







DEVOUT INSTRUCTIONS

ON THE

EPISTLES AND GOSPELS

FOR THE SUNDAYS AND HOLYDAYS;

WITH

EXPLANATIONS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND DUTY, AND OF
CHURCH CEREMONIES.

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,

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“Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass.”

ST. MATT. xxiv. 25.

“Blessed are they, who hear the word of God and keep it.”

ST. LUKE xii. 28.

“Come, children, hearken to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

PSALM xxxiii. 12.

“Show the people the ceremonies and the manner of worshipping.”

EXOD. xviii. 20.

“And I say unto you, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

ST. MATT. xvi. 18.

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P R E F A C E

GOFFINE'S Manual of Instruction and Devotion, when first published in the German language, was received with very great favor, which has not only been continued to it up to the present time, but has meanwhile increased. The first Wurtzburg edition consisted of 3,000 copies, the second and third of 5,000 each, and the fourth of 7,500. The Munich, Munster, Vienna, Einsiedeln, and many other editions have been still larger—a fact which serves to indicate the esteem in which the book is held by German Catholics. All the German Bishops have recommended its publication and circulation as a standard work; and some of the most learned and distinguished German divines have at different times appeared as its editors. The following considerations will also help to show the usefulness of the work:

1. The Catholic Church, according to the words of Christ, "Go and teach all nations," has at all times joined instruction with the offering of the Holy Sacrifice. But the words of the preacher often pass away like smoke in air; preaching and spiritual reading should therefore support each other. By this means instruction will be the more deeply impressed on the heart, and bring forth more salutary fruits in the life. Much that we lose by neglect may thus be regained. For these reasons the reading of spiritual books is recommended by all enlightened teachers, as a means of properly keeping Sundays and holy

days. What a beautiful sight it is to see the father begin this reading on days sanctified to God, while the members of his family sit around and listen to him!

2. No exercise of our lives is more salutary than meditation on the life, death, doctrines, and example of our Divine Saviour. It is milk to the children, nourishing food to the adults, medicine to the sick, salvation to sinners, consolation to them of little faith, strength to the penitent, counsel to the just. To the perfect it opens secret mysteries, and gives to the faithful grace in time and happiness in eternity.

3. Many cannot assist at the community mass, or other divine services; and often from just causes—as when attending the sick. But by the help of a spiritual book like this, they are enabled devoutly to arrange their family devotions.

4. The Latin language has been reserved by the Catholic Church for its Divine Services, in order that an inviolable conformity and unity may be preserved, and all innovations prevented. In this book, however, the Catholic will find the Introits of the Mass during the Ecclesiastical Year, the Prayers of the Church, the Epistles and Gospels, translated from the Latin, the points of faith and practice taught therein, and explanations of the ceremonies used in celebrating the mysteries of our salvation.

Would that this book might come into the hands of many; that they might read it with care on Sundays and holy days; and that what they read might not only be deeply impressed on their understanding and memory, but also upon their hearts, to the glory of God, and the temporal and eternal welfare of the faithful.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE chief aim of the translator of the following well-known book, has been to present as clearly as he could the meaning and thought of his author; but he has not restricted himself to the text of any one edition, having made use of several of those that are most esteemed. He hopes that German Catholics in this country, who are familiar with Goffine in the original, will be glad to meet with their favorite volume in a language which, though comparatively new to them, must yet be the language of their children; and that English readers will find both pleasure and profit in the intrinsic worth of the book, apart from the interest which attaches to it on account of its popularity in the German.

Occasional allusions will be found to customs not known here; but these have been allowed to pass without remark, as not being likely to mislead any one, while they help to interest us, and extend the reach of our sympathies by showing us something of Catholic life under circumstances different from our own.



MEMOIR OF THE VENERABLE AUTHOR.

LEONARD GOFFINE was born at Cologne, in the year 1648 and was received as a Premonstratensian monk, on the 18th July 1669, at Steinfeld, in the Duchy of Juelich, in a convent which was afterwards secularized. For many years he had charge of the parishes of Oberstein and Coesfeld, which he served with praiseworthy zeal. Everywhere he kept the example of his Lord and Master before his eyes. As we read in the Acts (i. 1), "Jesus began to do, and to teach," so his greatest care was, first to correct himself and then to teach others. Being persuaded that public instruction and the exercises of the Divine Service should be accompanied by Christian Instruction at home, he wrote at Coesfeld, Westphalia, a book of Instruction and Devotion, which, under the title of "A Manual," he caused to be published in the year 1690. In this work his aim was to instruct thoroughly, in regard to their sublime vocation, not only his own parishioners, but also all Christians desirous of salvation; to convince them of the superstition and errors of the world; to fill them with a lively faith, with sweet hope of the goods of eternity, and with a holy love for God and heavenly things. As his whole conduct showed that the Spirit of God was with him, so even they who opposed his religion could not withhold from him their respect. He died August 11th, 1719, in the 71st year of his age. His memory remains in benediction.



P A R T I.



Of the Sundays of the Ecclesiastical Year.



DAILY PRAYERS
OF THE
CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN.

Morning Devotions.

The wise man will give his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and he will pray in the sight of the Most High.—*Eclus.* xxxix. 6.

As soon as you awake, think that your Guardian Angel has awakened you, and that God has given you the day to work out your salvation. Remember that this day may be the last of your life, that in it you may practice virtue with the more zeal. Do every day what you wish to have done at the hour of your death.

Say, at rising :

I rise in the name of God ✠ the Father, who has created me, ✠ the Son who has redeemed me, ✠ the Holy Ghost who has sanctified me. May the blessed Trinity preserve me from all dangers of soul and body.

While dressing :

O Lord, give me the garment of love, the arms of justice; gird my loins with truth; put on me the helmet of salvation, give me the sword of the spirit, which is thy divine word; protect me with the shield of faith, with which I may repel the arrows of the enemy. Oh, that I might, like the elect of God, be invested with mercy, benignity, humility, patience, and all other virtues.

An Act of Adoration.

O most holy and undivided Trinity, eternal Lord and God, I believe that thou art here really present, and dost penetrate the inmost recesses of my heart. I adore thee with the profoundest veneration. I unite my prayers with the praises of the angels and saints in heaven,

and with those of thy faithful servants on earth, who in this morning hour offer up their devotions to thee. I love thee with my whole heart, and above all things.

An Act of Thanksgiving.

I heartily thank thee, most gracious God, for all the benefits which thou hast conferred upon me: that thou hast created me, redeemed me with thy most precious blood, sanctified me through holy baptism, called me to thy holy religion, and particularly that thou hast preserved me during the night past. I also give thanks to thee in behalf of those who fail to acknowledge the mercy of another day.

An Act of Contrition.

Alas, when I look back, I confess with confusion! I reproach myself with many sins and omissions. I acknowledge my ingratitude, and most heartily repent of it. Forgive me, O Lord, the bad thoughts by which, whether sleeping or waking, I have during the past night defiled my conscience and offended thee. My God, deal with me according to thy goodness and mercy, in which I hope.

An Act of Oblation.

O Lord, our Maker, who hast created all things for thyself, I offer up to thy infinite good pleasure whatever I shall this day think, speak, do, or suffer, every pulsation and breathing, every inner and outer act of mine, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in union with the thoughts of his most sacred heart, and with the intentions which have ever been made by the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all pious souls, in order to praise and glorify thee, the fountain of all goodness, to lay down a satisfaction for my sins before the judgment-seat of thy justice, to implore thy mercy for all living and for the dead. To thee, O King of Glory, I devote all my labors.

Petition and Commendation to God.

From thee, O Lord, proceed all good counsels and just works; assist me always with thy grace, that I may begin, continue, and end all my works in thee. Give me wisdom to speak what is right and pleasing to thee, and wisdom to keep silence where silence is better than speech. Give me courage to suffer whatever thou orderest for my good. Cause thyself, O Lord, to be devoutly served in all Christian lands, that in all governments good laws may be made, in all families useful works may be done, that by all this day may be sanc-

tified and directed to the glory of thy name. Bless my friends and enemies; let no one this day perish, either temporally or spiritually. In particular, be gracious to the authorities whom thou hast set over us for our protection. Let them live in thy fear and govern according to thy will, that justice may be promoted and malice prevented. Lead those that travel; provide for the poor; to those who desire to live by their labor, grant the rewards of their industry. Give me a heart compassionate towards the poor and suffering; heal the sick, comfort the afflicted, uphold the weary, preserve us all in health and happiness, and grant perpetual peace to the faithful departed, particularly to those who have died during the night past. Finally, O Creator of all, have mercy on all that thou hast made.

I place myself, O Jesus, in thy most sacred wounds, particularly in thy most sacred heart. Teach me to be like thee, humble, meek, and patient. Grant that I may daily take up my cross, deny myself, and follow thee.

To Mary.

O my advocate and most holy Mother of God, Mary, I commend myself to thy special patronage and protection; to thy compassion I commit my soul and body, my life, and the end of my life. Show that thou art indeed a mother, and let me not die without thy maternal blessing.

To our Guardian Angel.

Angel of the Lord, and protector of my soul, to whom God has committed me, guard me this day in all my ways, against all my enemies, visible and invisible, enlighten, direct, and govern me.

To our Patron Saints.

O St. Joseph, St. Ann, ye holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, St. John Nepomucen, St. N. N., and all ye holy patrons, pray for me that I may not fall into any sin, that I may imitate your virtues, love my neighbor as myself, and daily become more pleasing to God, until by a happy death I shall, under your protection, pass into your society; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

(Reflect here what you have to do during the day; consider the obligations you have to fulfil; bethink yourself of the faults which you have committed at other times, of the dangers and occasions of sin to which you may be exposed, and be resolved to guard against them.)

A Good Intention.

O God, whose will it is, that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I could wish for myself thousands of the most perfect hearts, with which this day to offer up to thee, O Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, thy only begotten Son, our Redeemer, whatever I shall think, say, do, or suffer, as an offering of worship and adoration due to thy majesty; of thanksgiving for so many graces and benefits; of prayer for the gifts and assistances that we need; of propitiation for my sins and omissions, in union with the works and merits of Jesus Christ, and I desire that such might be the intention of all men.

THE THREE DIVINE VIRTUES.

An Act of Faith.

Almighty, eternal God, before thy face I prostrate myself before thee in the depth of my nothingness, and with all saints and angels adore thee, full of humility and veneration. I believe that thou art one God, threefold in person—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that thou rewardest the good and punishest the bad. I believe that the second person in the Godhead, Jesus Christ, for our sakes became man, suffered, died, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of the Father Almighty, is also truly and substantially present in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, and one day shall come to judge the living and the dead. All this, and whatever the Catholic Church proposes to be believed, I firmly believe, because thou hast revealed it, O God, who art the Eternal Truth, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived. In this holy faith I will live and die.

Act of Hope.

I hope, O my God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and by my co-operation therewith to obtain from thee the forgiveness of all my sins, the graces necessary to lead a Christian life, and to serve thee diligently, and to gain finally, after this life, everlasting happiness; because thou hast promised this, who art infinitely powerful, benign, and faithful, who art able to keep thy word, who desirest to keep it, and who will keep it.

Act of Charity.

I love thee, O my God, with all my heart, all my soul, all my strength; I love thee as my Creator, my Redeemer, my Sanctifier,

the author of my happiness, my greatest benefactor; but yet I love thee more because thou art the Supreme Good, infinitely worthy of all love. For love of thee, I love my neighbor as myself, even my enemies and persecutors, because thou commandest me to love them. For love of thee, I also repent of all my sins, I hate and detest them, not out of fear or punishment, but because thereby I have offended thee, O Supreme Good! In thy love, O my God, will I live, and in thy love I long with ardor to die.

Form of making a Good Intention before Holy Mass.

(To be used when, by reasonable cause, one is hindered from going to church.)

I believe, Lord Jesus, that in the last supper thou didst offer up a true sacrifice; I believe it because thou hast made it known to us through the Catholic Church, which from the Apostles' times has constantly taught the same to us. Since thou didst command the Apostles and the priests ordained by them, to do the same till the end of time, I therefore offer to thee, with the priest, this Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (which I believe to be one with that offered on Mount Calvary), to thy honor and glory, in acknowledgment of my most bounden service, in thanksgiving for the innumerable benefits which thou hast conferred upon me and upon the whole world, in satisfaction for my sins and the sins of all mankind, and for obtaining the grace of perfect contrition for my sins. I also offer to thee this Holy Mass for my friends, benefactors, for those for whom I am bound, and for whom thou willest me to pray. I also offer it for my enemies, that they may be converted, for all the faithful departed, particularly for my parents and relatives, and for the welfare of all Christendom.

House Mass,

Or a lifting up of the heart during the time of Divine Service, for those who are hindered from attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in church.

I.—Heartfelt Desire to Participate in the Holy Sacrifice.

Most Holy Trinity, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, almighty source of all things; my best Father, my merciful Redeemer, the Fountain of my sanctification and happiness, I, thy most unworthy creature, venture to appear before thee, to show to thee, my true God and Creator, all honor, adoration, and trustful submission; to thank thee for the innumerable benefits which I have received from thee;

to praise thee for thy glory (for I am created for thy praise); to implore thy mercies, and to appease thy justice, because I have so often and so grievously sinned against thee. All this I cannot do in a worthier and more perfect manner than by hearing, with faith and devotion, Holy Mass. For in that Holy Sacrifice is offered to thee the most sublime sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, the most efficacious sacrifice of supplication and propitiation, the most worthy sacrifice of salvation for the living and dead. But because I cannot this day be present bodily at the Holy Mass, I will, at least in spirit, place myself before the altar where Jesus Christ in unbloody manner offers himself, O Heavenly Father, to thee. With this glorious sacrifice I unite my present prayer; I fervently desire, united with the Son of God, in the strongest manner to praise, love, supplicate thee, O Heavenly Father, to repair all the wrong and shame that I have wrought, and completely to accomplish all that can be accomplished by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. To this end give me thy divine grace, and grant that I may perform all this with sincere devotion. Amen.

II.—*Contrition for Sins, with Faith and Confidence in Jesus Christ, and an Offering up of His Precious Merits.*

Holy Father, I confess with sorrow that I have seldom served thee with an undivided heart, but rather have often offended thee, and by my slothfulness and neglect have brought upon myself infinitely great guilt before thee. I therefore take refuge in the merits of thy Beloved Son, now present upon the altar, who so freely commends and imparts to us his grace and favor. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Jesus offers to thee, for me, the highest veneration and love, the most perfect praise, the most hearty thanksgiving, and the most kind expiation. For the perfect forgiveness of my sins, O Heavenly Father, I offer up to thee the whole suffering and death of Jesus Christ, which now, in an unbloody manner, is renewed upon the altar. O most benign Father, thy Son has suffered and died even for me, a poor sinner. With thankful love I bring before thee as a precious and pleasing offering, the infinite merits of his suffering and death. I firmly trust that, on account of this inestimable sacrifice of thy Son, thou wilt not regard my guilt, and that thou wilt increase in me thy graces. Amen.

O Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, to thee I turn for help and grace. Graciously look upon my misery and wretchedness, and let my supplications come before thee. That I may the more surely be heard by thee, I appear before the throne of thy grace, which for our salvation, is set up in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, where the

innocent Lamb of God is mysteriously offered up to thee, Holy Father Almighty God, for the remission of our sins. Regard, I beseech thee, the innocence of this holy sacrifice, and for the sake thereof, extend to me thy mercy. O my Saviour, how great is that love of thine for me which, to make satisfaction for my sins, and to gain me the grace of thy Father, impelled thee to endure for me such bitter pains, and even death itself. O how great is yet that love of thine for me, which causes thee, in every Holy Mass to renew, in an unbloody manner, thy death of propitiation, in order to apply and communicate to me thy merits. With my whole heart I thank thee for this, thy great love, and from the depths of my soul I beseech thee to make me a partaker of the fruits of it, and to strengthen and confirm me by the grace of the Holy Ghost, that I may detest sin and all unholy living, that I may crucify my flesh, with all its passions, deny myself, and follow in thy footsteps, that all my thoughts and words, all that I do or leave undone, may be a living service of God, and a sacrifice well pleasing to him.

As thou hast offered up to thy Heavenly Father thyself, so take me also in the arms of thy love and mercy, and present me, a poor erring sinner, as an offering to thy Father, and let me no more be separated from his love. Amen.

III. *Adoration of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, under the appearances of Bread and Wine.*

O most holy Jesus, before thee the heavenly choirs kneel and adore; with them I lift up my voice and cry, Holy, holy, holy, art thou, O Lord of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy grace and glory! Thou art present, O Jesus, under the appearances of bread and wine. Hear, O hear my prayer. I strike my breast and confess my unworthiness; but with firm confidence I implore thee, O Jesus, be merciful to me. O most benign Jesus, forgive me my sins. O holy blood, wash me from my sins. O precious blood of Jesus, O blood of Jesus, rich in grace, cry out to heaven for mercy upon me. Most holy God, receive this precious blood, together with the love through which it was shed; receive it as an offering of my love and thankfulness, for the greatest glory of thy name; for the forgiveness of my sins; in satisfaction of the punishments which I have deserved; for the washing away of the stains of my guilt, as reparation for all my neglects, and as amends for all the sins which I have committed through ignorance or frailty; receive it also as a sacrifice for the consolation of the afflicted; for the conversion of sinners; for the recovery of the sick and suffering; for the strengthening of those

who draw near to death; for the refreshment, purification, and deliverance of the souls of the departed in purgatory. Amen.

IV. *Unshaken Confidence in Jesus Christ.*

To thee, O most benign Jesus, I lift up my eyes and my heart. Oh, turn upon me thy gracious countenance, and thy true love. Behold, O Lord, my manifest need, and the great danger of my soul. Oh, receive me, thou who art my only true mediator and helper. Be thou, through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, my salvation, and obtain for me the entire remission of my sins. Oh, represent to thy Father how cruelly thou wast scourged, crowned, crucified, and put to death for us, and thereby reconcile with the strict justice of God me, a miserable sinner. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

V. *He who asks in the name of Jesus shall receive.*

O Lamb of God, who suffered for us miserable sinners, have mercy upon me, and offer up to the Father thy passion for the forgiveness of my sins. O Lamb of God, who died for us miserable sinners, have mercy upon me, and offer up to God thy death in satisfaction for my sins! O Lamb of God, who didst sacrifice thyself for us miserable sinners, have mercy upon me, and offer up thy holy blood to the Father for the cleansing of my soul.

Heavenly Father, I offer up to thee this precious and most worthy oblation. My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head, but, O just and merciful God, lay this precious offering in the one scale and my sins in the other, and that will far outweigh my guilt. O merciful, O holy God, give me thy blessing before I end my prayer, and through this blessing let me obtain grace at once to begin to amend my life, and to renounce whatever is sinful and displeasing to thee. Support me in my weakness; strengthen me when temptations assail me, and let me never forget that thou art near me.

O precious day! but perhaps the last of my life. O happy day! if it shall make me better. Holy Mother of God, Mary, holy angels and friends of God, pray for me and lead me in the way of truth. O God, grant thy love to the living, and thy peace to the dead. Amen.

PRAYERS TO BE SAID IN A STORM.

V. From lightning, hail, and destroying tempest,

R. Keep us, O Lord Jesus Christ.

V. Show us thy mercy, O Lord,

R. And grant us thy salvation.

V. Lord, hear our prayer,

R. And let our cry come unto thee.

V. The Lord be with you,

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us Pray.

We beseech thee, O Lord, graciously avert from this house all hostile power of evil spirits and all injury from the tempests which gather in the air: Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and merciful God, through the intercession of the holy Mother of God, Mary, and of the holy angels, patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, widows, and all saints, extend to us, we beseech thee, thy continual protection; make the storm to cease, and the angry elements to give forth a blessing from heaven upon us unworthy; preserve from all the dangers with which their destroying power threatens us, our dwellings, and the fruits of the earth: Through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

Blessing.

V. Blessed be the name of the Lord,

R. Henceforth world without end.

V. Our help is in the name of the Lord,

R. Who made heaven and earth.

The blessing of Almighty God the ✠ Father, the ✠ Son, and the ✠ Holy Ghost, descend upon us, our dwellings, and the fruits of the earth, and remain with us always. Amen.

Evening Devotions.

(In the Old Law, God commanded that a sacrifice should be offered up to him at evening as well as at morning, to teach us thereby that we should begin and end every day with him. Gentle sleep is the balm of our nature; but you will never sleep more softly and quietly than when you go to your rest like a Christian, and lay yourself down in the peace which you find in God.)

I.—*Give Thanks to God.*

O God, whose most holy presence I acknowledge and with all submissiveness adore; O God most gracious, who with such fatherly kindness hast preserved me and renewed to me this day so many graces, what shall I repay thee for so many benefits? Thy saints shall praise and bless thee therefor. Jesus, I kiss the holy wounds of thy right hand, and give thanks to thee, in union with the thanks which thou, when on earth, didst pay to thy Father. *Praise, O my soul, the Lord, for he is good and his mercy endureth forever.* (Ps. cxxxv.)

II.—*Pray for Light, that you may know your Sins.*

But, O Lord, how can my thanks please thee when I have this day sinned so often before thee, to whom all things are open and known. By the wounds of thy left hand, I pray thee, O Jesus, who art the true light that enlightenest every man, to enlighten me by thy holy spirit that I may know wherein I have erred. I will now in bitterness of soul examine all my actions of this day.

(Here examine your conscience, whether you have sinned by wilful distraction in prayer, reading, meditation, at mass, at sermon, at confession, or communion, or by irreverent behavior in church. Think whether you have not resisted the grace and inspirations of God; whether you have not sinned by cursing and swearing, or by want of confidence in God. Examine yourself, whether you have not offended God by rash judgment against your neighbor, or by despising him; by hatred, envy, anger, strife, revenge, calumny, slander, mockery, false accusation, injustice, bad example, disobedience, unfaithfulness. Ask yourself before the all-knowing and holy God, whether you have

not sinned, by pride, by vain fear and human respect, by lies, by thoughts, desires, words or deeds opposed to purity, with others or by yourself; by sinful thoughts and wishes of other kinds, by intemperance, by slothfulness in the performance of your duties; by misuse of time, by sinful pleasures or useless occupations; how you have conducted yourself at home, at church, at table, in the street, in your intercourse with others, and whether you have not made yourself guilty of the sins of others. But particularly, direct your attention to your habitual sins. Examine carefully what gives occasion to your falling into them so frequently. Have a firm purpose to be on your guard against them the following day; impose upon yourself a penance proportioned to your sins and faults, and pray God to strengthen you in your resolution, with his grace).

III.—*Make an Act of Contrition.*

Father, I acknowledge and confess my guilt—my great guilt. I am ashamed at the sight of my faults and imperfections; I am heartily sorry for, and detest all my past sins, not because I have thereby lost all that is temporal and all that is eternal, but because I have thereby so often and so grievously offended thee, my Lord and my God, my Supreme and Eternal Good, whom I love above all things, and desire to love forever. O Jesus, who hast so loved me that for me thou didst offer up thy life, I beseech thee by the holy blood which flowed from thy right foot, forgive me all my sins. Cleanse me from all the stains which defile my soul—thy image—before thy strict judgment shall visit me with punishment. With the penitent David I cry out, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me.*

IV.—*Make a Resolution to Amend your Life.*

By the blood which flowed from the wound of thy left foot, O Jesus, I beseech of thee the grace that, as I now earnestly purpose, I may shun every sin, and seek out and make use of every means of amendment. O God, who givest grace to undertake what is good, give grace also to accomplish the same until the day of Jesus Christ.

V.—*Commendation and Petition.*

I hide myself, O Jesus, in the wound of thy holy side, and by the blood and water which, at the piercing of the spear flowed therefrom, I beseech thee to receive me under thy almighty protection. According to thy great mercy, spare all who this day offend thee. Have patience with those children of darkness who shall abuse this night

to manifold evil. Let not drunkards die in their sin. Grant that all who are this day at variance may not suffer the sun to go down upon their anger. Strengthen those who must lie down in hunger. Have mercy upon those who this night lie sleepless through care or sickness, and upon those who draw near to death; deliver them in their necessity, relieve their pain, watch over the sick, and cause them, through faith in thee, to partake of thy holy consolation. Have care for all travellers, for all in authority over us, preserve the innocent from temptation, and protect our whole community from every harm and misfortune. Bless me and all that belong to me, my relatives, benefactors, friends, and enemies, bless all men. Let the suffering souls in purgatory experience the effects of thy blessing; bring them out of their pain into everlasting rest and heavenly joys.

Our Father. Hail Mary. I believe.

Immediately before going to bed.

Grant, O Lord, thy blessing to this house and to this place in which I am, that I and all that belong to me may rest in thy peace. Suffer me to spend this night in thy love unstained by any sin, that if thou shouldest call me before thee, I may die in thy grace, and in this grace awake to thee. Crucified Jesus! let me rest in thy most sacred arms. I unite my sleep with thine, and in that love with which thou didst give rest to thy most holy manhood upon earth. I also lay my body down to rest that I may to-morrow the better serve thee. As often as I shall draw my breath, as often as my pulses shall beat this night, so often shall my heart cry to thee, "My Lord and my God! I believe in thee, I hope in thee, I love thee above all things. I am heartily sorry for my sins, and detest every thing that displeases thee. To thy infinite mercy I commit my body and soul."

O Mary, before, and at, and after the birth of thy Son, ever most pure virgin, for defence against all the assaults of Satan I intrust my body and my soul to thy love and intercession. Thou art my mother, be near thy foster-child.

Angel of the Lord! who hast thus far led me so faithfully, and guarded me against so many dangers, defend me from every danger of body and soul.

My holy Patrons, and all ye elect of God, give continual praise and honor to God this night for me; pray for me that I may sleep this night free from all unclean imaginations, and from every sin, unharmed and undisturbed by all attacks of enemies.

Here sprinkle yourself with holy water, undress yourself with modesty, say one Our Father for all who shall die this night. Perhaps in so doing you may

be praying the last time for yourself. At getting into bed make the sign of the cross, and say: "In the name of my crucified Jesus I lay me down; may he bless, preserve, and bring me to life everlasting;" or the Church prayer: "Deliver us, O Lord, waking, and preserve us sleeping, that we may watch with Christ, and rest in peace. In peace will I sleep and rest. Into thy hands, O Heavenly Father, I commend my spirit." Compose yourself then to sleep; but if sleep will not come to you, think upon death, and that trying hour when the crucifix will be pressed into your hand and the door opened for you into eternity. What will you then sigh and wish for? Remember, man, thy last end, and thou wilt not sin. Happy is the day that comes to its close with such pious thoughts.

EVENING DEVOTIONS FOR THOSE THAT FEAR GOD.

(TO BE SAID IN COMMON.)

All. In the name of the ✠ Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the ✠ Holy Ghost. Amen.

The head of the family, or Leader. O most holy Trinity, our most gracious God and Father, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, we praise, honor, and adore thee, we bless thee and give thanks to thee for all the graces and benefits which we have this day received anew from thy divine bounty. Glory be to God the Father, who hath created us. Glory be to God the Son, who hath redeemed us. Glory be to God the Holy Ghost, who hath sanctified us.

All. Glory be to the most adorable Trinity, for ever and ever.

Leader. O eternal God and Lord, we confess with shame and sorrow that we have grieved and offended thee, our Supreme Good, in thought, word, and deed, and sinned, O Most Holy, before thee. For all this we are truly sorry, and from the bottom of our hearts repent. O most compassionate Father, in reparation for our manifold sins, we offer up to thee the love, fidelity, obedience, humility, purity, and all the pleasing virtues of thy only-begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; we offer up to thee his fervent prayers, his holy vigils, and his bitter passion and death. For the sake of these most holy merits, be gracious unto us, O God, and forgive us our sins.

All. Be gracious unto us, O God, and forgive us our sins.

Leader. Under thy holy protection, O Lord, let us enjoy the rest which thou hast ordained for the refreshment of the body. Let thy holy angels defend us from all the powers of darkness and all the dangers of the night. Let thy holy light pour its rays into our souls,

that we sleep not in eternal death, and let thy divine grace repel from us all evil.

All. In thy holy peace let us sleep and take our rest, O Lord, our God.

Leader. Have mercy, also, O Father of mercy, on all those with whom Divine Providence has united us here upon earth, our relatives, benefactors, friends, and enemies; have mercy, also, upon all who are distressed and afflicted, upon all who are sick and about to die. O holy God, powerful God, immortal God, have mercy upon us in life and in death.

All. O God, have mercy upon all, living and dead.

Leader. Holy Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Joseph, and ye beloved angels and saints, supply through your intercession what is wanting in our prayers, and implore for us the assistance and protection of Almighty God.

All. Pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

Leader. O Lord, grant to the souls of the faithful departed eternal rest, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.

All. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, I believe.

Evening Blessing.

The blessing of the most holy Trinity, the grace and mercy of the Heavenly Father, the peace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, the virtue of his bitter passion and death, the protection and assistance of the Holy Ghost, be and remain with us now and forever, and guard and protect us and ours this night, and ever, from all evil of soul and body. In the name of the ✠ Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the ✠ Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer for a Sick Person.

Lord Jesus, he whom thou lovest is sick. Let it not be a sickness to death, but to thy glory and to his sanctification. Thou hast to so many sick restored health, to so many dead even life, even so extend thy goodness to this sick person, and let him become well again. Thou art almighty and infinitely good. Speak but one word, and he shall regain his health. But we know not always what is good for us; do thou, therefore, what is pleasing to thee. Only give to the sufferer patience, and to us true love for him, that with him we may, in this life, give thanks to thee in thy temple for hearing our prayers, and, in the life to come, may praise thee forever in heaven. Amen.

DAILY EXERCISES FOR VARIOUS PERSONS.

Prayer to be said by Persons that are Married.

O God, who didst institute marriage in paradise, and in the new law didst raise it to the dignity of a sacrament, and who hast called me, as I hope, thereto, I pray thee that thou wouldst give me grace to live therein peacefully and humbly this day, and all the days of my life, to suffer patiently all afflictions and trials that befall me, to rear my children piously, according to thy will and commandments, to train the members of my family to devotion, and to banish from my house whatever is scandalous, that in and through us thy name may be praised. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Manner in which the Countryman and Day-laborer should offer up their work to God.

O almighty, eternal God, who, for the disobedience of our first parents, didst curse the earth that it brought forth thistles and thorns, who hast said that in the sweat of our brow we should eat our bread, who hast laid it upon me for my own and for my neighbor's sustenance to cultivate the land in the sweat of my brow, I give up myself therefore to thy divine will, and offer up to thee all my bodily acts, in union with those done by my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, while he walked upon earth; I offer up to thee my labor in thanksgiving for all the benefits which I have received, in satisfaction for my sins, and finally, to obtain eternal life. Amen.

Prayer of a Servant.

My Lord Jesus, who didst leave the bosom of thy heavenly Father and come into this world, not that thou mightest be served, but as thou thyself hast said, that thou mightest serve others, to leave us an example of humility, since it has pleased thee to give me such station that after thy example I should serve others, I therefore give myself up to thy will, and will serve others as if I were serving thee, that with the humble I may one day be exalted in heaven, and for reward receive thee thyself. Amen.

Prayer of a Child.

My Lord Jesus, who didst become a little child, and as an example for me didst grow in wisdom, years, and favor with God and man, give me grace that through true faith I may know and love thee, and

walk in the way of justice; show me, I humbly beseech thee, the way of salvation which thou hast made ready from eternity, that I may walk in the same by the practice of devotion, and at last come to thee, O Jésus, who art eternal life. Amen.

VARIOUS PRAYERS TO BE SAID WITH THE SICK.

Psalm vi.

O Lord, rebuke me not in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.

And my soul is troubled exceedingly: but thou, O Lord, how long?

Turn to me, O Lord, and deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercy's sake.

For there is no one in death, that is mindful of thee: and who shall confess to thee in hell?

I have labored in my groanings, every night I will wash my bed: I will wáter my couch with my tears.

My eye is troubled through indignation: I have grown old among all my enemies.

Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity: for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

The Lord hath heard my supplication: the Lord hath received my prayer.

Let all my enemies be ashamed, and be very much troubled: let them be turned back, and be ashamed very speedily.

Prayer for a Happy Death.

Lord Jesus Christ, I beseech thee, by thy holy wounds through which man, born in sin, is born again to eternal life, let those wounds stand open to my afflicted soul when it shall depart from this world, that the prince of darkness may not withstand it, nor the powers of the air terrify it, let thy holy wounds protect it in the last most dangerous combat, who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

How to suffer Sickness and Death with merit.

(The sick person should be encouraged by reminding him to unite his pains with those which Christ suffered for us in the garden and on the cross, to submit himself to the will of God, and if it be his pleasure, to be ready to die.)

It is highly meritorious to be resigned to die according to the will

of God, to unite one's death with the death of Christ, and to offer it up as a sacrifice for one's sins, and in thanksgiving for mercies received, to add thereby to one's merits in heaven.)

Prayer.

O Lord Jesus, I unite the pains which I now suffer, with those which thou didst suffer in the garden, at the pillar, in the house of Pilate, and on the cross. I also offer up to thee my death, which I am ready to undergo according to thy will, for my sins and for thy greater glory, and I unite it with thy holy death endured for me on the cross.

An Act of Faith.

It is useful to recite in the hearing of the sick, the Apostles' Creed, and to ask him afterwards whether he believes it all.

If the sick person be weak, some good friend should encourage him to make an act of faith in his heart, and should then say,

I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. I believe that my Redeemer liveth, and that on the last day I shall rise again from the dead.

For one thing have I besought the Lord, again I desire it, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life.

Act of Hope.

In thee, O Lord, I hope, I shall never be confounded. Thou, O Lord, art full of goodness and meekness. Thou art rich in mercy to all that call upon thee. Whoso calls upon the name of Jesus shall be saved.

The Lord loveth all that he hath made and his mercy is over all his works.

O God, show me thy protection, that mine enemies may be confounded at seeing that thou art my consolation and support.

Receive my soul into thy keeping, for to thee have I been dedicated; deliver, O God, thy servant, who trusts and hopes only in thee.

O Lord, thou art my Helper, my Protector, my Redeemer. Lord, my God, delay not to assist me. In God is my strength.

Why art thou so sad my soul, and why dost thou disquiet me? Hope in God; I will yet give him thanks. He is the salvation of my countenance and my God.

Act of Charity.

I will love thee, O God, who art my strength, my refuge, and my Redeemer.

For thy glory, my God, I desire to be entirely consumed by this sickness, that so I may be a sacrifice to thee. Blessed art thou, O queen of heaven and earth! Oh, that thy name may be praised and venerated from the rising to the setting of the sun.

The sick person must be often reminded to ask forgiveness of all whom he has offended, and to forgive from his heart all who have offended him. St. Augustine, in his last illness, called for the seven penitential psalms, and said them devoutly. For he had been accustomed to say that no one, however piously he might have lived, ought to depart from this world without penance. Every sick person should follow this example and say himself these psalms, or in case of being too weak, cause them to be recited for him by another.

It is useful to sprinkle the sick, at times, with holy water.

Memorare.

Remember, Mary, tenderest-hearted Virgin, how from of old the ear hath never heard that he who ran to thee for refuge, implored thy help, and sought thy prayers, was forsaken of God. Virgin of virgins, Mother, emboldened by this confidence I fly to thee, to thee I come, and in thy presence I a weeping sinner stand. Mother of the Word Incarnate, Oh, cast not away my prayer; but in thy pity hear and answer. Amen.

Salve Regina.

Hail, Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope, hail! Exiles, children of Eve, we cry to thee; to thee we sigh, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, gracious Advocate, turn thou upon us the eyes of thy tender mercy; and after this our exile ended, show unto us Jesus, the blessed Fruit of thy womb, O gentle, O tender, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Make me worthy to praise thee, Holy Virgin.

R. Give me strength against thine enemies.

V. Blessed be God in his saints.

R. Amen.

INSTRUCTIONS

ON

THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS.



EXPLANATION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

WHAT do we understand by the Ecclesiastical Year?

That order of seasons and days appointed by the Church, which commences with the first Sunday in Advent and ends with the last Sunday after Pentecost, and which is so arranged, that, every year, the mysteries, doctrines, benefits, obligations, and promises of Christianity, and in general all the grace and truth which Jesus Christ has provided for dispensing to men through his Church, shall be brought before the eyes and minds of the faithful by appropriate solemnities.

Why has the Church prescribed this order?

1. To keep constantly before her children the infinite love of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as it was displayed from the beginning of the world down to the coming of Christ, and in his Incarnation, Satisfaction, and Glorification; and as it will continue to be manifested in the redemption, sanctification, and salvation of mankind till the end of time; in order that the Ecclesiastical Year may serve as a living Gospel, intelligible to all—as an open promulgation of the faith, and as a pattern of Christian life.

2. To lead the faithful, as it were by the hand, to an acquaintance with the truths of the Catholic religion, and to accustom them to a corresponding church-like life.

3. To secure to them the benefits procured by our Redeemer, and intrusted by him to his Church; to restore, preserve, and increase in them sanctifying grace, thereby to free them more and more from sin, and make them holy and happy.

Which are the chief holy days and seasons of the Ecclesiastical Year?

The holy seasons are: 1. Christmas, for which Advent is the preparation;

2. Easter, for which Lent is the preparation;

3. Pentecost, extending to the first Sunday in Advent.

What does the Church commemorate at Christmas?

The infinite love of God the Father, who, according to his promise, sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, for the redemption of mankind. This holy season commences with the first Sunday in Advent, and ends with the sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

What does the Church commemorate at Easter?

The infinite love of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who, in obedience to his Father's will, by his life, his works, his doctrine, his sufferings and death accomplished our redemption, and then in his glorified body ascended into Heaven, to be there our Mediator with his Heavenly Father. This holy season commences with Septuagesima Sunday, and ends at the Vigil of Pentecost.

What does the Church commemorate at Pentecost?

The infinite love of God the Holy Ghost, who, through the sacraments of the Church, imparts to the faithful the fruits of the redemption which Christ purchased for them; that they may attain to a holy life in the faithful service of the ever-blessed Trinity, and arrive at a happy union with Christ. This holy season commences with Pentecost Sunday, and ends with the last Sunday after Pentecost. The holy days are: 1. Sundays; 2. Festivals; 3. Fast-days; and 4. Certain other days which the Church appoints to be kept holy.

I. What is Sunday?

Sunday, also called the Lord's Day and the Christian Sabbath, is the first day of the week; on it Christians are com-

manded to rest from all servile work, and to occupy themselves with the service of God and the important business of their salvation.

Why is there only one such day, and that the first day of the week?

One day of the week is thus specially hallowed because God himself rested on the seventh day, and in the old law, which is the type of the new (Exod. xx. 10, 11), commanded to keep holy the Sabbath day. Besides, it is evidently just that man, created for the glory of God, should dedicate at least one day out of the seven to his special service and to the salvation of his own soul. The seventh day's rest is also most beneficial both to soul and body; for how many, blinded and led astray by passion and excessive desire of worldly goods, would waste their strength in forgetfulness of God and neglect of their soul's salvation, if they were not, by this day, wakened from their deadly slumber, and reminded that they had souls to save. The first day of the week was kept as a holy day by the Apostles, and in the second century this observance of it had become general. The reasons for this practice were: 1. To establish a distinction between Jews and Christians; 2. Because, as on that day God created the world, so too on that day our life was brought from darkness to light, through the Resurrection of our Lord; 3. Because, as on the first day God commenced the creation of the world, so too on it he sent his Holy Spirit for the restoration of mankind, and for the founding of his Church. Sunday is therefore a perpetual commemoration of the creation of the world by God the Father; of our redemption by God the Son, and of our sanctification by God the Holy Ghost. 4. Besides, many events memorable in the history of the Church, and fraught with blessing, have happened on that day; as, for instance, the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem before his suffering and death; the institution of the sacrament of Penance; and, according to Bellarmine (tom. 2, lib. 2), the Birth, Circumcision, and Baptism of our Lord. Finally, Sunday is also a day of rest to Christians, and as such reminds them to prepare with earnestness for the eternal Sabbath of Heaven.

How, then, should we spend Sunday ?

As the design of its institution requires ; that is, holily. For whoever ponders the account of the day just given, must perceive that there is no time in it for mere worldly affairs, but that it should be all devoted to the service of God and the interests of eternity, unless a man would go contrary to the ordinances of God, slight the intention of the Church, trifle with his salvation, and draw down upon himself heavy punishment. In the law of Moses, happiness, prosperity, and benediction in soul and body, were promised to those who kept holy the Sabbath (Exod. xxvi. ; Deut. xxviii.) ; but evil and misfortune were threatened to those who desecrated it, and even capital punishment was declared to be the penalty of violating it. Should not God, therefore, require the sanctification of the Christian Sabbath, which he has signalized by so much greater benefits, as strictly as he did that of the old law ?

How is Sunday kept holy, and how is it profaned ?

We keep it holy by abstaining on it from servile labor (Luke iv. 4 ; vi. 1), and by doing works of piety, such as attending the public services of the Church, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and also the sermon, catechism, and afternoon services in the parish church, if it can be conveniently done (Conc. Trid. Sess. 24, de ref. c. 4 et 13 ; see *16th Sunday after Pentecost*) ; and if not, we should say at home the proper prayers, that they may be united with those which are offered in church at the Holy Sacrifice—should read some spiritual book—should make, during the day, frequent acts of contrition, and renew our love to God, thus preparing ourselves to go, with renewed strength and zeal, to our avocations in the coming week. Sunday is further sanctified by receiving on that day, once a month at least, the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, as the most efficacious means towards our salvation ; and by spending the time that remains from the divine service in the practice of virtues, and in works of charity. On the other hand, Sunday is desecrated by unnecessary and servile labor ; by neglecting church services ; by idleness, intemperance ; by plays and dances ; by roving about at night, and in general by sinful acts. Indeed

it would be better, writes St. Augustine, that is, it would not be so bad, to work in the field on Sunday, as to play, to dance, and spend the day in frivolous, dangerous, and sinful pleasures. Nevertheless, innocent and decent recreations, after the church services, are not forbidden, but on the contrary recommended.

Prayer for Sundays.

O God, who hast appointed Sunday, to the end that on it we should serve thee, and make ourselves partakers of thy grace, grant that we may always, on that day, renew our faith, and be incited to the praise and adoration of thy Majesty, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Why is it that the number of Sundays after Epiphany, and after Pentecost, is sometimes greater and sometimes less?

That depends upon Easter coming sooner or later: if Easter comes early, there will be fewer Sundays after Epiphany, and more after Pentecost, than if it came later.

When is Easter?

On the first Sunday after the full moon, which comes next after the vernal equinox.

II. What do we understand by feasts and holy days?

Days on which the Catholic Church celebrates either certain mysteries of religion, or some passage in the life of our Lord, or the memory of the Saints; they may therefore be said to consist of two sorts,—the feasts of our Lord and the feasts of the Saints.

Why has the Church established these holy days?

She has instituted the feasts of our Lord, that by means of them we may be induced to remember God's love and mercy towards us; to meditate upon the mysteries, truths, and benefits of the Christian religion, and to contemplate Jesus as the perfect pattern of a Christian life.

On the feasts of the Saints our minds are directed to those heroes of Christianity, that we may keep in veneration the lives of the friends of God, and that, convinced of the necessity and practicability of a true Christian life, and witnessing the

rewards which they have gained, we may be encouraged to similar perseverance in the struggle for virtue, and in the imitation of their examples.

Which are the feasts of our Lord?

Christmas, Circumcision, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, and Corpus Christi.

Has the Church authority to establish holy days?

Certainly; for Jesus Christ gave his Apostles and their successors power to bind and to loose upon earth (Matt. xxiii. 18), and enjoined upon the faithful to hear the Church. This grant includes the power of making laws and regulations for the salvation of the faithful; and, as the Church thus has this power, so the faithful are bound, on their part, to obey. God himself appointed feasts under the old law, and the new law follows that pattern. Thus, under the old law, Pasch, or Easter, was established in memory of the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage; Pentecost, in memory of the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai; the Feast of Tabernacles, in commemoration of the forty years' passage through the wilderness. But should not the Church, the spouse of Christ, have power to do what the Synagogue, the servant, did? Has she not, indeed, the same right that governments, families, and societies have, to appoint their festivals? and ought she not to honor the works of God, and venerate the lives of the Saints, even upon the same principles on which worldly festivals are celebrated?

How should we spend holy days?

According to the intention of the Church, as we do Sunday; but further, the Church, in order that we may become acquainted with the mysteries of our faith, and with the particular favors God has conferred upon us, as well as with the acts of the Saints, and with the ceremonies and usages by which their feast days are honored, desires that we should assist at the eulogies preached on such occasions, and that, by the reading of suitable books, we should incite ourselves to the love and praise of God, and the imitation of his Saints.

Which are the holy days of obligation?

Circumcision, Epiphany, Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin,

Easter, Ascension Day, Whitsunday, Corpus Christi, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, All Saints, and Christmas.

What are we to understand by octaves?

An octave is the prolongation of a festival of the Church for eight days, in order to extend the time for meditation upon the particular subject of the festival. The festivals with octaves are Christmas, St. Stephen's day, St. John the Evangelist's, Holy Innocents, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, St. John the Baptist, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and some others.

Has the Church the power of dispensing with, or transferring holy days?

Yes; for Christ has given her the power to bind and to loose upon earth; that is, to dispense with laws.

III. What are fast-days?

Fast-days are those on which the Catholic Church commands us to chastise the body, either by abstaining from the use of meat or by fasting on one meal only during the day, in order thus to present to God a sacrifice of mortification. Those days on which it is not allowed to eat flesh-meat, are called days of abstinence; those on which it is permitted to eat but one meal a day, are called fast-days of obligation.

Can the Church appoint fast-days?

Yes: for having received the power to bind and to loose, and being, as the mother of the faithful, guided by the Holy Ghost, she may justly appoint fast-days whenever she finds it advantageous to her children.

This power she exercised from the very beginning, commanding Christians to abstain from things strangled, and from blood (Acts xv. 20), in order that the Jews might not be hindered from becoming Christians by observing them to partake of those things which were prohibited by the old law; and afterwards, when this occasion had passed by, dispensing with the prohibition, and appointing days of fasting and of abstinence instead.

Why has the Church appointed fast-days, and what advantages do they bring?

In appointing fast-days, it is the intention of the Church that

her children should, by fasting, mortify the flesh, and overcome sensual inclinations; that they should make satisfaction for sin by doing penance, and by being reconciled to God; that they should become more fervent in prayer and in meditation; that, by conquering their lusts, they should gain the greater strength for God's service; that, by saving in their fasts, they should have the more to distribute among the poor; and, in fine, that by despising worldly pleasures, they should learn to desire only the things of Heaven, where Christ reigns. That fasting is advantageous is proved by many places in holy Scripture; by the examples of Saints, both of the Old and New Testaments; and, above all, by that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our own experience confirms the lesson; a full stomach does not incline to prayer; and physicians tell us that flesh-meat is more conducive to sensuality than other food.

For such reasons, the holy fathers can hardly say enough in praise of fasting; Christ himself also predicted (Matt. ix. 15), that days would come "when the Bridegroom should be taken away from them, and *then they should fast.*"

What are the principal fast-days?

1. Lent; 2. Ember Days; 3. Vigils; 4. Fridays in Advent. (The other Fridays in the year are only days of abstinence.)

Who sin against fasting?

1. Those who, willingly and knowingly, without sufficient cause, refuse to abstain from meat. 2. Those who eat two full meals on one day. 3. Those who, in the course of the day, eat as much as would make a full meal. A small bit, or a moderate drink, would not break fast, but would be sensuality. 4. Those who eat costly dinners, and indulge in drunkenness and excessive amusements, for that is against the spirit of mortification and penance (Rom. xiii. 13; Galat. v. 24).

How does the Church sanctify week-days?

By commemorating on each week-day some divine benefit, or the memory of some saint, and by providing for the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that whosoever can attend may do so. Every Catholic should therefore, each day, meditate upon some divine truths; if in his power hear Mass, and without fail say devoutly his morning and evening prayers, that he

may, by such means, be strengthened to perform his daily labors in a manner pleasing to God, and patiently suffer the trials of life, while through all he ascends from virtue to virtue.

Thus the Ecclesiastical Year is constantly impressing upon the heart of the Christian the works and promises of God, reminding him of the creation, the fall, the redemption, and sanctification of mankind; inviting him to participate in the benefits which it exhibits; to acknowledge his own frailty; to put confidence in the promises of Christ; to apply to himself, through the sacraments, the redemption purchased by our Saviour; and to become sanctified by penance and good works, that so he may be always prepared for the coming of the Redeemer, when he shall appear as Judge of the world.

How wise and how beautiful! Who, out of the Catholic Church, can boast of having so tender and careful a mother? But for that very reason it is the duty of every Catholic to be obedient to the Church; to comply with her intentions; to be guided by the spirit of her Ecclesiastical Year, and to lead a religious life.

INSTRUCTION ON ADVENT.

What does Advent mean? and what is the season of Advent?

Advent means the coming of Christ, and the season of Advent comprises the four weeks preceding Christmas. By it the Church represents the four thousand years of preparation for the coming of the God-man, our Redeemer, and at the same time points us to his second coming as our Judge.

Was a Redeemer necessary?

Yes; for all men sinned in Adam, were children of wrath, and needed to be reconciled to God.

Could not the fathers, under the old law, be saved before the coming of Christ?

Yes; through the expectation of him, as already promised (Gen. iii. 15), and through his future merits, all might be saved under the old law, who made themselves worthy of the grace of Christ by innocence and penance, although they could not be admitted to Heaven until our Lord's ascension.

When was the first coming of our Redeemer?

Four thousand years after the creation of the world, when the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the ever-blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, and was made flesh, to sanctify the world through his gracious and long-expected Advent.

When will be his second Advent ?

At the end of time, when Jesus Christ will come with great power and majesty, to judge the world ;—upon this truth we should earnestly reflect.

What do we mean by his third Advent ?

The third Advent of Christ is, when he enters our hearts in Holy Communion, to be with us, and to reign in us.

Why has the Church appointed the holy season of Advent ?

1. That we may consider the wretched state of mankind before Christ, and at the same time that of every one without Christ, which is the state of the sinner ; for which considerations the very time of year seems naturally fit, when the earth is deprived of its beauty, covered with snow and ice, and its very life apparently extinguished by the killing frost. 2. That we may vividly bring before our minds the mercy of God, who delivered us from that miserable state, and may sympathize with the longing of the patriarchs, during four thousand years, for the promised Redeemer. 3. That we may consider the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ ; his love, humility, and patience ; and rejoice and be grateful to him therefor. 4. That we may prepare ourselves worthily for Christmas ; that Christ may then enter our hearts, in the fulness of his grace, to renew them and dwell in them. 5. That we may often think of his second Advent, and so prepare ourselves for it, that he may be to us a merciful Judge. “ Watch ye, therefore, because you know not what hour your Lord will come ” (Matt. xxiv. 42-44).

What particular arrangements has the Church made for this season ?

The violet color is used at the altar ; the Gloria is omitted in the Mass, and the Te Deum in the Office ; altars are adorned only in the simplest manner ; marriages and all festive enjoyments are prohibited.

How ungrateful to God, how disobedient to his Church, how unjust to themselves, are those who spend this holy season without special devotion, without good works, without receiving the Sacraments!

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Prayer for Advent.

O God, who hast brought joy to the world through thy gracious Advent, grant us, we beseech thee, thy Grace, that we may prepare ourselves by sincere penance for its celebration, and for the last judgment. Amen.

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First Sunday in Advent.

The first Sunday in Advent is the first day of the Ecclesiastical Year; on it the Church begins to contemplate the coming of our Saviour, and with the prophets to long for him; she exhorts the faithful to true penance for their sins, which oppose Christ's entrance into their hearts; she sings, therefore, at the Introit of the Mass: "To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul."

Epistle. (Romans xiii. 11-14.)

Brethren, knowing 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 or drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does St. Paul teach us in this Epistle?

After explaining to the Romans the duties of a Christian life, he calls upon them to forsake sin and begin the discharge of those duties at once, because their salvation is nearer now than it was before; "the night is passed, the day is at hand," that is, by their conversion they had received, through the Gospel, more knowledge of God and of his holy will, and greater favors and graces than were before thrown open to men, and so were brought nearer to salvation through Christ,

—blessings which imposed corresponding obligations to live according to the Gospel.

But if the Apostle requires this from the Romans, what will be required of us, who have received Christian instructions and innumerable graces, even from our very youth?

What is to be here understood by *sleep*?

We are to understand by it the deplorable condition of men in sin; for, as in sleep, we are inert, without care and without perception of danger, so Christians, in sin, are free from anxiety for their salvation, heedless of doing penance or of leading a better life. They are asleep. Others again are drowsy and lukewarm; they neglect their prayers, the Holy Sacraments, and other means of salvation, and work but languidly in the affairs of their souls. They will indeed one day awake from their sleep, but then, alas! it will be too late.

What is to be understood by *night* and *day*?

By night is to be understood ignorance, infidelity, and sin. Where ignorance is, there is darkness; and where sin and concupiscence reign, there is double darkness: God, the light of the soul, withdraws; true knowledge departs, and the soul is left like the earth after the sun is gone. The day, on the other hand, represents faith, grace, and reconciliation with God.

What are the works of darkness that we must cast off?

St. Paul here speaks particularly of the wicked deeds which the Romans did before their conversion, but, in general, he means such sins as are committed in the darkness of the night, unknown to men, but seen and known by God, of whose grace they deprive us.

What is the armor of light which we are to put on?

It consists in Faith, Hope, Charity, and good works (1 Thess. v. 8), the spiritual arms with which we have to overcome the world, the devil, and the flesh.

What is the meaning of "*let us walk honestly as in the day*?"

That we should do always such works as we would not be ashamed to do before God and good men, in broad daylight.

What does it mean "*to put on the Lord Jesus Christ*?"

It means that Christians who, in Holy Baptism, have re-

nounced the devil, his works, and his pomps, should not live in pride and drunkenness, in impurities and rioting, in contention and envy—but should think, speak, and act like Jesus, adorning themselves by the imitation of him, as with precious garments.

Aspiration.

O Lord Jesus, who became man for us, grant that we may in all things comply with the admonitions of this Epistle; that we may arise from the slumber of our sins, and walk in the light of grace by the diligent performance of good works, and adorn our souls by putting on thee, through the imitation of thy virtues.

Gospel. (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.

Why does the Church cause this Gospel, concerning the last judgment, to be read to-day?

Like a wise mother, she would have us at the beginning look to the end, that we may live soberly, justly, and piously; in particular, by meditation on the coming of Jesus as our Judge, she would incite us to prepare our hearts by penance, for him who came into the world as our Redeemer. For what can or ought more effectually to frighten us from sin, and encourage us to receive salvation through Jesus Christ, than the remem-

brance that at the judgment of this very Saviour, all evil, as well as all good, shall be revealed—that to be punished, this to be rewarded?

When will this last judgment be held?

Jesus Christ has not made known to us the day and the hour, that we may be always ready, but he has given us certain signs, by the appearance of which the approach of judgment may be known, as by the shoots of the fig-tree we can tell that summer is near.

What are those signs which shall precede the last judgment?

The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven; the heavens themselves shall pass away with a great noise; the elements shall melt with heat, and the earth, with all that is in it, shall be burned up. At the command of God, the order of the world shall be shaken to its centre; fearful tempests shall arise; the sea and waves shall roar, and wild struggle and destruction take the place of present quiet and order. In a word, such distress and tribulation shall come upon the whole world, that men shall wither away with fear, not knowing whither to fly. Thus shall God destroy his works, which the wicked have abused to sin, arming all creation against his enemies. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man, the Holy Cross, a terror to sinners, who have hated it—a consolation to them who have loved it.

Why does Jesus say, "*Lift up your heads, for your redemption is at hand?*"

These words refer to the just, who on earth are, as it were, prisoners and exiles, but who, at the last judgment, will gain the perfect liberty of the children of God, and be translated, soul and body, to their long-desired home—Heaven. They have therefore the best reason to lift up their heads and rejoice.

How will the last Judgment commence?

At the command of God the angels will, with the sound of the trumpet, summon all men to Judgment (1 Thess. iv. 15). The bodies and souls of the dead shall be again united, and the wicked shall be separated from the righteous; those on the

left—these on the right (Matt. xxv. 33). All angels and evil spirits will be present, and Jesus Christ will appear in a bright cloud, with such power and majesty that the wicked will not, for fear, be able to look on him, but will say to the mountains, “fall on us,” and to the hills, “cover us” (Luke xxiii. 30).

How will the Judgment proceed?

The books will be opened, and from them all men will be judged; that is, all their good and bad thoughts, words, and deeds, even those which were most secret, and known only to God, will be revealed before the whole world, and according to those works men will either be rewarded or forever damned. “*The just shall go into everlasting life, but the wicked into everlasting punishment*” (Matt. xxv. 26). Oh! my God, when we have to render account even of every idle word we speak (Matt. xii. 36), how will it be in regard to so many sinful and scandalous words and actions! Let us be our own judges while we may!

Why does God hold a general and public Judgment?

Besides the particular and irrevocable judgment upon every man at his death, God has appointed the general Judgment for the following reasons: 1. That all may know how just God has been in the particular judgment of each one; 2. That men may be judged according to those good or bad consequences of their actions, which last long after death, and even perhaps to the Day of Judgment itself; 3. That the body, which arises on that day, and which has been the instrument of sin or of virtue, may share the reward or punishment of the soul; 4. That justice, sought for on earth but not found, may at last be rendered before the whole world to the afflicted and persecuted, while on the other hand the wicked, who have oppressed the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the religious, and who have nevertheless often passed for upright and devout persons, may be known in their real characters and forever disgraced; 5. That God himself, who in this world often distributes temporal goods and worldly riches to the wicked, rather than to the good, may be praised at the Day of Judgment for his eternal wisdom and justice; 6. That all may perceive the goodness of God in rewarding the least thing done or suffered for his sake,

even a drink of water given in his name; 7. That there may be a perfect retribution when the just, who in this world have been condemned by the wicked, shall then, with Christ, judge the wicked; 8. That Jesus Christ may complete his Redemption, and openly triumph over his enemies, who shall see the Glory of the Crucified, and tremble at his power. O Christian, remember this Judgment!

Exhortation.

The Church, during the season of Advent, reminds thee, O Christian! of the coming of Christ to Judgment, that thou mayest with the more zeal apply thyself to profit by his first coming; for they only will be justified and glorified, who have acknowledged and received him as their Redeemer. Examine thyself therefore to-day, and during this week, whether thou hast believed in him, loved him, admitted him into thy heart, and kept his holy commands. Begin at once penance and good works, that thou mayest with confidence await the Judgment-day of the Lord.

Aspiration.

Thou art just, O Lord! and just is thy Judgment. Oh, penetrate my soul with holy fear, that I may be kept from evil deeds, and incited to good works. Would that I could say, with St. Jerome, "Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, it is as if I heard the awful summons of the trumpet, 'Ye dead, arise and come to Judgment!'"

Second Sunday in Advent

The Church, after having on the first Sunday of Advent taught us to sigh with the prophets for the Redemption through Christ, on this day reminds us, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, of the joyful promises of God for the salvation of the Gentiles, and of Jesus Christ's actual coming, in order to quicken our desire for it, and to produce in us an alacrity in making ready our hearts by penance and love.

For that purpose she says, at the Introit of the Mass, from Isaias (Isai. xxx.), "People of Sion, behold, the Lord shall come to save the nations, and the Lord shall make the voice of his glory to be heard in the joy of your heart." "Give ear, O thou that rulest Israel; thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep" (Ps. lxxix. 2). Glory be to the Father, &c.

Prayer.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the ways of thy only-begotten Son, that by his coming we may be worthy, with purified minds, to serve thee, who livest and reignest.

Epistle. (Romans xv. 4-13.)

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

What does St. Paul teach in this Epistle?

He teaches the Christians to be united in peace and love according to Jesus Christ, for the converted Jews and Gentiles were separated by mutual reproaches—the Jews pretending to have the advantage over the Gentiles, because they were the chosen people, and because the Saviour was of their nation; while the Gentiles, on the other hand, reproached them with ingratitude, and with crucifying the Saviour. To

restore the concord thus disturbed, St. Paul wrote to them that the Gentiles could be saved only through the mercy of God and the grace of Jesus Christ, while the Jews could only be justified, not through the works of the law, but only through belief in Jesus; that one, therefore, had no cause to boast of advantages over the other, since both had equal need of the grace of God, and that therefore they should not despise, but love one another in Jesus Christ; accordingly St. Paul cites various texts of Holy Scripture, admonishing them to be of one mind, and proving that the mercy of God and the Saviour of Israel were promised to the Gentiles also.

What are we to learn by this Epistle?

To be grateful to God for having called us to the true faith, and for having received us into the bosom of his Holy Church, and not to think less of those who are not yet Catholics, or who have failed to become followers of Christ, for it is not on account of our merits that we are Catholics, but only by the grace of God.

Again: we are taught that by envy, discord, pride, and hatred, we lose our salvation. Finally, St. Paul refers us to the Scriptures for instruction.

What do the Holy Scriptures profit us? •

1. They teach, correct, and instruct us in justice, that we may serve God faithfully, and be ever ready for good works.
2. They sustain our patience in suffering, and our hope of eternal life, by many promises, and by the examples of Jesus Christ and his saints.

Does not the Catholic Church forbid her children to read the Scriptures?

No; but she advises those not to read the Scriptures who are not capable of understanding them, and if in reading they come upon difficult passages (as St. Peter tells us "there are many hard things contained therein," 2 Eph. iii. 16), they should seek the explanation of such difficulties in the teaching of the infallible Church. How often, when not read with the proper intention, have they been the occasion of innumerable disputes, controversies, scandals, and schisms!

Why is God called the God of patience, comfort, and hope?

1. Because he looks with patience and long-suffering upon our sinful lives ; 2. Because he gives us grace to carry our cross with patience and joy, and removes our down-heartedness by spiritual consolation ; 3. Because he gives the hope that after this life we shall possess him, the object of our desire.

Aspiration.

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

Gospel. (Matt. 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. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: What went you out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold they that are clothed in soft garments, are in the houses of kings. But what went you out to see? a prophet? yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: "Behold I send my Angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."

Why was St. John in prison?

Because he severely rebuked King Herod Antipas, who was living in adultery with the wife of his step-brother: for this fidelity to the truth he afterwards had to suffer death. This example of St. John teaches us that the truth easily begets hatred, but that we should not be deterred from speaking the truth when our duty obliges us to, although the greatest suffering and misfortune should thereby befall us. Is it not nobler and more profitable to our salvation to be a martyr for truth, with St. John, rather than to gain the favors of the world by timidly looking on, or by deceitful flattery.

Why did St. John send his disciples to Jesus ?

St. John being perfectly convinced himself that Jesus was the promised Saviour,—for in baptizing him he had heard the voice of his Heavenly Father, “*this is my beloved Son,*”—sent his disciples that they, in turn, might be also convinced that he was the Messiah.

A beautiful and important lesson for all superiors, fathers, and mothers, to take care that their dependents may be well instructed in matters of faith.

Why did Jesus not answer directly, but indirectly, saying, *Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, &c. ?*

The prophets had predicted (Isai. iii. v. vi. ; lxi. 1) that the Messiah would restore sight to the blind, and give hearing to the deaf; the disciples of John ought therefore to have believed in him as the promised Messiah, because they saw him perform those miracles which were at once the fulfilment of the prophecies and works of omnipotence, as such constituting the most evident and authentic proofs of his Divinity, and of his mission as Redeemer of the world.

Why did Jesus add, *Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me ?*

On account of those who, notwithstanding the miracles he wrought, would be scandalized at his humility, his poverty, his ignominious suffering and death upon the Cross, and who would, accordingly, despise and reject him; although, as St. Gregory says, they ought rather to love and honor God the more, the more he humbled himself for them.

What is the object of the question which Christ asks in regard to St. John ?

1. To praise the firmness of St. John, whom neither the authority of Herod, nor the fear of prison and death, could deter from exercising his sacred functions,—an example to all preachers, confessors, and spiritual superiors, that they should not be influenced by human respect or temporal advantage, to be indulgent to vice; but that, following the dictates of conscience, they should discharge their duty faithfully. 2. To approve the austere life of St. John, as shown by his wearing a garment of

camel's hair, and using as food locusts and wild honey, that we should thereby be encouraged to crucify the flesh and to do penance.

Why did Christ say that John was more than a prophet?

Because, unlike any other prophet, his appearance was foretold by inspiration; he was glorified both before and at his birth by miracles; and he was destined to see the Messiah, to preach him to men, and declare him to be the Saviour of the world. And as he led an angelic life he was fitly called an angel, that is, a messenger of God, to announce the coming of Christ, and prepare his way.

How did St. John prepare the way of the Lord?

By his austere life and his preaching of penance, by which he sought to prepare the hearts of the Jews to receive the grace of Jesus Christ.

Why does the Church set before us this Gospel?

In order that we, like the disciples of St. John, may, by his works, recognize Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, and that we may make ourselves worthy of the grace of redemption by doing penance earnestly and firmly, thus preparing the way of the Lord in our hearts.

Aspiration.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast praised thy forerunner, St. John, for his firmness and austerity, strengthen in us faith in thee; give us grace to have those confided to our care instructed in Christian doctrine, according to the example of St. John, and inflame our hearts with such readiness to imitate his courage, that we may never do any thing to please men which shall displease thee.

Consolation in Adversities and Affliction.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing” (Rom. xv. 13).

What can and should console us in adversities?

A living and firm belief in these truths: 1. That all events, adverse or prosperous, are ordered by God's wise Providence, and therefore that no evil can befall us except by his permis-

sion, who never allows us to suffer more than is for our greatest good. Fortune and misfortune, life and death, riches and poverty come from God (Ecclus. xi. 14). If we willingly accept from the hand of God, what is good and agreeable, shall we not accept also what is adverse and trying? If we are ourselves the cause of our own sufferings, we should say, "Our Father in Heaven is punishing us for our sins;" if not ourselves the cause, we must think that God is testing and strengthening our love and our obedience. 2. That as God, with the solicitude of a father, will not allow even a hair to fall from our heads without his permission, so will he not suffer any evil to be done to us by devil or man. 3. That if we call upon him in adversity, God is able and willing to help us whenever it is expedient for our salvation. Thus, to encourage us, he says (Ps. xlix. 15), "*And call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me; and, If God is for us, who is against us?*" (Rom. viii. 31); and, "*Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee: behold, I have graven thee in my hands*" (Isaias xlix. 15). 4. That it would be of no use for us to resist Divine Providence, for all who have done so have been filled with shame and ignominy. *Who hath resisted him, asks Job, and hath had peace?* (Job ix. 4.) God leads him who willingly submits, but crushes him who refuses to obey. It is a frightful example which the Scriptures furnish us in Saul, who, despairing of help from God, took his own life. 5. That our sufferings, when borne with patience and submission, lose their sharpness, and bring us merit and reward. *For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us, above measure exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory* (2 Cor. ix. 17). 6. That Christ also entered into his glory through sufferings; that the Saints have all followed him in the way of the Cross, and that, by partaking of the sufferings of Christ, we become partakers also of his glory (1 Pet. iv. 13). Why then should we complain of the sufferings sent to us from God, which beget in us a likeness to Christ, the man of sorrows, and to all the saints; which separate us from

the things of the world, and create in us a desire for Heaven ; which assist us to repent of our sins, give us peace and joy in God, and produce imperishable fruits for the harvest-day in Eternity ?

Prayer to be said in Adversity : from the Psalms of David.

Almighty, Benign, and True God, who hast said, Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee ; behold, all-merciful Father, confiding in thy word, I have recourse to thee in my need. Give honor, therefore, to thy name, and deliver me, if it be according to thy will, and for my good, that all may acknowledge the Truth, that thou, O Lord, art a Helper in time of tribulation. Amen.

Third Sunday in Advent.

The nearer the coming of the Lord, the more earnestly the Church calls upon us to rejoice ; and to-day therefore, at the Introit of the Mass, she sings the words of St. Paul to the Philippians (ch. iv. 4) : *Rejoice in the Lord always ; again, I say, rejoice ; let your modesty be known to all men, for the Lord is nigh : be nothing solicitous, but in every thing by prayer let your requests be made known to God.* (Ps. lxxxiv. 2.) *Lord, thou hast blessed thy land ; thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Lord, incline thine ear to our prayers, and lighten the darkness of our minds by the visitation of thy grace, who livest and reignest.

Epistle. (Phil. 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 nothing solicitous, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgivings, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What does St. Paul teach us in this Epistle ?

He exhorts the Philippians, and us in them, to rejoice in the Lord, to be modest, and to have confidence in God.

What does it mean to rejoice in the Lord ?

It means, to be glad in remembering the grace by which God called us to the true faith, and gave us the hope of eternal salvation, and to rejoice even in all our tribulations and adversities for the Lord's sake, as the Apostles, particularly St. Paul, did (2 Cor. vii. 4).

What further does St. Paul here teach ?

He admonishes us to give others a good example, by modesty and an edifying life, because the Lord is nigh—ever present ; he cautions us against immoderate care for worldly things, and would have us rather fix our desires on God, who will never fail us if we make our wants known to him by prayer and supplication, and give him thanks for benefits received.

In what does the peace of God consist ?

It consists in a good conscience, such as St. Paul enjoyed. It is this peace, this tranquillity of the soul, which sustained the holy martyrs in their agonies, and consoled others under persecution for Christ's sake. (Matt. v. 11, 12.) A good conscience gives us the most precious and purest joy. To understand this joy, we must possess it by purifying our hearts and becoming united to God.

Aspiration.

O Lord, grant that thy peace, which thou hast given us, and which the world knows not, may keep our hearts and minds in thee. O wisdom ! proceeding from the mouth of the Highest, and reaching to the ends of the world, who governest with power and grace, come and direct us all, that we may walk in the path of wisdom, and of the peace which surpasseth all understanding. Amen.

The Best Remedy in the Hour of Sorrow.

In need, sorrow, and dejection, the best means to relieve our distressed hearts ; to gain light and consolation ; to revive our

fallen courage, is humble and confiding prayer, in which we can pour out our hearts before God, and give ourselves up to his love and mercy. Who has more willingness and power to help us than God? and what is the consolation of men, in comparison with that of God? Let us have recourse to him, and he will enlighten, strengthen, and deliver us, as he did Anne, the sorrowful mother of Samuel the prophet, David fleeing from his son Absalom, Ezekias threatened by King Sennacherib, Josaphat in painful uncertainty, Susanna falsely accused and condemned to death, and innumerable others whose memory the Holy Scriptures, and the history of the Church, preserve for our instruction. These all prayed to God and were delivered from their afflictions, receiving help and consolation. St. James therefore admonishes us, *Is any one of you sad? let him pray* (James. v. 13); and St. Paul, in the Epistle for this Sunday, encourages us *not to be solicitous about any thing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be known to God.* Are you, then, sad and discouraged? Lift up your soul to God, and say with David, *To thee have I lifted my eyes, who dwelleth in Heaven; behold, as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress, so are our eyes unto the Lord our God, until he have mercy on us: have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us. Give joy to the soul of thy servant, for to thee, O Lord, I have lifted up my soul* (Ps. lxxxv. 4).

Gospel. (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.

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

Because his baptizing and preaching, with his life of austerity and penance, had made such an impression that people took him, not for an ordinary prophet, but for the Messiah himself (Luke iii. 15).

Why did the messengers ask whether he was Elias or the prophet?

The Jews believed that, before the coming of Christ, either Elias, or some other one of the prophets, would return to earth to prepare his way; and from St. John's denying that he was the Christ, they inferred that he was either Elias or that prophet.

Why did St. John say that he was not that prophet, but only the voice of one crying in the wilderness?

He said so out of humility; for although, according to the testimony of Christ himself, there was not, *amongst those that are born of women, a greater prophet than St. John* (Luke vii. 28), whom he declared to be *a prophet, and more than a prophet* (Matt. xi. 9), yet John would not praise himself—following that counsel of the Holy Ghost, *Let another praise thee, and not thine own lips* (Prov. xxvii. 2). He, however, uttered no untruth (for it would be a sin to utter a falsehood, even out of humility), since, in fact, he was not the prophet predicted by Moses (Deut. xviii. 15), but only *the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord*, as the prophet Isaias said (Isaias lx. 3).

How do we make straight the way of the Lord?

By sincere penance; which consists not in merely going to confession, and making hollow resolutions, but in bringing forth fruits worthy of penance (Matt. iii. 8; Luke iii. 8).

How do we bring forth fruits worthy of penance?

Whoever wishes to bring forth fruits worthy of penance,

must first apply himself to redress the consequences of his former sinful habits, and must show his corrected will by the punctual fulfilment of his duties ; for it is not enough to detest our sins in heart, or to confess them with the lips, but we must endeavor to make amends for what is past, and use all possible means to avoid, in future, those sins which we have been most given to ; we must love and serve God as much, and more than we have before loved and served the world, and *yield our members to serve justice unto sanctification, as we yielded them to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity* (Rom. vi. 19). Whosoever, therefore, has committed fraud or theft must make restitution ; the slanderer must retract his slander ; he who has lived in sensual pleasures, must leave the persons with whom he has had sinful intercourse, and avoid all further occasions of sin ; the covetous, who is attached to the things of this world, must learn to exercise benevolence ; the envious man must perform acts of charity to his neighbor ; the drunkard must accustom himself to sobriety ; and the sensualist, according to St. Gregory, must abstain even from lawful pleasures. Such were the *fruits worthy of penance*, brought forth by Zacheus (Luke xix.), Matthew, Magdalene (Matt. xxvi. 72-75 ; Mark xiv. 71, 72), St. Paul (Acts x.), and many others.

What was the baptism of John, and what was the effect of it ?

It was a baptism of penance, for the forgiveness of sins ; not that sins were forgiven by his baptism, but that by it men were moved to penance and the confession of their sins ; thus it was a preparation for the baptism of Christ, through which sins were actually forgiven, and the Holy Ghost received (Mark i. 4, 5).

What are we further taught by this Gospel ?

We are taught to always speak the truth, like St. John ; not to desire to appear more, or better, than we are ; and, in particular, to make a good and sincere confession. We should, therefore, before confession, often ask ourselves, " Who art thou ? How livest thou ? How dost thou stand before God ? How dost thou deal with thy neighbor ? "

We learn, also, from St. John to confess our sins without

reserve, neither concealing nor excusing them; above all, we learn from him to be humble, for although he might have passed for the Messiah, had he chosen, he refused that honor, and held himself unworthy to loose the latchet of Christ's shoe. Have not we greater reason to avoid exalting ourselves above others, and to humble ourselves before God? *My son*, says Tobias (iv. 14), *never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words; for from it all perdition took his beginning.* But if thou wouldest be honored, seek honor with God, and with his Saints, who are greater and more numerous than all the men on earth.

Aspiration.

O Lord, banish from my heart envy, self-love, and pride; give me grace so to know thee and myself, that in contemplation of thy majesty, omnipotence, love, and wisdom, and other perfections, I may love thee above all things, and in regarding my own nothingness, misery, and sins, may always humble myself before thee, and be little in my own eyes. Grant, also, that I may judge my neighbor with justness and tenderness, and love him as myself.

Instruction on bearing witness.

And he confessed, and did not deny; and he confessed, I am not the Christ (John i. 20). *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor* (8th Commandment).

What is forbidden by this Commandment?

It forbids deceit, falsehood, dishonesty, slander or calumny, flattery, and particularly false witness and perjury.

What is a falsehood?

A falsehood, or lie, is the willing and deliberate uttering of an untruth; when done before the courts, under oath, we call it false swearing, or perjury.

Is it never allowed to tell a lie?

Never; not even in joke or in need, much less with a bad intention, or to the injury of any one. *A lie is a foul blot in a man* (Eccles. xx. 26). *Lying lips are an abomination to*

the Lord (Prov. xii. 22). *The devil is a liar, and the father thereof* (John viii. 44). *Bringing two men, sons of the devil, they, like men of the devil, bore witness against him* (3 Kings xxi. 13). See the punishment of Ananias and Saphira (Acts v). It is also a lie of hypocrisy, when, to please others, we represent ourselves to be better, or more pious, than we are in reality. *It is better to be rebuked by a wise man, than to be deceived by the flattery of fools* (Eccles. vii. 6). But all lies are not equally sinful. The malice of a lie is the greater when one has the intention of injuring another, in his honor, or in his goods; and this is done—1, by calumny; 2, by detraction; 3, by suspicion.

What is calumny or slander?

Calumny, or slander, consists in making a false charge against another, whether invented by ourselves or by some one else.

When do we commit the sin of detraction?

When we divulge, unnecessarily, the hitherto unknown sins of others; when we magnify small faults, or when we report as true, uncertain charges against our neighbor.

What is required of him who has committed these sins?

Justice requires that he should recall the slander, and repair the injury; for honor and a good reputation are of more value than gold and silver, and indeed are indispensable to every man who would do good in his vocation.

Are we never permitted to make known the sins of others?

Yes, we may be even obliged to do so, but only to those who can prevent them, or whose interests are at stake.

How do we sin by suspicion or rash judgment?

By thinking evil of others, without reasonable cause. *Charity thinketh no evil* (Rom. xiii. 5).

What do we mean by backbiting?

To carry stories from one to another, telling what this or that one said, and thus creating hatred and discord among neighbors, friends, and relatives.

How can we avoid these sins?

1. By being very prudent in what we speak; 2. By not being credulous; and 3. By knowing our own faults.

Is it enough, if we keep from attacking our neighbor's reputation ?

No ; we are also obliged to defend him against any false accusation.

What is enjoined by the eighth Commandment ?

To be sincere and truthful, and to avoid deceit and hypocrisy. *Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye the truth, every man with his neighbor, for we are members one of another* (Eph. iv. 25).

Prayer for Ember days ; to obtain good and worthy Priests.

O Jesus! blameless and unstained High Priest, Founder and Protector of the Holy Catholic Church, guide the Bishops of thy Holy Congregation on earth, that they may impose their hands upon those only who are worthy, and called by thee, like Aaron, for the greater glory of thy name. Let those who are ordained to the sacred Priesthood earnestly consider, both the grace they receive by the imposition of the Bishop's hands, and the obligations and responsibilities which they contract thereby. Send zealous and pious laborers into thy vineyard, who shall be filled with thy Spirit, and come before thee penetrated with holy fear. Fill them with a wise zeal and child-like love for thee, and with self-sacrificing charity for men ; keep their hearts from sin ; give vigor and strength to their preaching ; let them walk blamelessly before thee and thy people. Let them be faithful ministers of thy mysteries. Let thy example be always before them, and give them grace ever to follow it. Amen.

Fourth Sunday in Advent.

The nearer we approach to the coming of Christ, the more the Church sighs in her prayers for the Saviour of mankind. She sings, therefore, at the Introit, "*Drop down dew, ye Heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just* (Isai. lxxv. 8). *The Heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands.*

Prayer.

Stir up thy might, we beseech thee, O Lord, and come and succor us with great power, that, by the help of thy grace, the indulgence of thy mercy may accelerate what our sins impede. Who livest, &c.

Epistle. (1 Cor. iv. 1-5.)

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

Why is this Epistle read to-day?

The Church wishes, 1. To remind those who have been ordained on the Ember-days, of their sacred office, and of the fidelity and sanctity by which, as well as by their dignity and calling, they should be distinguished among the faithful. 2. She wishes to inspire respect and veneration towards priests, who are ministers of Christ, dispensers of the mysteries of God, and advocates of religion. The Scripture says, *Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine* (1 Tim. v. 17). *Who hears you, hears me; who despises you, despises me.* 3. By pointing to the second Advent of Christ, she would remind the faithful to avoid judging their neighbors, but to judge themselves, and to cleanse their hearts for the reception of Jesus as our Saviour, that they may not have to shrink from him when he comes as Judge.

What are the duties of the faithful towards their priests and spiritual superiors?

To esteem and obey them as spiritual fathers and pastors, who cannot successfully perform their duty without the respect and obedience of their children; to pray God that they may

be enlightened and strengthened for their sacred office; and, since it is of the greatest importance to have good priests, to unite one's own prayers with those of the Church that God may send worthy laborers into his vineyard.

Can priests give the Holy Sacraments as they please?

No; for the Apostle says that the dispenser *must be found faithful*. As stewards of Jesus Christ, they must observe his will, which is, that they should administer the sacraments for the glory of God and the salvation of the faithful. They are not permitted to *give that which is holy unto dogs* (Matt. viii. 6), and cannot, therefore, give absolution, or any sacrament, to those who are unfit, lest they thereby condemn themselves. They are not allowed to preach, or teach their own opinions, or what would tickle the ears of the multitude; but only the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and that with earnestness and gravity, and with no more concern for being judged by men than St. Paul had.

Why should they esteem it a small matter to be judged by men?

1. Because men generally judge according to the appearance, and not according to the reality; rather from passion, selfishness, and partiality, than from regard to justice; neither bestowing praise nor censure, according to merit. They are also changeable in their judgments, approving what just now they condemned, and condemning what a little while ago they applauded. Who would value such judgments? 2. Because neither the praise nor blame of men would add to or lessen our worth before God. He judges according to truth and justice, and it is his judgment, therefore, that we should care for, rather than for the world's. How worthy of punishment would priests be who should seek to please men, rather than God! St. Paul says, in his Epistle to the Galatians (ch. i. 10), *If I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*. But not only priests, the faithful also must seek to please God more than men. How foolish, then, are they who to please the world follow all silly and scandalous fashions in dress, gesture, and manners; who, not to be called odd, frequent dangerous society; who neglect the holy exercises of religion, and ask

constantly, "What will the world say?" but never, "What will my God and Saviour say, if I do this or that?" Let us open our eyes, and take alarm at the awful consequences of such a course, before they befall us.

Why does St. Paul say, *But neither do I judge my own self?*

Because he could not know how God would judge him, *For no man knoweth whether he is worthy of love or hatred* (Eccles. x. 1); therefore he adds, *I am not conscious to myself of any thing, yet in this I am not justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* We should, therefore, examine ourselves thoroughly, whether we are in sin; but if we find nothing in us which displeases God, we are not on that account at liberty to think ourselves better than others, for before the mirror of our self-esteem we look quite different to what we are in truth before God, who cannot be bribed. Oh, how many, who now think themselves innocent and holy, shall appear at the Day of Judgment, stripped of their disguises, and the most secret workings of their hearts revealed by God to their eternal disgrace! This should determine us not to *judge before the time*, either ourselves, or any one else, of whose hearts we must know even less than of our own. *Let us therefore work out our salvation with fear and trembling* (Phil. ii. 12).

Aspiration.

O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight no man living shall be justified (Ps. cxlii. 2).

Gospel. (Luke iii. 1-6.)

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, 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 was made unto 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 was written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: "A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. 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."

Why is the time at which St. John began to preach so minutely described ?

Because in that happy year the prophecy of Jacob was fulfilled, and the sceptre being taken from Juda, the long-expected Messiah showed himself to the world, was baptized by John, and declared by his Heavenly Father to be his Beloved Son, whom men should hear. Accordingly, that this time should never be forgotten, the Evangelist, contrary to his usual custom, describes it particularly, mentioning the names both of the spiritual and temporal rulers.

What were the tetrarchs ?

They were petty princes under the Roman government, invested with power to govern territories, each of which was about the fourth part of the former Jewish empire ; hence their name of tetrarchs.

What is meant by, *the word of the Lord came to John ?*

It means that John was called, either by a voice from Heaven or by inspiration, to preach penance, and to announce the coming of Christ, for which mission he prepared himself during thirty years, by a retired, austere life, and by communion with God. He did not force himself into his holy calling, but was summoned to it by God. A true vocation must come from God, and one must wait till he is called, never forcing himself into office, least of all into the priestly office, for which one ought to prepare himself by the diligent acquisition of the necessary learning, by solitude, by meditation, by study, and by an unblemished life.

How is the language of Isaias, *prepare ye the way of the Lord*, to be understood ?

The prophet, by this way of speaking, teaches the people of his time that, as on the approach of kings and princes, the way was prepared for them, by filling up the low and levelling the high places, by straightening the crooked and smoothing the rough ways, so they, in a corresponding manner, in order

to prepare for the reception of the Saviour, their Lord and King, ought to correct the disorders of their lives, and remove all obstacles to their salvation. The prophet here evidently points at the sacred mission of John, to prepare the Jews for the advent of Christ, and to the manner in which they ought to receive him.

Do these admonitions apply to us?

Yes; and that the more because we know perfectly well the power and dignity of our Sovereign Lord and King. We can and must even yet *prepare the way of the Lord*, that is, we must make ourselves worthy of his grace by true and sincere penance; we have to *fill up every valley*, by abandoning all low and sensual pleasures; by aspiring to heavenly thoughts; by being encouraged through confidence in God so to discharge our duties as to make up for the previous defects of our lives by good and virtuous deeds. We bring low the mountains and hills, when instead of being proud and arrogant we exercise the most beautiful virtue of humility; we straighten the crooked way when we repair injury by restitution and retraction, according to the eternal laws of justice, avoiding all hypocrisy; finally, we make plain the rough ways when we check our angry and revengeful inclinations, and endeavor to be modest, charitable, mild, and patient. To do all this will be the easier for us, since the powerful grace of our Redeemer encourages us in these rough ways of penance and good works by many consolations.

What do those words mean, *and all flesh shall see the salvation of God?*

They mean that as the object of Christ's advent was to bring salvation to men, so all who with the desire of being saved, made ready the way of the Lord, should see the salvation of God, by experiencing his love, grace, and mercy, through Jesus Christ.

Aspiration.

Oh that thy way, Jesus, may be well prepared in my heart. Alas! assist me, O my Saviour, to do what I cannot do by myself. Fill up the valley of my heart with thy grace, and

straighten my crooked and perverted will, till it shall conform to thine own. Soften my rough and unruly mind ; bring low, destroy, and remove whatever in me impedes thy way, that thou mayest come to me without hindrance, and possess and govern me forever. Amen.

Instruction on Penance.

And John came into the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins (St. Luke iii. 3).

What is penance ?

Penance may be considered, either as a virtue, or a sacrament. In the former sense, it is a sorrow for and detestation of sins committed, with a firm resolution to repent of them, and commit them no more. In the latter sense, it is a sacrament instituted by Christ, for the remission of sins committed after baptism (St. John xx. 23).

What is the difference between the sacrament and the virtue of Penance ?

The virtue of penance is, and always has been, necessary as a remedy for every sort of sin ; the sacrament has only existed since it was instituted by Christ (Conc. Trident., Sess. xiv. c. 1). The sacrament of Penance presupposes the confession of sins ; the virtue of penance does not.

Why do we say the virtue of penance was always necessary for all sins ?

Because in all ages to detest sin, to repent of it, to punish it, and to be resolved never again to commit it, have been necessary dispositions for obtaining God's grace (St. Aug., Serm. 351). Accordingly the Prophets, and St. John the Baptist, as well as Christ and his Apostles, preach penance.

Can any one who has committed mortal sin be saved without penance ?

Whoever has the opportunity of making his confession, must, in order to be saved, receive the sacrament of Penance (St. Luke xiii. 3) ; for how could he be saved without pleasing God, and how could he please God while remaining in a state

of sin? But he does remain in sin so long as he has no firm will to forsake it, and love God.

Why do we say, "if we have the opportunity of making our confession?"

Because, in case of necessity, the virtue of penance will bring us the same remission of sins as the sacrament of Penance does. But, in that case, we must have a great desire to receive the sacrament, and receive it actually, so soon as the danger of death, or other cause, whatever it may have been, is removed. Such has been the perpetual tradition of the Church.

Why do so many die without true penance?

Because they put it off until overtaken by old age or sickness, thus refusing the proffered grace of God so often, that, according to St. Augustine (l. 3, De Libero Arbit.), they cannot do penance when they would, since they would not when they could. And St. Gregory says, "He who in time of grace will not give ear to God, will not be heard by him in time of tribulation." Almost all are surprised by death (Eccles. v. 8). Christ himself has declared that he will *come as a thief in the night* (Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xii. and xxi). God will laugh at the destruction of those who have mocked him by delaying their conversion during their lives (Prov. i. 24). The example of Antiochus should make all such tremble for their fate. He lived impiously, defying God and persecuting his people; but at length he fell sick, and, being about to die, entered into himself, prayed with apparent fervor, and resolved to amend if he should recover; but, says the Scripture, this wicked wretch prayed to God who would not grant him mercy (2 Macc. ix. 13). With the same awful punishment he threatens those who defer their repentance till their last hour.

Can all sinners do penance?

Yes; with the grace of God, even the greatest sinners; for he says to us all, without exception, through the prophet (Ezekiel xxiii. 11), *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, and why will you die? The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him in what day soever he shall return from his wickedness.* Indeed, the whole work of Redemption, from the Fall

of man until the present time, and till the end of time,—all the preparatory institutions of the Old Law, the Incarnation, Life, Works, and Death of Christ, the Church founded by him for carrying on the salvation of men, all are pledges of the infinite mercies of our Heavenly Father to sinners, and of his desire that they may not perish, but have life everlasting. (St. John iii. 15).

Are all doing true penance who go to confession ?

It were much to be wished that they were. God not only commands us to confess our sins, but to bring forth fruits worthy of penance. Hence Christ has given to his Apostles, not only power to remit sins to the worthy, but to retain them upon the unworthy. If, therefore, according to the Gospel for the day, the valleys are not filled up, the mountains and hills brought low, the crooked made straight, and the rough ways plain ; if, in other words, we have no detestation of our sins ; if our bad habits and sinful inclinations are not overcome ; if the goods unjustly gotten are not restored, and the injured honor of our neighbor cleared ; if the immediate occasions of sin are not avoided, and if we do not lead better lives, there is not then even a shadow of penance ; and confessions, though made every week, will be without fruit. And yet how many such penitents do we not see every day ! And why ? Because they suppose that penance consists barely in confession, without amendment of life ; whereas, it is only when both are united that the sinner receives true absolution for his sins. Read, therefore, and weigh carefully the following Instructions :

I. *On the Examination of Conscience.*

What is it to examine one's conscience ?

Every man has within himself a voice which tells him distinctly whether his free determinations and actions are according to the law of God or not. This is the voice of God in man, or conscience. In the one case he experiences a sweet contentment with himself ; in the other, a feeling of dissatisfaction. When, then, we examine our thoughts, words, and deeds, and ask whether they agree with the law of God or not,—whether

we should praise or accuse ourselves on account of them,—then we examine our conscience. And herein great care is needed, lest we be deceived by self-love, for nothing is easier than for a man to overlook and excuse his faults and sins.

Is the examination of conscience necessary?

Yes, because the confession in which a single mortal sin is omitted through carelessness, is null and sacrilegious. Examination of conscience should not, however, be over-scrupulous, but should receive the attention due to an affair of the greatest importance.

How must we examine our conscience?

1. We must, above all, implore aid and light from the Holy Ghost, because the necessary knowledge of ourselves is a grace of God. 2. We must ask ourselves when we last made our confession; whether, at that time, we willingly omitted any one or more sins; whether we performed the penance given us by our confessor; we must examine ourselves further on the capital sins, and the necessary virtues; on the Commandments of God, and of his Church; on the precepts of the Gospel, the duties of a Christian life, and our own particular circumstances; whether we have sinned in thought, word, deed, or by omission of good works; when, where, how, with whom, how often; why we have sinned; whether the temptation was strong or not, and so on. 3. We must do this with such earnestness and care, as if we were about to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Good Christians examine their consciences daily.

II. *On Contrition and Sorrow.*

O man, says St. Augustine, why dost thou weep for the body from which the soul has departed, and not for the soul from which God has withdrawn? Michas, the idolater, lamented vehemently the loss of his idols; the parents of Tobias grieved over his long absence; and should not we mourn when, by our own fault, we have, through sin, lost God, his grace, and heaven?

What is contrition?

Contrition is a hearty sorrow and detestation of our sins,

with a firm resolution or will to sin no more (Conc. Trid., Sess. xiv. c. 4).

What are the conditions necessary to true contrition ?

Our sorrow must be, 1. Interior, proceeding from the bottom of the heart, and not from the lips only ; our hearts must be contrite. All sin proceeds from the heart, and from the heart must spring our contrition (Joel ii. 12). Our sorrow must be, 2. Supernatural, excited by faith, and the motion of the Holy Ghost, and proceeding from the consideration that we have offended so good a God, and disobeyed his holy will ; but if that sorrow is the fruit of some merely natural motive, such as temporal loss, disgrace, contempt, or punishment, then it is but natural contrition, such as Pharaoh, Saul, Antiochus, and Judas had. This kind of contrition will not suffice for the remission of sins, and whosoever should make a confession with no other contrition than this, would commit sacrilege. Our sorrow must be, 3. Sovereign, that is, it must be the greatest we can feel for any evil. Such sorrow for sin we have, when we are more troubled for having offended God than we would be for the loss of the dearest object in the world ; when we prefer God to every thing, and are ready to sacrifice every thing—even life itself—rather than offend him. Our sorrow must be, 4. Universal, that is, we must detest, universally, all the sins we have committed ; if we remain attached to one, our repentance is incomplete—we are still enemies of God.

How many sorts of contrition are there ?

Two ; perfect and imperfect contrition, or attrition.

What is perfect and what is imperfect contrition ?

Perfect contrition is a hearty sorrow for sin, proceeding solely from the consideration of having offended God, whom we love above all things. This contrition reconciles a man to God, even before he has received the sacrament of Penance, by virtue of his desire to go to confession at the earliest opportunity.

Imperfect contrition, which is also called attrition, is a sorrow for sin proceeding from consideration of the foulness of sin, and from fear of hell and punishment. It must include a resolution to sin no more, and an incipient love of God, in order

to suffice for the remission of sins through the sacrament of Penance.

Who should fear having an insufficient contrition ?

1. Those who take no trouble to know what true contrition is. 2. Those who often commit mortal sins, and never amend ; for had they felt true contrition, they would have been strengthened by the grace of the sacrament to avoid the occasions of sin, to conquer temptation, and to sin no more, at least for a time. It is better not to go to confession, than to go without true contrition. 3. Those who do not repent of their sins until publicly disgraced, or deprived of some worldly advantages.

Can we produce contrition in our hearts of ourselves ?

No ; the grace of God alone can soften our hearts, make us hate sin, love virtue, and lament our guilt (Ezech. xviii. 31 ; xi. 19 ; xxxvi. 26, 27). *For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will* (Phil. ii. 13). *Convert me, O God, and I shall be converted ; after thou didst convert me, I did penance* (Jer. xxxi. 18, 19). As it is thus a gift of the Holy Ghost, we must, like David, beg it from God with earnestness and perseverance (Ps. lx. 12). *If thou wilt be converted, I will convert thee* (Jer. xx. 19). Sinner ! think not, therefore, that thou canst sin as long as thou wilt, or be converted when thou wilt ; unless God gives thee his grace, thou wilt have neither will nor power to change thy life.

How can we obtain true contrition ?

By considering earnestly, 1. Whom we offend—God, our Father, who has created, nourished, protected us, and bestowed on us innumerable favors, temporal and spiritual ; Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who shed his blood, and suffered the most cruel and painful death for us ; the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier, who, in Holy Baptism, made us children of God, took up his dwelling within us, and enriched us with the precious gifts of his graces ; we offend the most powerful Lord, before whom angels, in veneration, cover their faces, and devils tremble ; we offend the most severe and just Judge, who can and will punish every sin not repented of ; we offend the Supreme Goodness, the fountain of all loveliness, benignity, and grace.

2. By considering the consequences of sin: for thereby we let go Heaven, and commit ourselves to Hell—deprive the soul, once the image of God, of his grace and friendship, and make it the slave of the devil; that venial sin deforms the soul, weakens our love and zeal for virtue, lessens our love of God, and places us in danger of falling into mortal sin, and thence into eternal damnation. 3. By considering *why we have sinned*: for an honor that passes away like smoke; for a momentary pleasure; for a small and miserable gain; in a word, for a lentil-porridge, like Esau; for a drop of honey, like Jonathan, we have sold and trifled away God, Heaven, and everlasting life. Should not this grieve us?

By such meditations, it will be easy to excite in ourselves a true sorrow for our sins; but without that, the most moving acts of contrition read in a prayer-book, or said by rote, will be useless. They also err greatly who prepare themselves for confession merely by saying the Rosary.

III. *On the purpose of Amendment.*

The purpose of amendment is as necessary for the sacrament of Penance as contrition, for God would never forgive our sins unless we were determined not to sin again. But they who have a true sorrow for their sins will have a firm purpose of not sinning any more (Ezech. xviii.)

How can we know whether we have this purpose of amendment?

We can know by the effects of such resolution, that is, by the efforts we make to correct evil habits, to suppress sinful inclinations, to resist temptation, and to avoid the immediate occasions of sin. A total change of life must follow such resolution (St. Augustine, Serm. 393).

What do we mean by evil habits?

The facility of falling into certain sins, to which we are accustomed; for example, into impurity, swearing, drunkenness, or detraction.

What must we do to correct evil habits?

We must watch carefully over ourselves, pray often and earnestly, and avoid the immediate occasions of sin; that is, what-

ever leads us into imminent danger of committing sin. *He that loveth danger shall perish in it* (Eccles. iii. 27).

What are ordinarily the immediate occasions of sin?

They are of two kinds. Some things are, in themselves, the immediate occasions of sin; such as indecent pictures, the reading of bad books, frequent familiarities between persons of opposite sex, lascivious balls, dresses, plays, dances. Other things are the occasions of sin only in connection with the circumstances and dispositions of persons. Thus, a judge who is a slave to ignorance, fear, or human respect, is in immediate danger of doing injustice, so long as he holds his office; and a man who cannot be in company with persons, who are themselves virtuous, without committing sin, is in immediate danger of sin until he quits that company. Business, in like manner, is the immediate occasion of sin to him who cannot carry it on without becoming guilty of usury, lies, and fraud.

What persons are without a firm purpose of amendment?

Such, for example, 1. As continue to keep in their houses persons of light reputation, with whom they commit sin. 2. Those who continue in the habit of cursing and swearing, of drunkenness and quarrelling, without trying to avoid it. 3. Those who incur debts, knowing that they will not be able to pay them. 4. Those who lavish and dissipate what belongs to their wives and children, who are thereby brought to suffering. 5. Those who spend day and night drinking, playing, using indecent and frivolous language, slandering and murmuring against their spiritual and temporal superiors. 6. Those landlords and keepers of public houses, who, for the sake of a little money, entice and detain dissolute people, and, what is worse, make them drunk. No such person as these has a firm resolution to amend his life, and no such a one, therefore, is fit to receive absolution.

IV. *On Confession.*

To receive pardon of our sins we must confess them. Under the Old Law it was enough to confess them to God, as Adam, Eve, Cain, David, and others did. But under the New Law we have to confess them also to the priest having jurisdiction

over us. For Jesus Christ has given to his Apostles the power of remitting and retaining sin. Priests are, therefore, judges, and have to decide whose sins they shall remit or retain. But they could not perform this duty of judges, unless sinners were to confess to them their sins. Confession is, therefore, no human invention, but being so essentially connected with the authority to bind and to loose, which cannot be exercised without it, is an Institution of Jesus Christ's in his Church. St. Augustine writes, "Let no one say, 'I do penance secretly before God, who knows me, and all my thoughts and actions,' for then it were in vain that Christ said, 'Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them.'"

What are the advantages of confession ?

1. Pardon of all sins, and remission of eternal punishment, if the confession be humble, thorough, sincere, simple, and modest. 2. Consolation and a quiet conscience; but without confession we could not know whether we had received pardon of our sins or not. 3. Instruction, advice, and encouragement from a pious and prudent confessor, who is a friend and a father to the sinner. How necessary is such a friend and counsellor in the affairs of our salvation ! 4. Confession leads us to the knowledge of ourselves, and consequently to humility, contrition, and other virtues. 5. The necessity of confession is the surest and most effectual preventive of sin. How many crimes and robberies are there not committed which escape the watchful eye of authority ! how often are the welfare and prosperity of men secretly threatened with destruction ! But where human laws cannot be brought to bear, there we see the sacred institution of Penance opposing such crimes.

What must be done by those who through fear or shame are kept from making a good confession ?

They must consider well, 1. That by omitting one or more sins in confession they commit a new sin, greater perhaps than that which they concealed. 2. That if they do conceal their sins from their confessor they cannot conceal them from God. 3. That one day, sooner or later, they will have to confess their sins, or be forever damned. 4. That every sin deserves confusion, and hence it would be an injustice, and actual in-

penitence to refuse to submit one's self to that holy confusion which always accompanies true sorrow for sin. 5. That all the sins which they have ever committed will be openly known to the whole world on the Day of Judgment. *For there is not any thing secret that shall not be made manifest, nor hidden that shall not be known, and come abroad* (St. Luke vii. 17). 6. That they are not afraid to speak openly to the physician, that he may understand the cause of their sickness, and remove its effect; why then should they shrink from revealing the dangers and wounds of their souls to their confessor, who, himself a sinner, will sympathize with them, and observe in regard to their confession the profoundest secrecy. St. Augustine says, be not ashamed to confess your sins to one man, when you have committed them before many. To sin is disgraceful, but not to confess sin.

What is necessary to secure the advantages of confession?

1. To be sincere in our confession, that is, to disclose fully not only our mortal sins, the kind, number, and circumstances of them, but also the doubts, fears, and griefs of our hearts. 2. We must not intentionally select confessors such as the Prophet Isaias calls "dumb dogs;" that is, such as would absolve any one without hesitation, but pious, learned, and zealous priests. If we could not persuade ourselves to go to this or that confessor, with whom we are acquainted, it would be better, in that case, to go to some one who does not know us. It should be, however, our strict rule not to run from one confessor to another, but to have always the same one, with whom our confessions will be made more profitable.

How must we approach the confessional?

We must suppose ourselves to be at the foot of the Cross of Jesus Christ, and that his precious blood is flowing to wash away our sins; we must consider ourselves to be the prodigal son returning to his father. But we must not approach the confessional unless well prepared. We must, therefore, humble ourselves before God, begging of him the grace to make a good confession; we should then ask the Blessed Virgin Mary and our Guardian Angel to assist us. In our dress and deportment there must be nothing careless or negligent, for the sac-

rament demands that much of respect and consideration. Arrived at the confessional, we must kneel, cast down our eyes, and join our hands; after this, we are to make the sign of the cross, and ask the confessor's blessing.

In blessing the penitent, what does the confessor say?

May the Lord be in thy heart, and on thy lips, that thou mayest, in a worthy and proper manner, confess thy sins; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

What are we to do next?

We are to receive our confessor's blessing in humility, and then say the Confiteor, as far as "through my fault;" then we are to mention the time of our last confession, whether or no we received absolution, and performed the penance imposed on us.

With what sins should we commence?

With those which we have the greatest reluctance to tell; after that, we should name all the sins we can remember, taking care to mention their number, their different qualities, and the circumstances connected with each.

What have we to say at the close?

And I also accuse myself generally of all the other sins which I may have committed, and do not remember; I beg pardon of God for them; I am sorry for them, and am resolved, by the help of God's grace, to sin no more. I ask pardon and absolution from you, father, if I am worthy of it.

Will absolution be then immediately given?

No; the confessor must first exercise his three-fold office. As judge, he must decide upon the state of the penitent,—whether he is worthy to be absolved or not; he may, therefore, have to inquire about things which he did not well understand during the confession. As physician, he must then prescribe what is necessary. As teacher, he must instruct and admonish the penitent. Here it is to be well considered, that, as the confessor is not allowed to reveal any thing that is said at confession, under pain of suspension and punishment for life, so it is a great sin for the penitent to make any such disclosures.

What is the form of absolution?

1. The priest says, "May the Almighty God have mercy on thee, and forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to life everlasting. Amen."

Then, stretching forth his right hand towards the penitent, he says, "May the Almighty and merciful Lord give thee pardon, absolution, and remission of thy sins. Amen."

"Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee, and I, by his authority, absolve thee, in the first place, from every bond of excommunication or interdict, as far as I have power, and thou standest in need: in the next place, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

"May the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, and whatsoever good thou shalt do, or whatsoever evil thou shalt suffer, be to thee unto the remission of thy sins, the increase of grace, and the recompense of everlasting life. Amen."

Can the confessor forgive all and every sin?

No; for he cannot absolve—1. Those who have committed sins, the absolution of which is reserved, except in danger of death, to the Pope or to the Bishop. 2. No Priest in the world, no Bishop, not even the Pope himself, can absolve those who are not fit for absolution, in consequence of not having true sorrow for their sins; they are unworthy of absolution, even in the hour of death. Such, too, is the case of those who, through their own fault, do not truly confess their mortal sins, or who have neither contrition nor a firm purpose of amending their life; who refuse to forgive their enemies, or to restore ill-gotten goods, when they might; who do not forsake their bad habits, or the immediate occasions of sin; who do not correct their public scandals; in a word, all those are unfit to be absolved who refuse to comply with any part of their duty, to which they are obliged under penalty of mortal sin. If, however, the Priest should absolve them, such absolution is null and void, and they who obtain it by deceiving their confessor, commit a sacrilege, and incur additional punishment.

V. *On Satisfaction.*

What is satisfaction ?

It is a faithful performance of the penance imposed by the Priest to whom we confess, in addition to which we have to impose some penance on ourselves, in order to clear us of the temporal punishment which yet hangs over us, to heal the wounds of the soul caused by sin, and to repair the injuries done to God, our neighbor, and ourselves.

Has not Christ made abundant satisfaction for us ?

Certainly ; and no man can satisfy the justice of God otherwise than by uniting his satisfaction to that of Christ, from whom ours derives its only value. But the superabundant satisfaction of Christ does not relieve us from the obligation of doing works worthy of penance. And it is not only the justice of God which requires such satisfaction on our parts, but also his love and goodness ; for the works of penance deter from sin, are a remedy for our infirmities, and make sinners more cautious for the future. The reason why so many fail to continue good after confession, is because they omit the works of penance.

What are the works by which we may satisfy God for our sins ?

According to Tobias (xii. 8), and St. Ambrose (lib. 2, de Penit.), they are these three : Prayer, Fasting, and Alms. "*Prayer is good, with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold.*" By prayer is to be understood the offering up to God of our actions, with all our afflictions, whether corporal or spiritual ; all mental and vocal prayer, spiritual reading, and assisting at public prayers and the Sacrifice of the Mass. By fasting we are to understand all retrenchment of food, comfort, or pleasure ; mortifications of mind and body, and submission to humiliations and confusion for the love of God. By alms, all works of mercy, spiritual and corporal.

Vigil of Nativity, or Christmas Eve.

Let us make him a little chamber, and put a little bed in it for him, and a little table, and a stool, and a candlestick, that when he cometh to us he may abide there (4 Kings iv. 10). Thus spoke that woman of Sunam, as the Prophet Elisæus approached her house, and such preparation she made for his reception. Shall not we do likewise for Jesus our Lord, who is coming to us, preparing our hearts for him to dwell in, by true penance, firm faith, and ardent charity?

O Christian! for the love of Christ, and for thine own salvation, occupy thy mind, during this Holy Night, with holy thoughts and aspirations, in order to make thyself worthy of all the graces which Christ will grant thee on his coming. Consider how St. Joseph and the blessed Virgin Mary, in obedience to the edict of Cæsar, and in perfect submission to the will of God, went to Bethlehem, and finding no room there, at last entered an open stable, which they were contented to take up with. Does not the Son of God deserve all our love, when he thus humbled himself for us? Tender him your heart as an abode, in the following

Prayer of the Church.

O God, who givest us joy by the annual expectation of our redemption, grant that we may securely see him coming as our Judge, whom we joyfully receive as our Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who livest and reignest with thee forever. Amen.

Nativity of our Lord, or Christmas.

Christmas brings before us the happy day on which, in the fulness of time, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, was born of the ever-blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, in the stable at Bethlehem.

Why does every priest say three masses on this day?

1. To give thanks to the ever-blessed Trinity, who co-oper-

ated in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. 2. To honor the three births of Jesus Christ: his eternal birth, in the bosom of his Heavenly Father; his temporal birth, of his Virgin Mother; and his spiritual birth in our hearts, which he occupies by his grace.

Why is the first Mass celebrated at midnight, the second at daybreak, and the third at daylight?

The first is said at midnight, to remind us that before Jesus Christ was born, the world was without the true light, and lay in darkness and the shadow of death. Again, it was in the night that he was born; and both his temporal and eternal births are mysterious truths, incomprehensible to our understandings. Midnight masses are now generally transferred to a later hour, on account of the irregularities and interruptions which have often attended those solemnities. The second mass is celebrated at daybreak, because the birth of Christ brought light to the Gentiles, whose salvation was then nigh, and because, according to tradition, it was about that hour that the shepherds came to see and adore the new-born Saviour. The third mass is said at daylight, because Christ dispersed the darkness of ignorance, and appeared as the Light of the world (John i. 9; Isaias lx. 8).

Of the First Mass.

The Introit of the first Mass is taken from the second Psalm, and reminds us of the eternal birth of Jesus Christ: *The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things?* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who hast made this holy night shine forth with the brightness of the true light, grant, we beseech thee, that we may enjoy his happiness in Heaven, the mystery of whose light we have known upon earth. Amen.

Epistle. (Titus ii. 11-15.)

Dearly beloved: The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we

should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works. These things speak, and exhort, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How did the grace of God appear to all men?

Through the Incarnation of his Son, whom, in his infinite love, he made like unto us, to be our brother and teacher, that we might become children and heirs of God, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ.

What does Christ teach us by his Incarnation?

That we should put on him, and become like unto him, as he became like unto us; this is done when we abandon impiety, infidelity, injustice, and worldly desires, and love God and our neighbor, though he be our enemy, for God's sake; when, in fine, we live soberly, justly, and piously in this world. The Incarnation also shows the dignity and greatness of man, for as God gave his only Son for our redemption, we thereby perceive the worth of man in the sight of God.

What does the Apostle mean by worldly desires?

He means by them, carnal and sensual desires and lusts, such as impurity, drunkenness, avarice, and such like, which *war against* the soul (2 Pet. ii. 11), and exclude us from Heaven (Eph. v. 5). Christ teaches us to renounce these, by the poverty, patience, fasting, and innumerable privations of his life.

How do we live soberly, justly, and piously?

We live soberly when we use temporal goods according to the intention and will of God, and to supply our necessary wants; we live justly when we desire for, and render to our neighbor, what, by the example of Christ, we are bound to; we live piously when we give God his due honor, love him above all things, and love all men, in Christ, for his sake.

Gospel. (Luke ii. 1-14.)

At that time: There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus; that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus the governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every

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

Why did Cæsar Augustus publish a decree, that all the Roman subjects should be enrolled?

The immediate reasons of Cæsar are not known to us, but the result shows that it was done by the special providence of God, for Joseph and Mary were thus obliged to go to Bethlehem, and so the prophecy of Michæas, that the Messiah should be born there, was fulfilled. Hence we learn to admire the wisdom of Divine Providence, to trust it in every event of our life, and to be obedient, as the blessed Virgin Mary was to the decree of Cæsar, or rather of God.

Why is Christ called the first-born son of Mary?

Because she had no child before him; and moreover, having no other after him, he is also the only-begotten of his blessed mother, as he was the first-born and only-begotten of his Heavenly Father (Heb. i. 6).

Why was the Saviour of the world born in a stable?

To show, from his very birth, that he had not come to establish a splendid worldly kingdom, or to enjoy the riches and comforts of life, as many Jews supposed, but to establish a kingdom of grace, justice, and peace, and to lead us to imi-

tate his example of poverty, humility, and contempt of the world.

Why was the birth of Christ first announced to the poor shepherds, and not to the high-priests?

The shepherds were humble and innocent persons, who feared God and served him in simplicity of heart; and were therefore ready to recognize and adore the new-born Saviour, whom Herod, and afterwards the high-priest, desired to kill. Herein we see also that God does not distribute his graces according to any respect for persons: he exalts the humble, and humbles those who exalt themselves. O Christian, strive to attain humility, simplicity of heart, and filial confidence, avoiding pride and unbelief, if thou wouldst have Christ manifest himself to thee.

The angels for joy praised God, and sang, "Glory to God in the highest;" that is, Praise and thanks to our Heavenly Father for sending his only-begotten Son for the salvation of men;—"and on earth peace;" that is, Prosperity, happiness, salvation, and blessing "to men of good-will;" that is, who have the will to accept and follow the will of God, declared by Jesus who united what sin had separated; restoring to man peace with God, with himself, with his neighbor, and even with nature. Learn from the angels to be thankful for all the benefits which God bestows upon thy neighbor, and then you also will partake of them. In particular, thank God to-day for the inexpressible benefit of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Of the Second Mass.

The Introit of this Mass reminds us of the temporal birth of our Saviour in Bethlehem. *A light shall shine upon us to-day, for our Lord is born to us, and he shall be called Wonderful, God, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the world to come, of whose reign there shall be no end* (Isaias ix. 6). *The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty; the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself* (Ps. xcii. 1). Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who are filled with the new light of thy Incarnate Word, may show forth in our works what faith displays in our mind. Through the same Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Epistle. (Titus iii. 4-7.)

Dearly beloved: The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared; not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we may be heirs, according to hope of life everlasting, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What does St. Paul teach us in this Epistle?

He teaches us both what God has done and is doing, that we may have eternal life, and why he does it: it is from his goodness and kindness, which never appeared clearer than in his Incarnation. Not by our own merits, but according to his mercy he has saved us by holy baptism, for we were conceived and born in sin. Let us show by our lives that we are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and animated by the hope of life everlasting.

Why did not God have mercy on the fallen angels?

This is a mystery which should heighten our love to God, but should also fill us with fear and trembling, for if we do not use the goodness and kindness of God to our advantage, our punishment will be severer than that of the fallen angels.

Gospel. (Luke ii. 15-20.)

At that time: The shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child. And all that heard wondered: and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned,

glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

How could the shepherds know that the new-born child was the Saviour of the world?

The angels had given them a sign: *You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger*; and seeing, they believed, fell on their knees, and adored the child. They then praised God for the graces they had received, and made known what they had heard and seen to others. Let us imitate these pious shepherds; let us obey the inspirations of God, and encourage each other by good examples and edifying words; let us show our gratitude to our God by making the right use of the knowledge he has given us, and let us communicate the same to others.

What do we learn from Mary in this Gospel?

That we should ponder the divine truths in our hearts, and, by this heavenly nourishment, strengthen and preserve our souls in spiritual life.

Of the Third Mass.

The Introit of the third mass reminds us of the spiritual birth of Christ in our hearts (Isaias, ix. 6). *A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, whose government is upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called the Angel of great counsel* (Ps. xcvii. 1). *Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle, for he hath done wonderful things.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the new birth of thy only-begotten Son in the flesh may deliver us, whom the old servitude keeps down under the yoke of sin. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (Heb. i. 1-12.)

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he hath made the world: who being the brightness of

his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels hath he said at any time, "Thou art my son, to-day have I begotten thee?" And again, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world he saith: "And let all the angels of God adore him." And to the angels indeed he saith: "He that maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." But to the Son: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of justice is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved justice, and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And: "Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth: and the works of thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but thou shalt continue: and they shall all grow old as a garment. And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the self-same, and thy years shall not fail."

What does St. Paul teach in this Epistle?

He endeavors to strengthen his Jewish brethren, who had been converted to Christ, in their belief in him, and to show them the dignity and divinity of the Saviour.

Meditation.

How magnificently does this Epistle set forth the kindness and love of God the Father, who, for a teacher, has given us, not a prophet, but his only Son! how beautifully does it prove the divinity of Christ, since God has begotten him from all eternity, and created the heavens and earth through him, who is always the same, and his throne forever and ever! Learn, O Christian soul, from this Epistle, how much thou art obliged to love God, to trust him, and to follow Christ thy example, without imitating whom thou canst neither belong to his elect, nor have part in his redemption.

Aspiration.

O Heavenly Father, I thank thee with my whole heart, for having spoken to us through thy only-begotten Son, whom

thou hast made better than the angels. I will, O Father of Mercy, listen to him with gratitude, and use his sublime teachings for the perfect enlightenment of my mind and heart.

Gospel. (John i. 1-14.)

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

What does St. John mean by the *Word*?

He means the Son of God, who is called the Word of the Father, because he was begotten as the word is produced from the thought, but in a manner more beautiful and mysterious. In his divine nature he is one with the Father; but in person distinct from him; as the word spoken is at the same time one with him who speaks, and yet distinct from him. He is also called the Word, because it is through him that the Father has declared to us his will.

What is the meaning of, *in the beginning was the Word, &c.*?

It means that at the beginning of the world, the Son of God already *was*, and, therefore, was begotten of his Father from all eternity. Thus, at the commencement of his Gospel, St. John teaches Christ's Eternity, Divinity, and Equality with the Father.

What is the meaning of, *all things were made by the Word*?

That the Son of God, himself true God, with the Father and

the Holy Ghost, created all things that were made, both visible and invisible, in perfect order and beauty (Prov. viii. 30).

What is the meaning of, *in him was life* ?

That, as the living God, he was the Source and Fountain of all life ;—of the natural life, by his creation and providence ; of the supernatural and spiritual, by delivering us from sin, and sanctifying us through his holy grace, thus making us children of God, and heirs of eternal life.

How was the *Life the light of men* ?

The Eternal Son, who was the life, was also the light of men, because he was the Truth to enlighten them with the knowledge and love of God, that, avoiding sin and ignorance, they might walk with safety in the way of salvation.

In what sense are we to understand the words, *and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it* ?

Christ made known the true knowledge of God to men who were in spiritual darkness,—that is, in error and ignorance,—but they would not receive his holy teaching. This is still the case with those who, notwithstanding the preaching of the Gospel, will not believe, and particularly with those hardened sinners who will not return to God, although he pours upon them the light of his grace to move them to penance. Alas for those who refuse to receive the only true light !

What John did the Evangelist mean by him who *came to bear witness of that light* ?

St. John the Baptist, who endeavored by his preaching to prepare the Jews for the coming of Christ, and who testified before the whole world that he was the expected King and Messiah.

How does Christ *enlighten every man that cometh into the world* ?

He enlightens us, inwardly, with the light of intellect, of conscience, of faith, and of grace, that we may know and do that which is good ; outwardly, by his words, his life, and his miracles, his church, and also by the teaching of the prophets, the apostles, and their successors.

What is the meaning of, *he came unto his own, and his own received him not?*

The whole world was his own, and man, in particular, was his, having been created in his likeness and image. But the Jews were especially his own, because he had made them his chosen people, and had confided to them his sacred Revelation and his holy Law, yet they received him not; refusing to accept him as the promised Messiah, because he came not with the worldly pomp of a king, but in poverty and humility, and because he upbraided them for their wickedness.

Who then did receive him?

They who recognized in him the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, who believed in his holy name, that is, in him and his divine doctrine, and who endeavored to live according to his teaching and example, seeking happiness and salvation through him. By such persons he is received still. But they who endeavor not to do the will of the Saviour, however they may believe in him with their lips, in their works deny Jesus. Faith without works is dead.

How are we made children of God?

By the grace which we receive in holy baptism, for in that sacrament we are spiritually born again of God, freed from sin, sanctified, and made his children.

What is to be understood by, *and the Word was made flesh?*

We are to understand by it that the Word was not changed into human nature, but that he became incarnate by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, uniting in one person the two natures, divine and human. He was the God-man, who walked among men thirty-three years, marking every step by favors and benefits. He assumed, says St. Leo, the nature of man, who was to be reconciled to God, in order that Satan, the author of death, might be overcome by that same nature which he had before conquered; and thus our Lord and Saviour vanquished our most cruel enemy, not in majesty, but in humility.

What is the meaning of, *and we saw his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father?*

The Evangelist hereby indicates that he and his fellow-apostles were permitted to see the glory of the God-man; for instance, on Mount Thabor; in his miracles; in his glorious Resurrection and Ascension. Thus they saw him, and knew that he was the true Son of God, the fountain of all good, from which all receive life, and light, and grace (John i. 16).

Aspiration.

O God, Father in Heaven, who, in the form of an amiable child, hast given to us poor sinners this past night thy only-begotten Son, born of the immaculate Virgin Mary, to be our Mediator and Redeemer, we thank thee with all our hearts for this inexpressible grace, and beseech thee, of thy goodness, to preserve in us the perpetual memory of it, that, in all our adversities and temptations, we may have comfort and consolation, with strength to love, serve, and praise thee, in holiness and purity, until the last hour of our lives. Amen.

How do good Christians spend this day?

After having attended the three masses, and, if practicable, the other services of the Church, they read, or have read to them, some spiritual book; and, if they have the means, they clothe the child-Saviour in the naked, feed him in the hungry, and give alms, knowing that the poor are brethren of the infant Jesus. The good Christian, moreover, on this day, makes an act of love towards all men, whom God and his Son have so loved; he occupies his thoughts with the infant Jesus in the crib of Bethlehem, and meditates, and sings, thanking Christ for his incarnation; he contemplates the divine and human nature of the Saviour, and the condescension with which he so dwells in us, that it is no longer we who live, but Christ who liveth in us; and he finally prays for the spiritual advent of the Saviour in the hearts of men, that they may be re-born in Jesus, and serve and please God in newness of life.

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

It is now six hundred years old, and was introduced by St. Francis of Assisi, who, having a particular devotion to the in-

fant Jesus, obtained permission of the Pope to build a crib representing the stable at Bethlehem, as a means of constantly exciting his love. The custom was afterwards generally adopted in Catholic Churches, because it furnished a representation by which children and unlettered persons were easily instructed in regard to the nativity of our Saviour, and for the same reasons cribs are sometimes set up in private houses; it is to be observed, though, that for the attainment of the proper object, all indecent figures must be excluded.

Sunday after Christmas.

Introit of the Mass.

While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, thy Almighty word, O Lord, came down from Heaven, from thy royal throne (Wisdom xviii. 14, 15). The Lord has reigned; he is clothed with beauty; the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself (Ps. xcii. 1).

Prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, direct our actions so as to be pleasing to thee, that, in the name of thy beloved Son, we may deserve to abound in good works. Who livest and reignest.

Epistle. (Gal. 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: so we also, 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 them who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also through God.

Whom does the Apostle here intend to represent by the child that is an heir, but under tutors?

He means the Jewish people before the coming of Christ; they were the chosen people of God, and, as children of Abraham, were heirs of the promises of God; that is, they had hopes of receiving manifold graces through Jesus Christ. The Jews were therefore like children under age, and under the protection of a tutor, having claim and title to estates, but not yet possession; being under the tutelage of the old law, and not yet having part in the grace of redemption, for which they were preparing.

Are we, as Christians, really participators in the grace of redemption?

Certainly; as Christians who received baptism immediately after our birth, we thereby became partakers of the happy effects and graces of the incarnation and redemption of Jesus Christ, being in that sacrament born again of water and the Holy Ghost, freed from original sin, and made children and heirs of God. Moreover, our actual sins since baptism are capable of remission through the sacrament of Penance, while we are continually sanctified and strengthened by receiving the other sacraments. Thus our relation as children of God is restored, and he gives us the disposition of sons, which is shown by our addresses to him in prayer.

How are we to understand the words, *God sent his Son, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law?*

St. Paul here speaks to such Christians among the Galatians as were formerly Jews, and who supposed themselves yet bound to keep the observances of the Law of Moses; he shows that Christ had delivered them from being under that Law, and that they had received the adoption of sons. Christ being come of the Jews, according to the flesh, had indeed fulfilled the whole Law himself, as, for instance, by being baptized and circumcised; but, by his death on the cross, he dispensed with the Law, abolished its types and ceremonies, and redeemed the Jews from the curse and bondage to which it subjected them, delivering them thereby from sin and eternal death, in order that they, and all who were children of Abraham by faith, might be heirs of the promises and blessing given to

Abraham, and attain the grace of justice, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. We, for our part, have received still greater favors than the Jews, because in our ancestors we were converted from Paganism to Christianity, and from children of the devil were made by faith heirs of God. Should not such blessings be more prized by us than all the riches of the world? Let us show how we value them, by living as children of God, in faith, love, confidence, patience, and innocence, shunning sin as the only real evil; unless we would forfeit our name and privileges as Christians, and voluntarily become a second time the slaves of the devil.

Gospel. (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 fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years: who departed not from the temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord; and spoke of him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, into their city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in him.

Why did Mary and Joseph wonder at these things?

Not as if they heard from Simeon any thing new respecting Jesus, since they knew by repeated revelations who he was; but they were filled with joyous wonder that Simeon was enabled by divine inspiration to recognize the child Jesus as the promised Messiah, and to say such great things of him.

What is the meaning of, *and Simeon blessed them?*

He congratulated them on the great honor they enjoyed in carrying the infant Jesus in their arms, and bringing him to

the temple ; he pronounced words of benediction over them, and prayed God to bless and protect them.

How is Christ the fall and resurrection of many in Israel ?

He is the fall, that is, the damnation of those who do not receive him, though they know him to be the Saviour of the world ; and of those also who believe in him, and receive his holy teaching, but do not live according to it. *If Christ had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sins* (St. John xv. 22). He is the resurrection or salvation of those who believe in him, receive his doctrine, and live according to it.

What is the meaning of, *he is a sign which shall be contradicted ?*

This was a prophecy that Jesus Christ, his life, works, teaching, and institutions, should be the object of continual contradiction on the part of sensual and worldly wisdom. It was fulfilled in the blasphemies and persecutions of the Jews and Gentiles, and is confirmed by infidels of all ages, as well as by those Christians who, as St. Bernard says, contradict his humility by their pride, his poverty by their avarice, his fasting by their intemperance, his purity by their impurity, his zeal by their sloth ; thus confessing him with their lips, but denying him by their deeds. Hereby they reveal the malicious thoughts of their hearts ; they are not faithful and sincere towards Jesus, and do not love him, for they obey not his holy will ; they are Christians only in name, of whom Christ is not the resurrection but the fall, for they are yet the slaves of sin.

What is signified by those words, *thy own soul a sword shall pierce ?*

That on account of her Son, Mary would have to suffer such inexpressible pains and sorrows as should pierce her heart as with a sword. Time made this plain ; for how often was not her beloved Son pursued and persecuted ? Yet the greatest grief she felt must have been when she saw her Son in his sufferings and death, hanging, like a malefactor, on the cross.

What are we to understand by the words, *out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed ?*

Simeon, inspired by the Holy Ghost, wishes to show that the

contradictions which, according to his prophecy, Jesus should meet with, the persecutions of his enemies, his sufferings and death, were necessary to bring to light the different thoughts and opinions of men, and to separate the true followers of Christ and his doctrine from such as were false and unsteady. Persecutions are thus necessary to try the faith of Christians; sufferings and adversities must come to test our virtue and love towards God, to reveal the thoughts of many hearts, and to disclose which predominates in us, patience or impatience, confidence in God or distrust, resignation or discontent.

What else is to be learned from this Gospel?

First, widows may learn from Anna, who departed not from the temple, how to serve God, by fasting and prayer, *for the widow that liveth in pleasure is dead while she is living* (1 Tim. v. 6). Secondly, parents may learn to be careful that their children increase not only in skill and wealth, but rather in the grace of God, by living pious, edifying, and peaceable lives before God and men.

Exhortation.

To-day, O Christian, is the last Sunday in the year; thou art at the end of the year; a new year is at hand. Part not with the old year without earnest consideration; this is an important period of thy life. Ponder with care the truths and doctrines which the Holy Church has laid before thee in the Epistles and Gospels; thank God with thy whole heart for the great favors and benefits which thou hast received in the incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ; examine thyself also how it is with thy faith, whether it is living and efficient, that thou mayest have the hope of being a child and heir of God; ask thyself, Has Christ been during the last year my fall or my resurrection? have I confessed him in heart and deed, or have I been only a name Christian? With such exercises and examinations occupy thy mind until the New Year, that thou mayest be prepared to begin it worthily.

Instruction on Blessing.

“ And Simeon blessed them.”—*Luke* ii. 24.

What does it mean to bless ?

To give or wish something good to any one ; in the first of which senses God alone blesses, because all goods of soul or body which we have, or wish to have, come from him ; in the second sense, angels and men may bless us, in wishing us whatever is good, and in praying for it to God. Blessing, says St. Ambrose, is wishing one the communication of grace and sanctification.

Have we examples of blessing in Scripture ?

Yes ; an angel blessed Jacob (*Gen.* xxvi. 29) ; Jacob, when dying, blessed his children and grandchildren (*Gen.* xlviii. 15) ; Melchisedech blessed Abraham (*Gen.* xiv. 19) ; Rebecca was blessed by her brother (*Gen.* xxiv. 60) ; and the priests blessed the people. Our Saviour also blessed his disciples with uplifted hands.

Is it good for parents to bless their children ?

Yes ; for as it is commendable for us every morning and evening, and at every good work, to ask God's blessing, so is it particularly praiseworthy for parents to bless their children ; for God fulfils blessings of good parents, as he did those, for example, of the patriarchs Isaac and Jacob. On the other hand, he also ratifies and confirms the curses of parents upon their children, as every day's experience fully shows. *The father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children, but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundations* (*Eccles.* iii. 11). Is it, therefore, to be wondered at that we see so many bad and wicked children when fathers and mothers curse instead of blessing them ? Oh, what a lesson for parents !

What virtue is there in the priest's blessing ?

Very great virtue ; because it is given in the name of the Church, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and comes from God himself, whose ministers and stewards the priests are. Prize, therefore, the priest's blessing, and do not destroy its efficacy by a sinful life. Parents should see that their children are blessed by the priests who may come to visit them, as the

children were brought to our Saviour, that he might lay his hands on them, and bless them (Matt. xix. 13).

What are the observances of the Church in regard to blessing?

At blessings, the sign of the cross is often repeated, as being the instrument by which Christ's blood was shed, and through which he gained us all graces and blessings. Holy water is also used, signifying that the person on whom it is sprinkled is purified and dedicated to the service of God, and that the Church implores for him the grace of purity. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is given to the people, because it is through Christ alone that we receive grace and blessing from God.

What is the effect of God's blessing?

Whoever has God's blessing will be successful in every thing; he can do more with small than others with larger means. Wouldst thou have that blessing? Live piously and justly, *for the blessing of God is on the head of the just* (Prov. x. 6). We should not, however, forget to prefer the eternal goods of the knowledge and grace of God, to any temporal advantages. For God does not always hear our prayers for worldly treasures; riches are, besides, often ruinous, and poverty a real blessing. The disposal of temporal benefits, therefore, we must leave to God's love and benignity.

These truths we should meditate upon at all times, but particularly on this Sunday, the last of the year, which is a day of thanksgiving, penance, and prayer: of thanksgiving, for all the benefits received, and evils averted in the year past; of penance, for so many grievous sins by which we have offended God; of prayer, for the necessary blessings of the coming year.

Oh, that on this day we might know how much God loves us, and whence it comes that there is so much misery and unhappiness in the world! Let us return to him in love and confidence, ask him for his blessings, and keep them by leading a holy life.

New Year's Day (1st January).

Why do we call this New Year's day?

Because the civil year commences on this day, as the ecclesiastical does on the first Sunday in Advent.

What ought we to do on this day?

We must dedicate the New Year to the service of God, in order that, assisted by his grace, we may both commence and end it to his honor, and our own sanctification.

How must we begin the New Year piously?

We must look back to our past life, and remember the shortness of our days, and the swiftness with which time passes; we must examine what passions of ours are the strongest and have oftenest caused us to fall. To conquer these and acquire the opposite virtues, should be our first resolution on New Year's day. When we do this with earnestness and care, asking God's assistance, we have taken the first step in the New Year towards a pious and holy life.

Why do we wish each other a happy New Year?

To renew love and harmony, and to fulfil an obligation of charity by wishes for each other's happiness and prosperity, which should be given not merely out of politeness, but from the heart, unless we would, like heathens, deserve no merits for our actions.

What feast does the Church celebrate on this day?

The circumcision of Christ, at which he received the name of Jesus. *But when the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law* (Gal. iv. 4, 5).

What was circumcision?

It was an exterior rite of the old law, by which men were admitted among the chosen people, as we now enter the Church by baptism.

To whom did God first give the law of circumcision?

To Abraham, as the seal of a covenant between God and him and his seed (Gen. xvii. 10), that, by strict obedience to his will, they might make themselves worthy of his promises and blessings, and finally have part in the kingdom of Christ.

Who has abolished circumcision?

Christ our Lord, who established in its stead the mysterious sacrament of the new law, holy baptism. As circumcision made the law of Moses binding, so holy baptism obliges us to keep the law of Christ.

What is circumcision, in the spiritual or moral sense?

It is the mortification of the senses, and the subjection of sinful inclinations and concupiscences. St. Stephen accordingly calls the obstinate Jews *uncircumcised of heart and ears*. Let us ask Jesus Christ for those graces of self-command and spiritual circumcision which are necessary for our salvation, in the following

Aspiration.

O my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I thank thee for having to-day shed thy blood for the first time for me. Grant me, I beseech thee, the grace of mortifying, circumcising for thy love, my eyes, ears, lips, hands, feet, and all my sensual appetites, that I may not see, hear, speak, touch, wish, or do any evil. Amen.

The *Introit of the Mass* is the same as in the third Mass at Christmas.

Prayer.

O God, who by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary, hast bestowed on mankind the rewards of eternal salvation, grant, we beseech thee, that we may experience her intercession for us, by whom we have been found worthy to receive the Author of life, our Lord Jesus.

Epistle.—(The same as in the first Mass at Christmas.)

Gospel. (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.

Why was Christ circumcised the eighth day of his birth?

1. By his fulfilling the Jewish law, to teach us patience and

obedience to the law of God, and to his Holy Church. 2. To show his infinite love to us in the very first days of his life.

Who gave him the name of Jesus?

God himself gave it to him, who came to save the world and sanctify us, for Jesus means Saviour. It is, therefore, that holy and powerful name, whereby alone we can be saved (Acts iv. 12).

What power has this name?

A divine power; for in this name the Apostles cast out devils and cured the sick (Mark xvi. 17, 18), as, for instance, the lame man who lay at the gate of the temple (Acts iii. 2, 6). Through this name we receive from God whatever is helpful towards our salvation (John xiv. 13). It is well, therefore, to call on this holy name in adversities, in doubts, and in great temptations, particularly such as are hostile to purity. Even when so unhappy as to fall into sin, the remembrance of this holy name may bring us back to virtue, for *it is like oil* which enlightens, nourishes, and heals (Canticles i. 2, 3). "When I call on Jesus," says St. Bernard, "it reminds me of a man who is from his whole heart humble, mild, benevolent, sober, pure, and merciful; in whom shine forth, in full splendor, all gifts of sanctity and justice; who is Almighty; who is our God; who can incite me by his example, and encourage me by his holy grace. All this echoes in my ear and heart, when the holy name of Jesus sounds in my soul."

How must we speak this holy name, that its virtue may be felt?

With the greatest devotion and veneration, and with unbounded confidence; for, as St. Paul says, *in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth* (Phil. ii. 9, 10). How sinful, therefore, is it in some to speak this name almost at every word, frivolously and disrespectfully; a habit which, in this country particularly, is so widely and fatally prevalent.

A devout Prayer to Jesus in our manifold necessities.

O Jesus, Consoler and Comforter of all who are afflicted, thy name is truly like oil poured upon men; for thou enlight-

onest those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death; thou takest away the blindness of the soul, and healest all its wounds; thou fillest all that hunger and thirst after justice. Be, therefore, O Jesus, my Saviour and Physician, and heal all the infirmities and diseases of my sick soul. O Jesus, Refuge of all who are in need, be my Protector in temptations; Jesus, Father of the poor, be my Provider; Jesus, joy of angels, be my joy in the hour of affliction; Jesus, our only hope, assist me in the agony of death, for no other name is given to us under the sun, through which we must be saved, than thy most holy name, O Jesus.

Exhortation.

St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Colossians (iii. 17), admonishes us, whatsoever we do, in word or work, to do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The saints have all followed punctually this admonition, and we, imitating their example, should often say, at least in our hearts, "For love of thee, O Jesus, I awake and rise; for love of thee, I lie down to sleep; for love of thee, I will eat, drink, speak, keep silence, labor, rest." In his name we should salute each other with those beautiful words: "Laudetur Jesus Christus—Jesus Christ be praised;" answering: "Laudetur in æternum—May he be praised forever!"

In this manner we must accustom ourselves, whatever we do, avoid doing, or suffer, to do, to avoid doing, and to suffer in the holy name of Jesus; thereby we can sanctify even the ordinary acts of our life, and either experience the benefit of being successful in our undertakings, or at least of gaining great merit by them.

Prayer for New Year's Day.

O God Almighty, now that we have lived to see another year, we thank thy goodness and thy incomprehensible mercy, that, from the moment of our birth, we have escaped so many dangers which have threatened our health and life. Would that we had never abused the precious time of our life to sin! but, alas! it is done, and we therefore pray thee, through thy

Son, and through the precious blood he this day shed in his circumcision, to look, not upon the multitude of our sins, but upon thy infinite mercy; we promise to be henceforth pious, just, and virtuous; strengthen us in our weakness; increase in us faith, hope, and charity; keep us, by thy powerful grace, from all sin, dangers, temptations, and adversities of soul and body; enable us, we beseech thee, to offer up to thee, from this day henceforth till the hour of our death, all our senses, thoughts, words, and deeds; to subject them all to thy holy will; to oppose successfully every evil habit, and to practice every virtue. Grant, O Father, that we, living and dying in thy only true faith, may enjoy in thy kingdom, where one day is better than a thousand upon earth, an everlasting New Year of eternal happiness, and that we may praise thee, with all thy angels and saints, forever and ever. Amen.

First Sunday after New Year's Day.

The *Introit of the Mass*, the *Prayer*, and *Epistle* are the same as on the Sunday after Christmas.

Gospel. (Matt. ii. 19-23.)

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

Who was Herod?

He was a king of the Jews, appointed by the Roman emperor; a Jew by birth, but not from the line of David: he was king, not by legitimate inheritance, nor yet by the choice of the people, but was forced upon them by a Pagan emperor.

What do we learn by this fact?

That the time was now fulfilled in which, according to the prophecies, the promised Saviour was to come; for the sceptre was now taken away from Juda, and a stranger reigned over the Jews.

Why was St. Joseph afraid to go to Judea?

Because Archelaus, who succeeded Herod, was, according to the historians, even more cruel than his father, and on this account it was that St. Joseph feared to return to Judea. In this difficulty he prayed to God, and was answered by an angel warning him in sleep to return, but to retire into Galilee.

What are the virtues which we here see practised by St. Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus?

We observe in St. Joseph, and also in Mary, the mother of Jesus, a firm belief and unbounded confidence in God, throughout all the temptations, hardships, and dangers which they had to undergo on account of their child; for surely it must have been a hard trial to their faith that they should have to flee hither and thither with him, upon whom depended such great promises of God, who, indeed, according to the announcement of the Angel, was the Son of God himself, in order to save him from the pursuit of his enemies. They however remained steadfast in their belief, obedient to the commands of God, and submissive under their trials.

What are we to learn from this example?

To preserve confidence in God, and not hesitate, although his counsels may sometimes be incomprehensible to us, both as regards the course of the world and the events of our own lives. We should remember that the dispensations of God are always wise, just, and holy, and will result in our profit if only we are obedient, and firm in faith, hope, and charity; *for to them that love God, all things work together unto good* (Rom. viii. 28).

Why was Jesus called a Nazarite?

Because he was brought up in Nazareth, and lived there the greatest part of his life. But he was also called a Nazarite, out of contempt, to signify his humility and poverty; for Nazareth was a new village in Galilee, never mentioned in the old Law; indeed, so insignificant and despised was it among the

Jews, that it was proverbial to say, *Can any thing of good come out of Nazareth?* (John i. 46). Now the prophets had predicted often that the Messiah would live in poverty, and be despised of men (Isa. liii. 1, 11; Zach. i. 3, 8, 9); they had also predicted that he was to be holy, and "Nazarite" means as much as "holy"—"he that is dedicated to God." It also signifies "flower;" and was not he the flower from the root of Jesse?

Prayer.

O my Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus of Nazareth, who didst subject thyself to travel as a fugitive upon earth, with no resting-place in which to remain in safety, yet hast now thy throne at the right hand of thy Father in the majesty of God, teach me to consider this world a foreign land, and my life that of a pilgrim, that in thee and thy Father I may find my home. Strengthen me by thy grace to prepare myself worthily for the land of eternal happiness, and receive me, when I leave this world, into thy glory, where thou livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for all eternity. Amen.

Epiphany.

What mystery does the Church celebrate to-day?

She celebrates to-day a threefold mystery: 1. The arrival in Bethlehem of the wise men from the East to adore the newborn Saviour; 2. The baptism of Jesus in the Jordan; 3. The first miracle of Jesus at the wedding in Cana.

Why is this festival also called "the Three Kings' Feast?"

Because, according to a very old tradition, those wise men from the East were the three kings, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar.

Why is this festival called Epiphany, or the manifestation?

Because, in those three events just mentioned, Jesus manifested himself not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles, as the expected Messiah, the Redeemer of the world, and the beloved of his Heavenly Father.

Why was Jesus baptized by John ?

1. To be like us ; 2. To confirm and approve the baptism administered by John, and to sanctify water by touching it with his most holy body. The appearance of the three divine persons at his baptism, was to indicate that baptism should be administered in the name of the most Holy Trinity.

The Church sings to-day with joy at the Introit, *Behold the Lord the Ruler is come, and a kingdom in his hand, and power and dominion* (Mal. iii. 1). *Give to the king thy judgment, O God, and to the king's son thy justice* (Ps. lxxi. 2).

Prayer.

O God, who didst on this day reveal thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles by the guidance of a star, grant in thy mercy that we who know thee now by faith, may be brought to behold the beauty of thy majesty. Through the same Lord.

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 Ephraim : all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense : and showing forth praise to the Lord.

Of what does the prophet here speak ?

He foretells the future manifestation of the light of the Lord Jesus to Jerusalem, which was a type of the Church, and that by that light the Gentiles, who hitherto had walked in darkness, should come from the east, and from the west, and enter together with the Jews, into the one Church of Christ.

Was this prophecy fulfilled ?

Yes; the wise men who came from the East seeking the Saviour, and who found and adored him in Bethlehem, were the first fruits of the Gentiles. During the ministry of Christ on earth many more believed on him, and after his death, resurrection, and ascension, more of them than of the Jews were converted by the preaching of the Apostles.

What does the prophet mean by saying, *lift up your eyes and see?*

That Jerusalem, the Church of Christ, should lift up her eyes, and see all those that are gathered together, and come to her; and as a mother rejoices in beholding her children, so should she be glad at seeing so many sons and daughters come from afar, and grow up at her side, to know and serve God. On this day we also should rejoice, and praise and thank God, that by the calling of our forefathers, who were Gentiles, we too have been called to the true religion. Let us recognize, therefore, in those wise men who adored Christ, the first fruits of our race; let us celebrate with joy this beginning of the hope of our salvation, for thereby have we commenced to enter into the eternal inheritance; while the truth rejected by the blind and stubborn Jews, has shed its light upon all nations. *Give praise, O ye heavens, and rejoice, O earth; ye mountains, give praise with jubilation, because the Lord has comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his poor ones* (Isa. xlix. 13).

Gospel. (Matt. 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 are come to adore him. And king Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him: and assembling together all the chief priests and 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 captain that shall rule my people Israel." Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared

to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him. Who having heard the king, went their way: and behold, the star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down, they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country.

Why did the wise men come from afar to seek the Saviour in Jerusalem?

They lived in Arabia, which was mostly populated by the children of Abraham, and, either by verbal communication with those Israelites, or because they themselves were not unacquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, had acquired some information of the prophecies of Israel, particularly of the noted prophecy of Balaam, *A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre spring up from Israel* (4 Numb. xxiv. 17), which was the more significant to them, because they were, as their name denotes, skilled in astronomy. But probable as the above account may be, it is not sufficient to explain their having had such a firm and persevering faith; but to these human considerations must be added the light of divine inspiration: as St. Leo says, "the star shone also in their hearts,"—a beautiful example for us to follow without delay, in spite of all difficulties and hardships, the inspirations of divine grace; to pursue, with zeal and perseverance, the things necessary for our salvation, and to do the will of God without fear of men. Would it not be shameful and humiliating if we, so near to Jesus, should do less for him than those who come from afar!

Why was Herod troubled, and all Jerusalem with him?

Herod was troubled, because he was proud, imperious, and cruel, and consequently afraid both of losing his kingdom, which he had bought from the Romans, and of being punished for his tyranny. A bad conscience is always trembling, and

has no peace. *The wicked are like a boisterous sea* (Isa. lvii. 30). Many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were also troubled, because, as friends of Herod, they feared that under a new king they would lose their offices, dignities and riches; others were troubled by anticipations of disturbance and rebellion, or, perhaps, because they thought the expected Messiah would be a severe Master, and a reformer of their corrupt habits and manners. But the well-disposed Jews were full of joy, because the expectation of the Gentiles and the hope of Israel was fulfilled.

What can we learn from this?

That the same truth causes joy to one, and fear and terror to another.

Why did Herod assemble the chief priests and scribes?

To inquire from them when, and where the Messiah should be born. Here again the finger of God was visible. Those persons were obliged to state the circumstances which were to attend the birth of the Messiah, and this they do with great correctness, and yet do not believe on him. What then could excuse their hardness of heart? In like manner, God often gives us the grace to understand the most beneficial truths, but we heed them as little as the Jews, who had sufficient knowledge of the Saviour, and were even shown the way to him by the wise men, yet made no use of their knowledge, and went to ruin. The same will happen to us if we do not carry out into deeds what we ourselves know and teach to others.

Why did Herod say he would come and adore the child?

He said it out of dissimulation and hypocrisy; in truth, he desired nothing else than to murder Jesus; therefore he inquired so minutely the time and place of his birth; and, that he might realize his wish, the crafty hypocrite simulated piety. After the same manner do those murderers of souls act, who try to seduce and destroy innocence. They must not appear as wolves, for that would be to make their wicked intentions at once known; they come, therefore, in the clothing of sheep, appearing pious and devout, until by flattery and presents they creep into the heart, from which they banish shame, fear of God, innocence, and even Christ himself. Innocent souls,

beware of such wolves in the clothing of sheep; and you, parents, guard your children from such men.

Why did the wise men fall down and adore Jesus?

It was the custom of the East to fall down before kings, to show respect for them; and, as the three wise men, by divine inspiration, knew the child Jesus, notwithstanding his poverty and swaddling-clothes, to be the expected Messiah, and the new-born king of the Jews, they accordingly paid him the honor customary in their country, by prostrating themselves before him. We also, guided by the light of our holy religion, believe firmly in the real presence of Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist; but do we always, like the wise men, follow the divine inspiration, and show our veneration for the Son of God in church?

What was the significance of the presents which they offered to the Saviour?

Like their falling down before him, the offering of presents was also in the East a part of the honor paid to kings. "Behold," says St. Fulgentius, "what they offered, and you may see what they believed." The holy fathers of the Church interpreted these gifts in the following manner: in offering gold, the wise men honored the infant Jesus as King; in frankincense, as God; in myrrh, as suffering Man.

How can we offer to Jesus similar gifts?

We can present him with gold, by giving up to him, in sincere love, perfect obedience, and continual mortification, what we value most, our will; also by giving alms in his name to the poor. We can present him incense in fervent and devout prayers ascending to heaven; and myrrh, by mortifying the flesh, rooting out lust and concupiscence, and by preserving purity of body and soul.

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

Out of obedience to the command of God, who had, by an angel, made known to them the evil designs of Herod. Hereby we learn: 1. That God can easily frustrate human purposes, and that justice and virtue will triumph in the end. 2. That we should obey God rather than man. 3. That, if we have

sought and found God, we must, after our conversion, take another course than that which we followed before. If we have wandered from God and heaven, our true home, by sensual pleasure, pride, indifference, we must return to him forthwith, by penance, self-denial, and mortification.

Aspiration.

Give to me, O my divine Saviour, the faith of these wise men; enlighten my understanding with the light which enlightened them; but move my heart also, that I may follow that light, and sincerely seek thee, and thee only, who didst first seek me. Grant that I may find and adore thee, with the wise men, in spirit and in truth, offering to thee, like them, gold in my obedience and alms, incense in my prayers, myrrh in my penances and mortifications, that after having brought thee the offerings of my faith on earth, I may adore thee in thy eternal glory. Amen.

On the use of Incense.

Was incense used in Church in ancient times?

Yes; the fourth of the Apostolical Canons proves that it was used in the first three centuries. St. Ambrose also speaks of it; and the antiquity of its use is witnessed to by its constant prevalence in all churches in the world.

Why does the Church use incense at High Mass?

To do an act of homage to God as our Sovereign, and to signify our desire that our prayers should ascend as sweet incense in his sight. We scatter incense around the altar, to pray Jesus, represented by the altar, to receive the prayers which are represented by the incense.

Why are the cross upon the altar, and the missal incensed?

We incense the cross, as the object of our veneration, referring thereby the honor to Jesus Christ himself; and the missal, to show our reverence for God's word, and to signify the sweet odor that is shed from heaven on them that keep it.

Why is the altar first incensed, and afterwards the congregation of the faithful?

To signify the union which exists between Jesus, as the Head, and the faithful as the members of his mystical body.

Why do we incense bishops and priests ?

As a mark of the honor and respect due to them as the representatives of Christ.

Why do we incense relics, and the bodies of the dead ?

To testify our respect for those bodies of saints which have been sanctified by the sweet odor of divine grace ; and to honor the memory of those who have died in the true faith, while we offer up the incense of our prayers for them.

First Sunday after Epiphany.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church animates us to adore and obey God, willingly and joyfully. *Upon a high throne I saw a man sitting, whom a multitude of angels adored, singing together, Behold him, the name of whose empire is eternity (Dan. viii). Sing joyfully to God, all the earth : serve the Lord with gladness (Ps. xcix. 2). Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, in thy heavenly mercy, the prayers of thy suppliant people, that they may both see what they ought to do, and may be enabled to do what they see. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Romans xii. 1-5.)

Brethren : I beseech you, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world : but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behoveth 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 every one members one of another in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How can we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God?

By keeping the body and its members clean from all sin; serving God with soul and body. The body is the habitation of the soul, and an instrument of the human spirit. The soul is the mistress of this habitation, the mover and employer of that instrument. The soul, therefore, must govern; not the body. The soul must be the barrier to the body's sensual inclinations; must subdue, regulate, and subject them to the law of God. Thus to serve God, with our soul and body, is our reasonable service, and the vocation of every Christian.

What is the meaning of the words, *and be not conformed to this world?*

That we are bound not to follow the principles and manners of the children of this world; not to love what they love; not to do what they do. This is an indispensable lesson for every Christian, who, without putting it into practice, cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ; he must cease to be the old man, and become the new man, whose thoughts are in heaven. To accomplish this, he will have to ask his conscience often, what is good, pleasing to God, and perfect? Above all, humility is here alike necessary to the most considerable and the most insignificant persons.

Why, and in what sense, does the Apostle warn Christians *not to be more wise than it behoveth to be wise?*

This he meant for certain Christians who envied others, and were dissatisfied because they had not the same clear knowledge in religious truths as those on whom God had bestowed greater gifts. He also warns those who had received in abundance the gifts of faith and prophecy, not to be arrogant, but humble. This is a lesson for those of the present day, who *think themselves more wise than it behoveth to be wise*; who wish to penetrate and comprehend the mysteries of religion,—for example, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. We must subject our understanding to faith, and be *wise unto sobriety*; we must not exalt ourselves, or make account of our talents, or religious knowledge, for God has divided to every one the measure of faith.

What does St. Paul mean by the comparison of *one body and many members* ?

He means that we Christians belong all to one body, the Church, the head of which is Christ. Now, as all the members of the body work for its welfare, so should Christian, minister to the wants of all in the Church. One should join the other in the work of salvation ; should instruct or punish, warn, admonish, or correct, as there is occasion for it. This is true love, such as we ought to have, one for another, and happy are we when we thus love in word and deed.

Aspiration.

Grant, O Jesus, that I may present my soul and body a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to thee, by mortification, humiliation, and contrition, and that I may never defile them by impurity, gluttony, lust, vanity, or pride ; give me also thy grace, O my Saviour, to love my neighbor as myself, for we are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another.

Gospel. (Luke ii. 42-52.)

When Jesus was twelve years old, they going up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem ; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him : Son, why hast thou done so to us ? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them : How is it that you sought me ? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business ? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth : and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.

Why did Joseph and Mary go to Jerusalem with Jesus?

Every Israelite had to appear three times a year before the Lord in the place which he had chosen: at the feast of unleavened bread, at the feast of weeks, and at the feast of tabernacles. This place was, since the time of Solomon, in the temple which he had built at Jerusalem. Accordingly, when Jesus was twelve years old, his mother, the blessed Virgin Mary, and his foster-father, St. Joseph, took him along with them to Jerusalem, he being then apparently strong enough to accompany them.

What are we Christians to learn by this?

That we should go willingly to church, particularly on Sundays and holy-days, and remain there to assist at the public services, with inward and outward devotion. Neither distance from the church, nor the difficulty of the way, should prevent our attendance. If, however, the state of our health, or domestic affairs, should not permit us to go, we should make our devotions at home, by prayers, and by reading in this, or some good book. All parents should learn from Joseph and Mary, who took the child Jesus with them to Jerusalem, to bring their children to church and school, and to keep them to their prayers and the other exercises of religion by word and deed.

How came it that Jesus remained in Jerusalem?

Among the Jews it was a custom to go to their feasts in large companies, or caravans; such a company it was that Joseph and Mary joined, there being in it many of their friends and relatives, as appears by the Gospel, among whom, on their leaving Jerusalem, they thought that Jesus still remained. It was not through the carelessness of the parents, but by the design of divine Providence, that Jesus was left behind in the temple, to arrest the attention of the doctors, and of the people; to show himself there in his wisdom and dignity, and to make known, for the first time, the object of his divine mission. Accordingly, he spent several days there, attending the interpretations of the law given by the doctors, and astonishing all who heard him, by his wisdom and his answers.

What lesson does the infant Jesus give us?

That we also should attend the instructions of religion, the

sermon, and catechism, to learn what we ought to know in regard to our salvation. Jesus was not only engaged in prayer to his Heavenly Father, he also listened attentively to the explanation of the law; there are, therefore, two important duties in the house of God: to pray, and to receive instruction. Would that all Christians discharged these two duties faithfully.

Why did Mary and Joseph seek Jesus so diligently?

“Out of fear that Jesus, whom they loved infinitely, might have forsaken them” (Origen); by which we learn how careful we should be, lest we lose Jesus by committing sin; should we, though, be so unhappy as thus to lose him, we must be eager to find him again, by penance. The parents of Jesus, by the pains they took to seek and find him, particularly teach and rebuke those parents who trouble themselves less about the education of their children, than about temporal goods; who never care whether their children are in good or bad company; whether they learn what will be useful to them or not; and who, for a worldly gain, as, for instance, a miserable living, even allow them to have intercourse with wicked persons. From such parents God will one day demand the souls of their children, with the severest justice.

How was it that his parents understood not the words that he spoke to them?

Although they did not understand the whole meaning of those words, they apprehended something divine in them, since they knew by revelation that Jesus was the Son of God, and would be the Redeemer of the world; but the whole mystery of Christ, as it was revealed by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles (Ephes. iii. 5); the manner in which he was to fulfil the purpose of his Father, and save his people, was not yet made known to them. To the others, also, who were present, and who were astonished at his wisdom and answers, those words were very mysterious. Such, however, as kept them in their hearts, as Mary did, might, after eighteen years, easily understand, and even use them for their own salvation.

Why did Mary say, “Son, why hast thou done so?”

She wished to give her Són, who was blameless, not a reproof, but a proof of her maternal love. Mary's conduct, however, reminds parents of the duty of attending to their children, and of punishing them when they are wrong. Heli, who did not chastise his children when they deserved it, was himself punished by God with a sudden and terrible death (1 Kings iii. 13, 14 ; iv. 18).

What do we learn by those words, *and Jesus was subject to them?*

That children should obey their parents ; for the Scripture says, *Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken better than the fat of rams* (1 Kings xv. 22). But disobedience is in the sight of the Lord equal to idolatry. When the God-man was thus subject to his poor mother and foster-father, who was a plain mechanic, all those children should justly blush who are ashamed of, or refuse to assist in their old age, poverty, or distress, the parents from whom, after God, they received their life. If the Scripture says, *Cursed be he that honoreth not his father and his mother, and all the people shall say, Amen* (Deut. xxvii. 16), how much greater punishment will those children receive who despise, mock, and desert them! *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth the labor of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the valley pick it out, and the young eagles eat it* (Prov. xxx. 17). And when God commands to stone disobedient children (Deut. xxi. 20, 21), what punishment do they deserve who strike their parents, or forcibly lay hands on them? Should they escape in this world, their punishment will only be the severer in the next.

What is the meaning of those words, *and Jesus increased in wisdom, and age, and grace?*

That works of wisdom and grace shone forth in Jesus according to his age, and appeared more and more plainly in the sight of God and man. In this respect Jesus leaves to youth the most beautiful example, from which they should learn to spend the earlier and better years of their life in the cultivation of their minds and hearts, in order to become useful in the Church and in the State.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, Source of grace, who, in the twelfth year of thine age, didst permit thyself to be sought by thy parents in the temple of Jerusalem, and wast subject to them as an example to us, grant us grace, we beseech thee, to apply ourselves zealously to the affairs of our Heavenly Father, or rather to the most important affair of our salvation; to bear willingly the yoke of thy holy law from our youth, and to be always obedient and subject to thy Church, to our parents, and superiors. Guard and direct Christian youth, that they may fear and love God, and early know their duty to him. Watch over them, O Jesus, that they may not grow up to a sinful life of ignorance and lawlessness. Give parents grace to bring up their children according to thy will, and to walk before them in the way of good example. Assist us all, that we may never lose thee, or, if we have lost thee, may seek thee diligently till we find thee; and, in possessing thee, may grow in wisdom, grace, and virtue, until finally we arrive at that perfection which shall secure us eternal happiness. Amen.

Instruction on the Duties of Parents.

“And when Jesus was twelve years old, Joseph and Mary went up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast.”—*Luke ii. 42.*

The Gospel of the day teaches the fundamental duties of parents to their children. In order to bring up children religiously, parents must teach them as early as possible to know God as their Father and Benefactor, from whom they receive every thing; to love him, obey his commandments and prohibitions; to believe that he is everywhere present, and to pray to him with a filial heart. It is also the duty of parents, while their children are of tender age, to repress their outbreking passions and subdue their stubbornness, for this can hardly be done later, when, with the growth of the body, the passions also have grown stronger. How much are those parents to blame who allow their children every thing in their early years, merely to quiet their impatience, and soothe their bad temper!

When children are old enough to attend regular instruction, it is the duty of parents to send them to mass, to catechism, and school; Christian parents also generally ask them what they have heard in the sermon or instruction; make them read, on Sundays and holy-days, in good books, sing Christian songs, and converse piously. If possible, they should pray with their children every morning and evening, and instruct them to say a grace before and after each meal; to make a good intention every morning, and particularly to remember the examination of conscience every evening; this should never be omitted. They should see that the children, after making their first communion, continue to go to confession and communion once a month, or, at the longest, once in two or three months, for this is the most efficacious means to keep them from vice and advance them in virtue. And as pious parents thus try to implant in their children the principles of a Christian life, so they will not fail, on the other hand, to remove all that endangers and opposes it. Accordingly, they will not allow the larger children to sleep with them, nor suffer those of opposite sexes to be in one bed; they do not let their neglect of prayer pass uncensured, nor permit them to run about in idleness and mischief at night; they do not tolerate unbecoming plays or dances, nor permit the daughters either to stay up alone in the company of young men, or go to balls, except on extraordinary occasions, and even then only in company with their mothers, or some trustworthy persons who will not let them stay too long, or be accompanied home by young men.

Christian parents will banish from their houses heretical and superstitious books and indecent pictures; they will not knowingly allow cursing and swearing, idleness, tale-bearing, or vanity in dress. If their children are about to marry, they will take care that the betrothed never meet alone, much less live together. To preserve a true Christian mind in their children, parents must set them a good example, and admonish them in season. They should often repeat to them what the saintly Queen Blanche said to her little son Louis, "My child, I had rather see you die than offend God by one mortal sin."

Thus far, then, we have the first duty of parents; how great and important is it, for every thing depends upon a truly good education. If that is neglected, God will demand from parents the souls of the children whom he has given them.

2. The second duty of parents to their children is *watchfulness*. Admonitions, warnings, good example, and other means, all will be of no avail without watching. Parents must take pains to know whether their children attend the instructions provided for them; must observe what they learn; whether they go to church; with whom they associate; what books they read; what are their predominant passions; what they do when alone, and what in company. In this way they will soon come to know the faults of their children, and will be able the more easily to correct them.

3. The third duty of parents to children is, to punish them. There are persons who appear to see no faults in their children, as if they were perfection, but good parents do not think so; for they know too well that the heart of man is, from his youth, inclined to evil, and are therefore determined to discover and correct their children's faults; for this purpose, they use all the means which reason and religion furnish—such as admonitions, warnings, and, if nothing else will answer, even the harder punishments of privations and the rod; in administering which, however, they take care not to be angry, scold, or curse, so as to give the children an occasion of learning evil; but they do what is necessary, quietly and constantly, remembering the proverb, "He who spares the rod, loves not his child."

On the Duties of Children to their Parents.

"And he was subject to them."—*Luke ii. 51.*

Children owe their parents—

1. *Filial veneration*, from the obligation of which neither office nor high position can exempt them; for parents are the representatives of God himself. Children should, therefore, never meet their parents with rough and insolent words, but with such only as are dutiful and becoming, and this even when they may think themselves to have been unjustly dealt

with; they should never despise, nor be ashamed of their parents, for Jesus was not ashamed of his, though poor and humble.

2. In the second place, children owe their parents *punctual obedience*, and this in all things that are not sinful; particularly such as relate to the salvation of the soul. Seeing that parents incur, in this regard, such an awful responsibility, should good children be displeased at the desire of parents to save their own souls, and those of their offspring?

3. Tender and practical love is the third duty of children to parents. Next after God, their parents are children's greatest benefactors. What love, what care, what sacrifices, what privations, what sleepless nights, have they not cost their parents from their earliest days? Children should, therefore, remember well how much they owe for all this devotion, and how justly they will make themselves liable to the curse of God, if they act unlovingly towards father or mother; if they strike at them; disown them; or leave them to suffer in time of want. They should consider, too, what so many examples in Holy Scripture show (such as those of Tobias, of Joseph, and of others)—what a blessing they will receive for their filial love. Children should assist their parents in their domestic affairs as much as they can, and give to them in their old age, affectionately and abundantly, whatever they need. Good children never divulge the faults of their parents; they love them too well to expose them to the contempt of others; in sickness they wait on them, calling in the priest and the physician, and neglecting nothing either in regard to their temporal or eternal welfare; after death, they have them decently interred, and never forget to pray for them.

If all children would behave thus, what a change there would be in Christian families!

Instruction on the Church Service.

“They found him in the temple.”—*Luke* ii. 46.

“A living sacrifice your reasonable service.”—*Rom.* xii. 1.

Into how many kinds may we divide the divine service ?

Into three—public, private, and domestic ; to each of which every Christian should give his best attention.

What is it to serve God in public ?

To take part in the divine service as celebrated by the bishops, priests, or other ministers of the Church, and to show ourselves before men as worshippers and servants of God.

Of what is the public divine service composed ?

Of the sacrifice of the mass, prayer, singing, making the sign of the cross, the use of incense, sermons, the dispensing of sacraments, processions, blessings (as of candles at Candlemas, of baptismal fonts, on the vigils of Easter and Pentecost), and of other rites.

Are we bound to assist at the public service ?

Yes ; and for various reasons : 1. It is a duty of justice to God, who, on account of his infinite greatness, majesty, love, and manifold perfections, deserves that we should worship him publicly in the congregation, and serve him with veneration, love, and gratitude. 2. Christ has here given us an example, by attending the public service of the temple when he was twelve years old ; and he himself instituted the sacraments, and the holy sacrifice of the mass. 3. The Church strictly enjoins us to attend her public services on Sundays and holy-days of obligation. 4. Care for the salvation of our souls, and true love for ourselves, require of us this attendance, for there it is that we are instructed in the truths and duties of our religion ; are incited to good works ; are consoled in our sufferings ; are elevated to heaven by the ceremonies of the Church ; are edified by the good example of others ; and particularly, drawn to love of our neighbor, since we all appear in church as one family, children of one and the same Father, redeemed by the blood of Christ. 5. Love to our neighbor also enforces this duty ; since it requires us to set a good example to others, and they who are not present at church give

scandal, which must be the greater when they, who thus show their contempt for the Church services, are parents, and even, it may be, respectable and learned persons.

Are family devotions also necessary ?

Certainly ; every family should assemble to pay the duty of worship to God. Thus the Saviour, in communion with his disciples, often prayed and worshipped his Heavenly Father. Family worship is of great benefit ; it causes the household to live and work together in love and harmony ; it promotes fervor in prayer, guards against immorality, animates to virtue and piety, and brings down the blessing of God on the house. What a beautiful custom would it be, if, as our pious ancestors did, fathers and mothers nowadays would say morning and evening prayers with their families, and at times would read to them from some good book ; or, which would be of the greatest advantage, go over with them the instructions of sermon and catechism.

What is private devotion ?

It consists in meditation and oral prayer by ourselves, in retirement ; to testify to God our veneration for and dependence on him. Care for our souls, the admonitions and example of our Saviour, alike urge us to pray often. The whole life of a Christian should indeed be a continual prayer ; that is, he should *pray without ceasing*, by performing all his works to the honor of God, and according to his holy will.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

At the Introit the Church invites us to thank God for the Incarnation of his only-begotten Son : “ *Let all the earth adore thee, and sing to thee, O God ; let it sing a psalm to thy name, thou the most high ; all earth sing to the Lord ; praise his name, bring him praise and honor.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Almighty, eternal God, who disposest and governest all things in heaven and earth, hearken, we beseech thee, to the humble petitions of thy people, and give us thy peace, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Epistle. (Rom. xii. 6-16.)

Brethren having different gifts, according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, to be used according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, in ministering; or he that teacheth, in doctrine, he that exhorteth in exhorting, he that giveth with simplicity, he that ruleth with carefulness, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Hating that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good. Loving one another with the charity of brotherhood, in honor preventing one another. In carefulness not slothful. In spirit fervent. Serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope. Patient in tribulation. Instant in prayer. Communicating to the necessities of the saints. Pursuing hospitality. Bless them that persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep. Being of one mind one towards another. Not minding high things, but consenting to the humble.

What are those gifts of which St. Paul here speaks?

They were various; some being extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as the gift of prophecy, by virtue of which certain persons were enabled to declare the mysteries of the faith in the words of inspiration, and to predict future events; others again, had the gifts requisite for different offices, as, for example, the deacons, who had care of the poor; the bishops and priests, to whom belonged the duty of teaching and exhorting.

What does the Apostle teach us by mentioning these various gifts?

That God has confided these offices and gifts to those who receive them, as talents, which they must employ in wisdom, and according to his will,—that is, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. That no one might endanger his own soul by neglect of his office, the Apostle warns them against faults and imperfections in the discharge of their duty.

How must one act in the administration of an office ?

He must see that he discharges it with conscientious solicitude to stand well with God. The superiors of a congregation or house should, therefore, examine themselves whether they give satisfaction in all and to all ; they should avoid pride, hatred, and imperiousness, giving their orders in humility, and simplicity of heart, and their admonitions in prudence, kindness, and love. How amiable would all superiors and parents appear in their offices, if they meet their inferiors according to the advice of St. Paul, in mercy and love, without dissimulation.

What other lessons does the Apostle give us in this Epistle ?

That we should hate that which is evil, and love that which is good ; that we should love one another with brotherly love, and practise works of mercy. This love includes also respect, courtesy, and affability, in which we should anticipate each other ; we should not be slothful in our duties, but solicitous and fervent, as in the service of God ; the hopes which we derive from our religion should fill our hearts with joy, strengthen them in adversities, and preserve them in patience. We should also co-operate with the grace of God ; and that we may have assistance from above to do so, should pray instantly. All these exhortations should produce in us perseverance in faith, hope, and charity.

Who are these saints whom Christians are to assist in their necessities ?

They are their brethren ; for Christians in general are thus called saints, firstly, because the Christian religion leads to sanctity ; and, secondly, because in the first period of Christianity, to be a Christian and to be a saint were almost the same thing. We must, therefore, minister to the necessities of our Christian brethren, practising hospitality and charity.

What does the Apostle mean by those words, *rejoice with them that rejoice, &c.* ?

That we should take part in their happiness and misfortune ; rejoicing in their prosperity, consoling and assisting them in sufferings. If we admire such sympathy in any man, how

much more lovely does it become in the Christian! To preserve brotherly love, the best means is humility, by which we avoid thinking more of ourselves than of others, and become capable of doing justice to their talents and good qualities, meeting them with respect, amiability, and kindness,—thus mutual peace will be preserved, while *among the proud are always contentions* (Prov. xiii. 10).

Practical Instructions for Superiors.

They must expect a severe judgment who seek offices only for the sake of emolument, forcing a way into them, either without the requisite qualifications, or, if possessing them, caring little for their duty, and regarding bribes and presents, rather than justice. Of such God complains through Isaias, saying to the Israelites, *Thy princes are faithless, companion of thieves: they all love bribes, they run after rewards: they judge not for the fatherless, and the widow's cause cometh not in to them* (Isaias i. 23). *But, alas, horribly and speedily will God appear to them, for a most severe judgment shall be for them, and they shall be mightily tormented.*

Aspiration.

O God, give us thy grace to follow faithfully what St. Paul teaches us of humility and charity, that we may have compassion on all who are in need, and not exalt ourselves above our neighbors, but, humbling ourselves with the humble, may merit, with them, to be exalted. Amen.

Gospel. (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 to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled

them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Why was Jesus with his mother and disciples present at the wedding?

1. In order there to reveal his majesty, and by that means to establish and confirm the belief in his divinity. 2. To show that marriage is pleasing to God. 3. To let us understand how pious the bridegroom and bride were. Would that all who are about to enter into matrimony might thereby learn that only the fear of God, a Christian life, and a clear conscience, will make them worthy of the presence of Jesus at their wedding, and gain them God's blessing; while a life of sensuality and pleasure will drive God from them, and make their marriage unhappy. 4. To teach us that those pleasures are permitted which are in accordance with reason and Christianity, and neither sinful nor leading to sin. Yet how can those weddings be counted among innocent pleasures where pride displays itself, and excesses of every kind are committed?

Why did Mary intercede for the bride and bridegroom when the wine was failing?

She was sorry for them, for she is the mother of mercy, and the tender-hearted mediatrix of the afflicted and destitute. Besides, the number of the guests had been considerably increased by the presence of Jesus and his disciples, so that the wine was not sufficient for all. To this, therefore, the mother of Jesus directed his attention, wishing, perhaps, to save the bridegroom and bride expense, on account of their being poor. By this we learn to help the poor, particularly those who are too modest to beg, and if we have not the means of helping them ourselves, to obtain help for them, by recommending them to such as are willing and able; and, in our own need,

to address ourselves to Mary, the mother of mercy, at whose intercession the Saviour wrought his first miracle.

What is the meaning of the words, *woman, what is that to me and thee?*

According to the idiom of the Hebrew language, they mean as much as, "Mother, be not anxious; I will provide the wine as soon as the hour, appointed by my Father, is come." His mother evidently so understood his answer, for she said to the waiters immediately after, *Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye.* Jesus, therefore, did not offend his mother by saying, *Woman, what is that to me and thee,* but he thus gave her, and all who were present, to understand that he had not received the power of working miracles as the son of woman, but that he possessed it as the Son of God, and should use it according to the will of his Father. He thus teaches us to await, in all things, the time appointed by God, and to act, in whatever concerns his honor, without human respect, and with reference only to the divine will.

Why does Jesus command the wine to be carried to the chief steward of the feast?

1. To preserve order, and avoid any misuse of the wine among the guests. 2. To let the chief steward taste it, that, by his announcing and certifying the miracle, the disciples of Jesus and all present might believe in him.

Aspiration.

I thank thee, O Jesus, for the grace of knowing thy divinity; grant that I may persevere in this knowledge till death, in order to enjoy the contemplation of thy Godhead in eternity.

Instruction on the Sacrament of Marriage.

What is marriage, and why has God instituted it?

Marriage is a free and mutual union for life between two single persons, established by God for the propagation of the human race, for the mutual assistance of the parties in the trials of life, and for the prevention of impurity (1 Corinth. vii. 2). It is also a means of educating children honestly, and of instructing them well, particularly in matters of faith. Jesus

Christ has added to marriage a particular dignity and consecration, in making it a sacrament.

Is matrimony, then, a sacrament?

Yes; for St. Paul calls matrimony a great sacrament in Christ and in the Church (Eph. v. 32); and, according to the holy fathers, the Church has held matrimony for a sacrament from the time of the Apostles until now, which she would not have done had not Christ raised it to that dignity.

What is the outward sign of grace in the sacrament of matrimony?

The contract, or mutual union, of the bride and bridegroom before the pastor, or, with his permission, before any other priest, in the presence of two witnesses. Those who are engaged to be married must be single, and free from any impediment.

What grace is received in this sacrament?

1. Sanctifying grace; 2. Grace to keep matrimonial fidelity inviolate; 3. Grace to give children a Christian education; 4. Grace to suffer patiently the troubles unavoidable in married life, and to live together peaceably; 5. Grace to assist each other in obtaining salvation. How much do married persons need these graces, to fulfil their mutual obligations!

How must persons prepare themselves to obtain these graces?

1. By living in the fear of God, and in purity; for these virtues will procure the grace and benediction of the Lord. 2. By invoking the Holy Ghost, to know whether they are called to that state or not. 3. By acquiring the virtues necessary for matrimony, with sufficient knowledge of the obligations of our holy religion, and of matrimony. 4. By regarding, in their choice, a Christian heart, a gentle disposition, purity, diligence, love of order, and regularity, rather than beauty and wealth; for without these virtues, married life becomes a hell. 5. By cleansing their conscience by a good confession—a general confession on that day is recommended—and by receiving worthily holy communion. The persons to be married should also assist at the mass, with the greatest devotion, that their union may be sanctified by the holy sacrifice, and that God may give them

grace to begin their married life with the proper dispositions, and to perform faithfully its obligations.

With what intention must one enter into holy matrimony ?

With such intention as is suitable to the reasons for which matrimony was instituted ; like Tobias, who said, *O Lord, thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which thy name may be blessed forever* (Tobias viii. 9). If persons would enter into matrimony in this manner, it would be holy, pleasing to God, and blessed ; then the words of St. Paul would be verified, *The wife shall be saved through child-bearing, if she continue in faith, and love, and sanctification, with sobriety* (1 Tim. ii. 15). If, on the other hand, persons seek marriage to satisfy fleshly lusts, excluding God from their thoughts, they thereby commit a mortal sin, and the devil gains power over them (Tobias vi. 17).

Why are there so many unhappy marriages ?

For the reason that many do not prepare themselves sufficiently, but contract marriage imprudently and indiscreetly ; sometimes without knowing each other well enough ; sometimes without any prospect of a subsistence. Some are unhappy because they live in sin until the very day of their marriage, and perhaps commit sacrilege at that sacrament by making a bad confession, and by receiving holy communion unworthily ; some do not think of asking God for light, and grace, and blessing ; others again make themselves drunk on the day of their marriage, even before going to church, ridicule the sacrament, and keep their wedding with excesses and scandals, greater than those of the Gentiles.

Do parties betrothed sin by living together as man and wife ?

Certainly ; for they thereby live in fornication, and bring down upon themselves the just wrath of God. A mere promise of marriage is not marriage, as some seem to think. To avoid this sin, the Church does not allow parties betrothed to live under one roof.

Why are the banns of marriage published on three successive days ?

In order that, if any impediment exists, such as consanguin

ity or affinity, or if the parties, being under age, desire to be married without the consent of their parents, it may be made known to the pastor, and thus illegal marriages be prevented. In case of impediment, the parties may apply for dispensation, but must not try to procure it fraudulently. When consanguinity or affinity, within the prohibited degrees, exists, the parties should be warned against such marriages, for they are seldom happy.

How is the sacrament of Matrimony administered?

The persons to be married kneel before the altar, when the priest usually addresses them briefly on the importance and obligations of matrimony; exhorting them to mutual fidelity, and calling upon them, in the presence of the two witnesses, to express their mutual consent; after which he says: "I join you in matrimony, in the name of the Father, ✝ and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Then the ring is blessed, in the following manner:

V. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R. Who hath made heaven and earth.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy Spirit.

Let us pray.

Bless, ✝ O Lord, this ring, which we bless in thy name, that she who shall wear it, keeping inviolable fidelity to her spouse, may ever remain in peace and in thy will, and always live in mutual charity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The priest then sprinkles the ring with holy water, and the bridegroom taking it, puts it on the fourth finger of the left hand of the bride, saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Why are the bride and bridegroom blessed by the priest?

That they may receive from God, through the prayers of the Church (when there is no obstacle in mortal sin), peace, health, and happiness, with special grace to bear patiently every cross

of married life, to rear children in accordance with the law of religion, and to fulfil faithfully their duties to each other.

Why do the parties mutually give each other the hand and ring?

As a token of the union they enter into, before God and his Church, and of the obligation they contract to be faithful to each other till death, and to assist each other in adversity.

What ought they to do after the administration of the sacrament?

To thank God for the grace therein given them, and to pray, "Confirm, O God, this which thou hast wrought in us, that we may keep, until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, what we have now promised before thee." They should remind themselves also of their duties, as explained by the priest, and of the admonitions given before marriage. These instructions are taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (ch. v.), in which he represents the union of Christ and his Church as a pattern for their life.

1. Thus, as Christ is with his Church until the end of time, so married persons should be faithful to each other as long as they live, endeavoring to preserve unity and peace, and inciting each other by word and example, to the praise of God, and the observance of his holy commands.

2. The husband, in particular, should look upon his wife as his consort, not his servant. Although he is the head of the woman, he must not do her any injustice, as by treating her cruelly, or striking her, for the head never hurts the body. Besides, the husband represents Jesus Christ, who compares himself to a lamb, and who loved his Church, and died for it: so ought husbands to love their wives.

3. But wives should be subject to their husbands in all things that are good. For *as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let women be to the husbands in all things*—sin excepted (Eph. v. 24). They should also, for the sake of their husbands, bear patiently and cheerfully the trials and adversities of life, as the Church bears so many persecutions and crosses, for Christ's sake.

4. Both husband and wife should think and speak well of

each other ; neither one distrusting the acts of the other, but putting the best construction on them. Talebearers they should avoid, as they would serpents, not allowing them to enter the house. Abusive words and insults from one to the other should never be heard, nor murmurs and repinings ; but all disagreements should be adjusted in mildness and love. The husband will correct a wicked woman better by kind and friendly words, than by cursing and striking ; and the wife will win over her wicked husband sooner by silence and patience, than by quarrelsome and sharp answers. Should reproof make an evil worse, it is better then to be still and wait ; and as the blessing of God depends upon peace and harmony, each should yield to the other, enduring faithfully till death, and saying, “ God has patience with the disorderly life of my wife or my husband, I will bear it too. God bears with me a sinner, why should not I bear with others ? ”

5. If the married persons have no children, or if God takes them away, they should not mourn immoderately ; for he knows best what to do, and what he does is right. It is far better to have no children, or to have them in heaven, than to see them grow up in sin and wickedness.

6. The marriage debt should not become a scandal to others, least of all to the children. *Marriage honorable in all, and the bed undefiled* (Heb. xiii. 4). *Let the husband render the marriage debt to his wife, and the wife also in like manner to her husband* (1 Cor. vii. 3), but always according to the law of God. Alas for those who try to prevent one object of holy matrimony, the procreation of children. In the holy Scriptures there is a man (his name was Onan) branded as wicked because he thus sinned against the order of nature, for which he was punished with instant death.

7. Finally, they should keep inviolably that mutual fidelity which they solemnly promised before God. For as Christ had but one spouse, so should the bride have but one bridegroom, and the husband love only his wife ; to turn to another, and even to desire another in heart, would be adultery, and *adultery God will judge* (Heb. xiii. 4).

Prayer.

O most amiable Jesus, who didst work thy first miracle at the wedding of Cana, by changing water into wine, thereby revealing thy divine power and majesty, and honoring matrimony, grant, we beseech thee, that marriage may be kept honest and holy by thy faithful people, by living in modesty and the fear of God; that so they may gain for themselves and their children the everlasting joys of heaven. Amen.

Instruction on Mixed Marriages.

What are mixed marriages?

Those in which the parties are of different religions.

Are such marriages valid?

Yes, if no impediment exists. According to the doctrine of the Church they are also indissoluble. She, however, disapproves of them, and in some cases declares them sinful.

Why does the Church thus oppose mixed marriages?

Because the Catholic party is thereby exposed to the danger of neglecting, and becoming indifferent to his religion; or rather, as experience shows, of apostatizing from it. *He that loveth danger shall perish in it* (Ecclus. iii. 27). 2. Because it is to be feared that the children will be brought up in some other than the true religion. For even though the non-Catholic party may have promised that the children shall be brought up in the Catholic Church, still various circumstances, death for instance, may hinder the fulfilment of that promise. *But if any have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel* (1 Tim. v. 8). And even when the children are brought up in the Catholic faith, their education will always be deficient, because the father and mother evidently cannot agree as to the most important affair in life, that is, as to religion. 3. Because such married persons could not pray, or receive holy communion together, or even use the same food at meals—the Catholic being bound to fast and abstain, on certain days, from flesh-meat, but not the Protestant.

What other reasons are there why persons should be dissuaded from mixed marriages?

1. The uncertainty, to the Catholic, of receiving the necessary grace of the sacrament of Matrimony. 2. The advantage which the Protestant has, in being able to get a divorce and marry again, during the life of the other party, which a Catholic cannot do. 3. The scandal frequently given to the congregation by such marriages. 4. The grief which they cause to parents, brothers, sisters, relatives, and particularly to pastors, who are responsible for the souls of their parishioners.

Why is it that, notwithstanding all these objections and dangers, so many enter into mixed marriages?

For such reasons as the following: 1. Some seek in matrimony the satisfaction of lust, being carried away by blind and sensual passion. 2. Many again, before marriage, have already become indifferent about religion, and think little of having children brought up for Heaven. 3. Or they are intent on worldly advantages, such as having riches, honor, influential relatives; forgetting these words of Christ, *What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?* (Matt. xvi. 26.) 4. Or they refuse to see the danger and unlawfulness of mixed marriages, and only acknowledge their imprudence when they can no longer change their position.

It is the duty of the righteous to avoid evil; of the prudent, to shun danger; of the saint, not to communicate with the wicked; of the wise, to learn from the experience of others; but it is the act of a fool to throw himself into the fire. Samson was the bravest of men; Solomon the wisest; Ahab the most powerful; but each of them fell by strange women.

Upon what conditions does the Church allow mixed marriages?

Upon condition that the children, without regard to sex, shall be brought up in the Catholic Church, and that the Catholic party shall be protected in the exercise of his religion.

What are we to think of mixed marriages where none, or only a portion of the children, are to be brought up in the Catholic Church?

Such marriages could not be solemnized by any Catholic priest, because the Catholic party would not enter into matrimony with the right intention, and therefore would be unworthy of the grace of God.

What is to be observed by Catholics who are parties in mixed marriages?

They must, 1, be firm in their faith; for Christ says, *Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father, who is in Heaven* (Matt. x. 32, 33). *And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican* (Matt. xvii. 17). They must, 2, bring up their children carefully in the Catholic religion, so as to be able to say on the day of Judgment, "Behold, here are all thou gavest me, and none perished through my fault." They must, 3, try by word and deed to bring over the other party to the truth, as it is in the Catholic Church, remembering what St. James says: *My brethren, if any of you err from the truth, and one convert him, he must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins* (James v. 19, 20). They must not, 4, either through persuasion or by threats, be led to deride or slander the Catholic Church, her ceremonies, or precepts.

What shall we think of Catholics who get married out of the Church?

They not only give scandal, but exclude themselves from the sacraments. If they desire to return to the Church, they must obtain absolution from the Bishop, and perform the penance imposed by their pastor.

Instruction on the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

This feast was, in former times, kept on the feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, but was afterwards transferred to the 14th of January, and finally, at the request of the emperor Charles VI., was fixed by Pope Innocent XIII. in the year 1721, on the second Sunday after Epiphany. This festival comprises, as it were in one, all the feasts of our Lord, as the

Holy Name of Jesus (Saviour) brings before us all the love of him who healed and sanctified us. To remind us frequently of the mystery of the incarnation, Pope John XXII. had already, in the year 1316, introduced the Angelus Domini, or Angelic Salutation, and had attached an indulgence to the Christian salutation, "Laudetur Jesus Christus—Jesus Christ be praised." There exists in the Church, also, the custom, so old as to have the force of a law, of showing our veneration and love for the Holy Name of Jesus, by bowing our heads when we hear it spoken.

At the Introit of the Mass, the Church points us to the greatest proof of divine goodness, that we were redeemed because the God-man for our sake humbled himself to that death on the cross, for which he was glorified by his Heavenly Father.

In the name of Jesus let every knee bow of those that are in heaven or earth, or under the earth, and let every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10, 11). O Lord our Lord, how wonderful is thy name in the whole earth! (Ps. viii. 10.)

Prayer.

O God, who hast appointed thine only-begotten Son the Saviour of mankind, and hast commanded that he should be called Jesus, mercifully grant that we may enjoy in Heaven the blessed vision of him whose holy name we venerate upon earth. Through the same our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (Acts iv. 8-12.)

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

Explanation.

Who could believe that Peter, who a few months back was induced by a servant to deny his Saviour, should here speak so openly? Thus it is that we speak when filled with the Holy Ghost. Happy he who in such manner repairs his faults!

The words, *Jesus is the stone which was rejected by you builders*, mean, that the Jews did not acknowledge him to be the Saviour, but despised and crucified him; nevertheless he became the head of the corner, uniting Jews and Gentiles in one Church, in whom alone can we be saved. For he only can free us from the chains of sin and error with which every one is bound, for he alone is the Truth. He only, as the Son of God, has power to destroy sin and make us truly just, and the just only can be saved. Let us, therefore, love him, and seek our salvation in him; then we shall confess and glory in his holy name, and proclaim forever the praise of the Lord, our Saviour and Redeemer.

Gospel.—(As on the Feast of the Circumcision, or New Year's day.)

Words of St. Bernard on the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus excites in us holy thoughts, fills our hearts with noble sentiments, strengthens virtue, begets good works, and nourishes pure desires. Every kind of food leaves the soul dry, unless seasoned with the salt and oil of this name. If, therefore, you are about to write books, write first the name of Jesus; or else, without that name, they will have no charm or attraction for me. The name of Jesus is honey in our mouths, light in our eyes, flame in our hearts. This name is a cure for all diseases of our souls. Are you sad? Think of Jesus, speak out his holy name, and the clouds will vanish, and peace come down anew from heaven. Have you sinned, so that in despair you fear the nets of death? invoke the name of Jesus, and you will feel how soon life returns. No obduracy, no weakness, no cold of the heart can resist it. There is no heart which will not soften and open in tears at the name of Jesus. Are you surrounded by dangers and tribulations?

name Jesus, and your uncertainties are at an end. No man, in however great need, and even at the point of despair, ever invoked this powerful name, without receiving great assistance. It was given to cure all our evils, to temper the violence of anger, to quench the fire of concupiscence, to quiet the motions of pride, the pain of our wounds, the thirst of avarice, the fever of passions, and the propensities of lust.

In repeating this Holy Name we bring before our minds that most humble and gentle heart of Jesus, from which we have learned our ideas of the most tender mercy that ever appeared. The name of Jesus, the most pure, the most holy, the most noble, the most merciful of mankind, the God-man, the name of Holiness itself, and of all graces and virtues! To think of Jesus is to think of the great and infinite God, who having given his life as an example to us, will also give us the grace to follow him, in word and deed. The name of Jesus, penetrating the heart, enriches it with heavenly virtue. We, therefore, say with St. Paul, *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha* (1 Cor. xvi. 22).

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

The Church, knowing that she cannot sufficiently love and praise God, at the Introit of the Mass invites all angels to praise him, in the words of David from the 96th Psalm: *Adore God, all you his angels: Sion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Juda rejoiced. The Lord hath reigned, let the earth rejoice, let many islands be glad.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and extend the right hand of thy majesty for our protection. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Rom. xii. 16-21.)

Brethren: Be not wise in your own conceits. To no man rendering evil for evil. Providing good things not only in the sight of God,

but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as is in you, having peace with all men. Not revenging yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place unto wrath, for it is written: "Revenge to me: I will repay, saith the Lord." But "if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink; for doing this thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.

Why should we not be wise in our own conceit?

It would not agree with humility, which teaches us to acknowledge our own ignorance. We must, therefore, profit by the judgment of others, and ask of God all knowledge and wisdom. Self-esteem and pride would lead us to manifold sins, against which St. Paul warns us in the above Epistle.

How can we have peace with all men?

If we carefully avoid every thing by which peace is destroyed, and do all we can to preserve harmony, and prevent discord. Whoever loves peace, will be very cautious in his opinions, his sayings, and doings; he will remove from his heart all unfounded suspicion, and rash judgment; he will not offend others in words, nor speak disrespectfully of the absent; he will watch over himself and suppress his anger; when offended, he will either defend himself quietly, and without passion, or else remain silent. He will meet every one with meekness and affability, and, being in peace with all around him, will be a peacemaker when dissensions break out among others. How amiable is such a peaceable Christian! *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God* (Matt. v. 9).

How are those words to be understood, *it is written, Revenge to me: I will repay, saith the Lord?*

They mean, that God alone has the right to revenge, but not man; and as revenge is a retaliatory punishment of evil, they who revenge themselves interfere with the right of God. We should not harbor thoughts of revenge at the least offence: it is only a sign of weakness, as it is a sign of a feeble stomach not to be able to digest its food. "Are you impatient," says St. Ambrose, "then you will be conquered: but do you suffer in patience, then you will be conqueror."

What must we do then when our honor is attacked?

It cannot be in any case an indifferent matter what opinion others have of our character, for our happiness and success in life may be greatly affected thereby. When, therefore, an injury by others brings serious consequences upon us, it is not only permissible, but even a duty, to defend, with the assistance of the civil authorities, if need be, our honor and good name. In matters of less importance we should leave our assailants to God, according to the admonition of the Apostle.

Is it wrong to wish our neighbor the evil that he wished us?

Certainly; for it is contrary to the law of God, who commands us *to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate us* (Matt. v. 44; Luke vi. 35).

How are we to *heap coals of fire on the heads of our enemies?*

When, according to the will of God, we render good for evil, thereby confounding our enemies and causing them to burn with shame; for how can they be indifferent, when they see that, instead of getting angry at their insults, we remain quiet and peaceable, and return good for evil? St. Augustine explains the above words as follows: "You will heap burning coals of love on his head, for nothing sooner begets love than to meet one with love."

Learn, therefore, from Christ and the saints, not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good; that is, to do good to them that hate and calumniate us.

Aspiration.

Enable me, O Heavenly Father, so to follow these admonitions of St. Paul, in regard to the love of my enemies, that I may be thy child, who makest thy sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good.

Gospel. (Matt. viii. 1-13.)

At that time: When Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him; and behold a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And

Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man; but go show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them. And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him. And the centurion, making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And Jesus, hearing this, marvelled; and said to them that followed him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion, Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.

Why did the leper say to Jesus, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean?*

He believed Jesus to be the promised Messiah, who, as true God, had the power to heal him. Hereby we learn to place our confidence in the all-mightiness of God, who is a helper in trouble (Ps. xlv. 2). But when we pray, we must be careful, like the leper, not to prescribe to God what he shall give us, but commence our prayers with these words, "*Lord, if thou wilt*—if it be pleasing to thee, and advantageous to me, give me this or that grace.

Why did Jesus stretch forth his hand and touch him?

Jesus, without doubt, thereby gave him to understand that his leprosy was to be healed. Let us also imitate the example of Jesus, by assisting each other in sickness, not allowing ourselves to be kept back from this work of charity by aversion or excessive delicacy.

Why did Jesus say, *I will, be thou made clean?*

To reveal his all-mightiness, and to show that all things were

subject to him. *He hath spoken, and it was done ; he hath commanded, and it was created.*

Why did Jesus say, *see thou tell no man ?*

To show his modesty and humility, and to teach us, when we do good works, not to sound a trumpet in order to be honored by the world, thus losing our reward (Matt. vi. 2, 3). God will make them known, even against our will, whenever it is necessary for his glory, and the edification of our neighbor.

What does the Saviour mean by saying, *go, show thyself to the priest ?*

1. Christ hereby honored the law of Moses himself, and showed that he would have it fulfilled as faithfully by others as it was by him ; for, according to that law, lepers were required to show themselves to the priests, who were to decide whether they were clean or not. He also teaches us that priests should receive their proper respect. 2. He reminded him who was cleansed to give thanks to God, by offering the gift which Moses commanded. In like manner should we show our thankfulness for every benefit received from God. 3. He intended that the Jewish priests who were enemies of Christ, should be convinced that the leper was really cleansed. By this we learn to be prudent, even in our best actions.

What does the solicitude of the centurion teach us ?

That masters and mistresses should take care of their sick servants, nurse them, and do whatever they can for their restoration to health ; for it is not the act of a Christian, but of a tyrant, to dismiss servants when they are sick. It is also a duty to see that they are visited in their sickness by the priest, that they may receive the holy sacraments.

Why did our Saviour say, *I will come and heal him ?*

To show his profound humility, in that although he was God, and the Lord of lords, he did not hesitate to visit a poor servant : by which humility he confounds many masters.

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

Out of humility, for he acknowledged Jesus to be Almighty God. "Hereby," says St. Augustine, "he made himself worthy that Christ should enter into his heart." We may learn

from this example, to humble ourselves before God, particularly when about to receive Holy Communion.

Why does the centurion speak of the obedience of his soldiers?

To show his firm belief in the power of the Divine Saviour; for it was as much as to say, that as his soldiers were ready at any moment to obey his commands, so all the powers of nature were subject to the Almighty, at whose word sickness would instantly cease. It would not, therefore, be necessary for Jesus to come to his house; but his commands, though absent, would be sufficient. If the centurion, who was a Gentile, could have so much faith and confidence in Christ, should not Christians be ashamed to have so little?

What is the meaning of the words, *that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, &c.*?

Christ said this on account of the stubborn Jews, who believed not in him, and rejected his doctrine. Many Gentiles shall come from the east and west to receive the Gospel, and living according to it, shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the Jews, who were the chosen people, the children of God, who had the first title to heaven, shall, for their unbelief and sins, be cast out into the exterior darkness,—that is, into the most exerceiating pains of hell. So will it also be with every Christian who does not live according to his faith. Fear, therefore, that by not co-operating with the grace of God you may be lost forever, while others are saved. *With fear and trembling work out your salvation* (Phil. ii. 12).

Aspiration.

O Jesus, fountain of consolation, give me the faith and confidence of the leper, that I may always trust in thy Almighty power, and give myself up to thy divine will. O most humble Jesus, give me the humility of the centurion, that I may for the sake of thee, love and assist my neighbor, particularly those of my household and family, the poor and the sick, and gain an eternal reward. Amen.

Practical Instruction on Resignation to the Will of God.

“Lord, if thou wilt.”—*Matt.* viii. 2.

Those persons have already heaven upon earth, who alike in prosperity and in misfortune, give themselves up entirely to the will of God, so that being of one will and heart with him, they patiently accept, approve, and are grateful for whatever he sends upon them. Such persons cannot be disconcerted by any cross or adversity, because, whatever it be that God dispenses to them, whether honor or dishonor, poverty or riches, life or death, they are pleased with it, as coming from him. In having no other will than that of God's, they become, as it were, almighty, since the will of God is theirs also. Who can but desire such a state of happiness? It is, however, not difficult to attain, if we believe firmly—

1. That every thing that befalls us is from God: *Shall there be evil in a city which the Lord hath not done* (i. e. permitted)? (*Amos* iii. 6.)

2. That whatever God does, is well done, and for our good. *He hath done all things well* (*Mark* vii. 37). Whoever keeps these two truths in remembrance, will, under any circumstances, be satisfied with the will of God, and enjoy without disturbance quiet and contentment of mind; in fine, he will have a foretaste of that happiness which the saints in heaven find in the union of their will with God's.

Instruction for Masters and Servants.

1. *Masters* should be above all things solicitous to have not merely faithful, obedient, and industrious, but also pious servants, who fear God. For the sake of such servants God has often blessed their masters: Laban, for example, on account of Jacob (*Gen.* xxx. 30); Putiphar on account of Joseph (*Gen.* xxxix 5). They should not keep in the house, wicked and bad servants, lest they become guilty of the sins of others, and trifle away the grace of God. The Scripture says, *If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel* (1 *Tim.* v. 8).

2. Masters should love and honor their servants, as they would their children, acting towards them as fathers, not as tyrants; bearing patiently with their frailties and faults; not making them work beyond their strength; not merely giving them time to pray and attend divine service, but seeing that they do it; should pay them their wages, giving them enough; and particularly, should take care of them in sickness.

3. Masters should watch over their servants, if not suspiciously, yet diligently, to guard against dangers, and occasions of sin; not allowing them to run about at night, or permitting them to be alone with persons of the other sex; dismissing those who are dangerous and scandalous, either to the other servants, or to the children of the family. They should at times see whether all are at home or not; and it is far better here to be a little too strict, than too indulgent, for excessive indulgence is a sword that kills the soul. How many servants shall curse their masters for having been too indulgent with them in this particular!

4. Masters should impress upon them that it their duty to receive often the holy sacraments; to love the Catholic Church as their mother, and to die rather than forsake her. If servants are not faithful to their God and their Church, how will they be faithful to their masters?

Servants, on the other hand are obliged—

1. To be obedient to their masters, as to Jesus Christ himself, with good will, even though they see them doing wrong, and in every thing, sin excepted,—in which case they must obey God rather than man, considering that the favor of men lasts not very long, but that sin reaches beyond the grave (Matt. x. 28). They should, therefore, quit as soon as possible a place where they cannot stay without sin; for what will good pay profit them if they lose their souls?

2. They should be diligent and industrious, taking care of their master's property as if it were their own, and often lifting up their hearts during their work, in saying, *I will do this work for thy sake, O God* (Colos. iii. 22, 23, 24).

3. They must not get drunk, nor commit impurity, nor pilfer and steal, nor persuade or assist any one outside the house

to do any such things, and then keep silence. They should neither eat out of the proper times, nor give things away without permission; and should avoid dangerous places and occasions of sin, such as dances and bad or doubtful acquaintances.

4. No calumny should come from their mouths; no false witness; no talk of the faults and errors of those in the house; no tattle, or falsehood.

5. They must keep holy the Sundays and holy-days, and, if they find themselves in danger of sinning in this respect, must say, What will it profit me, the money I earn during the week by the sweat of my brow, if I lose to-day the friendship of Jesus, and my title to Heaven, by wicked words, by gaming, drinking, dancing, and other sins?

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

The *Introit of the Mass* is the same as on the last Sunday.

Prayer.

O God, who knowest that amidst so many dangers we cannot subsist, by reason of our frailty, grant us safety of mind and body, that we may surmount those things, by thy grace, which we suffer for our sins. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Rom. xiii. 8-10.)

Brethren: Owe no man any thing, but to love one another. For he that loveth his neighbor, hath fulfilled the law. For "Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet:" and if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The love of our neighbor worketh no evil. Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law.

How are we to understand those words of St. Paul, *he that loveth his neighbor, hath fulfilled the law?*

St. Augustine explains them as follows: "Our love towards our neighbor must have its origin in the love of God; for if we love our neighbor, we must love him for God's sake. Now

he who loves God keeps the first four commandments, for he believes in God, hopes in him, loves him, and honors him, while he also loves and honors his parents. But he who loves his neighbor keeps the rest of the commandments also, since that love prevents him from doing any injury to his neighbor, so that he will not kill, nor steal, nor calumniate, nor bear false witness; thus he fulfils the law, for *upon these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets* (Matt. xxii. 40).

Prayer.

O Lord Jesus Christ, pour into our hearts holy love, that we, with thy assistance, may fulfil thy holy command of loving our neighbor, which thou hast observed in regard to us.

Gospel. (Matt. viii. 23-27.)

At that time: When Jesus entered into the boat, his disciples followed him: and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awaked 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: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?

Why did Jesus sleep while a great tempest arose in the sea?

1. As man, he felt the need of sleep. 2. He thereby tested the faith of his disciples, and confirmed it, by the miracle of their escape. 3. He, by this occasion, taught the just and pious not to be scandalized, or discouraged if God should visit them with affliction, such as sickness, poverty, or other miseries. 4. He hereby teaches us, also, to seek refuge in him, and encourages us to hope for help. For God often allows the storm to come upon us, permitting us to be persecuted and tried in every manner, while he, sleeping as if he did not care, seems to abandon us in order to prove our patience and love. We should remember that the greater the need, the nearer is God.

Why did our Saviour reprove his disciples?

Because they showed a want of faith and confidence; for had

they been sure that Jesus was the Son of God, they would have been also sure that he could help them as well asleep as awake. Even had they been then drowned, such a death would have been to them the entrance to eternal life. Here we may see how displeasing to God are want of faith and timidity. *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man . . . but blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord* (Jer. xvii. 5, 7). Let us, therefore, in any adversity, or danger, be firm in our belief that God cares for us, and have confidence in him, saying, like his disciples, *Lord, save us, we perish*; or with David, *Arise; why sleepest thou, O Lord? Arise and cast us not off to the end: arise, O Lord, help us, and redeem us for thy name's sake* (Ps. xliii. 23, 26); and he will hear our prayers, if it be for our good, as he quieted the wind and the sea with his almighty word.

What can we further learn from this Gospel?

1. How willingly Jesus assists us. 2. That he will protect his Church in all storms and persecutions, since he the Almighty is always with her. 3. How willingly we should follow Jesus, since even the winds and waves obey him. 4. That we should not look stupidly and with indifference at the wonders of God's omnipotence and benevolence, but from them learn to raise our thoughts in love to him. For if those men wondered, saying, *Who is this, for even the winds and the sea obey him*, how much rather should we know and love God, from the innumerable miracles of his love and power (Rom. i. 20).

Aspiration.

Grant us, O most benign Jesus, great confidence in thy divine assistance, whenever we are in need; and allow us not to be of little faith. Be our Saviour in the many dangers that surround us; make use of thy omnipotence against our enemies; command the impetuous winds and sea of persecution that they may be calm; and give peace and quiet to thy Church, which thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood, that we may serve thee in sanctity and justice, and come safely to the wished-for haven of eternal happiness. Amen.

On Divine Providence.

“But he was asleep.”—*Matt.* viii. 24.

Many persons seem to believe God too great to have the care of the world; as though it were sufficient for him to have created it (if they believe even that), and for the rest, to have left it to chance. What a God would he be if he were as the wicked imagine, either unwilling or unable to govern the world; for if he could not, he would not be Almighty; and if he would not, he would be no longer benevolent; or if ignorant of any thing in the world, then no longer Omniscient. Could a house stand without some one to take care of it? How then could the world and all things in it have stood so long already, and that in such beautiful and admirable order, if God had not preserved it? It is true that the method of the Divine Providence with which God controls all things, is so mysterious, that in considering certain events we might be tempted to assign as the causes of them, the course of nature, or the malice of devils; but Divine Providence cannot be denied, for nothing takes place by mere chance; even the least occurrence happens only by the will or permission of God. The notion of chance, and of being fortunate or unfortunate, is in reality but a foolish fancy, which even the more thoughtful of the heathen rejected. The course of nature is nothing else but God's continual, all-wise, and benevolent preservation, and direction of his creatures. Even the ill-will of men, and of devils, are instruments in his hand for the promotion of good; since he knows how to draw good from the evil that he permits; and, “therefore,” says St. Augustine, “he permits the evil, that the good may not be omitted.”

The Holy Scripture gives us many instances of this Divine Providence. Read only the history of our first parents, of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, the Israelites, Job, Ruth, Tobias, Esther, and Judith,—everywhere we find proofs that God overrules all things, according to his own designs, and for the good of his elect. The Gospel of to-day furnishes an instance of this. Why does Jesus enter into a ship? Why did the tempest arise, and he sleep? Was all this by chance? No;

it was with design, and of divine dispensation; to show the omnipotence of Christ, and to confirm the faith of his disciples. Thus, it is certain, does God provide, guide, and govern all things. This the Holy Scripture, reason, and daily experience certify; and if we look more attentively at the events of our own lives, we shall see clearly the Divine Providence over us, and will give ourselves up to its guidance with greater confidence than heretofore. *The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing* (Ps. ii. 1). Surely we shall want nothing so long as God guides us, if we submit ourselves to his holy will, and are content with his providence; but if we resist that, he will rule us with a rod of iron (Ps. ii. 9). For God will govern us, whether it be with mildness or with severity; he is not a slumbering God, for *behold, he shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel* (Ps. cxx. 4).

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

On this Sunday the Church reminds us how God tolerates the wicked, and exhorts us to love him.

The *Introit* is the same as on the third Sunday after Epiphany.

Prayer.

Preserve, we beseech thee O Lord, thy family, by continued mercy, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, it may be always defended by thy protection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (Col. iii. 12-17.)

Brethren: Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so 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, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

Because it combines all the virtues of which perfection consists. For whoever loves God and his neighbor, practises in a perfect manner all virtues, such as humility, mercy, patience. St. Paul would have all Christians to be rich, that is, well instructed in the word of God, that it may console and strengthen them in all adversities, which purpose is to be attained also by attending at the public services, where Christians edify one another by psalms and canticles.

The Apostle further admonishes us to do all, whatsoever we do, in word or in work—whether it be to eat, or drink, or sleep—to do all in the name of Jesus, in his spirit and according to his will; thus honoring and praising God, our Heavenly Father. How will those persons be troubled on their death-beds, who now neglect to offer up their daily work to God by a good intention, perceiving too late how many treasures of merit they might have gathered; and, on the other hand, how joyful will those be whose conscience certifies them that their whole life has been directed to God as their last end. Would to God that day-laborers, and all who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, might consider this well, and turn their toil to their advantage by a good intention, for without that their labor is but lost, and they will be unhappier after this life than they have been on earth.

* *Aspiration.*

O God of love, patience, and mercy, sanctify our hearts that we may sincerely love thee and our neighbor; do all that we do in thought, word, or deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

On the Singing of the Church.

“Teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God.”—*Col.* iii. 16.

Whence comes the custom of singing psalms and hymns in the Church?

David first commanded, and after him Ezechias, that during the divine service psalms and canticles should be sung by the priests and Levites, alternately in chorus (2 Paralipom. xxix.) The same usage was retained in the Christian Church, as we see in the Epistles of St. Paul to the Ephesians (v. 19, 20), and to the Colossians (iii. 15), that so Christians might, as it were, imitate the angels and saints of God, who praise him without intermission. This is also the object of the present chanting or singing during divine service.

How then should this Christian singing be done?

1. It should, in all, come from the heart, which must give tone and spirit to the singing: *be ye filled with the Holy Ghost* (Eph. v. 18). *Is any of you sad? let him pray; is he cheerful in mind? let him sing* (James v. 13). The pious words of the psalm or hymn should re-echo in our hearts. When a congregation of such as have given up their hearts to God, sing, then love and joy go along with the singing; and what the ear hears and the eye sees, the heart also feels, as the expression of its devotion and happiness. The effect upon St. Augustine he has described as follows: “How many tears have I shed at the Psalms! how much did the sweet singing of the Church move me! As the tones sounded in my ears, the truth made its way into my heart, my tears flowed, and I was filled with joy.” (Aug. Con., Book IX., chap. vi.)

Why are musical instruments used during the service?

Religion, the inner life of the soul, must also show itself outwardly, in order to engage and captivate the minds of men. She is, therefore, intimately connected with the arts. She designs and builds not only the humble chapels, but the most magnificent cathedrals; adorns them with beautiful paintings, and statues; uses the treasures of the earth, as gold, silver, and precious stones, for emblems of inward purity, beauty, and

steadfastness; invites to devotion by the majestic sounds of her bells, and announces in oratory and poetry, the wonders of God. Always full of inspiration, she does not rest until she has brought into wonderful harmony human voices, the deep, hidden tones of the organ, and innumerable instruments, creating thus a heavenly music, and fulfilling the words of the divine singer: *Praise him with sound of the trumpets, praise him with psaltery and harp, praise him with choir and timbrel, praise him with strings and organs, praise him on high-sounding cymbals, praise him on cymbals of joy* (Ps. cl. 3-5). The Council of Trent forbids music containing luxurious and immodest pieces; and it is proper that during Advent and Lent the singing should be without any instrumental accompaniment.

Gospel. (Matt. xiii. 24-30.)

At that time: Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the good man of the house coming said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn; but the wheat gather ye into my barn.

What are parables? and why did Jesus so often propose them?

Parables are relations of events which either actually have happened somewhere, or which might easily have occurred. Those of our Saviour contain always some important lesson, which Jesus either drew from them himself, or left his hearers to infer.

The reasons why he spoke in parables are various: 1. Because it was the usage of the time and age to teach in figures and

parables. 2. To bring the truth more vividly and easily before his hearers. 3. It was a relief to their minds, and enabled them better to remember his instructions. Some parables which he proposed were mysterious; such he did not wish to be understood before the time, as otherwise his enemies would have had an opportunity of killing him before his hour had come. It was, therefore, at the same time both an act of prudence in our Lord, and a kindness and condescension to our frailty, that he spoke in parables.

What is to be understood by the kingdom of heaven?

The Church of God, or the congregation of the faithful upon earth, in which there are good and bad, as there is cockle among the wheat. The Church is so called, because she is the kingdom of heaven on earth, coming from heaven, and leading thither.

What are we to understand by the good seed and the cockle?

By the good seed is meant good Christians, who, being converted by the word of God sown in their hearts, become children of God, and bring forth thousand-fold fruit of good works; the cockle denotes heretics, infidels, and bad men. We are also to understand by the good seed, the word of God, and by the cockle, false doctrines and principles.

When is the cockle sown among the wheat?

While men are asleep. By sleep is here understood, neglectfulness, indifference, and carelessness: 1. On the part of every private Christian who ceases to use the means of salvation by absenting himself from the divine service, by omitting to receive the sacraments, to hear the word of God, or to do good works. His enemy, the devil, then comes immediately, and sows in his heart bad thoughts and desires, doubts and temptations, out of which spring pride, impurity, anger, envy, and avarice. 2. It denotes also, the carelessness of secular and ecclesiastical superiors in not fulfilling the obligations of their office, while they fail to watch over their flock, and to punish the guilty. In this case, it is the easier for bad men, the instruments of the devil, to corrupt the congregation by false doctrine, by mockery of religion, by bad example, and immoral books.

Why does not God gather up the wicked, who are the cockle, and destroy them ?

1. On account of his long-suffering and patience towards the sinner, whom he gives the opportunity of doing penance.
 2. Out of love for the just and righteous ; for should he exterminate the wicked, the just would lose the opportunity of exercising many virtues, such as patience, meekness, mercy, purity, and perseverance to the end, whereby they acquire the merits of eternal life.

But does not the Church lose her sanctity by reason of so many sinners living therein ?

No, the Church still is, and will continue to be holy ; for all her members are sanctified by faith and baptism, and are called to holiness ; they are all under one head, our Lord Jesus Christ, and are led to and preserved in sanctity by her doctrines, laws, and sacraments, if they but follow these, and cooperate with the grace of God ; besides, there always are in the Church saints, whom God glorifies by many miracles. The unholy life of Christians as little deprives the Church of her holiness, as Judas did the Apostles of theirs.

When is the time of harvest ?

The day of Judgment, when, according to St. Matthew (xiii. 49), the angels shall separate the wicked from among the just, that every one may receive his reward, or punishment.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, who hast sown the good seed of thy Divine Word in our hearts, grant that it may bring forth in us, many fold, the fruit of eternal life. Defend us against the enemy, that he may not sow in us false and wicked doctrines to destroy our good works ; preserve us from the sleep of sin and sloth, that we may watch against the temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh, and having overcome them, may die happily. Amen.

On the Inclination to Evil.

“ Whence then hath it cockle ?”—*Matt.* xiii. 27.

What do we mean by the inclination to evil ?

That law in man which draws him to whatever is forbidden. It is no sin to feel that law in us, but the sin is in following it willingly.

Whence comes this inclination to evil ?

It is a consequence, and at the same time a punishment of original sin, transmitted to all men from our first parents, and remaining in us after the guilt and punishment of original sin are washed away in baptism.

Why does it remain after baptism ?

1. To humble us that we may know our frailty and misery, and have recourse to God, our most powerful and kind Father, as children when frightened run to their parents for protection and help. Thus St. Paul besought the Lord, when a sting of flesh was given him (2 Cor. xii. 17).

2. For the greater honor of God ; that the power of his grace may be revealed in us, who thereby, though weak and frail ourselves, yet conquer evil.

3. To try us, and to incite us to the practice of virtue, that we may have the combat and the chance of victory, and not become slothful and wicked. Waters that do not move; putrify; a soldier with no enemy before him, performs no heroic acts: in like manner, we should neither practise virtue nor gain a crown in Heaven, if we had not the opportunity of a contest. “ What torments the combatant, crowns the victor,” says St. Bernard.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

With this week the Church concludes the solemnities of Christmas. At the Introit, which is the same as on the third Sunday after Epiphany, she calls upon the angels to adore and praise God, for the grace of the Incarnation of his divine Son, which gave joy to the Church and all pious men.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that, ever fixing our thoughts on reasonable things, we may perform, both in words and works, the things that are pleasing to thee. Through Christ. Amen.

Epistle. (1 Thess. 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 unto 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 in 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 any thing. For they themselves relate of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. And to wait for his Son from heaven (whom he raised up from the dead), Jesus who hath delivered us from the wrath to come.

Explanation.

St. Paul wishes grace and peace to the Thessalonians; gives them the assurance of his prayers without ceasing, and declares his joy for their having received the faith in Christ; for their being zealous in good works and firm in tribulation, and for their persevering in the hope of reward, whereby they became a pattern to others, who were led to embrace the true religion, and were confirmed in it by their example. Oh, that we could say the same of Christians of the present day! Such a life is the glory of Christianity. Let us, therefore, endeavor to have a living faith, shining forth in all good works, with a firm hope of our salvation, that we too may be an example to unbelievers.

Gospel. (Matt. xiii. 31-35.)

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

Why are the Church and the doctrines of Christ compared to a grain of mustard-seed ?

Because they are very similar in this : that the mustard-seed, though small, grows in Palestine to be very high, spreads wide, and contains a very prolific power. In like manner the Church and doctrine of Christ, though at the beginning very small, increased so fast, and in time arrived at so large a growth as to surpass all other religions, so that the princes and wise men of the world sheltered themselves under the protection of Christianity, as the birds dwell under the branches of the tree. This was first conspicuously seen when the emperor Constantine, and after him the king Clodovaldus and others, became members of the Catholic Church. There are also, even in the smallest sentences of the evangelical doctrine, concealed, as in the mustard-seed, great and powerful truths ; for how many have been converted and become saints by one single sentence of the Gospel, well pondered and put into practice !

Why are the Church and doctrine of Christ compared to leaven ?

Because, as leaven in a short time penetrates and makes palatable a large measure of meal, so the Church and doctrine of Christ penetrated most rapidly three quarters of the globe, corrected the foolish and absurd opinions of the heathen, and gave them a taste for divine things and heavenly wisdom.

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

1. By the numerous and great miracles wrought by the Almighty power of God, to confirm the truth and divinity of the Christian religion. 2. By the love, purity, and excellent morality of the first Christians, which convinced the Gentiles that Christianity was from God. 3. By the persecution of Christians ; for, as Tertullian writes, the blood of martyrs was the seed of the Church.

The false doctrines of Mohammed, of Luther, and other heretics in earlier and later times, have indeed spread rapidly and widely, and no wonder ; for how easily might not people be persuaded to that which their own evil inclinations urged. But to propagate a doctrine contrary to worldly and fleshly desires, something more than the power and eloquence of men was necessary. Sir Thomas More, the Chancellor of England—himself a martyr—accordingly answered Luther, who prided himself on the increase of his sect, that it was always easy to descend, and that no other miracle was wanting to corrupt the people, than that of a stone falling of itself.

Aspiration.

Most amiable Jesus, we thank thee for having called us to thy Church, and for having communicated to us thy doctrine. Give us grace to become by it each day better and more pleasing to thee, and finally to attain eternal happiness. Enlighten also the nations living in heresy and darkness, that they may know thee, and be delivered from the wrath to come. Amen.

Septuagesima Sunday.

Why is this Sunday called Septuagesima ?

The word means *seventy*. According to the first Council of Orleans, in the year A. D. 545, many pious ecclesiastics and lay persons of the primitive Church used to fast seventy days before Easter, and their fast was called, therefore, Septuagesima ; a name which was afterwards retained to distinguish this Sun-

day from others. The same was the case with the three following Sundays; many Christians commencing their fast sixty days before Easter, whence the name Sexagesima; others fifty days, whence Quinquagesima; others forty days, whence Quadragesima.

Why did the first Christians fast seventy days?

Alcuin and Amalarius say that the captivity of the Jews in Babylon gave the first thought of it; for as the Jews were obliged to do penance seventy years, that they might thereby merit to return into the promised land, so Christians sought to regain the grace of God by fasting for seventy days. On Septuagesima Sunday the Church commences to infuse into the minds of her children thoughts of penance, as a preparation for the fast.

Why does the Church, from this Sunday until Easter, omit all joyful chants, as the Te Deum, Alleluiah, Gloria in Excelsis?

The whole time from this Sunday was, according to the early usage of the Church devoted to penance, and for that reason the Council of Toledo, A. D. 633, pronounced the Alleluia, as the expression of joy, unsuitable to this penitential season. Afterwards, the Popes Alexander II. and Leo VII. published a similar decree, for the same reasons, in regard to the Gloria in Excelsis during Mass, and the Te Deum in the Office of the Clergy.

To remind the sinner of the grievousness of his errors, and to exhort him to penance, the Church in the name of all nations unites, at the Introit of the Mass, her prayers with those of David. *The groans of death surrounded me, the sorrows of hell encompassed me, and in my affliction I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice from his holy temple. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Graciously hear the prayers of thy people, we beseech thee, O Lord, that we who are justly afflicted for our sins, may be mercifully delivered, for the glory of thy name. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 Cor. ix. 24–29, and x. 1–5.)

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

Explanation.

To impress upon us that, since the disobedience of our first parents, we can obtain the everlasting rewards of heaven, the prize of eternal happiness, only through many difficulties, sacrifices, privations, and hard contests (“for narrow is the gate and strait is the way”—Matt. vii. 14), the Church on this day proposes to us this Epistle, in which St. Paul incites all Christians earnestly to labor for obtaining the heavenly crown. He points to those who run in the race, and strive for mastery, as men who hardened their bodies by their severe mode of life, who only ate and drank what gave them muscle and strength, abstaining from food that might weaken and enervate them, and who did all this that they might receive a corruptible crown. If then they did so much for so small a reward, how much rather should we sacrifice our comfort, abstain from sensual lusts, exercise ourselves in practising love towards God and our neighbor, in patience, purity, and other virtues, in order to regain that incorruptible crown of eternal happiness, which we lost by sin. To encourage us the more, the Apostle declares himself an example of one who runs, not like a child, without knowing whither ; who fights, not as one who instead of his enemy, beats the air ; who chastises and subjects his body by fasting, watching, and praying. Consider,

O Christian, if the holy Apostle had to suffer so much to obtain eternal life, what should not we poor sinners be willing to do to gain Heaven!

St. Paul finally brings forward the example of the Jews whom God led by a cloud into the land of promise, saving them as they passed through the Red Sea from the bondage of Pharaoh. That cloud which by its shadow protected them by day from the heat, and by night shone to guide them through the dark, was the figure of baptism, which tempers the heats of passion, and enlightens the spirit of man; the Red Sea was the type of the baptismal water, from which the Christian goes on in safety. God further gave the Jews manna, typifying the Holy Eucharist, in which we receive the true bread from heaven; and water from the rock, an emblem of the fountain of living water, the stream of grace from Christ.

But what did it profit the Jews to have received so many benefits? They lived in idolatry, were stubborn, impure, and sensual, and with the most of them God was not well pleased. Out of six hundred thousand only two came to the land of promise. What will it profit Christians to have received true baptism, and the other holy sacraments, but not to use them for the salvation of their souls? Woe to those, who relying on their name as Christians, and upon the grace of God, lead an unchristian life, not using their numerous and powerful means of salvation for their conversion and perfection.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, assist me, that with thy holy grace I may follow the example of St. Paul, and endeavor to deny myself, to chastise my body, and by continual exercise of every virtue, to obtain perfection and everlasting life. Amen.

Gospel. (Matt. xx. 1-16.)

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give

you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you there 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 were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering 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.

In these parables, what is to be understood by the master of a family, the vineyard, the laborers, and the penny?

The master of a family is God, who at different times and periods, as in the days of Adam, Noe, Abraham, Moses, and finally in the time of Jesus and his Apostles, called all men to work in his vineyard of the true religion, or Church, and to receive the promised penny, which is the divine grace and eternal salvation.

How and when does God call men?

By the instruction of parents and teachers, by preachers and confessors, by spiritual books, edifying conversation, good examples, and inspirations; in early youth, in manhood, and in old age,—which stages of human life are also signified by the different hours of the day.

Who are the laborers in the vineyard?

Those who work, combat, and suffer for God and his honor, for their own salvation, and that of others, particularly spiritual teachers. As in a vineyard men must dig, destroy the weeds, cut off what is useless and bad, manure, plant, and

bind, in like manner must we, in the spiritual vineyard of our souls, destroy the weeds of vice by meditation on death and hell; by the examination of conscience; by rooting out sinful inclinations, and their causes; and by real penance; we must cut off the passions by self-denial, prayer, and fasting; humble ourselves by remembering our sins and miseries; instead of our bad habits we must implant the opposite virtues, and as they fasten the vines to their supports, bind our fickle will to the fear of God and of judgment, that it may stand firm.

What must we do to exterminate a bad habit?

1. We must hate every sin. 2. We must produce in ourselves a fervent desire to destroy vice. 3. We must earnestly beg God's grace, without which we can do nothing. 4. We must attend zealously at instructions, sermons, and catechism. 5. We must go often to confession and communion, and follow our confessor's directions. 6. Every morning we must make firm resolutions, and every night an examination of conscience. 7. We must read in some spiritual book, treating of the sin which we have to root out. 8. We must venerate some saint, who in life had committed the same sin, and afterwards, by the grace of God, conquered it; as, for instance, Mary Magdalen, who, from a great sinner, became a great penitent. 9. We must fast, give alms, and do other good works.

Who are the *idle* in the parable?

Those who do not work for God, nor for their own and their neighbor's salvation. At the same time they may have, in other ways, as much business as possible; but the only thing here necessary is, the service of God and the salvation of our souls. All those are idle, therefore, 1, who do nothing at all; 2, who do evil; 3, who do something else than the works of their calling and office; 4, those who do not offer up their work to God, in love, and with a good intention.

Such idleness deprives us of our salvation, just as a laborer, who works either not at all or against the will of his master, forfeits his hire. For we are all servants of God, and cannot say that no man has hired us; he took us, immediately after our baptism, into the vineyard of his Church, and had us instructed in our holy religion. He has even sought and brought

us back after we have left him. If, then, we are idle, what hire will be our due when the evening comes, at the day of Judgment? If the master of the family reproaches those whom no man had hired, how will he deal with us?

Why did the last receive as much as those who came first?

Because God does not reward men according to the time of their labor, but according to the zeal, love, fidelity, and humility with which they have concurred with the grace of God (Wisd. vi. ; 2 Cor. ix. 6).

What does the murmuring of the first mean?

Our Saviour hereby gave the Jews to understand, that, although they, being called first, envied the Gentiles who were called last, yet God nevertheless acted not unjustly in fulfilling his promises to them, and at the same time calling others to participate in his kindness and love.

From this murmuring of the laborers, and the answer of the master of the house, we should learn never to be displeased at, or to envy our neighbor for enjoying God's favor; for he is most wise and just, and gives us always more than we deserve. Envy is an abominable sin before God; by the envy of the devil, death came into the world (Wisd. ii. 24). And the envious follow the devil; but they hurt nobody but themselves.

What is meant by, *so shall the last be the first and the first last?*

This is to be applied first to the Jews; for on account of their rejecting the doctrine and call of Christ, the last, that is the Gentiles, gathered from all countries, shall be the first, both in numbers and in merits; while the Jews, become in turn the last, will not come to the true knowledge of God until the end of the world. Those words also refer to those who may be the lowest and humblest in this world, but who will be first in Heaven.

Why does Christ add, *for many are called but few chosen?*

As if he should say, Do not wonder that the last shall be the first, and the first last, for many will not be received at all. From among the Jews and Gentiles he has called many, but few only have followed him, and of these again only few can be the chosen. Oh, that this may not be verified in Christians

whom God has called, desiring that they might be saved (1 Tim. ii. 4); and yet how many are there among them who do not accept his calling, or who fail to live according to their vocation, neither co-operating with his grace, nor trying forcibly to enter the kingdom of Heaven!

Aspiration.

O most merciful and benign Lord, who hast called us thy unworthy servants, without any merit of our own, out of mere mercy, into thy vineyard—the Church—and commanded us to work therein, grant us grace, we beseech thee, never to be idle, but as faithful servants to be always doing thy holy will. Whatever we have heretofore left undone, we will in future endeavor to do with persevering zeal, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sexagesima Sunday.

(The name of Sexagesima was explained in the instruction of last Sunday.) The Introit of the Mass is taken from the forty-third Psalm: *Arise; why sleepest thou, O Lord? Arise, and cast us not off to the end; why turnest thou thy face away, and forgettest our trouble? for our soul is humbled down to the dust; our belly cleaveth to the earth. Arise, O Lord, help us, and redeem us for thy name's sake. O God, we have heard with our ears: our fathers have declared to us.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who seest that we confide in no action of our own, grant, in thy mercy, that we may be defended from all evils by the protection of the Doctor of the Gentiles. Through our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (2 Cor. xi. 19–xii. 9.)

Brethren: You gladly suffer the foolish: whereas yourselves are wise. For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take from you, if a man be lifted up, if a man

strike you on the face. I speak according to dishonor, as if we had been weak in this part. Wherein any man dares (I speak foolishly) I dare 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 journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren: in labor and painfulness, in many watchings, 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 am not on fire? If I must needs glory: I will glory of the things that concern my infirmity. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knoweth that I lie not. At Damascus the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. If I must glory (it is not expedient indeed): but I will come to the visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth), such an one rapt even to the third heaven. And I know such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth: that he was caught up into paradise; and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter. For such an one I will glory: but for myself I will glory in nothing, but in my infirmities. For even if I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish: for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or any thing he heareth from me. And lest the greatness of the revelations should lift me up, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me: and he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Why does the Church mention St. Paul in the Holy Mass of this day, and why is this Epistle read?

Because the station, or divine service, is held to-day at Rome in the Church of St. Paul, from whose example the Church would incite us to work out our salvation by co-operating faithfully with the grace of God.

Why does St. Paul speak so many glorious things of himself?

He did so, not as seeking honor and glory for himself, but for God; out of love and benevolence towards the Corinthians, who had been seduced by certain self-styled apostles and interested persons, or, as St. Paul calls them, emissaries of the devil. To confound these hypocrites, and to remove the obstacles in the way of our holy religion, St. Paul felt bound to tell the Corinthians all that he had suffered for the propagation of the Gospel. In like manner, it is also our duty to appeal to our innocence, and to defend it when wicked men, by slandering us, try to hinder the salvation of those confided to us.

What was the sting of the flesh, or the angel of Satan?

According to some interpreters, we are to understand by it the sufferings, privations, and persecutions which the Apostle had continually to undergo; according to others, and this is the more probable opinion, it was the temptations of the flesh and of impure desires, by which he was tried and kept humble, but which he easily overcame through the assistance of the grace of God, whose strength is best seen in our weakness. Let us, like St. Paul, not be irritated at temptations, but firmly combat and overcome them by the help of divine grace.

Aspiration.

Grant me, O God, thy grace, that I may in these evil days keep steadily to thy holy doctrine, and never be seduced from obeying it, either by the allurements of the world, or the reproaches of the wicked. Amen.

Gospel. (Luke viii. 4-15.)

At that time: When a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities unto Jesus, he spoke by a similitude. The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air de-

voured it. And other some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a 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 may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the way-side, 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.

Why is the word of God here compared to seed?

Because as good fruits spring from good seed, so do good works from the word of God: and as it is impossible for any soil not sown to produce good fruits, so neither can men produce the fruits of the Spirit, without the seed of the divine word. Therefore it is that St. Augustine says, that the word of God is as necessary for men as even the body of Christ. This seed was sown by Christ, his disciples, and their successors, and is still daily sown in the soil of men's hearts.

Why did our Saviour cry out, *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear?*

To declare the importance and necessity of the doctrine taught in this parable, and to urge his hearers to meditate upon it. For it is necessary to salvation to heed attentively the word of God, and whoever refuses to hear it, throws himself into everlasting perdition, since without the instruction in our holy religion which we derive from that word, we cannot know what we must do to please God, and save our souls.

How then does it happen that notwithstanding the excel-

lence of the divine word, there are so many bad and immoral Christians?

Christ himself explains this in the Gospel of to-day. Some seed fell by the wayside, some upon rock, some among thorns, but very little upon good ground. That is, men who hear the word of God are at one time like an open street, where the thoughts run in distraction this way and that; they hear, read, and meditate, only superficially; do not carry out their resolutions; perhaps forget them; devote themselves to a changing succession of vanity, pleasure, and useless occupations; are drawn away by evil spirits, and easily betrayed into wickedness and sin. At another time, they are like the rocks,—that is, they hear and receive the word with joy, and make many good resolutions; but their hearts are hardened by pride, impurity, anger, and other evil passions and habits; they have no lasting sorrow, nor are they penetrated by the truths which concern their salvation; hence they fall away in time of the least temptation, at a slight mockery, for a small gain; the divine seed had found no moisture or root in their hearts. Again; they are overgrown with the piercing thorns of cares, riches, and sensual lusts, so that the seed of the divine word, though received by them, can neither grow up nor bear fruit.

Instruction on hearing the Word of God.

Are we bound to hear the word of God?

Yes; we are obliged, under penalty of mortal sin, to attend the sermon, unless detained by some grave reason; for it is the will of God that we should thereby be instructed in our duty towards him and towards our neighbor. Besides, Christ himself preached the Gospel, and commanded his Apostles and their successors to teach all nations to observe whatsoever he had commanded them (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). It is, therefore, our duty to hear these preachers of the divine word (Luke x. 16). Jesus calls those blessed who hear the word of God and keep it (Luke xi. 28); but those that hear it not, are not of God (John viii. 47).

As the Church has often strictly commanded the bishops and priests to preach with zeal and fervor on Sundays and Festi-

vals, so she also desires that the faithful shall attend the sermon (Conc. Trid., Sess. 24, de ref. cap. 4). The commandment to hear mass on Sundays and Festivals includes the obligation of hearing the word of God preached, according to the custom of the Church, after the first Gospel of the mass. How can a Christian say that he has sanctified the Sunday or festival to the honor of God and the sanctification of his soul, if he has not heard attentively the word of God, and nourished his soul with that necessary food. The neglect of attendance on the sermon has always brought with it the sad consequences of infidelity, ignorance in matters of faith and of morals, heresy, lukewarmness, desolation in adversity, weakness, and want of courage in temptations, obduracy, and other sins to which the devil and the world are continually exciting men.

Where and how is the word of God preached?

In and by the Church : 1. In the Holy Scriptures of the old and new law ; 2. By bishops and priests in sermons and catechising ; 3. In spiritual books. We say in the Church and *by* her, because it is only from the Church that we know that there are Holy Scriptures, and that we have received them pure ; as it is by her only that they can be interpreted, for she is the pillar and the foundation of truth.

What is the effect of the word of God, when heeded ?

To wash away sin, implant virtue, and create the world anew. The Scripture uses sublime expressions to indicate the power of the divine word. Jeremias says (xxiii. 29), *Are not my words as a fire*, which bursts out from within, consuming the vapors of sin, drying up the marshes of vice, and killing the deep roots of bad habits. Again, it is a *hammer*, breaking in pieces the rock of hardened hearts. The Psalmist calls it *thunder*, spreading terror on all sides ; and a *powerful wind*, *breaking the cedars of Libanus*, that is, the proud and inflexible minds of men (Ps. xxviii. 3, 4). He also calls it the light, which disperses the darkness of ignorance (Ps. cxviii. 105), and shows the path of salvation. According to Isaias, the word of God is a precious dew, or rain, softening our hearts, and making them fertile (Isa. lv. 10, 11). St. Paul says, it is living and effectual, and more piercing than a two-edged sword,

reaching into the division of the soul and spirit, of the joints also and marrow—that is, cutting away from the spirit sensual lusts (Heb. iv. 12). St. James calls it a mirror, in which a man beholding himself and his sins, becomes ashamed, and tries to get free from them (Jas. i. 23). It is, finally, the good seed, which, falling upon good ground, yields fruit an hundred-fold. Thus, one single grain of this seed brought forth wonderful fruit in St. Augustine, St. Anthony, St. Nicholas of Tolentine. St. Augustine was converted by the words, *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities* (Rom. xiii. 13). St. Anthony by the words, *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me* (Matt. xix. 21); and St. Nicholas of Tolentine by the words, *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world* (1 John ii. 15).

What must we do that the word of God may produce such effects in us also?

We must be the good, well-cultivated ground,—that is, we must have a heart which loves truth, wishes to be instructed, is humble, and seeks sincerely its salvation; we must give attention to sermons and instructions, and the reading of the divine word, and keep in our hearts and practice the truths we thus hear.

What must we do before sermon?

1. First of all, we must fervently ask God the Holy Ghost for light; for he opens the understanding for the reception of divine truths, and prayer is a fertilizing dew for the soil of the heart.

2. St. Chrysostom, in his third sermon on Saul and David, asks, “Who pours a precious liquid into an unclean vessel, before he has washed it?” We should, therefore, cleanse our hearts before sermon by contrition, *for wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul* (Wisdom i. 4). As the ground to be sown must first be prepared, so must our hearts be cleansed, and made ready by a holy desire of learning what is good; but to attend sermons merely out of curiosity to hear something new, to criticise the preacher, to see and be seen, is sinful and Pharisaical; for the Pharisees listened to Jesus for much

the same reasons, and hence derived no benefit from his discourses.

What must we do during sermon?

We must listen to the preacher attentively, and respectfully, for it is God that speaks to us through him; *he that heareth you, heareth me* (Luke x. 16). The preacher is the minister of God, for Christ said, *Behold I send you* (Matt. x. 16). If an ambassador reading the letters of his king is listened to with great attention, quiet, and respect, says St. Chrysostom, how much greater veneration should we not pay to the minister of God announcing his holy will? Be careful, therefore, not to show contempt for the preacher, for that will reach back to God, who has said, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me* (Luke x. 16). Though the preacher himself, or his delivery, may be imperfect, yet his office, and the word of God which he announces, must command our reverence. That word is, and always will be, a divine seed, which when well received, without regard to the person who sows it, or the manner in which it is sown, brings forth fruit an hundred-fold; who sows does not make the difference, but on what soil it falls. Endeavor to be always the good ground, and then from the poorest sermons you will derive the best fruit. Be careful not to apply what is said in the sermon to others, but rather *take heed to thyself* (1 Tim. iv. 16). Are you free from those sins which the sermon points at? thank God, and do not on that account despise others who are not; rather pray that they may be free from them in future, and take care yourself not to fall into them. We should be very careful not to sleep, speak, or give scandal, during the sermon, since we have to render account for each word that we neglect to hear. Remember, *he that is of God heareth God's words* (John viii. 47).

What must we do after sermon?

We must endeavor to practise what we have heard; for God justifies, not the hearers of the law, but only the doers (Rom. ii. 13) of it; and they who hear only, but do not practise, are like a man beholding himself in a glass; for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and presently forgets what manner of man he was (Jas. i. 22-24). As it is of no use for one thus to see

himself unless he washes away the stains and spots that he beholds, so is it useless for us to listen to the sermon, unless we are moved by it to amend our life; on the contrary, we shall thereby become more displeasing to God, *for that servant who knew the will of his lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes* (Luke xii. 47). *It had been better for them,* says St. Peter (2 Pet. ii. 21), *not to have known the way of justice, than, after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment.*

In order to practise what we hear in the sermon, it is necessary in the first place, to keep it in our minds, to ponder it carefully and remember it. Christ, therefore, blesses those who hear the word of God and keep it (Luke xi. 28). Food which the stomach is unable to retain is of no benefit; but it must be well digested to become nourishment and strength to man. The seed cannot bring forth fruit if not well covered with good ground, warmed by the sun, moistened by the rain and dew, and cared for in other ways. Think, therefore, not only on the same day, but during the whole week, of what you have heard in the sermon; how you have practised it before, and how you are able and willing to practise it in future. Speak about it to others, and thereby will many idle words be prevented, and much good done. Let others also tell you what was said in the sermon, that they have heard; particularly should parents require this of children and servants. Finally, pray often to God, that he may keep alive in you the divine truths which you have heard. If this were done everywhere, and particularly in every family, how much better would it be for Christianity.

Aspiration.

O my God, I am covered with shame, because the seed of thy divine word, which thou hast so abundantly sown in my heart, has brought forth so little fruit. Have mercy, O Lord, and change my heart, that it may become good ground, in which thy word may take root, thrive, grow, and finally bring forth the fruit of salvation, which thou requirest of me. Amen.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

On this Sunday, when so many Christians give themselves up to the dangerous pleasures of the world, the Church brings before our eyes Jesus, who, out of infinite love for us, died to remove the blindness of our hearts. At the Introit, in the words of the Psalmist, she calls upon God for help, with a sorrowful but confident heart. *Be thou unto me a protector and place of refuge; save me, for thou art my strength and refuge, and for thy name's sake thou wilt be my leader, and wilt nourish me* (Ps. xxx. 2-4). *In thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded; deliver me in thy justice, and set me free.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Mercifully hear our prayers, O Lord, we beseech thee, and, absolving us from the bonds of sin, preserve us from all adversity. Through our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (1 Cor. xiii. 1-13.)

Brethren: If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and 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 falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. We see now through a glass in a dark manner:

but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain, faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greater of these is charity.

Explanation.

St. Paul here teaches the Romans, and us in them, the necessity, the qualities, and the advantages of charity:

The *necessity*; because all natural and supernatural gifts—all good works, virtues, and sacrifices—even martyrdom itself,—cannot save us, if we have no charity. By charity only are we and our works pleasing to God; without it, therefore, whatever good we may do in fasting, prayer, almsgiving, labors, will neither be acceptable to him nor merit eternal life.

The *qualities* of charity; which are good-will without envy, suspicion, perversity, or malice; pure intention without self-love, ambition, immodesty, or injustice; untiring patience, without hastiness; and finally, humble submission to God, who is all to him that possesses charity.

The *advantages* of charity; in that it gives to good works their value, and that it never fails; for while all things else cease—while faith passes into seeing, hope into possession, knowledge in part into knowledge of the whole—charity is everlasting, and therefore the greatest of the three. “Faith,” says St. Augustine, “lays the foundation of the house of God; hope builds up the walls; charity covers and completes it.”

Aspiration.

O God of love, pour into my heart the spirit of charity, that, according to the spirit of St. Paul, I may always endeavor to be in the state of grace, that so all my works may be pleasing to thee, and of merit to me. Amen.

Gospel. (Luke xviii. 31–43.)

At that time: Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood

none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass when he drew nigh to Jericho, 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 standing, commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Why did our Saviour so often predict his sufferings to his Apostles?

1. To show that he was already apprised of them, thereby indicating his omniscience; and that, 2. He desired to suffer. 3. In order that when his disciples should see him punished as a malefactor, they might neither be scandalized at his humiliation, nor think evil of him as if he had deceived them, but, by their remembrance of his words, be rather confirmed in their belief in him as the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

Did not the Apostles understand any thing of what he thus predicted in regard to his sufferings?

They might have known that he was to suffer, for St. Peter undertook to dissuade him from it (Matt. xvi. 22), but they could not reconcile these predictions with their expectation of a future glorious kingdom. They did not understand the Holy Scripture and the prophecies of the Messiah, and hence could not comprehend why and to what end he should suffer, or how he should rise from the dead. All this was yet to be taught them by the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 16). We, also, shall never be able to cast off our prejudices, and to understand the truths of the faith, however plainly taught, until we are enlightened by the Holy Ghost.

Why did Christ here, and on many other occasions, call himself the Son of man?

He who is the only-begotten of the eternal Father, thereby reminds us of the mystery of his incarnation and of his mercy towards us. In the Old Testament, Daniel (vii. 13) calls the future Redeemer by the same name. Let us learn hence to be humble, and not to desire high titles.

Why does the blind man call Jesus the Son of David?

Because he believed him to be the Messiah who was promised to the Jews, from the line of David (Ps. cxxxii. 11).

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

1. That the blind man might the better testify his belief and hope to receive sight through Jesus; and, 2. To teach us how willing Jesus is to help us, and how pleasing it is to him when we make known our necessities to him, with confidence.

What should we learn from this history of the blind man?

1. What an inexpressible misfortune is blindness of the heart; a state in which we know not our God, our Redeemer and Sanctifier, and see neither the way of divine life, nor the hindrances to our salvation, but grope about in the darkness of ignorance and sin.

2. Where to find one who will save us from this awful condition, in Jesus Christ healing and enlightening us through and in his Church.

3. With what holy zeal and perseverance we should seek and call upon him for deliverance, disregarding alike the bad examples, persecutions, and mockery of the world.

4. How fervently we should thank God, and how faithfully we should follow him, after he has opened the eyes of our soul and freed us, by his grace, from the spiritual blindness of sin.

Why is this Gospel read to-day?

The Catholic Church would thereby remind us of the sorrowful passion and death of Christ, in order to prepare us for the holy season of Lent, and prevent us from participating in the pleasures so common at this season, to which people of the world often give themselves up like the heathen.

A Practical Instruction against the Amusements of the Carnival.

By these amusements we do not mean those brief and harmless recreations which are in conformity with the spirit of Christianity and the Church, but those noisy and wild festivities, lasting often through the day and night; such as dances and masquerades, which in some places are customary before Ash-Wednesday. Are such amusements of a Christian character and becoming Catholics? Christianity enjoins self-denial, the suppression of sensuality, mortification, watchfulness, love of God above all things, a continual living in his holy presence, a careful use of time and care for one's household; but on these occasions that we speak of, are not the sensual passions roused? is it not common to indulge in excesses, to make display of bad and scandalous conduct, to destroy health? Does not experience show, that these days of carnival never pass by without the sins of drunkenness and impurity, without bringing misery upon individuals and families? The Church, on the contrary, at this very time, wishes to prepare her children for penance, and accordingly brings before them the passion of Christ. How then can Catholics, unless they would deny their Mother, the Church, spend these days in revelling and drunkenness, as if they wished to indemnify themselves in advance, for the coming season of Lent? Are such Christians entitled to call themselves disciples of Christ, children of the Catholic Church? Many may say, "I neither think nor do evil by those pleasures." What then, good, perhaps? Do you think of God, your salvation, your duties, and the dangers in which you are? Again, are you then doing good works? and does not he do evil, who omits good works? Do you honor God in your revels? Do you thereby show him your love? You waste your time, your money, your health, and expose yourself to the danger of losing your good name and innocence; is not this bad enough? How many have perished by such occasions, and yet you will not profit by the lesson? Do not excuse yourself by saying that you need recreation; as if that were to be called recreation, by which you lose your soul. Or

is it that you do feel refreshed the next day? Away, then, with such dangerous pleasures! The joy of Christians should be to work and suffer with Christ, in order to rejoice eternally with him in the kingdom of his Father.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, who hadst so great a desire to suffer for our temporal and eternal good, grant that we, for thy sake, may hate all sensuality, but love mortification and the crucifixion of the flesh, and thereby merit to be freed from blindness of the soul, to know thee better, to love thee more fervently, and to possess thee forever. Amen.

Instruction on Lent.

What is the origin of fasting?

Under the old law the Jews fasted by the command of God; thus Moses fasted forty days and forty nights, on Mount Sinai, when God gave him the ten commandments; Elias, in like manner, fasted in the desert. Jesus also fasted, and commanded his Apostles to fast also. The Catholic Church, says St. Leo, from the time of the Apostles, has enjoined fasting upon all the faithful.

Where does the Church derive power to prescribe fasts?

From Jesus Christ, who commissioned her to conduct the faithful by holy and needful precepts and rules on the way to Heaven. Fasting has always been considered the means of attaining virtue; the Church can therefore command it, and whoever does not obey the Church, refuses obedience to Christ himself (Luke x. 16).

Why has the Church instituted the fast before Easter?

1. To imitate Jesus Christ, who fasted forty days. 2. To participate in his merits and passion; for as Christ could only be glorified through his sufferings, so in order to belong to him, we must follow him, by a life answering to his. 3. To subject the flesh to the spirit, and to conquer sensual lusts which war against the soul, that we may live a pure and holy life, and thus, 4, prepare ourselves for Easter and the worthy reception of the Divine Lamb. Thus the Jews were obliged

to prepare themselves, by chastising the body, for eating their Easter lamb, which was the figure and type of ours. 5. Finally, to offer to God some satisfaction for our sins, and, as St. Leo says, to atone for the sins of a whole year by a short fast of the tenth part of a year: this can be most conveniently done at Lent, which is devoted particularly to meditation on the passion and death of Christ. The Church indicates these holy designs in her ceremonies during this season; thus, to move us to sorrow and penance, and to meditation on the passion of Christ, she covers her altars, removes the flowers, uses the violet color in the vestments of the priests and on her altars, omits the hymns of joy, forbids weddings, dances, and public amusements, and sighs without intermission, in her prayers, for mercy, grace, and assistance, that her children may be comforted to a better life.

Oh, how necessary is it for men to be thus obliged, as it were, to enter into themselves!

Was the fast of Lent kept in early times as it is now?

Yes, only more rigorously; for, 1. The Christians of the early ages abstained not only from flesh-meat, but from those things which are produced from flesh, such as butter, eggs, cheese, and also from wine and fish; although this last was not a general rule of the Church. 2. They fasted during the whole day, and ate only after vespers, that is, at night. How many Christians of our day, who think the present rules of fasting too severe, are put to shame by these holy usages of antiquity! What kind of Christians are they, says St. Ambrose, who fatten their bodies, while Christ suffers from hunger? He who committed no sin, fasts for us, while we refuse to mortify ourselves for our own sins, which are so many.

How shall we keep the holy season of Lent with advantage?

Since, according to the doctrine of St. Leo, the most important part of fasting consists in abstaining from sin, rather than in abstaining from food, and as the body will be uselessly deprived of nourishment, if the soul is not kept clear of guilt, we should endeavor not only to deny ourselves food and drink, but still more, all sinful gratifications. And as the body is weakened by fasting, the soul on the other hand should

be strengthened by repeated prayers, and earnest meditation on the passion of Christ; by frequent reception of the Holy Sacraments; attending mass, spiritual reading, and good works, particularly those of charity: for, to have our fasting profitable, we should give to the poor what we refuse to ourselves. In such manner we shall be able, according to the intention of the Church, to supply by our fasting what we have omitted during the year, especially if we fast willingly, and with a good intention.

What intention must we have in order to fast to our profit?

1. The intention of following Christ, and of applying to ourselves the merits of his passion; 2. Of being obedient to his spouse, the Catholic Church, our Mother; 3. Of offering our body to God, by willingly chastising it, as a holy, living, and pleasing sacrifice; 4. Of asking God for his grace to avoid those sins we are most addicted to, and to acquire the opposite virtues. This intention we can with great merit renew every day, in saying the following

Prayer.

O Lord Jesus, I offer up to thee my fasting and self-denial, to be united to thy fasting and sufferings, for thy glory, in gratitude for so many benefits received from thee, in satisfaction for my sins and those of others, and to obtain thy holy grace that I may overcome my sins and acquire the virtues which I need. Look upon me, O Jesus, in mercy. Amen.

Instruction for Ash-Wednesday.

Why is this day so called?

Because on this day the Catholic Church blesses ashes and puts them on the foreheads of the faithful, saying, "Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 19).

Why are the ashes blessed?

1. That all who receive them with a contrite heart may be preserved in soul and body. 2. That God may give them con-

trition, and pardon their sins. 3. That he may grant them all they humbly ask for, particularly the grace to do penance, and the reward promised to the truly penitent (Rom. Missal).

Why are the faithful sprinkled with ashes?

The sprinkling with ashes was always a public sign of penance; as such, God enjoined it upon the Israelites (Jerem. xxv. 34). David sprinkled ashes on his bread (Ps. ci. 10). The Ninevites (Jonas iii. 16), Judith (Jud. ix. 1), Mordecai (Esther iv. i), Job (lxii. 6), and others, did penance in sack-cloth and ashes.

How should we receive the blessed ashes?

1. According to the intention with which they are blessed and sprinkled upon the heads of the faithful. 2. In humility, remembering and confessing that we are dust and ashes, and that for our sins we shall return to ashes again. 3. To testify before God and man that we are willing to commence the holy season of Lent, and are not ashamed to follow Christ, doing penance publicly, and bearing the ashes on our foreheads.

To show the spirit of penance and to move God to mercy, the Church, at the Introit of the Mass, uses the following words (Wisd. xi. 24, 25): "*Thou hast mercy upon all, O Lord, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made, overlooking the sins of men for the sake of repentance, and sparing them, for thou art the Lord our God. Have mercy on me, O God, for my soul trusteth in thee.*" Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant to thy faithful, O Lord, that they may begin the venerable solemnities of fasting with becoming piety, and perform them with undisturbed devotion, through Christ.

Epistle. (Joel ii. 12-19.)

Thus saith the Lord: Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth but he will return, and forgive and leave a blessing behind him, sacrifice and libation to the Lord your God?

Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather together the people, sanctify the church, assemble the ancients, gather together the little ones, and them that suck at the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth from his bed, and the bride out of her bride-chamber. Between the porch and the altar the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep, and shall say: Spare, O Lord, spare thy people: and give not thy inheritance to reproach, that the heathens should rule over them. Why should they say among the nations: Where is their God? The Lord hath been zealous for his land, and hath spared his people. And the Lord answered and said to his people: Behold I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and you shall be filled with them: and I will no more make you a reproach among the nations, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

The prophet, in these words, calls upon the Israelites to be converted, reminding them of the great mercy of God, and exhorting them to join true repentance for their sins with their fasting and alms. They should all, without exception, do penance and implore the mercy of God, who would then forgive them, deliver them from their enemies, and bring peace and happiness upon them.

Gospel. (St. Matt. vi. 16-21.)

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee. Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.

How do hypocrites receive their reward?

They receive their reward from men, and have nothing else to expect, for only works done for eternity will be eternally rewarded. Such are those that are done for God's sake, and with his assistance. The true Christian lives in God, and in

truth; but to live with the world and for mere appearance, is contrary to the life of Christians. All those persons therefore are to be counted among hypocrites who observe the obligation of fasting merely in order not to be censured by men, and not to *appear* without faith or religion; so too are those who pretend to be sick that they may be dispensed from fasting.

What did Christ mean when he said, *but thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face?*

To anoint the head and wash the face, were, in the East, the tokens of cleanliness and propriety. By these words, therefore, Jesus said as much as, "When you fast appear as usual, and do not make a show of your fasting, by your singularity."

Why does Christ join contempt for earthly treasures with fasting?

To take away the miserable pretence of those who fast from avarice, and on account of the petty saving. "Let us fast," says St. Augustine, "that the savings may be deposited by the hands of the poor in the treasury of Jesus Christ, and not serve as a nourishment for our avarice. Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." Wherever that is which thou lovest best, there are thy desires, thy thoughts, thy works. Is thy treasure of the earth, thy desire will be of the earth also, and will perish with it. Is thy treasure in heaven, thy thoughts and works will be there also, and remain forever.

Meditation.

Jesus goes with his disciples to Mount Olivet. Be thou also prepared for the combat.

Prayer of the Church over the People.

We bow down before thy majesty, O Lord; look upon us in mercy, that, comforted by divine gifts, we may always be nourished by heavenly assistance. Amen.

Thursday after Ash-Wednesday.

Introit of the Mass (Ps. liv.) *When I cried to the Lord, he heard my voice from them that draw near to me, and he humbled them, who is before all ages, and remains forever. Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. Hear, O God, my prayer, and despise not my supplication; be attentive to me and hear me. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

O God, who by sin art offended, and by penance pacified, mercifully regard the prayers of thy people, making supplications to thee, and turn away the scourges of thy anger, which we deserve for our sins. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Isaias xxxviii. 1-6.)

In those days Ezechias was sick even to death, and Isaias the son of Amos the prophet came unto him, and said to him: Thus saith the Lord: Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die and not live. And Ezechias turned his face towards the wall, and prayed to the Lord, and said: I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Ezechias wept with great weeping. And the word of the Lord came to Isaias, saying: Go and say to Ezechias: Thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father: I have heard thy prayer, and I have seen thy tears: behold I will add to thy days fifteen years: and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of the Assyrians, and I will protect it, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was threatening the kingdom of Juda, Isaias, by the command of God, announced to king Ezechias, that he should die. He thereupon prayed fervently to God, and obtained what he prayed for: God added to his life fifteen years, and delivered him and Jerusalem from the king of the Assyrians. Thus God hears the prayers of the just who confide in him; he is moved by our tears, and

either restores to health, or grants a death, precious in his sight, freeing us forever from the enemies of our salvation.

Gospel. (Matt. viii. 1-13.) See p. 122.

What do we learn by this Gospel?

That towards the Gentiles also our Saviour is kind and charitable. Let us, therefore, despise no one; let us not refuse charity and assistance to the unhappy man, because he thinks differently from us, or belongs to another religion, unless we would forfeit our own salvation.

Meditation.

Jesus is sorrowful and prays on Mount Olivet. Are you sad and downcast, have recourse to prayer.

Prayer.

Spare, O Lord, spare thy people, that having been justly punished for their sins, they may find comfort in thy mercy. Through our Lord.

Friday after Ash-Wednesday.

Introit of the Mass (Ps. xxix). *The Lord hath heard, and hath had mercy on me; the Lord became my helper. I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast upheld me, and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me.* Glory be to the Father.

Epistle. (Isaias lviii. 1-9.)

Thus saith the Lord God: Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their wicked doings, and the house of Jacob their sins. For they seek me from day to day, and desire to know my ways, as a nation that hath done justice, and hath not forsaken the judgment of their God: they ask of me the judgments of justice: they are willing to approach to God. Why have we fasted, and thou hast not regarded: have we humbled our souls, and thou hast not taken notice? Behold in the day of your fast your own will is found, and you exact of all your debtors. Behold you fast for de-

bates and strife, and strike with the fist wickedly. Do not fast as you have done until this day, to make your cry to be heard on high. Is this such a fast as I have chosen : for a man to afflict his soul for a day ? is this it, to wind his head about like a circle, and to spread sackcloth and ashes ? wilt thou call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord ? Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen ? loose the bands of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress, let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden. Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house : when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thy own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily arise, and thy justice shall go before thy face, and the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear : thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. Because I thy Lord God am merciful.

Explanation.

God commanded the prophet Isaias to show to his people their wicked doings, and to exhort them to true penance and amendment of life, without which their fasting would avail them nothing. Thus, they should lay aside the evil thoughts by which, though fasting, they offended God ; desist from oppression of their neighbors ; and from spending their days in disputes and strife. Their fasting and winding of their heads at prayer, would be nothing without their thus becoming better men. If, however, they abstained from sin, as well as from food ; if they were merciful and charitable to their neighbors, then their self-denial would be acceptable to God, and he would bless them with temporal and eternal goods. From this warning learn how to fast and pray.

Gospel. (Mat. v. 43-48 ; vi. 1-4.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples : You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy : but I say to you, Love your enemies : do good to them that hate you : and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you : that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have ? do not even the publicans this ? And if you salute your breth-

ren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens this? Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect. Take heed, that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee.

Explanation.

Our Saviour teaches us in this Gospel, to love our enemies, and not to practice good works out of vanity, or for the praise of men, but only to please God, and to fulfil his holy will. What is not done for God's sake will not be rewarded in eternity.

Meditation.

Jesus' bloody sweat on Mount Olivet. What sorrow should you have for your sins, when Jesus is so sorrowful for those of others!

Prayer over the People.

Defend thy people, O Lord, and mercifully cleanse them from all sins, for no adversity will hurt them, if no iniquity enslave them. Through Christ our Lord.

Saturday after Ash-Wednesday.

The Introit of the Mass the same as yesterday.

Prayer.

Be attentive, O Lord, to our supplications, and grant that we may celebrate with devout homage this solemn fast, which is a wholesome institution to heal both our souls and bodies. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Isaias lviii. 9-14.)

Thus saith the Lord God: If thou wilt take away the chain out of the midst of thee, and cease to stretch out the finger, and to speak that which profiteth not. When thou shalt pour out thy soul to the hungry, and shall satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness shall be as the noon-day. And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness, and deliver thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of water whose waters shall not fail. And the places that have been desolate for ages shall be built in thee: thou shalt raise up the foundations of generation and generation: and thou shalt be called the repairer of the fences, turning the paths into rest. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy own will in my holy day, and call the sabbath delightful, and the holy of the Lord glorious, and glorify him, while thou dost not thy own ways, and thy own will is not found, to speak a word: then shalt thou be delighted in the Lord, and I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth, and will feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob thy father. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

In this epistle, God promises happiness and rest to those who take off the bonds of many, who are peaceable and silent, and who help the poor. He also promises the fulness of blessing to those who keep holy the Sabbath day. Let us learn from this, to be peaceable to all men, to govern our tongues, to be merciful towards the needy, and to sanctify the days of the Lord by a holy joy and veneration: then we shall be rewarded here on earth, as well as in heaven above.

Gospel. (Mark vi. 47-56.)

At that time: when it was late, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and Jesus alone on the land. And seeing them laboring in rowing (for the wind was against them), and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh to them walking upon the sea, and he would have passed by them. But they seeing him walking upon the sea, thought it was an apparition, and they cried out. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he spoke with them, and said to them: Have a good heart, it is I, fear ye not. And he went up to them into the ship, and the wind ceased: and they were far more astonished within themselves: for they understood not con-

cerning the loaves; for their heart was blinded. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Genesareth, and set to the shore. And when they were gone out of the ship, immediately they knew him: and running through that whole country, they began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered, into towns or into villages or cities, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

Explanation.

The boisterous sea is the world; the waves are temptations. The Lord is always nigh us, when we are tempted, although not always visible. Never, therefore, be discouraged; have confidence in him, the Almighty, the All-present; pray, watch, chastise thy body, purify thy heart with tears of penance, and thou wilt receive assistance.

Meditation.

Jesus is comforted by an angel on Mount Olivet.

Prayer over the People.

May thy faithful, O Lord, be confirmed by thy gifts, that receiving them, they may seek them, and seeking may receive them forever. Through Christ.

First Sunday in Lent; called Invocabit.

Why is this Sunday called Invocabit?

Because the Introit of the Mass commences with this word; for all the Sundays during Lent, and between Easter and Pentecost, derive their appellations from the Introits of the Mass. Protestants, also, sometimes use these names, although to have been consistent, they should, on abolishing the mass itself, also have abolished these names taken from the Introits of the Mass.

Introit. *He shall call upon me, and I will hear him; I will deliver him and glorify him; I will fill him with length*

of days. He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of Heaven (Ps. xc.)
 Glory be to the Father.

Prayer of the Church.

O God, who dost purify thy Church by the annual observance of Lent, grant to thy servants, that what they endeavor to obtain of thee by abstinence, they may pursue by good works. Through Christ.

Epistle. (2 Cor. 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, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report : as deceivers, and yet true : as unknown, and yet known : as dying, and behold we live : as chastised, and not killed : as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing : as needy, yet enriching many : as having nothing, and possessing all things.

Why is this epistle read to-day ?

By this epistle the Church admonishes us to profit by Lent, as a season of grace, to spend it in earnestly combating sin, and the diligent performance of good works. Let us, therefore, not suffer this spiritual harvest-time to pass by without advantage, but practice zealously, temperance, patience, chastity, liberality, love of God and of our neighbor. Let us put on the armor of a just life, on the right hand and on the left ; that is, let us endeavor to arm ourselves against the enemies of our salvation, who surround us on all sides, by frequent meditations, by prayer, by receiving devoutly the Holy Sacraments, by fasting and other acts of piety : let us fight with courage, that we may conquer. Let us not, when doing good works,

or practising penance, regard either the mockery, persecution, dishonors, contempt or praise of men; it is an abundant reward when we can be pleasing to God, be useful to our fellow-men by good example, and gain eternal happiness.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, enable us to co-operate at all times with thy holy grace, and to make good use of the time which thou hast given us for obtaining life everlasting. Amen.

Gospel. (Matt. iv. 1-11.)

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

Brief Lessons.

I. Jesus was led by the Holy Ghost into the desert in order to prepare himself there, by fasting forty days and forty nights, for his holy ministry. The tempter here approaches him and seeks to betray him, at one time into distrust, at another time into presumptuous reliance on the Divine Providence, to cause him to fall into pride, and even into apostasy from God, in order that the redemption of mankind may be frustrated. In what close and vital connection with us does Jesus here stand!

Tempted as we are, but not yielding to sin, he becomes, as St. Paul says (Hebr. iv. 14), a high-priest, who knows how to regard our frailties with compassion. He also becomes to us an example how to put to flight and conquer the tempter with the sword of God's word (Eph. vi. 17). Let us then follow Christ into the combat: with his assistance it will not be difficult to conquer. Those great temptations of sensual lust, pride, and avarice, he has taught us to overcome, and when they are vanquished, it is the easier to conquer the others. As the reward of our courage, he promises that we shall sit with him on his throne, as he, after his victory, is now seated on the throne with his Father (Apoc. iii. 21).

II. When the Son of God permits himself to be thus tempted, what can justify us in the wish to be above all frailties and inducements to sin?

III. After he had overcome the devil, Angels came and ministered to Jesus; by which we learn that they who overcome temptations enjoy the consolation and assistance of the Angels. Should not this encourage us to combat joyfully to the end?

Lessons for Faith and Practice in regard to Temptations.

“To be tempted by the devil.”—*Matt.* iv. 1.

What is temptation?

By temptation we understand every inducement to transgress the commandments of God. Temptations are either from within or without.

How are we tempted from within?

By our own concupiscence (*James* i. 14); for the flesh lusteth against the spirit (*Gal.* v. 17).

How are we tempted from without?

1. By the world and its dangerous allurements; such as riches, human respect, the pleasures of dances, theatres, and such like, which provoke and stimulate lust (*1 John* ii. 15).

2. By bad men, who would seduce us to evil by false principles, bad books, shameless example, flattery, and even by force. Thus was Joseph tempted by the wife of Potiphar; Job and Tobias, by their own wives.

3. By the devil, who, having tempted and seduced our first parents, also tempted Jesus, and yet goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. v. 8). But his power is limited; he can do nothing but what God permits. St. Augustine therefore compares him with a dog that is chained, that can hurt no one but those who put themselves within his reach.

How does the devil tempt us?

Taught by long experience, he moves the natural concupiscence to such sins as he sees men particularly inclined to, and then deceives and confuses the man's mind, that he may not see clearly either the temporal loss, or the dishonor and danger of sin. Thus he seduced Eve: first exciting her curiosity at the sight of the forbidden fruit, and then making her proud; after which she became disobedient (1 Pet. v.)

Does God also tempt us?

St. James says (i. 13), *Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God; for God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempteth no man.* But he allows us to be tempted, sending us manifold trials. Thus were tempted Abraham, Joseph, the Machabee brothers, the woman of Cana, and all the saints. When God, therefore, says (Deut. xii. 13), *For the Lord your God trieth you that it may appear whether you love him with all your heart, and with all your soul, or not,* the meaning is, that God does not hinder temptations from coming upon us, that thereby the virtues of the just may be known. The more we love God, and the more we work for his glory, the more are we exposed to temptation.

Does God permit us to be tempted beyond our strength?

No; for he is in us, combats with us, and gives us always as much strength as is required to conquer temptations, and even to gain advantage from them (1 Cor. x. 13).

Are temptations of themselves injurious?

So long as they are displeasing to us, and we do not consent to them, they are of no harm to us; while by bravely overcoming them, they become to us a means of obtaining a crown in heaven (Apoc. iii. 12).

When do we consent to temptation?

When we decide, knowingly and willingly, to do the evil proposed to us; but so long as we make the least resistance, we do not consent.

What are the best means to overcome temptation?

1. Humility and constant prayer, by which we acknowledge our frailty and insufficiency before God, and invoke his assistance with great confidence. Hereby we compel God, as it were, to assist us, *for he resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble* (James iv. 6).

2. The recollection that God is everywhere present. For how should we dare to think, or do any evil before our Judge, which we should be ashamed of before men?

3. The thought of death, as of something which may follow immediately after we have consented to sin; of the eternal pains of hell, which may be the punishment of one moment's sinful pleasure; and of heaven, the reward of those who overcome temptations.

4. The consideration of those truths of our holy religion with which our Saviour repulses Satan.

5. The anticipation, on the one hand, of the remorse, distress of mind, fear and agony which follow upon sin; and, on the other, of the joy and happiness of overcoming temptation.

6. To turn away from temptations; directing our thoughts to modest and innocent objects; praying devoutly the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer, "lead us not into temptation;" calling on the holy name of Jesus; making the sign of the cross, and sprinkling ourselves with holy water.

7. By invoking the aid of Mary, of our Guardian Angel, our Patron Saint, and others.

8. By avoiding the occasion of sin: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it* (Ecclus. iii. 27).

9. By constant occupation.

Aspiration.

O Lord Jesus, who didst fast forty days and forty nights in the desert, and didst permit Satan to tempt thee, give me thy grace to guard against temptation, to have recourse to thee, and with thy assistance to persevere and conquer, that I may

receive the crown of eternal glory, which thou hast promised for a reward to those who overcome. Amen.

Monday in the First Week of Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *As the eyes of servants are on the hands of their master, so are our eyes unto the Lord our God, until he have mercy on us. O Lord, have mercy on us* (Ps. cxxii). *To thee have I lifted up my eyes, who dwellest in the heaven.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Convert us, O God, our salvation; and that the fast of Lent may benefit us, instruct our minds with heavenly discipline. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Ezech. xxxiv. 11-16.)

Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I myself will seek my sheep, and will visit them. As the shepherd visiteth his flock in the day when he shall be in the midst of his sheep that were scattered, so will I visit my sheep, and will deliver them out of all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and will gather them out of the countries, and will bring them to their own land: and I will feed them in the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the habitations of the land. I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures, and their pastures shall be in the high mountains of Israel: there shall they rest on the green grass, and be fed in fat pastures upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my sheep: and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost: and that which was driven away, I will bring again: and I will bind up that which was broken, and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve: and I will feed them in judgment, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

The prophet here speaks of the deliverance of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, by the immediate interference of

God ; but in a higher sense, this represents the bringing of all nations into one fold, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ. How many benefits do we owe to this Good Shepherd ! He cleanses our souls by his word and sacraments. He defends us against our enemies, and rests not until he finds and brings back to the fold any one who has wandered away by a sinful life. Thanks, continual thanks, to thee, O Good Shepherd, for thy care ; and grant that we may learn more and more of thy goodness, and come nearer and nearer to thee by hearty and active love, never to be separated from thee again.

Gospel. (Matt. xxv. 31-46.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples : When the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats : and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand : Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat : I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink : I was a stranger, and you took me in : naked, and you covered me : sick, and you visited me : I was in prison, and you came to me. Then shall the just answer him, saying : 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 see thee sick or in prison, and came to thee ? And the king answering, shall say to them : Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me. Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand : Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat : I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me not in : naked, and you covered me not : sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. Then they also shall answer him, saying : Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee ? Then he shall answer them, saying : Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting.

Why does the Church read this Gospel?

To remind us often of the last judgment, and to exhort us to a Christian life.

Why does Jesus enjoin these works of charity as though they were to be done to himself?

He would thereby teach us that those works only are good which we do through faith in him, and for his sake. A deed of charity done to the least of his brethren is thus really done to him, for he lives in those belonging to him (John vi. 57). Works of mercy are in general works of charity towards our neighbor, and as such fulfil the whole law, because true charity towards our neighbor is done for God's sake, and implies, therefore, the love of God.

Why will the punishment of the wicked be everlasting?

Because they can never again be good, inasmuch as God withdraws from them that grace of which in their lifetime they made no use (John iii. 36).

By unbelief a man may for a time exclude the thought of hell from his mind, but to contemplate it with the eyes of faith, will deter him from the way which leads thither. Be not satisfied, therefore, O Christian, to have made on this day a meditation on the everlasting punishment of hell; repeat it at least once or twice every week; impress deeply on thy soul the remembrance of the last judgment. *In all thy works remember thy last end, and never shalt thou sin* (Ecclus. vii. 40).

Meditation.

Jesus meets his enemies, and saying, *I am he*, shows their inability to take him, if it were not by his will. Thus, no evil can visit thee, unless God permits it.

Prayer of the Church over the People.

Loosen, we beseech thee, O Lord, the chains of our sins, and being appeased, avert whatever we deserve for them. Through Christ.

Tuesday. First Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *Lord, thou hast been our refuge from generation to generation, from eternity to eternity thou art (Ps. lxxx.) Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world were formed, from eternity to eternity thou art God. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Look down upon thy family, O Lord, and grant that our minds, which are afflicted by the mortifications of the flesh, may shine in thy light with the desire of thee. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Isaias lv. 6-11.)

In those days, Isaias the prophet spoke, saying: Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found: call upon him, while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God: for he is bountiful to forgive. For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts. And as the rain and snow come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be, which shall go forth from my mouth: it shall not return to me void, but it shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

The prophet admonishes us that the sinner should improve the time of grace for his sincere conversion; and, since God is so willing to receive him, that he should not be deterred either by the multitude or magnitude of his sins, for God's mercy is greater still. Remember what St. Bernard says, in explaining the words, *seek ye the Lord while he may be found*. There are three reasons why God is sought in vain: that men do not seek him at the *right time*, or in the *right manner*, or in the *place* where he is to be found. The right time is, this

life; for death is the end of seeking Christ; the door is then shut. The right manner is, to seek him with an ardent desire and with perseverance. The right place is, in the contemplation of the life, suffering, and death of Jesus here, and of his glory in heaven. Seek, therefore, the Lord in time, seek him with fervor, in prayer and meditation.

Gospel. (Mat. xxi. 10-17.)

At that time when Jesus was come into Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying: Who is this? And the people said: This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth of Galilee. And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves: and he saith to them: It is written, "My house shall be called the house of prayer: but you have made it a den of thieves." And there came to him the blind, and the lame in the temple; and he healed them. And the chief-priests and scribes seeing the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying: Hosanna to the son of David; were moved with indignation, and said to him: Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus said to them: Yea, have you never read: "Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" And leaving them, he went out of the city into Bethania, and remained there.

Practice.

According to the doctrine of the fathers, we may by the temple understand mankind in general, and also every soul of man which is defiled by sin and vice, as the temple at Jerusalem was by buying and selling, usury and fraud. Jesus came to purify the temple from these sins. With his assistance, therefore, destroy without mercy thy sins, concupiscence, bad habits, and whatever desecrates thy heart, that God may have *his* dwelling in thee, and thou mayest love and praise him with a pure mind.

Meditation.

Jesus is betrayed by Judas with a kiss. Hast thou never led others into sin by flattery? Hast thou never, under the cloak of friendship, destroyed others by fraud?

Prayer of the Church over the People.

May our prayers ascend to thee, O Lord, and repel all wickedness from thy Church. Amen.

Wednesday. First Week in Lent.

EMBER-DAY.

Introit of the Mass. *Remember, O Lord, thy bowels of compassion, and thy mercies that are from the beginning of the world, lest at any time our enemies rule over us; deliver us, O God of Israel, from all our tribulation (Ps. xxiv.) To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul; in thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Mercifully hear our prayers, we beseech thee, O Lord, and against all our adversaries extend the right hand of thy majesty. Through Christ. Amen.

Epistle. (3 Kings xix. 3-8.)

In those days came Elias, to Bersabee of Juda, and left his servant there, and he went forward, one day's journey into the desert. And when he was there, and sat under a juniper-tree, he requested for his soul that he might die, and said: It is enough for me, Lord, take away my soul: for I am no better than my fathers. And he cast himself down, and slept in the shadow of the juniper-tree: and behold an angel of the Lord touched him, and said to him: Arise and eat. He looked, and behold there was at his head a hearth-cake, and a vessel of water: and he ate and drank, and he fell asleep again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said to him: Arise, eat: for thou hast yet a great way to go. And he arose, and ate, and drank, and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb.

Explanation.

The prophet Elias, in the land of Juda, caused the putting to death of the idolatrous priests of Baal, after he had defended

against them, by a great miracle, the adoration and worship of the one true God. The impious Queen Jezabel heard of it, and threatened him with death; he fled into the desert. But God does not forsake those that belong to him: He sent to Elias food, in the strength of which he walked forty days and forty nights unto the mount of Horeb, where God appeared to him, giving him important commands. The holy fathers say, that the juniper-tree in whose shadow Elias slept, signifies the cross of Christ, in whose shadow all those who are suffering find rest: the food with which he was strengthened, represents the holy communion, and the forty days and nights in which he neither ate nor drank, the forty days' fasting of Jesus Christ.

Gospel. (Matt. xii. 38-50.)

At that time, some of the Scribes and Pharisees answered Jesus, saying: Master, we would see a sign from thee. Who answering said to them: An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. The men of Ninive shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas. And behold a greater than Jonas here. The queen of the south shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon here. And when an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith: I will return into my house from whence I came out. And coming he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is made worse than the first. So shall it be also to this wicked generation. As he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him: Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking thee. But he answering him that told him, said: 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, that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Practice.

Like the Pharisees are those Christians who, not content with all proofs and the most manifest miracles, demand still others that are new. Christ has risen from the dead, giving the fullest evidence of his Godhead, of the divine character of his doctrine and institutions, showing himself to be the Lord of life and death, and fulfilling, before the whole world, the sign of the prophet Jonas. And yet they believe not. Alas for them! The Ninevites and Queen of the South shall rise up against them on the day of Judgment. But thou who believest, fulfil what thou believest—the will of thy Heavenly Father; then shalt thou be brother, sister, and mother to Jesus, thou receiving him into thy heart, and he being born again in thee. What an honor for us sinners!

Meditation.

Jesus is bound and sent to Annas. Oh, what love! He wears those bonds that I ought to have worn, and shall I not love him in return?

Prayer of the Church over the People.

Illuminate our minds we beseech thee, O Lord, with the brightness of thy light, that we may see what we ought to do, and also may have strength to fulfil the same. Through our Lord.

(To-day, Friday, and Saturday, read the instructions on Ember-days, and say the prayer for obtaining good priests.)

Thursday. First Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *Praise and beauty are before him; holiness and majesty in his sanctuary* (Ps. xcv.) *Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle, sing to the Lord, all the earth.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Look, O Lord, upon the devotion of thy people, that we, who are afflicted in body by abstinence, may be refreshed in mind by the fruit of good works. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Ezech. xviii. 1-9.)

In those days the word of the Lord came to me, saying: What is the meaning, that you use among you this parable as a proverb in the land of Israel, saying: The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the teeth of the children are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, this parable shall be no more to you a proverb in Israel. Behold all souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, the same shall die. And if a man be just, and do judgment and justice, and hath not eaten upon the mountains, nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel: and hath not defiled his neighbor's wife, nor come near to a menstruous woman: and hath not wronged any man: but hath restored the pledge to the debtor, hath taken nothing away by violence: hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment: hath not lent upon usury, nor taken any increase: hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, and hath executed true judgment between man and man: hath walked in my commandments, and kept my judgments, to do truth: he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

It was an old proverb, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the teeth of the children are set on edge. That is, the fathers have sinned, and the children are punished. It was grounded upon what Moses said (Exod. xxxiv. 7), *Who renderest the iniquity of the fathers to the children, and to the grandchildren, unto the third and fourth generation.* Those to whom the prophet spoke, had experienced the truth of this proverb. They were in bondage, as the punishment of their own sins, and of the abominations committed by their ancestors, Achab, Manasses, and many others: not that they were punished altogether on account of the sins of Manasses, but also because they themselves imitated and persevered in the sins of Manasses. God, consoling his oppressed people in cap-

tivity, commands the prophet to tell them that this proverb should be no more in Israel, but that every one should suffer the punishment of his own sins only, and at the deliverance from bondage the old sins should all be washed away. What the prophet here said was not to be understood in a literal sense; the promises should only be fulfilled under the new law in the kingdom of Christ. Thus baptism has put an end to that proverb, because in that sacrament we receive pardon of that old or original sin, which was the sour grapes, setting on edge the teeth of the children of Adam. God declares that all souls are his own, because, as purified in the blood of the God-man, he loves them, and none shall die except him who sins, and perseveres willingly in sin. Certainly the way of parents will be punished in the children, but only in so far as they who are born with the concupiscence of their parents fail to resist it, although by the grace of God they might, and imitate, on the contrary, their parents' sins, by a course which depends altogether on their own will. Let us avoid evil and do good, and then we shall have nothing to fear from God.

Gospel. (Matt. xv. 21-28.)

At that time: Jesus went from thence, and retired into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold a woman of Canaan who came out of those coasts, crying out, said to him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. Who answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us: And he answering, said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. But she came and adored him, saying: Lord, help me. Who answering, said: It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs. But she said: Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. Then Jesus answering, said to her: O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was cured from that hour.

Why does the Church read this gospel?

Because fasting and prayer must be united. She therefore teaches us in this gospel how we must pray.

Why did Jesus answer the woman not a word?

Not out of contempt, but to afford her an opportunity to continue her entreaty, that by her faithful, devout, humble, and persevering prayer she might become an example to the whole Church (St. Chrysostom).

What did Christ mean when he said, *It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs?*

As the master of the house gives food to his children before he does to the dogs, so was Christ first to teach the children of Israel by his miracles. But after they had rejected their salvation, the Apostles were commanded to preach to the Gentiles, whom the Jews called *dogs*, because they were unclean and impure idolaters. Christ uses this expression to show the great humility of the woman.

How must we understand the words of the woman, *Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters?*

As the children do not lose any thing, although the dogs are fed under the table, so the Jewish nation would not be deprived of any benefit, although the daughter of the heathen woman were restored to health: her answer, therefore, was as prudent as it was modest, and proved the firmness of her faith.

Meditation.

Jesus is struck in his face by a servant of the high-priest. Overcome thy anger. Learn from Jesus.

Prayer over the People.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, to thy Christian people to acknowledge what they profess, and to love the heavenly gifts which they frequent. Through Christ.

Friday. First Week in Lent.

EMBER-DAY.

Introit of the Mass. *Deliver me from my necessities, O Lord; see my abjection and my labor, and forgive me all my sins* (Ps. xxiv.) *To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul, in thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Be merciful, O Lord, to thy people, and as thou makest them devout to thee, mercifully refresh them with kind assistance. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Ezechiel xviii. 20-28.)

Thus saith the Lord God: The soul that sinneth, the same shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, and the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son: the justice of the just shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked do penance for all his sins, which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done: in his justice which he hath wrought, he shall live. Is it my will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways, and live? But if the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity according to all the abominations which the wicked man useth to work, shall he live? all his justice which he hath done, shall not be remembered: in the prevarication, by which he hath prevaricated, and in his sin, which he hath committed, in them he shall die. And you have said: The way of the Lord is not right. Hear ye, therefore, O house of Israel: Is it my way that is not right, and are not rather your ways perverse? For when the just turneth away from his justice, and committeth iniquity, he shall die therein: in the injustice that he hath wrought he shall die. And when the wicked turneth himself away from his wickedness, which he hath wrought, and doeth judgment, and justice: he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth and turneth away himself from all his iniquities which he hath wrought, he shall surely live, and not die, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

This epistle is the continuation of that of yesterday. The truth is repeated, that every one shall be punished for his own sins. God sometimes, in this world, permits the innocent to suffer with the guilty, and to become implicated with them in the same punishments, it being the will of God that this chastisement shall become to the innocent a fountain of many merits, of firmness in virtue, and of greater rewards in life everlasting. In this light, crosses and adversities are to be called benefits, rather than punishments. Those who have fallen should not despair, for they can rise again, and their fall will then be of no disadvantage to them. Those who stand should fear lest they fall: for if they fall and do not rise again, all their previous justice will avail them nothing towards eternal life. Both, therefore, should adore the ways of God, which are truth and mercy, and have confidence in him, who desires not the death of the wicked, and far less that of the just, but who is always ready to reward with eternal happiness, both the perseverance of the righteous and the penance of the sinner.

Gospel. (John v. 1-15.)

At that time there was a festival day of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem a pond, called Probatica, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water. And an angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond: and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water, was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under. And there was a certain man there, that had been eight-and-thirty years under his infirmity. Him when Jesus had seen lying, and knew that he had been now a long time, he saith to him: Wilt thou be made whole? The infirm man answered him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond. For whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me. Jesus saith to him: Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole: and he took up his bed and walked. And it was the Sabbath that day. The Jews therefore said to him that had been healed: It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed. He answered them: He that

made me whole, he said to me: Take up thy bed, and walk. They asked him therefore: Who is that man that said to thee: Take up thy bed, and walk? But he who was healed, knew not who it was. For Jesus went aside from the multitude standing in the place. Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple, and saith to him: Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee. The man went his way, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole.

What did Jesus mean by the words, *sin no more*?

He thereby gave the sick man to understand, that he who had cured him knew the cause of his sickness; namely, the lawless passions and sinful acts which God had punished with so long an illness. Accordingly, he warns him to sin no more, lest some worse thing should happen to him. To be sick for thirty-eight years, and forsaken of every one,—how miserable is such a life! Yet there is *something worse*.

What is this something worse?

It consists in blindness of the heart which sees not the things above, nor what promotes the welfare of men; in perversity and feebleness of the will, saying, “I will,” and “I will not;” in the disorder of the soul, carried hither and thither, without love and peace; in being deserted by God, and dying in impenitence.

What are we to learn hence?

All sinners should look upon their sins as diseases, and run to the fountain of healing which Christ has opened in his Church, and to the use of which we are at this season particularly exhorted. This is the fountain of penance, which possesses virtue for all, and not merely for him who goes down into it first; which is moved, and heals, not merely at certain times, but all the time. Well for him who earnestly wishes to be healed, for he will surely have his wish.

Meditation.

Jesus fearlessly confesses before Caiaphas that he is the Son of God, although he knows that for this very confession he shall suffer death. Do you in like manner speak without fear when the honor of God, and the extirpation of sin and scandal demand it? or are you silent and timid?

Prayer of the Church over the People.

Graciously hear us, O merciful God, and show to our minds the light of thy grace. Through Christ.

Saturday. First Week in Lent.

EMBER-DAY.

Introit of the Mass. *Let my prayer come in before thee, incline thine ear to my petition, O Lord (Ps. lxxxvii.) O Lord the God of my salvation, I have cried in the day and in the night before thee.* Glory be to the Father.

Epistle. (1 Thess. v. 14–23.)

Brethren, we beseech you, rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men. See that none render evil for evil to any man: but ever follow that which is good towards each other, and towards all men. Always rejoice. Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all. Extinguish not the spirit. Despise not prophecies. But prove all things: hold fast that which is good. From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves. And may the God of peace himself sanctify you in all things: that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Explanation.

The Apostle warns us not to quench by sin, indiscretion, and a distracted life, the spirit that is in us,—that is, the grace, the inspiration, and the light of the Holy Ghost; not to despise prophecies,—that is, the gifts of explaining the Scriptures, and of preaching the mysteries of the faith; but rather to examine whether they agree with the doctrine of Christ. Let us follow in every thing the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the doctrine of Holy Church, and then we shall never err, but may expect with confidence the coming of Christ to judgment.

Gospel and Prayer, the same as for to-morrow.

Second Sunday in Lent; called Reminiscere.

The Church to-day encourages us to penance, by pointing to the eternal glory, of which Jesus revealed some rays on Mount Thabor. At the Introit she asks of God the grace to fall no more into sin. *Remember, O God, thy bowels of compassion, and thy mercies that are from the beginning of the world, lest at any time our enemies rule over us; deliver us, O God, from all our tribulations (Ps. xxii.) To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul. In thee, O God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who beholdest us destitute of every virtue, preserve us both inwardly and outwardly, that we may be defended from all adversities in body, and purified from all evil thoughts in mind, through our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (1 Thess. iv. 1-7.)

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

Practice.

As St. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians, so does the Church all her children, to walk according to the instructions they have received even from their youth; to crucify the lusts of the flesh; to lay aside all impurity in desire, thought, word, and action; all fraud in our vocation and business; not to pause, but continually to aspire to higher perfection. Would that all might

well consider that such is the will of God, who has called us to holiness, and who will punish severely all impurity and injustice.

Aspiration.

Grant, O Lord, that, according to my vocation, I may never, like the heathen, who know thee not, be addicted to earthly and fleshly lusts, but may live in modesty, chastity, and holiness, and adorn my name as a Christian with good works. Amen.

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

Why was Jesus transfigured before his disciples on Mount Thabor?

1. To give them a manifest proof of His Godhead and divine mission.
2. To prevent all doubt on their part when they should afterwards see him suffer on Mount Calvary.
3. To encourage them and all the faithful to patience under all agonies and sufferings, by looking at the glory to be revealed.
4. To show us how our glorified bodies shall rise from the dead (1. Cor. xv. 52).

Why did Moses and Elias appear with our Lord?

Because the Old Testament had predicted the coming and life of Christ. Moses, therefore, representing the Law, and Elias representing the Prophets, were present to give testimony that the law and the prophets had spoken of Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

Of what did they speak with him ?

Of his sufferings and decease, that he should accomplish at Jerusalem (St. Luke ix. 30, 31) ; by which he should work out the redemption of mankind, and fulfil the types of the law and of the prophecies. On this death, the fruits of which it is ours to harvest, we should often think that we may be moved to love Jesus as he loved us.

Why did Peter propose to make three tabernacles ?

He was so overjoyed that he knew not what he said, and recollected not that we can enter into the heavenly glory only through sufferings. If Peter was thus transported by one drop of heavenly joy, what, O my God, will be, in heaven, the abundance of thy house where thou shalt make thine elect drink of the torrent of thy pleasure ? (Ps. xxxv. 9.)

Whence came the voice, *this is my beloved Son* ?

From the Heavenly Father, who thereby declared Jesus to be his true Son, the Messiah, who should announce his doctrine to men. They should therefore hear, that is, obey him.

Why did Jesus forbid his disciples to tell the vision to any man until the Son of man was risen from the dead ?

1. Because the time for revealing his glory had not yet come.

2. That the other disciples and all Christians might have a firmer faith in him, after his death and resurrection.

3. To teach us that divine revelation does not rest on our private judgment, but on faith in the testimony of God's messengers.

4. That we should conceal our good works until death ; for the wise man says : *Praise not any man before death* (Ecclus. xi. 30).

Aspiration.

Draw us to thee, O Jesus, by the contemplation of the joys of heaven, that we may steadfastly acknowledge thee to be

the Son of God, faithfully follow thy doctrine, and subdue all sinful fondness for the world, that so we may become worthy to partake of the everlasting happiness of heaven.

Instruction on keeping the Commandments of God and of the Church.

“This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.”—*Matt.* xvii. 15.

It is not difficult to understand that the Christian is obliged to keep the commandments of God; for every creature owes to God, the Creator, Preserver, and Judge of all, perfect obedience, and every one who loves God is happy in serving him. But the Christian also owes obedience to the Church, her commandments, decisions, and regulations; for she commands, decides, and regulates, not in her own name merely, but in that of Jesus, for the sanctification of the faithful. He is with her, and guides her all days, until the consummation of time. He has given her the power to bind and to loose. Whoever, therefore, obeys her, obeys Jesus; whoever hears her, hears Jesus; and whoever despises her, despises Jesus.

Is it possible to fulfil all the commands of God and the Church?

Yes, notwithstanding men say it is impossible. For is not such language most imprudent, if not blasphemous? Has God, who is of infinite love, or has the Church, the tender mother of the faithful, imposed upon us more than we are able to bear? Has not he promised us his assistance, with which we can easily overcome the world? Has Christ told us an untruth, in saying that his yoke was sweet and his burden light? Do we not accuse God of injustice in saying that he asks from us more than he has given, and enjoins upon us what we are not able to perform? Should we not thus make him the author of sin—a thought which we cannot cherish, far less express without blasphemy?

Besides, are there not many who have kept all the commandments. Have not the patriarchs, prophets, and innumerable other just persons under the old law, fulfilled the law of God? Could not even that young man, who became sad when Jesus spoke to him of a higher perfection—could not

even he say, that from his youth he had kept the commandments? And how many examples of perfect observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, does not the New Testament furnish, from among people of all professions, ages, and nations, under all possible conditions and circumstances of life! Could all these keep the law? Then why not we? Must we not confess, that when we have disobeyed the law, it has been because our will refused to co-operate with God's grace, and to avoid the occasions of sin? It is ourselves, then, that we must blame, and not the commandments. Let us therefore say, "I will, with the grace of God, and as surely as God lives, and as his promises are true, I *can* do whatever he, or the Church, in his name, commands."

Meditation.

Jesus suffers, during the night, mockery and great pain; and thou wilt not suffer any thing from thy neighbor, and art angry at any contradiction thou meetest.

Monday. Second Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *Redeem me, O Lord, and have mercy on me, for my foot hath stood in the direct way. In the churches I will bless the Lord (Ps. xxv.) Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my innocence, and hoping in the Lord, I shall not be weakened. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that thy family, who, afflicting their flesh, abstain from food, by following justice may fast from sin. Through our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (Daniel ix. 15-19.)

In those days, Daniel prayed unto the Lord, saying: O Lord our God, who hast brought forth thy people out of the land of Egypt with a strong hand, and hast made thee a name as at this day: we have sinned, we have committed iniquity, O Lord, against

all thy justice: let thy wrath and thy indignation be turned away, I beseech thee, from thy city Jerusalem, and from thy holy mountain. For by reason of our sins, and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem, and thy people are a reproach to all that are round about us. Now, therefore, O our God, hear the supplication of thy servant, and his prayers: and show thy face upon thy sanctuary which is desolate, for thy own sake. Incline, O my God, thy ear, and hear: open thy eyes, and see our desolation, and the city upon which thy name is called: for it is not for our justifications that we present our prayers before thy face, but for the multitude of thy tender mercies. O Lord, hear: O Lord, be appeased: hearken and do: delay not for thy own sake, O my God: because thy name is invocated upon thy city, and upon thy people.

Explanation.

Daniel prays God to look in mercy upon his city, his temple, and his people; he presents his prayers, not on account of their righteousness, but on account of God's tender mercy, and that his name may be glorified by hearing the supplications addressed to him. It is in the same manner that we must offer our prayers to God; asking of him that for his name's sake the enemies of his Church may be humbled and converted, and that she may flourish more and more.

Gospel. (John viii. 21-29.)

At that time Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: I go, and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin. Whither I go, you cannot come. The Jews therefore said: Will he kill himself, because he said: Whither I go, you cannot come? And he said to them: You are from beneath, I am from above. You are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you, that you shall die in your sins. For if you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sin. They said therefore to him: Who art thou? Jesus said to them: The beginning, who also speak unto you. Many things I have to speak and to judge of you. But he that sent me is true: and the things I have heard of him, these same I speak in the world. And they understood not that he called God his father. Jesus therefore said to them: When you shall have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father hath taught me, these things I speak: and he that sent me is with me, and he hath not left me alone: for I do always the things that please him.

Why does the Church read this gospel to-day?

To warn us against the horrible fate that attends unbelief and despair. Jesus said plainly to the Jews that he was the beginning,—that is, he by whom all things were made: that God was his Father, that he taught his Father's doctrine, and did what was pleasing in his sight. But the Jews believed not, and Jesus returned to his Father in Heaven, and sits on his right hand. The Jews, meanwhile, yet seek and expect their Messiah, even until this day; but they cannot call him down from heaven; they have no part in his kingdom, and from one century to another they die in their sins. Thus it will be with every nation which knows not the time of its visitation, and despises the Gospel. The same will happen to thee, also, my Christian brother, if thou dost not devote the years of thy youth and manhood to penance, and conversion from sin. Sin will become stronger in you, the passions more violent, and contrary to your expectations and wishes, you will be overcome by sin, and die without repentance, while the angel of vengeance shall pronounce over you a threefold woe!

What are we to learn then from this gospel?

That we must believe in Jesus, and do whatever he and his Church commands—in a word, what is acceptable to God. This is in all ages the strongest foundation of pious confidence, for it is not so much by consolation from without, by exhortations and promises, but by a good conscience within, that the soul is prompted and encouraged to serve God.

Meditation.

Jesus is in council, condemned to death. Have you never taken any part with the wicked in the condemnation of the innocent?

Prayer over the People.

Attend to our supplications, O Almighty God, and graciously grant the effect of thy wonted mercy to us, to whom thou grantest confidence to hope for forgiveness. Through our Lord.

Tuesday. Second Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *My heart hath said to thee, I have sought thy face; thy face, O Lord, will I seek: turn not away thy face from me (Ps. xxvi.) The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Perfect, we beseech thee, O Lord, in thy mercy, the help of this holy observance within us, that, what by thy instructions we know we are to do, by thy grace we may be enabled to accomplish. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (3 Kings xvii. 8-16.)

In those days the word of the Lord came to Elias, the Thesbite, saying: Arise, and go to Sarephta of the Sidonians, and dwell there: for I have commanded a widow woman there to feed thee. He arose and went to Sarephta. And when he was come to the gate of the city, he saw the widow woman gathering sticks, and he called her, and said to her: Give me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And when she was going to fetch it, he called after her, saying: Bring me also, I beseech thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand. And she answered: As the Lord thy God liveth, I have no bread, but only a handful of meal in a pot, and a little oil in a cruse: behold I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it, for me and my son, that we may eat it and die. And Elias said to her: Fear not, but go and do as thou hast said: but first make for me of the same meal a little hearth-cake, and bring it to me: and after make for thyself and thy son. For thus saith the Lord the God of Israel: The pot of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil be diminished, until the day wherein the Lord will give rain upon the face of the earth. She went and did according to the word of Elias: and he ate, and she and her house: and from that day the pot of meal wasted not, and the cruse of oil was not diminished, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke in the hand of Elias.

Explanation.

In this epistle the Church proposes to us the example of the poor widow of Sarephta, who divided her last morsel of bread

with the prophet Elias, the servant of God ; teaching us thereby how acceptable to God it is to be merciful to the poor. Thus we see the just very often allowed to fall into need, for the salvation of those who help them. The poor widow of Sarephta will, on the day of judgment, confound many Christians. She helps one whom she does not know, while she is herself in need of the assistance asked from her : but she gives her own food, and by so doing saves her life. What a heroic confidence ! To build churches from affluence, is less than to give to another the last morsel of bread which you were keeping for yourself. We may learn also from this example to give to the house of God, and to his ministers, and we shall never be in want of what we give.

Gospel. (Matt. xxiii. 1-12.)

At that time Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying : The Scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do : but according to their works do ye not : for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders : but with a finger of their own they will not move them. And all their works they do to be seen of men. For they make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge their fringes. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place, and to be called by men, Rabbi. But be not you called Rabbi. For one is your master, and all you are brethren. And call none your father upon earth : for one is your father who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters : for one is your master, Christ. He that is the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled : and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

What important truths does Jesus Christ teach in this gospel ?

That the law of God fastens its obligations on us, although made known to us by those who do not observe it themselves. The priest and teacher sit in the chair of Jesus Christ ; they teach in his name, and they teach his gospel. If they shall be judged for not practising what they teach, so also shall you, if

you follow them, or if, on account of their lives, you refuse to believe in his truth and his Church.

Against what sins does Christ here warn us?

Against hypocrisy and ambition. The phylacteries here spoken of were strips of parchment, on which were written passages from the law of Moses. They were worn on the left arm and on the forehead. The fringes were worn on the seams of the dress: they were to serve as a mark of distinction from the Gentiles, and to put the wearer in mind of the commandments of God (Exod. xv. 38).

The Pharisees made their phylacteries and fringes larger than others, to give themselves the appearance of having uncommon zeal in fulfilling the law of God.

What does Jesus enjoin upon us to avoid the pride and ambition of the Pharisees?

To be unassuming, modest, and humble; for there truly is the kingdom of God, where the most powerful, the richest, the most respected, the most intelligent, the greatest man, is also first in humility. We all have one father, one teacher, but we act against the honor and glory of God, if we undertake to instruct, admonish, or guide our brother, in the name of any other than our Lord and Master.

What is the meaning of the words, *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*?

The dust rises to fall again. Again it arises when trampled on; that is, *honor flees from him that seeks it, and seeks him that flees from it* (Prov. xxix. 23-25). Not he that is humbled, but he that humbles himself, shall be exalted before God and man, that he may the more successfully work for the glory of God, and the salvation of men. Real greatness, therefore, can exist only where there is humility making us pure and holy.

Meditation.

Jesus gives no answer to the false accusations before Pilate. And art thou angry and irritated at having the truth told to thy face?

Prayer over the People.

Be propitious, O Lord, to our prayers, and heal the desires of our souls, that having received forgiveness, we may even rejoice in thy benediction. Through Christ.

Wednesday. Second Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *Forsake me not, O Lord my God, do not thou depart from me; attend unto my help, O Lord, the power of my salvation* (Ps. xxxvii.) *Rebuke me not, O Lord, in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer of the Church.

Mercifully regard thy people, O Lord, we beseech thee, and grant that we, whom thou commandest to abstain from carnal food, may also cease from hurtful vices. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Esther xiii. 9-17.)

In those days, Mardochai prayed to the Lord, saying: O Lord, Lord, almighty king, for all things are in thy power, and there is none that can resist thy will, if thou determine to save Israel. Thou hast made heaven and earth, and all things that are under the cope of heaven. Thou art Lord of all, and there is none that can resist thy majesty. Thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that it was not out of pride and contempt, or any desire of glory, that I refused to worship the proud Aman. (For I would willingly and readily for the salvation of Israel have kissed even the steps of his feet.) But I feared lest I should transfer the honor of my God to a man, and lest I should adore any one except my God. And now, O Lord, O king, O God of Abraham, have mercy on thy people, because our enemies resolve to destroy us, and extinguish thy inheritance. Despise not thy portion, which thou hast redeemed for thyself out of Egypt. Hear my supplication, and be merciful to thy lot and inheritance, and turn our mourning into joy, that we may live and praise thy name, O Lord, and shut not the mouths of them that sing to thee, O Lord, our God.

Explanation.

The Persian king, Artaxerxes, exalted Aman to the highest dignities, and issued a decree that all the Jews should bow the knee before him. This Mordechai refused to do, and thereupon Aman prevailed upon the king to publish an edict that all the Jews in the Persian dominions should be put to death on a certain month and day. Mordechai prayed to God, and so did Esther, for the deliverance of their people. Their prayers were heard, and their nation saved. Aman and his friends were hanged on the very gibbets intended for Mordechai and his people. Thus Aman verifies the proverbs, "He who digs a grave for others, falls into it himself," and "Pride goes before a fall." From Mordechai, we learn to have recourse to God in our need, and to confide in the Lord, for he will hear our prayers and save us from danger.

The reading of this epistle is particularly proper for those seasons in which the Church, in the spirit of penance, prays to God for mercy and forgiveness to all, who, on account of their sins, are deserving of death.

Gospel. (Matt. xx. 17-28.)

At that time, Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death. And they shall deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and the third day he shall rise again. Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, adoring and asking something of him. Who said to her: What wilt thou? She saith to him: Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answering, said: You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink? They say to him: We can. He saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink: but to sit on my right or left hand, is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father. And the ten hearing it, were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them to him, and said: You know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them: and they that are the greater, exercise power

upon them. It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister. And he that will be first among you, shall be your servant. Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many.

What was the effect of the request made by the mother of the sons of Zebedee ?

It provoked the jealousy and indignation of the other ten against the two brothers ; for they all had the same ambition. Jesus therefore declared that there was no other way of rising to the first place in his kingdom, than by seeking the last, and that he who would be greatest among them should be their servant ; that is, should be the most humble, the most patient, the most zealous. It is in accordance with these words that the representative of Christ on earth—the head of the visible Church—calls himself the servant of the servants of God.

Would that all, who are superiors over their brethren, considered well these words of Christ, that they might rule, not according to their unrestrained will, but according to law—treating their subjects with humility and meekness ; using their power for the service and advantage of others, and considering themselves to be in their office, not masters, but servants.

Is it enough that the first in the kingdom of God should be the servant of others ?

It is not enough. He must also be ready to sacrifice, for the glory of God and the salvation of men, all he possesses, and even his life. Therefore it is that Christ adds, " Follow me ; I am not come to be administered unto, but to minister ; and as the greatest among you, to make the greatest sacrifice, by giving my life as a ransom for many."

O Life, what will not man give to buy thee ! having lost all else, how happy is he in having saved thee ! What love is it, therefore, that the Lord is come to redeem us at the price of his life ! What frivolity and sacrilege, if we allow this great sacrifice for us to be in vain !

Meditation.

Jesus is mocked before Herod. What consolation for thee when thou art mocked.

Prayer over the People.

O God, the restorer and lover of innocence, direct to thyself the hearts of thy servants, that, having conceived the fervor of thy spirit, they may be found both steadfast in faith and efficacious in works. Through Christ, in the unity of the same Holy Ghost.

Thursday. Second Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *O God, come to my assistance. O Lord, make haste to help me; let my enemies be confounded and ashamed, that seek my soul (Ps. lxxix.) Let them be turned back and blush for shame, that desire evil to me. Glory be to the Father.*

Epistle. (Jer. xvii. 5-10.)

Thus saith the Lord God: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like tamaric in the desert, and he shall not see when good shall come: but he shall dwell in dryness in the desert in a salt land, and not inhabited. Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord, and the Lord shall be his confidence. And he shall be as a tree that is planted by the waters, that spreadeth out its roots towards moisture: and it shall not fear when the heat cometh. And the leaf thereof shall be green, and in the time of drought it shall not be solicitous, neither shall it cease at any time to bring forth fruit. The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable, who can know it? I am the Lord who search the heart and prove the reins: who give to every one according to his way, and according to the fruit of his devices, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

There is a threefold curse of God upon him who puts his trust in man, and not in God. 1. God, his angels and saints, forsake him. 2. He is deprived of divine assistance and grace.

3. The merits of all his good works are taken away from him, so that he can no longer practice virtue.

Put not your confidence, therefore, in fickle and miserable man, but in God, the Almighty and eternal, and you will receive help in time of need.

Gospel. (Luke xvi. 19–31.)

At that time Jesus said to the Pharisees: There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen: and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom: and he cried, and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life-time, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither. And he said: Then, father, I beseech thee that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments. And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. But he said: No, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead.

Why was the rich man buried in hell?

Because, while he feasted sumptuously, clothed in purple, and fared well, he had, on the other hand, no mercy for the poor, and no remembrance of God.

What tormented him there?

His own sufferings, the sight of Lazarus' happiness, his fruitless desire for even the least relief, the remembrance of his life

on earth, remorse of conscience, the consciousness that he was justly damned, and finally, the certainty of his remaining hopeless in that place forever.

Why was not Lazarus sent to warn the brothers of the rich man?

Because they who do not hear Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, are incorrigible. The sinner, surrounded by the pleasures of this world, forgets to consider that all things will pass away, and consequently the most inviting promises, the most terrible threats, make no impression on him.

Are you one of the brothers of the rich man? Know, then, that the approach of Easter calls you to sorrow and penance. Arise, therefore, from the slumber of sin, and be converted.

Meditation.

Barabbas is preferred to Jesus. You are shocked at it, but are not you doing the same thing as often as you follow your own inclination rather than the will of God?

Prayer over the People.

Attend, O Lord, to thy servants, and grant continual favors to those who beseech thee, that thou mayest gather and restore what they have lost, and preserve what thou hast restored to those who glory in thee their Creator and Ruler. Through Christ.

Friday. Second Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *But I will appear before thy sight in justice; I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall be made manifest (Ps. xvi.) Hear, O Lord, my justice, attend to my supplications.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that, purified by the holy fast, we may arrive by thy grace with sincere minds at the festival to come. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Gen. xxxvii. 6-22.)

In those days, Joseph said to his brethren : Hear my dream which I dreamed. I thought we were binding sheaves in the field : and my sheaf arose as it were and stood, and your sheaves standing about, bowed down before my sheaf. His brethren answered : Shalt thou be our king? or shall we be subject to thy dominion? Therefore this matter of his dreams and words ministered nourishment to their envy and hatred. He dreamed also another dream, which he told his brethren, saying : I saw in a dream, as it were the sun, and the moon, and eleven stars worshipping me. And when he had told this to his father, and brethren, his father rebuked him, and said : What meaneth this dream that thou hast dreamed? shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren worship thee upon the earth? His brethren therefore envied him : but his father considered the thing with himself. And when his brethren abode in Sichem, feeding their father's flocks, Israel said to him : Thy brethren feed the sheep in Sichem : come, I will send thee to them. And when he answered : I am ready ; he said to him : Go, and see if all things be well with thy brethren, and the cattle : and bring me word again what is doing. So being sent from the vale of Hebron, he came to Sichem : and a man found him there wandering in the field, and asked what he sought. But he answered : I seek my brethren, tell me where they feed the flocks. And the man said to him : They are departed from this place : for I heard them say : Let us go to Dothain. And Joseph went forward after his brethren, and found them in Dothain. And when they saw him afar off, before he came nigh them, they thought to kill him. And said one to another : Behold the dreamer cometh. Come, let us kill him, and cast him into some old pit, and we will say : Some evil beast hath devoured him : and then it shall appear what his dreams avail him : and Ruben hearing this, endeavored to deliver him out of their hands, and said : Do not take away his life, nor shed his blood : but cast him into this pit, that is in the wilderness, and keep your hands harmless : now he said this, being desirous to deliver him out of their hands, and restore him to his father.

Explanation.

The sons of Jacob try to prevent their brother Joseph from ruling over them ; but what they do with this purpose, serves only to exalt Joseph to a throne in Egypt. The cruelties inflicted upon Joseph by his brothers are a striking figure of those suffered by our Saviour ; as Joseph's elevation is of

Christ's triumph and glory. Thus are verified those words of the Proverb (Prov. xxi. 30): *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord.* The envy of Joseph's brethren made them resolve even to murder him. Such are the consequences, if we do not resist sin at its very outset. Parents can never be too prudent in correcting even the smallest faults of their children; for envy among brethren has brought great destruction to families. Ruben's example teaches us to prevent evil whenever and wherever we can.

Gospel. (Matt. xxi. 33-46.)

At that time Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude of the Jews, and the chief priests: There was a man a householder who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a wine-press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen: and went into a strange country. And when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits thereof. And the husbandmen laying hands on his servants, beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the former: and they did to them in like manner. And last of all he sent to them his son, saying: They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen seeing the son, said among themselves: This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance. And taking him they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen? They say to him: He will bring those evil men to an evil end: and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, that shall render him the fruit in due season. Jesus saith to them: Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? By the Lord this hath been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes." Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they knew that he spoke of them. And seeking to lay hands on him, they feared the multitudes: because they held him as a prophet.

What is the meaning of this parable?

The *householder* is God, the *vineyard* the kingdom of God as it was manifested among the Jews; the hedge is the protection of Divine Providence, and the guardianship of the holy angels; the press is the law of God, requiring from every one the fruits of virtue and piety; the *tower* is the protection of temporal superiors; the *husbandmen* are spiritual superiors, kings, princes, priests, rulers, and judges; *the going into a strange country* represents separation from God; the *fruits* are the ever necessary works of mercy; the *servants* are the prophets sent by God from time to time to incite the Jews to virtue, and to dissuade them from sin: of these, one they beat, as Jeremias; another they killed, as Isaias; another they stoned, as Zachary. *The son and heir* is Jesus Christ, whom the husbandmen cast forth out of his vineyard, out of Jerusalem, and crucified him. But God exalted him, through his death and resurrection, to be the first of the elect, the cornerstone upon which the whole structure of the house of God rests, and in which are united all men, from our first parents to Jesus Christ, and from him to the last righteous man on earth.

What punishment did those wicked husbandmen receive?

The vineyard was taken away from them, and given to the Gentiles, who, after being received into the Church, yielded the fruits of salvation, and will yield them till the end of time. The Holy City was destroyed, and with it the temple, and the people dispersed, homeless, into all parts of the world. Thus Christianity left those countries in which the people, in heart and life, turned away from Jesus.

How shall we apply this gospel to ourselves?

As the vineyard is let out to us, that is, as we have received the Gospel, we must ask ourselves whether we have given in the required fruits more punctually than the Jews. As the prophets admonished the Jewish people, so the Church, by her doctrine, the Holy Ghost by his divine inspirations, and conscience by its directions and reproofs, all admonish us to render to the Lord of the vineyard the due returns.

Those fall upon Christ, says St. Augustine, who despise and offend him; but Christ falls upon them, whom in his

judgment he rejects, and who are scattered like dust before the wind.

Meditation.

Jesus is declared by Pilate to be innocent; but the Jews condemn him to death. So far does the rage of passion carry us!

Prayer over the People.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, to thy people, health of mind and of body, that by laboring in good works, they may deserve to be forever defended by the protection of thy power. Through Christ. Amen.

Saturday. Second Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *The law of the Lord is unspotted, converting souls; the testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones* (Ps. xviii.) The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the works of his hand. Glory be to the Father.

Prayer of the Church.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, a salutary effect to our fasts, that the chastisement of the flesh which we have taken upon us, may promote the vigor of the soul. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Gen. xxvii. 6-40.)

In those days Rebecca said to her son Jacob: I heard thy father talking with Esau thy brother, and saying to him: Bring me of thy hunting, and make the meats that I may eat, and bless thee in the sight of the Lord, before I die. Now, therefore, my son, follow my counsel: And go thy way to the flock, bring me two kids of the best, that I may make of them meat for thy father, such as he gladly eateth: Which when thou hast brought in, and he hath eaten, he may bless thee before he die. And he answered her: Thou knowest that Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am smooth. If my father shall feel me, and perceive it, I fear least he will think I would have

mocked him, and I shall bring upon me a curse instead of a blessing. And his mother said to him: Upon me be this curse, my son: only hear thou my voice, and go, fetch me the things which I have said. He went, and brought, and gave them to his mother. She dressed meats, such as she knew his father liked. And she put on him very good garments of Esau, which she had at home with her: and the little skins of the kids she put about his hands, and covered the bare of his neck. And she gave him the savory meat, and delivered him bread that she had baked. Which when he had carried in, he said: My father? But he answered: I hear. Who art thou, my son? And Jacob said; I am Esau thy first-born: I have done as thou didst command me: Arise, sit, and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said to his son: How couldst thou find it so quickly, my son? He answered: It was the will of God that what I sought came quickly in my way. And Isaac said: Come hither, that I may feel thee, my son, and may prove whether thou be my son Esau, or not. He came near to his father, and when he had felt him, Isaac said: The voice indeed is the voice of Jacob: but the hands, are the hands of Esau. And he knew him not, because his hairy hands made him like to the elder. Then blessing him, he said: Art thou my son Esau? He answered: I am. Then he said: Bring me the meats of thy hunting, my son, that my soul may bless thee. And when they were brought, and he had eaten, he offered him wine also, which after he had drunk, he said to him: Come near me, and give me a kiss, my son. He came near, and kissed him. And immediately as he smelled the fragrant smell of his garments, blessing him, he said: Behold the smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field, which the Lord hath blessed. God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn and wine. And let peoples serve thee, and tribes worship thee: be thou lord of thy brethren, and let thy mother's children bow down before thee. Cursed be he that curseth thee: and let him that blesseth thee be filled with blessings. Isaac had scarce ended his words, when Jacob being now gone out abroad, Esau came, and brought in to his father meats made of what he had taken in hunting, saying: Arise, my father, and eat of thy son's venison; that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said to him: Why! who art thou? He answered: I am thy first-born son Esau. Isaac was struck with fear, and astonished exceedingly: and wondering beyond what can be believed, said: Who is he then that even now brought me venison that he had taken, and I ate of all before thou camest? and I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed. Esau having heard his father's words, roared out with a

great cry: and being in a consternation, said: Bless me also, my father. And he said: Thy brother came deceitfully and got thy blessing. But he said again: Rightly is his name called Jacob; for he hath supplanted me lo this second time: my first birth-right he took away before, and now this second time he hath stolen away my blessing. And again he said to his father: Hast thou not reserved me also a blessing? Isaac answered: I have appointed him thy lord, and have made all his brethren his servants: I have established him with corn and wine, and after this, what shall I do more for thee, my son? And Esau said to him: hast thou only one blessing, father? I beseech thee bless me also. And when he wept with a loud cry, Isaac being moved, said to him: In the fat of the earth, and in the dew of heaven from above, shall thy blessing be.

Explanation.

We see from this history that men try in vain to frustrate the decrees of God, announced by the prophets. It was in vain that Isaac endeavored to give to Esau, whom he loved, for the meats prepared by him, that blessing which was promised to Jacob, even before he was born. Isaac must be sick and blind, and be deceived in his blindness, that the divine prophecy might be fulfilled. We see further, that God does not leave unpunished the sins of the best and most pious men. How much anguish and sorrow befell Rebecca, for the deception to which she persuaded Jacob! How many sufferings came upon Jacob because he followed the sinful counsel of his mother in deceiving his father, for which Esau tried to kill him: Yet they would not have suffered at all, had they only left the manner in which the promise to Jacob was to be fulfilled, to Divine Providence. Let us not, like Esau, sacrifice our prerogatives for a short sensual pleasure.

Gospel. (Luke xv. 11-32.)

In that time Jesus spoke this parable to the Scribes and Pharisees: A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after

he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And rising up he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry: Because this my son was dead, and is come to life again: was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field, and when he came out and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing: and he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said to him: Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe. And he was angry, and would not go in. His father therefore coming out began to entreat him. And he answering, said to his father: Behold, for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured his substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. But he said to him: Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine. But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is come to life again: he was lost, and is found.

Explanation.

The elder son in this parable, like Esau in the epistle, represents the Israelites; the prodigal son, the sinful, but repentant Gentiles. Our Saviour hereby showed the calling and reception of the Gentiles into his kingdom, which the Jews would not enter. The parable also represents the misery of the sinner, the penance which he has to perform to be restored

again, the unwearied desire of God for the salvation of the sinner, and his joy at the sinner's return. Thus the father puts on him the robe of innocence and grace, a ring on his hand, the seal of the Holy Ghost, and shoes on his feet, to show that (as slaves were always barefooted) he is no longer to be a slave of sin, but a child of God, walking in the path of justice and faithfully carrying out his holy resolutions. He gives him also the fatted calf, and a joyous feast, to represent that God will nourish him with holy communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, while the music denotes the heavenly consolations with which God will comfort him

Meditation.

Jesus is scourged. Such are the pains which the Saviour must endure for the forbidden lusts of the world, and dost thou now wish to indulge in them?

Prayer over the People.

Preserve, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy family, by continued mercy, that relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, it may be also defended by thy protection. Through our Lord.

Third Sunday in Lent, called "Oculi."

This Sunday derives its name from the first word of the Introit, which is "Oculi." The Introit itself contains the prayer of a soul anxious to be freed from the snares of sin. *My eyes are ever towards the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare. Look thou upon me and have mercy upon me, for I am alone and poor. To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul; in thee, O God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed* (Ps. xxiv. 12, 15, 16). Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, regard the prayers of thy humble servants, and stretch forth in our defence, the right hand of thy majesty. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Ephesians v. 1-9.)

Brethren: Be ye therefore 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: or obscenity, or foolish talking, or 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 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.

Explanation.

It is here declared to be the duty of every Christian, not only to walk in love, but also to abstain from fornication, uncleanness, and equivocal and foolish talk. No one, therefore, who is addicted to these vices, can have any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. St. Paul also warns us against deceiving with vain words, such as are careless about committing sin, as if any crime were but a light fault, for which one might easily obtain pardon; and here, perhaps, he refers more particularly to the Gentiles.

Infidels, children of darkness and of the devil, are they who use vain words, that bring down the wrath of God upon all who believe them. A Christian, a child of light, that is of faith, should regard as a sin, what faith and conscience tell him to be so, and must live according to their direction, and not that of unbelieving and impious men. Ask yourself, therefore, O Christian, should any one try to lead you astray, whether after such a deed you could stand before the judgment-seat of God? Listen to your conscience, as to an impartial judge, and then decide whether that which you are asked to do is good or bad, lawful or unlawful.

Aspiration.

O Lord, free my heart from all inordinate desires for temporal goods and sensual pleasures. May a childlike fear of thee, O God, guard my tongue, that I may not speak foolish, frivolous, and far less vain or scandalous words, which may give occasion to my neighbor to fall. Strengthen me, that I may not be deceived by vain words, and become faithless to thee, but that I may always walk as a child of light before thee. Amen.

Gospel. (Luke xi. 14-28.)

At that time: Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke: and the multitudes were in admiration at it: but some of them said: He casteth out devils, by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven. But he seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall. And if satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that through Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court: those things are in peace which he possesseth. 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.

What are we to understand here by the dumb devil?

The evil spirit, who so controls those of whom he has possession, that they are dumb.

By what power did Christ cast out the devil?

By his divine power, described also as the *finger of God*, which worked so suddenly and perfectly, that the possessed was at once freed and able to speak.

How did Christ show the Jews that he did not cast out devils by Beelzebub?

1. By the parable in which he explains to them that the kingdom of Satan cannot stand if one evil spirit is cast out by another. 2. By pointing to their own children, some of whom were enabled to cast out devils by the power they had received from God (Mark ix. 37, 38). For if they cast out devils in the name of God, why should the same thing, when done by Jesus, be ascribed to the devil? Is not this evident malice against him? 3. By his whole life, and his works, which were in direct opposition to the devil.

The best defence against calumny is an innocent life; and the sweetest consolation for those who are slandered, is the remembrance of Jesus Christ, who was thus accused. If we are obliged to defend ourselves otherwise, we should do so with truth and energy, but without bitterness or revengefulness.

How can we apply this parable to ourselves?

1. We also are dumb when we cease to praise God, to thank him for the faculty of speech, and when our prayer is without devotion. 2. When we do not defend our neighbor, in case of his honor and good name being attacked, to save him from harm if we can. 3. When we neglect brotherly admonitions, through indifference to the sins of those that belong to us; not preventing the evil that we might, by our authority and influence. 4. When, through false shame, we do not confess our sins with sincerity. Jesus, by his grace bringing us to a good confession, casts this dumb devil out of us.

Who is the strong man armed?

It is Beelzebub, in whose name, according to the opinion of the Jews, Jesus cast out devils. The meaning of this whole passage is, "I am necessarily stronger than Satan, because I

overcome him, and take away his armor; that is, his malice, his hatred against God and man, his craft in deceiving, together with the wicked inclinations of men, idleness, bad company, slothfulness in prayer, and above all, *human respect*, all which are arms of Satan.

Why does Jesus say, *he that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth?*

Jesus here reproved the Jewish priests, the Pharisees, and doctors of the law, who, as men of learning and leaders of the people, should have been the first to know and receive him as the Messiah, and to join themselves to him, instead of persecuting him, maligning him as an associate of Satan, and endeavoring to destroy his kingdom.

Every Christian is thus bound to fight with Christ against the devil, against sin, and all its attendant evils.

Consider this well, O Christian, that between truth and error, between Christ and Satan, there is no middle party. Either you belong to God or to Satan; either you work for God or the devil. Are you not with Christ, against the world and the devil? Then you break the oath of baptism, and are the enemy of Christ. We cannot serve God and the world; we cannot give ourselves up to the vanities of the world, and at the same time be pious and devout. *He that is not with me, is against me.*

How shall we understand what Jesus said about the unclean spirit?

In the literal sense, these words were a warning to the Jews; particularly to the Pharisees and doctors of the law, showing them that their continued unbelief, after so many miraculous proofs of his mission and authority as the Messiah, would with certainty bring them to perdition.

In the spiritual sense, they describe the state of the soul which has been purified by the grace of God, but has fallen back again into sin. For the soul of the sinner is the dwelling-place of Satan. Is he expelled thence by the grace of God, he goes, seeking another resting-place; but finding none—that is, coming to men who keep their hearts shut against him, by penance, watching, and a virtuous life, and give no entrance to

his malice—he says, “I will return to the soul which I left.” He applies himself, therefore, to seduce that soul again, by deceiving it, and causing its zeal to grow cold; its watchfulness and penance to cease. If he is successful, and the man falls into his former sins, and others besides, he then re-enters that soul, taking with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. And this, 1. Because a relapse into sin gives fresh strength to its inclinations, while at the same time it weakens the will, thus making it harder for the man to extricate himself; just as, in bodily diseases, relapses are always attended with additional danger. 2. Because renewed and repeated infidelities remove the sinner the further from God, and render him unworthy of the grace without which he cannot be saved. 3. Because a relapse into sin brings along with it indifference, feebleness, and many other sins. 4. Because a habit of sin is thus formed, which it is almost impossible to break. 5. Because when God forsakes man, he gives himself up entirely to sin, and becomes hardened and impenitent. Such is the meaning of the seven evil spirits occupying the heart of man.

O Christian soul, guard against a relapse into sin, lest the worst befall thee. What happens to the individual will also happen to the nation. Thus it is that our Saviour applies the parable to the Jews, whose unbelief, immorality, and malice, becoming more and more confirmed, brought destruction upon them.

Why is the woman who praised Christ mentioned in this gospel?

It is done, says Bede, to the eternal honor of her, who thus, publicly and without fear, called Him blessed whom the Pharisees mocked and tempted in the most revolting manner. He who among the wicked shows himself to be pious, deserves the greatest praise.

Why does Jesus call those blessed who hear the word of God, and keep it?

Because it is not enough to obtain salvation that we should hear the word of God only; we must also practice it. By this answer Christ wished it to be understood that his mother was

to be called blessed, not only because she had conceived him, the Word of God, but also because she kept that word in her heart, and lived according to it.

Aspiration.

I thank thee, O Jesus, for having freed me from the slavery of Satan; but look upon my frailty, and enlighten, O True Light, the eyes of my soul, that I may never be induced, by the delusions of the evil spirit, to disregard the malice and hurtfulness of sin, or to conceal it through false shame. Strengthen me, O Jesus, conqueror of the dumb devil, that if I should have the misfortune to sin against thy holy commandments, I may have courage to overcome my false shame, and confess my sins in sincerity and humility. O my Saviour, be thou my leader in the fight, that I may foil those arms of the devil, my evil inclinations, idleness, bad company, bad books, and human respect, and grant that I may never relapse into sin, but serve thee with perseverance. Amen.

Meditation.

Jesus is brought out before the people, with the words, "Behold the man!" Do you also remain unmoved, like the Jews, while looking at the lacerated Saviour?

Monday. Third Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *In God I will praise the word, in the Lord I will praise his speech. In God I will trust. I will not fear what man can do against me (Ps. lv.) Have mercy on me, O God, for man hath trodden me under foot. All the day long he had afflicted me, fighting against me. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Pour forth, in thy mercy, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that, as we abstain from flesh, we may also restrain our senses from hurtful excesses.

Epistle. (4 Kings v. 1 15.)

In those days, Naaman, general of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable: for by him the Lord gave deliverance to Syria: and he was a valiant man and rich, but a leper. Now there had gone out robbers from Syria, and had led away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid, and she waited upon Naaman's wife. And she said to her mistress: I wish my master had been with the prophet, that is in Samaria: he would certainly have healed him of the leprosy which he hath. Then Naaman went in to his lord, and told him, saying: Thus and thus said the girl from the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said to him: Go, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment, and brought the letter to the king of Israel, in these words: When thou shalt receive this letter, know that I have sent to thee Naaman my servant, that thou mayest heal him of his leprosy. And when the king of Israel had read the letter, he rent his garments, and said: Am I God, to be able to kill and give life, that this man hath sent to me, to heal a man of his leprosy? mark, and see how he seeketh occasions against me. And when Eliseus the man of God had heard this, to wit, that the king of Israel had rent his garments, he sent to him, saying: Why hast thou rent thy garments? let him come to me, and let him know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Eliseus: and Eliseus sent a messenger to him, saying: Go, and wash seven times in the Jordan, and thy flesh shall recover health, and thou shalt be clean. Naaman was angry and went away, saying: I thought he would have come out to me, and standing would have invoked the name of the Lord his God, and touched with his hand the place of the leprosy, and healed me. Are not the Abana, and the Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel, that I may wash in them, and be made clean? So as he turned, and was going away with indignation, his servants came to him, and said to him: Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it: how much rather what he now hath said to thee: Wash, and thou shalt be clean? Then he went down, and washed in the Jordan seven times: according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored, like the flesh of a little child, and he was made clean. And returning to the man of God with all his train, he came, and stood before him, and said: In truth, I know there is no other God in all the earth, but only in Israel.

Explanation.

The washing of Naaman, the leper, in the river Jordan, by which he was made clean, according to the word of Eliseus, was a figure of baptism and penance, by which the leprosy of the soul, sin, is removed.

Use often, therefore, the sacrament of penance, that thy soul may become purer and more acceptable to God.

Gospel. (Luke iv. 23-30.)

At that time Jesus said to the Pharisees: Doubtless you will say to me this similitude: Physician, heal thyself: as great things as we have heard done in Capharnaum, do also here in thy own country. And he said: Amen, I say to you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country. In truth I say to you, there were many widows in the days of Elias in Israel, when heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout all the land. And to none of them was Elias sent, but into Sarepta of Sidon, to a widow woman. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet: and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, hearing these things, were filled with anger. And they rose up and thrust him out of the city: and they brought him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them, went his way.

Practice.

It was through a perverted will that the Pharisees demanded miracles of Jesus. He, knowing their hearts, reproached them for this, and pointed out to them the final perdition in which their course would end. Hearing this, they were filled with anger, and sought to kill him.

Like these Pharisees are the infidels of our day, who, throwing off the yoke of faith, rise against God and his holy Church, to destroy her. Will they ever be successful? No; save as the Nazarenes were, in putting Jesus to death. What a consolation in persecution, for us, that they can neither hurt us, or the Church; and what an encouragement to be firm in our faith in Jesus and his holy Church!

Meditation.

Pilate gives Jesus up to the Jews to be crucified, although acknowledging him to be innocent. Hast thou never acted against thy knowledge—out of fear condemning the innocent?

Prayer over the People.

Let thy mercy, O God, assist us, that by thy protection we may deserve to be delivered from the threatening dangers of our sins, and by thy deliverance be saved. Through Christ.

Tuesday. Third Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *I have cried, for thou, O God, hast heard me; O incline thine ear and hear my words; keep me, O Lord, as the apple of thine eye, protect me under the shadow of thy wings* (Ps. xvi.) *Hear, O Lord, my justice, attend to my prayer.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Graciously hear us, O Almighty and merciful God, and favorably grant to us the gifts of wholesome self-denial. Through Christ.

Epistle. (4 Kings iv. 1-7.)

In those days, a certain woman of the wives of the prophets cried to Eliseus, saying: Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant was one that feared God, and behold the creditor is come to take away my two sons to serve him. And Eliseus said to her: What wilt thou have me do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in thy house? And she answered: I thy handmaid have nothing in my house but a little oil, to anoint me. And he said to her: Go, borrow of all thy neighbors empty vessels not a few. And go in, and shut thy door, when thou art within, and thy sons: and pour out thereof into all those vessels, and when they are full take them away. So the woman went, and shut the door upon her, and upon her sons: they brought her the vessels, and she poured in. And when the vessels were full, she said to her son: Bring me yet a vessel. And he

answered: I have no more. And the oil stood. And she came and told the man of God. And he said: Go, sell the oil, and pay thy creditor: and thou and thy sons live of the rest.

Explanation.

By this epistle, the proverb is verified: "The greater our need, the nearer is God." Our confidence in him should, therefore, increase as our need increases. Purity of heart, and fervor in doing good works, give firm hope to the just. God enriches us with heavenly goods, as he finds us free from desire for the goods of this world.

Gospel. (Matt. xviii. 15-22.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: If thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more: that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand. And if he will not hear them: tell the church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican. Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning any thing whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Then came Peter unto him and said: Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith to him: I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times.

Practice.

Jesus here teaches us both the method and the importance of brotherly correction and reconciliation. We must first rebuke our brother alone, then before one or two friends. If he should not hear them, we should try to reconcile him through the authority of our spiritual superiors, and on our part be ever ready for reconciliation, whether our advances are accepted or not. Whoever does not hear the Church incurs the sentence of eternal damnation; but he who hears the Church, be-

comes reconciled to his brother, and prays with him, shall receive what he asks for. What an inestimable good might such brotherly correction and reconciliation be to the community of Christians, if it were not that we allow ourselves to be paralyzed by fear of men, and are more ready to calumniate our neighbor than to gain him to God.

Meditation.

Jesus, dressed as a king, is mocked. Hast thou never ridiculed poor, debilitated, and old persons, in whom thou shouldst have recognized Jesus Christ?

Prayer over the People.

Defend us, O Lord, by thy protection, and always preserve us from all iniquity. Through our Lord.

Wednesday. Third Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *But I will hope in the Lord. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast regarded my humility (Ps. xxx.) In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded; deliver me in thy justice, and rescue me.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant us, we beseech thee, O Lord, that instructed by wholesome fasting, and abstaining from dangerous vices, we may more easily obtain thy favor. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Exodus xx. 12-24.)

Thus saith the Lord God: Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house: neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his. And all the people saw the voices and

the flames, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mount smoking: and being terrified and struck with fear, they stood afar off, saying to Moses: Speak thou to us, and we will hear: let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die. And Moses said to the people: Fear not: for God has come to prove you, and that the dread of him might be in you, and you should not sin. And the people stood afar off. But Moses went to the dark cloud wherein God was. And the Lord said to Moses: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: You have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven. You shall not make gods of silver, nor shall you make to yourselves gods of gold. You shall make an altar of earth unto me, and you shall offer upon it your holocausts and peace-offerings, your sheep and oxen, in every place where the memory of my name shall be.

Explanation.

Every legislator says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal;" but only He who knows our hearts has forbidden us to covet. To have no desire for what is forbidden, is the very essence of rectitude, because then the root of vice is destroyed; and out of love to our neighbor not to covet, is the spirit of the life of Christ. The fear of the Lord is *good*: it restrains outward acts: but love which combats the evil inclinations within, and brings us nearer to God, is better. More pleasing to him than an altar of pure gold set with the precious things of earth, is the heart from which is offered up what is acceptable to him.

Gospel. (Matt. xv. 1-20.)

At that time: There came to Jesus from Jerusalem, Scribes and Pharisees, saying: Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answering, said to them: Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for your tradition? For God said: Honor thy father and mother; and: He that shall curse father or mother, let him die the death. But you say: Whosoever shall say to father or mother, The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me, shall profit thee; and he shall not honor his father or his mother: and you have made void the commandment of God for your tradition. Hypocrites, well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying: This people honoreth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they wor-

ship me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men. And having called together the multitudes unto him, he said to them: Hear ye and understand. Not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man: but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said to him: Dost thou know that the Pharisees, when they heard this word, were scandalized? But he answering, said: Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit. And Peter answering, said to him: Expound to us this parable. But he said: Are you also yet without understanding? Do you not understand, that whatsoever entereth into the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the privy? But the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and those things defile a man. For from the heart cometh forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man.

What is the meaning of the words, "*not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man?*"

Christ did not mean to say, "Eat and drink whatever you wish, you will never sin;" for to abstain from certain food was commanded by that divine law which he came to fulfil (Matt. v. 17); but he intended thereby to say, "It is not the unclean or forbidden food alone which defiles a man, but it is the perverse will within, and the wicked deeds without, that make him sinful and unclean." When our first parents in Paradise ate the forbidden fruit, it was not the fruit itself entering the mouth, but the disobedience towards God, proceeding from the heart, that first defiled them, and after that, the act of eating. Thus thou also art defiled by the wicked words coming from thy mouth, with which thou gainsayest the authority instituted by God; by thy gluttony on days of fasting and abstinence appointed by the Church.

What Christians in this way make themselves guilty of hypocrisy?

Those who keep the precepts of the Church, but violate, at the same time, the law of God. Many, for instance, would not for any consideration eat flesh-meat on a Friday, but do

not hesitate to eat more than enough of permitted meats, to curse and swear, to scandalize the little ones, to slander their neighbors, and to drive away the poor and needy.

Meditation.

Jesus is crowned with thorns. He suffers for your proud, vain, and sinful thoughts. Oh, be sorry for them! combat them!

Prayer over the People.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who seek the favor of thy protection, being delivered from all evils, may serve thee with secure minds. Through Christ.

Thursday. Third Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *I am the salvation of the people, saith the Lord. From whatever tribulation they shall cry to me, I will hear them, and I will be their Lord forever (Ps. lxxvii.) Attend, O my people, to my law, incline your ear to the words of my mouth. Glory be the Father.*

Prayer.

May the blessed solemnity of thy saints, Cosmas and Damian, magnify thee, O Lord, by which thou hast granted eternal glory to them and assistance to us in thy ineffable providence. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Jer. vii. 1-7.)

In those days the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Stand in the gate of the house of the Lord, and proclaim there this word, and say: Hear ye the word of the Lord, all ye men of Juda, that enter in at these gates, to adore the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel: Make your ways and your doings good: and I will dwell with you in this place. Trust not in lying words, saying: The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, it is the temple of the Lord. For if you will order well your ways, and your doings: if you will execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not

innocent blood in this place, and walk not after strange gods to your own hurt, I will dwell with you in this place: in the land which I gave to your fathers from the beginning and forever, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

The Jews believed themselves to be acceptable to God, because they had the temple of the true God at Jerusalem, and observed the requirements of the external service there offered. This error the prophet exposes; teaching them, by divine command, that he only is acceptable to God who combines the outward service with an inward intention to please God, and to perform works of justice and mercy.

Like these Jews, many Catholics attach more importance to the outward observances and ceremonies of the Church, than to the correction of their hearts. We may justly feel happy to be members of the Catholic Church; but let us remember the significant words of St. Pacian, "What does it profit us to believe in the Catholic Church, but to live like the heathen?"

Gospel. (Luke iv. 38-44.)

At that time Jesus, rising up out of the synagogue, went into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever, and they besought him for her. And standing over her, he commanded the fever, and it left her. And immediately rising, she ministered to them. And when the sun was down, all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them to him. But he laying his hands on every one of them, healed them. And devils went out from many, crying out and saying: Thou art the Son of God. And rebuking them he suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was Christ. And when it was day, going out he went into a desert place, and the multitudes sought him, and came unto him: and they detained him that he should not depart from them. To whom he said: To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God: for therefor am I sent. And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

What does the mother of Simon's wife here teach us?

To devote our strength, after recovery from sickness, to God and to our neighbor, for God's sake. Let us never commence

a day without thinking, "This is perhaps my last day." It is also a praiseworthy devotion to end our prayers every morning and evening with an act of contrition, and the Psalm *De Profundis* (cxxxix.) St. Paul says, in his Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 31), *I die daily*. St. Theresa said, every time the clock struck, "I am now one hour nearer to judgment." Finally, keep your heart continually so prepared as to be able to say calmly, with the Psalmist, *My heart is ready, O Lord, my heart is ready*. I expect thee every hour. *Blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord shall come, he shall find so doing* (Matt. xxiv. 46).

Meditation.

Loaded with the cross, Jesus is led to death. As often as your passions rebel against the cross, remember Jesus, and follow him in love.

Prayer over the People.

May heavenly propitiation increase thy people subject to thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, and make them ever servants of thy Commandments. Through Christ.



Friday. Third Week in Lent.

The Introit of the Mass. *Show me, O God, a token for good, that they who hate me may see and be confounded; because thou, O Lord, hast helped me, hast comforted me* (Ps. lxxxv.) *Bow down thy ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am needy and poor*. Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Look down on our fasts, we beseech thee, O Lord, with merciful favor, that, as we abstain from food in body, so we may fast from vice in mind. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Numbers xx. 2-13.)

In those days, the children of Israel came together against Moses and Aaron: and making a sedition, they said: Would God we had perished among our brethren before the Lord. Why have you brought out the church of the Lord into the wilderness, that both we and our cattle should die? Why have you made us come up out of Egypt, and have brought us into this wretched place which cannot be sowed, nor bringeth forth figs, nor vines, nor pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink? And Moses and Aaron leaving the multitude, went into the tabernacle of the covenant, and fell flat upon the ground, and cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord God, hear the cry of this people, and open to them thy treasure, a fountain of living water, that being satisfied they may cease to murmur. And the glory of the Lord appeared over them. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Take the rod, and assemble the people together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak to the rock before them, and it shall yield waters. And when thou hast brought forth water out of the rock, all the multitude and their cattle shall drink. Moses therefore took the rod, which was before the Lord, as he had commanded him. And having gathered together the multitude before the rock, he said to them: Hear, ye rebellious and incredulous: Can we bring you forth water out of this rock? And when Moses had lifted up his hand, and struck the rock twice with the rod, there came forth water in great abundance, so that the people and their cattle drank. And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron: Because you have not believed me, to sanctify me before the children of Israel, you shall not bring these people into the land, which I will give them. This is the Water of contradiction, where the children of Israel strove with words against the Lord, and he was sanctified in them. .

Explanation.

Can we bring you forth water out of this rock? "This was said," says St. Augustine, "not that Moses doubted the almighty power of God, but only his own power under those particular circumstances; namely, during the murmurs of the people. For this reason, God suffered the water to come forth after the second stroke. Thus the man to whom God himself gave testimony that he was faithful in his whole house, lost a great temporal consolation, for Josue was appointed in his

room to bring the Israelites into Canaan. Thus God punishes the faults of the just.

Are not we like the Israelites, who, having for so many years received favors from God, murmured against him? Is not our behavior the same as theirs, when, after continued happiness, one day of misfortune befalls us?

Gospel. (John iv. 5-42.)

At that time Jesus came to a city of Samaria which is called Sichar; near the piece of land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone into the city to buy meats. Then that Samaritan woman saith to him: How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans. Jesus answered, and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God, and who is he that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith to him: Sir, thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered, and said to her: Whosoever drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever: but the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting. The woman saith to him: Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw. Jesus saith to her: Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered, and said: I have no husband. Jesus said to her: Thou hast said well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband. This thou hast said truly. The woman saith to him: Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers adored on this mountain, and you say, that at Jerusalem is the place where men must adore. Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe me, that the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem adore the Father. You adore that which you know not: we adore that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For

the Father also seeketh such to adore him. God is a spirit, and they that adore him, must adore him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith to him: I know that the Messiah cometh (who is called Christ) therefore when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her: I am he who am speaking with thee. And immediately his disciples came: and they wondered that he talked with the woman. Yet no man said: What seekest thou, or why talkest thou with her? The woman therefore left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men there: Come, and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not he the Christ? They went therefore out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean time the disciples prayed him, saying: Rabbi, eat. But he said to them: I have meat to eat which you know not. The disciples therefore said one to another: Hath any man brought him to eat? Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work. Do not you say, there are yet four months, and then the harvest cometh? Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes, and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true: that it is one man that soweth, and it is another that reapeth. I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labor: others have labored, and you have entered into their labors. Now of that city many of the Samaritans believed in him, for the word of the woman giving testimony: He told me all things whatsoever I have done. So when the Samaritans were come to him, they desired him that he would tarry there. And he abode there two days. And many more believed in him because of his own word. And they said to the woman: We now believe, not for thy saying: for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.

What do these words of Christ mean, *he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever?*

This water is, 1. The living truth; and to drink of it means to receive the heavenly truth, as the thirsty drink fresh water. 2. It is the fountain of the grace of Jesus Christ, cleansing the soul, and refreshing it, and allaying the heats of passion and concupiscence, moistening the soil of our hearts to bring forth good works, and imparting true life. It is, again, the effusion of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Whoever possesses this

Holy Spirit has found rest in God, for whom he was created in the knowledge of his truth, and of a holy life. He has in his heart a fountain which is never dried up, except by mortal sin, the water of which quenches the thirst for worldly goods beyond our reach, and the lust for sinful pleasures which disquiet the mind, keeping our thoughts raised to heaven, until through thorns and sorrows, patiently suffering and praying, combating and conquering, we enter into eternal life, and thirst no more.

Meditation.

Jesus admonishes the women of Jerusalem to weep over themselves and their children. Thus we too weep over the sufferings of Christ, without amending our lives, which also should move us to tears.

Prayer over the People.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who confide in thy protection, may, by thy assistance, overcome all that is opposed to us. Through Christ.

Saturday. Third Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *Give ear, O Lord, to my words, understand my cry; hearken to the voice of my prayer, O my king, and my God (Ps. v.) For to thee will I pray, O Lord; in the morning thou shalt hear my voice. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that they, who afflicting their flesh, abstain from food, may, following justice, fast from sin. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Daniel xiii. 1-62.)

In those days there was a man, that dwelt in Babylon, and his name was Joakin: and he took a wife whose name was Susanna, the daughter of Helcias, a very beautiful woman, and one that feared God. For her parents being just, had instructed their daughter according to the

law of Moses. Now Joakim was very rich, and had an orchard near his house: and the Jews resorted to him, because he was the most honorable of them all. And there were two of the ancients of the people appointed judges that year, of whom the Lord said: Iniquity came out from Babylon from the ancient judges, that seemed to govern the people. These men frequented the house of Joakim, and all that had any matters of judgment came to them. And when the people departed away at noon, Susanna went in, and walked in her husband's orchard. And the old men saw her going in every day, and walking: and they were inflamed with lust towards her: and they perverted their own mind and turned away their eyes that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments. So they were both wounded with the love of her, yet they did not make known their grief one to the other: for they were ashamed to declare to one another their lust, being desirous to have to do with her: and they watched carefully every day to see her: and one said to another: Let us now go home, for it is dinner time. So going out, they departed one from another. And turning back again, they came both to the same place: and asking one another the cause, they acknowledged their lust: and then they agreed upon a time, when they might find her alone. And it fell out, as they watched a fit day, she went in on a time, as yesterday and the day before, with two maids only, and was desirous to wash herself in the orchard: for it was hot weather. And there was nobody there, but the two old men that had hid themselves and were beholding her. So she said to the maids: Bring me oil, and washing balls, and shut the doors of the orchard, that I may wash me. And they did as she bade them: and they shut the doors of the orchard, and went out by a back door to fetch what she had commanded them, and they knew not that the elders were hid within. Now when the maids were gone forth, the two elders arose, and ran to her, and said: Behold the doors of the orchard are shut, and nobody seeth us, and we are in love with thee: wherefore consent to us, and lie with us. But if thou wilt not, we will bear witness against thee, that a young man was with thee, and therefore thou didst send away thy maids from thee. Susanna sighed and said: I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing, it is death to me: and if I do it not, I shall not escape your hands. But it is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord. With that Susanna cried out with a loud voice: and the elders also cried out against her. And one of them ran to the door of the orchard, and opened it. So when the servants of the house heard the cry in the orchard, they rushed in by the back door to see what was the matter.

But after the old men had spoken, the servants were greatly ashamed ; for never had there been any such word said of Susanna. And on the next day, when the people were come to Joakim her husband, the two elders also came full of wicked device against Susanna, to put her to death. And they said before the people : Send to Susanna, daughter of Helcias the wife of Joakim. And presently they sent, and she came with her parents, and children, and all her kindred. Now Susanna was exceeding delicate, and beautiful to behold. But those wicked men commanded that her face should be uncovered (for she was covered) that so at least they might be satisfied with her beauty. Therefore her friends, and all her acquaintance wept. But the two elders rising up in the midst of the people, laid their hands upon her head. And she weeping looked up to heaven, for her heart had confidence in the Lord. And the elders said : As we walked in the orchard alone, this woman came in with two maids, and shut the doors of the orchard, and sent away the maids from her. Then a young man that was there hid came to her, and lay with her. But we that were in a corner of the orchard, seeing this wickedness, ran up to them, and we saw them lie together. And him indeed we could not take, because he was stronger than we, and opening the doors he leaped out : but having taken this woman, we asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us : of this thing we are witnesses. The multitude believed them as being the elders and the judges of the people, and they condemned her to death. Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said : O eternal God, who knowest hidden things, who knowest all things before they come to pass, thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me : and behold I must die, whereas I have done none of these things, which these men have maliciously forged against me. And the Lord heard her voice. And when she was led to be put to death, the Lord raised up the holy spirit of a young boy, whose name was Daniel. And he cried out with a loud voice : I am clear from the blood of this woman. Then all the people turning themselves towards him, said : What meaneth this word that thou hast spoken ? But he standing in the midst of them, said : Are ye so foolish, ye children of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth, you have condemned a daughter of Israel ? Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her. So all the people turned again in haste, and the old men said to him : Come, and sit thou down among us, and shew it us : seeing God hath given thee the honor of old age. And Daniel said to the people : Separate these two far from one another, and I will examine them. So when they were put asunder one

from the other, he called one of them, and said to him: O thou that art grown old in evil days, now are thy sins come out, which thou hast committed before: in judging unjust judgments, oppressing the innocent, and letting the guilty to go free, whereas the Lord saith: The innocent and the just thou shalt not kill. Now then, if thou sawest her, tell me under what tree thou sawest them conversing together. He said: Under a mastic tree. And Daniel said: Well hast thou lied against thy own head: for behold the Angel of God having received the sentence of him, shall cut thee in two. And having put him aside, he commanded that the other should come, and he said to him: O thou seed of Chanaan, and not of Juda, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust hath perverted thy heart: thus did you do to the daughters of Israel, and they for fear conversed with you: but a daughter of Juda would not abide your wickedness. Now therefore tell me, under what tree didst thou take them conversing together. And he answered: Under a holm tree. And Daniel said to him: Well hast thou also lied against thy own head: for the Angel of the Lord waiteth with a sword to cut thee in two, and to destroy you. With that all the assembly cried out with a loud voice, and they blessed God, who saveth them that trust in him. And they rose up against the two elders (for Daniel had convicted them of false witness by their own mouth) and they did to them as they had maliciously dealt against their neighbor, to fulfil the law of Moses: and they put them to death, and innocent blood was saved in that day.

Explanation.

The vile slander of these two miserable and shameless persons is here brought before us as a warning. Being unable to seduce a young woman of rare virtue, they determined to ruin her by false accusation. But "*whoever digs a grave for others, falls into it himself:*" Susanna and Joseph in Egypt are the two greatest examples of chastity to both the sexes. Susanna is particularly the model of the matrimonial fidelity which the wife owes the husband. *It is better for me to fall into your hands, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.* So she exclaimed, her eyes and her heart lifted up to God—for sin is a greater evil than death itself. Besides, men cannot save the sinner from the justice of God, while God can free the innocent from the violence of men.

Gospel. (John viii. 1-11.)

At that time Jesus went unto mount Olivet. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came to him, and sitting down he taught them. And the Scribes and Pharisees bring unto him a woman taken in adultery; and they set her in the midst. And said to him: Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest thou? And this they said tempting him that they might accuse him. But Jesus bowing himself down, wrote with his finger on the ground: when therefore they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said to them: He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again stooping down, he wrote on the ground. But they hearing this went out one by one, beginning at the eldest. And Jesus alone remained, and the woman standing in the midst. Then Jesus lifting up himself, said to her: Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee? Who said: No man, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more.

Practice.

The Pharisees, more loaded with sin than the woman who committed adultery, brought her to Jesus, whose meekness and mercy towards the sinner they well knew, in order to tempt him, and to see whether out of tenderness he would act against the strict letter of the law. But he showed them and saved her (for he had come to seek and to save that which was lost), the sinful but contrite woman, admonishing her never to sin again.

What a difference between the chaste Susanna, the beautiful type of a pure soul, and this woman taken in adultery. God does not reject the sinner ready to do penance. Go, therefore, to Jesus, the friend of the contrite sinner. Hast thou not avoided sin like Susanna, repent then like the woman who committed adultery; watch thyself in future with more care, and behold the Lord will not condemn thee.

Meditation.

Simon of Cyrene carries the cross for the languid Saviour. Every sorrow, every suffering, is part of the cross of Christ. Oh, carry it willingly and patiently.

Prayer over the People.

Extend, O Lord, to thy faithful, the right hand of heavenly succor, that they may seek thee with their whole hearts, and deserve to obtain what they ask for worthily. Through our Lord.

Fourth Sunday in Lent, called "Laetare."

The Introit of the Mass commences with the word *laetare* (rejoice), from which the Sunday derives its name. *Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and come together, all you that love her. Rejoice with joy, you that have been in sorrow, that you may exult and be filled from the breasts of your consolation* (Isaias lxvi. 10). *I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord* (Ps. cxxi.) Glory be to the Father.

By the Introit and following epistle, the Church reminds us of the joys of heaven, to encourage us to persevering zeal in penance and fasting, and to patience under persecution, crosses, and sorrows. Our joy in heaven will be the greater the more we shall have suffered in this life, and the more we shall have brought the body under subjection to the soul.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we who are afflicted for our deeds as we deserve, may be relieved by the comfort of thy grace. Through our Lord.

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 who was of the bond-woman, was born according to the flesh: but he of the free-woman, was by promise. Which things are said by an alle-

gory. For these are the two testaments. The one from Mount Sina, engendering unto bondage; which is Agar: For Sina is a mountain in Arabia, which hath affinity to that Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But that Jerusalem, which is above, is free: which is our mother. For it is written: Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not: break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath a husband: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he, that was born according to the flesh, persecuted him that was after the spirit: so also it is now. But what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bond-woman, but of the free: by the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.

Explanation.

The epistle mentions the two sons of Abraham, and their mothers, by whom St. Paul shows that God had prefigured a great mystery. The one of the sons, Ismael, was born to him by his bond-woman, Agar, *according to the flesh*, that is, in his best years, and according to nature; but the other, Isaac, was born to him according to *promise*, by the free-woman, his wife Sara, in his old age and in a wonderful manner. They were types of the two Testaments, or double covenant which God made with man, and by which he bound them to the observance of his law, promising therefor both temporal and eternal benefits.

The first covenant, typified by Agar and her son, God made with the Jews, who served God like servants, under the yoke of hard laws, from fear of punishment, and for the hope of temporal rewards. The second covenant, typified by Sara and the son of promise, Isaac, God made with Christians, who, freed from the yoke of bondage, and the misery of sin, through Christ, do not tremble before him as servants, but lift up their hands to him as their father, and who, if they fulfil his will faithfully and thankfully, will not be hurt by the persecutions of their sensual brethren, but will become heirs of God through Christ, partakers of the glory of their Heavenly Father, and be filled with the abundance of his house forever.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, I thank thee for the grace of having received me into thy holy Church; grant me, I beseech thee, the further grace, that by fasting, prayer, and patience under persecutions and adversities, I may partake in thy sufferings and become so like unto thee that I may never be rejected by thee as a disobedient and sensual child, but be found worthy of thy divine promises, and thy eternal consolations in the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.

Gospel. (John vi. 1-15.)

After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias: and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased. Jesus therefore went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand. When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to try him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered 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. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves: and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were 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. They gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. So those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus therefore when he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone.

Why did Christ thus try St. Philip?

St. Augustine says: 1. Christ knew the infirmity of their

faith, but he tried them in order that they also might perceive it, and to direct their attention to the miracle he was about to perform. 2. He thereby taught all the faithful to make use first of natural and ordinary means, before we have recourse to the supernatural. 3. The miracle would be the more striking to the people, when they were satisfied that the provisions they had were quite small and insufficient. 4. We learn, hence, to have confidence in God who is a helper in due time of tribulation (Ps. ix. 10).

What ceremonies did our Saviour use at this miracle, and why?

According to St. Matthew (xiv. 19), he first looked up to heaven, in order to remind us that every good gift comes from above, and that it is God only who opens his hand, and fills all with benediction. 2. He thanked his Heavenly Father, to show us that we also should be careful to thank God for all his benefits. The table, says St. Chrysostom, which begins and ends with prayer, shall never know want. 3. He blessed the bread that we might learn thence that it is the blessing of God which gives success.

Why did Jesus command to gather up the fragments?

1. That they might not be trodden under foot and lost. 2. To show, by the multiplicity of the remnants, the greatness of the miracle. 3. To teach us to value the gifts of God, however small they appear to be, and to keep them for the poor.

Why did Jesus flee after this miracle?

Because the people, through this miracle, knew him for the Messiah, and desired publicly to proclaim him king. But he had come to establish a spiritual, not a temporal kingdom. Hereby he teaches us, 1. To seek, in all our actions, not the admiration and applause of men, but only the glory of God, and the good of our neighbor. 2. To love solitude; that there, far from the noise of the world, we may with more freedom converse with God.

Consolation in Poverty.

To those poor who are devout, and who follow Christ, this gospel is full of consolation, in that even without entreaty, he is here seen to care for the people that followed him. Thus has God, from the very beginning of the world, shown care for his children. For the comfort and preservation of his chosen people, he sent Joseph before them into Egypt (Gen. xlv. 5; Ps. civ. 4). He sustained the children of Israel during forty years in the wilderness, with bread from heaven (Deut. viii.) He fed the Prophet Elias, sending him bread and flesh by a raven (3 Kings xviii. 6). He remembered Daniel lying in the lion's den (Dan. xiv. 37). God has also, in the New Testament, shown his care for his own by nourishing and feeding them in their greatest need, at one time through the instrumentality of animals, at another by that of angels and of men, as authentic histories of the saints testify. David therefore said with truth, *I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread* (Ps. xxxvi. 25). That is, God forsakes none of those who serve him sincerely, who *before all seek the kingdom of God and his justice* (Luke xii. 31), and who have great confidence in God; but they who do not thus, have little reason to expect any thing from him. As he cares with the love of a father for those who serve him, so he forsakes those who forsake him. Endeavor therefore to be a good child, and then you will have God always for your father. *Cast thy care upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee* (Ps. liv. 23). Many suffer because they put more confidence in men, or in themselves, than they do in God. But it is not hence to be inferred that the just need not work for his support, *for if any man will not work, neither let him eat* (2 Thess. iii. 10).

Aspiration.

In thy omnipotence and benignity, O my God, I put my trust. I firmly believe if I fear thee, shun that which is evil, and do that which is right, I shall, though poor here, after this life, have abundance of good things from thee.

Instruction how to prepare ourselves for Easter.

“Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand.”—*John* vi. 14.

In order to prepare ourselves worthily for the approaching festival of Easter, on which we should arise with Christ, to a new, holy, and God-pleasing life, we must first avoid all lawful joys and pleasures, particularly gay company, and often withdraw into solitude, for when man is alone God speaks to his heart (*Osee* ii. 14).

2. When we have once chosen retirement, we shall be the more easily led to such meditation on our state before God, as will be to the sinner the beginning of conversion, and to the just, a means of advancing to higher perfection. We must often remember what Moses said to the Jews, in regard to the festival of the pasch. *On this day is your reconciliation and purification from all sin. You will be purified before the Lord, and this is for you a sabbath of entire rest.* We must therefore prepare ourselves by fasting, watching, and praying; but the soul which is not prepared on that day, by works of penance, *shall be destroyed from among the people.* 3. We must, from this until Easter, fast with more and more strictness; often, in the church, or in our own chamber, meditate upon the sufferings of Christ with sorrow, and with thanksgiving; give alms to the poor, if we are able, or, if poor ourselves, bear our poverty with patience, offering it up to Jesus, our Lord, to be united to his poverty, hunger, and thirst. 4. Finally, we must make a good confession, that we may celebrate the feast of Easter *not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*—that is, with a pure heart (*1 Cor.* v. 8).

Monday. Fourth Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *Save me, O God, by thy name, and in thy strength deliver me. O God, hear my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth* (*Ps.* liii.) *For strangers have risen up against me, and the mighty have sought after my soul.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that keeping with yearly devotion these sacred observances, we may please thee both in body and mind. Through Christ.

Epistle. (3 Kings iii. 16–28.)

In those days, there came two women that were harlots, to king Solomon, and stood before him: And one of them said: I beseech thee, my lord, I and this woman dwelt in one house, and I was delivered of a child with her in the chamber. And the third day, after that I was delivered, she also was delivered, and we were together, and no other person with us in the house, only we two. And this woman's child died in the night: for in her sleep she overlaid him. And rising in the dead time of the night, she took my child from my side, while I thy handmaid was asleep, and laid it in her bosom: and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold it was dead: but considering him more diligently when it was clear day, I found that it was not mine which I bore. And the other woman answered: It is not so as thou sayest, but thy child is dead, and mine is alive. On the contrary, she said: Thou liest: for my child liveth, and thy child is dead. And in this manner they strove before the king. Then said the king: The one saith: My child is alive, and thy child is dead. And the other answereth: Nay, but thy child is dead, and mine liveth. The king therefore said: Bring me a sword. And when they had brought a sword before the king, divide, said he, the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. But the woman whose child was alive, said to the king (for her bowels were moved upon her child), I beseech thee, my lord, give her the child alive, and do not kill it. But the other said: Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. The king answered, and said: Give the living child to this woman, and let it not be killed, for she is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king, seeing that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment.

Explanation.

We are taught by this epistle that all to whom God has intrusted any office, should give judgment according to justice, and use the wisdom which they have received, according to his will, for the glory of God and the good of man. Spiritual

pastors, princes, civil rulers, and fathers of families, should, like Solomon, ask God for a prudent and wise heart, if they would govern well. If superiors would have obedience from the people over whom God has placed them, they themselves should be foremost in obeying God.

Gospel. (John ii. 13-25.)

At that time: the pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple them that sold oxen and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when he had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, he drove them all out of the temple, the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers he poured out, and the tables he overthrew. And to them that sold doves he said: Take these things hence, and make not the house of my Father a house of traffic. And his disciples remembered that it was written: The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up. The Jews therefore answered, and said to him: What sign dost thou show unto us, seeing thou dost these things? Jesus answered, and said to them: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews then said: Six and forty years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen again from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture, and the word that Jesus had said. Now when he was at Jerusalem at the pasch, upon the festival day, many believed in his name, seeing his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men. And because he needed not that any should give testimony of man: for he knew what was in man.

Practice.

It was to promote the honor of God, to destroy sin, to purify and sanctify men, that Jesus had come into the world. Hence his zeal for the house of God, a type of the Church, which he cleansed with his blood. To demonstrate to the Jews his authority, he pointed them to his resurrection, which is the fullest evidence of his Godhead. But if that temple was thus the object of divine zeal, how much more must our churches, in which the God-man, who died and rose again for us, really and truly dwells in the Holy Sacrament of the altar? Adore, then, Jesus; have devotion and veneration in the house

of God; banish worldly and sensual thoughts, and give yourself up entirely to Jesus.

Meditation.

Jesus willingly gives himself up to be crucified. Follow him, for in vain wouldst thou seek to throw off the cross.

Prayer over the People.

Mercifully hear our prayer, O Lord, we beseech thee, and to those to whom thou givest a mind to pray, grant the help of thy protection. Through our Lord.

Tuesday. Fourth Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *Hear, O God, my prayer, and despise not my supplications; be attentive to me and hear me* (Ps. liv.) *I am grieved in my exercise, and am troubled at the voice of the enemy, and the tribulation of the sinner.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Lord, that the fasts of this observance may procure us an increase of piety in our lives, and the continual help of thy mercy. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Exodus xxxii. 7-14.)

In those days the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Go, get thee down: thy people, which thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt, hath sinned. They have quickly strayed from the way which thou didst show them: and they have made to themselves a molten calf, and have adored it, and sacrificing victims to it, have said: These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And again the Lord said to Moses: I see that this people is stiff-necked: let me alone, that my wrath may be kindled against them, and that I may destroy them, and I will make of thee a great nation. But Moses besought the Lord his God, saying: Why, O Lord, is thy indignation enkindled against thy people, whom thou hast brought out of the

land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Let not the Egyptians say, I beseech thee: He craftily brought them out, that he might kill them in the mountains, and destroy them from the earth: let thy anger cease, and be appeased upon the wickedness of thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou sworest by thy ownself, saying: I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven: and this whole land that I have spoken of, I will give to your seed, and you shall possess it forever. And the Lord was appeased from doing the evil which he had spoken against his people.

Explanation.

St. Ambrose admires, in this epistle, the meekness of Moses, who, forgetting all the dishonors done to him by the people of Israel, and refusing the offer of God, to make him the leader of another great nation, prays so devoutly for the ungrateful Israelites, that he thereby caused them to love him more for his meekness than they admired him for his extraordinary deeds. Do thou, also, O Christian, exercise this holy virtue, to which Jesus himself invites thee, in the words, *Learn from me because I am meek; blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth*, that is, they will win the hearts of their neighbors.

Gospel. (John vii. 14 31.)

At that time, about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews wondered, saying: How doth this man know letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them and said: My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do the will of him: he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, he is true, and there is no injustice in him. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why seek you to kill me? The multitude answered, and said: Thou hast a devil; who seeketh to kill thee? Jesus answered and said to them: One work I have done; and you all wonder: therefore Moses gave you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on the Sabbath-day you circumcise a man. If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath-day, that the law of Moses may not be

broken; are you angry at me because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment. Some therefore of Jerusalem said: Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And behold he speaketh openly, and they say nothing to him. Have the rulers known for a truth that this is the Christ? But we know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying: You both know me, and you know whence I am: and I am not come of myself; but he that sent me, is true, whom you know not. I know him, because I am from him, and he hath sent me. They sought therefore to apprehend him: and no man laid hands on him because his hour was not yet come. But of the people many believed in him.

Practice.

Jesus declared distinctly to the Jews, that he was the Messiah sent from God, and that his teaching was divine. But they believed not: he confirmed it by miracles, and they sought to stone him. Learn by this how far man can be carried away by blindness and prejudice, and escape these sins by thorough instruction and docility towards grace. Follow the few and keep close to Jesus. But above all, take for the pattern of thy conduct, Jesus teaching his most furious enemies with invincible meekness.

Meditation.

Jesus is stripped of his garments. Oh, what suffering! He bears it for thy sake. Learn to renounce the vanities of the world, and to deny thyself for Christ's sake.

Prayer over the People.

Have mercy, O Lord, on thy people, and mercifully grant them relief, who labor under continual tribulations. Through Christ.

Wednesday. Fourth Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *When I shall be sanctified in you I will gather you from every land, and I will pour upon you clean*

water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness, and I will give you a new spirit (Ezech. xxxvi.) I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be ever in my mouth. Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who grantest to the just the reward of their merits, and to sinners pardon, by means of fasting, have mercy on thy supplicants, that the confession of our guilt may enable us to receive the forgiveness of our sins. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Isaias i. 16-19.)

Thus saith the Lord God: Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes: cease to do perversely, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge for the fatherless, defend the widow. And then come, and accuse me, 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 white as wool. If you be willing, and will hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

Wash yourselves, be clean. When the wicked man lifts up his hand to heaven, he is described as a murderer stretching forth to God, hands stained with blood.

And then come and accuse me. It shall be proved that for your sins you deserved severe punishment, and yet however great and numerous your sins may be, I shall be ready to forgive them and remit the penalty of them if you show contrition, and not only depart from sin, but also do that which is good. The sins of the Jews were compared with scarlet and crimson on account of the murders they committed and the blood unjustly shed by them. Snow and white wool are emblems of innocence.

In the early ages of Christianity the sacrament of baptism was administered on this day. Nothing explains better the wonderful effects of baptism than these similitudes just mentioned.

Gospel. (John ix. 1-38.)

At that time: Jesus passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth: and his disciples asked him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had said these things, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloe, which is interpreted, Sent. He went therefore, and washed, and he came seeing. The neighbors therefore, and they who had seen him before that he was a beggar, said: Is not this he that sat, and begged? Some said: This is he. But others said: No, but he is like him. But he said: I am he. They said therefore to him: How were thy eyes opened? He answered: That man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see. And they said to him: Where is he? He saith, I know not. They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was the sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Again therefore the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. But he said to them: He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see. Some therefore of the Pharisees said: This man is not of God, who keepeth not the sabbath. But others said: How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say therefore to the blind man again: What sayest thou of him that hath opened thy eyes? And he said: He is a prophet. The Jews then did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight, and asked them, saying: Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them, and said: We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth, we know not: or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: ask himself; he is of age, let him speak for himself. These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had already agreed among themselves, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore did his parents say: He is of age, ask him. They therefore called the man again that had been blind, and said to him: Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. He said therefore to them: If he be a sin-

ner, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. They said then to him: What did he to thee? How did he open thy eyes? He answered them: I have told you already, and you have heard: why would you hear it again? will you also become his disciples? They reviled him therefore, and said: Be thou his disciple; but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses: but as to this man, we know not from whence he is. The man answered, and said to them: Why, herein is a wonderful thing that you know not from whence he is, and he hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God he could not do any thing. They answered and said to him: Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when he had found him, he said to him: Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered, and said: Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? And Jesus said to him: Thou hast both seen him; and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said: I believe, Lord. And falling down he adored him.

Practice.

How full of instruction is this gospel! 1. Jesus gave sight to a man who was blind from his birth, that God might be glorified. Thus, this affliction of many years served, at the same time, to reveal the Godhead of Jesus Christ, and to open the eyes of the blind man's soul to belief in him. Suffer, therefore, patiently; that if adversities befall you, God may be glorified in you: and beware of believing every suffering a punishment. 2. Jesus, in the act of healing, spat on the ground, and mixed clay of the spittle. 3. This was a striking and significant sign of an inward healing and creating power, and a figure of the Holy Sacraments. Use them, therefore, that thy blindness may be healed by the invisible grace, under the visible signs. 4. The blind, after having received his sight, confesses, openly and freely, the truth, and cannot be deterred from so doing by persecution, or even by being expelled from the synagogue. Learn from him to be steadfast to the teachings of thy holy religion; show thyself, as thou art, a faithful subject of the Catholic Church, and fear

not the weapons of the wicked, who oppose to heaven only stubbornness, calumny, and persecution.

Meditation.

Jesus is nailed to the cross. Oh, what pain! He laments not! Suffer also, O Christian, in silence, with firmness.

Prayer over the People.

Let the ears of thy mercy, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy suppliants, and that thou mayest grant what thy petitioners desire, make them ask what is pleasing to thee. Through our Lord.

Thursday. Fourth Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *Let the heart of those rejoice, that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and be strengthened, seek his face evermore* (Ps. civ.) *Give glory to the Lord, and call upon his name, declare his deeds among the Gentiles.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer of the Church.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who are chastised by the fasts we have undertaken, may rejoice with holy devotion; that our affections being weakened, we may more easily apprehend heavenly things. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (4 Kings iv. 25-38.)

In those days, a Sunamite woman came to the man of God to mount Carmel: and when the man of God saw her coming towards, he said to Giezi his servant: Behold that Sunamitess. Go therefore to meet her, and say to her: Is all well with thee, and with thy husband, and with thy son? And she answered: Well. And when she came to the man of God to the mount, she caught hold on his feet: and Giezi came to remove her. And the man of God said: Let her alone, for her soul is in anguish, and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. And she said to him; Did I ask a son of my lord? did I not say to thee: Do not deceive me? Then he said to Giezi: Gird

up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go. If any man meet thee, salute him not: and if any man salute thee, answer him not: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. But the mother of the child said: As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. He arose, therefore, and followed her. But Giezi was gone before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child, and there was no voice nor sense: and he returned to meet him, and told him, saying: The child is not risen. Eliseus therefore went into the house, and behold the child lay dead on his bed; and going in he shut the door upon him, and upon the child, and prayed to the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child: and he put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he bowed himself upon him, and the child's flesh grew warm. Then he returned and walked in the house, once to and fro: and he went up, and lay upon him: and the child gaped seven times, and opened his eyes. And he called Giezi, and said to him: Call this Sunamitess. And she being called went in to him: and he said: Take up thy son. She came and fell at his feet, and worshipped upon the ground: and took up her son, and went out. And Eliseus returned to Galgal.

Explanation.

The Sunamite woman had shown hospitality to the prophet Eliseus, for which God rewarded her by giving her a son. Thus was fulfilled what Jesus said, *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet* (Matt. x. 41). To obtain the resurrection of her son from the dead, she added to the merit of her mercy that of her prayers and tears. As soon as a child is taken sick, the parents, leaving all other affairs, should apply themselves to the restoration of its health, praying to God to add his blessing to the medicines of the physician. When children have died, by having committed sin, to obtain their resurrection, the parents should have recourse to prayers, tears, and good works. If St. Monica had not wept for the conversion of her son, St. Augustine, recommending his salvation to the prayers of all the servants of God whom she knew, she would never have obtained the accomplishment of those words which the holy bishop, St. Ambrose, addressed to her: "A son for whom so many tears have been shed, cannot be lost."

Gospel. (Luke vii. 11-16.)

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

Practice.

Jesus commands, and the dead arises. Is he not the Lord of life? Confide to him, therefore, your life, and all the events of it. Jesus has compassion on the widow. You, O Christian, are his disciple, follow him. Yes, O Jesus, I will follow thee, and be glad, after thy example, to do good according to my ability. Direct me, according to thy most holy will.

Meditation.

Jesus is lifted up on the cross. All his limbs were dislocated. What suffering! O Jesus, crucified love, draw me up to thee, that I may become and remain one with thee.

Prayer over the People.

O God, Creator and Ruler of thy people, drive away the sins by which they are assaulted, that they may become pleasing to thee, and secure thy protection. Through our Lord.

Friday. Fourth Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *The meditation of my heart is always in thy sight, O Lord, my helper and redeemer* (Ps. xviii.) *The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who renewest the world by unspeakable mysteries, grant, we beseech thee, that thy church may profit by thy eternal institutions, and not be deprived of thy temporal assistance. Through Christ.

Epistle. (3 Kings xvii. 17-24.)

In those days the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick, and the sickness was very grievous, so that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elias: What have I to do with thee, thou man of God? art thou come to me that my iniquities should be remembered, and that thou shouldst kill my son? And Elias said to her: Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him into the upper chamber where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord my God, hast thou afflicted also the widow, with whom I am after a sort maintained, so as to kill her son? And he stretched, and measured himself upon the child three times, and cried to the Lord, and said: O Lord my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech thee, return into his body. And the Lord heard the voice of Elias: and the soul of the child returned into him, and he revived. And Elias took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber to the house below, and delivered him to his mother, and said to her: Behold thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elias: Now, by this I know that thou art a man of God, and the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true.

Explanation.

We can make the same meditation on this epistle as on that of yesterday. In both we see how the hospitality shown to the servants of God is rewarded with the greatest miracles. The Eternal Truth, therefore, says, *Give, and it shall be given to you.* We observe, further, how the two prophets, both stretched and measured themselves upon the children whom they restored to life. Thus also did St. Paul, when he brought back to life the young man Eutyches, who had fallen down from a high window. In like manner, according to the testimony of St. Gregory, did St. Benedict when he restored a child to life. The mystery of this action points to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, who took a body like ours, in order to

impart life to our souls, which were dead through sin, and to make our bodies like his in glory and majesty. Jesus Christ, therefore, being the reality to which these figures referred, does not observe such formalities. As Lord, he commands, and the dead arise.

The prophets stretched themselves upon the children several times, whereby we learn to be persevering in prayer.

Gospel. (John xi. 1-45.)

At that time there was a certain man sick named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister. (And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick.) His sisters therefore sent to him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. And Jesus hearing it, said to them: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God: that the son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he still remained in the same place two days: then after that he said to his disciples: Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say to him: Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered: Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: but if he walk in the night he stumbleth, because the light is not in him. These things he said; and after that he said to them: Lazarus our friend sleepeth: but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples therefore said: Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. But Jesus spoke of his death; and they thought that he spoke of the repose of sleep. Then therefore Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead; and I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe: but let us go to him. Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples: Let us also go, that we may die with him. Jesus therefore came and found that he had been four days already in the grave. (Now Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha therefore said to Jesus: Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother hath not died. But now also I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to him: I know that he shall

rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her : I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me although he be dead, shall live : and every one that liveth and believeth in me, shall not die forever. Believest thou this ? She saith to him : Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. And when she had said these things, she went, and called her sister Mary secretly, saying : The master is come and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly and cometh to him. For Jesus was not yet come into the town : but he was still in that place where Martha had met him. The Jews therefore, who were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying : She goeth to the grave, to weep there. When Mary therefore was come where Jesus was, seeing him she fell down at his feet, and saith to him : Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus therefore, when he saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her, weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled himself, and said : Where have you laid him ? They say to him : Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said : Behold how he loved him. But some of them said : Could not he that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die ? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the sepulchre : now it was a cave ; and a stone was laid over it. Jesus saith : Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to him : Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days. Jesus saith to her : Did not I say to thee, that if thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God ? They took therefore the stone away. And Jesus lifting up his eyes said : Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it : that they may believe that thou hast sent me. When he had said these things, he cried with a loud voice : Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding-bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them : Loose him and let him go. Many therefore of the Jews who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in him.

Practice.

Jesus restores to life Lazarus, whose sickness and death he had known beforehand. Behold the all-knowing God, Lord of life and death. Adore him, and seek assistance from him in

your spiritual and temporal need. The sisters address to him prayers, short, indeed, but full of faith. *Thy brother shall rise again*, said Jesus, and he arose. "You also will have his assistance. You will be saved from the death of the soul, you shall one day rise again," teaches the Son of God. Believe his teaching. But as with you, so with all. All men shall rise again, and, therefore, your friends who have gone before you to death. Be comforted, then, and hope with joyful confidence.

Meditation.

Jesus is crucified between two thieves. What disgrace! And you are vain, proud, and ambitious, while the King of glory is humbled for thy pride.

Prayer over the People.

Grant us, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who, conscious of our weakness, confide in thy power, may ever rejoice under thy merciful protection. Through Christ.

Saturday. Fourth Week in Lent.

Introit of the Mass. *You that thirst, come to the waters, saith the Lord, and you that have no money come and drink with joy* (Isaias lv.) *Attend, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth* (Ps. lxxix.) Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

May the affection of our devotion be made fruitful to us by thy grace, we beseech thee, O Lord, for then will the fasts we have undertaken become profitable to us, if they are pleasing to thy mercy. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Isaias xlix. 8-15.)

Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in the day of salvation I have helped thee: and I have preserved thee, and given thee to be a covenant of the people, that thou might-

est raise up the earth, and possess the inheritances that were destroyed: that thou mightest say to them that are bound: Come forth: and to them that are in darkness: Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in every plain. They shall not hunger, nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun strike them: for he that is merciful to them, shall be their shepherd, and at the fountains of waters he shall give them drink. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my paths shall be exalted. Behold these shall come from afar, and behold these from the north and from the sea, and these from the south country. Give praise, O ye heavens, and rejoice, O earth; ye mountains, give praise with jubilation: because the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his poor ones. And Sion said: The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

This prophecy refers to the deliverance from the captivity in Babylon, and also to the redemption by Christ. He is the mediator of the new law, appointed by God to restore the desolated world, to obtain the spiritual inheritance of the children of God, and to give it those whom he has set free from the power of satan and the bondage of sin and error. Those who return from foreign lands shall want nothing on their way: the new believers shall find everywhere spiritual food, the bread of life; no misfortune, no evil shall hurt them; he that is merciful to them shall open to them the fountain of his grace in the Holy Sacraments. He shall remove all obstacles to their salvation, and they shall praise him for their deliverance. Come forth, ye prisoners, and come to the light of faith, and unite yourselves with those who return to the Lord with contrite hearts, and are enlightened by his light. He will receive you, for his mercy is from generation to generation upon all who fear him.

Gospel. (John viii. 12-20.)

At that time: Jesus spoke to the multitudes of the Jews, saying: I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore

said to him: Thou givest testimony of thyself: thy testimony is not true. Jesus answered, and said to them: Although I give testimony of myself, my testimony is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go: but you know not whence I come, or whither I go. You judge according to the flesh: I judge not any man. And if I do judge, my judgment is true; because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. And in your law it is written, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that give testimony of myself: and the Father that sent me, giveth testimony of me. They said therefore to him: Where is thy Father? Jesus answered: Neither me do you know, nor my Father: if you did know me, perhaps you would know my Father also. These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, teaching in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

Practice.

Jesus calls himself the light of the world, and shows it by his works and the testimony of his Father; but the Jews believed not. Is it not always so? Is not the evidence that Jesus is the light of the world more than eighteen hundred years old, and proved true by all history? But the moles work under ground, avoiding the light and hating it. What will become of them? O Christian, remember Jesus is the light: out of him there is nothing but darkness. Would you have light? Come, then, to him, and be enlightened: come and live as a child of the light, in chastity, temperance, patience, and meekness.

Meditation.

Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. This is the inscription on the cross. Yes, he is the true King and Lord, the Redeemer from sin, death, and hell. I adore thee, O Jesus, and devote to thee my whole heart.

Prayer over the People.

O God, who chooseth rather to have mercy than to be angry with those who hope in thee, grant us worthily to lament the evils we have done, that we may deserve to find the grace of thy consolation. Through Christ.

Fifth Sunday in Lent; called *Judica*.

From this Sunday, the Church gives herself up entirely to meditation on the passion of Jesus, in order thereby to move us to participate in the same, and to complete our penance, since Christ endured his sufferings for our sake. This Sunday is therefore called *Passion Sunday*. To that, all the ceremonies of the Church point. To-day the crucifixes are covered, in remembrance that from this time until his entrance into Jerusalem, Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews (John xi. 54.) From to-day, the *Gloria Patri* (Glory be to the Father) is omitted in the Mass, because in the person of Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Trinity was dishonored. To-day, finally, the Church places before us, in Jesus Christ, the innocent and unstained High-Priest, and from the contemplation of him, incites us to more earnest penance; on which account she says, at the Introit of the Mass, in the name of the suffering Jesus, the words of the Psalmist (xlii.): *Judge me, O Lord, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy; deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man, for thou art God, and my strength* (Ps. lxii.) *Send forth thy light and thy truth, they have conducted me and brought me unto thy holy hill, and into thy tabernacles. Judge me.*

Prayer.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully look upon thy family, that by thy bounty it may be governed in body, and by thy preservation be kept in mind. Through Christ.

Prayer for the Church.

We beseech thee, O Lord, in thy clemency admit the prayers of thy Church, that all errors and adversities being destroyed, she may serve thee with secure liberty. Through our Lord.

Prayer for the Pope.

O God, the pastor and ruler of all the faithful, mercifully regard thy servant N. whom thou hast pleased should preside as

pastor over thy Church; grant him, we beseech thee, to benefit those over whom he is placed, by word and example, that with the flock intrusted to him, he may arrive at everlasting life. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Heb. ix. 11-15.)

Brethren, Christ, being come an high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand, that is, not of this creation: Neither by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself 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.

Explanation.

St. Paul teaches us in this epistle, that Jesus Christ, the high-priest, forever, of the New Testament, has given full satisfaction for the sins of men, and opened to all the entrance into the sanctuary. Every thing now depends upon a man's participation in this eternal redemption, by virtue of sharing in the sufferings of Christ, by combating, and by denying himself, as the holy Paul teaches in another place (Gal. i. 24). The Church proposes this epistle to us, in order that we may meditate on the passion and death of Christ, thank God for the great mercy of the redemption, love and praise him, and be encouraged to share in his sufferings, by fasting, prayer, and penitential works.

Aspiration.

Give us thy grace, O meekest Jesus, that by true sorrow for our sins, and by the practice of good works, we may become partakers of thy bitter sufferings, and obtain the promised inheritance of eternal life. Amen.

Gospel. (John viii. 46-59.)

At that time Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not because you are not of God. The Jews therefore answered, and said to him: Do not we say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil: but I honor my Father, and you have 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 forever. 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 forever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him, but I know him. And if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

Why did Jesus ask the Jews, *which of you shall convince me of sin?*

1. To show them how unjustly and maliciously they conducted themselves towards him, in not believing on him, although his life was stainless, and there was the best evidence of the truth of his teaching. 2. To show that he, being free from all sin, was more than mere man—that he was the Messiah, and the Son of God, as he had often told the Jews, particularly in this gospel, and as he had proved by manifest miracles. 3. That we might learn, when admonishing and correcting others, to strive to be irreproachable ourselves.

Why does Jesus add, *he that is of God heareth God's words?*

To point out to the Jews the real cause of their stubborn

unbelief, and its consequences. For had they truly been of God, that is, had they known God and his revelation, and served him with zeal, they would also have heard and received the teachings of Jesus, as the divine word; since every thing went to show their origin from God. He has also given us herein a test of our dispositions. He that is of God hears and loves that which is Godlike; he that is not of God, but sensual, worldly, and vain, will despise it. When, therefore, we gladly hear the word of God, read good books, visit the Church with pleasure, and strive with zeal to do what we have heard and read, we testify thereby that we are the children of God. On the contrary, when we shun the word of God, and the Church, when we love bad company and bad books, are careless as to meditation and good works, how can we then flatter ourselves that we belong to God? must we not rather fear a punishment like that of the Jews?

How did the Jews receive these words?

With indignation. Instead of reflecting upon them, they poured out their offended pride and abuse, and called him a Samaritan, and one having a devil. The same thing happens continually. Instead of listening to the truth, the proud man answers with calumny and contempt. Is that a sign of a Christian?

How and why did Jesus defend himself against the abuse of the Jews?

Jesus defended himself simply by repelling their insults, and by proving, from his deeds, that he told them the truth, and that he honored his Father in truth, in that he sought not his own, but his Father's honor. The objection in regard to his youth, he answered by saying that he had been before Abraham. In repelling these insults, while he bore so many others in silence, he took away all reason for doubt in regard to his divine mission, and the truth of his teaching. Thereby he teaches us, also, to defend ourselves with calmness and modesty against slander and insults, when they would be injurious to the honor of God, and hinder the salvation of man; but when our own good name only is likely to suffer, we should leave the defence of it, as Christ himself did, to God, who knows better than we how to defend it, and how to obtain our rights for us.

How did Abraham see the day of Jesus Christ?

In spirit; that is, 1. By divine revelation he foresaw the advent of Christ, as plainly as if it had happened in his own time. 2. Besides, the actual coming of Christ was made known to him while detained in Limbo. We, too, have had the good fortune to know Jesus before others; let us rejoice thereat, and follow his footsteps.

Why did the Jews attempt to stone Jesus?

Because he called himself the Son of God, and confirmed it by the words, *before Abraham was, I am*. In their blindness, they mistook this for blasphemy, and were about to stone him according to the law. Are not these Jews types of the unbelievers who reject whatever they cannot comprehend?

Why did Jesus hide himself from the Jews, and not rather take vengeance on them?

He hid himself, 1. Because the hour of his suffering and death had not yet come. 2. To show his patience and meekness, and to teach us to forgive and avoid our enemies, rather than to oppose and take revenge on them. 3. To signify to the Jews that, on account of their stubbornness, he would leave them and turn to the Gentiles, as, according to his example, the Apostles afterwards did. 4. To give us a twofold warning and instruction; to guard against unbelief and blindness of heart, lest it should happen to us as to the Jews; and to avoid contentious and quarrelsome persons, *for it is an honor for a man to separate from quarrels, but all fools are meddling with reproaches* (Prov. xx. 3).

Aspiration.

O Jesus most meek, who didst calmly repel the insults of thy enemies, whom thou didst avoid when about to stone thee, forgive us who will not bear a rough word, or yield in any thing to our neighbor, or take patiently an insult, but are always burning to avenge ourselves. Pardon this impatience and anger of ours, and grant us thy grace, to bear all insults with patience in satisfaction for our sins, and to repel them with modesty only when thy honor, or the good of our neighbor requires it.

Consolation under Insults.

When Christ tells the truth to the Jews, he gains the reward of abuse and insults. This fact contains a treasure of consolation for those who are insulted when innocent. For as disciples they thereby become in one respect more like their Lord and Master. Therefore, says St. Augustine, O friend, what insult can be given to you, which your Saviour did not suffer before you? Is it calumny? He heard it, when he was at one time called a glutton and a drunkard, at another, a heretic and a rebel, again, a friend and associate of sinners, and one who had a devil: he even must hear that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, prince of devils (Matt. ix. 34). He, therefore, comforts his disciples with the words, *If they have called the good man of the house, Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?* (Matt. x. 25.) Do bitter sorrows befall you? There is no sorrow so bitter that he has not borne it, for what was more painful and grievous than the death of the cross? Therefore St. Paul says, Christians, *think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds, at contempt and insult* (Heb. xii. 3).

Meditation.

Jesus on the cross is mocked by the Jews. Take courage, virtuous Christian, when in your suffering men mock at you, for so did they also to thy Master.

Monday. Passion Week.

Introit of the Mass. *Have mercy on me, O Lord, for man hath trodden me under foot; all day long he hath afflicted me, fighting against me* (Ps. lv.) *My enemies have trodden on me all the day long, for they are many, that make war against me. Have mercy.*

Prayer.

Sanctify our fasts, we beseech thee, O Lord, and mercifully grant us the pardon of all our faults. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Jonas iii. 1 10.)

In those days the word of the Lord came to Jonas the prophet the second time, saying: Arise, and go to Ninive the great city: and preach in it the preaching that I bid thee. And Jonas arose, and went to Ninive, according to the word of the Lord: now Ninive was a great city of three days' journey. And Jonas began to enter into the city one day's journey: and he cried, and said: Yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed. And the men of Ninive believed in God: and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least. And the word came to the king of Ninive: and he rose up out of his throne, and cast away his robe from him, and was clothed with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published in Ninive from the mouth of the king and of his princes, saying: Let neither men nor beasts, oxen nor sheep, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water. And let men and beasts be covered with sackcloth, and cry to the Lord with all their strength, and let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn, and forgive: and will turn away from his fierce anger, and we shall not perish? And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way: and our Lord God had mercy on his people.

Explanation.

This epistle shows the effects of true penance, in expiating so many great sins of so large a city; in appeasing the wrath of God, preventing his scourges, obtaining grace and justification; of children of hell making the Ninevites children of heaven; of slaves of the devil, friends of God; of unjust, impious, and unbelieving sinners, making them just, pious, believing, and holy men. In turning to penance, says St. Bernard, we make the angels rejoice. Hasten, therefore, brethren, hasten; not the angels only, but their Creator expects you! Thou also art expected by God and the holy angels. Hasten to do penance, lest the Ninevites rise against thee in judgment (Matt. xii. 41).

Gospel. (John vii. 32-39.)

At that time the rulers and Pharisees sent ministers to apprehend Jesus: Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little while I am with you: and then I go to him that sent me. You shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither you cannot come. The Jews therefore said among themselves: Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What is this saying that he hath said: You shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, you cannot come? And on the last and great day of the festivity, Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this he said of the Spirit which they should receive who believed in him.

Practice.

In these words Jesus admonishes the Jews to make good use of the time of grace given to them, since, once passed, it will return no more. The Church, in like manner, exhorts us to take advantage of our short stay on earth, and of the season of Divine grace; for to every people, and to every man, there is appointed a certain time of visitation, which being allowed to go by without profit, each one's fate is determined irrevocably. Perhaps in a few days more, O Christian, thy time of grace will be ended. Wilt thou not, then, obey the call of thy Saviour to penance?

Meditation

The garments of Jesus are divided by lot among the soldiers. What barbarity! Turn your eyes from them, and lift them up to the Crucified. What tranquillity does not this sight bring, amid the din of the world, and the most violent temptations!

Prayer over the People.

Grant to thy people, O Lord, health of mind and body, that attending to good works, they may ever deserve to be defended by thy protection. Through our Lord.

Tuesday. Passion Week.

Introit of the Mass. *Expect the Lord; do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord (Ps. xxvi.) The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? Expect the Lord.*

Prayer.

May our fasts be acceptable to thee, O Lord, and, by expiating our sins, may they make us worthy of thy grace, and conduct us to eternal salvation. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Daniel xiv. 28-42.)

In those days the Babylonians came to the king, and said: Deliver us Daniel, or else we will destroy thee and thy house. And the king saw that they pressed upon him violently: and being constrained by necessity he delivered Daniel to them. And they cast him into the den of lions, and he was there six days. And in the den there were seven lions, and they had given to them two carcasses every day, and two sheep: but then they were not given unto them that they might devour Daniel. Now there was in Judea a prophet called Habacuc, and he had boiled pottage, and had broken bread in a bowl: and was going into the field, to carry it to the reapers. And the Angel of the Lord said to Habacuc: Carry the dinner which thou hast into Babylon to Daniel, who is in the lions' den. And Habacuc said: Lord, I never saw Babylon, nor do I know the den. And the Angel of the Lord took him by the top of his head, and carried him by the hair of his head, and set him in Babylon over the den in the force of his spirit. And Habacuc cried, saying: O Daniel, thou servant of God, take the dinner that God hath sent thee. And Daniel said: Thou hast remembered me, O God, and thou hast not forsaken them that love thee. And Daniel arose and ate. And the angel of the Lord presently set Habacuc again in his own place. And upon the seventh day the king came to bewail Daniel: and he came to the den, and looked in, and behold Daniel was sitting in the midst of the lions. And the king cried out with a loud voice, saying: Great art thou, O Lord the God of Daniel. And he drew him out of the lions' den. But those that had been the cause of his destruction, he cast into the den, and they were devoured in a moment before him. Then the

king said : Let all the inhabitants of the whole earth fear the God of Daniel : for he is the Saviour, working signs, and wonders in the earth : who hath delivered Daniel out of the lions' den.

Explanation.

Daniel had exposed the impositions of the priests of Baal ; destroyed his image and temple, and killed the serpent which was worshipped by his followers. The people of Babylon became thereupon enraged, and persuaded the weak king to cast Daniel into the lions' den. But God does not forsake them that love him. Daniel remained in the den unhurt, and preserved by a miracle. We learn from this instance not to be of little faith when we are insulted and persecuted for the sake of truth, because as priests, or parents, or superiors, we oppose wickedness and disorderly conduct. Though God should not save us by miracle, as he did Daniel, it will yet be known, sooner or later, that we strove to do what was right.

Gospel. (John vii. 1-13.)

At that time Jesus walked in Galilee ; for he would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of Tabernacles was at hand. And his brethren said to him : Pass from hence, and go into Judea : that thy disciples also may see thy works which thou dost. For there is no man that doth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, manifest thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said to them : My time is not yet come : but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you ; but me it hateth : because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go you up to this festival day, but I go not up to this festival day : because my time is not accomplished. When he had said these things, he himself staid in Galilee. But after his brethren were gone up, then he also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. The Jews therefore sought him on the festival day, and said : Where is he ? And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning him. For some said : He is a good man. And others said : No, but he seduceth the people. Yet no man spoke openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

Practice.

According to the gospel, not even the brethren of Christ believed in him. He, therefore, not trusting them, went up to the feast; not openly, but, as it were, in secret. Learn hence what unbelief is, and how difficult to cure; learn further how the world hates those who are not its friends; but be not on that account afraid, so long as you follow your Master only; finally, learn to avoid anger and revenge, and to speak and keep silence at the right time.

Meditation.

Jesus is glorified on the cross by certain remarkable occurrences. All nature mourns and shudders. And thou, my soul, so dearly purchased, shouldst not thou mourn; shouldst thou show no compassion?

Wednesday. Passion Week.

Introit of the Mass. *My deliverer from the angry nations, thou wilt lift me up above them that rise up against me; from the unjust man thou wilt deliver me, O Lord* (Ps. xvii.) *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Sanctify this fast, O God, and mercifully enlighten the hearts of thy faithful; and to those whom thou grantest the grace of devotion, mercifully grant, when they pray to thee, a favorable hearing. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Leviticus xix. 10-19.)

In those days the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: I am the Lord your God. You shall not steal. You shall not lie, neither shall any man deceive his neighbor. Thou shalt not swear falsely by my name, nor profane the name of thy God. I am the

Lord. Thou shalt not calumniate thy neighbor, nor oppress him by violence. The wages of him that hath been hired by thee shall not abide with thee until the morning. Thou shalt not speak evil of the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind: but thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, because I am the Lord. Thou shalt not do that which is unjust, nor judge unjustly. Respect not the person of the poor, nor honor the countenance of the mighty. But judge thy neighbor according to justice. Thou shalt not be a detractor nor a whisperer among the people. Thou shalt not stand against the blood of thy neighbor. I am the Lord. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but reprove him openly, lest thou incur sin through him. Seek not revenge, nor be mindful of the injury of thy citizens. Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself. I am the Lord. Keep my laws, for I am the Lord your God.

Explanation.

There have been, and there are yet men, who maintain that we cannot keep the commandments of God. To this the Council of Trent answers as follows: "God does not command any thing impossible; but he encourages us to do what we can do, and to ask his help, that we may do what of ourselves we are not able to do, and he will assist us in fulfilling it" (Sess. vi. c. xi.) His commandments are not difficult whose yoke is sweet, and whose burden is light.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, who wouldst have me take thy yoke upon me, to find rest for my soul, grant me thy grace, that I may carry it cheerfully until the end of my life. Amen.

Gospel. (John x. 22-38.)

At that time it was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem: and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came round about him, and said to him: How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them: I speak to you, and you believe not: the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me. But you do not believe: because you are not of my sheep. 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. That which my Father hath given me, is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father are one. The Jews then took up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them: Many good works I have showed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me? 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. Jesus answered them: Is it not written in your law: "I said, you are gods?" If he called them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken, and the Scripture cannot be broken: do you say of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

Practice.

This gospel also shows that Jesus did every thing to convince the Jews of the truth of his divine mission. His works and the Holy Scriptures alike bear witness to him. They cannot deny it, but they will not believe, and resolve to stone him. O Jesus, true Son of God, give me thy grace to be on my guard against such unbelief; cleanse my soul from pride, and my heart from sensuality, that I may never separate from thee.

Meditation.

Jesus suffers, on the cross, indescribable pains, and all the time he suffers on account of thy sins. Oh, detest them in bitterness of soul, and henceforth, live only for him.

Prayer over the People.

Attend to our supplications, O Almighty God, and graciously grant the effect of thy wonted mercy to us, to whom thou grantest confidence to hope for forgiveness. Through our Lord.

Thursday. Passion Week.

Introit of the Mass. *All that thou hast done to us, O Lord, thou hast done in true judgment, because we have sinned against thee, and have not obeyed thy commandments; but give glory to thy name, and deal with us according to the multitude of thy mercy (Daniel iii.) Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. All that thou.*

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the dignity of human nature, wounded by excess, may be reformed by attention to medicinal temperance. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Daniel iii. 34-45.)

In those days Azarias prayed to the Lord saying: O Lord our God, Deliver us not up forever, we beseech thee, for thy name's sake, and abolish not thy covenant. And take not away thy mercy from us for the sake of Abraham thy beloved, and Isaac thy servant, and Israel thy holy one: To whom thou hast spoken promising that thou wouldst multiply their seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is on the sea-shore. For we, O Lord, are diminished more than any nation, and are brought low in all the earth this day for our sins. Neither is there at this time prince, or leader, or prophet, or holocaust, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place of first fruits before thee, that we may find thy mercy: nevertheless in a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted. As in holocausts of rams, and bullocks, and as in thousands of fat lambs: so let our sacrifice be made in thy sight this day, that it may please thee: for there is no confusion to them that trust in thee. And now we follow thee with all our heart, and we fear thee, and seek thy face. Put us not to confusion, but deal with us according to thy meekness, and according to the multitude of thy mercies. And deliver us according to thy wonderful works, and give glory to thy name, O Lord: And let all them be confounded that shew evils to thy servants, let them be confounded in all thy might, and let their strength be broken. And let them know that thou art the Lord, the only God, and glorious over all the world, O Lord, our God.

Explanation.

Nabuchodonosor erected a golden statue (probably that of Baal), and decreed that at the sound of the trumpet every

one should fall down and worship it. This the three Jews refused to do; whereupon the king being informed thereof, commanded them to be thrown into the furnace,—a kind of capital punishment in use among the Chaldeans. But they walked through the flames unhurt, praising God; and Azarias prayed to God, that for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's sake, he would have mercy on his people, and deliver them from the hands of the enemy. Let us imitate these three men, and never suffer any power on earth to prevail upon us to act against our faith; but in our own need let us call on the Lord, that he may have mercy on us, for the sake of his saints, and save us from all calamity. Let us not bow our knees before the idols of worldly lust, and proud vanity, but sacrifice even our last drop of blood for our holy Catholic faith.

Gospel. (Luke vii. 36–50.) See vol. ii. p.

Meditation.

Jesus asks, prays for the forgiveness of his tormentors. Dost thou in like manner forgive thine enemy? As long as thou dost not forgive, thou canst not receive forgiveness.

Prayer over the People.

Be merciful to thy people, O Lord, we beseech thee, that rejecting those things which displease thee, they may be rather filled with the delight of thy commandments. Through Christ.

Friday. Passion Week.

On this day the Church celebrates the feast of the Seven Dolors of the Virgin Mary.

The part which the blessed Virgin took in the sufferings and death of her beloved Son, has induced the Church to give her the glorious title of Queen of Martyrs. The feast of the Seven Dolors was first instituted by the Council of Cologne, in

the year 1423, in order to repair what the Hussites had done against the veneration of the blessed Virgin, whom they, like all heretics, had assailed with many calumnies and insults; in particular, rejecting the image of the mother of Dolours, with the body of her deceased Son resting upon her lap. This feast was originally called the Feast of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin.

At the presentation of Jesus in the temple, Simeon had predicted that the suffering of the Son would be the suffering of the Mother also. *Behold this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; and thine own soul a sword shall pierce* (Luke ii. 34, 35). The ignominy, insults, and cruelties inflicted on him, shall be so many swords piercing thy heart. Remember, therefore, on this day, the Seven Dolours which the blessed Virgin experienced. 1. At the circumcision of her Son. 2. At her flight into Egypt with him. 3. At her losing him for three days in the temple. 4. At the sight of him carrying the cross. 5. At his death. 6. At beholding his side pierced with a spear, and his body taken down from the cross. 7. At his burial. Make an act of contrition for your sins which helped so much to cause the sufferings and death of Jesus, and resolve firmly that you will no more grieve the hearts of Jesus and Mary by sin. Ask her to assist you at your death by her powerful intercession, that then she may show herself to you as a mother, and obtain from her beloved Son grace for you.

Introit of the Mass. *There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Salome, and Mary Magdalen* (John xix.) *Woman, behold thy Son, said Jesus, and to the disciple: Behold thy mother.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O Lord, in whose passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, a sword of sorrow pierced the most sweet soul of Mary, mother and virgin, grant, in thy mercy, that we may call to mind with veneration her transfixion and sufferings;

and by the glorious merits and prayers of all the saints who stood faithfully by the cross, interceding for us, may experience the happy effects of thy passion. Who livest.

Epistle. (Judith xiii. 22-25.)

The Lord hath blessed thee by his power, because by thee he hath brought our enemies to nought. And Ozias, the prince of the people of Israel, said to her, Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth. Blessed be the Lord who made heaven and earth, who hath directed thee to the cutting off the head of the prince of our enemies. Because he hath so magnified thy name this day, that thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men who shall be mindful of the power of the Lord forever, for that thou hast not spared thy life, by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people, but hast prevented our ruin in the presence of our God.

Explanation.

The pious widow, Judith, delivered her city, Bethulia, when occupied by the Assyrians, from the enemy, by beheading their commander, Holofernes. She was, therefore, highly honored and esteemed in Israel, and her praises are recounted in the epistle of to-day, in words, however, which are still better adapted to the dolorous mother of God, than to her, since through her Son, Mary crushed the head of the serpent.

Gospel. (John xix. 25-27.)

At that time, there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.

What does Jesus teach us, by saying, *Woman, behold thy son?*

What he was to his mother upon earth, and she to him, should St. John henceforth be to her, and she to him; by which we are taught to provide for the time after our death,

in behalf of those who are connected with us, and whom we are specially bound to love.

What consolation should we derive from those words, *Son, behold thy mother?*

Jesus leaves his mother, as it were, by his last will, to his beloved disciple, John. The holy fathers (and among them St. Augustine in particular) here remark, that St. John represents all the children of the Church, and that through the person of the beloved disciple Jesus has given Mary to be the mother of all the faithful. What a happiness, what a blessing for us!

“Blessed mother of the Lord,” cries St. Bonaventure, “as all those who forsake thee, and from whom thou avertest thy maternal face, will surely perish, so, on the contrary, they cannot be lost who have recourse to thee, and who are looked on by thee with favor.”

St. John took Mary to his own house, honored her as her son, loved her cordially, and served her. Let us too love and venerate Mary, the mother of Jesus, for the Lord’s sake, as our own mother, and follow her, as children do their mother, to the cross; remembering the words, Blessed is the man who overcometh temptation, for if he shall be found faithful (which can only be after many trials) he shall receive the crown of eternal life, which God has promised to all those that love him.

Devout Aspiration, to be used throughout the day.

Grant, O Mother, Fountain of Love, that I may unite my grief to thine. Give me thy sorrows—sorrows which shall inflame my love, and unite me to God, that I may be pleasing to him.

Gospel for Friday of Passion Week. (John xi. 47–54.)

At that time: The chief-priests and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let him alone so, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation. But one of them named Caiphas, being the high-priest that year, said to them: You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation

perish not. And this he spoke not of himself: but being the high-priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation. And not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God, that were dispersed. From that day, therefore, they devised to put him to death. Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but he went into a country near the desert, unto a city that is called Ephrem, and there he abode with his disciples.

Practice.

The high-priests and Pharisees were determined to put Jesus to death. They thought by that means to save themselves, the nation, and the temple. They were afraid, says St. Augustine, to lose their temporal goods, not remembering the eternal goods which Christ wished to give them, and thereby they lost both. In the remarkable decision, that it were better for one man to die for the people, than for the whole nation to perish, Caiphas, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, but without himself knowing what he said, and even against his own will, declared the great mystery that through Jesus all men, Jews or Heathen, should be saved. See how the wisdom of God confounds the wisdom of men! See how even the malice of men must accomplish God's holy will, and contribute to the glory of his name and the salvation of mankind. Here, O sinner, see that concerning truth exemplified for thee by the blind Jews, that if through fear, or desire of worldly goods and pleasure, thou forsakest Jesus, thou wilt lose not only the things that are temporal, but the eternal also.

Meditation.

Jesus promises Paradise to the contrite thief. Thus also will he receive thee, O sinner, when thou returnest to him with a contrite heart. Delay not!

Prayer of the Church.

Mercifully infuse thy grace into our hearts, we beseech thee, O Lord, that refraining from sin by voluntary chastisement, we may be rather afflicted in time, than condemned to punishment for eternity. Through our Lord.

Saturday. Passion Week.

Introit of the Mass. *Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted. Deliver me out of the hands of my enemies, and from them that persecute me; let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon thee (Ps. xxx.) In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded; deliver me in thy justice. Have mercy.*

Epistle. (Jer. xviii. 18–23.)

In those days the impious Jews said: Come, and let us invent devices against the just: for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet: come, and let us strike him with the tongue, and let us give no heed to all his words. Give heed to me, O Lord, and hear the voice of my adversaries. Shall evil be rendered for good, because they have digged a pit for my soul? Remember that I have stood in thy sight, to speak good for them, and to turn away thy indignation from them. Therefore deliver up their children to famine, and bring them into the hands of the sword: let their wives be bereaved of children, and widows: and let their husbands be slain by death: let their young men be stabbed with the sword in battle. Let a cry be heard out of their houses: for thou shalt bring the robber upon them suddenly: because they have digged a pit to take me, and have hid snares for my feet. But thou, O Lord, knowest all their counsel against me unto death: forgive not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from thy sight: let them be overthrown before thy eyes; in the time of thy wrath do thou destroy them, O Lord, our God.

Explanation.

The Church, recognizing the Prophet Jeremias as a type of our Saviour, proposes to us the epistle of to-day, in which the prophet, whom his enemies try to kill, that they may no longer hear his severe expostulations, and that their own false prophets may have more liberty, prays God to send misfortune and suffering upon the Jews, that they may be converted.

Never wish any misfortune to your enemies, unless with the intention that they may thereby be brought to perceive their injustice, and be converted to God.

Gospel. (John xii. 10-36.)

At that time: The chief-priests thought to kill Lazarus also: Because many of the Jews by reason of him went away, and believed in Jesus. And on the next day a great multitude, that was come to the festival day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees and went forth to meet him, and cried: Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel. And Jesus found a young ass, and sat upon it, as it is written: Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy king cometh sitting on an ass's colt. These things his disciples did not know at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things to him. The multitude therefore gave testimony, which was with him when he called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead. For which reason also the people came to meet him: because they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves: Do you see that we prevail nothing? behold, the whole world is gone after him. Now there were certain Gentiles among them who came up to adore on the festival day. These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying: Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew. Again Andrew and Philip told Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying: The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Amen, amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal. If any man minister to me, let him follow me: and where I am, there also shall my minister be. If any man minister to me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause I came unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. A voice therefore came from heaven: I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore that stood and heard, said that it thundered. Others said, An angel spoke to him. Jesus answered, and said: This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself. (Now this he said, signifying what death he should die.) The multitude answered him: We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth forever: and now sayest thou: The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little

while the light is among you. Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light. These things Jesus spoke, and he went away, and hid himself from them.

Practice.

While the Doctors of the Law and Pharisees were nearly ready to die for envy at the solemn entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and the hosannas of the people, the Gentiles, on the other hand, came to see and hear him. This led him to speak of the nearness and necessity of his death, and to exhort them to belief in him as the light of the world. The hour of the lowest humiliation, as also of the highest exaltation, has come. I must die that men may be redeemed, as the grain of wheat sown into the ground must die to bring forth fruit. Even so, says Jesus Christ, every one who wishes to save his life, must hate in this world; that is, he must deny himself, and overcome his sinful inclinations; then will he be my disciple, and preserve his life through a happy eternity. Finally, Jesus again invites the Jews to believe in him, while he, their light, was walking among them, lest darkness should overtake them, and they seek light in vain. Sinner, listen to-day to the voice of grace; be converted while the light of grace shines, lest perdition befall thee.

Meditation.

“Behold thy son.” “Behold thy mother.” What love, which even to the end, is careful for its own! And what joy also for thee, my soul, to have such a mother! Honor and love her!

Prayer over the People.

May thy right hand defend thy suppliant people, we beseech thee, O Lord, and worthily instruct them, being purified in thy sight, that by present consolation it may profit for future good things. Through Christ.

Palm Sunday.

Why is this Sunday called Palm Sunday ?

In memory of the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, when he was received by the devout people with palms ; for which reason the Church to-day blesses palms, with which a solemn procession is held.

Why are the palms blessed ?

Through the blessing of the palms the Church desires to procure us new graces, and to impart to us wholesome lessons. She prays God, 1. To protect in body and soul those who carry palms with devotion. 2. To bless the dwellings into which the palms are brought, to free them from all misfortunes, and to shelter them with his hand. 3. She therein brings before us, how God, signifying the Redemption, even by lifeless things, has by the entrance into Jerusalem with palms, represented the victory of Jesus over the prince of darkness, and by the olive-branches, the fulness of mercy, that we, regarding this mysterious meaning, may pray God for grace, to vanquish through Jesus the kingdom of Satan, that finally, decorated with the palm, we may bear part in his glorious resurrection. 4. She lastly prays God to increase in us faith, and to give us grace, that as we bear palms and olive-branches in our hands, so we may go forth flourishing with the fruits of righteousness, to meet Jesus with good works ; and that following the people of Israel in a spiritual manner, we may, by faith, and the removal of scandals, make ready for him a way clear from all stones of stumbling and offence, may openly confess him and walk in his footsteps, till, with him, we enter the heavenly Jerusalem.

How should we assist at the procession ?

With the intention with which it was instituted. We should place before ourselves, 1. The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, go forth in spirit to meet him, and adore him as the king and Saviour of the world. 2. We should, with the people, praise Jesus as the son of David, as God and Saviour, saying, Hosanna, praised be he forever ! 3. Finally, we should pray for protection and blessing for ourselves, and our own ; for vic-

tory over evil; for the fruits of justice; and for admission into the heavenly Jerusalem.

Why does the priest, at the close of the procession, knock three times at the church door?

To signify that until Jesus Christ came, heaven was shut to mankind, but is now opened by the triune God, the Father who sent his Son, Jesus, who died for our sins, and obtained the grace of salvation for us, and the Holy Ghost, who brings sanctification.

In the same manner as we are reminded by the blessing of palms, and the procession, of the entrance into Jerusalem, and of the last days of Jesus upon earth, so, in the mass of to-day, the Church reminds us of his sufferings, to move us to compassion and contrition for our sins, and cries with a sorrowful voice, at the Introit: *O Lord, remove not thy help to a distance from me, look towards my defence, deliver me from the lion's mouth, and my lowness from the horns of the unicorn. O God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me? far from my salvation are the words of my sin (Ps. xxi.) O Lord, remove.*

Prayer.

O Almighty and Eternal God, who wouldst have our Saviour take flesh and undergo the cross, for man to imitate the example of his humility, grant, we beseech thee, that we may both deserve the instruction of his patience, and the fellowship of his resurrection. Through the same Jesus Christ.

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 to be equal with God: but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He 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 every name (*here kneel*): that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

Explanation.

It is always our duty to be of the same mind as Jesus Christ, but the Church would have us specially strive to be so in these days of his sorrow. Jesus was so humble and obedient that for our sake he deprived himself of his glory, took the form of a servant, and, in obedience to the will of his Father, underwent the most ignominious death of the cross. We therefore are of the same mind with Jesus, when we are humble of heart, and willingly obey God, the Church, our parents and superiors, even though it should cost us trouble and self-denial. Thus following him in mind, we shall share in his exaltation in the glory of his Father.

Aspiration.

Oh, that I were of the same mind with thee, O Jesus, as humble, as obedient! How guilty and malicious for me, a sinner, always to seek my own will, while thou, the infinite majesty, through obedience, humblest thyself to the death of the cross. By this death of thine, I pray thee, give me thy grace, to follow thee faithfully in humility and obedience.

During mass, instead of the gospel, is read the Passion of our Lord, taken from the Gospel of St. Matthew (xxvi., xxvii. 1-66). The use of candles and incense is omitted, and "Dominus Vobiscum" is not said, to signify that Jesus, the light of the world, was taken away, and that the love and faith of the Apostles nearly failed. In reading the Passion, at the words, "*bowing his head, he gave up the ghost,*" the priest and congregation kneel down and meditate for a short time, in veneration and humility, on the mysterious event of the accomplishment of our redemption.

At the blessing of the palms the following gospel is said:

Gospel. (Matt. xxi. 1-9.)

At that time: When Jesus drew nigh to Jerusalem, and was come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet; then he sent two disciples, saying to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to me; and if any man shall say any thing to you, say ye

that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Why did Jesus enter with so much solemnity into Jerusalem?

1. To present himself as the promised Messiah and King of the Jews, whose triumphant entry into Jerusalem the Prophet Zachary had predicted. 2. To call the Doctors of the Law and Pharisees, as also the whole Jewish nation, by the fulfilment of this prophecy, to the most confident belief in him. 3. To show that it was of his own free will that he gave himself up to the death which he was, in a few days more, to suffer. 4. To keep before them the true spirit of his kingdom—meekness and love—and thereby to show that it was a spiritual, not an earthly kingdom. Thus he has also given us, 5. An important lesson; for, by his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, he foreshadows his victory over Satan, the world, sin, and hell, and proclaims himself King of our hearts and Prince of peace. Follow him, therefore, as thy king, and endeavor to acquire that characteristic of thy Saviour, meekness.

Why did the people go to meet Jesus with palms in their hands?

1. The miracles wrought by Jesus, of which the raising of Lazarus from the dead was yet fresh in their recollection, had filled the people with profound love and veneration for him. 2. It was done by a divine inspiration, partly that the prophecies might be fulfilled, and partly to show that Jesus, as the victor over death, Satan, and hell, would gain for us the palm of peace with God, our neighbor, and ourselves, and that he

would open to us the heavenly Jerusalem. And yet these same people, five days later, desired his death, and they who on Sunday greeted him with hosannas, on Friday cried out, "Crucify him." How fickle and changeable! But such is mankind—such is the world. Learn, therefore, to confide in God alone, and not in man; for he who is with you to-day, may be against you to-morrow. Be cautious, therefore, and watchful, lest imitating the changeableness of the people, you at Easter receive your Saviour with joy, and then after a little, by new sins, crucify him again (Heb. vi. 6).

Passion of our Lord according to St. Matthew (xxvi., xxvii. 1-66).

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: You know that after two days shall be the pasch, and the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief-priests and ancients of the people into the court of the high-priest, who was called Caiphas: and they consulted together, that by subtilty they might apprehend Jesus, and put him to death. But they said: Not on the festival day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people. And when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to him a woman having an alabaster-box of precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he was at table. And the disciples seeing it, had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste? for this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And Jesus knowing it, said to them: Why do you trouble this woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you: but me you have not always. For she in pouring this ointment upon my body, hath done it for my burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her. Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief-priests: and said to them: What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver. And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray him.

And on the first day of the Azymes the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the pasch? But Jesus said: Go ye into the city to a certain man, and say to him: The master saith, My time is near at hand, with thee I make the pasch with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed to

them, and they prepared the pasch. But when it was evening, he sat down with his twelve disciples. And whilst they were eating, he said: Amen I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me. And they being very much troubled, began every one to say: Is it I, Lord? But he answering said: He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that man, by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed: it were better for him, if that man had not been born. And Judas that betrayed him, answering said: Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him: Thou hast said it. And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat: this is my body. And taking the chalice he gave thanks; and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins. And I say to you I will not drink from henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father. And a hymn being said, they went out unto mount Olivet. Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed." But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. And Peter answering, said to him: Although all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized. Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee, that in this night before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. Peter saith to him: Yea, though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner said all the disciples. Then Jesus came with them into a country place which is called Gethsemani: and he said to his disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to grow sorrowful and to be sad. Then he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here and watch with me. And going a little further, he fell upon his face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh to his disciples: and findeth them asleep, and he saith to Peter: What? Could you not watch one hour with me? Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak. Again the second time, he went and prayed, saying: My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done. And he cometh again, and findeth them sleeping; for their eyes were heavy. And leaving them, he went again: and he prayed the third time saying the self-same word. Then he cometh to his disciples and saith to them:

Sleep ye now and take your rest : behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go : behold he is at hand that will betray me. As he yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief-priests and the ancients of the people. And he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying : Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, hold him fast. And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said : Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him : Friend, whereto art thou come ? Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus, and held him. And behold one of them, that were with Jesus, stretching forth his hand, drew out his sword : and striking the servant of the high-priest, cut off his ear. Then Jesus saith to him : Put up again thy sword into its place : For all that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels ? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done ?

In that same hour Jesus said to the multitudes : you are come out as it were to a robber with swords and clubs to apprehend me. I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me. Now all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then the disciples all leaving him, fled. But they holding Jesus led him to Caiphas the high-priest, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled. And Peter followed him afar off, even to the court of the high-priest. And going in, he sat with the servants, that he might see the end. And the chief-priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death : and they found not, whereas many false witnesses had come in. And last of all there came two false witnesses : and they said : This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it. And the high-priest rising up, said to him : Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee ? But Jesus held his peace. And the high-priest said to him : I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith to him : Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying : He hath blasphemed : what further need have we of witnesses ? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy ; what think you ? But they answering said : He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffet him, and others struck his face with the palms of

their hands, saying: Prophecy unto us, O Christ; who is he that struck thee? But Peter sat without in the court; and there came to him a servant maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath: That I know not the man. And after a little while they came that stood by, and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them: for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse and to swear that he knew not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus which he had said: Before the cock crew, thou wilt deny me thrice. And going forth he wept bitterly.

And when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put him to death. And they brought him bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned; repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief-priests and ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple he departed: and went and hanged himself with a halter. But the chief-priests having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood. And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying-place for strangers. For this cause that field was called Haceldama, that is, the field of blood, even to this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was prized, whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me." And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus saith to him: Thou sayest it. And when he was accused by the chief-priests and ancients, he answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to him: Dost not thou hear how great testimonies they allege against thee? And he answered him not to any word: so that the governor wondered exceedingly.

Now upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner, that was called Barabbas. They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ? For he knew that for envy

they had delivered him. And as he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with that just man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief-priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. And the governor answering, said to them: Whether will you of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They say all: Let him be crucified. The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified. And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing: but that rather a tumult was made: taking water, washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it. And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children. Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him unto them to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band; and stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head, and after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him. And going out they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced to take up his cross. And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary. And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when he had tasted, he would not drink. And after they had crucified him, they divided his garments: casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots." And they sat and watched him. And they put over his head his cause, written: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then were crucified with him two thieves: one on the right hand, and one on the left. And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it: save thy own self: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief-priests with the scribes and ancients mocking, said: He saved others: himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God: let him now deliver him if he will have him; for he said: I am the

Son of God. And the self-same thing the thieves also, that were crucified with him reproached him with. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamna sabaethani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some that stood there and heard, said: This man calleth Elias. And immediately one of them running took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar; and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the others said: Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver him. And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. (*Here all kneel and pause.*)

And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God. And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. And when it was evening, there came a certain rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded that the body should be delivered. And Joseph taking the body, wrapped it up in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way. And there was there Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre.

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 perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead: and 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, sealing the stone, and setting guards.

Meditation.

Jesus cries, "*I thirst,*" and they gave him vinegar to drink. And thou, O Christian, wilt only please thy palate! Oh, do penance, and deny thyself for the love of Jesus!

Aspiration.

O Jesus, tree of life, ever blooming and ever bearing fruit, grant that we may, like palms, ever flourish in thy love, and blossom and bear fruit in the exercise of good works, and so be prepared to celebrate worthily the holy feast of Easter.

Holy Week.

Why is this week called Holy Week?

Because, during this week, we celebrate the most important mysteries of our religion with touching and holy ceremonies.

On account of the constant reference of the Church, throughout this week, to the death of Christ, and to the great and holy redemption thereby accomplished, the week itself is called both the Great and Holy Week.

How should we spend this week?

According to the intention of the Church, by meditating on what Jesus did for us during this week, particularly on his sufferings and death; further, by fasting more strictly, like the Christians of early times, who, during these days, contented themselves with water and bread; by praying often and devoutly; avoiding society as much as possible; attending the divine service daily, and leading a holy life.

What remarkable things did Jesus do, during the four first days of this week?

After he had entered on Palm Sunday, amidst the greatest exultation of the people of Jerusalem, into the temple, and had been received by the children with that cry of joy, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" he cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple; spent the day in preaching and healing

the sick, and returned at evening, with his disciples, to Bethany (Matt. xi. 11), a village on Mount Olivet, about two miles from Jerusalem. On the following three days, also, he went with the twelve to Jerusalem, teaching in the temple during the day, and spending the night on Mount Olivet. In his preaching on these days, he particularly endeavored to convince the Jewish priests, Doctors of the Law, and Pharisees, that he was the true Messiah (Matt. xxii. 42), and that in his death, which he predicted as certain, they would commit a great sin, and bring destruction upon themselves and the whole Jewish people; which he gave them to understand, by the withering of the fig-tree under his curse, and by the prediction of the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem (Luke xxi.) Besides, he disputed with them, and confounded them so completely, both openly and by parables, that, out of anger and hatred, they with one mind determined to kill him (Matt. xxvi.) To the accomplishment of their purpose, the impious Judas contributed the most; for out of avarice he agreed with the high priests, for thirty pieces of silver, to betray and to deliver him into their hands on the next day; that is, Thursday.

Thus far could Judas be led by avarice. Combat, therefore, every passion, and particularly avarice, lest the like happen to you.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, I thank thee for all thou hast done and suffered for me. Oh, by thy blood, give me grace to conquer my passions, and never to betray thee by any sin. Amen.

Monday in Holy Week.

Introit of the Mass. *Judge thou, O Lord, them that wrong me; overthrow them that fight against me; take hold of arms and shield, and rise up to help me, O Lord, the strength of my salvation (Ps. xxxiv.) Bring out the sword and shut*

up the way against those who persecute me ; say to my soul, I am thy salvation. Judge thou, O Lord.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who fail through our infirmity, in so many adversities, may be relieved by the passion of thy Son, making intercession for us, who lives and reigns.

Epistle. (Isaias 1. 5-10.)

In those days, Isaias said: The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I do not resist: I have not gone back. I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me. The Lord God is my helper, therefore am I not confounded: therefore have I set my face as a most hard rock, and I know that I shall not be confounded. He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? let us stand together, who is my adversary? let him come near to me. Behold the Lord God is my helper: who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they shall all be destroyed as a garment, the moth shall eat them up. Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, that heareth the voice of his servant, that hath walked in darkness, and hath no light? let him hope in the name of the Lord, and lean upon his God.

Explanation.

Isaias here speaks of Christ, who, being appointed by God the Father to redeem mankind, had not gone back; that is, had not refused to accomplish the will of his Father, but out of love for us, suffered willingly innumerable sorrows and pains, subduing thereby his and our enemies, the world, hell, sin, and death, and entering into his eternal glory. When we are in misery and need, let us put our confidence in God, particularly when we find ourselves walking in the darkness of sin, and he will give us his light and grace, he will be our helper, and will not leave us to perish.

Gospel. (John xii. 1-9.)

Six days before the pasch Jesus came to Bethania, where Lazarus had been dead, whom Jesus raised to life. And they made him a supper there: and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that were at table with him. Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of right spikenard, of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, he that was about to betray him, said: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein. Jesus therefore said: Let her alone, that she may keep it against the day of my burial. For the poor you have always with you; but me you have not always. A great multitude therefore of the Jews knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus's sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

Practice.

This short gospel gives us many lessons. 1. The love of Mary teaches us with our whole heart to love Jesus, who forgives our sins, as he did hers; to show our love to him, without fear, in our life, and not to consider any offering too costly to be made to him. 2. The wickedness of Judas, notwithstanding he was one of the disciples of Jesus, shows that there is nothing so holy but that it may be abused, no state of life which does not include unworthy members. But on that account is the state of life itself evil? 3. The forbearance of Jesus teaches us to acknowledge God's long suffering towards us, and earnestly urges us to use the time of divine forbearance to complete our repentance, that we may not some day come to a frightful end; and besides, to practice a merciful forbearance towards our erring brethren. 4. The indignation of Judas at Mary, shows what continual hindrances to the exercise of good works are prepared for the good, either by evil dispositions within, or by men without. But fear not; become and remain good, trust in Jesus, and thou shalt celebrate an eternal triumph.

Meditation.

“O God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” Oh, what desolation! Thou also sufferest often spiritual dryness and desertion; be not discouraged, turn to Jesus and pray, and soon will heavenly dew moisten the dry ground of thy heart.

Prayer over the People.

Help us, O Lord, our Saviour, and grant us to come with joy to celebrate the benefits which thou hast been pleased to heap on us. Through our Lord.

Tuesday in Holy Week.

Introit of the Mass (the same as on Holy Thursday).

Prayer.

O Almighty and everlasting God, grant us so to celebrate the mysteries of our Lord's passion, that we may deserve to obtain pardon. Through the same, our Lord.

Epistle. (Jeremias xi. 18-20.)

In those days Jeremias said: Thou, O Lord, hast shown me, and I have known: then thou showedest me their doings. And I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim: and I knew not that they had devised counsels against me, saying: Let us put wood on his bread, and cut him off from the land of the living, and let his name be remembered no more. But thou, O Lord of Sabaoth, who judgest justly, and triest the reins and the hearts, let me see thy revenge on them: for to thee have I revealed my cause, O Lord my God.

Explanation.

According to the constant doctrine of the Church, these words spoken in the person of Jeremias, refer to Jesus. Jeremias, indeed, like Jesus, was unjustly persecuted by his enemies, towards whom he showed only meekness: and, in the first instance, these words apply to him; but in a more special

and proper manner they relate to Jesus, who, patient as a lamb, allowed his enemies to nail him to the cross. Learn here, O Christian, to imitate the example of the Lamb of God, and to endure patiently every injustice.

In regard to the prayer of Jeremias for vengeance, St. Augustine remarks, "It is for the good to come of it, and not for the vengeance itself, that the just rejoices at the punishment of the sinner, since he finds no pleasure in the perdition of the sinner, whose conversion he desires, but wishes justice to be meted out, that many may be brought back to God."

The Passion of our Lord, according to St. Mark (xiv., xv. 1 46).

At that time the feast of the pasch, and of the azymes was after two days: and the chief-priests and the scribes sought how they might by some wile lay hold on him, and kill him. But they said: Not on the festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people. And when he was in Bethania in the house of Simon the leper, and was at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster-box of ointment of precious spikenard: and breaking the alabaster-box she poured it out upon his head. Now there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said: Why was this waste of the ointment made? For this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her. But Jesus said: Let her alone, why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you: and whensoever you will, you may do them good; but me you have not always. What she had, she hath done: she is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial. Amen I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memorial of her. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief-priests to betray him to them. Who hearing it were glad: and they promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him. Now on the first day of the unleavened bread when they sacrificed the pasch, the disciples say to him: Whither wilt thou that we go, and prepare for thee to eat the pasch? And he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith to them: Go ye into the city; and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water, follow him; and whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house, The master saith, Where is my refectory, where I may eat the pasch with my disciples? And he will show you a large dining-

room furnished; and there prepare ye for us. And his disciples went their way, and came into the city; and they found as he had told them, and they prepared the pasch. And when evening was come, he cometh with the twelve. And when they were at table and eating, Jesus saith: Amen I say to you, one of you that eateth with me shall betray me. But they began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one by one: Is it I? Who saith to them: One of the twelve, who dippeth with me his hand in the dish. And the Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him, if that man had not been born. And whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread: and blessing broke, and gave to them, and said: Take ye, This is my body. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks he gave it to them. And they all drank of it. And he said to them: This is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many. Amen I say to you, that I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had said a hymn, they went forth to the mount of Olives. And Jesus saith to them: You will all be scandalized in my regard this night; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be dispersed." But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter saith to him: Although all shall be scandalized in thee, yet not I. And Jesus saith to him: Amen I say to thee, to-day even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But he spoke the more vehemently: Although I should die together with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner also said they all. And they come to a farm called Gethsemani. And he saith to his disciples: Sit you here, while I pray. And he taketh Peter and James and John with him; and he began to fear and to be heavy. And he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here, and watch. And when he was gone forward a little he fell flat on the ground; and he prayed that if it might be, the hour might pass from him: and he saith: Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee, remove this chalice from me, but not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping. And he saith to Peter: Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch ye, and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And going away again, he prayed, saying the same words. And when he returned he found them again asleep (for their eyes were heavy) and they knew not what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith to them: Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It

is enough : the hour is come ; behold the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go. Behold, he that will betray me, is at hand. And while he was yet speaking, cometh Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief-priests and the scribes and the ancients. And he that betrayed him had given them a sign, saying : Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, lay hold on him, and lead him away carefully. And when he was come, immediately going up to him, he saith : Hail, Rabbi : and he kissed him. But they laid hands on him, and held him. And one of them that stood by drawing a sword, struck a servant of the chief-priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus answering, said to them : Are you come out as to a robber with swords and staves to apprehend me ? I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not lay hands on me. But, that the scriptures may be fulfilled. Then his disciples leaving him all fled away. And a certain young man followed him having a linen cloth cast about his naked body ; and they laid hold on him. But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked. And they brought Jesus to the high-priest ; and all the priests and the scribes and the ancients assembled together. And Peter followed him afar off, even into the court of the high-priest ; and he sat with the servants at the fire, and warmed himself. And the chief-priests and all the council sought for evidence against Jesus that they might put him to death, and found none. For many bore false witness against him, and their evidences were not agreeing. And some rising up, bore false witness against him, saying : We heard him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another, not made with hands. And their witness did not agree. And the high-priest rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying : Answerest thou nothing to the things that are laid to thy charge by these men ? But he held his peace and answered nothing. Again the high-priest asked him, and said to him : Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed God ? And Jesus said to him : I am. And you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rending his garments saith : What need we any farther witnesses ? You have heard the blasphemy. What think you ? Who all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him : Prophecy : and the servants struck him with the palms of their hands. Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maid-servants of the high-priest. And when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking

on him she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying: I neither know nor understand what thou sayest. And he went forth before the court; and the cock crew. And again a maid-servant seeing him, began to say to the standers-by: This is one of them. But he denied again. And after awhile they that stood by said again to Peter: Surely thou art one of them: for thou art also a Galilean. But he began to curse and to swear, saying: I know not this man of whom you speak. And immediately the cock crew again. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said unto him: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny me. And he began to weep. And straightway in the morning the chief-priests holding a consultation with the ancients and the scribes and the whole council, binding Jesus, led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate asked him: Art thou the king of the Jews? But he answering, saith to him: Thou sayest it. And the chief-priests accused him in many things. And Pilate again asked him, saying: Answerest thou nothing? behold in how many things they accuse thee. But Jesus still answered nothing; so that Pilate wondered. Now on the festival day he was wont to release unto them one of the prisoners, whomsoever they demanded. And there was one called Barabbas, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder. And when the multitude was come up, they began to desire that he would do, as he had ever done unto them. And Pilate answered them, and said: Will you that I release to you the king of the Jews? For he knew that the chief-priests had delivered him up out of envy. But the chief-priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas to them. And Pilate again answering, saith to them: What will you then that I do to the king of the Jews? But they again cried out: Crucify him. And Pilate said to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more: Crucify him. So Pilate being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him into the court of the palace, and they call together the whole band: and they clothe him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon him. And they began to salute him: Hail, king of the Jews. And they struck his head with a reed: and they did spit on him. And bowing their knees, they adored him. And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him, and they led him out to crucify him. And they forced one Simon a Cyrenian who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and of Rufus, to take up his cross. And they

bring him into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is, the place of Calvary. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but he took it not. And crucifying him, they divided his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. And the inscription of his cause was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And with him they crucify two thieves, the one on his right hand and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith: "And with the wicked he was reputed." And they that passed by, blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again: save thyself, coming down from the cross. In like manner also the chief-priests mocking, said with the scribes one to another: He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let Christ the king of Israel come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him, reviled him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying: Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of the standers-by hearing, said: Behold he calleth Elias. And one running and filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it upon a reed, gave him to drink, saying: Stay, let us see if Elias come to take him down. And Jesus having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost. (*Here all kneel.*) And the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top to the bottom. And the centurion who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this man was the Son of God. And there were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph, and Salome: who also when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered to him, and many other women that came up with him to Jerusalem.

And when evening was now come (because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the Sabbath), Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. But Pilate wondered that he should be already dead. And sending for the centurion, he asked him if he were already dead. And when he had understood it by the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And Joseph buying fine linen and taking him down, wrapped him up in the fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewed out of a rock. And he rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre.

Meditation.

It is consummated. I have done every thing to save you. Oh, what love! Hast thou also finished the work of thy day? Dost thou love Jesus, as he loved thee? Dost thou fly from sin, and practice virtue?

Prayer over the People.

May thy mercy, O God, purify us from all the encroachments of our former ways, and make us capable of a holy renovation. Through our Lord.

Wednesday in Holy Week.

Introit of the Mass. *In the name of Jesus let every knee bow, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; for the Lord became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of the Father* (Phil. ii.) *O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to thee* (Ps. ci.) In the name of Jesus.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who are continually afflicted through our excesses, may be delivered by the passion of thy only-begotten Son. Who lives.

Epistle. (Isaias lxii. 11, 12; lxiii. 1-7.)

Thus saith the Lord God: Tell the daughter of Sion: behold thy Saviour cometh: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord. But thou shalt be called: A city sought after, and not forsaken. Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength? I, that speak justice, and am a defender to save. Why then is thy apparel red, and thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not

a man with me: I have trampled on them in my indignation, and have trodden them down in my wrath, and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, the year of my redemption is come. I looked about, and there was none to help: I sought, and there was none to give aid: and my own arm hath saved for me, and my indignation itself hath helped me. And I have trodden down the people in my wrath, and have made them drunk in my indignation, and have brought down their strength to the earth. I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord our God hath bestowed upon us.

In this epistle the prophet describes a great conqueror who has conquered Edom and the Gentiles. By Edom and the Gentiles are here to be understood the spiritual enemies of the kingdom of God, who fall into his power, and the Divine Victor can be no one but the Messiah. No one gave him assistance; alone he trampled on the Gentiles; subduing his enemies by his own power, with no aid from men. His unstained robe is beautiful, declaring both the divine justice and mercy, for God punishes only to benefit us. He brings at the same time both vengeance and redemption,—vengeance to the enemies of God, to the devil, and his children; redemption to the penitent sinner, who therefore gives thanks, in which the whole congregation of God participate. Shall not we thank him also? Yes, let us give thanks to the Father who sent his Son; to the Son who offered himself up to accomplish our redemption; let us give thanks to our Saviour for every wound which he received for our sake, and for every drop of blood which he shed for us. Let our gratitude show itself in particular, by our exertions to become a holy people, pleasing to God.

The Passion of our Lord according to St. Luke (xxii., xxiii. 1-53).

At that time the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the pasch, was at hand. And the chief-priests and the scribes sought how they might put Jesus to death: but they feared the people. And satan entered into Judas who was surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve. And he went and discoursed with the chief-priests and the magistrates, how he might betray him to them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised. And he sought opportunity

to betray him in the absence of the multitude. And the day of the unleavened bread came, on which it was necessary that the pasch should be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying: Go and prepare for us the pasch, that we may eat. But they said: Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said to them: Behold, as you go into the city, there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in: and you shall say to the good man of the house: The master saith to thee: Where is the guest chamber, where I may eat the pasch with my disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished: and there prepare. And they going, found as he had said to them, and made ready the pasch. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And having taken the chalice he gave thanks, and said: Take, and divide it among you. For I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God come. And taking bread, he gave thanks, and brake; and gave to them, saying: This is my body which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of me. In like manner the chalice also, after he had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you. But yet behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And the Son of man indeed goeth, according to that which is determined: but yet wo to that man by whom he shall be betrayed. And they began to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. And there was also a strife amongst them, which of them should seem to be greater. And he said to them: The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and they that have power over them, are called beneficent. But you not so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader, as he that serveth. For which is greater, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at table? but I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth: and you are they who have continued with me in my temptations: and I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom: that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom: and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren. Who said to him: Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. And he

said: I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest me. And he said to them: When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, did you want any thing? But they said: Nothing. Then said he unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip: and he that hath not, let him sell his coat, and buy a sword. For I say to you, that this that is written, must yet be fulfilled in me, "And with the wicked was he reckoned." For the things concerning me have an end. But they said: Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said to them: It is enough. And going out he went according to his custom to the mount of Olives. And his disciples also followed him. And when he was come to the place, he said to them: Pray, lest ye enter into temptation. And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast; and kneeling down he prayed: saying: Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: But yet not my will, but thine be done. And there appeared to him an Angel from heaven strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them: Why sleep you? arise, pray, lest you enter into temptation. As he was yet speaking, behold a multitude: and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus to kiss him. And Jesus said to him: Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss? And they that were about him, seeing what would follow, said to him: Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answering, said: Suffer ye thus far. And when he had touched his ear, he healed him. And Jesus said to the chief-priests, and magistrates of the temple, and the ancients that were come unto him: Are you come out, as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. And apprehending him, they led him to the high-priest's house. But Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them. Whom when a certain servant maid had seen sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said: This man also was with him. But he denied him, saying: Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another seeing him, said: Thou also art one of them. But Peter said: O man, I am not. And after the space as it were of one hour, another certain man affirmed, saying: Of a truth, this man was also with him:

for he is also a Galilean. And Peter said: Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately as he was yet speaking, the cock crew. And the Lord turning looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as he had said: Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter going out wept bitterly. And the men that held him, mocked him, and struck him. And they blindfolded him, and smote his face. And they asked him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck thee? And blaspheming, many other things they said against him. And as soon as it was day, the ancients of the people, and the chief-priests, and scribes came together, and they brought him into their council, saying: If thou be the Christ, tell us. And he saith to them: If I shall tell you, you will not believe me. And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me go. But hereafter the Son of man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all: Art thou then the Son of God? Who said: You say, that I am. But they said: What need we any farther testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth. And the whole multitude of them rising up, led him to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying: We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, and saying that he is Christ the king. And Pilate asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? But he answering, said: Thou sayest it. And Pilate said to the chief-priests and to the multitudes: I find no cause in this man. But they were more earnest, saying: He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place. But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if the man were of Galilee? And when he understood that he was of Herod's jurisdiction he sent him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem, in those days. And Herod seeing Jesus was very glad, for he was desirous of a long time to see him, because he had heard many things of him: and he hoped to see some sign wrought by him. And he questioned him in many words. But he answered him nothing. And the chief-priests and the scribes stood by, earnestly accusing him. And Herod with his army set him at nought: and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day: for before they were enemies one to another. And Pilate calling together the chief-priests, and the magistrates, and the people, said to them: You have presented unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people, and behold I, having examined him before you, find no cause in this man touching those things wherein you accuse him. No, nor Herod neither. For I sent you to him, and behold, noth-

ing worthy of death is done to him. I will chastise him therefore, and release him. Now of necessity he was to release unto them one upon the feast-day. But the whole multitude together cried out, saying: Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas. Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for a murder, was cast into prison. And Pilate again spoke to them, desiring to release Jesus. But they cried again, saying: Crucify him, crucify him. And he said to them the third time: Why, what evil hath this man done? I find no cause of death in him: I will chastise him therefore, and let him go. But they were instant with loud voices requiring that he might be crucified: and their voices prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him who for murder and sedition had been cast into prison, whom they had desired: but Jesus he delivered up to their will, and as they led him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country: and they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus. And there followed after him a great multitude of people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the day shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us: and to the hills, Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified him there: and the robbers, one the right hand, and the other on the left. And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. But they dividing his garments, cast lots. And the people stood beholding, and the rulers with them derided him, saying: He saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ, the elect of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying: If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself. And there was also a superscription written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. And one of these robbers who were hanged, blasphemed him, saying: If thou be Christ, save thyself, and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee,

this day thou shalt be with me in paradise. And it was almost the sixth hour: and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And saying this, he gave up the ghost (*All kneel*). Now the centurion seeing what was done, glorified God, saying: Indeed this was a just man. And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts. And all his acquaintance, and the women that had followed him from Galilee, stood afar off beholding these things.

And behold there was a man named Joseph, who was a counsellor, a good and a just man, (the same who had not consented to their counsel and doings,) of Arimathea, a city of Judea, who also himself looked for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And taking him down, he wrapped him in fine linen, and laid him in a sepulchre that was hewed in stone, wherein never yet any man had been laid.

Meditation.

“*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*” Oh, that we may thus pray, when we find ourselves on the cross, may so pray in all situations of life.

Prayer over the People.

Look down, we beseech thee, O Lord, upon this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to be delivered up to the hands of the wicked, and to undergo the torments of the cross. Who lives and reigns.

(On the evenings of this and the two following days, the “*Tenebræ*” will be sung.)

What are *Tenebræ*, and what does the word signify?

They consist of prayers and chants sung by the choir, on the evenings of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of this week, accompanied by mournful ceremonies. One part of them is taken from the Lamentations of Jeremias, which so powerfully move the heart to penance. The Church would thereby express her grief over the passion and death of our Saviour, and

over the sins which were the cause thereof, in order to move the sinner to return to God. She therefore sings in sad and heart-rending tones, "*Jerusalem,*"—that is, *sinner, sinner,*—" *be converted to God, thy Lord.*"

Why are these matins called "*Tenebræ?*"

Because they are usually said in the evening, by candle-light, and because, also, they are mournful, and call us to sorrow.

Why is this service held at night?

In memory, 1. Of the evening when Christ was by force taken prisoner, like a murderer. 2. Of the darkness which lasted three hours at his crucifixion. 3. Of the spiritual darkness, confusion, and grief, which prevailed during our Saviour's passion, in the minds of his disciples. 4. Of the darkness which overspread mankind, while Jesus was suffering for them. Further, the Church would show her grief, and invite Christians to penance, for which the darkness of the evening is the better adapted, in that it gives us more leisure, and better opportunity to retire into ourselves.

What is meant by extinguishing, one after another, first the twelve lights on the triangular candlestick, and then all the rest?

By the twelve lights are signified the twelve apostles, and the extinguishing of the same is to represent how all, one after another, deserted Jesus. But the putting out of all the lights reminds us of the darkness which prevailed upon the earth at the death of Jesus, of the blindness of the Jews, and of the gradual extinguishment of belief in him.

What is the meaning of the last light which is hidden for awhile, and then brought forth again when all is ended?

It signifies Christ, whose divinity was, as it were, hidden during his passion, and whose body was buried in the grave, from which he soon after arose by his own power, and thereby showed himself more clearly than before, to be the Light of the world.

What is signified by the noise made at the end of the tenebræ, while the last light is hidden?

It signifies the earthquake at the death of Jesus; and further, the jeerings, mockings, triumph, and shouting of the Jews

around the cross, all which, however, became dumb at the Resurrection. On account of this ceremony these matins are sometimes called clapper-matins.

How should we assist at tenebræ?

1. By meditating upon the passion and death of Jesus; particularly on Wednesday, upon his bloody sweat, and his being made a prisoner; on Thursday, on his other sufferings up to the time of his death; on Friday, upon his death and burial.

2. By sorrow and grief for our sins, on account of which Christ became obedient to the death of the cross, and by which he is crucified again.

Green or Maundy Thursday.

Whence are these names taken?

Of this no certain account can now be given. What is most probable is, that the name of Green Thursday was derived partly from the custom observed by the faithful, of bringing from the field and garden offerings of fruits, which, in warm countries, could already be had; partly, because with the beginning of the passion of our Lord, the salvation of mankind began to flourish like the green plants.

The name Maundy Thursday was probably taken either from the maunds or hand-baskets in which the above-mentioned offerings were carried; or, as others suppose, from the Latin *dies mundati*, by which the day is described as the day of the institution of the Eucharist.

What, therefore, does the Church celebrate on this day?

The last supper of our Lord, and the beginning of his passion. On this day Jesus ate with his disciples the paschal lamb, according to the requirement of the Mosaic law (Exod. xii.), washed his disciples' feet, and, to fulfil the type of the paschal lamb of the old law, gave them himself, his body and blood, under the appearances of bread and wine, to be their spiritual food, and commanded them to do the same in commemoration of him. By this command he established the holy sacrifice of the mass, the sacrament of the altar, and the

priesthood. For as he gave them to partake of his body which was delivered, and his blood which was shed, for the sins of the world, and ordained that they should show forth the same ; so also did he ordain that the bloody sacrifice should be shown forth as it was by him at his last supper, in an unbloody manner ; that his body and blood should be given for the nourishment of the soul, and that all this should be administered by his apostles and their successors.

After the last supper, Jesus admonished his disciples to love one another, and to be one as he and the Father were one. He strengthened them for his approaching passion, by the promise of the comforter to come ; he prayed for them, and then went to Mount Olivet, where in his agony he sweat blood : soon after he was betrayed by Judas ; made a prisoner by the Jews, taken first to Annas, then to Caiphas, condemned to death by the high council, and denied in the court-yard by Peter.

This is, therefore, a day both of joy and sorrow, as the Church has ever indicated by her ceremonies. While the times of public penance which were so useful, were yet observed, penitents clothed with sackcloth, their heads sprinkled with ashes, presented themselves at the church door, where, mourning and sighing, they prayed to be admitted into the fellowship of the Church. The bishop prayed over them, absolved them from their sins, and gave them leave to partake in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist. This custom has disappeared with the abolition of public penance ; but not so the invitation to all, to partake with pure heart in the feast of infinite love, and thus to complete that joy which the Church proclaims in the *Gloria in Excelsis*, accompanied by the ringing of bells.

How must we, therefore, spend this day ?

We must, 1, meditate with devotion and earnestness upon the events of this day ; thank Jesus for instituting the holy sacrament of the altar, the sacrifice of the mass, and the priesthood, and endeavor not only to worship him, but to receive him. 2. We must prepare ourselves for receiving him worthily ; that is, with a heart which has renounced the world—which is no longer leavened with evil desires, but pure, full of

love, humility, and sorrow. We must, 3, by following the example of Jesus as far as possible, wash the feet of the poor, or at least give alms; attend, both morning and evening, the divine service; join with the Church in meditating with sorrow on the passion of Jesus; detest the sins which were the cause of his sufferings, and make a firm resolution, out of love and thankfulness, to live henceforth only for Jesus, and to seek our glory only in him.

Of this the Church admonishes us, in the Introit of the Mass, in which she lays before us the words of St. Paul: *But it behoves us to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection; by whom we are saved and delivered* (Gal. vi. 14). *May God have mercy upon us, and bless us; may he cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us, and may he have mercy on us* (Ps. lxvi. 2). *But it behoves.*

Prayer.

O God, from whom Judas received the punishment of his guilt, and the good thief the reward of his confession, grant us the effect of thy mercy, that as our Lord Jesus Christ, in his passion, gave to each different retribution, according to their deserts, so he would take from us our old errors, and grant us the grace of his resurrection. Who lives and reigns.

Epistle. (1 Cor. xi. 20-32.)

Brethren: When you come together into one place, it is not now to eat the Lord's supper. For every one taketh before his own supper to eat. And one indeed is hungry, and another is drunk. What! have you not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? Do I praise you? In this I praise you not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you: that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye, and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner, also, the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat

this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come. Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep. But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.

Explanation.

The early Christians were accustomed, after holy communion, to unite in a common repast; the more able supplying what was necessary to eat and drink, while rich and poor partook together, in token of their brotherly love. At Corinth, there sprang up an abuse of this custom; certain Christians consumed, before communion, what they had brought with them, became drunk, and deprived the poor of their share. This scandalous conduct the apostle reprov'd as an unworthy preparation for communion, going back to the institution of the most holy Eucharist, and teaching what a horrible sacrilege it was for a man to eat and drink unworthily, thereby making himself guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. That is, says St. Chrysostom, he makes himself guilty of putting the Lord to death, and eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, or, eternal damnation. Prove thyself, then, O Christian, as often as thou receivest holy communion, whether thou art in any mortal sin, or whether thou hast them all confessed and sincerely repented of.

In consequence of this conduct of the Corinthians, the Church required that those who were about to receive holy communion, should be fasting from midnight.

Gospel. (John xiii. 1-15.)

Before the festival day of the pasch, Jesus knowing that his hour was come, that he should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And when supper was done (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him), knowing that the

Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and goeth to God: he riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments, and having taken a towel, girded himself. After that, he putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. He cometh therefore to Simon Peter. And Peter saith to him: Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered, and said to him: What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith to him: Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him: If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me. Simon Peter saith to him: Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him: He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all. For he knew who he was that would betray him; therefore he said: You are not all clean. Then after he had washed their feet and taken his garments, being sat down again, he said to them: Know you what I have done to you? You call me Master, and Lord; and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also.

Why did Jesus wash his disciples' feet?

To show his humility and love; to teach them how pure they should be in approaching the holy sacrament of the altar; and, finally, to encourage them and their successors to imitate him. Hence arose the pious custom, that spiritual superiors and temporal rulers should on this day wash the feet of some of their subjects, usually of twelve poor persons, and afterwards serve them at table, or at least make them presents.

Why is it that only one priest says mass to-day in each church, while the rest go to communion; and why is the blessed Sacrament carried to the repository?

To imitate the example of Jesus Christ, who on this day gave to his apostles his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink. In like manner, all should to-day receive communion from one. The priests appear to-day in their stoles, the emblem of the spiritual dignity and power which were on this day given to the apostles, and through them to their successors. The removal of the most holy Sacrament to the repository, signifies Jesus' going to Mount Olivet, where his Godhead concealed itself.

Why is it that the bells are not rung until Saturday, but pieces of wood used instead ; and why are the altars denuded ?

By not sounding the bells, and by the use of the wooden rattles, the Church would express her deep grief for the sufferings and death of Jesus, and remind us to mourn for the same in silence, and in a spiritual manner, with Christ, to die to the world and to self; she also further indicates thereby the silence of the apostles, who, though compared in the eighteenth Psalm to bells, out of fear were at this time dumb. The removal of decorations from the altars, signifies how Jesus, through his passion, had lost his form and beauty, and been stripped of his garments, on which account the twenty-first Psalm, in which all this is predicted, is said, while the altars are denuded. It is also a call to sorrow and penance.

(In cathedral churches the oil for the sick and for chrism is consecrated on this day. Let us thank God for the institution of the sacraments in which these holy oils are used, and let us ask him for grace to receive them worthily.)

Meditation.

Christ struggles with death. Lift up your eyes and behold the man of sorrows, who sacrificed himself for you! Wilt thou not also offer up thyself as a continual sacrifice ?

Good Friday, called also Parasceve.

What is the meaning of Parasceve ?

It is a Greek word, and means preparation ; it is applied to this day as the one on which the Jews made preparation for the Sabbath of the Paschal week, the highest and holiest festival they had.

What does the Church commemorate on this day ?

The death of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father, and the Saviour of the world, who on this day was given up by the Jews to Pontius Pilate, was scourged by his heathen soldiers, and then, crowned with thorns, and bowed

down with the weight of his cross, was escorted, amidst blasphemies and mockeries, to Mount Calvary, and there most cruelly crucified between two thieves, as if he had been their leader; through which bitter and ignominious passion and death he accomplished the redemption of mankind.

Why did Christ suffer so much to redeem us?

1. To show how great an evil sin is, since to satisfy Divine justice, he must endure so much. 2. To manifest his great love for men, since the more one does and suffers for any one, the more love for him does he thereby show; for while he might have redeemed us with a single drop of his most precious blood, yet out of his infinite love for us, he shed it all. 3. To show the worth of the soul, and his earnest desire to save all. It cannot therefore be the fault of Christ that sinners are condemned, since he suffered so much to redeem all, without exception, and to obtain for them sufficient grace for salvation.

What are the ceremonies of to-day, and what do they signify?

I. The priest, wearing black vestments, goes to the altar, on which no lights are burning, and falls upon his face. This is done to signify that the light of the world has been extinguished, as it were, in death, and to move those present to sorrow and penance for their sins.

II. A lesson is read from the Prophet Osee (vi. 1-6), in which the Church admonishes us to return to the Lord, to know him, and to do works of mercy, and remain steadfast in a Christian life.

(The prayer after this lesson is the same as on Maundy Thursday.)

After the prayer follows the second lesson from Exodus xii. 1-11, in which Jesus is represented as the true paschal lamb, slain for us, to deliver us from a more frightful slavery than that of the Egyptians, the slavery of sin and the devil, and to make us children of God. The two lessons are read, to show that Jesus died as well for the Gentiles as for the Jews, and that both the law and the prophets predicted his death.

III. After the lessons is read the Passion of Christ (John xviii., xix. 1-42).

The Passion of our Lord according to St. John (xviii., xix.)

At that time, Jesus went forth with his disciples, over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden into which he entered with his disciples. And Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: because Jesus had often resorted thither together with his disciples. Judas therefore having received a band of soldiers and servants from the chief-priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said to them: Whom seek ye? They answered him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am he. And Judas also who betrayed him, stood with him. As soon then as he had said to them: I am he: they went backward, and fell to the ground. Again therefore, he asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you, that I am he. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way. That the word might be fulfilled which he had said: of them whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one. Then Simon Peter having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. Then Jesus said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Then the band, and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him: and they led him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the high-priest of that year. Now Caiphas was he who had given the counsel to the Jews: That it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. And that disciple was known to the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the high-priest. But Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple therefore who was known to the high-priest, went out, and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter. The maid therefore that was portress, saith to Peter: Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith: I am not. Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals, because it was cold, and warmed themselves. And with them was Peter also standing, and warming himself.

The high-priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him: I have spoken openly to the world: I have always taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither all the Jews resort: and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them who have heard what I have spoken to them: behold they know what things I have said. And when he had said

these things, one of the servants standing by, gave Jesus a blow, saying: Answerest thou the high-priest so? Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why striketh thou me? And Annas sent him bound to Caiphas the high-priest. And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him: Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said: I am not. One of the servants of the high-priest, a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off, saith to him: Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Again therefore Peter denied, and immediately the cock crew. Then they led Jesus from Caiphas to the governor's hall. And it was morning: and they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the pasch. Pilate therefore went out to them, and said: What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said to him: If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee. Pilate therefore said to them: Take him you, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said to him: It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which he said signifying what death he should die. Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus, and said to him: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief-priests have delivered thee up to me. What hast thou done? Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said to him: Art thou a king then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice. Pilate saith to him: What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and saith to them: I find no cause in him. But you have a custom that I should release one unto you at the pasch: will you therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying: Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers plating a crown of thorns, put it upon his head: and they put on him a purple garment, and they came to him, and said: Hail, king of the Jews! And they gave him blows. Pilate, therefore, went forth again, and saith to them: Behold I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him. Jesus therefore came

forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And he saith to them: Behold the man. When the chief priests, therefore, and the servants had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him; crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Take him you, and crucify him; for I find no cause in him. The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus: Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him: Speakest thou not to me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee? Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he that hath delivered me to thee, hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.

Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the parasceve of the passover, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews: Behold your king. But they cried out: Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your king? The chief-priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar. Then, therefore, he delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him forth. And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. This title, therefore, many of the Jews did read, because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not, The king of the Jews; but that he said, I am the king of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written. The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified him, took his garments (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part), and also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith: They have parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they have cast lots. And the soldiers indeed

did these things. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had seen his mother, and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman! behold thy son. After that, he saith to his disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own. Afterwards Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they putting a sponge full of vinegar, about hyssop, put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had taken the vinegar, he said: It is consummated. And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost. (*Here all kneel, and pause a little, to meditate on the redemption of mankind.*)

Then the Jews (because it was the parasceve), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day (for that was a great sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers, therefore, came; and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true, that you also may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled: You shall not break a bone of him. And again another Scripture saith: They shall look on him whom they pierced.

And after these things, Joseph of Arimathea (because he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave leave. He came therefore and took away the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came, he who at the first came to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. They took therefore the body of Jesus, and wrapt it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now there was in the place where he was crucified a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man yet had been laid. There, therefore, because of the parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus; because the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

IV. When the Passion is finished, the priest, after the example of Jesus, who prayed on the cross for all men, prays first, 1, for the Church; 2, for the Pope; 3, for the bishops,

priests, deacons, and the body of the faithful; 4, for the civil rulers, and the catechumens; 5, for preservation from famine and sickness; 6, for heretics and schismatics; 7, for Jews and Heathen.

In these prayers all are exhorted to join, by the words "lift up your hearts." At the prayer for the Jews the genuflection is omitted, because they bowed the knee before Christ in mockery.

The "amen," in response, is also omitted for the reason that the Church, though she is praying to God for the Jews, does not expect their conversion till the end of time.

With the above-mentioned prayers, say also the following :

Prayer for all Men.

Almighty, everlasting God, who through Christ hast made known thy majesty to all nations, protect thy Church spread over the whole earth, that she may persevere with unshaken faith in the confession of thy holy name. Preserve our chief pastor N., that the Christian people who are under thee, ruled by his guidance, may have the merit of their faith increased by active charity. Hear our humble supplications for all degrees of men in thy Church, that under thy divine direction all may serve thee faithfully. Look down with favor and grace upon our country, that our rulers, by upright and gentle government, and our people by uniform obedience, may increase the general welfare, and advance true piety to the glory of thy holy name. Grant that all who have been in holy baptism, new-born and received into the holy fellowship of Christians, may be well instructed in the truths of the faith, in knowledge of thy blessed teaching, and may daily increase in zeal for fulfilling thy holy commandments. Free those bowed down with trouble, from the load that oppresses them; let them find consolation and comfort in adoring thy holy name, and draw strength and encouragement from the example of thy Son, patient, even to death on the cross: hear the prayers of all in need of help, that being delivered from their necessity, they may, with joy, give thanks to thee for thy innumerable mercies. O God, who willest not that any should

perish, be merciful to those who are held captive by error, that they may renounce their false persuasions and surrender their hearts to the oneness of thy truth. Hear also our prayers for the deluded Jews, that they may know the true light, which is Christ, and be rescued from their darkness. O God, who desirest the salvation of the sinner, deliver the people who languish in heathenish ignorance from the yoke of Idolatry, and gather them into thy holy Church, for the honor and praise of thy name. Grant this, Almighty God, for the sake of thy Son, who prayed on the cross for all men. Amen.

V. After the prayers, the priest, from the epistle side of the altar, extends towards the people the veiled crucifix, uncovered at the top, and sings with a loud voice, "Behold the wood of the cross, whereon hung the Saviour of the world." The choir then answers, "Come, let us adore;" whereupon all, except the celebrant, kneel down. The priest then advances to the corner of the altar, uncovers the right arm of the crucifix, and sings in a higher tone than before, "Behold the wood of the cross." The choir answers as before. Then, at the middle of the altar, he uncovers the whole crucifix, and, elevating it, sings in a still higher tone, "Behold the wood of the cross," to which the same answer is given as at first. This elevation of the crucifix refers to Jesus, who delivers us from everlasting death, as the brazen serpent, set up by Moses in the wilderness, saved all who looked upon it from the death of the body. The covering of the crucifix signifies that the crucified Saviour was at first unknown and despised by the world; the gradual uncovering of it represents the gradual propagation of the knowledge and adoration of Jesus among mankind.

VI. The uncovered crucifix is then laid down by the priest upon a cushion prepared for that purpose, in front of the altar; he next puts off his shoes, and proceeds to kiss the cross, kneeling three times; meanwhile the choir sings, "O my people." The laying down of the crucifix in the middle of the sanctuary reminds the faithful that Christ crucified, the Fountain of Life, the Centre of the Church, is in her midst, and will remain

with her till the end of time. The putting off the shoes is a mark of veneration for the presence of the God-man—the same that Moses also was commanded to observe before the burning thorn-bush,—an acknowledgment of our sinfulness and unworthiness, and an emblem that we must lay aside every sin if we would worthily adore Christ, and become partakers of the fruits of his death on the cross. By the thrice-repeated adoration, the Church would make amends, as it were, for the three-fold indignity which Jesus suffered, where he was derided, 1. In the hall of the high-priest Annas, as a false prophet; 2. In the house of Pilate, as a pretended king; 3. On Mount Calvary, as one who falsely claimed to be the Son of God.

Accordingly the choir, during the adoration, sings sorrowful chants, in which the Messiah, who has done nothing but good to mankind, complains bitterly, first, of the ungrateful Jews, but at the same time also of those Christians who bear his glorious name, but in works deny and crucify him again, threatening them with his just punishment, that they may yet be converted. Between these chants there is sung, alternately in Latin and Greek,—but not in Hebrew, since the Hebrews did not acknowledge Christ,—“Holy God, Holy Strong One, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us;” partly, by these heart-rending lamentations, to honor Jesus for the pains he endured in his passion; partly to obtain forgiveness for the wrongs done him by unthankful Christians. After the priest follow the clergy and the faithful, closing their adoration by kissing the crucifix. Do you go also, fall upon your knees before your crucified Saviour, humbly adore him, kiss his wounds, and say devoutly—

O Lord Jesus Christ, I adore and praise thee, that by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed me and all mankind. I desire to render thee, from the bottom of my heart, all the praise, honor, and thanks which the whole world offers to thee to-day. Grant me thy grace to amend my life, to love all men, even my enemies, and above all, to profess myself a sincere adorer of thy cross, and never to be ashamed of it, though for the sake of it I should be subject to mockery and derision. Amen.

VII. When the adoration is ended, the cross is released on the middle of the altar, the candles are lighted, and the holy Sacrament is brought in procession from the place where it was yesterday deposited. While the procession is returning, there is sung the beautiful hymn, "Vexilla regis prodeunt," inviting all tongues to proclaim the triumph achieved by the death upon the cross, and to honor and praise Jesus therefor. On returning to the altar, the priest lays one of the two hosts consecrated yesterday upon the corporal, incenses it in token of the reverence due to the holy Sacrament, washes his hands a little way from the epistle corner in silence, after some short prayers elevates the sacred host, breaks it as usual, communicates as usual, says a short prayer of thanksgiving, and, while the choir is singing, places the most holy Sacrament in the repository, for the adoration of the faithful, that by contemplation of the death upon the cross, and burial, the visible representation of which cannot but assist us, we may be moved and quickened to devotion. With this the service ends.

Is there then no mass said to-day ?

No ; for there is no consecration either of bread or wine, which is of the substance of the holy sacrifice of the mass, but one of the hosts consecrated yesterday is received by the priest.

Why is there no mass said ?

Because to-day the Church directs her attention exclusively to the bloody sacrifice. She places herself in spirit at the foot of the cross, where she beholds her Redeemer grow pale and die. That is the only object of her meditation and devotion. She therefore thinks it unseemly to offer up to-day the unbloody sacrifice, which is a sacrifice of joy and consolation, when she is full of sorrow and grief.

During the day, do for the love of Jesus all the good you can ; for example, to the poor, to the sick, to prisoners, to unfortunate but worthy debtors, make the way of the cross, visit the holy sepulchre, and meditate upon the passion of Christ.

St. Augustine says, "Behold the wounds of Jesus hanging on the cross, the blood of the dying, the price of redemption. Behold how he bows down his head that we may kiss it ; how

his side is opened to receive us in love ; how his arms are extended to embrace us, his whole body given up for our redemption. Consider this, that Jesus may be in your heart, as he was nailed to the cross for you."

Instruction how to meditate with advantage on the Passion of Christ.

"Oh, all ye that pass by, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow."—*Lament.* i. 12.

I. *The profit of meditating on the Passion of Christ.*

1. A proper meditation on the passion of Christ is every way fitted to make men better. Whoever considers that Jesus suffered such unspeakable pains, and so cruel a death, to deliver him, cannot indeed continue longer in sin ; he must hate it as the cause of the death of Jesus ; must feel kindled within him an inextinguishable fire of love for one who endured every thing out of love for him ; must resolve earnestly to follow Jesus in humility, meekness, love for his enemies, patience, and obedience. This powerful effect of meditating on the passion of Jesus, all the saints have experienced in great degrees.

2. The Passion of Christ gives us unusual strength in combat with temptation. On this point, St. Augustine says, beautifully, "In all my adversities, I have not found any remedies so powerful as the passion and wounds of Jesus. In them I sleep securely, and rest without fear. Christ died for us. Death has, in itself, no bitterness that Christ has not changed to sweetness. All my hope rests on the death of my Lord. His death is my merit, my refuge, my salvation, my life, and my resurrection. Does a sinful thought disturb me, I hide myself in the wounds of Christ. Does the flesh press me down, I rise again by remembering the wounds of my Lord. Does the devil secretly try to ensnare me, I fly to the innermost mercy of my Lord, and Satan retires. Does the fire of impurity move my flesh, it will be quenched by again meditating on the wounds of my Lord. All my hope and the certainty of my confidence rest on the precious blood of my Lord Jesus. In it I refresh myself when the weight of my sins

would cast me down and throw me into despair. Through that same blood, I hope for the forgiveness of all my sins, and to come one day, O my God, to thee.”

II. *The method of meditating rightly on the Passion of Christ.*

1. First place before yourself what Jesus suffered from the Jews, the Gentiles, and even his own disciples, who all forsook him. Then consider his suffering at the agony in the Garden of Gethsemani, at the treachery of Judas, at the scorn, and railing, and contempt which were poured upon him during the whole time of his passion. Think on his pains at the scourging, on the way to Golgotha, at being deprived of his garments, at the crowning with thorns, at the crucifying: finally, reflect on that excess of sorrow which he endured, in feeling that he was for a moment forsaken by his Father. There is no sorrow or grief of soul, no pain of body, that he did not endure.

2. Yet we must not stop here, but earnestly reflect *why* Jesus went through so many and so great sufferings. He, the Son of God, holiness and innocence itself, suffered not for his own sake, but to deliver mankind, who, since Adam's fall, have walked in the way of perdition, from sin, death, and hell, to take away their guilt and punishment, and of children of the devil, to make them children of God. He came into the world, suffered, and died that we might have life. Oh, what sacrificing love! Consider the greatness of it: think that Jesus has suffered all this for thee: that without the merits of his passion and death thou wouldst go to eternal ruin: that he has procured for thee these merits when thou hadst no merits of thine own, even when thou didst so often offend him: imagine to yourself that he says to you from the cross, “O Christian, what more could I have done for thee! See at what a price I have redeemed thee!”

If one seriously ponders these things, his heart must be harder than stone, if he is not thereby moved to hatred of sin, and to love for Jesus.

3. But this is not the perfect fruit of meditation on the passion of Jesus. By contemplating his passion, we ought to

be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. In the school of the suffering Redeemer we should learn to be humble, meek, patient, obedient unto death, to love our enemies, to return good for evil. Then, and then only, has one rightly meditated on the passion of Christ, when he has come to resemble the object of his meditation—Jesus his Lord and Master.

As often, therefore, as thou thinkest on the passion of Christ, whether in making the stations of the cross, or in reciting the Rosary, or before an image of the suffering Redeemer, endeavor not only to have pity for his sufferings; not only to give him assurance of your love, but also to impress deep upon your heart, and to imitate the virtues practiced by him in his passion.

The Spectators of the Crucifixion and the Men of the Present Day.

On Golgotha, before the temple and city of Jerusalem, in presence of from two to three millions of Jews, gathered from all countries of the earth to that city, to attend the feast of the Passover, Jesus, the Son of God, hung nailed to the cross, a propitiatory sacrifice for mankind, loaded with all their sins. Near the cross of her dying Son stood Mary his mother, filled with sorrow; at her side John, the beloved disciple, and at the foot of the cross Mary Magdalen, the penitent, bowed down, as if senseless, to the ground, in grief and sorrow convulsively clasping the wood of the cross with her hands. At the right of Jesus hung a thief, turning to the Saviour in penance, while at his left groaned another malefactor, blaspheming the Holy One of Israel with a hardened heart. Around the Saviour, as he struggled with death, stood the Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees, a hypocritical company of crafty reprobates, through whose hatred Jesus, the innocent Lamb, was persecuted even in the hour of his death, and who, blind to all the predictions of the prophets, which yet they had read; insensible to all the miracles which Jesus had wrought before their eyes, as evidence of his mission, and filled with unbelief and malignity, blasphemed the dying Redeemer. Along with these, at some distance from the cross, stood a multitude of indifferent per-

sons, who, having come to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover, had heard of Jesus, and were come to witness his crucifixion. Not far off from them, the barbarous soldiers and executioners were assembled, to divide among themselves his garments.

Such were the witnesses of the crucifixion of our God and Saviour; divided into different classes, they represent men of the present day.

There were but three persons near the cross who remained immovable in faith and truest love to the Saviour, ready to die with and for him. Only three were there who, though derided and mocked, taunted and jeered at, retreated not from the cross; these three were Mary, John, and Magdalen. Answering to these in our day are those who, pure and innocent like Mary and John, or weeping over their sins like Magdalen, acknowledge Jesus to be their Saviour, faithfully adhere to him, and suffer not themselves to be separated from him, either by persecution, or even by death. As in that hour at the cross, so also now, the number of the faithful is small; but great, too great, is the number who, like the indifferent spectators of the crucifixion, are neither open enemies of Jesus, nor yet his decided friends. Fear of men, human respect, attachment to the world and its pleasures, prevent them from declaring themselves on his side. Although baptized in the name of Jesus, and observing outwardly the laws of the Church established by him, they have fallen into indifference, have no living faith, and, like a reed shaken with the wind, vibrate between Jesus and the world. They dread the raillery of so-called enlightened and cultivated persons, among whom are many, like the Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees, destitute of all faith in Jesus, bearing in their hearts only hatred and contempt for the Church of God; they avoid taking up the cross, which is too heavy for their effeminacy; they commit, indeed, no public crime, value highly their good name, occasionally comply with some precepts of the Church, but they are open to every error, and lend a willing ear to every calumny against the religion of Jesus and its ministers. Instead of defending fearlessly, everywhere and at all times, Jesus, and the holy faith

which he revealed and taught, they draw back, keep silence, and even favor the enemies of the Church, in order not to be mocked by them. Thus, neither cold nor warm, they verify the words of the Scripture, *Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.*

Among the large number of indifferent and lukewarm Catholics, there are also to be found many like those Pharisees and Doctors of the Law at the cross. They are such as at the present time deliberately extinguish the light of truth, and who having rejected the faith of Jews, are become incapable of receiving instruction. Pride and insolence have blinded them: with their feeble reason they desire to comprehend the mysteries of God; with their poor intellect to investigate his ways, to be even equal to God; denying revealed truth, denying the existence of heaven and hell, like brutes, they live and die without God, and their end is perdition. But few among them return penitent to Jesus, acknowledging their sin, like the thief on his right hand: rather, like the murderer on his left, they cease not to blaspheme the Crucified, and to slander his holy Church. On the same side are found those apostates and heretics, who, like the cruel soldiers, part his garments among them, and cast lots for his seamless vesture.

Those garments which the soldiers divided, are the truths which apostates and heretics acknowledge in spite of their separation from the Church. For they are divided into sects, possessing but fragments and portions only of that one whole and perfect body of truth which Jesus gave to his Church. *"They cast lots upon the seamless vesture."*

This seamless vesture is his holy Church, which never can be divided. She is one, and shall remain so until the end of time. About this one true Church, all sects and heresies contend. They all would claim to belong to her: but they forget that as the seamless vesture of Christ could be gained by but *one* of the soldiers, so there can be but one Church—the Church of Christ—who chose his apostles to be its pillars, and their successors, the bishops and priests, its only true and lawful ministers.

Thus do those who were present at the crucifixion represent men in our day. As on Golgotha, so are there now different classes, the pure and innocent, penitent and hardened sinners, the decided followers of Christ, and the lukewarm, having only the name of Christians, infidels, apostates, and heretics.

To which of these, O Christian, do you belong? and to which do you desire to belong? Be decided; for the hour of death is nigh. The Lord has already put the axe to the tree. He hath the winnowing shovel in his hand, to clear his floor. Are you not a follower of Christ and a child of his holy Church? You will be borne away like chaff by the wind. Are you a firm and constant follower of the Church, you will triumph forever as a victorious knight of the cross, with Mary, the mother of the faithful, with John and Magdalen, on that day when the Cross shall appear in the clouds of heaven. Be decided!

Aspirations at the Cross of Jesus.

BY THOMAS A KEMPIS.

My God and my Saviour, thou didst carry the cross, that I, denying myself and bearing my own cross, might follow thee. Thou wast nailed to that cross, that I might be crucified to the world, and the world to me. Thy body was raised above the ground, that my heart might be lifted up to the things in heaven. In thy most bitter anguish thou didst feel the pain of being forsaken even by thy Heavenly Father, that in all my sufferings and in my death I might have in thee a tried and merciful high-priest. Thy heart melted in compassion towards thy mother and thy faithful disciple John, to move me also to compassion. Thou didst pray for thine enemies, that with my whole heart I might forgive mine, and leave judgment to thee. Thou didst consummate the work of redemption to obtain forgiveness, grace, and eternal life for me. Thou didst permit thy side to be opened that thy blood might ransom me, and that the water might wash me from my sins. Thou didst bow thy head, O merciful God; bow it down to me, in token that thou acceptest my love. Without thee, I cannot live; to die

for thee would be my gain. At thy grave, O most adorable Redeemer of mankind, I will mortify and bury the old man, with all desire for sin, and all the pleasure of doing evil. I will—oh, strengthen my feeble will with thy sanctifying grace—I will prepare for thee a sepulchre in my heart, that through thee the new man may be raised up, that with thee I may arise from death, and walk, in newness of life, to a happy eternity. Amen.

Holy Saturday.

Why is this day called Holy Saturday ?

Because Jesus Christ, the Holy of Holies, was on this day in the grave, and because on this day the new fire and the baptismal fonts are blessed.—(Rupertus.)

What is the new fire ?

It is the fire caught from the sparks of a flint, and then blessed by the priest, from which afterwards the candles and lamps in the church are lighted.

Why is this done, and what does it signify ?

In the earliest days of Christianity it was customary to bless the new fire every day, and later, as Thomassin writes, at least every Saturday. In the eleventh century the ceremony was first confined to Holy Saturday. The fire is first caught from a flint to indicate that Christ, the light of the world, though rejected by the Jews, is the head of the corner (Ps. cxvii. 22). The fire is blessed, because it is the practice of the Church to bless whatever pertains to the Divine service, and because it is becoming to bless the fire and light, since they represent Christ, who brought the fire of love from heaven, therewith to kindle our hearts. That this is done on Holy Saturday is to signify, that Christ, the light of the world, who was, as it were, extinguished in the grave, after his resurrection, shed the beams of his blessed light on all the world.

What is signified by the three candles, or triple candlestick ?

The most holy Trinity, one in the Divine nature, but three

in person, the second of whom came from heaven, as the true light, to enlighten all men. The priest sings, therefore, at the lighting of the three candles, "Lumen Christi—Light of Christ," and the chanters answer, "Deo gratias—Thanks be to God."

Why are all the candles of the church lighted from the triple candle?

To signify that all enlightening comes from the most holy Trinity, and in particular, that all light, truth, grace, and love, were at the beginning given by Jesus Christ to his apostles, disciples, and faithful, and through them have been handed on to their successors.

What does the Paschal or Easter candle signify?

It represents Jesus Christ, who died, but rose again, and now lives forever, the light of the world, giving light to all, and delivering us from the darkness of sin. The wax signifies his body, which he took from the most pure Virgin Mary; the wick, his soul, the light, his divinity.

At the blessing of the Paschal candle, the Church points to the cloudy pillar, which gave light to the children of Israel on their flight from Egypt, as a type of Jesus, who has brought us from the servitude of Satan and the darkness of sin, unto the freedom and light of children of God; and she exhorts us to joy, praise, and thanks for this redemption, without which it would have profited us nothing to have been born, and to walk carefully by the light of the Gospel.

The five holes in the Easter candle, in the form of a cross, represent the five holy wounds which Christ retains for our consolation. The five grains of incense inserted therein, signify the spices used in embalming the corpse of our Saviour.

Why are the twelve prophecies read to day?

To indicate that all predictions in regard to Christ, which were made since the beginning of the world, were now fulfilled in him. The number of the prophecies probably points to the twelve Apostles, by whom the fulfilment of them was announced to the world.

What does the baptismal font signify, and why is it so solemnly blessed?

It signifies the blood of Christ, by which our souls are cleansed and the power of Satan destroyed, as Pharaoh and his army were swallowed up by the sea. In the earliest ages, the catechumens (those who desired to become Christians, and had been duly instructed) were baptized on this day. The use of so many ceremonies in consecrating the font is intended to make better known among Christians the different effects of baptism, and to cause this holy sacrament to be received with greater reverence and devotion.

What are these ceremonies, and what do they signify?

After the priest has prayed to God to increase the number of the faithful, he divides the water in the form of a cross, and afterwards touches it with his hand, praying to God to bring to naught all assaults of the devil, and that the water may become pure and purifying, holy, living, carrying with it the virtue of regeneration, that the persons to be baptized therein may, by the application of the same, through the power of the Holy Ghost, be made clean from all their sins. Thereupon he makes three crosses over the water, in the name of the living, true, and holy God, whose spirit at the creation moved over the waters; divides it with his hand, and pours out some of it towards each of the four quarters of the globe, in token that as the four streams went forth from Paradise, to water the earth, so also, according to the command of Christ, shall the stream of grace, through holy baptism, flow to all parts of the world, for the washing away of sin. He then breathes upon the water three times, puts the Paschal candle into it three times, each time deeper than the last, the last time touching the bottom of the font; and then holding the candle thus, breathes three times over the water, in the form of a cross, praying God, at the same time, that the power of the Holy Ghost may descend upon the water and impart to it the virtue of regeneration, that thereby all stains of sin being removed, man, created after the image of God, may be born again, to a new and holy life. The immersion and withdrawal of the candle from the water, denote that it is sanctified by Christ, to be a means through which the baptized are drawn out of the abyss of sin. The breathing upon the water denotes the com-

munication of the Holy Ghost. After these prayers, the assistant priests sprinkle the holy water over the people. The holy oils, that of the catechumens, and that of the holy chrism, are then mixed with the consecrated water, partly to indicate the union of Christ with his people, and partly also to denote that the grace of the Holy Ghost, of which the holy oil and chrism are figures, together with faith, hope, and charity, is infused into the heart of the catechumen.

During these ceremonies think often of the grace of holy baptism; give thanks for it, renew your baptismal vows, and say the following

Prayer.

O most benign Jesus, we thank thee, that through thy most precious blood thou hast prepared us in holy baptism, a laver of regeneration. Give us thy grace, that we may preserve unstained the innocence that in baptism we received. Amen.

Why does the priest prostrate himself after the blessing of the baptismal font, and rise again after the chanting of the Litany of the Saints?

This is done to pray God, through the intercession of all saints, to give the grace of holy baptism to all men without exception, that as all are from their birth dead and buried in sin, so all might rise up with Christ to grace and a holy life.

Why are the altars to-day re-decorated, and the bells again sounded?

The decoration of the altars is a figure of the glorious incorruptible body of Jesus, and at the same time a token of the joy with which the Church hails his glorious resurrection. This joy she expresses also by the festive sound of the bells, and glad hymns of praise. That this is done at so early an hour is for the reason that the mass of this day was in early times celebrated the midnight before Easter, but now is said on the morning of Holy Saturday.

Why has the Mass of to-day no Introit?

The Introit of the Mass for the day formerly consisted of a

whole psalm, which was sung while the people were assembling in the church. But as the people were already gathered together in attendance upon the above-mentioned ceremonies, there was for that reason no Introit sung. The Church still observes the same practice, for the like reasons, although what was first a vigil mass has been transferred to the previous day, on account of the disorders to which it gave occasion.

Prayer.

O God, who didst illustrate this night with the glory of our Lord's resurrection, preserve in the new progeny of thy family the spirit of adoption which thou hast given, that, renewed in body and mind, they may exhibit in thy sight a pure service. Through the same Lord.

Epistle. (Coloss. iii. 1-4.)

Brethren, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory.

Explanation.

St. Paul represents to us the resurrection of Jesus Christ as both the example and cause of the spiritual resurrection from sin wrought in us by the reception of the holy sacraments at Easter. With Christ we must renounce the world, and live hidden with him in God, if we would arise with him on the last day, and be acknowledged before all men as his own.

After the epistle the priest intones the Allelujah, singing it three times, and each time raising his voice. The choir and people repeat it in turn. This is the first expression of joy which the Church and her children use in anticipation of Easter. The repetition of this exclamation, and the raising of the voice, indicate the continuance and increase of this most devout and solemn joy.

Gospel. (Matt. xxviii. 1-7.)

In the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake. For an Angel of the Lord descended from heaven: and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the Angel answering, said to the women: Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid. And going quickly, tell ye his disciples that he is risen: and behold he will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see him. Lo, I have foretold it to you.

Practice.

The love of the two Marys which brought them so early to the sepulchre, was rewarded by the appearance of an angel. Do you also love Jesus, seek him early, by making a good intention, and whatever you do will receive God's blessing.

In the mass the Credo is omitted, because in the early times it had been already said by the catechumens; the same is the case with the Agnus Dei, which was said at the Litany of the Saints. The kiss of peace is not given, because Jesus had not yet appeared to his disciples. The vespers are very short, as if there were no vespers, because this Sabbath-day is the figure of the eternal Sabbath in heaven, which has no evening. No Christian should forget to-day to revisit the holy sepulchre, to thank Jesus for his passion and death, and to venerate the sorrowful mother Mary.

Easter.

What is the feast of Easter?

The day on which Jesus Christ, according to the predictions both of himself and the prophets, by his Almighty power, reunited his body and soul, and arose alive from the grave.

What is the meaning of this feast?

It has significations as various and important as the resurrection itself. Thus, it betokens, 1. The perfect triumph of Jesus over death and the grave; the accomplishment of our redemption; the foundation of our faith (1 Cor. xv. 13). It is also the pledge and figure of our own resurrection, the fountain of our hope and joy. For so sure as Christ rose from the dead, so sure is it that he is the Son of God, that his doctrine is divine, his Church the true one, and that we, as members of his body, provided we are his true disciples, shall one day rise with glorified bodies, as he did. 2. The resurrection of Jesus is a pattern and admonition of what every one at this season ought to do. For as Jesus on Easter-day began a new life, so should every Christian rise from the grave of sin, and begin to walk in newness of life (Rom. vi. 6). He should remove from himself the last remnant of the old leaven of sin, free himself from the evil habits which, like the linen cloth, hold him fast, roll off the stone of guilt from his conscience, break the seal which Satan has impressed upon him as one of his own, chase away the guards who would keep him confined in the grave, and show by a new, glorified, and holy life, that he is indeed risen from the death of sin.

This feast is called in Latin, "Pascha," and in Hebrew, "Phase," the meaning of which is, "the passing over,"—because the destroyer of the first-born in Egypt *passed over* the houses of the Israelites, who had sprinkled the transom and posts of the door with the blood of the paschal lamb; and because the Jews were in that same night delivered from bondage, passing over through the Red Sea into the land of promise (Exod. xii.) Now as we Christians are by the death and resurrection of Christ, who was the true paschal lamb that taketh away the sins of the world, redeemed and *passed over* to the freedom of the children of God, we too call the day of his resurrection, Pascha, or Phase.

How should we observe the feast of Easter?

In such manner as to confirm our faith in Jesus Christ, and in his Church, and to pass over from the death of sin to the new life of grace (Rom. vi. 4). Of this the resurrection of Christ reminds us; of this the Holy Church admonishes us,

prescribing for us at the Easter season the reception of the holy sacraments of penance and Eucharist ; this, too, all nature preaches to us, awakening at this season to new life, and through every blade of grass calling out to us, "Thy Saviour is risen again, and thou also shalt one day rise again, if thou awakest from the sleep of sin, and permittest Jesus to live in thee."

What is the meaning of the repetition of Allelujah, and of standing at prayers at Easter ?

Allelujah means "praise God," and is an expression of joy at the resurrection of our Lord, and the hope of eternal happiness, which he thereby obtained for us. The standing up at prayers likewise indicates that Christ is risen from the grave, and, as St. Augustine says, that we have left the grave of sin, and are ready to walk in the way of the divine commandments.

To summon us to rejoice over the resurrection of our Lord, the Church sings to-day, and often during the Octave, "*This is the day that the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad therein*" (Ps. cxvii. 24); and in the Introit of the Mass, she introduces Jesus Christ as risen, addressing his Heavenly Father, in the words of the hundred and thirty-eighth Psalm, "*I arose and am still with thee, Allelujah ; thou hast laid thy hand upon me, Allelujah*" (Ps. cxxxviii.) "*Lord, thou hast proved me, and known me ; thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up.*" Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who this day didst open to us the approach to eternity, by thy only Son victorious over death, prosper by thy grace our vows, which thou dost anticipate by thy inspirations. Through the same Lord.

Epistle. (1 Cor. v. 7, 8.)

Brethren: Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ, our pasch, is sacrificed. Therefore let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Explanation.

The Apostle wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians at Easter, on which feast the Jews ate the Paschal lamb with unleavened bread, carefully cleansing their houses from leaven. He therefore selected the leaven as a type of the moral depravity from which the Christian community and every individual Christian should be free. Let us, therefore, purge out the old leaven of sin, by true penance, that we may receive our Paschal Lamb, Jesus, in the most Holy Eucharist, with a pure heart.

Say often during the day, with the Church, Allelujah ; give praise to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. Allelujah. This is the day which the Lord hath made, Allelujah ; let us be glad and rejoice therein, Allelujah. Christ, our Pasch, is immolated. Allelujah !

Gospel. (Mark xvi. 1-7.)

At that time: Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted; 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.

Why did the holy women desire to anoint the body of Jesus with sweet spices?

Out of love to Jesus. For as it was the custom among the Jews to embalm the dead, these holy women, who had been hindered by the approach of the Sabbath from paying this duty of love to their beloved before his burial, came early in the morning to discharge it. This love God rewarded with the appearance of the Angel, who rolled back the great stone from

the door of the sepulchre, comforted them, and convinced them of the resurrection of Jesus.

These women teach us that true love is not lagging and indifferent, but always eager to please God and benefit man, according to its ability, without delay; furthermore, we learn from them how God consoles those who seek him from the heart, and how pleasing to him are the works of mercy. Let us practice them diligently. Since what we do for the poor, that we do also for Christ himself (Matt. xxv. 40).

Why did the Angel send the holy women to the disciples of Christ, and in particular to Peter?

To console them for the death of Christ, and that through them the resurrection of Jesus might be made known to the whole world. Peter was particularly named because he was the head of the Apostles, and also because, on account of his threefold denial of the Saviour, he was sadder and more dispirited than the others. So gracious is God to penitents.

Aspiration.

What joy it is to me, O Jesus, that, decorated with the sacred marks of thy wounds, thou art risen from the grave! I beseech thee, by thy glorious victory over sin, death, the devil, and hell, grant to me, and to all Christians, grace to die to all sinful propensities and lusts, and no more to strive for earthly things, but to seek those things which are above, in heaven, and to walk before thee in newness of life.

Meditation on the Resurrection of Christ.

The enemies of Jesus had his sepulchre sealed and surrounded with a guard, lest the corpse should be stolen, and his disciples say, "He is risen from the dead." Thus did God's providence use the enemies of Jesus to secure us against the danger of deception.

At the beginning of the first day of the week the Crucified arose!—the Sun, the Light of the new world. The earth trembled. An Angel, whose aspect was like the lightning, whose robes were white as snow, had rolled away the stone

from the sepulchre, in which were found only the linen grave-clothes, in which the corpse had been wrapped. "*He is not here,*" said the Angel; "*he is risen; behold the place where they laid him.*" Jesus lives, and shows himself for the reward of love and fidelity, first to the holy women, next to the disciples. They gaze upon him with their eyes, and see him eat; they hear his voice, and touch his body; and all this not once only, but repeatedly, on different occasions, and for forty days. He is as truly risen from the dead as he had predicted.

Jesus lives. Ignominious and painful was his death, but even this was the means of obtaining for his cause, for justice, and for truth, an everlasting victory. He has overcome sin, death, hell, and all his enemies; and ever since, the knowledge of his name is spread throughout the whole earth; his temples are erected in all parts of the world; the most renowned nations acknowledge him; through his name, millions hope for and receive salvation and a blessed immortality.

He lives; and as he arose, so too shall we, the members of his body, one day arise, and partake of his glory. We shall be where he is. The grave no longer confines man; we sow the earthly and perishable, to reap the heavenly and eternal. What a glorious destiny!

He lives, and reigns for our salvation; let us keep to him and follow him faithfully, for he is the true Guide who leads us to life; he is the good Shepherd who can protect us from the wolf; to him all power is given. We will therefore put away from us the sins which, before his coming, polluted mankind; the impurity, avarice, envy, blood-thirstiness, rioting, deceit, malice, from which he has redeemed us. Let us not be slanderers, calumniators, blasphemers, boasters, insolent to parents, perfidious, implacable, and unmerciful. Oh, that we had so nailed our sins to the cross, during Lent, that, in spirit victorious over the flesh, we might, on this day, greet the risen Jesus! How can we rejoice, if Christ has not conquered in us? if we are not yet risen from the grave of sin?

He lives and reigns. Oh, let us not think too much of the labors, the combats, and temptations of this world; they last

but a short while, and soon they who suffered with him shall be partakers of his glory.

He lives, and dies no more. Through combat and inexpressible sufferings, he gained victory. So also with us. Only by labor, combat, and sufferings, shall we win the crown of eternal life. As the Israelites, though freed by Moses from the slavery of Egypt, must yet suffer and combat for forty years, and enter, combating, the promised land, so we, though redeemed by Christ from the servitude of Satan and sin, will not be able to enter the kingdom of Christ, unless, after his example and by his grace, we fight till the end, against the flesh, the devil, and the world. For only he that perseveres to the end shall receive the crown (2 Tim. ii. 5); only he that mortifies and denies himself with Christ, shall also live and reign with him. Suffer, therefore, labor, combat till the end!

Easter Monday.

Jesus, through his death and resurrection, has brought us into a land incomparably more beautiful than the land of promise. The Church with joy reminds us of this in the Introit of the Mass, in which she brings before our eyes the entrance of the Israelites into the promised land, which is a type of the kingdom of heaven, under Josue, who is a type of Christ.

The Lord hath brought you into a land flowing with milk and honey, allelujah: and that the law of the Lord may be ever in your mouth, allelujah, allelujah (Exod. xiii.) Give glory to the Lord and call upon his name, declare his deeds among the Gentiles. Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who hast bestowed remedies on the world in the paschal solemnities, grant to thy people heavenly gifts, we beseech thee, that they may both deserve to obtain perfect liberty, and arrive at life everlasting. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Acts x. 37-43.)

In those days: Peter standing in the midst of the people, said: Men, brethren, you know the word which hath been published through all Judea: for it began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things that he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed, hanging him upon a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses pre-ordained by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose again from the dead: and he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead. To him all the prophets give testimony, that through his name all receive remission of sins, who believe in him.

Explanation.

Through Jesus sent from God, the deliverer from all sickness of soul and body, who has risen from the dead, and is to be our Judge, to whom all the prophets gave testimony—through him, and through him alone, forgiveness of sins and salvation are promised to all who truly and firmly believe in him, and show their belief by deeds. Have such a lively faith, and thou shalt receive forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

Gospel. (Luke xxiv. 13-35.)

At that time: two of the disciples of Jesus went the same day to a town, which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus himself also drawing near went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know him. And he said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to him: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom he said: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and

word before God and all the people, and how our chief-priests and princes delivered him to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel: and now besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company, affrighted us, who before it was light were at the sepulchre. And not finding his body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of Angels, who say that he is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre: and found it so as the women had said, but him they found not. Then he said to them: O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things that were concerning him. And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going: and he made as though he would go farther. But they constrained him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in the way, and opened to us the scriptures? And rising up the same hour they went back to Jerusalem: and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way: and how they knew him in the breaking of bread.

Why did Jesus walk as a stranger with the two disciples?

He walked with them because they talked of him, and were sad on his account. Thus Jesus joins himself to those who speak of him, while he withdraws himself from those whose mouths are filled with impious and impure words. He appeared to them as a stranger, says St. Gregory, because he meant to deal with them according to their dispositions, and according to the firmness of their faith. They seemed not to have believed in him as the Son of God, so irresolute and sad are they. Thus far Christ was, indeed, yet a stranger in their hearts, and chose to appear to them as such, to free them who loved him from their false notions, to convince them of the necessity of his passion, and to reveal himself to them, so soon

as their understandings should be enlightened, and their hearts filled with desire. Thus God orders the disposal of his graces according to our dispositions; according to our faith and trust; according to our love and fidelity.

Why did Christ say that he ought to have suffered?

He said it not as if he had been forced to suffer, since he gave himself up to death of his own free will; but as he had caused the prophets to announce his humiliation and passion, so he must suffer in reality, that those prophecies might be fulfilled.

How did he expound the Scriptures to his disciples?

The two disciples showed plainly that, mistaking the glorious descriptions given of the Messiah by the prophets, they expected a hero or prince who should deliver them from their subjection to the Romans, and a splendid worldly empire. "*But we hoped,*" they said, "*that it was he that should have redeemed Israel.*" In expounding the Scriptures to expose this error, Jesus probably showed his disciples how his sufferings, death, and resurrection were foreshown by the institutions, the persons, and the events of the old law,—for example, by the selling of Joseph, the treachery of Judas; by the coat stained with blood, the scourging (Gen. xxxvii.); by the ram caught by his horns in the briars, his crowning with thorns (Gen. xxii. 13); by Isaac carrying the wood for the sacrifice, his carrying the cross (Gen. xxii. 6); by Noe naked and mocked by his sons, his being stripped and reviled (Gen. ix); by the brazen serpent set up by Moses, his crucifixion (Numb. xxi. 9); by the sacrifices of animals, particularly of the paschal lamb, not a bone of which was broken, his sacrifice on the cross; by Jonas on the third day thrown up alive from the belly of the whale, his burial and resurrection,—and so on; besides which he pointed out how clearly David, and Isaias, and other prophets, had foretold, and, as it were, recorded his passion.

Why did Jesus make as if he would have gone further?

As he had strengthened their faith, so now, before staying with them, he would prove their love, and give them an opportunity to show hospitality.

Why did the disciples know him by the breaking of bread?

Because, as the phrase "breaking of bread" indicates, and as

the holy fathers teach, he gave them his sacred body in the same manner that he did at his last supper.

What should this occurrence teach us ?

1. It should confirm our faith, in that the disciples did not readily believe the resurrection of Jesus, but only after many irrefragable proofs. 2. It should encourage us to imitate them, in speaking gladly of Jesus, in being ready to receive instruction, in showing hospitality to strangers. Should we not be so fortunate as to entertain an angel, like Abraham, or Jesus himself, like these disciples and other saints, we may yet receive those of whom he said, whatever we do unto the least of his disciples we do unto him. 3. It should particularly teach us that after we have known and received him, we should earnestly pray him to leave us no more, and to that end, should incite us, by faith, love, and hatred of sin, to make our hearts a worthy resting-place for him.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, nearer and nearer draws the evening of our life. As thou didst abide with the disciples at Emmaus, so abide also with us in the power and operation of the holy sacraments, that we, who are foolish and slow of heart to believe, may, like them, by partaking of thy most holy body, be strengthened in faith, confirmed in hope, and so united to thee by love, that nothing may any more separate us from thee. Amen.

Easter Tuesday.

To praise and thank God for the mystery of redemption, the Church sings at the Introit of the Mass: *He gave them waters of wisdom to drink, allelujah. She shall be made strong in them, and shall not be moved, allelujah. And he shall exalt them forever, allelujah, allelujah* (Ecclus. xv. 3). *Give glory to the Lord, and call upon his name, declare his deeds among the Gentiles* (Ps. civ. 1). Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who dost ever multiply thy Church by a new progeny, grant to thy servants, that they may retain in their lives, the mystery which they have received by faith. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Acts xiii. 26–33.)

In those days, Paul rising up, and with his hand bespeaking silence, said: Men, brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you fear God, to you the word of this salvation is sent. For they that inhabited Jerusalem, and the rulers thereof, not knowing Jesus, nor the voices of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, judging him have fulfilled them. And finding no cause of death in him, they desired of Pilate, that they might kill him. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, taking him down from the tree they laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him up from the dead the third day: who was seen for many days by those, who had come up together with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who to this present are his witnesses to the people. And we declare unto you that the promise which was made to our fathers, this same God hath fulfilled to our children, raising up Jesus Christ our Lord.

Explanation.

Like St. Peter, so St. Paul founds the truth of his doctrine upon the resurrection of Jesus—and why? Because Christ had given this as the special proof of the truth of his doctrine. Had he not risen from the dead he would not have been the Son of God, and could not have redeemed mankind. The resurrection is, therefore, the foundation of our belief. On that account, he allowed his disciples for awhile to doubt, and only to believe after he had given them, by repeatedly appearing to them, irrefragable proofs of his resurrection; that by their doubts and cautious unbelief, the wounds of unbelief in our hearts might be healed, and we might know how true is the resurrection, and how firmly founded our faith.

Gospel. (Luke xxiv. 36–47.)

At that time: Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples, and saith to them: Peace be to you; it is I, fear not. But they being troubled

and frightened, supposed that they saw a spirit. And he said to them: Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet, that it is I myself; handle, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. But while they yet believed not, and wondered for joy, he said: Have you here any thing to eat? And they offered him a piece of a broiled fish and a honeycomb. And when he had eaten before them, taking the remains he gave to them. And he said to them: These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. And he said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day: and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations.

Why does Jesus greet his disciples with the words, "*Peace be to you?*"

1. Because he came to restore to men that peace with God, with themselves, with their neighbor, which sin had destroyed.
2. Because peace is a mark of the children of God, as discord is of sinners.
3. Because peace is the greatest of all goods. Therefore it is that he will have his Apostles, after his example, give the greeting of peace at entering a house. Finally,
4. Because he desired to encourage his disciples to confidence by his friendliness.

To live constantly in peace, one must possess humility, according to the saying, You will not be long in peace, if you do not endeavor to be the least of all.

Why did Christ show his disciples the marks of his wounds after his resurrection?

To remove from their minds all doubts as to his resurrection: for he must have had a real body to be touched by them, and to eat with them. Hereby we learn what our resurrection from sin should be, for the resurrection of Christ is a pattern of that. We must give indisputable proofs of spiritual life; that is, we must love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves; must hate sin, avoid the occasions of sin, and exercise ourselves in good works.

Why did our Saviour retain the places of his wounds after his resurrection?

To show that it was the same body which had been wounded during his passion, and to show that he was really risen from the dead. 2. To teach us that we too shall, in like manner, rise with our bodies. 3. To make known to us the greatness of his love, through which he has graven us, as it were, on his hands and feet, and in his heart (Isaias xlix. 16). 4. To impart to us confidence in his endless mercy, and to encourage us to combat against the world, the flesh, and the devil; for it was on our account that he received those wounds which, ever since, are speaking intercessors to the Father, and sure tokens of victory. Should we not be ashamed to be cowardly combatants, when we see the wounds on his head which his love for us inflicted on him? 5. To prepare for all the miserable, afflicted, and tempted, a place of refuge, and an inexhaustible fountain of consolation. 6. To terrify the impenitent, whom, on the day of judgment, he will show how much he has suffered for them, and that they have been the cause of their own destruction. Oh, let us endeavor to think often on the wounds of Jesus, that we may thereby be encouraged to lead pious lives acceptable to God.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, grant that the precious blood which flowed from thy wounds for me and all sinners, may not be lost.

Instruction on what we ought to believe concerning the Holy Scriptures.

“He opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”—*Luke xxiv. 15.*

What is the Bible?

It is the collection of those writings which holy men have composed under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Ghost, and which have been acknowledged and explained by the Catholic Church, as given by God. These scriptures or books are divided into the Old and the New Testament. The

scriptures of the old law contain, in forty-five books, the history of events from the creation to the coming of Jesus, and the doctrines, laws, institutions and promises which during that period were given by God. Those of the new law contain, in twenty-seven books, mostly epistles, the doctrine and life of Jesus, the sending of the Holy Ghost, the first spreading of Christianity, instructions and admonitions, and finally predictions, in regard to the fortunes of the Christian Church. These scriptures are also sometimes called the Word of God.

Are the Scriptures the only source of Christian faith and doctrine?

No: 1. For the Holy Scriptures do not contain all that God has revealed, that Jesus has done and taught. St. John says the world would not be able to contain the books, if all that Jesus had done should be written (John xxi. 25); in particular, but very little has been written of the instructions and predictions which Jesus gave to his Apostles from his resurrection to the ascension. 2. The Scriptures are not plain enough to be understood by every one, without danger of erring. For this reason it was necessary for Jesus to explain to his disciples the Holy Scripture, to open the meaning of it, that they might understand it. St. Peter already complained that in the epistles of St. Paul were some places hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrested to their own destruction (2 Pet. iii. 16). All history witnesses to the same thing. Whenever a heresiarch has arisen, he has appealed to the Holy Scriptures, and many have appealed to the same words in support of contradictory opinions. They expounded, wrested, omitted, added to, till the Scriptures fitted their opinions. Finally, it is quite natural that the Holy Scriptures, being given by God, can be rightly understood only by him who is led by the Spirit of God.

What other source, then, is there besides the Holy Scriptures?

Tradition, or inherited doctrine,—that is, those doctrines of faith and practice which the Apostles had either learned from the mouth of Christ himself, or had been taught by the Holy Ghost, and which, without being committed to writing,

were delivered, as it were, from mouth to mouth, by the Apostles to their disciples, and by these again to their followers.

That tradition was not only a true, but the very best source of the doctrine in faith and practice, follows from these facts : 1. Oral tradition was the first, and for a long time the only means of spreading the Gospel. The holy Gospels, and the other books of the new law, were first committed to writing much later, as occasion required, to facilitate the remembrance of the acts and teaching of Jesus, but not to supplant the living word. They are only a part of revelation. 2. St. Paul pointedly enjoins upon the Thessalonians the observance of the traditions, whether learned by word of mouth, or from his epistles (2 Thess. ii. 24) ; and he admonishes Timothy (2 Tim. ii. 3) to intrust to others, in order to continued instruction, the traditions learnt from him. 3. That there are only four Gospels, etc. ; that these, and no other writings, belong to the Holy Scriptures, we know only by tradition, in accordance with which the Church has so decided. 4. In like manner, without tradition we should have no certainty of the right meaning of the Holy Scriptures,—this history teaches ; but tradition, which points out what has been always, everywhere, and by all believed and taught in the Catholic Church, from the time of the Apostles till now, puts us in a sure way to the right understanding of them, prevents doubts and errors, and leads us with certainty to the knowledge of God's will, and to salvation. The consideration of all this led St. Augustine to say, "I would not believe the Gospel itself, unless on the authority of the Church."

Where is this source preserved ?

Like Holy Scripture itself, so also tradition is kept in the Roman Catholic Church, with which Jesus has promised to be all days, even to the consummation of the world, and which St. Paul calls "*the pillar and the ground of truth*" (1 Tim. iii. 15).

What follows from this ?

That it is not free to every one to read and explain Holy Scripture according to his own opinion, but that it must be done with submission and conformity to the teaching of the

Church. 2. That the Holy Scriptures cannot be the final judge in controversies of faith, since they are themselves liable to be misunderstood. 3. That for this reason the Church has done wisely in making the printing, reading, and explaining of Holy Scripture depend upon the permission of lawful spiritual superiors.

Why does God will that men should not interpret Scripture according to their own sense, but only according to the teaching of the Church?

1. In order to prevent the innumerable controversies which must arise, were each one to interpret Scripture according to his own private opinion, and to persist in it obstinately, by reason of thinking his own intelligence equal to any other. 2. That the preservation of unity, and the perpetual power and presence of Jesus in the Church, by which he keeps her from all error, may appear the more clearly. 3. That the way of salvation may be surely found by all, by submitting their own private opinion to that of the Church, led by the Spirit of God. 4. To keep us in humility, as St. Augustine says, since with all our other knowledge, we perceive that we cannot understand the Holy Scriptures without the particular assistance of God.

What, therefore, must one do, who desires to read the Holy Scriptures?

He must read them, 1. Only with the permission of the ecclesiastical superiors. 2. With the subjection of his own opinion to the decisions of the Church, and the interpretation of the holy fathers. 3. With suitable preparation, by prayer and fasting, as St. Thomas of Aquin did, and with devotion and care.

First Sunday after Easter, called *Dominica in Albis*, or *Low Sunday*.

Why is this Sunday called *Dominica in Albis*, or, as in German, *White Sunday*.

Because, in the earlier times, they who had been recently

baptized on Holy Saturday, on this day laid aside the white garments which they had then received in token of their baptismal innocence, and put on, around the neck, an "Agnus Dei," made of white wax, and blessed by the Pope, to remind them continually that they were bound to preserve that innocence unstained. The Church therefore sings, at the Introit of the Mass, *As new-born babes, allelujah, desire the rational milk without guile, allelujah, allelujah, allelujah* (1 Pet. ii. 2). *Rejoice to God our helper; sing aloud to the God of Jacob.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who have performed the paschal solemnities, may, by thy grace, preserve them in our life and conduct. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 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 by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit which testifieth, that Christ is the truth. For there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself.

Explanation.

How consoling is this epistle! We can then overcome the world, if we will, through our faith,—the faith, namely, that Jesus is the Son of God, who overcame the world, and obtained for all his followers abundant strength to do the same. That he is the Son of God, St. John shows, 1. By the threefold testimony on earth, of the water at the baptism in Jordan (John i. 33), of the blood at the death on the cross (Heb. ix. 22), of the spirit in the miraculous effects wrought in those that believed (Acts i.)

2. By the threefold testimony from heaven: of the Father, who calls him his Son; of the Son himself, by his doctrine, his life, his miracles; of the Holy Ghost who descended upon him in bodily shape as a dove (Luke iii. 22). 3. From the testimony in the heart of every one. As Jesus says, "*Whoever shall do my will shall know whether I am from God.*"

By loving faith in Jesus as the Son of God, we can surely overcome the world, because that faith shows us in God, our Father; in the world to come, our true country; in Jesus, our example; teaching us to love God above all things, to disregard the world, and worldly goods, and to strive for the eternal; and directing us to the proper means for accomplishing this in the power of the infinite grace of the Son of God, which he is ready in every way to impart to us.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, I believe in thee, as the Son of the living God! Grant that through this faith I may victoriously combat the flesh, the world, the devil, and every inclination to evil, and obtain everlasting life.

Gospel. (John xx. 19-31.)

At that time: When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands, and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he 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 faithless but believing. Thomas answered, and saith 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 after his name.

Why does Jesus so often say, "*Peace be to you?*"

To signify that he had restored peace between God and man; to show how men might know his disciples; and how necessary to salvation the preservation of peace is.

2. To invite us thereby always to preserve peace *with God*, by avoiding with care every sin; *with our neighbor*, by true charity, which knowingly harms no one, and readily forgives injury and injustice; *with ourselves*, by subjecting our will and desire to God.

What is the meaning of the words, "*as my Father hath sent me, &c.?*"

That he gave to his Apostles the power which the Father had given him; for example, the power to forgive sins, to govern the Church; and not to them only, but also to their lawful successors till the end of time, since the Father had sent him to be the Saviour of all men, in every age.

Why did Christ breathe on the Apostles when he gave them the power of forgiving sins?

It was a figure to signify that the Holy Spirit proceeded from Christ, and was by him communicated to the Apostles; for in Hebrew and Greek, "spirit" is the same as "breath." By this sign they were visibly taught, that as the divine breath gave life to Adam, in like manner spiritual life is imparted to the descendants of Adam, dead through sin, in the sacrament of penance, through the Holy Ghost.

Why did God permit Thomas to disbelieve the appearance of Christ to the other disciples?

That we might thereby be strengthened in faith, for as Christ took away all doubt from Thomas, by appearing again, the resurrection of Christ by that means becomes, as St.

Gregory says, so much the more credible and certain. At the same time, in this narrative there shines forth the goodness of God, who took as much pains for Thomas alone, as for all the rest of the Apostles. Therefore, says St. Augustine, God does as much for one man as for all, and for all as much as for one. Who would not love so good a God?

Instruction on the True Faith and the True Church.

“Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.”—*John* xx. 29.

What is it to believe?

To receive as immovably certain what God has revealed to us, although we cannot comprehend it. Thus Thomas saw only what was visible and human in Christ, but at the same time acknowledged his Godhead which he could not see.

What must we, therefore, believe?

All that God has revealed (*Matt.* xxviii. 20). We are not at liberty, therefore to say, either “I do not receive this,” or “I receive it only in so far as seems to me proper.” For thereby man would set up himself as judge above God. We must therefore believe *all*, even though not written, but made known to us only by the tradition of the Church.

Why must we believe all this?

Because God, the infallible truth, has revealed it. This belief is as necessary to salvation as it is reasonable in itself. For it would be manifest folly and absurdity not to receive what God has revealed, or to pretend to understand it better than he.

Can there be more than one true faith?

No; for as there is only one God, one Saviour, one Truth, so also can there be but one revelation, one true faith, which, like God and the truth, remains always, in every age and every place, unchangeably the same, and includes, without addition or diminution, all that God has revealed.

How can we certainly know what God has or has not revealed, and which this one true faith is?

By the means that God has given us, that is, by his Church, which is guided by the Holy Ghost to all truth, and in which Jesus Christ dwells till the end of time.

How can we know the Church of Christ?

By this, that she is, like the truth, one, holy, apostolic, and catholic.

1. She must be *one* in her doctrine, so that all her members, from the rising to the setting of the sun, confess the same articles of faith; *one* in the Holy Sacraments; *one* in her head, Christ, and in his visible representative upon earth (Ephes. iv. 5).

2. She must be *holy* in her head, in her doctrine, her sacrifice, and other means of salvation; in her whole organization, the object of which is the honor of God and the salvation of men: and finally, in her members, who, by following her teaching, and by use of the means of grace, are brought to salvation.

3. She must be *apostolic*; that is, her doctrine and organization must not be new, but must be derived from the Apostles, from them to their successors, and so on.

4. She must be catholic or universal; that is, must take in all times and all places, preach everywhere, and always the doctrine intrusted to her, because it is given for all men, and all who would be saved are bound to hear and follow her.

Can there be more than one true Church?

The Church of Christ can be but one, as the faith which she is to keep and preach, is one.

Which is this true Church of Christ?

The Roman Catholic, since she alone possesses the above-mentioned marks of the true Church, as every one, even the least instructed, must see. For she alone has preserved unity in faith and in the Holy Sacraments, at all times and in all places, and is subordinate to one visible head, the Pope, the successor to St. Peter in the See of Rome. She alone can trace her derivation from the Apostles to the present day, and can demonstrate this origin as well by her doctrine, as by the succession of her popes and bishops. She alone has all the means of salvation, and she alone has produced saints. Finally, she alone embraces all ages, and shines, as St. Augustine says, from one end of the world to the other, in the splendor of one and the same faith, inviting all to her bosom, to bring them to Jesus. She includes both the visible and invisible world,

the saints in heaven—the Church triumphant; the souls of the departed in purgatory—the suffering Church; and the faithful upon earth—the Church militant.

These marks cannot be shown, either singly or together, by any Christian sect. “Therefore,” says Richard, “O Lord, if we are deceived in our faith, thou canst not impute the error to us for sin, since the Church which has taught us this faith bears all the marks of truth, and confirms its teaching with such miracles as thou only canst work.”

If the Roman Catholic is the only true Church, what then follows?

1. That she is infallible, because she is guided by the Holy Ghost.

2. That she will stand till the end of the world, because Jesus dwells in her.

3. That in her alone can we be saved; that is, that in her alone are found all the means of salvation, and that every one to whom God gives the grace and opportunity to know her, cannot be saved otherwise than by submitting to her.

But by this teaching are not heretics damned?

Only heresies are rejected, but not any particular man. The Church would much rather, 1. That we should not condemn misbelievers, since we do not know whether the error is through their own fault, and whether in spite of it, they do not, on account of the desire and longing with which they seek the truth, already belong to the Church in spirit; besides, judgment is the Lord's (Rom. xiv. 4). 2. That we should pray to God, as she does on Good Friday, to enlighten and bring them into the Church, and should labor by word and deed to that end.

What should the Catholic answer to objections against the mass, purgatory, and such like?

He should say, These and the like matters of faith I believe, because God, who is Truth, has revealed them: that he has thus revealed them I believe, because the Roman Catholic Church, which teaches them to me, has all the marks of the true Church of Christ, guided by God, and cannot therefore deceive me.

But is it sufficient for salvation to have the true faith, and to belong to the true Church ?

No ; we must live according to that faith,—that is, we must observe what it commands, avoid what it forbids, and often, particularly in temptation, make an act of faith ; we must obey the Church, keep her precepts, and openly confess ourselves Catholics, since otherwise we should be but dead members of the body of Christ, which is his Church ; we must thank God for the grace of calling us to the true faith, and the true Church, and pray him to keep us in the same. If any one will not live according to the faith, God will either suffer him to fall into error, as so many men, and so many nations even, have done, or else he will condemn him the more severely, on account of his faith, because he knew what he ought to do, but did it not.

(A very useful Instruction on Faith will be found at the “ Feast of St. Thomas.”)

Second Sunday after Easter.

The Church continues to praise God for the resurrection of Jesus, and the graces thereby procured for us, and sings accordingly, at the Introit of the Mass : *The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord, allelujah. By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, allelujah, allelujah* (Ps. xxii.) *Rejoice in the Lord, ye just ; praise becometh the upright. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

O God, who by the humility of thy Son hast raised up a fallen world, grant to thy faithful everlasting joy, that those whom thou hast delivered from the evils of eternal death, thou mayest make to enjoy everlasting happiness. Through the same Lord.

Epistle. (1 Pet. ii. 21-25.)

Dearly beloved: Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree: that we being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray: but you are now converted to the shepherd and bishop of your souls.

Practice.

From the example of Christ we should learn to bear in patience crosses, adversities, and even unjust persecutions. How otherwise could we be true sheep of this Good Shepherd, if at every, the least suffering, at the scoffs and mockeries which men cast at us, we should become angry and revengeful, and seek to retaliate with the like?

Aspiration.

O Lord, grant me grace to follow thee, my shepherd; not to revile and threaten when I am reviled, calumniated, or persecuted for justice' sake, but for the love of thee to suffer all with patience.

Gospel. (John x. 11-16.)

At that time Jesus said to the Pharisees: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling: and he 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.

By what does Christ show that he is the Good Shepherd?

By this, that he takes all pains to seek, to find, and to bring back again to the right way the lost sheep—that is, the sinner;

that he receives with all love, and even carries on his own shoulders the sheep that he has found—that is, the penitent; that he leads them to good pastures—that is, to sound doctrine, and all the means of salvation; finally, that he offers up his life for them, and gives himself to be to them their food, and a pledge of eternal life (1 John v. 10; Rom. v. 8).

What is the meaning of his words, *I know mine*?

“I know all who belong to me, all their anxieties and needs; I care for them, watch over them, and defend them in all dangers.” By this example should all superiors, parents, teachers, and masters govern themselves, for to them is confided a part of the pastoral care. They should accordingly watch over those intrusted to them, defend them from dangers, bring them to the use of the means of grace, and in general do every thing for their temporal and spiritual good.

Whom does Jesus describe as “*the hireling*?”

The word hireling denotes, in general, a man who does something only for reward. It means here a spiritual pastor, who, in contrast to the Good Shepherd, feeds the flock only for the sake of gain, and of his own advantage; who cares not for the safety of the sheep, but in time of danger leaves them to perish. Such were the Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke.

Hirelings also are such superiors, masters, or teachers as exercise their office only for the sake of gain, giving themselves no care for the salvation of the souls entrusted to them, but abandoning them to dangers and occasions of sin, neglecting to give warning of seducers, but keeping silence, like dumb dogs when thieves are breaking in.

How do we know the sheep of Christ?

In general by this, that they know Christ; that is, that they hear and follow his voice, in particular, 1. By their willingly receiving and striving to fulfil the teachings of Jesus, whether proposed in books, in sermons, or in catechism. 2. By their obeying the Church and her ministers; for whoever hears her, hears God himself, and, as St. Augustine says, he who will not have the Church for his mother cannot have God for his Father. 3. By their receiving, often and gladly, the food of the Good Shepherd—the holy communion. 4. By being patient

and meek, like the lamb that is slain without opening his mouth, forgiving their enemies readily and willingly. 5. By loving all their fellow-men, and by seeking to bring into the one fold those who are out of it.

Whom does Jesus speak of as "*the other sheep?*"

The Gentiles, whom, through his Apostles and their successors, he would have brought into the one fold, as he himself sought to bring in the Jews. To those sheep we belong in our ancestors. Let us thank God that he has called and received us into the fold—that is, into the Catholic Church; and let us show our thankfulness by keeping the Catholic faith alive in our hearts, and by confessing it before the world.

How shall there be one fold and one Shepherd?

This is already accomplished in part, in that the Apostles and apostolic men have, by their preaching, brought into the fold almost all nations; while in part it yet remains to be accomplished, in that, before the end of the world, all people, both Jews and heathens, shall yet be gathered in, and there shall be only one Faith, one Church upon earth (John x. 16).

Aspiration.

O Jesus, thou Good Shepherd, who, on the wood of the cross, didst give thy life for the sheep, I beseech thee, by thy death, give me grace, by faithful obedience to thy voice and doctrine, to become worthy of a place among thy good sheep, the elect, and to obtain the everlasting life which thou hast promised them.

What we must believe concerning Hope.

"I lay down my life for my sheep."—*John x. 15.*

Jesus Christ, by his death, has obtained for us, in this life, not only forgiveness of our sins, the grace and means of leading lives pleasing to God, but also eternal happiness in the life to come, which we may confidently hope for, and surely shall obtain, if we fail not on our part.

In what does eternal happiness consist?

In the clear contemplation and perfect love of God; for our

knowledge of him will be infinite, and nothing will hinder us from loving him alone; and this will fill the soul with greater joy than all the pleasures of the world.

What is necessary to obtain eternal happiness?

Before all else, the grace of God, which enlightens our faith, confirms our hope, inflames our love, and, through the holy sacraments, imparts the strength required to do good.

Have we then nothing more to do?

Much, always. We must pray for the grace of God, and zealously co-operate with it, by keeping the commandments, and diligently using the means of grace. Since, as St. Augustine says, though God has created us without our concurrence, yet will he not save us unless we work with him. Only the faithful and diligent servant, who puts his talent to use, can enter into the joy of his Lord.

What should encourage us in the hope of future happiness?

1. *The goodness and mercy of God*, who, from all eternity, has loved us more than the mother loves her child; and for our sake has sent his only-begotten Son, that through his death we might obtain life. How, therefore, should God, who even spared not his only Son, deny us heaven and the means of obtaining it?

2. *The faithfulness of God to his promises*. He has promised us eternal happiness, and has often and distinctly declared that he would have all men saved. But God is not like men, who to-day say "yes," and to-morrow "no." He is the eternal and unchangeable Truth, and faithful to his promises. Should we not therefore hope for eternal life?

3. *The omnipotence of God*, which will not allow him to be thwarted by any one, in accomplishing his design. If we hope in the assistance of a rich man who promises us his aid, how much more should we not hope in God, who is Almighty?

But this should not induce us to hope in him *presumptuously*; for he is as just as he is merciful, and rewards with the crown of justice only those who are faithful, and those who persevere in the combat till the end.

When should we make an act of hope?

1. In time of tribulation, and of temptation against this

virtue. 2. At receiving the holy sacraments. 3. Frequently during our ordinary life, and at the hour of death.

The same is to be observed of acts of faith and charity.

Third Sunday after Easter.

The Church continues to encourage us to rejoice and praise God for the resurrection of Jesus, and sings accordingly, at the Introit of the Mass, "*Shout with glory to God, all the earth, allelujah. Sing ye a psalm to his name, allelujah. Give glory to his praise, allelujah! allelujah! allelujah! Say unto God how terrible are thy works, O Lord. In the multitude of thy strength, thy enemies shall lie to thee in vain* (Ps. lxxv.)

Prayer.

O God, who dost show to those that go astray the light of thy truth, that they may return to the way of justice, grant to all those who are numbered in the profession of Christianity, to reject those things that are inimical to this name, and to pursue those which are becoming. Through Christ.

Epistle. (1 Peter ii. 11-19.)

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul, having your conversation good among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may, by the good works which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation. Be ye subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake: whether it be to the king as excelling: or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of the good: for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not as making liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thanks-worthy, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Brief Lessons.

These admonitions of St. Peter are as useful as they are beautiful. Would that we might comply with them! He reminds, 1. That we are only pilgrims on earth, passing, as it were, through a foreign country. Let us not, therefore, fasten our hearts on the world and its goods, but deny ourselves all carnal and worldly pleasures, to gain those goods that are eternal. He admonishes us, 2. To lead an edifying life, particularly when we are among the adversaries of our faith, for, as an edifying course of life does great good, and awakens respect for the Church to which we belong, so an un-Catholic and unchristian life not only brings shame upon him who leads it, but gives scandal to non-Catholics, throws a false light upon the Church, and causes them to revile and despise her. He admonishes us, 3. To be subject to our superiors, for God's sake, for it is he who commands this obedience (Rom. xiii. 1). Thereby the Apostle forever condemns rebellion against the existing lawful authorities, even in case they should encroach upon and damage those interests which are the most important—religious rights. Never were Christians more wronged than in the first century. Yet they rebelled not, but became more united among themselves, demanded redress in well-reasoned petitions, remained steadfast in the profession of the faith, discharged their obligations to the State with the greater strictness, persevered, and prayed incessantly to the Lord. This may serve for an example to us.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, I will impress deeply upon my heart the teaching of thy Apostle, that this world is not my home. Though I should meet in my pilgrimage many adversities, I will patiently combat them, and will not suffer any thing to keep me from the way to my true home, heaven. Give me thy grace, O God, to fulfil this resolution.

Gospel. (John xvi. 16-22.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples : A little while, and now you shall not see me : and again a little while, and you shall see me : because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said one to another : What is this that he saith to us : A little while, and you shall not see me : and again a little while, and you shall see me, and because I go to the Father? They said therefore : What is this that he saith, a little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask him ; and he said to them : Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said : A little while, and you shall not see me : and again a little while, and you shall see me? Amen, anen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice : and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in 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.

What is the meaning of the expression, *yet a little while* ?

Jesus would thereby say, that he was about soon to leave his disciples, and that during the time of his passion they would have much to endure ; but that he would soon see them again, and that then no one should any more take their joy from them. He therefore speaks openly of his suffering and resurrection. He calls the time of his passion only "*a little while.*" What, indeed, are the sufferings of time, in comparison with the eternal joy to follow, but a small and trivial thing, passing away in the twinkling of an eye? (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.) With reason, therefore, may those who, having suffered much on earth, now enjoy eternal happiness, sing with David, *We have rejoiced for the days in which thou hast humbled us, for the years in which we have seen evil* (Ps. lxxxix. 15).

Why did Jesus tell his disciples beforehand of their sufferings and joys?

1. That they might bear their trials the more easily, for heeded arrows hit not so hard. 2. That they might not believe their master unable to have preserved them from suffer-

ings. 3. That by looking to the eternal joy, in sure expectation of it, they might make light of present troubles, and keep up their courage; as a woman readily forgets the pains of childbirth, for joy that a man is born into the world. Therefore, says St. Chrysostom, "Tell me, if you were called to a temporal kingdom, but had to spend the night before entering into your palace, where you were to be crowned, in a dark and offensive stable, would this be hard for you? would you not bear it cheerfully, in expectation of the kingdom?" Why, then, should we not live cheerfully in this valley of tears, amid hardships and adversities, when we have the hope of one day gaining heaven?

Aspiration.

Enlighten me, O Holy Ghost, that I may rightly see the shortness of life, and its sorrows, and inflame my heart with hope of life eternal, that I may patiently bear all the miseries of time, and, like Jesus, reap in eternal happiness what I have sown here in tears.

Encouragement to Patience in Adversity.

"You shall lament and weep."—*John* xvi. 20.

Many think that true happiness on earth consists in honors, riches, or pleasures, but how foolishly! Christ, the eternal Truth, calls, not the rich, but the poor and persecuted, "*blessed*." He even predicts to his disciples, in this world, nothing but sorrows which would force them to tears; and on the other hand, to the rich and great, who set their hearts on this world, he predicts in the world to come nothing but woe, mourning and weeping. How much, therefore, are they to be pitied, who, regardless of this truth, think of nothing else but to spend their days in luxury, and at the same time encourage themselves in the illusory hope of reaching heaven, when Christ and all saints have ascended thither only by the way of the cross, and of suffering, and when it is certain that no one can have part in their joys who has not also first borne part of their sorrows. How consoling, then, to those who are

suffering, is the prospect of a happy eternity, where distress, sorrow, pain, disgrace, are over forever, and where no one can take away from them their inexpressible, divine joy! Shall we not do, bear, and suffer every thing to obtain it?

Prayer in Adversities.

O most benign Jesus, thou willest that we shall only through tribulations enter into heaven; thou thyself wouldst go no other way, neither didst thou show any other to thy disciples.

In the same I also will cheerfully walk, firmly convinced that it will be best for me. I give myself entirely up to thy holy will; deal with me according to thy good pleasure; only give me thy grace, hold me up, and bring me through this present distress, to thee, the fountain of everlasting life. Amen.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

The Introit of the Mass of to-day is likewise a song of praise and thanksgiving from the ninety-seventh Psalm. *Sing ye to the Lord a new song, allelujah, for the Lord hath done wonderful things, allelujah. He hath revealed his justice in the sight of the Gentiles, allelujah, allelujah. His right hand had wrought for him salvation, and his arm is holy. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

O God, who dost unite the hearts of the faithful in one will, grant to thy people to love what thou commandest, and to desire what thou dost promise, that among the changes of this world our hearts may be fixed on that place where true joys reside. Through our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (James i. 17-21.)

Dearly beloved: Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is

no change, nor shadow of alteration. For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creature. You know, my dearest brethren: and let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God. Wherefore casting away all uncleanness, and abundance of naughtiness, with meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Practice.

By these words of James, the Church teaches us that every good gift, and nothing but good, comes from God. But the most precious gift is, that God of his grace through the doctrines and institutions of Christianity, has made us new men, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Could God have given us any thing greater and more excellent? The Church admonishes us, further, to walk worthy of this grace; that is, as new men, as children of God, to love God as our Father, to listen to his word willingly, without cavilling or displeasure, when he chastises us, and to shun all impurity, anger, and multiplicity of words, in which "*there shall not want sin*" (Prov. x. 19).

Aspiration.

Help me, O God, to preserve the grace received in baptism; give me, therefore, a great love for thy word. Deliver me from all inordinate passions, that I may walk worthy of thee, with pureness and patience.

Gospel. (John xvi. 5-14.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin: because they believed not in me. And of justice: because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment: because the prince of this world

is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. For he shall not speak of himself: but what things soever he shall hear, he shall speak, and the things that are come, he shall show you. He shall glorify me; because he shall receive of mine, and shall show it to you.

Why did Jesus say, "I go to my Father?"

To give a reproof to his disciples for giving themselves up to excessive sorrow over his departure, which was to be the means of purifying and strengthening their virtue, and of perfecting the work of redemption, for them and for all the world. Learn hence, not to give way to too much sorrow in adversity.

Why could not the Paraclete come before the ascension of Christ?

Because the work of redemption must first be accomplished; Christ must first die, must be glorified, and must reconcile man to God, before the Spirit of truth, of consolation, and of adoption into the family of God, could descend upon them. Hereby we should learn, that if we would receive the fulness of grace of the Holy Ghost, we must first purify our hearts, and be reconciled to God.

How has the Holy Ghost convinced the world of sin, of justice, and of judgment?

He has convinced the world, 1. *Of sin*, in that he brought the Jews to know and lament the monstrous crime which they had committed upon Christ, and this he effected particularly at Pentecost.

2. *Of justice*, in that he taught the innocence and holiness of Jesus, on account of which God had given him a kingdom, and required men to worship him as the true God.

3. *Of judgment*, in that everywhere the prince of darkness was overcome, his kingdom destroyed, the temples of idolatry cast down, and in their place, by seemingly weak means, the kingdom of truth and virtue was established.

Let us pray to God to send us also the Holy Ghost, that we may know the grievousness of our sins, may break the

strength of evil, may adore Jesus as our God and Lord, and glorify him by our life.

Why did not Jesus say to his disciples all that he had to say to them ?

Because, before the death and resurrection of Christ, the Apostles were incumbered by too many prejudices, and were as yet too ignorant to receive truths which required a previous thorough instruction. He promised them, therefore, a second teacher—the Holy Ghost—and fulfilled his promise. We learn hereby, 1. That when we have to instruct others, we should not teach them things too high and difficult for them to understand ; 2. That every thing depends on the grace and illumination of the Holy Ghost, without which, though Christ himself should instruct us, we can comprehend and retain nothing.

How does the Holy Ghost teach all truths ?

By preserving the pastors and teachers of the Church from all errors, in their teaching of faith and morals, and by instructing each member of the Church in the truths of salvation.

Aspiration.

Whither am I going ? Will my life bring me to God ? O my God and my Lord, direct my feet in the way of thy commandments, and keep my heart free from sin, that the Holy Ghost, finding nothing in me worthy of punishment, may teach me all truth, and bring me safely to thee, who art the eternal truth. Amen.

Instruction on Grace.

“ But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth.”—
John xvi. 13.

What is grace ?

It is the supernatural assistance of God, whereby man is enabled to know what is good, to will it, and to fulfil it.

What power has grace ?

An almighty power, for it is the immediate assistance of God himself. With it we can *do all things* (Phil. iv. 13). By it the wicked become good ; the weak, strong ; the tempted,

invincible; the just, more just. It makes whatever we do or suffer pleasing to God, and merits eternal life.

Is grace, then, necessary to man?

Yes; as necessary, indeed, as the sun to the earth, the living principle to the plant, the soul to the body. Without it, man can do nothing (John xv. 5); he can neither believe, hope, love, or suffer with merit, nor think, will, or accomplish any thing pleasing to God. Without grace, man is a branch cut off from the vine.

Is grace given to every one?

Yes, God gives to every man, without exception, sufficient grace to work out his salvation. This we might expect from the goodness and love of God, and the Holy Scriptures teach it expressly. God has created all men after his image; to redeem all, the Father has given his only-begotten Son; for all, Jesus has bled on the cross; and it is the will of God that none should be lost, but that all should be saved, for which reason the Gospel was to be preached to all nations.

If grace is so efficacious, and is given to all, how is it that there are so many errors, and so many unbelieving and corrupt men?

It is because men do not accept and co-operate with the grace of God. It is the will of God that they should become and remain good, yet he forces no one, but every one must, of his own free will, follow the leadings of grace. Without this free obedience, without this free co-operation, not even God himself can save men. Just as, according to the expression of St. Chrysostom, the earth cannot bring forth fruit without seed, and the seed itself comes to nought without cultivation, in like manner neither man by himself, nor grace without man's free consent, can bring forth the fruits of salvation. Grace and man must work together.

How does God impart to us grace?

In many ways, but particularly, 1. Through conscience, by inspiration, and by inward enlightenment. 2. Through the Church, by the holy sacraments, by sermons, by Christian doctrine, and by all the other means of grace confided to her. 3. Through good books, through parents, through teachers,

&c. 4. Through all external nature, through good and bad fortune, and through all the events of life.

What should we learn hereby ?

1. That no one should trust to his own wisdom or power. 2. That no one who lives in sin and perishes thereby can accuse God, since he gives sufficient grace to all. God wills, if only thou willest. 3. That even the greatest sinner should not despair, but put the most unlimited confidence in the power of grace. 4. That every one who would reach the goal, should earnestly, actively, and constantly follow the leading of grace ; and, in order to do so, 5. Should receive frequently the holy sacraments, give ear to the voice within him, attend zealously the Christian instructions, and in general be attentive to the voice of grace, wherever it comes from. *To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts* (Ps. xciv. 8).

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

The Introit of the Mass is again a joyful thanksgiving for our redemption. *Declare the voice of joy, and let it be heard, allelujah ; declare it even to the ends of the world, the Lord hath delivered his people, allelujah, allelujah* (Isaias xlvi. 20). *Shout with joy to God, all the earth, sing ye a psalm to his name, give glory to his praise.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, from whom all good things proceed, grant to thy suppliants that by thy inspiration we may think those things that are right, and by thy direction perform them. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (James i. 22-27.)

Dearly beloved : Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his 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 therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work; this man shall be blessed in his deed. And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation; and to keep one's self unspotted from this world.

Practice.

One may know the truly pious and God-fearing man by this—that he not only hears the word of God, but when the divine will is made known to him, does it; in particular, he bridles his tongue, refraining from all uncharitable, false, or wanton words, imitates Christ in helping the poor and forsaken, by counsel and assistance, contemns the world, and shuns its false reasonings, its foolish customs, its scandalous examples. Is our piety of this sort?

Aspiration.

O Jesus, true guide of our souls, give me grace of true piety, as St. James describes it, that I may faithfully serve thee.

Gospel. (John xvi. 23–30.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing 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 I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and 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 thou needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou comest forth from God.

Why does God will to be prayed to ?

Not as if he were ignorant of our wants, but, 1. That we know and confess that all good things come from him, and that without him we are nothing but poverty and weakness, everywhere needing his gracious help. 2. That we may, therefore, put our confidence in him, trying to make ourselves worthy of his divine grace, by thoughts pleasing to him, and valuing more, and using better, the graces we have received.

Does God always hear our prayers ?

Yes, when we pray in the name of Jesus. This he has most assuredly promised.

What is it to pray in the name of Jesus ?

It is, 1. To pray *according to his doctrine*, that is, with such intentions as conform to his instructions on prayer. 2. *According to his most holy example*, with resignation to the will of God. 3. With confidence in the merits of his death and intercession. The Church has accordingly adopted the praiseworthy usage of ending all her prayers to God with the words, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord ;" that is, through the merits of our Redeemer and Mediator, the head of the Church.

What should we pray for according to the example of Christ ?

Before all, for the glory of God, for the spread of his kingdom, for the graces necessary to salvation ; in general, for the spiritual goods which Christ has obtained for us. We may also ask temporal goods from God, but only conditionally, as Jesus in the garden of Gethsemani asked that the chalice might pass from him.

How shall we pray according to the example of Jesus ?

1. *With becoming preparation* ; which consists in disengaging the thoughts from earthly things, placing one's self in the presence of God, asking him for the grace of praying rightly, and avoiding whatever distracts the mind.

2. *With humility* ; which ascribes every thing to God, and expects every thing from him. The humble publican found grace before the Lord.

3. *With the heart* ; and not merely with the lips and bodily gesture. For God is a spirit, and requires us to serve him in

spirit and truth (John iv. 24). In praying, we must remember with whom we speak ; whatever we propose to him should be done with earnestness and zeal, as we would undertake an affair of the very greatest importance.

4. *With a living faith and full confidence in God's infinite goodness and faithfulness.* Thus, the woman who was twelve years sick, prayed and was heard, and made whole (Matt. ix. 22).

5. *With resignation to the will of God,* like Jesus on the Mount of Olivet ; leaving it to God to give us what is best for us.

6. *With proper outward reverence.*

7. *With perseverance* (Luke xii. 40). The fickle is like the wave of the sea. Monica prayed eighteen years for the conversion of her son, Augustine.

8. *Above all, we should endeavor to be in the state of grace,* because God does not hear the sinner ; but the continual prayer of the just man availeth much (James v. 16).

What is the object of the customs and bodily postures which are used in the Catholic Church during prayer ?

To awaken in our minds the above-mentioned dispositions, and to suggest holy thoughts in praying ; to represent outwardly what passes inwardly in our hearts, and thereby to edify others and incite them to devotion. Thus, for instance, oral prayer is an acknowledgment before men of God's majesty, and as such encourages those present to the same ; the uncovering of the head, the folding and lifting of the hands, the kneeling and prostration of the body, are so many expressions of reverence and submissiveness before the majesty of God, of humility, and of desire to be heard. The sign of the cross reminds us of the Crucified, and is at the same time a confession of his name ; by making it on the forehead, lips, and breast, is signified that we intend, as we are bound, to honor Christ in thought, word, and work ; by the words which we use thereat, we confess that all the benefits received by us through Christ, have for their author the triune God, whom we should glorify in our lives. Many of these customs were already in use before Christ, and were observed by him ; others were after-

wards introduced by his Apostles and their successors. No Catholic should neglect them, or be ashamed of them, or say that it is sufficient to worship God *in spirit*. Not only the spirit, but the body also belongs to God; Christ has given us the example, and who could believe in your reverence for God, if you should present yourself before him as you would not be permitted to do before an earthly monarch?

Why is our prayer often not heard?

1. Often because we ask for something that would be more hurtful than profitable to us. In such case God deals with us as prudent parents do, who deny to their children things that will injure them, although they may be grieved thereat.
2. Because he would test our patience and perseverance.
3. Because the above-mentioned requisites are so often wanting to our prayers.

When ought we to pray?

At all times (Luke xviii. 1); which is done when at all our undertakings we make a good intention, when we keep our heart always united to God, and to that end send up frequently to God short prayers and aspirations. At certain times, however, we must apply ourselves directly to prayer, as at, 1. Morning, noon, and evening (Ps. liv. 18); before and after meals, and at the striking of the hour. We cannot want for time; let us only make the trial. God's blessing will make up for loss of time. And is it not just that we should think often of God, when he thinks always of us? 2. At the divine service, in Church, or if hindered from attending it, then at the same or some convenient hour at home. 3. In time of any great temptation. 4. At receiving the holy sacraments. 5. At undertaking any affair of importance. 6. In the hour of death.

Which is the best of all prayers?

The Lord's Prayer; but though we say it a hundred times, it will fail to produce its beneficial effects, if we barely repeat it without meaning or purpose. When, therefore, you say the Lord's Prayer, think what you say. It is related of St. Francis of Assisi, that he was once three days in saying the Lord's Prayer.

Short Explanation of the Lord's Prayer.

Why does this prayer commence with "Our Father?"

To encourage us thereby to a child-like confidence in God, as our Father, who loves all men, and is ever ready to help them; and at the same time to remind us of the reverence due to him, which are, as was said above, necessary requisites to prayer.

Why do we say, "who art in Heaven," since God is everywhere?

To admonish us to lift up our hearts with longing to Heaven, where lies our true home—where God has set up the throne of his kingdom.

What do we ask of God in this prayer?

In the first petition, "hallowed be thy name," we express the ardent desire that God may be known and loved by all men, and that his name may be glorified by a Christian life.

In the second petition, "thy kingdom come," we pray God to enter and rule in our hearts by his grace, to spread his Church throughout the whole world, and after our death to award us eternal happiness.

In the third petition, "thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven," we offer up ourselves entirely to God, and declare ourselves ready to be subject to the dispositions of his holy will, as the angels are in Heaven, and pray him for grace to do this. In these three petitions, Christ teaches us to *seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, that all other things may be added unto us* (Luke xii. 31).

In the fourth petition, "give us this day our daily bread," we ask for all things which we need day by day; for the body, as food and clothing, and for the soul, as grace and the divine word; that God may avert from us failure of the crops, hail, and every calamity, and grant us a prosperous season. The words "this day" remind us to pray daily, but for such things only as are necessary, for ourselves and others; to avoid all immoderate anxiety about the future, and to expect, with confidence, our daily sustenance from God. The confidence, how-

ever, which would consume the sustenance of many days in one, would be presumption.

In the fifth petition, “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,” we confess ourselves to be sinners, and pray God for forgiveness, but only in so far as we forgive them that injure us. We must therefore remember well, that we shall not obtain forgiveness from God, so long as we have in our hearts hatred against any one.

In the sixth petition, “and lead us not into temptation,” we acknowledge our frailty, and, with this conviction, we ask of God to remove temptations from us, or, if he shall permit us to fall into such as the world, the flesh, and the devil prepare for us, to strengthen us with his grace not to consent to them, but, by combating and overcoming them, to gain the merit and the crown of justice.

In the seventh petition, “but deliver us from evil,” we pray God to preserve us from spiritual evils; from error, sin, and the occasions of sin; an evil death and hell; also from pestilence, famine, war, and all temporal evils, so far as may be for the salvation of our souls.

By the word “amen”—so be it—we pray God that what we have asked may be fulfilled.

On Processions, and particularly of those on St. Mark's Day, and during Holy Cross Week.

What are processions?

They are solemn religious assemblages of persons marching together, by means of which the faithful unanimously either ask God for grace and mercy, as on St. Mark's day and the Rogation days, or thank him publicly for his benefits, as on Corpus Christi day, or testify in general, by outward manifestations, their inward joy and veneration.

When did these processions commence?

They were already in use in the first century of the Church. Tertullian, St. John Chrysostom, and many others, testify, that whereas the first Christians, in time of persecution, were obliged to assemble one or two at a time, yet in time of peace they

marched to their churches in regular order, with singing of psalms.

Processions were established under the old law. God commanded a procession, with the ark of the covenant, to go seven times round the walls of Jericho, which, at the seventh round, fell down (Josue vi. 4, 5). By the order of David, the same ark was carried in procession from Cariathiarim to the house of Obedom, and thence to Hebron (2 Kings v. 6). Solomon instituted a splendid procession when the ark of the covenant was brought, by priests and Levites, into the magnificent new temple (3 Kings viii. 4, 5, 6). Christ himself entered Jerusalem, on Palm Sunday, with a procession of a multitude of people (John xii. 12, 13). At Antioch, in the time of Julian the Apostate, there was a solemn procession to transport the relics of the holy martyr Babilas. At Milan there was a great procession, at which St. Augustine and St. Ambrose were both present, and of which they have given us an account; in it were carried the relics of St. Gervasius and St. Protasius, by touching which a blind man received his sight. If abuses and disorders take place at processions, let these be abolished, but not the processions themselves.

What caused processions to be introduced?

During the first three centuries many Christians were put to death for the faith. When the persecutions were over, the faithful sought out the bodies of these martyrs, and brought them to the churches in triumph, singing hymns and psalms.

The same was done when relics were translated from one church to another. When a bishop officiated, his priests, deacons, and sub-deacons went in procession to his house, and in the same manner conducted him to the church, singing psalms. When princes arrived in a city of their dominions, it was customary to bring them, in procession, to the principal church. This was also done with the dead, before obsequies were performed.

What is the significance of processions?

They are intended to be, 1. A public profession, before the whole world, of our faith in God's majesty and omnipresence,

and of our dependence on him. 2. A solemn confession of our belief in Christ crucified, and a joyous thanksgiving for all the graces procured for us through him. 3. A visible representation of the unity of the Catholic Church in the oneness of feeling and of devotion which animates all her children. 4. An effective encouragement to confidence in God. For shall not the wonders of omnipotence in nature—shall not the living faith of our brethren, incite us thereto? Finally, they are, 5. An emblem of our pilgrimage on earth, reminding us that we have here no abiding-place; but that we are journeying to our own country. Processions have accordingly a deep Christian significance, which comes forth from and leads back to the doctrines of Christianity.

Why are crosses and banners carried in processions?

The cross signifies that we are gathered in the name of Jesus the crucified, and that we commence and fulfil our devotion in his name, hoping thereby to obtain, through his merits, what ever we ask from our Heavenly Father. The banners indicate, firstly, that we are spiritual combatants, and invite us, according to our vows, to fight with one mind, for the honor of God and our salvation, against our enemies; secondly, they indicate the triumph of Jesus over death and hell, and the glorious victory which the Christian religion has obtained over the Jews and heathens through the labor and sweat of apostles and the blood of martyrs.

What was the origin of the processions which are made on St. Mark's day, the Rogation days, and of those around fields?

The procession on St. Mark's day was already in existence in the sixth century, and was brought into general acceptation through St. Gregory the Great, in the following manner: In the year 590, there raged at Rome a contagious pestilence, which caused persons who yawned or sneezed to fall down and die (hence comes the custom of saying to one who sneezes, "God bless you," and of making the sign of the cross over the mouth when one gapes). St. Gregory thereupon appointed a great procession, in which the picture of Mary, painted according to tradition by St. Luke, was carried, and the Litany

of all Saints sung. Wherever the procession came, the plague disappeared.

This was called the great or sevenfold procession, because St. Gregory had caused it to be composed of seven classes, or ranks, namely—the *secular* and *regular* clergy, the *boys, young men, girls, married persons, and widows*. On the day on which it was held, there was seen upon the castle of Rome the figure of an angel sheathing a bloody sword, to denote the cessation of the plague. In memory of this event the gilted statue of the archangel Michael was set up on the castle, which is since, to this day, called the Castle of St. Angelo. By degrees the custom of holding processions on St. Mark's day to obtain the preservation of the fruits of the earth, became general in the Catholic Church.

The processions on the Rogation days originated in France. The city of Vienne, in the year 469, suffered very much by earthquakes, failure of crops, and other calamities. The pious Bishop Mamertus saw in the events the judgment of God, and called upon his flock to appease Heaven by penances, processions and prayers during the three days before Ascension day. The example of Mamertus was followed by all the French bishops, and the custom finally became general. These three Rogation days serve also as a preparation for the feast of the Ascension, which brings before us the fact, that we have the most powerful intercessor in our Saviour, who is now enthroned at the right hand of the Father. May we attend these processions with piety and devotion.

Processions around fields and lands are also held to pray God, the Lord of Nature, with his kind hand to bless the soil, to preserve the fruits of the earth, and as he gives to all animals their food at the right time, so also to provide for us our necessary subsistence. Thereby, also, we promise God, as good children, to use his gifts to his honor and to the good of ourselves and our brethren.

Rogation Days.

Introit of the Mass. *He heard my voice from his holy temple, allelujah, and my cry before him came into his ears, allelujah, allelujah* (Ps. xvii.) *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Almighty God, that we, who in affliction confide in thy mercy, may be defended by thy protection against all adversities. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (James v. 16-20.)

Dearly beloved: Confess your sins one to another: and pray one for another, that you may be saved. For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much. Elias was a man passible like unto us; and with prayer he prayed that it might not rain upon the earth, and it rained not for three years and six months. And he prayed again: and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. My brethren, if any of you err from the truth, and one convert him: he must know, that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

Aspiration.

Favorably receive our vows, we beseech thee, O Lord, that while we receive thy gifts in tribulation, we may from thy consolation increase in thy love. Through Christ.

Gospel. (Luke xi. 5-13.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine is come off his journey to me, and I have not what to set before him. And he from within should answer and say: Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. 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. And I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. And which of you if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask him?

PRAYERS.

To avert the Punishment of God.

O God, who by sin art offended, and by penance pacified, mercifully regard the prayers of thy people, making supplications to thee, and turn away the scourges of thy anger, which we deserve for our sins. Through Christ, our Lord.

In time of Famine.

Give, O Lord, we beseech thee, the desired effect to our supplications, and mercifully avert famine, that the world may know that these scourges come from thy anger, and cease through thy mercy. Through Christ, our Lord.

For Rain.

O God, in whom we live, move, and are, give us a prosperous rain, that we being abundantly provided with temporal goods, may with more confidence desire the eternal. Through Christ, our Lord.

For Fair Weather.

We cry to thee, O Lord, and humbly ask thee, give us serene weather. Let us who are justly punished for our sins, experience thy guiding mercy and kindness. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

For all in Affliction.

Almighty, Eternal God, consolation of the afflicted and strength of the weak, let the supplications of those reach thee

who cry to thee in their adversities, that they may experience in their need that thy mercy has delivered them. Through Christ, our Lord.

The Feast of the Ascension.

At the Introit of the Mass, the Church sings the words which the Angels spoke to the Apostles when Jesus ascended to heaven. *Ye men of Galilee, why wonder you, looking up to heaven? Allelujah. He shall so come as you have seen him going up into heaven, allelujah! allelujah! allelujah!* (Acts i. 11.) *O clap your hands, all ye nations, shout unto God with the voice of joy. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who believe that thy only-begotten Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day into heaven, may ourselves also, in mind, dwell in heavenly things. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Acts i. 1-11.)

The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all things which Jesus began to do and to teach, until the day on which, giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up. To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And eating together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard, saith he, by my mouth: for John, indeed, baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. They therefore who were come together asked him, saying: Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? But he said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in his own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while

they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven.

Explanation.

For forty days after his resurrection, Jesus remained with his disciples, to convince them of the truth of his resurrection, to teach them in regard to his kingdom, that is, his Church, and their vocation; and as they still were thinking of an earthly kingdom to be established by Christ, he referred them to the instruction of the Holy Ghost, and then ascended to heaven, whence he shall come to be our judge.

Rejoice over the instructions which are preserved for you through the Church; but rejoice especially that Jesus has taken possession of the glory gained by his most profound humiliations, for now he is there an intercessor for thee; there he prepares for thee a mansion; there is now thy home. To-day look up to heaven where Christ is, hope, suffer, love, and pray.

I rejoice, O King of heaven and earth, that thou art this day come into thy kingdom and royalty. Ye nations of the earth, sing praises to our God; sing the praises of our King, for he has ascended on high, and led captivity captive. Allelujah.

Gospel. (Mark xvi. 14–20.)

At that time: As the eleven were at table, Jesus appeared to them, and he upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again. And he said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover. And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God. But they going forth preached everywhere: the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.

What is contained in the words of Jesus, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature?*

They contain many truths: 1. That Jesus instituted a special office of teaching in the Apostles and their successors. 2. That no one should *assume to himself* the office of teaching and preaching, but must have his mission from the lawful pastors of the Church, as the Apostles had from Christ. 3. That as the Church must teach all that Christ commanded, and as he commanded, so we must believe and observe whatever the Church commands us to believe and to do, without presuming to say, "I accept this, and reject that." 4. That God would save all men, since he commands his Gospel to be published to all. If this design of God's be not fulfilled in the case of many, certainly it is not he that is to blame, but man himself, who either refuses to believe, or does not live according to his belief, or else makes himself unworthy of the grace of enlightenment by his obstinacy. How thankful should we be to God, that he caused us to be born among a people to whom the Gospel was preached! But let us remember well, that faith saves us only when we live according to it, and that otherwise we shall only be the more severely punished.

Is it not all one whether a man believes at all, what he believes, and how he lives?

No. 1. It is not the same thing whether a man believes or not. For if God, the Creator of the world, commands or forbids any thing, no creature has the right to refuse obedience; when eternal Wisdom speaks, it is to the last degree unreasonable to raise doubts. But God has spoken; heaven and earth testify to it; all history testifies to it by innumerable events, by undeniable miracles, by true prophecies. 2. Again, it is not the same thing as to what a man believes—whether he stands by this or that creed. God is a God of truth, and truth is one, as he is one. Now if God has spoken and revealed to men what they must believe and do to please him, it is surely clear that man can only please God and be happy, when he believes and observes all that God has revealed. Not all creeds are true, therefore, because truth is one, and only one creed can contain all that God has revealed. It is not, accord-

ingly, all one thing what we believe, so long as God wills man to believe what he has commanded to be believed. Indifferentism, therefore, in matters of faith is absurdity—an actual denial, contempt, and blasphemy of God and the truth, because it virtually asserts that it is all one in the sight of God whether we believe in him or not, what we believe of him, and how we serve him. 3. It is not all one how we live. We must carry out, in acts, what we believe (Gal. v. 6); for faith without works is, as St. Anselm says, no faith of Christians, but the faith of devils.

Why is the gift of miracles more rare now-a-days, than it was in the early times?

St. Gregory replies very beautifully to this question, by saying, that these signs were particularly necessary at the commencement of the Church; that by such undeniable evidences of divine Omnipotence, the truth of the Christian doctrine, and the divine mission of those who proclaimed it, might be known, and all men might be converted to it. The same thing has taken place in later times, when the Gospel has been first made known to heathens, for example, by St. Francis Xavier. The faithful now have less need of such tokens. God has given them—in the fulfilment of his promises, in the preservation of his Church in spite of all storms, in keeping alive the dispersed Jewish race—evidences which, though less striking to the eye, are no less miraculous than those earlier signs. However, the gift of miracles has never ceased in the Catholic Church. The lives of all the saints, down to our own day, contain a multitude of indisputable miracles, and in a spiritual manner they are taking place every day; for surely the renewal of the spirit is as great a miracle as to restore the dead to life. St. Chrysostom, therefore, says that Christians even now cast out devils, when, by penance, they banish sin. They speak new tongues when they no more talk of sinful, earthly things, but of those which are heavenly. They take up serpents, says St. Bernard, when they stifle their sinful inclinations; and drink poison without harm, when they dwell uncorrupted amid dangers and occasions of sin. They lay hands upon the sick and they recover, says St. Gregory, when they teach the ignorant, and

bring back the erring to the way of truth. Do this, O Christian, and you will have done wonderful works,—more profitable to yourself and others, than if you had performed the greatest miracles.

Where and how did Christ ascend to heaven?

From Mount Olivet, the place where he entered upon his passion, that from the same place he might enter upon his glory, and we might learn that the cross and suffering exalt us to heaven. He ascended by his own power, in the presence of his Apostles, after he had blessed them, and now sits as our eternal mediator, at the right hand of the Father.

Thus has Christ, as the prophets predicted, opened the kingdom of heaven, not to himself only, but to all believers of all time. What a triumph! and what a joyful thought for us pilgrims on earth! Let us, then, says St. Augustine, in heart, ascend with Christ, that when the time comes we may follow him in body also. But we must know, dear brethren, that neither pride, nor avarice, nor impurity can ascend with Christ, our Lord, for pride does not keep company with the teacher of humility, nor wickedness with the source of all good, nor impurity with the Son of the Virgin (Serm. II. de Ascens.)

Aspiration.

O King of glory! who didst on this day ascend victoriously above the heavens, leave us not orphans, but send us, from the Father, the spirit of truth whom thou hast promised, and receive us all into thy glory.

Why, on this day, is the Easter-candle extinguished and carried away after the gospel?

It is done in remembrance of the hour in which Christ, signified by the Easter-candle, is removed from his Apostles.

Sixth Sunday after Easter.

On this day, and throughout the following week, we have, according to the intention of the Church, to prepare ourselves for the feast of Pentecost, that we may be worthy to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The Church, therefore, at the Introit of the Mass, entreats with David: *Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee, allelujah. My heart hath said to thee, I have sought thy face; thy face, O Lord, will I seek; turn not away thy face from me, allelujah, allelujah* (Ps. xxvi.) *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O Almighty and everlasting God, grant us ever to entertain a devout affection towards thee, and to serve thy majesty with a sincere heart. Through Christ.

Epistle. (1 Peter iv. 7-11.)

Dearly beloved: Be prudent, and watch in prayers. But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins. Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring. As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth: that in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Practice.

The virtues which St. Peter here recommends are excellent preparatives for receiving the Holy Ghost, for nothing makes us more worthy of his grace, than temperance, prayer, charity, unity, and hospitality towards our neighbors. Endeavor, therefore, to exercise these virtues, and say every day during the following week, this short prayer:

Prayer for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

Come, O Holy Ghost, who hast united people of all tongues in unity of faith, fill the hearts of those who believe in thee, and kindle in them the fire of divine love. Amen.

Gospel. (John xv. 26, 27; xvi. 1-4.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you, that when the hour of them shall come, you may remember that I told you.

Why is the Holy Ghost called the Paraclete or Comforter?

Because by inward consolations he alleviates and even makes agreeable the afflictions of the just, as in the case of the Apostles (Acts v. 40), for he fills the faithful followers of his doctrine with heavenly joy, and makes the yoke of Christ delightful to them; with the penitent, he relieves the sadness of penance with the consolation of pardon, and renders sickness and the agony of death endurable through his inward unction.

How has the Holy Ghost given testimony of Christ?

1. By this: that on the day of Pentecost, he so enlightened, instructed, and strengthened the ignorant and timid Apostles, that they proclaimed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, with a courage and authority that no one could withstand, and men were converted by thousands.
2. By the preaching of the Gospel accompanied by innumerable miracles, and by the equally wonderful establishment, preservation, and increase of the Catholic Church. Twelve previously unlearned men, without money, without reputation, without power, go into all the world, to preach a faith which

overthrows all existing religions, and they gain the victory. The faithful shed their blood: it was a struggle of life and death. But tyrants disappeared, heresies dissolved; the Catholic Church alone survived, always the same. 3. At the present day, also, the Holy Ghost gives testimony of Christ, in that he aids the Church in all the storms of infidelity, gives courage to her ministers, and crowns her at last with victory. Rejoice, therefore, in thy Church, and follow her!

How have the Apostles borne testimony of Christ?

By their doctrine, their miracles, their lives, and by their fearless confession of him under every suffering. As for ourselves, if not by miracles, still by a virtuous life, by a faithful, unflinching adherence to the Church, which is the spouse of Jesus, we must confess him to be our Master, our Lord, and our God, unless we would have him deny us before his Father in heaven (Matt. x. 32).

Why did Christ predict to his disciples, and the elect, their sufferings?

That they might not afterwards be thereby scandalized and shaken in their faith in his Godhead. For the sufferings thus predicted became a new evidence in favor of Christianity, and a motive to perseverance, since the Christians perceived that their afflictions came not unsent, but from the hand of God, and that the way of suffering and of the Cross, of persecutions and temptations, would lead them to glory. Hence the confidence of the martyrs in their torments. Be not surprised, therefore, when adversities befall you, persevere in patience, and through suffering you will enter into glory (2 Tim. ii. 12).

But did the Jews sin by persecuting the Apostles?

Yes: for although thinking thereby to do God service, they showed more of error than of malice; yet this very error was itself a guilty one—being sinful and punishable because it was easy for them to be instructed, and to know the truth. In like manner is the ignorance of those persons sinful and punishable, who, from neglect of Christian instructions, hardly know what they must believe and do to be saved, and accordingly make no scruple of contracting mortal sins; so, too, of those who, without being satisfied that they hold their possessions justly, yet,

for fear of being compelled to make restitution, take no pains to arrive at certainty.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, send us the Holy Ghost the comforter, to comfort and strengthen us in our sufferings, that we may not thereby separate from thee, and that he may enlighten and encourage us to learn and perform, with diligence, the truths of the faith. Amen.

Practical Lessons on the giving of Scandal.

“These things have I spoken to you that you may not be scandalized.”—
John xvi. 1.

How, in general, does one give scandal?

By speaking, doing, or omitting to do, something observed by men, which gives to another occasion of sin. This is done, when, for instance, you dress immodestly, with shameful exposure, utter unchaste words, sing songs of like description, or commit corresponding acts before observers, or incite others to commit them; when you cause others to get drunk, or furnish them the opportunity of becoming so; when you encourage others to anger, cursing, and revenge, or detain them from the divine service, from sermons, and instruction, etc.

When do parents give scandal?

1. When, through anger, cursing, swearing, injustice, fraud, discord, and contentions, excess in eating and drinking, extravagance in dress, or impurity, in word or deed, they set a bad example to their children. 2. When they neglect to keep their children from bad company, and much more when they, themselves, carry them into it. 3. When they do not punish the evil which they see in their children, or neglect to remove them from what is bad, and to accustom them to what is good.

How do heads of families give scandal to their dependents?

1. In the same ways that parents do their children. 2. When, by bad example, or by command, they keep those under them from divine service, or omit to make them attend it. 3. When they themselves use, or give to others, flesh-meat on days of abstinence. 4. When they order the commission of sin, as, for instance, to steal or pilfer.

How do servants give scandal?

Particularly by assisting their masters to commit sin; by using improper language before children, or by inciting them to sinful acts and words.

What kind of sin is scandal?

It is a frightful sin. By it countless sins are occasioned, thousands and thousands of souls are deprived of their innocence, held fast in sin, and carried to perdition, while the loving design of God for the salvation of men is frustrated. He who gives scandal loads himself with as many sins as he causes to be committed, and, at the same time, with the obligation of making reparation for them, and of giving a strict and terrible account. And if this be so with others, how much rather with parents (who have been murderers of their children's souls), with masters, and with servants? Hence it was that Jesus pronounced against him who gives scandal the terrible words, *Woe to him who gives scandal; it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea* (Matt. xviii. 6, 7). Shun it, therefore, if you would escape this woe.

On the Preparation for Pentecost.

The Holy Ghost was necessary to the disciples for the fulfilment of their calling, and to us also; so necessary, indeed, that without him we can think nothing good, or even speak the name of Jesus acceptably (2 Cor. iii. 5), much less become good ourselves, or steadfastly accomplish what is good. For this reason, endeavor to prepare in thy heart a worthy dwelling-place for the Holy Ghost, and with that intention do as follows:

1. Avoid, if your calling will permit, the bustle of the world, and in solitude apply yourself to earnest and persevering prayer, after the example of Mary and the Apostles. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you* (James iv. 8).

2. Be reconciled to your neighbor; purify your conscience by a penitent confession; for the Holy Ghost is a spirit of peace, love, and purity, and dwells, accordingly, only in pure and peaceful souls (Ps. lxxv. 3).

3. Give alms according to your ability. The heathen centurion Cornelius, by prayer and almsgiving, made himself worthy of the communication of the Holy Ghost (Acts x.)

4. Finally, have a great desire for him, and often sigh for him with the words, "Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy love."

Pentecost.

What is Pentecost?

The solemn anniversary of the day on which, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Ghost came down, as with a mighty wind, and under the appearance of fiery tongues, upon Mary the mother of Jesus, and his Apostles and disciples, who were all, with one mind, assembled together in prayer at Jerusalem.

Why does the Church celebrate this day so solemnly?

To praise and thank God that, by sending the Holy Ghost, he fulfilled his promises, announced publicly the law of the New Testament, dispensed wonderful gifts, and began to spread his holy Church; thereby renewing the face of the earth, in that already, on this same day, three thousand persons, moved by the Apostles' preaching, entered into the Church through baptism. If then the Jews, by the command of God, solemnly celebrated their Pentecost in thanksgiving for the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, and for the gathering in of the fruits of the earth, how much more should we Christians honor this day, on which was given the Gospel, the law of grace, of love, and adoption among the children of God, and on which the Holy Ghost gave so many spiritual graces and fruits to men.

To express her joy over the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Church sings, at the Introit of the Mass, *The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole earth, allelujah, and that which containeth all things, hath knowledge of the voice, allelujah, allelujah* (Wisd. i. 7). *Let God arise, and his enemies be scat-*

tered; and let them that hate him, fly before his face (Ps. lxvii. 2). Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who on this day didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that we may be truly wise in the same Spirit, and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the unity of the same.

Epistle. (Acts ii. 1-11.)

When the days of the pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these, that speak, Galileans? And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome; Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

Why did the Paraclete descend on the Pentecost of the Jews?

Because the Pentecost of the Jews was the figure of that of the New Law. For, as formerly the law was given on Mount Sinai, amid thunder and lightning, so now, amid the rushing of the wind, the new law of grace was instituted by the Holy Ghost, to fulfil and take the place of the old. On this day the Jews of all lands and tongues were assembled together, and were able to be witnesses of this miracle, and of the publication of the New Law.

Why did the Holy Ghost appear under visible signs?

It was done to attract attention, and to indicate outwardly what took place inwardly. The roar of the mighty wind, according to the language of the prophets, pointed to the approaching Godhead, and was intended to announce something extraordinary. The appearance of tongues signified the gift of languages, and the division of them the difference of gifts imparted by the Holy Ghost. The fire which lightens, warms, and quickly spreads, denoted the love of God, the power and joy with which the Apostles, and mankind through them, should be filled, and indicated the rapid extension of Christianity.

Was this actually effected?

Yes; the Apostles became at once other men; being now enlightened and made acquainted with all truth, freed from all fear and faint-heartedness, and so undaunted that they preached everywhere Christ crucified, and for love to him endured with joy all sufferings. Their discourses were understood by all present, notwithstanding they spoke various languages, as if the Apostles had carefully learned each particular tongue. From that time Christianity spread with wonderful rapidity throughout the whole world. Pray the Holy Ghost to-day to enlighten you also, to inflame you with holy love, and to give you strength daily to increase in all goodness.

Gospel. (John xiv. 23-31.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and come unto you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass,

you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not any thing. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I.

Why is the Holy Ghost called a spirit, and the Holy Spirit?

Because he proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is, as it were, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, the fountain of inward holiness, and of all the gifts and graces by which we become holy.

What does the Holy Ghost effect in men?

He enlightens them to know the truths of faith and salvation, and the beauty of virtue. He moves them to desire, seek, and love what they know. He renews their hearts, by cleansing them from sin, by imparting to them the sanctification and likeness to God gained through Christ, together with all these supernatural gifts and graces by which they can become holy and happy, and brings forth in them wonderful fruits of sanctity.

Which are these gifts of the Holy Ghost?

The seven following, as named by the Prophet Isaias (xi. 2).

1. *The gift of wisdom*, which teaches us to value the heavenly more than the earthly, infuses into us a longing for the same, and points out to us the right means to salvation.

2. *The gift of understanding*, which enlightens us to rightly understand the mysteries and doctrines of our holy religion. How necessary is this gift both to children and adults, particularly in our days!

3. *The gift of counsel in doubtful cases*, which enables us to know what to do or omit, and what to advise others. This gift is particularly necessary for superiors, for those who are changing their state of life, and for those who are entangled in perplexing and unfortunate marriage relations.

4. *The gift of fortitude*, which banishes all timidity and human respect, strengthens a man to hate sin, and steadfastly to practice virtue; preferring contempt, temporal loss, persecution, and even death, to denying Christ by word or deed.

5. *The gift of knowledge*, by which the Holy Ghost enlight-

ens us with an inner light, that we may know ourselves, the snares of self-love, of our passions, of the devil, and of the world, and may choose the fittest means to overcome them.

6. *The gift of piety and devotion*, which infuses into us veneration for God and divine things, and joy in conversing with him.

7. *The gift of the fear of God*, that childlike fear, which dreads no other misfortune than that of displeasing God, and which accordingly flees sin as the greatest evil.

Which are the fruits of the Holy Ghost ?

They are the twelve following, which St. Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Galatians (v. 22, 23): 1. Charity. 2. Joy. 3. Peace. 4. Patience. 5. Benignity. 6. Goodness. 7. Long-suffering. 8. Mildness. 9. Faith. 10. Modesty. 11. Continency. 12. Chastity.

These fruits should be visible in the Christian, for thereby men shall know that the Holy Ghost dwells in him, as the tree is known by its fruit.

Whit-Monday.

The feast of Pentecost continues seven days, in remembrance of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Filled with joy over the gracious descent of the Holy Ghost, the Church sings, at the Introit of the Mass, *He fed them with the fat of wheat, allelujah, and filled them with honey out of the rock, allelujah, allelujah* (Ps. l.) *Rejoice to God, our helper, sing aloud to the God of Jacob.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who didst give the Holy Spirit to thy Apostles, grant to thy people the effect of their pious prayers, that on those to whom thou hast given grace, thou mayest also bestow peace. Through Christ our Lord.

Epistle. (Acts x. 42-48.)

In those days Peter, opening his mouth, said: Men, brethren, the Lord commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead. To him all the prophets give testimony, that through his name all receive remission of sins, who believe in him. While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And the faithful of the circumcision, who came with Peter, were astonished, for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God. Then Peter answered: Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Explanation.

That the Holy Ghost descended upon Cornelius before he was baptized was partly because God designed, thereby, to reward his desire for the truth, and his God-fearing life, but partly also, and particularly, that the converted Jews might know that the Gentiles, also, were to be called to the Church of Jesus, and not be scandalized at seeing them receive holy baptism. Learn, hence, 1. Like Cornelius, to love the truth, to live in the fear of God, and do good works, for so you will gain the approval and grace of God. 2. Like him, follow the guidance of grace, and to that end give willing attention to instructions, and invoke the Holy Ghost before the commencement of them.

Gospel. (John iii. 16-21.)

At that time Jesus said unto Nicodemus: God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him. He that believeth in him is not judged. But he that doth not believe, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light: for their works were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works

may not be reproved. But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God.

By what has God most shown the greatness of his love?

By giving up his only-begotten Son to the most painful and ignominious death, that we, the guilty, might be delivered from eternal death, and have life everlasting. What love! Take courage, ye desponding ones, bowed down with the heavy burden of your sins, ye penitent, ye unfortunate of every sort.

If, then, so many are lost, is it the fault of God?

No: as the physician gives up only the incurable, so God condemns only the incorrigible, who believe not in Christ as their Saviour and God; who love darkness, that is, the principles and works which correspond to their corrupt inclinations; who despise Jesus, the light of the world, and his doctrines; who neglect the divine service, the public instructions, and the reception of the holy sacraments; who take this licentious life for wisdom and enlightenment; who refuse to be taught, and have pronounced, already, their own condemnation, before the final judgment. Woe to them that even such love cannot save, but must condemn them!

Motives to Love God.

For God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son (John iii. 16). To move men to love God, St. John wrote, "*Let us love God for he has first loved us.*" Indeed, what love has he not shown us hitherto, and what does he not yet show every moment. He has loved us from eternity: he loved us when as yet we were not. Of his endless love, although he knew that we would be sinners, and enemies to him, he made us after his own image and likeness, breathing into the mortal body an immortal soul gifted with reason and free will, and made like to God in holiness and justice (Eph. iv. 24). Man fell, and sank deeper and deeper in sin and misery. God then took pity on us, sent his only-begotten Son, who first washed away our guilt with his blood, and then,—oh, in-

scrutable depth of divine love!—gave himself to be the perpetual nourishment of our souls. What more could God give us? One thing more—the Holy Ghost, and him he has sent, in holy baptism, pouring him with all his gifts and treasures of grace, continually into every heart. “If then,” says St. Bernard, “we already love him who does us some good, who helps us in need, or exposes himself to danger for our sake, how much more should we love him who has given us all that we have; the angels to be our guards, the sun, moon, and stars to be our light; the earth to be our dwelling-place; the elements, plants, and animals to supply our necessary wants, and to serve for our advantage and enjoyment; who continually preserves us and protects us from countless dangers; who has subjected himself for our sake, not merely to the danger of his life, but to the most painful and humiliating death; who forgives all our sins, heals all our infirmities, redeems our life from destruction, and crowns us with compassion and mercy.” (Ps. cii.)

Oh, let us then, in turn, with all our hearts, love the God of love, who first loved us: he seems, as it were, to live and work only for us, and shall we live, not for him, but for the world and its vanities? Ah, infinite Love, we are sorry from the heart to have loved thee thus far so little, to have done so little from true love for thee! Oh, take from us this heart of stone, and give us a new heart that shall glow forever with love to thee! Come, Holy Ghost, and kindle in us the fire of thy love.

Whit-Tuesday.

The Introit of the Mass is again a song of joy. *Receive the joy of your glory, allelujah; giving thanks to God, allelujah; who hath called you to a heavenly kingdom (Esdras). Attend, O my people, to my law, incline your ears to the words of my mouth (Ps. lxxvii.)* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

May the power of the Holy Ghost be with us, O Lord, we beseech thee, which may mercifully purify our hearts and defend them from all adversities. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth in the unity of the same.

Epistle. (Acts viii. 14–17.)

In those days: When the apostles who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God; they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For he was not as yet come upon any of them: but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

Explanation.

The Samaritans had been converted and baptized by Philip the Deacon. Peter and John administered to them, by the imposition of hands and prayer, the sacrament of Confirmation.

Instruction on the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Is Confirmation a sacrament, and why?

Yes, for Jesus Christ has promised the Holy Ghost not only to the Apostles, but also to all the faithful, to confirm them fully in faith and charity. The Apostles, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and consequently in accordance with the will of Christ, actually communicated the same spirit to the baptized, under the visible sign of the imposition of hands (Acts viii. 17). Finally, the Catholic Church from the beginning to this very hour has declared this act to be a sacrament, and has excluded from the communion of the Church those who obstinately deny this.

What is the outward sign of this sacrament?

The imposition of the bishop's hands, the anointing with the chrism, and the words which the bishop speaks, namely—"I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the

chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

What grace is conveyed through this sacrament ?

Through holy confirmation, God confirms and completes in the Christian the grace of baptism, and strengthens him for the combat with his spiritual enemies. For they who, through baptism, are become Christians, like new-born children have as yet a certain weakness and tenderness; but when they have been confirmed, they acquire greater power to overcome the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil, and their souls are strengthened in faith to confess and glorify the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. These effects are indicated by the word "confirmation," which comes from the Latin word "confirmare," to strengthen.

How often can holy confirmation be received ?

Only once; confirmation, like baptism, cannot be received oftener, because the grace received in these sacraments is always efficacious if we only co-operate with it; and because in these sacraments we receive also an indelible character, which forever distinguishes the souls of those who have been baptized and confirmed from those who have not. In baptism, we receive the character of children of God; in confirmation, that of his soldiers. By the first, we belong to God; by the second, we are required to combat for his sake, and for that purpose we receive particular graces. Signed with the sign of the Lord, he is a perfect Christian (Eph. i. 13).

Who administers holy confirmation ?

According to the example of the Apostles, the tradition and expressed decisions of the Church, the bishop is the only ordinary administrator of confirmation. In the Acts of the Apostles, we do not read that any but the Apostles confirmed, and the successors of the Apostles are the bishops.

What is the holy chrism used at confirmation ?

Chrism (a Greek word, which means unction) is oil of olives mixed with balsam, which is solemnly blessed every year, on Maundy-Thursday, by the bishop. The oil denotes the strengthening grace of the Holy Ghost; the balsam, preservation from the foulness of sin, and the good odor of an edifying

life, whereby the Christian becomes to God a sweet odor in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. ii. 15).

What do the ceremonies of confirmation signify?

1. The unction on the forehead, with the holy chrism in the form of the cross, reminds the Christian that he is to combat bravely under the banner of the cross, and never be ashamed to confess the name of Jesus, in word and deed.

2. The imposition of the bishops, after the example of the Apostles, to communicate the Holy Ghost, signifies that the confirmed Christian is under the special defence and protection of God.

3. The light blow upon the cheek is given to remind the confirmed of the grace conveyed by this sacrament, and that he cannot be confirmed a second time; also, that he should be ready to suffer patiently, yes, joyfully, adversities and persecutions on account of his holy faith, as the first Christians did (Acts v.)

Is confirmation necessary to salvation?

No; yet no one should neglect to receive it, because it conveys so many graces, and every one, on account of his innumerable enemies and his own weakness, is in need of the divine assistance, that he may not be overpowered. Again, as God has not instituted this sacrament in vain, the neglect of it would therefore be a guilty indifference to his grace, and to our own salvation. This should be particularly considered by those who live among non-Catholics, and by parents who allow their children to go to strange places, where their religion is exposed to so many dangers.

How ought one to prepare for confirmation?

1. One must be in the state of grace, and in order thereto must purge his conscience of all sins by a contrite and sincere confession; otherwise, instead of receiving grace, one would only run into a new mortal sin, by setting up hindrances to the operation of the Holy Ghost.

2. According to the capacity of his years, he must be instructed in the mysteries of the faith, particularly in regard to holy confirmation.

3. He must have an ardent desire to receive the strengthening grace of the Holy Ghost, and pray God fervently for it.

4. It is praiseworthy, according to the custom of the early Church, to fast, perform good works, and to receive this sacrament fasting.

5. One must have one Godfather, or Godmother, who has been confirmed; and finally,

6. Must present himself to receive the sacrament with a heart full of faith, reverence, and devotion.

What must one do after confirmation?

He should remain in the Church some time, and humbly thank the Holy Ghost for the precious graces bestowed on him, in some such prayer as the following:

Prayer of the Confirmed.

(To be repeated often during the year.)

I thank thee, O Holy Ghost, that in the holy sacrament of confirmation thou hast bestowed upon me thy grace, to strengthen me against all temptations and persecutions; and I humbly entreat thee to encourage me by thy holy inspirations, that under all circumstances I may remain faithful to the grace I have received; may co-operate with it, and never, out of fear or human respect, go against the commands of God, or the Church. Oh, give me grace to die rather than oppose thy inspirations, or grieve thee, or by any mortal sin to drive thee from me. I ask it of thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

What are the obligations of the confirmed?

1. Not to expel the Holy Ghost by sin, but to walk in his light, that is, according to the doctrine and example of Jesus.

2. To confess our holy religion, in word and deed, at any cost whatever.

Gospel. (John x. 1-10.)

At that time Jesus said to the Pharisees: Amen, amen, I say to you: he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he hath let out his own sheep, he goeth before them: and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him,

because they know not the voice of strangers. This proverb Jesus spoke to them. But they understood not what he spoke to them. Jesus therefore said to them again: Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All others, as many as have come, are thieves and robbers: and the sheep heard them not. I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures. The thief cometh not, but to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.

How is this parable to be understood?

The sheepfold is the Church, or congregation of the faithful; the door for the flock is baptism; for the pastors, lawful vocation and mission from God, through their spiritual superiors; the chief-pastor is Christ; the sheep are the faithful; the invisible door-keeper is the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as he prepares hearts for Jesus; the visible door-keeper is the bishop or his representatives. The thieves and robbers are the Pharisees and heretics of all ages, who lead astray the sheep of Christ, and destroy their spiritual life, by false doctrines. If we would not become the prey of thieves and murderers, we must follow the doctrines of the teachers and pastors whom Christ has appointed for his Church.

Aspiration.

O God, who hast given to the world, in thy Son, the most faithful pastor, through him hast established this great fold thy Church, and graciously upheld it, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, grant us always, we beseech thee, such pastors as shall enter through the right door, unite wisdom with true piety, feed thy flock with pure doctrine, true love, and good example, and strive to bring back again the erring to the fold. Grant, also, to the faithful, that they may hear and obey the voice of the true shepherd, that both pastors and flock may together enter into that eternal fold, which no robber shall disturb, in the kingdom of everlasting glory. Amen.

Wednesday. Ember-Day

Introit of the Mass. *O God, when thou didst go forth in the sight of thy people, making a passage for them, dwelling in the midst of them, allelujah, the earth was moved, the heavens dropped, allelujah, allelujah (Ps. lxxvii). Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered, and let them that hate him flee from before his face. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

May the Paraclete, who proceeds from thee, enlighten our minds, we beseech thee, O Lord, and lead us into all truth, as thy Son has promised. Through Christ.

[See the prayer for good priests, p. 42.]

Epistle. (Acts v. 12-16.)

In those days: By the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. But of the rest no man durst join himself unto them; but the people magnified them. And the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord was more increased: inso-much that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities. And there came also together to Jerusalem a multitude out of the neighboring cities, bringing sick persons, and such as were troubled with unclean spirits, who were all healed.

Gospel. (John vi. 44-52.)

At that time Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: No one can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him, and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets: And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, but he who is of God, he hath seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in me hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living

bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world.

Practice.

No one can come to Jesus, that is, no one can know him as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, unless the Father draw him; that is, unless the Father enlighten and move him. Learn hence, that faith is a grace, and pray God to preserve it in you, and give it to others. Jesus is the Bread of Life; as such he offers himself to us, particularly in the most holy Sacrament of the altar. Wouldst thou live? Feed on this bread; go to this table, and go often.

Friday. Ember-Day.

Introit of the Mass. *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, allelujah, that I may sing, allelujah. My lips shall rejoice when I shall sing to thee, allelujah, allelujah. In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be put to confusion; deliver me in thy justice, and rescue me. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Grant to thy Church, we beseech thee, O merciful God, that, gathered together in thy Holy Spirit, it may not be troubled by any hostile invasion. Through our Lord, &c., in the unity of the same.

Epistle. (Joel ii. 23-27.)

Thus saith the Lord God: O children of Sion, rejoice, and be joyful, in the Lord your God: because he hath given you a teacher of justice, and he will make the early and the latter rain to come down to you as in the beginning. And the floors shall be filled with wheat, and the presses shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years which the locust, and the bruchus, and the mildew, and the palmer-worm have eaten: my great host which I sent upon you. And you shall eat in plenty, and shall be filled: and you shall

praise the name of the Lord your God, who hath done wonders with you, and my people shall not be confounded forever. And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: and I am the Lord your God, and there is none besides: and my people shall not be confounded forever, saith the Lord Almighty.

Gospel. (Luke v. 17-26.)

At that time: It came to pass on a certain day: and Jesus sat teaching. And there were Pharisees and Doctors of the Law sitting by, that were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was to heal them. And behold men brought in a bed a man who had the palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles with his bed, into the midst before Jesus. Whose faith when he saw, he said: Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the Scribes and Pharisees began to think, saying: Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? And when Jesus knew their thoughts, answering he said to them: What is it you think in your hearts? Which is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy): I say to thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And immediately rising up before them, he took up the bed on which he lay; and he went away to his own house, glorifying God. And all were astonished; and they glorified God. And they were filled with fear, saying: We have seen wonderful things to-day.

Practice.

Jesus forgives the sins of the man who had the palsy, before healing him. Learn hence, that temporal evils are often the consequences of sin, and do penance if you would be freed from them. Jesus forgives sins, and to show that he had the right and power to do so, he heals the sick of the palsy at once. Here, sinner, you have your Deliverer from sin and punishment. Do not despair, but with faith take refuge in him according to his appointment in the holy sacrament of penance. Jesus heals him at the intercession of others. Let

us, therefore, also choose in our need, intercessors before God, that he may grant to us through their prayers what he would perhaps deny to ourselves.

Saturday. Ember-Day.

Introit of the Mass. *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, allelujah, by his spirit dwelling with us, allelujah, allelujah* (Rom. v.) *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

Mercifully pour forth the Holy Spirit into our souls, we beseech thee, O Lord, by whose wisdom we were created, and by whose providence we are governed. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Romans v. 1-5.)

Brethren: Being justified by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access through faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God. And not only so; but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial; and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not: because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.

Gospel. (Luke iv. 38-44.)

At that time: Jesus rising up out of the synagogue, went into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever, and they besought him for her. And standing over her, he commanded the fever, and it left her. And immediately rising, she ministered to them. And when the sun was down, all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them to him. But he laying his hands on every one of them, healed them. And devils went out from many, crying out and saying: Thou art the Son of God. And rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was Christ. And when it was day, going out he went into a desert place, and the multitudes sought him, and came unto him: and they

detained him that he should not depart from them. To whom he said: To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God: for therefor am I sent. And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

Practice.

The curing of so many diseases betokens the manifold graces through which the Holy Ghost heals the various infirmities of our souls. Let us pray him to quench the fever-heat of our passions; to repel from us the devil, who tempts us to evil; to heal the wounds of our souls; to take away our weakness, and supply us with strength to live according to the gospel which Jesus announces.

Trinity Sunday.

Every Sunday is dedicated to the worship of the Triune God, and is called accordingly the Lord's day; but the first Sunday after Pentecost is appointed by the Church a special feast of the most holy Trinity, because this mystery, as the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, began at once to be preached by the Apostles, as soon as they had been enlightened and strengthened by the descent of the Holy Ghost, according to the command of Christ: *Going, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* (Matt. xxviii. 19).

What thoughts and affections should occupy our minds on this feast?

Although this great mystery—how God can be threefold in person—is incomprehensible to our minds, we must consider, 1. That God would cease to be God, if our limited understanding were capable of penetrating the substance of his nature. God can be known as he is only by himself, and when he permits us, as he has done, to look at his mysterious nature through the revelation which he has given us, we must subject the feeble judgment of our understanding to his infinite wisdom.

2. The mystery of the blessed Trinity, though incomprehensible to our intellect, is yet not without fruit in our hearts. The records of revelation make known to us that each one of the divine persons has wrought for our happiness and salvation. They show us God the Father as our Creator, God the Son as our Redeemer, God the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier; and should not this move us to a child-like gratitude towards the blessed Trinity? Say to-day the Apostles' Creed, and make a resolution to do every thing in the name and to the honor of the most blessed Trinity. In making the sign of the cross, as you say, "In the name of the Father," remember the fatherly love of God towards you, and your filial duty to him. In saying, "and of the Son," remember the patience, the meekness, the obedience, even to the death on the cross, of Jesus. At the words, "and of the Holy Ghost," consider, and say, "I am the temple of God; let me not desecrate this temple." Then bow your head in veneration, and add, "Amen."

To the praise of the most holy Trinity, the Church sings at the Introit of the Mass, *Blessed be the holy Trinity and undivided Unity; we will give glory to him, because he hath shown his mercy to us* (Tobias xii.) *O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is thy name in all the earth.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O Almighty and Eternal God, who hast created thy servant to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, in the confession of the true faith, and to adore the Unity in the power of thy majesty, we beseech thee, that by firmness in the same faith, we may be ever protected from all adversities. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Rom. xi. 33-36.)

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and recompense shall be made him? For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things: to him be the glory forever. Amen.

Explanation.

The ground of St. Paul's admiration in this epistle is the unfathomable wisdom and love of God, by which he permitted the Jews and heathen to fall into unbelief, that he might have mercy on all, and make all perceive that they were justified, not through their merits, but only through his grace. But the Church makes use of these words to express her reverent admiration for the greatness of the mystery of the all-holy Trinity, which is the worthiest object of our faith, our hope, and our charity. Though we can neither measure nor comprehend this mystery, yet no man of sound reason will hesitate to believe it, if he considers that it is most plainly revealed by God; that as God, the Infinite, cannot be comprehended by the spirit of man, so also he can reveal more than we can understand; and that, finally, there are many things in man himself, and in nature, which we acknowledge for true, but cannot comprehend. How, for instance, does the soul, which is a spirit, act upon the body? How does the soul recall what is past, or bring up absent objects? How does the seed germinate, shoot forth from the ground, and bear fruit?

Besides, does not our holy religion assure us, that one day the sacred darkness through which we now see God shall be cleared up in eternity? Does it not give us the consoling hope, that one day we shall behold face to face the Infinite whose image is now reflected dimly in the mirror of nature? Let us add hope, therefore, to our faith, and if true and sincere love be based upon these two, our understanding and heart will have abundant consolation in regard to this great mystery.

Aspiration.

O incomprehensible Trinity, most worthy of all honor and adoration, abyss of wisdom, power, and goodness, I lose myself in thee, I believe in thee—believe, though I comprehend thee not—increase my faith. I hope in thee, for thou art the source of all good—sustain my hope. I love thee because thou art worthy of all love—inflame me with this love ever more and more.

Gospel. (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.

What are we taught by the words, *all power is given to me, &c.*?

That the authority of the Church is not human, derived from men, but divine, proceeding from God, and that we must, therefore, submit to it as to Jesus himself.

What is contained in the words, *teaching them to observe all things, &c.*?

1. The truth that Christ commanded them not *to write*, but *to preach*, by reason of which the Catholic Church teaches, that besides the Holy Scriptures there is a tradition, the doctrine of which is as much divine truth as the Holy Scriptures.

2. That to be saved, it is necessary not only to believe all that Christ has commanded, but to observe all, by a corresponding life.

What has Christ promised in the words, *I am with you, &c.*?

His invisible presence and guidance in the Church, and his divine support. Hence it is plain, that as Christ is always with his Church, the Church instituted by him never can cease, never has ceased, never will cease to be a visible Church, till the end of time: further, that in her decisions of faith and practice she is infallible. Oh, how securely the Catholic rests under the protection of a Church that is infallible, because she is invisibly governed and defended by Christ!

Aspiration.

O Jesus, my Lord and my God, I thank thee for the precious grace of having called me to the Catholic Church, which thou

conductest through thy guidance in safety to the end; in whose bosom I can rest safe from every error. I promise to-day anew, as I have promised in holy baptism, cheerfully to receive, and faithfully to follow to the end of my life, the doctrines and laws which thou thyself hast prescribed for me through thy Church. Oh, be with us all;—with thy ministers, who have the care of souls, that they may preach the pure doctrine of thy Church with fruit; with us, that we may understand and observe what is taught us: fail not, O Jesus, to uphold us, who never fail to need thy help. Amen.

Instruction on the Holy Sacrament of Baptism.

“Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—*Matt.* xxviii. 19.

Is Baptism a sacrament?

Yes, for therein the baptized person receives the grace of God, through an outward sign instituted by Christ.

What is the outward sign?

Immersion or sprinkling with water, and the pronouncing at the same time of the words: “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

What kind of water must be used?

Natural water, whether from streams or wells, or rain-water. But rose-water, or such like artificial preparations, must not be used.

What is the effect of the grace of baptism?

That through water and the Holy Ghost, the baptized person is cleansed from original sin, and from all actual sins, if he has committed such; is spiritually new-born, and made a child of God and a joint-heir with Christ (*John* iii. 6; *Rom.* viii. 17).

How many kinds of Christian baptism are there?

Three. 1. *Baptism of desire*, which consists in the perfect love of God, and perfect contrition for sin, with a firm purpose to keep all the commandments of God; which includes the desire to be baptized.

2. *Baptism of blood*, which is received by those who willingly and cheerfully suffer death for Christ's sake.

3. *Baptism with water*, which is the sacrament of baptism.

What do the ceremonies used at baptism signify?

They indicate outwardly what takes place inwardly in the soul of the baptized. These ceremonies were all introduced in the earliest period of Christianity, to the end that this sacrament might be administered with due veneration, be received with devotion, and make a deep impression on the faithful.

What is the use of sponsors?

1. That they may, in the name of the child, declare the desire to be baptized, and make the profession of faith, together with the promise to live according to the doctrine of Christ.

2. That in case the parents should die, or neglect their duty, the god-parents may provide for the instruction of the children. 3. To be witnesses that such a child or adult person has been baptized. Considering these weighty obligations, it is easy to see how grievously persons sin, who choose for sponsors bad Catholics, or those who are not Catholics at all. For how can such persons be expected to discharge these obligations?

What relationship arises out of sponsorship?

At baptism, as well as at confirmation, according to the law of the Church, god-parents, or sponsors, contract a spiritual affinity, 1. With the ministers of baptism and confirmation; 2. With the persons baptized or confirmed; 3. With the parents of those persons—with whom, consequently, without a dispensation previously obtained, they cannot enter into marriage. Between the sponsors themselves, however, no such spiritual affinity is contracted.

The Church has established this law out of veneration for these holy sacraments, and in order that sponsors might, by this bond, be more closely united to their god-children, and apply themselves the more earnestly to discharge their obligations.

Why must the person to be baptized wait at the Church door?

To signify that he is unworthy to enter into the Church of Christ and the kingdom of heaven until he is freed from the

dominion of Satan, has cast off the yoke of sin, and submitted to the rule of Christ.

Why is the name of a saint given to the person baptized ?

1. To show that he is, by holy baptism, received among the number of Christians, whom St. Paul calls saints. 2. That he may have a particular intercessor and protector. 3. That he may strive to order his life after the example of the saint whose name he bears. It is, therefore, in the highest degree blamable to give to children, in baptism, heathenish or otherwise unbecoming names.

Why does the priest breathe on the person to be baptized ?

Herein the priest follows the example of Christ, who breathed on his disciples when he gave them the Holy Ghost (John xx. 22). The ceremony signifies, as St. Chrysostom says, "that in baptism supernatural life is given to the soul, as God imparted natural life to the first man by breathing on him."

Why does the priest lay his hand on the head of the person to be baptized ?

As a sign that henceforth he is God's own and belongs to his Church. Accordingly, he prays that God will take away from the catechumen all blindness, destroy all the snares of the devil, and grant him grace joyfully to serve God in the Church.

Why is salt placed on the tongue of the catechumen ?

It signifies that as salt keeps food from corruption, and imparts to it a good savor, so also through the grace of baptism, man shall be purified from sin, filled with wisdom, and acquire a relish for heavenly things.

What do the many exorcisms signify ?

That in consequence of Adam's sin, mankind were, before baptism, kept in bondage to Satan, who is accordingly, by exorcism, in the name of God, commanded to depart and give up the catechumen as a dwelling-place for the Holy Ghost.

Why is the catechumen signed so often with the cross ?

Thereby is signified, 1. That baptism, by virtue of the merits of Christ's passion and death, washes away sin. 2. That the catechumen is to fight manfully under the banner of the

Cross, under which he is now enrolled, against the devil, the flesh, and the world, and henceforth to glory in nothing but the cross of Jesus. It also signifies that in this life he will have to meet many trials, which he must bear patiently.

Why are the ears and nose touched with spittle?

This signifies, 1. That as Christ made the man born blind to see, by touching him with spittle, so by baptism the blindness of the soul is removed, and the spirit of the catechumen is qualified for the knowledge of heavenly truth. 2. That he is always to hear the divine word readily, and by observing the same to be a sweet odor of God.

Why are the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed said at baptism?

Thereby adult catechumens make a profession of faith, which, at the baptism of infants, is done by the sponsors, who are thus also reminded of their duty to attend to the Christian instruction of the children.

Why does the priest, before baptism, exchange the purple stole for a white one?

The purple, as the color of penance, points to the state of sin which has lasted till now; the white, to the state of innocence into which, through baptism, the catechumen is translated.

Why does the priest ask, "Dost thou renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his pomps?"

That the Christian may know that it is his vocation to renounce the pomp, the suggestions, the works of the devil, and strive against them. For this reason, St. Ambrose addresses the baptized in the following beautiful words: "When the priest asked thee, 'Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works,' what didst thou answer? 'I renounce them.' 'Dost thou also renounce the world, its lusts and its pomps?' 'I renounce them.' Be mindful, therefore, of what thou hast promised, and let it never leave thy mind. Thou hast given to the priest, in God's stead, thy bond, as it were. When thou givest thy bond to a man, thou remainest bound by it; but now thy bond is kept, not on earth, but in heaven: say not, thou knowest nothing of this promise; this exculpates thee no better than the excuse

of a soldier, who in time of battle should say, he knew not that by becoming a soldier he would have to fight."

To remind children betimes of this promise, to instruct them in the obligations thereby contracted, and form in them a habit of fulfilling these obligations, is not only the duty of parents, but also one which the god-parents assumed at baptism. For if children who are to be brought up soldiers are early accustomed to watches, to heat and cold, to fearlessness in the presence of enemies, to bearing arms, how much more should the children of Christians, who have to undergo a spiritual warfare, be accustomed from youth to despise the lusts of the world, and to contend against the devil and the flesh?

Why is the catechumen anointed on the breast and shoulders with the holy oil?

To make him, as St. Ambrose and St. Chrysostom explain, a brave soldier of Christ; for as formerly combatants were anointed with oil to strengthen them for the combat, so the catechumen is anointed with oil, 1, on his breast, to strengthen him against the enemy of his salvation; and, 2, between his shoulders, that he may receive strength and courage to bear the yoke of the divine law without weariness or faintness, and to complete the laborious course of life with unshaken fidelity to God and his holy commandments.

Why does the priest ask the catechumen, "Wilt thou be baptized?"

That man may choose obedience to God of his free will, as the first man chose disobedience.

Why is the water poured three times on the head of the person baptized?

In token that man, after this thrice-repeated ablution, rises from the death of the sin, as Christ, after his three days' burial, rose from the dead (Rom. vi. 4, 5). In early times, the catechumens were dipped into water, kept in baptismal fonts for that purpose. For many reasons this custom was abolished.

Why is the baptized person anointed with holy chrism?

To indicate that, being now incorporated into Christ the anointed, he is made partaker of his priesthood and of his kingly dignity, for which reason St. Peter calls Christians α

chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pet. ii. 9).

How sublime, therefore, is the dignity of Christians! They are anointed priests and kings: priests, in that they offer up themselves as a living, holy, and pleasing sacrifice to God; kings, in that they rule over their evil inclinations, serve God (to serve God is to reign), and possess a title to the kingdom of heaven. Furthermore, by the chrism the baptized are consecrated, as temples of God and holy vessels, which are afterwards to receive the body of the Lord, and to be the dwelling-places for the Holy Ghost. What honor! How holy, therefore, should both soul and body be kept!

What does the white robe signify?

The splendor and beauty with which the soul is adorned after it has been washed from the stains of sin in baptism; the purity and innocence which it has to preserve; and finally the glory of the resurrection, to which, through baptism, the soul is new-born.

Why is a lighted candle placed in the hand of the baptized?

To signify that he is, through baptism, passed from darkness to light, and that, like the prudent virgins (Matt. xxv.), he must prepare to meet Christ the bridegroom, feeding the light of faith with love and good works, and causing it to shine before men in an exemplary life (Matt. v. 16).

Who has the power of baptizing?

Generally, only the ministers of the Church. But, in case of necessity, any one can baptize, even a father or mother. The reason of this is, that no one may be deprived of this sacrament, which, as the means of entrance into the kingdom of God, is in the highest degree a necessary means of salvation.

With what intention must one baptize?

With the intention of doing what Christ the Lord has commanded, and what the Catholic Church has prescribed to be done in this case.

Profitable Observations.—The day of his baptism is to every one of the greatest moment. For if the day of our birth into this earthly life is reckoned important, how much rather the day of our birth into spiritual life—the day of our entrance

into the kingdom of God, on which all the treasures of grace which Jesus has gained are opened to us! To the Christian, therefore, it should always be a holy day. He should consequently be taught and accustomed, so soon as he has come to the use of reason, to keep solemnly every year the day of his baptism, by receiving the holy sacraments, by doing good works, and by renewing his baptismal vows. It would, indeed, be very useful also to commemorate, in like manner, other important days in one's life; as, for example, the day of one's confirmation, first communion, marriage, or the day on which one has made solemn vows.

Instruction on the Renewal of Baptismal Vows.

All the graces and dignities which we receive in baptism, God secures to us for the future, only on condition that we keep our baptismal vows. Every Christian has in baptism made a covenant with God, through the mediation of Christ, with whose blood this covenant is sealed. This covenant consists, *on man's part*, in the promise, 1. To renounce forever the devil, all his works, all his pomps; that is, constantly to suppress the lust of the eyes and of the flesh, and pride, by which the devil seduces us into sin; and, 2. To believe all that God has revealed, and the Church proposed for our belief, and to use frequently and fervently the means of grace.

On the part of God it includes the cleansing us from all sin, the bestowal of all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, our adoption as his children, and the assurance of the future inheritance of Heaven.

This covenant will stand till death. God, who is infinitely faithful and true, will never break it; but fickle and frail men too often forget and violate it. We should, therefore, often, according to the desire of the Church, bring it to mind, and renew it from time to time. This should be done, 1. Before receiving the holy sacrament of confirmation; 2. Before first communion; 3. On the vigils of Easter and Pentecost, at the blessing of the baptismal water; 4. On the anniversaries of our baptism and confirmation; 5. Before making solemn vows;

6. Before entering into matrimony ; 7. In danger of death. The renewal of baptismal vows may be made in the following manner : We place ourselves in the presence of God, kneel down, fold our hands, and say, with fervent devotion, as follows :

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born and suffered for us. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

I renounce Satan ; all his works ; all his pomps.

Christ Jesus, I am united to thee ; to thee alone do I cling. Thee alone will I follow ; for thee I desire to live and die. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

First Sunday after Pentecost, or Trinity Sunday.

On the Most Blessed Trinity.

What is God ?

God is an infinite being, of all possible perfections, the most sublime and excellent of all goods, existing from all eternity, and containing within himself the principle of his own being and substance ; from whom all other things have received their existence and life, *for of him, and by him, and in him are all things* (Rom. xi. 36).

What is the blessed Trinity ?

It is this one God, who is one in nature and threefold in person,—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whom together we call the blessed Trinity.

Is each of these persons God ?

Yes, for each possesses the divine nature and substance.

Is any one of these three, older, more powerful, or greater than another ?

No ; they are all three, from eternity, equal in omnipotence,

sublimity, and majesty, and must therefore be equally venerated and adored.

From whom is the Father ?

From himself, before all eternity.

From whom is God the Son ?

The Son is begotten of the Father before all ages.

From whom is God the Holy Ghost ?

He proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Here we shall do well to remember the words of Holy Scripture: *He that is a searcher of majesty, shall be overwhelmed by glory* (Prov. xxv. 27).

God is Almighty ; that is, he can do all things—nothing is impossible to him (Gen. xviii. 14 ; Job xlii. 2 ; Matt. xii. 26 ; Luke i. 37).

God is all-wise ; that is, his designs are the best, and he uses the best means of accomplishing them.

God is all-merciful ; he willingly forgives our sins, if we return to him in sincerity ; he is long-suffering, in waiting for our conversion.

God is omniscient ; that is, nothing can be hid from him ; he sees at once, the past, the present, the future, and penetrates the most secret thoughts of our hearts (Ps. cxxxviii. 1 ; Eclus. xxvii. 27 ; Rom. xi. 33).

God is omnipresent ; that is, he is everywhere, fills all things, and is not confined by space (Ps. cxxxviii. 7, 8 ; Job xi. 8, 9 ; Isaias xlvi. 1 ; Jerem. xxiii. 24 ; Acts xvii. 27, 28).

God is most bountiful ; that is, all we have comes from him.

God is immutable ; that is, he is subject to no change or vicissitude, but always the same.

God is most perfect ; that is, he could not be more powerful, more wise, more benign, or more just.

God is true ; he knows all truths, for he is omniscient, and will reveal truth to us, for he is most benign and holy.

God is most just ; he rewards the good and punishes the bad.

God is most holy ; he loves good, and hates evil.

The Introit of the Mass is an encouragement to confidence in the divine mercy. *Lord, I have trusted in thy mercy, my*

heart shall rejoice in thy salvation, I will sing to the Lord, who giveth me good things. How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me? Unto the end? How long dost thou turn away thy face from me? (Ps. xii. 1-6.) Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, the strength of them that hope in thee, favorably give ear to our supplications, and since, without thee, mortal infirmity can do nothing, grant the help of thy grace, that in fulfilling thy commandments, we may please thee both in will and action. Through Christ.

Epistle. (1 John iv. 8-21.)

Dearly beloved: God is charity. By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him. In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because he hath first loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us; we also ought to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abideth in us, and his charity is perfected in us. In this we know that we abide in him, and he in us; because he hath given us of his spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father hath sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God, and we have known, and have believed the charity, which God hath to us. God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him. In this is the charity of God perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment: because as he is, we also are in this world. Fear is not in charity: but perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain. And he that feareth, is not perfected in charity. Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us. If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother: he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother.

Explanation.

Can there be any stronger reason for loving God, than the inexhaustible love of God towards us? Let us love him, be-

cause he first loved us. But whether we love him or not, he has given us an unerring test in our love towards our fellow-men. When we love not them whom we have seen, and for their sakes do and suffer nothing, how can we say that we love God whom we have not seen, and whose commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves, we do not obey? But when we do indeed love them, we thereby show also that we love God, inasmuch as we love and honor him in his creatures, whom he has made in his likeness, and whom he has redeemed. Let us thus try ourselves.

Gospel. (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 mete withal, 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. 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? 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.

Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

To be children of our Heavenly Father, we must imitate him, and by imitating, become like him, and be merciful, as he is merciful. Like him, therefore, who causes his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, we must love, not our friends only, but our enemies also; not only the good and pious, but also sinners and the unjust, to whom we must do good according to our ability, as we would have God be good to us.

Judge not, and you shall not be judged.

With these words Christ forbids two kinds of judgment; that which is rash or presumptuous, and that which is arrogant. *A rash judgment* is that of him who, without any reason, and upon mere suspicion, considers the conduct of his neighbor to be bad and punishable; for no one can see into his heart, and know the meaning and intention of his deeds. The only judge of these is God, who tries the heart and reins. *An arrogant judgment* is that of one who judges another, without any right to do so, as his judge or superior. Both these kinds of judgment are most sinful, because thereby man intrudes upon the prerogative of God, and grievously violates the love of his neighbor. He also incurs, thereby, a severe judgment upon himself. For, says St. Chrysostom, in condemning thy brother, thou condemnest thyself, and challengest the Judge to deal severely with thee. Would it not be better for one to judge himself.

Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.

In these words Christ teaches us that we can obtain the forgiveness of our sins only upon condition that we forgive our enemies their little offences, *from our hearts*, laying aside all secret anger, which would hinder us from looking upon them, or speaking to them with friendliness; as St. Chrysostom explains, Wouldst thou be forgiven? Then first forgive.

Give, and it shall be given to you.

We ourselves are poor, and have great need that God should give to us. Therefore we say, every day, "Give us this day our daily bread." But God gives to us only on condition that we imitate his love and bounty by giving to others. As if he said to us: "You are my poor; would you have me give to you? Do you then give, according to your ability, to the poor whom you have with you." And how richly does God reward this kind of beneficence! It is but little that we can give; but for our little he returns much, *with good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.* The

same is true also of all other works that we do for the love of God; even the very least he rewards with unfailing bounty—here with new graces and benefits, hereafter with the everlasting glory of heaven. Even so will he reckon with the wicked. For with the same measure that he shall mete withal, shall it be measured to him again. His punishment will be adjudged to him according to the multitude and malice of his sins; and the more sinful lusts he has delighted in, the more torments will he have for his portion. Would that they might consider this lesson who heap sin upon sin, and drink in evil as they would drink water.

What did Jesus intend to teach by the parable of the *blind leading the blind*?

He intended thereby to warn and admonish his disciples, who were one day to be the pastors and leaders of the people, not to be like the Pharisees, who were but blind leaders, carrying themselves and those intrusted to their guidance *into the ditch*; that is, going to destruction. That these were blind guides, he points out in this: that they observe and censure the *mote*, that is, the least fault in their neighbor, while they cannot see the *beam*, that is, the far greater fault, in themselves. And they lead their followers to destruction, because, as the disciples cannot be above their master, so they who learn of the Pharisees can neither be better instructed in the way of salvation, nor lead a better life than their teachers. But with his disciples it should not be so. They must shape their life by his, confirm their teachings by their example, and so guide their people in the right way. The following lesson holds good for every age, and is particularly applicable to all superiors, parents, instructors, and teachers. “Whoever would teach, admonish, reprove, and lead others to the way of salvation, should first do himself what he enjoins upon others—should be free from what he reproves in them, and go before them in the way to heaven. Would it not be no less wicked than ridiculous to reprove others for that which we are ourselves guilty of, and to point out to them a way which we do not know ourselves.

Aspiration.

Oh, that I always had been merciful towards my neighbor, and never judged any one rashly and falsely! For how can I now expect a merciful and gracious judgment from God? O my God, I detest these sins from my heart; I will, from my heart, forgive all those who have offended me, and I hope thereby to obtain forgiveness of my own sins. Enlighten, O Lord, my blindness, that for the future I may avoid those sins, and by showing myself full of mercy and charity, may obtain mercy in the day of judgment. Amen.

Corpus Christi Day.

Why is this day called Corpus Christi day?

Because on this day the Catholic Church solemnly celebrates the institution of the holy sacrament of the altar. The name signifies, in English, the Body of Christ.

Why is this feast not celebrated on Maundy Thursday, rather than on the present Thursday?

1. Because on Maundy Thursday, the day of the institution of this sacrament, the Church, occupied with the passion and death of Christ, has no thought of joy, but gives herself up to grief. 2. Because it was not until they were enlightened and taught by the Holy Ghost, that the Apostles made known and dispensed this mystery to the faithful (Acts ii. 42).

Who established this festival?

Pope Urban IV. It was done in the following manner: The devout nun Juliana, in the diocese of Liege, was vouchsafed a special vision concerning this feast. For, being in an ecstasy, she saw the moon, elsewhere all shining, but in one spot somewhat darkened, and was thereupon taught by God that this dark spot denoted one feast wanting in the Church's course of festivals, namely, the feast of Corpus Christi. This revelation becoming public, Robert, Bishop of Liege, caused a careful examination to be made concerning it, as the result of which he determined, in the year 1247, to celebrate this feast

solemnly in his diocese. This intention he was prevented from carrying out by death. It was, however, accomplished by his successor. In the year 1264 Pope Urban IV., who had assisted as archdeacon, at the examination, commanded this feast to be solemnly celebrated throughout the whole Church. Clement V. confirmed this order, at the Council of Vienne, 1311, and fixed the feast on the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

For what purpose was this feast instituted, and why are processions so solemnly held on this day?

1. Because it is in the highest degree just, as the Council of Trent says, that Christians should be particularly thankful for these inexpressible and truly divine benefits, by which is represented Christ's victory over sin and death. 2. In order to celebrate the triumph of truth over falsehood and heresy with such solemnity, that its adversaries, at the sight of such splendor and such universal joy, may either be humbled and weakened, or ashamed and disconcerted, and finally converted. 3. To thereby declare, openly, to the faithful, the real and substantial presence of Jesus in the holy sacrament of the altar. 4. In order to manifest, in the sight of heaven and earth, honor and adoration for him before whom every knee shall bow. 5. To give public thanks for the institution of this holy sacrament, and for all the graces thereby conferred upon the faithful. 6. To repair, in some measure, by solemn adoration, the wrongs done to Christ, in this sacrament. 7. To bring down God's blessing upon the land and upon the people. 8. To show that Jesus, as true God, dwells not only in temples built by hands, but that he has heaven for his throne, the earth for his footstool, and the whole world for his temple. 9. To fulfil the type of the old law, in which the ark, with the manna inclosed therein, was carried as the figure of the holy sacrament of the altar. Hence, it is plain how justly due to God, and how consonant to faith and reason these processions are. But, in regard to these the clergy should take pains, by instruction and watchfulness, to promote devotion; and to establish whatever order requires.

Why are the beginnings of the four Gospels sung at four different altars?

To signify: 1. That all four Gospels, with one voice, declare that the true Son of God became also true man, to redeem us; and, as the true bread of heaven, to convey life eternal to the redeemed. 2. That all men, from all the four quarters of heaven, nay, the whole creation of heaven and earth, should have part in the redemption by Jesus, and in salvation and happiness through him.

(On this feast, and throughout the octave, a plenary indulgence may be gained by all who hear at holy mass with a pure conscience.)

In joy for these benefits, the Church sings at the Introit of the Mass: *He fed them with the fat of wheat, allelujah; and filled them with honey out of the rock, allelujah, allelujah* (Ps. lxxx.) *Rejoice to God our helper, sing aloud to the God of Jacob.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who in this wonderful sacrament hast left us a memorial of thy passion, grant us, we beseech thee, so to reverence the sacred mysteries of thy body and blood, that we may ever perceive within us the fruit of thy redemption, through Christ.

Epistle. (1 Cor. xi. 23-29.)

Brethren: For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you: that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat, this is my body which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come. Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.

Explanation.

St. Paul, by the first words of this epistle, would say, that he had received the doctrine of the most blessed sacrament, at the institution of which he was not present, by immediate revelation from Jesus Christ himself. He now communicates to the Corinthians, in writing, the same instruction in regard to it, which he had previously given them by word of mouth.

Instruction on the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

What is the holy Sacrament of the Altar?

It is that sacrament in which, after the words of its institution have been spoken by the priest, Jesus Christ is present, whole and entire, in his Godhead and in his manhood, under the appearance of bread and wine, not in figure, but in truth, not in belief only, but in act, not as something besides the bread and wine, but in his own substance, so that the bread is changed into the body and the wine into the blood of Jesus, and only the appearances of those elements remain.

When and how did Jesus institute this sacrament?

At the last supper. In the night, before he was betrayed, he took bread, and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "*Take and eat, for this is my body which will be given for you.*" In the same manner, he took the chalice and said, "*Take and drink, for this chalice is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink from it in commemoration of me.*"

What did Jesus effect by these words?

He changed bread and wine into his most precious body and blood.

Has he given to others the power to do the same?

Yes; to his Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests, in these words, "*Do this in commemoration of me.*"

What takes place at the words of consecration?

Bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and only the outward appearances of bread and wine remain.

What do we understand by outward appearances?

What is outwardly subject to our senses, as the color, shape, and taste of bread and wine.

How, then, is Jesus present in this most holy sacrament ?

He is present, truly, really, and substantially in his divinity and humanity, in flesh and blood, in body and soul, under the appearances of bread and wine.

Why do we believe this ?

1. Because the words of Jesus do not reasonably admit of any other meaning : since by them we perceive, (*a*) that Jesus gave to his disciples a certain nourishment which they were to eat ; (*b*) that this nourishment, as to appearance, was bread and wine, but Jesus called the bread his body, which was afterwards to be sacrificed for us, and the wine, his blood which was to be shed for us : this food consequently was not bread and wine, but, under the appearance of bread and wine, was indeed his body and blood ; since what he gave for our redemption was not bread and wine, but his true body and his true blood ; (*c*) that, as the body and blood of Jesus were inseparable from his soul and divinity, he gave himself up for our nourishment, whole and undivided, as he hung, bled, and died upon the cross ; (*d*) that he commanded what he had done to be continued until he should come again (1 Cor. xi. 26), that is, until the end of the world ; and that he, (*e*) on account of this being his testament, and the new law, was not at liberty to speak figuratively, but plainly and distinctly.

2. Because the Apostles preached this very doctrine. In particular, St. Paul, whom our Lord had specially instructed, says most expressly, as the epistle of to-day shows, that he that eateth and drinketh unworthily maketh himself guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and eateth judgment to himself, not distinguishing the body of the Lord from common food. But how could he say this if Christ were only figuratively and not truly and really present ?

3. Because the Catholic Church, the pillar and foundation of truth, has thus constantly taught, from the Apostles' times down to the present day, as the oldest Councils and the Holy Fathers unanimously testify. The faith of Catholics is therefore founded upon the words of Jesus and the teaching of the

Apostles, and so entirely that we might say, that he could not have intended to teach us the truth, unless his words were to be thus understood. This Catholic faith, moreover, is as old as Christianity, and as universal as the Catholic Church. What reason, therefore, can non-Catholics and Rationalists bring against it? Are they wiser than the Holy Fathers, more infallible than the Councils of the Church, nearer to the fountain than Paul, Ignatius, Justin? Perhaps they consider this mystery an impossibility? But what is impossible to him who has created and preserved heaven and earth, who has changed water into wine, who has given life to the dead, and raised himself from the grave? And is it not then enough for men, who must confess all their knowledge to be only in part, to know that God has so said, to submit and believe? Or are new believers offended that they should eat the flesh and blood of Christ? So, too, were the Jews, but they received for answer, that without this food they could have no life in them (John vi. 54). That was, indeed, the very will of Jesus, to give himself to be our food; and that is the fulness of love and consolation for us, that we receive him, and *with* him, all things—the fulness of grace and the pledge of immortality, as he predicted (John vi.)

[This instruction is continued after the gospel.]

Aspiration.

O most benign Jesus, hidden under the appearance of bread, by the love with which thou gavest thyself in this holy sacrament, to be the food of souls, strengthen and increase in me and all thy people faith in this holy sacrament, and grant that we may approach it only after an earnest examination and cleansing of conscience, that we may receive, not our condemnation, but life everlasting. Amen.

Gospel. (John vi. 56–59.)

At that time, Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: My flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed: he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me,

the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever.

What is the meaning of the words, *my flesh is meat indeed?*

Jesus had, on the day before he spoke these words, fed five thousand persons with five loaves of bread; when the Jews on that account followed him to the other side of the Lake of Genesareth, Jesus said to them, that they ought to seek, not that bread which perishes, but the living bread which the Son of man would give them. They, not content with so many signs which he had given them, asked, as a ground for believing in him, a particular sign from heaven, such as was the manna under the Old Law. Jesus answered them, "*Moses gave to your fathers manna from heaven, and all who ate of it died. But I am the living bread which came from heaven; whosoever eats this bread shall live forever; for the bread which I will give you is my flesh.*"

While the Jews disputed about this, and while many even of his own disciples, were offended that they should eat his flesh, and thereupon forsook him, Jesus again repeated expressly, that his *flesh was meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and whoso should eat of this bread, should live forever.* Could he have said more plainly that he would give himself—his flesh and blood—to be the food of men?

How are the words to be understood, *he that eateth my flesh, &c., abideth in me, and I in him?*

In these words Jesus points out the manner in which, by means of this sacrament, he unites himself with man. Whoever accordingly receives Jesus, is united with him, not only by sanctifying grace, but also in such a real manner that Jesus and man become, as it were, one. Jesus lives and works in man, purifies and sanctifies him, directly, by his own presence, so that as the Son lives through the Father, in like manner man lives through the Son. For which reason St. Chrysostom calls this sacrament "the mingling of Christ with man;" St. Cyril, "the communication not only of the love, but also of the nature

of Christ." The holy Church calls it "communion," because man thereby enters into a living fellowship with Christ, and in him, with all who receive him.

Why did Jesus say, *this is the bread which came down from heaven?*

He wished thereby to instruct the Jews that the bread which he should give them, like the manna, came down from heaven, and was, indeed, the only true bread from heaven. The manna was but a type, and could only prolong the life of the body, but not perpetuate even that; far less could it convey a life that should be spiritual and eternal. The type was now to be fulfilled; the bread that he was about to give them would impart to them eternal life, and this bread should be his flesh,—himself, who truly came from heaven, to redeem mankind, and to bring them to life everlasting. Jesus calls his flesh bread, partly on account of its likeness to the manna, partly on account of its effect; for as bread nourishes the body, and sustains the earthly life, so the body of Christ, in the holy sacrament, nourishes the soul, and imparts to it, continually, a new, divine, and everlasting life.

Aspiration.

O Lord, what happiness is our portion, that thou art the food of our souls, that we live by thee, that we are permitted to receive thee within us, as the author of holiness, and the pledge of everlasting happiness. But we cannot receive thee worthily unless thou assist us with thy grace. Come, then, to us, and prepare thyself in us a worthy abode, and remain in us, that we may worthily receive thee, and enjoy, here and hereafter, the blessedness of possessing thee.

Instruction on the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar continued.

What are the effects of this sacrament?

As this sacrament conveys, not only one or several graces, but the author of all graces, and in, and with him, all good, so also the effects of it are infinite. It nourishes the soul, communicates a taste for divine things, cleanses from daily faults,

frailties, and imperfections; guards against mortal sins, supplies invincible strength against all temptations, increases sanctifying grace, and is to the worthy communicant the pledge of everlasting life—to the *worthy communicant*; for he who *receives unworthily*, incurs frightful sin, separates himself still further from God, and eats therein judgment to himself, that is, eternal damnation!

The effects of this sacrament are described by the fathers in the most touching manner. St. Chrysostom says, that those who receive worthily return from this holy table like fiery lions, that is, bold, unterrified, and firm against all assaults of the devil, the world, and the flesh. St. Ambrose says: Would you have your wounds healed? This sacrament is your cure. Do you desire help? Here is strength for you. Are you sorely assailed? God has, in this sacrament, prepared a table before you, against them that afflict you (Ps. xxii. 5). St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that no sacrament is so beneficial as this, since it extirpates sins (anger, envy, avarice, jealousy), represses evil inclinations, procures virtues, and adorns the soul with spiritual gifts.

How eager, then, should we be to receive this most holy sacrament often! How soon, then, would families—how soon would the whole Church, put on a new appearance! The first Christians received it daily, and hence came the purity of their morals; their zeal in the service of God; their disdain of earthly goods, honors, and pleasures; their strength in sorrow and suffering, in torments and martyrdoms; their holiness of life; their hope of the life to come; for they lived and suffered, as it were, not of themselves, but it was Christ, dwelling in them by the holy sacrament, who lived and suffered in them. Were they hindered by persecution from assembling to receive holy communion, they carried the consecrated host with them, by it to strengthen themselves for the hour of combat. When we now see in Christians so much indifference, weakness, lawlessness, whence should all this so likely come, as from infrequent or unworthy communions? Learn, Christian, to understand this; and in order to obtain light, strength, and all graces, come where they are ready prepared for you, in over-

flowing measure and with unbounded love. Come often to this Fountain; though not every day, yet every fortnight, or at least every month. Have mercy on yourselves; make some return for the love of your Redeemer. Come and be warmed with the fire of eternal love! But when you come, prepare yourselves worthily beforehand, that you may receive, not judgment, but eternal life.

How is one to prepare himself beforehand?

1. By cleansing his soul from all mortal sins by a sincere and contrite confession, and by striving to possess faith, reverence, humility, and a holy longing to receive Christ. 2. By remaining fasting from midnight (from which rule the sick are exempt), and by showing veneration for the sacrament, by external respectfulness and propriety of demeanor.

Why is communion given only in one kind?

1. The Church gives holy communion only under one kind, to guard against abuses; for example, the spilling of the wine; 2. In opposition to those who hold that communion can only be received under both kinds, to hold fast the true doctrine, which is that Christ, whole and undivided, the entire sacrament is received under one kind. The truth of this doctrine is plain from this, that where the living body of Christ is, there is the whole Christ; that Christ promises eternal life to him who eats this bread alone (John. vi. 59), and finally, that there is no divine law which commands the receiving of this sacrament under both kinds.

How is this sacrament administered?

The attendants of the priest first say the *Confiteor*, during which those that are to communicate go up to the rail before the altar, kneel down there, and, taking the communion cloth, hold it before their breasts in such manner that, if any particle of the consecrated host should fall, it might not fall upon the floor, but be received upon the cloth.

After the *Confiteor*, the priest, turning towards the communicants, says, "May Almighty God have mercy on you, for give you your sins, and bring you to life everlasting. Amen."

"May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution, and remission of all your sins. Amen."

Then the priest, taking the particles of the blessed sacrament, and holding one of them, which he elevates a little over the pix or paten, pronounces the following words: "Ecce Agnus Dei," &c.; that is, "Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who taketh away the sins of the world." He then repeats three times the words of the centurion, "Domine non sum dignus," &c., "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; speak but only the word, and my soul shall be healed." Every one present should repeat these words with the priest, striking at the same time on the breast. The priest then gives holy communion, making the sign of the cross with the consecrated particle over each of the communicants, and saying to each, "Corpus Domini nostri," &c.; that is, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen." The saying of the Confiteor, and of the words of the centurion, are the expression of sorrow, humility, and veneration; the words of the priest at distributing the consecrated hosts, indicate the most excellent effects of this holy sacrament.

Why is this sacrament kept in the tabernacle, and exposed for adoration?

That Jesus may be always present with us; that we may have a continual remembrance of his boundless love for us, and that the sick, in danger of death, may be quickly strengthened with the bread of life. A light is kept at all hours burning before it, to point out and honor the presence of Christ, the Light of the world, and also to indicate that every Christian, and every Christian community, should be spiritually a burning light before the Lord.

The object of the blessed sacrament being often exposed and carried in procession, is the adoration of Jesus, the public profession of faith, the promotion of the love of God, and of devotion.

Attend, therefore, these services with devoutness and veneration.

Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Although many pious souls had been accustomed, in the silence of their secluded lives, to venerate the Sacred Heart of Jesus with great devotion, as we see in St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis of Sales, St. Ignatius, St. Clare, St. Gertrude, St. Matilda, St. Catharine of Sienna, St. Teresa, and others, yet still our divine Saviour desired that the boundless love of his heart might be known by all men, and that a new fire of love should thereby be kindled in the cold hearts of Christians. For this purpose he made use of a frail and little-known instrument, that the whole world might perceive that the hitherto unheard-of devotion to his loving heart was his own work. This instrument, disregarded by men, but shining with the splendor of sublime virtues before God, was a nun, by name Margaret Mary Alacoque, of the order of the Visitation, at Paray, in Burgundy. The divine Saviour often appeared to this pure spouse of his, whom he had exalted by the most difficult and protracted exercises of humility to be the fit instrument of his design, and showed her his loving Heart, as it were, upon a throne, surrounded by flames transparent like crystal, shining far more brightly than the sun. The wound which had pierced it, when his side was opened on the cross, was plainly seen; it was encircled with thorns, and over it shone the victorious sign of love, the holy cross.

One day, when, according to her custom during the octave of Corpus Christi, she was deeply engaged in devotions before the blessed Sacrament, the divine Saviour again appeared to her, showed her his heart burning with love, and said, "Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much that it has spared nothing, that it has even exhausted and consumed itself in showing its love to them. Instead of gratitude, I receive from the greater part of them nothing but ingratitude, in their contempt, disrespect, sacrilege, and indifference towards me in this sacrament of love. What is most painful to me is, that those very hearts that are dedicated to me, thus act against me. I

desire, therefore, of you to procure that the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi be observed as a particular feast for the veneration of my Heart, by solemn petitions for pardon, and by devout reception of the holy communion, with the intention of making amends for those undeserved cruelties which my heart has suffered, while I have been exposed upon the altar. I promise you that my heart shall pour out abundantly the influence of its divine love on those who pay it such honor themselves, or cause such honor to be shown by others."

Margaret obeyed, but met everywhere the greatest opposition, until finally, when she became mistress of novices, she succeeded, by the help of her divine Spouse, in animating them to venerate the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But this was not sufficient for her zeal. Still she endeavored, amid continued contradictions, to fulfil the command of Jesus, who himself finally interposed, softened the opposition of the nuns, and kindled in all of them an equal devotion towards his most sacred heart. Thence the devotion spread into the adjoining dioceses, where confraternities in honor of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus soon sprung up. Pope Clement XIII., after having instituted a most rigorous examination of the whole affair, commanded that the feast of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus should be solemnly celebrated throughout the whole Catholic Church every year, on the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi.

ON THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

I. *Object of this Devotion.*

In the divine heart of our Saviour we must not imagine an inanimate heart, separated from the person of Christ, but the living heart of the God-man, the centre of all his affections, the fountain of all his virtues, the most touching emblem of his infinite love to man. For in like manner the Catholic Church venerates the cross, the blood, and the wounds of the divine Saviour, by feasts which have their proper masses and lessons, in order, by meditation upon these objects, to awaken in us a more fervent devotion to the Redeemer, who, for us, shed his

blood on the cross, and for our sakes received those wounds, which, as a token of his immense love for us, he was pleased to retain after his resurrection, and to carry with him to heaven, and which, at the final judgment, he will one day show to us. But the sacred heart of our Saviour must be a far worthier object of devotion, since all its thoughts, movements, and affections aim at our salvation, and since it is always ready to receive truly penitent sinners, to pardon them, to restore them again to his favor, and to make them partakers of eternal happiness. Accordingly, the saints, as was mentioned above, always cherished a tender devotion towards this most sacred heart. "Longinus," says St. Augustine, "opened with a spear the side of Jesus Christ: there I enter and rest in safety." St. Bernard cries, "Oh, how good, how delightful is it, for one to make his abode in this heart! In this temple, in this sanctuary, before this ark of the covenant, I will adore and praise the name of the Lord in the words of the prophet, 'I have found the heart of Jesus, my king, my brother, my friend.'" "Believe me, O ye blind men," says St. Bonaventure, "if you knew how, through the sacred wounds, to enter into the heart of Jesus, you would find there not only wonderful delight for your souls, but most sweet rest, also, for your bodies. But if the body finds rest therein, how great do you think is the delight which the spirit receives, when united, through these wounds, with the heart of Jesus!" St. Peter Damian expresses himself in a manner not less beautiful: "In this adorable heart we find arms to defend ourselves against enemies, medicines for our healing, powerful assistance against temptations, the sweetest consolations in suffering, and the purest joys in this valley of tears."

But St. Matilda and St. Gertrude were especially moved by the sweetness of this adorable heart, to adore it fervently; and St. Gertrude, enlightened by the Spirit of God, spoke the prophetic words, "The Lord preserved the devotion towards his most sacred heart for the later centuries, as the last effort of his divine love."

We have seen above how these words of St. Gertrude were fulfilled by the blessed Margaret. Would that the fervent de-

sire of Jesus, that all men should know and love his most sacred heart, might be fulfilled!

II. *Excellence of this Devotion.*

It is, writes the blessed P. Simon Gourdan :

1. *The most holy devotion*, for therein men venerate in Christ those affections and motions of his heart by which he sanctified the Church, glorified his Heavenly Father, and showed himself to men as a perfect example of the most sublime holiness.

2. *The oldest devotion* of the Catholic Church, which, instructed by St. Paul, the great Apostle, has at all times acknowledged the great beneficence of the divine and sacred heart of Jesus.

3. *The most approved devotion*, for the Holy Scriptures everywhere admonish us to renew the heart, by changing our lives; to penetrate it with true sorrow, to inflame it with divine love, and to adorn it by the practice of all virtues. When, therefore, a new heart is promised us, by which to direct our lives, that can be no other than the heart of Jesus, which is to us the pattern of all excellence, and which we must follow, if we would be saved.

4. *The most perfect devotion*, as being the origin of all other devotions. For the heart of Jesus is the inexhaustible treasury, from which the blessed Mother of God, and all other saints have derived their graces, their virtues, their life, their spiritual goods. Filled first with treasures from this source, different servants of God have instituted and established other devotions.

5. *The most profitable devotion*, for thereby we have brought before our eyes the very fountain of life and grace, and can draw directly from it, increasing in ourselves all virtues, by adoring this divine heart, meditating on its holy affections, and endeavoring to imitate them.

6. *The devotion most pleasing to God*, for thus we adore God, as Christ requires, in spirit and in truth, serving him inwardly in our hearts, and endeavoring to please him: finally—

7. *The most necessary devotion*, since it is the whole object

of it to unite us most intimately with Christ as members of him, her head, to make us live by and according to his spirit, to have one heart and soul with him, and through grace finally to become one with him, which is and must be the object of all devotions.

As this devotion is thus so excellent, we cannot sufficiently recommend it to all who are anxious about their salvation. Every one can, indeed, make this devotion, and adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by himself, but there is a greater blessing when pious souls unite in performing it, making for that purpose a confraternity. Of such confraternities there were in the year 1726 more than three hundred, and they are now established throughout all Catholic countries. Hesitate not, Christian soul, to engage in their devotion, and to join in the adoration of that Sacred Heart of Jesus in which all men find propitiation,—the pious confidence, sinners their hope, the afflicted their consolation, the sick their support, the dying their refuge, the elect their joy and delight.

The Introit of the Mass for this feast is, *He will have mercy according to the multitude of his mercies, for he hath not willingly afflicted nor cast off the children of men; the Lord is good to them that hope in him, to the soul that seeketh him, alleluia, alleluia* (Lamentations iii.) *The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever to generation and generation.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who, glorying in the most Sacred Heart of thy Son, commemorate the chief benefits of his charity towards us, may equally rejoice in their acts and fruits. Through the same Lord.

Epistle. (Isaias xii. 1-6.)

I will give thanks to thee, O Lord, for thou wast angry with me: thy wrath is turned away, and thou hast comforted me. Behold, God is my saviour. I will deal confidently, and will not fear: because the Lord is my strength, and my praise, and he has become my salvation. You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains: and you shall say in that day: Praise ye the Lord, and call upon his

name: make his works known among the people: remember that his name is high. Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath done great things: show this forth in all the earth. Rejoice, and praise, O thou habitation of Sion: for great is he that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel.

Explanation.

The words of this epistle are a song of gratitude for the deliverance of the Jews from the hands of their enemies, and at the same time a prophecy of the future redemption of mankind from sin and death, through Jesus Christ. "*You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.*" These fountains are the graces which Christ has obtained for us on the cross, but particularly, says St. Augustine, the holy sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, flowing into the Church from the opened side of the Saviour. We should rejoice over these graces, particularly that the Holy One of Israel, Jesus, the Son of God, is in the midst of Sion, that is, the Catholic Church, in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, remaining therein until the end of time.

Oh, let us often approach the ever-flowing fountain of all graces, the most holy Eucharist, and draw thence with confidence, consolation, assistance, strength, and power from this fountain of love!

Gospel. (John xix. 31-35.)

At that time, the Jews (because it was the parasceve), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day (for that was a great sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came: and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony: and his testimony is true.

Practice.

According to the Jewish law, a criminal could not be put to death, nor could the dead body of one who had been executed

remain upon the place of execution, on the Sabbath-day. The Jews, therefore, demanded of Pilate the burial of the bodies of Jesus and the two thieves; but before this could be done, according to the Roman law, the legs of the crucified must first be broken with an iron mace: this was accordingly done by the soldiers to the two thieves; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, one of the soldiers, whose name was Longinus, with a spear opened his side; all which had been predicted by the prophets. Jesus permitted his most Sacred Heart to be opened, 1. To atone for those sins which come forth from the hearts of men, as Christ himself says, "*For from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies* (Matt. xv. 19). 2. To show the infinite love with which he first loved us, and to which the spear should point us. 3. To show that there was nothing so dear to him that he would not give it to us, since, for our salvation, he shed the last drop of his heart's blood. 4. To provide, as it were, an abode in his opened side, according to the words of St. Augustine: "The Evangelist is very cautious in his language; for he said, not the soldier *pierced* or *wounded* his side, but he *opened* it, that thereby there might be opened to us the door from which flow into the Church those holy sacraments without which we cannot enter into true life."

When temptation assails us, or sorrow depresses us, let us flee to this abode, and dwell therein until the storm has passed away; according to the words of the Prophet, "*Enter thou into the rock, and hide thee in the pit*" (Isaias ii. 10). For what is the rock but Christ, and the pit, but his wound?

An Act of Resignation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Whoever says the following prayer before the image of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, with sincere sorrow for his sins, gains each time, an indulgence of one hundred days; and by saying it daily for a month, he can on any one day gain a plenary indulgence, if he make his confession, receive communion, and pray according to the intention of the Church.

My loving Jesus, I (N. N.) give thee my heart; and I consecrate myself wholly to thee, out of the grateful love I bear thee, and as a reparation for all my unfaithfulness to grace; and with thine aid I purpose never to sin again.

Second Sunday after Pentecost.

On this Sunday also, the Church, in consideration of God's love towards us, animates us to love him, and our neighbor, and sings at the Introit of the Mass, *The Lord became my protector, and he brought me forth into a large place; he saved me because he was well pleased with me* (Ps. xvii.) *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, O Lord, that we may have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name, for thou never ceasest to direct and govern, by thy grace, those whom thou instructest in the solidity of thy love. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 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 put 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.

Explanation.

St. John, in this epistle, teaches us the following truths: 1. We must not wonder that the world hates the Christian. Indeed, the true Christian must shun and condemn the world,

and what is in the world: his life is not regulated by the principles of the world. How, therefore, could it be otherwise than that the world should hate the true Christian? Such has always been the fact. 2. That one is a true Christian may be known by his loving his neighbor. For as it belongs to a child of this world, to the wicked, to the godless, to hate and persecute the good man, whose life contradicts their own, so, on the other hand, love of one's neighbor, of one's enemy and persecutor, is the mark by which to know whether a man is truly regenerated and translated from the death of sin to spiritual life. *For he that loveth not, abideth in death*—cannot become a child of God, who is love; has not in him the life of God; rather he is a murderer, because his lack of love, and his hatred, have first deprived him of spiritual life, and next, become the source of all other offences against his neighbor, of scandal, of seduction like Satan, of murder like Cain. *But no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself.* 3. True love, like God's, of which it is the offshoot and image, is active and sacrificing, giving up, like Jesus, life itself, when necessary, and that for its enemies. Have we this love, this token of Christianity in us? Does not our love rather consist in mere compliments and idle demonstrations of friendship, while we waste to no purpose our real ability *to assist others*? If this be so, how can we stand before God?

Aspiration.

O God, who art love, give me a heart full of active love, that I may love my neighbor not in word only, but in works of mercy, and thereby show how much I love thee. Amen.

Gospel. (Luke xiv. 16-24.)

At that time, Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant, at the hour of supper, to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him, I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try

them: I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges; and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper.

How is the parable of the Great Supper to be understood?

At the supper to which Jesus was invited by one of the principal Pharisees, one of the company at table had said, *Blessed is he who can feast in the kingdom of God.* From these words Jesus took occasion to compare the kingdom of God with a great supper.

The supper is the kingdom of God upon earth, the Church of Christ, in which are deposited all the treasures of grace, for the nourishment, strengthening, and sanctification of our souls. It is a *Great Supper*, because the Church is to take in all men of all times.

Jesus, the God-man, himself prepares this supper by establishing his Church. The servant represents the Apostles and the successors whom he sends into all the world, to call both Jews and Gentiles. The first invited were the Jews, to whom the coming of the Messiah had been announced beforehand, and who were the first called to the Church.

What is denoted by the excuses of those invited?

The causes why the Jews were not converted to Christianity, such as pride, avarice, covetousness, and sensuality. They also denote the reasons why so many either fail to enter the Catholic Church, or live to her disgrace. Thus, he who bought a farm and went to see it, signifies those proud and avaricious men who seek only for temporal goods, and put aside all care for their souls; he who wished to try his five yoke of oxen represents those too-busy persons, who so overload themselves with a thousand earthly cares and labors, that they find no time to do any thing for God and heaven; he, finally, who

could not come on account of his wife, stands for those sensual persons who, through the lusts and pleasures of sense, render themselves insensible to heavenly joys.

Now as the Jews, by such worthless excuses, had shown themselves unworthy to be received into the kingdom of God, they were accordingly shut out, and others called in their stead.

Who are these others?

First, the humble and docile Jews, who, in respect to their dispositions, were the opposite of the proud, avaricious, and sensual Pharisees; and in the next place those Gentiles prepared for Christianity, who, through the Apostles and their successors, were brought into the Church from the four quarters of the world.

In what other sense may this parable be understood?

St. Gregory, and with him the holy Church, applies it, 1. To the most holy sacrament of the altar, with reference to which it is read on this Sunday. That is, indeed, a feast to which all are invited, which offers the fulness of graces and spiritual gifts, and is, therefore, fitly called a *great* feast; it is despised by the sensual, proud, and earthly; but to the penitent, the humble, the loving, it conveys innumerable blessings and inestimable benefits. 2. It represents, also, the eternal happiness in which all the saints partake, of never-ending spiritual delights. And, in this regard, how great is not this feast? It is God who has made it ready; the house is heaven, the guests are all the children of God—the angels and saints from the beginning of the world—the joy is immeasurable and everlasting.

But with what scorn is it despised and bartered away, as once the Gospel was by the Jews, by avaricious men, overburdened with business, to which they give up even Sundays and holydays; by sensual men, who put no restraint upon themselves, and deny themselves in nothing. What folly! Thus pursuing earthly riches and pleasures, they will be shut out from the kingdom of heaven, while the poor, the miserable, the low and humble, the penitent, shall be brought in by the sweet compulsion of the Lord, and made to partake of his heavenly feast.

Aspiration.

I thank thee, O merciful Jesus, that thou hast called me into thy Church, to the reception of the most holy sacrament, and to life eternal. O compel me, and continually urge me to deny myself, to combat the world and the flesh, with their pleasures, and make me, at last, partaker of thy eternal joys. Amen.

Practical Lessons against Unchasteness.

“I have married a wife, and therefore cannot come.”—*Luke* xiv. 20.

By thus introducing a wedding as an excuse, Jesus did not intend to say that matrimony would generally exclude persons from the kingdom of heaven. That man might have come to the supper notwithstanding his marriage, had he not been detained by an inordinate love of sensual pleasures. What Jesus, therefore, points out as a hinderance to entering into the kingdom of heaven is unchasteness; that is, the violation of modesty, either in thought, imagination, and desire, in gesture, words, dress, or actions; thus he would show us how detestable, shameful, and pernicious is this vice, which makes men so miserable, and incite us to purity and chastity, in whatever state of life we may live.

Indeed, how lovely and happy are the pure in heart! They are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who lives in and rules over them, and makes all their thoughts, deeds, and desires pleasing to God; they are the joy of angels and of men, the ornament and happiness of families, the crown of the holy Church, and they shall one day see God (*Matt.* v. 8).

On the other hand, how wretched do impure men make themselves!

1. They desecrate the temple of the Holy Ghost, and drive him out from their hearts, to make room therein for the unclean spirit. Thereupon enter in impure imaginations and lusts, and a thousand sinful inclinations: distractions, longings for pleasure, coquetry, falsehood, dishonesty, envy, take the place of purity, love, pious faith, peace, joy, delight in God, and heavenly things. Nay, they make themselves incapable any longer to understand diviue things (*1 Cor.* ii. 14).

2. They give up the body, which is a member of Christ, to the service of sin ; base pleasures destroy their health, weaken the powers of the soul, defile and disgrace the hitherto pure body, which should one day rise gloriously from the dead.

3. They sin against all mankind, bring themselves and their parents to shame and dishonor, become only too often the betrayers of innocent souls, and contract consequently innumerable sins, since by scandal and temptation they lead others thereto.

4. How miserable will the impure be ! History is witness to the terrible judgments and punishments of God upon this sin. He compares idolatry to it, as if unchasteness were the more shameful and punishable of the two. On account of this sin, he repented of having created mankind, and brought the flood upon the earth, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone (Gen. xix. 24), cut off the brothers Her and Onan by sudden death (Gen. xxxviii. 7, 10), and gave nearly the whole tribe of Benjamin to be slain (Judges xx. 47). And what are all these punishments, in comparison with those that await the unchaste hereafter ? He is shut out from the kingdom of God ; for no fornicator, nor adulterer, nor one who pollutes himself, nor one who defiles himself with mankind, can possess the kingdom of God (1 Cor. vi. 9). His portion shall be the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, and the brimstone in which he and Satan, whom he has followed, shall suffer eternal torments. O Christian, tremble before this sin.

And let no one excuse himself that he has committed no grievous sin. In this case, there is nothing trivial ; all is done with the consent of the will ; the thoughts, gestures, looks, words, desires, embraces, kisses, and such like, which one causes, gives, or receives, are mortal sins, and exclude one from the kingdom of heaven. It is the eternal truth which says, *Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart* (Matt. v. 28).

One thing more completes the miserable condition of the unchaste. By a sincere conversion he might at least escape eternal punishment, but how hard is it for him from his heart

to turn to God! *For a hot soul is a burning fire; it will never be quenched till it devours something* (Ecclus. xxiii. 22, 23). Desire becomes an irresistible inclination; act forms an invincible habit, which makes light of all common means, frustrates the firmest resolutions, checks the working of the holy sacraments, and makes the heart dull and insensible to all higher objects. Besides, as it belongs to true conversion to make amends for the consequences of one's sins, how hard must be the conversion of an unchaste person, if he is obliged to repair the consequences of his sins, against himself or against others?

Oh, think of this in season, and strive to keep chastity undefiled; or, if thou hast lost it, use with zeal the means of recovery.

The following means will aid you if you have the will, but without the will no means will preserve you, or rescue you from perdition.

1. Avoid, (a) *Idleness*, which breeds all kinds of evil thoughts, desires, and fancies; (b) *The reading of impure books*, which pollute the imagination, weaken the disposition for labor, and gradually remove the hatred of this vice; (c) *Excess in eating and drinking*, by which the passions are excited, and the reason so stupefied as to be incapable of making any resistance; (d) *Bad company*, for to the companies where impudent youths and forward young women meet, sin, death, and Satan also resort; (e) *Gatherings by night*, under whatever pretext they may be held. At first very likely harmless, by degrees they kindle a burning flame that destroys soul and body. Experience teaches this.

2. Preserve, (a) *Modesty*, which is a hedge against all impurity; (b) *Reverence towards yourself*—you are the temple of God, and his image; (c) *Reverence towards God*. “How shall I sin against God?” Thus bethink yourself, and you will not fall; (d) *Remembrance of Jesus*, of his passion and death. Alas! shouldst thou corrupt what he, by his bitter passion, has sanctified? (e) *Recollection of death, judgment, and hell*. What you sow, that shall you reap. Impurity earns for itself everlasting fire; how will you be able to endure it?

3. *Flee the first sin*; dread the first thought, the first motion; avoid, also, what appears a trifling thing, if it offend modesty. From little things come the great, and what are great now will soon appear small.

4. *Be zealous in prayer to God*, and to the immaculate virgin and mother, Mary.

5. *Restrain your senses*, particularly your eyes. Learn to be abstemious, and to deny yourself even lawful enjoyments and pleasures, that you may the more easily give up those that are unlawful. Chastise your body, by depriving yourself of delicate things, by penitential garments, and scourges.

6. *Watch always*, and especially on occasions that cannot be avoided.

7. *Finally*, receive often the holy sacrament, and choose a zealous confessor, in whom you place entire confidence, and whom you follow as your father. Think on God; combat on every occasion *promptly*, without making terms; call confidently on God for help, and you will carry off the victory, and become worthy, one day, to be a follower of the Lamb.

Third Sunday after Pentecost.

On this Sunday the Church calls on us to be converted, and to endure our trials patiently. Accordingly, at the Introit of the Mass, she invites the sinner to call on the Lord, with confidence and humility. *Look thou upon me and have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am alone and poor. See my abjectness and my labor, and forgive all my sins, O my God (Ps. xxiv.) To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul; in thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, the protector of those who hope in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, multiply thy mercy upon us, that under thy rule and guidance, we may so pass

through the goods of time, as not to forfeit those of eternity
Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 Pet. v. 6-11.)

Dearly beloved: Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation. Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you. Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you. To him be glory and empire forever and ever. Amen.

Explanation.

In these words, St. Peter teaches us, that he who would one day be exalted should humble himself under the mighty hand of God, and accept whatever bitter trials are sent from heaven with a heart full of faith and confidence; further, that the devil is always seeking to draw us into sin, but that he is always easily conquered by men, through God's assistance; when, namely, they use diligently the proper means thereto—sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer: and, finally, that after the short trials of this life, God will receive us into everlasting glory.

Do we need any thing more to encourage us to faith and confidence in God, to love of God, to patience and constancy?

Practical Advice against Drunkenness.

“Be sober and watch.”—1 Peter v. 8.

St. Peter prescribes sobriety and watchfulness as necessary means for resisting the attacks of the devil, who by day and night goes about seeking whom he may devour. Woe to those whom in their drunkenness and lethargy he finds defenceless; for how shall they escape his furious wrath? A drunken and drowsy soldier is the sure prey of his enemies; in like manner will every Christian, without fail, be overcome by every temptation, and fall into every snare set for him, who,

by drunkenness, extinguishes the light of reason, and lives, as it were, in unbroken stupor and senselessness. For this reason, the Saviour warns us to watch and take heed (Matt. xxvi. 41), lest we at any time make our hearts heavy by excess in eating and drinking (Matt. xxiv. 49; Luke xxi. 34), that death may not come upon us like a thief in the night, unexpected and unprepared for.

Let us, therefore, shun this vice, and, that we may do so effectually, reflect how disgraceful and deadly it is.

Is it not shameful that man, endowed with reason and created for the joys of heaven, should drown that reason, which constitutes his likeness to God, in excess of drink, and make himself like the brutes, and even lower than the brutes? For what animal, what ox or ass, will continue to drink after he has quenched his thirst? Are not, therefore, cries out St. Chrysostom, drunkards far more unreasonable and malicious than those brutes? Yes, so indeed it is; and that not only on account of intemperance, but by reason also of the scandalous gestures, words, and actions which proceed from them in their drunkenness. How scandalously lay Noe, naked in his tent (though made drunk without his fault), the derision of the shameless Cham! (1 Gen. ix. 21.) The old Romans were accustomed, by way of making their children hate this vice, to make one of their slaves drunk, and then to point out to them the disorder and shameful behavior of a drunkard, to impress upon them abhorrence of such a state.

But what ought to deter any one from drunkenness is, further, the perniciousness of this vice. It ruins body and soul. Thousands, countless thousands, have by drunkenness found their death (Ecclus. xxxvii. 34), and still more have destroyed their health. *Who hath woe? Whose father hath woe? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cups* (Prov. xxiii. 29, 30). This truth is established by daily examples, and the miserable old age, afflicted with innumerable infirmities and disorders, of such as are addicted to drunkenness, is sufficient evidence how ruinous this vice is.

Besides, drunkenness is the mother of extravagance (Eph. v. 18); it opens gate and door to all sins. In his drunkenness, Lot, otherwise pious, defiled his own daughter. Oh, would that all might well weigh this, and make one of the necessary preventives against this vice, which prevails so greatly, and which is the source of so much want and poverty, of so many quarrels and dissensions in families! Would, especially, that all young women who fear God, and have as yet escaped corruption, might reflect upon this, and avoid all occasions of associating with drunkards, or of frequenting places of amusement with them. For, to what dangers of losing their innocence do they not, in such ways, expose themselves! Much more should they take care never to marry a man who is a drunkard, or a frequenter of drinking places. For how much care, sorrow, and wretchedness would they not, in that case, bring on themselves, and to what danger, of being forever lost, would they not expose themselves and their children!

But from the temporal, let us turn to the eternal consequences of this sin. What will and must become of those who, by reason of their drunkenness, live in a continual night, and lie in the perpetual sleep of sin? How will it be with them, when they are suddenly awakened from this sleep by death, and find themselves standing, burdened with innumerable and unknown sins, before the judgment-seat of God? For who can number the sins committed in, and by reason of drunkenness, but which the drunkard either makes account of only as trifles, easily pardoned, or else, from not knowing what he has thought, said, and done in his fit of intoxication, considers to be no sins at all?

Will the Divine Judge, at the last day, thus reckon? Will he also find no sin in them? Will he let go unpunished the infamous deeds and the scandals of their drunkenness? He who demands strict account of every word spoken in vain, will he make no inquiry of so many shameful, scandalous, and blasphemous sayings, of so much time wasted, of so much money squandered, of some many neglects of the divine service, of the education of children, of the affairs of home, and of innumerable other sins? Will they be able to excuse them-

selves before this Judge, by saying that they did not know what they were doing? or that all took place without reflection, or in jest? or that they were of feeble strength, and could not bear much? Will not such excuses rather witness against them that they are the more worthy of punishment, for having taken more than their strength could bear, thereby depriving themselves of the use of reason, making themselves like brutes, and, of their own free will, taking on themselves the responsibility for all the sins of which their drunkenness was the occasion?

What, then, awaits them? What else than the fate of the rich glutton, who, for his gluttony, was burned in hell (Luke xvi. 22)? Yes, this shall be the place and the portion of the drunkard! There shall they in vain sigh for a drop of water! There, for all the pleasures and satisfactions which they had in the world, as many pains and torments shall now lay hold of them (Apoc. xviii. 7); there shall they be compelled to drain the cup of God's anger to the dregs, as they, in life, forced others into drunkenness. This is what they have to hope for, for St. Paul says expressly, that *drunkards* shall not possess the kingdom of God (1 Cor. vi. 10). What then remains for them, but to renounce either their intemperance or heaven?

But how rare and difficult is the true conversion of a drunkard! This is the teaching of experience. Will not such an one, therefore, go to ruin?

Gospel. (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 is there of you that hath an hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing: and coming home call together his friends and 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.

What caused the publicans and sinners to draw near to Jesus?

The friendliness and captivating goodness with which he met penitent sinners. Do you also draw near to him with a contrite heart, and be assured that, though you may be the greatest of sinners, he will receive you kindly, and grant you grace and forgiveness.

Why did the Pharisees murmur?

Because they thought themselves better than other men, and therefore avoided the company of sinners themselves, and required the same of others. True justice, says St. Gregory, has compassion for sinners, while false and hypocritical justice is angry with them. Love sinners, therefore, in imitation of Jesus, and if you can do nothing else, at least pray earnestly for their conversion.

What would Jesus teach by the parables of the lost sheep and the lost groat?

He desires, thereby, to show the proud Pharisees that he deserves no reproach for conversing kindly with sinners in order to convert them; for if the shepherd takes so much care and pains for a lost sheep, and a poor widow for a lost groat, and all this be thought right, how much more worthy of their approval is it, when he, the Good Shepherd, goes after and lovingly brings back his lost sheep, the sinner, who is of infinitely more consequence than all earthly things, and over whose conversion not men only, but angels also rejoice. Learn, hence, the greatness of the love of Jesus, with which he receives sinners (and consequently you also), brings them back to the Father, and reinstates them in the privileges of the children of God.

Why shall there be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance?

1. Because, by the conversion of sinners, the places of the fallen angels will be filled.

2. Because, for the penitent sinners, the passion of Christ is not in vain.

3. Because the guardian angels rejoice over the happiness of those committed to their care.

What is meant by the words, *there shall be more joy over one sinner that does penance than upon ninety and nine just who need not penance?*

Thereby it is not to be understood that the penitent sinner is more pleasing to God than ninety-nine just, but that, as men have a special joy over what they suppose to be lost, but found again, so also God, the angels, and saints have an extraordinary joy over the conversion of one sinner; and that, because they are good, truly love men; and because, in the conversion of the sinner, they see the glory, love, and power of God exalted. How long, sinner, will you delay to return to God, who with such love waits for you, and who has promised you such a reception?

Aspiration.

O Lord, what profit hast thou in the conversion of a sinner, that thou art thereby so greatly pleased? The happiness of one of thy poor creatures can add nothing to thine own. But thou lovest me, and therefore it is that thou art pleased if I return to thee. O my God, is it possible that I can know this, thy love, and remain any longer in sin?

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

With good confidence in God, say, with the priest, at the Introit of the Mass, *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? My enemies that troubled me have themselves been weakened and have fallen* (Ps. xxvi). *If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, O Lord, that the course of the world, by thy direction, may, in our regard, be peaceful; and that thy Church may rejoice in tranquil devotion. Through Christ, our Lord.

Epistle. (Rom. viii. 18-23.)

Brethren: I reckon, that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. 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.

Brief Lessons.

There is no better consolation under crosses and afflictions, no more powerful support in the adversities which happen to the virtuous and pious, than the thought that all the afflictions of the world are not to be compared with the glory to come, and *that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory* (2 Cor. iv. 17). And, therefore, St. Bede says, "If we had to bear for awhile the pains of hell, it would not appear so hard, if thereby we might merit to see Christ in his glory, and to be added to his saints."

Aspiration.

Ah! Lord, when shall we be freed from the bonds of this sinful body, and partake of that unspeakable glory which thou hast prepared for thy children? Who can sufficiently desire that glorious freedom which shall deliver us from so great misery, and so many temptations? But we desire it not, for we are yet too earthly-minded and too much given to the love

of our bodies. Cause us, O God, to feel the burden of our misery, that we may be thereby incited to desire ardently our deliverance.

Gospel. (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 into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said to him: Master, we have 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 broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of 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 catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him.

What may we learn from the multitude who pressed on Jesus to hear the word of God?

That we, also, should hear the word of God with great zeal, since it conveys to men the life of the soul (Matt. iv. 4) and eternal happiness (Luke xi. 28).

Why did Jesus teach the multitude out of the ship of Peter?

1. In order to be better understood by the people. 2. But this act has also a higher spiritual signification. The ship of Peter is the figure of the Church, to the headship of which this same Peter had been appointed by Christ, and we receive the true doctrine from that Church only (John xxi. 15, 16, 17). Amid all storms Jesus has preserved, and will preserve, this ship of his Church, till the end of time (Matt. xvi. 18). Peter yet stands at the helm, in the unbroken line of his successors;

Jesus yet teaches from the ship the same doctrines as before, by the mouth of bishops and priests, the assistants of St. Peter's successors; for whoso hears them hears him. Hear them, therefore, with willingness and docility.

What was signified by the great draught of fishes which the Apostles took, by the command of Jesus, after they had labored the whole night in vain?

1. It was to be a confirmation to his hearers of the doctrines which he had been teaching. 2. In regard to the disciples, also, it contained important truths. It was to them a type of their vocation, a pledge of their successful labors, and at the same time a lesson how to labor so as to gain the fruits. For as they had let down their nets for a draught, even so should they afterwards publish the doctrines of the Gospel, to win the souls of men to the kingdom of God. The exceeding and wonderful abundance of the draught of fishes was to assure them that their zealous labors to save souls should, in like manner, be crowned with rich success. In fact, does not all history confirm this? At the first preaching of St. Peter about three thousand were converted, and forthwith the Gospel was announced to the whole world by the Apostles and their successors, and millions after millions have since been received into the bosom of the Church. That the disciples, after laboring all the night in vain, should at once take so many fish, when they let down their nets at the word of Jesus, was to be to them a lesson never to be forgotten, that they could work with blessing and success only by relying not on their own skill and painstaking, but only on the might and blessing of the Lord.

Why did Jesus choose unlearned fishermen for Apostles?

To show, 1. That his doctrines and Church were the work, not of men, but of God; 2. That all, not excepting the poor and ignorant, are called to his kingdom.

What other lessons are to be drawn from this gospel?

1. The disciples take no fish so long as they cast their nets according to their own impulse. Learn hence, that nothing has any value before God which is done from mere natural inclination and human respect. 2. But so soon as they let down

their nets at the word of Jesus, they took a great abundance of fish. Learn hence that all our labors are without merit if not undertaken in the name of God; but that he does not permit the least work undertaken without timidity, in reliance on him, and for his sake, to be in vain. 3. From the obedience of the disciples, we learn not to be discouraged if we do not at first see the success of our labors, but to renew our efforts with fresh confidence in God. Pastors, instructors, and parents should particularly mark this, that they be not weary of admonishing and teaching, with love and firm confidence in God, those committed to them. They will surely take a successful draught. 4. That the disciples obeyed so quickly, teaches us to obey God at once, to spare no sacrifice, to leave all quickly, and not to put off till to-morrow what is to be done to-day. 5. That the Apostles called on their partners for help, teaches us how we also should assist our spiritual pastors in the conversion of sinners, by prayer, by fasting, almsgiving, and good example (James v. 20). Finally, every one may learn not to be proud of the success of his labor, but, like Peter, to give glory to God, who does so great things, by cheerfully leaving all earthly things to follow him.

Instruction on a Good Intention.

“At thy word I will let down the net.”—*Luke v. 5.*

In what does a good intention consist?

In this: that whatever a man does or forsakes, he should, like Peter when he was fishing, do and forsake all in the name of God, and for God's sake.

There are many men who seem to be born, by the particular providence of God, to misery, since they are obliged to spend their lives in hard labor, in constant sickness, or in great poverty, without being able with all their efforts to better their condition. How, then, must they act to secure something better in the world to come? They must, like the Apostles and saints, let down their nets in the name of Jesus; that is, whatever they do or suffer, must be done or suffered in the name of God, with obedience and resignation to his will, and

in the hope of receiving his blessing and an eternal reward. For he rewards every step we take for his sake, and even the cup of cold water that we give to the poor in his name; and thus a good intention makes, as it were, God our debtor, transmutes lead into gold, and converts the trifling acts of daily life into treasures of merit.

When and how shall we make a good intention?

One should, the first thing in the morning, offer up to God all his thoughts, words, and works, his trials and sufferings, his labors and travails of the ensuing day: 1. As a bounden sacrifice of adoration, honor, and love; 2. As a sacrifice of thanksgiving for benefits received; 3. As a sacrifice of propitiation, in satisfaction for his own sins and those of others; and finally, 4. As a sacrifice of impetration, to obtain thereby for himself, and for all for whom he is bound to pray, new gifts and graces, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and by virtue of union with his works, from which alone ours derive their value and merit. We should also invoke the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, that through their intercession we may persevere in our good intention, which we are in danger of destroying at any time by impatience or any sinful act, for a good intention cannot consist with sin. For this reason, it is most advisable to renew often during the day the good intention of the morning; for example, at the striking of the clock, at commencing any new task, with such words as these, "For the love of thee, O Lord," "All things for the glory of God," "This I do with the intention which I have this day made." Take pains also to instruct such as are ignorant how to make a good intention, for thereby you will participate in their good works, and increase your reward in heaven.

Aspiration.

Assist me, O God, that I may not labor in the night of sin, but to thy honor and my own salvation; and assist also all pastors, superiors, and parents, that they may gain for thy kingdom those committed to their care. Amen.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, with the priest implore God's assistance, and say: *Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee; be thou my helper, forsake me not, nor do thou despise me, O God, my Saviour* (Ps. xxvi.) *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who hast prepared invisible goods for them that love thee, infuse into our hearts the affection of thy love, that loving thee in all things, and above all, we may obtain thy promises which surpass every desire. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 Peter iii. 8-15.)

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

How may and ought we to sanctify the Lord Jesus in our hearts?

By faithfully imitating those virtues of his which St. Peter describes in this epistle; for thereby we become his true and faithful disciples, honor him, sanctify ourselves and edify others, who by our good example are led to admire Christianity, and Christ its founder, and to become his followers. Hereby we make ourselves worthy of God's favor and protection, so that

however persecuted, we have nothing to fear: for if God be for us, who can be against us?

Aspiration.

O most amiable Jesus, grant me grace to remain steadfastly faithful to thee, and zealously to follow thee as thy true disciple in all things, in fervent prayer, in compassion for my brethren, in modesty and humility, in patience and love towards my enemies, that thereby I may become worthy of thy protection.

Gospel. (Matt. v. 20-24.)

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

In what did the justice of the Pharisees consist?

They were very pious in outward appearance, and avoided those vices which either caused temporal disgrace and injury, or required self-denial; but, on the other hand, they were full of malice in their hearts, and this Christ often reproached them with, calling them hypocrites.

What does it profit to pray for hours, to fast, to go often to confession and communion, to give alms out of vanity or hypocrisy, but not to avoid envy, hatred, malice, and slander, to commit acts of impurity, to oppress the poor, to neglect the obligations of our calling?

In what does Christian justice consist?

In avoiding what is evil and doing what is good. We must,

therefore, not only avoid sinful deeds, private or public, but sinful thoughts and desires; we must observe not only some, but all the commandments of God, always and everywhere, for God's sake, and out of love to him, as we must also for his sake love our neighbor in word and deed; otherwise our good works are but the shell without the kernel.

How are we to understand what Christ says about anger and using abusive words?

Among the Jews there were, from a very early period, two principal courts of justice: of these one was a court to be found in every city, composed of priests and heads of families; the other, or high court, was composed of seventy-one members, and was held at Jerusalem, which dealt with difficult cases and pronounced the more severe sentences. The meaning of Christ's words is, therefore, "You have heard from your teachers and doctors of the law, that whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment of men; but I say to you, who think it no sin to be angry or envious, that whosoever is angry with his brother without cause, shall be in danger of the judgment of God. You have heard that whosoever calls his brother 'Raca,' that is, fool, shall be brought before the council and punished; but I say to you, that God punishes with hell-fire every grievous offence against your neighbor, as also the hatred and enmity of your heart towards him."

(The greatest punishment among the Jews was burning in the valley of Gehenna, near Jerusalem, whence came the name Gehenna for hell.)

Is anger, then, always a mortal sin?

No; only when one wishes, or actually inflicts on his neighbor some injury to his body, his reputation, or his property, or uses to him such slanderous language as to damage his good name, and at the same time to provoke and irritate him. The smaller the injuries, the lighter the sins. Whoever becomes angry at the vices and excesses of others, either because it is his duty to watch over their morals, to punish and to correct (as for example, in the case with parents, teachers, and pastors), or because he is grieved at finding so many sins among his Christian brethren, not only does not sin, but does something

praiseworthy; for Christ and his Apostles have shown such zeal. Thus was St. Paul angry at Elymas the sorcerer (Acts xiii. 8); St. Peter at the fraud of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 4); and Christ himself at the buying and selling in the temple. God himself is angry with the wicked (Wisdom xiv. 9). Anger, therefore, to be guiltless, must be a zeal for charity and justice, whereby our endeavors to correct the faults and sins of others, and not a passion of revenge whereby we endeavor to punish them and to obtain justice for ourselves. The same is true of rebukes, which can be given without sin, if they are not unchristian in themselves; if they do not cause scandal; and if they are given with charitable zeal to punish and correct, by those who have the proper authority for that purpose. Thus Christ has called his disciples "foolish" (Luke xxiv. 25). St. Paul called the Galatians senseless (Gal. iii. 1). But if spoken without justice and charity, such words would not be free from sin; the greatness of which would depend upon the person who is rebuked, the intention with which it is done, and the rebuke itself.

For the rest, it is always better for men, according to the advice of St. Francis of Sales, to refrain from all passion and anger, and in punishing others, to proceed with the earnestness of love rather than of indignation, since anger is seldom free from sin, and by charity and kindness one can accomplish more than by anger and violence; for how can one who is often like a wild beast from anger, correct others, so long as he is not able to restrain himself. Therefore the wise man says, *Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying them of thy household, and oppressing them that are under thee* (Ecclus. iv. 35). From harsh severity there will come only evil, on which account the punishments that it is sometimes necessary to inflict must be divested of bitterness by the love with which they are administered, that they may be the better received, and may produce the desired amendment.

Why must one first be reconciled to his brother before he offers his gift at the altar, or undertakes any good work?

Because no offering, or other good work, can be pleasing to God so long as we are living in enmity, hatred, and strife with

our neighbor, and thereby going directly against his will and example. This should be well marked by such Christians as go to confession and communion without forgiving those who have injured them, and without asking pardon of those whom they have injured. They should know that instead of receiving absolution of their sins, they contract a new sin by an unworthy confession, and in the holy communion eat their own condemnation. The same is true of those who hear mass with hearts full of hatred and revenge. How can God accept their offerings and hear their prayers?

How shall we be reconciled with our enemies?

1. Not only with the lips but from the heart, and with sincerity. 2. With promptness, since reconciliation becomes more difficult by delay, as rust is the harder to remove the deeper it has eaten in; at least it should be done, if possible, before bringing our offering, and before receiving the holy sacrament. It is in remembrance of this obligation that the assistants at the altar, before communion at holy mass, embrace each other, and give the salutation of peace, or kiss the paten or a reliquary. In early times it was the custom for the men to give each other the kiss of peace, while the women did the same, before receiving holy communion. Is he absent whom you have wronged, says St. Augustine, so that you cannot easily reach him? humble yourself then before God, and ask his pardon before you offer your gift, with a firm resolution to be reconciled with your enemy as soon as possible. 3. For the love of God, which alone sanctifies all things. 4. With constancy; for how otherwise could your reconciliation be from the heart, and after the example of Jesus?

It remains to be observed, that if it should be beyond our power entirely to expel a feeling of repugnance, this will not be imputed to us as a sin, so long as we do not consent to it, but strive to overcome it.

Aspiration.

O God, remove from me all Pharisaical blindness, that I may serve thee not only outwardly, but inwardly from the heart. Banish, therefore, from my heart all sinful anger, and give me

a loving zeal for thy honor and the salvation of my neighbor, together with the grace to be quickly, and from the heart, reconciled to those who injure me.

Remedies for Anger.

1. The first and best means to overcome anger is humility; for as among the proud there are always quarrels and contentions, so on the other hand the humble are always quiet, gentle, and patient. 2. But to become thus humble, gentle, and patient, one must often consider the example of Christ, *who, though he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth* (1 Pet. ii. 22), yet endured so many contradictions, persecutions, and insults, without reviling again when reviled himself, and without threatening vengeance to any one for all he suffered. With reason, therefore, he says to us, *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart* (Matt. xi. 29). How unbecoming, therefore, is it for Christians who desire to be, and who must be the disciples of this meek Master, to be angry and revengeful, and to rage like furious lions, when they have been nourished with the flesh and blood of this Lamb of God; to refuse to suffer any thing patiently, when through their sins they have contracted so much guilt, and when by enduring adversities patiently, they might so easily make amends for some of their own offences. 3. An excellent preventive to anger is, to think over in the morning what causes will be likely to draw us into anger at any time during the day, and to guard ourselves against them beforehand, by a firm resolution to bear every thing patiently for the love of God; and then, when any thing vexatious occurs and excites our anger, to say and do nothing so long as the anger lasts, but to busy ourselves with these and such like thoughts: "How am I sinning by my anger, and what can I accomplish by it? Can I thereby make things better? Do I not rather make myself ridiculous, and injure my health?" For it is established, both by experience and by Holy Scripture, that *anger shortens a man's days* (Ecclus. xxx. 26), and *killeth the foolish* (Job v. 2). 4. Anger itself may serve as an antidote to anger and to other passions, if we follow the advice of St. Gregory of Nazianzen,

who says, "Nature has given us anger as a virtue, and not as a vice;" we must therefore be angry at our anger, our excess, our indolence, and the like vices. This will be a holy anger, by means of which we shall overcome ourselves, and obtain that quiet and security of mind which is compared with a continual feast (Prov. xv. 15). 5. The most necessary means to banish anger is zealous prayer to God for the gifts of meekness and patience; for though it is naturally difficult, and even impossible for us to be patient, yet with God's grace it becomes not merely possible, but even easy.

Of the Daily Sacrifice of Christians.

"Then come and offer thy gift."—*Matt. v. 24.*

The Jews, according to the requirement of their law, offered sacrifice twice a day to God, partly to acknowledge and adore his majesty, partly to render him thanks, to implore his forgiveness, and to supplicate for new gifts and graces. Instead of this sacrifice of animals and fruits of the earth, we Christians have a sacrifice infinitely more worthy, and more pleasing to God—Jesus Christ himself; who is daily, in an unbloody manner, in every place, offered to God by the hands of the priests of his Church, as the most acceptable and sweetest odor; and in this sacrifice, all others, as figures and types, find their fulfillment. But if the Jews were obliged, if possible, to attend at their morning and evening sacrifice, how much more ready should Christians be to attend daily the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, thereby to adore and give thanks to God? Does not every one of us need continually God's blessing and protection against so many dangers; and where is greater grace dispensed than here? Let every one then make the effort to be present at the daily sacrifice, and he will find that it is not only practicable, but in the highest degree beneficial. Let him who is detained by hindrances that he cannot overcome, say his morning and evening prayers, and offer up himself, and all that is his, to God, in union with those that are present at the Holy Sacrifice, and he shall not lack God's blessing.

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

On this Sunday the Church exhorts Christians to perseverance in good works, by pointing them to God, the All Merciful. The Introit of the Mass is therefore the prayer of a soul that confides in the powerful and benign protection of God. *The Lord is the strength of his people, the protector of the salvation of his anointed. Save, O Lord, thy people, and bless thy inheritance, and rule them forever (Ps. xxvii.) Unto thee will I cry, O my God: be not thou silent to me, lest I become like unto them that go down into the pit. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

O God of hosts, to whom belongeth all that is best, infuse into our breasts the love of thy name, and grant within us an increase of devotion, that thou mayest nourish what is good, and by the pursuit of piety, preserve what thou hast nourished. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Rom. 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, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, 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 no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Explanation.

In this lesson the Apostle teaches us that, in consequence of our baptism, we are bound to lead a holy life, conformed to

the pattern of Christ's. For through baptism we become members of his mystical body, and accordingly what was accomplished in him actually, must also take place in us spiritually. As Jesus died for our sins, was buried, rose again, and ascended into heaven, so also must we die to sin and all sensual inclinations—must, with him, crucify the old man, our corrupt nature, by self-denial; and as he, once risen, died no more, but now lives and reigns forever, so also must we, once risen from sin, live henceforth to God, a new, holy life, conformed to that of Christ.

Aspiration.

Lord Jesus, I thank thee, that through the merits of thy bitter passion I have risen from the death of sin; grant me grace, that as thou diest no more, so I may no more die spiritually, through sin. Amen.

Gospel. (Mark viii. 1-9.)

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

Why did Jesus say, *I have compassion on the multitude, &c.?*

To confirm by acts what he had previously, through St. Matthew (Matt. vi. 33) taught in words, namely, that to them who seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice, all other things shall be added, without asking; and to show us, at the same time, the greatness of God's love, which takes account of

every hour spent in his service, and compassionates every want of man. The multitude were not solicitous for food, and had not even asked it from him, and yet he cared for them.

Instruction on the Blessings and Benedictions used in the Catholic Church.

“He blessed them.”—*Mark* viii. 7.

What are these blessings and benedictions?

Blessings are prayers, by which the Church prays God, through the merits of Jesus, and the intercession of the saints, either to grant to some person all that is good for soul and body, to deliver him from the influence of Satan, to grant him forgiveness of venial sins, and remission of deserved punishment, or else to impart his blessing to the use of certain creatures, that they may be profitable both for soul and body, to them who use them in humble faith. In this way are blessed, not only persons, but fruits, bread, wine, salt, houses, vessels, fields, water, candles, &c.

There are also certain blessings by which, through the prayers of the Church, certain things necessary for the divine service are set apart from others employed in worldly uses, and consecrated, as, for example, churches, altars, bells, church vestments, &c.

When and how did these blessings originate?

They are very old customs, sanctified by God himself, in the old and in the new law. Thus God blessed his creatures, and mankind in particular (*Gen.* i. 22–28; ix. 1). He commanded the priests of the old law to bless the people of Israel, promising to confirm their blessing with his own (*Numb.* vi. 23), and directed the blessing of all things required for the divine service (*Deut.* viii.) In the same manner Christ blessed the loaves and the fishes (*Matt.* xiv. 19; *Mark* viii. 6, 7; *John* vi. 11), feeding therewith the multitude. At the last supper he blessed bread and wine, changing it into his flesh and blood; and finally, he blessed his disciples before he ascended into heaven (*Luke* xxiv. 51). Following the example and the command of God, the Church, which was prefigured in the synagogue, also introduced blessings and benedictions. From the account

above given, as well as from the origin of these rites, it is plain that they are no more superstitious than prayer in general, and that one cannot make light of them without thereby making light of God, who has given us the example of using them, and who has also endowed his Church with all authority.

What virtue have these blessings, &c.?

A peculiar, supernatural, and great virtue: for as God has promised to hear the prayer of every person who prays to him in the name of Jesus (St. John xiv. 14), why should he not hear the prayers of his Church? Blessings and benedictions, therefore, it is certain, have a peculiar supernatural virtue, and together with objects that have been blessed, work for the good of soul and body, so long as we oppose no hindrance to their operation, but employ them with suitable preparation; that is, with pure hearts, with faith and confidence, and finally, with submission to the will of God, and according to the intention of the Church. For whatever our design in the use of things blessed, we must take care to add, according to the example of Jesus on Mount Olivet, "If such be the will of God, if it be for God's glory and my salvation." What is against his will is against our salvation also: for our salvation is what he desires (Ezech. xxiii. 11). Assistance in temporal things, therefore, might really be no assistance at all, so far as our eternal welfare is concerned, according to the well-known language of Christ. *What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?* (Matt. xvi. 26.) Are some of our prayers, seemingly, not heard? They will not be useless. The sick, in using things blessed as a means of recovery, is often not restored to health, but he obtains the graces of patience and inward consolation in his sufferings, and thus receives the goods of the soul while he was seeking those of the body.

Why are salt and water blessed?

1. To expel our adversary, Satan, and to frustrate his designs and attacks. 2. For the welfare of soul and body. 3. Holy water, if used with contrition and devotion, washes away venial sin. Say, therefore, in using it: Thou shalt sprinkle

me with hyssop, O Lord, and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow (Ps. l. 9).

Why does the priest sprinkle the people with holy water, on Sundays, before the divine service?

The reason for it lies in the signification and virtue of holy water. The sprinkling in the Church is done: 1. To point out to the people the inward purity with which they should appear before God, and fulfil the duties of their vocation, and to admonish them to cleanse themselves from the stains of sin, by the tears of penance; the priest, therefore, in the act of sprinkling, says the words of the 50th Psalm, *Thou shalt sprinkle me, &c.* 2. To remind them to preserve the purity and innocence procured for them by the blood of the Lamb of God, and communicated to them in baptism. 3. To repel the temptations of the devil during the divine service, and during our daily labors and sorrows. 4. Finally, to impart to the faithful the blessing of God, and to keep them from all evils of soul and body. The same remarks apply to the sprinkling of holy water at entering and leaving our dwellings.

During Easter, instead of the *Asperges—Thou shalt sprinkle me*, we sing the *Vidi Aquam*—I saw water coming from the temple on the right side, allelujah, and all those to whom this water came were saved, and shall say allelujah. For Holy Church presumes that during Lent we have in sincerity returned to God, and accordingly have reason to rejoice over our spiritual resurrection, rather than to be afflicted by penance.

Is the sprinkling with holy water an innovation?

No; for St. Matthew, the Apostle, blessed water and restored a dead person to life. The Holy Pope Alexander, the sixth in succession after St. Peter, writes: "We bless salt and water for the people, that all who may be sprinkled therewith may be cleansed and sanctified." St. Basil writes to the same effect. Holy water has also its types in holy Scripture (Numb. ix. 21), where God commands water to be mixed with the ashes of a calf, for sprinkling and purifying the unclean. The like virtue was in the salt with which Eliseus healed the unwholesome waters, and fertilized the barren land of Jericho (4 Kings ii. 20, 21)—a type of blessed salt.

On the Blessing of Bells.

Bells were prefigured in the old law, when Moses received from God the command to have two silver trumpets made, which were to be sounded at the departure of the people into the desert, at their assembling for divine service, when they were to prepare for battle, and to announce the great festivals. The priests alone were to sound them. In the first ages of Christianity the hours of divine service, on account of persecutions, were made known to the Christians by the deacons. Bells were first used in the seventh century.

What is the significance of bells?

They signify the preaching of the Gospel, the sound of which goes forth unto all the earth (Ps. xviii. 5).

What are the uses of bells?

They call the faithful together for the public divine service, announce on the vigils the great feasts that are at hand, add to the solemnities of feasts and professions, publish the fortune or misfortune of the congregation, as in case of death, that the faithful may remember their own end, soon perhaps to take place, and may pray for the souls of the departed.

In cases of fire they are tolled, because charity demands the calling of the people for assistance.

What are the ceremonies at the blessing of the bells?

1. They are first washed, outside and inside, with holy water, while some psalms are sung. Hereby the Church reminds us of the purity received in baptism, and admonishes us that as the inanimate sound which is to declare the praise of God must come only from a consecrated bell, so we must appear before God only with pure hearts.

Next, the bishop, or, with his permission, the officiating priest, anoints the bell with holy oil, which signifies the strength of the Holy Ghost, and with chrism, which is an emblem of the merits of Christ, while the Church entreats that God will be pleased, through the merits of his Son, at the sound of these bells, to restrain the power of the devil, to disperse thunder-storms, to banish from the hearts of the faithful the spirit of indolence, and to mitigate the pains of the souls

in purgatory, when besought thereto by the prayers of his people.

The bell is then anointed with holy oil seven times on the outside, and four times on the inside with chrism. The seven-fold unction on the outside refers perhaps to the seven hours of prayer; the four unctions on the inside, indicate that the sound of the bell is to go forth to the four parts of the world, to remind men of God.

The incensing of the bell signifies that our prayers and the sweet odor of a holy life should ascend, like incense, to the throne of God. The name of some saint is here given to the bell, to distinguish it from others, and to remind us by its sound to prepare for the divine service, as if we were called by the saint himself. From this circumstance, the blessing of bells is sometimes also called their baptism; but no one could be so ignorant as to suppose that a sacrament was therein administered, and the sponsors, as they are called, are only witnesses of the ceremony.

Finally, the deacon reads the gospel which treats of Martha receiving Jesus into her house, and entertaining him there, while Mary sat at his feet, to hear his words. Thereby we are taught to hear cheerfully the word of God in the church, to which we are invited by the sound of the bell. During the tolling of the bell say, "*O Lord, let the doctrine of thy gospel go forth into the whole world. Let me hear in my heart the voice which calls me to thy service, and let me follow thee.*"

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church invites us to the praise of God, in the words of the 46th Psalm: *O clap your hands, all ye nations, shout unto God with the voice of joy; for the Lord is most high, he is terrible: he is a great king over all the earth.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, whose providence is not deceived in its appointment, we humbly beseech thee to remove from us all that is hurtful, and grant us all that will prove profitable. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (Rom. vi. 19-23.)

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

Explanation.

In these words St. Paul admonishes the Romans that they ought henceforward to devote themselves as zealously to the service of God, as they had hitherto done to that of iniquity, because the service of sin is death, but the service of God is life everlasting. The words, "servants, to serve," denote the full and unconditional subjection of the Christian to God, without walking any longer according to his own will, just as, in regard to the state of sin, they indicate the dominion of the passions over the sinner. There is no requirement more reasonable, than that a man should labor as much for God and his own salvation, as he has labored for sin and hell. We should, therefore, often think on the wages of sin—eternal death; and when we are tempted, ask ourselves, "What shall I gain by my lust, my injustice, my vengeance? Ah, nothing but eternal death! And shall I, created to inherit eternal life, shall I make myself the heir of eternal death?"

Gospel. (Matt. vii. 15-21.)

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

Who are meant by "false prophets?"

All those who endeavor to spread heresy and immorality among their Christian brethren.

Why does Jesus add, "Who came to you in the clothing of sheep?"

It is either an allusion to the custom of the Pharisees, who dressed themselves like the prophets, or it is, perhaps, a proverbial expression. All those thus come in the clothing of sheep who not unfrequently announce themselves by their works of charity and benevolence, and by their liberality of opinions, while in their hearts they deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, mock at the holy mysteries, and ridicule the ceremonies of the Church. They promise enlightenment, liberty of the spirit, deliverance from prejudices and superstitions, concealing under the honey of their language the poison of sin, covering the most infamous actions with the pretence of spiritual love and lawful pleasure, and having continually in their mouths the sweetest expressions concerning the infinite goodness of God, while they deny his immutable justice and the existence of eternal punishments, destroying thus many harmless and simple souls.

By what may we know false prophets?

By their fruits; that is, by their works and lives. Those teachers whose works are good we may trust, if their teaching

be in conformity with that of the Church. But those whose lives show opposition to the requirements of the Gospel, by impurity, by enmity, by disobedience and indifference to the Church and her laws, by heresy, by intemperance, or such like evil fruits, we must take heed not to believe, for to expect the word of salvation to come from their mouths, would be to seek for grapes on a bramble-bush.

What other false prophets are we to beware of?

1. *The world*, which promises us honors and riches, but at the end rewards all our toil and labor only with disgrace and scorn. 2. *The flesh*, which promises pleasures and joys, but leaves a man at last nothing but the bitter reproaches of an unquiet conscience. 3. *The devil*, who promises to man a long life, and time enough for repentance, while the obdurate sinner is cut off suddenly in the midst of his days. 4. *All such evil-minded persons* as conceal their wicked purposes under the mask of virtue and honesty, until they have entrapped unwary souls, and drawn them into all kinds of shameful misdeeds. It is these false prophets of Satan, and wolves of hell, that make the greatest havoc in the flock of Christ.

Why does Christ say, *Do men gather grapes of thorns?*

To show that the hypocrite cannot possibly bring forth good works, since virtue consists not merely in outward actions, but in the conformity of the will to the law. Hypocrites may conceal their character for a time, but at last they betray themselves, and show what they really are.

Why does Christ say, *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire?*

He thereby warns us that faith alone, without good works, or, in other words, the mere desire for heaven without the practice of virtue, will not save us. Christ says plainly, *Not every one 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.* Jesus also saith (Matt. xii. 50), *Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.* Endeavor, therefore, O Christian, to fulfil in all things the will of God, and secure thy salvation by the exercise of good works.

Instruction on Good Works.

What are good works ?

All actions of men which are done according to the will of God, from love to him, in the state of grace, and by the help of the same.

Which are the chief of these ?

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Prayer, including all acts belonging to the service of God ; fasting, all mortifications of the body ; almsgiving, all works of mercy.

Of how many sorts are the works of mercy ?

Of two : corporal and spiritual.

What are spiritual works of mercy ?

Those which have for their object the salvation of our neighbor ; as, 1. To admonish those in sin ; 2. To instruct the ignorant ; 3. To give counsel to those in doubt ; 4. To pray for the living and the dead ; 5. To comfort the afflicted ; 6. To bear wrongs patiently ; 7. To forgive injuries and offences.

What are the corporal works of mercy ?

1. To feed the hungry ; 2. To give drink to the thirsty ; 3. To clothe the naked ; 4. To visit the prisoners ; 5. To visit the sick ; 6. To shelter the houseless ; 7. To bury the dead (Matt. xxv. 42, 43).

What is necessary to render works meritorious ?

1. They must be good in themselves ; 2. They must be done with the grace of God ; 3. In the state of grace ; 4. With free will ; 5. With the good intention of pleasing God.

Can we be saved without good works ?

No ; for Christ says expressly, *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire.* And that servant in the Gospel (Matt. xxv. 25), who neither wasted his talent nor yet traded with it, but digged into the earth and hid his Lord's money, was therefore cast into the outer darkness. How greatly, therefore, do not they err, who hope to reach heaven merely by not doing any evil ? Of this dangerous mistake St. Chrysostom very justly says, " If you had a servant who was no robber, no glutton, no drunkard, but who was constantly idle, and neglected every

thing that you required him to do, would you not drive him from your house?" Is it not then evil enough, to omit doing what we are bound to do? Like such an one is that Christian, who, doing neither good nor evil, makes himself thereby unfit for heaven; for heaven is a reward for labor done. He who labors not has no reward to expect.

On the Reading of Bad Books.

What we read exerts a powerful influence on the mind and heart. Just as little as it is a matter of indifference how one thinks and acts, is it a matter of indifference what one reads: indeed, the reading of bad books is simply corrupting.

But what is, in this case, bad or good?

Good books and writings are such as agree with the truths of Christianity, and the doctrines of the Church, defending them, explaining them, and pointing out how they are to be applied in life. Bad books are all such as have the opposite tendency; which, whether openly or covertly, deny Christianity; make out all religions to be alike good; ridicule and misrepresent the Catholic Church, her clergy, her institutions, her ceremonies; set aside the sacraments as unnecessary; call the commandments of the Church, inventions of men; stimulate evil desires, and describe vices as virtues, or at least as light faults. Writings of this character, every Christian should conscientiously avoid. For, 1. As it is the bounden duty of a Christian to shun what is evil, and the very opportunities and risks of evil, so it is also his duty to shun bad books, and such like publications. 2. By purchasing such works he would directly encourage the writing of them, and assist in giving them circulation. But if they were not read, they would soon cease to appear. 3. The reading of bad books never takes place without scandal to one's family or neighbors, who perceive it, and frequently are thereby induced to do the same. In this way, one becomes a promoter and partaker of all the evil which grows out of his own practice. 4. One who reads bad books, if not already corrupted, is at heart, in a fair way to become so. He cannot be good while he reads with avidity

what is evil, and laughs over wickedness. None but a carrion-bird feeds on carcasses. It is useless to say, one reads only to improve himself. A grave remains a grave, however beautified. If one desires to cultivate his mind, let him read good books, of which there is no lack. In reading bad books, something always sticks in the memory, and in the end one will laugh over what at first would only have made him indignant. Thousands have in this way become corrupt, unbelieving, and immoral. 5. The Church has always uniformly forbidden the reading of such writings. Read the Acts of the Apostles. Is not that the way that the good Christian should always think and act? Ought he not always to be obedient to the Church?

Every one, therefore, to whom faith, virtue, his soul's salvation, his Church, are dear, will shun: 1. The buying and reading of bad books. In particular, pastors, heads of families, tutors, and instructors, should be watchful to preserve those confided to their care from this infection; and, to this end, should neither buy nor read dangerous publications themselves, nor suffer them to be bought or read by those under their charge. 2. He will also resolve firmly not to read anything which is not either approved by the Church, or at least approved by pious and experienced confessors. 3. He will take pains, so far as lies in his power, to prevail upon others to overcome that pernicious craving for reading which delights in debasing and corrupt books, and to read only what is good, edifying, and instructive.

Aspiration.

Preserve me, O Lord, from error and seduction. Grant me thy grace, that according to the teachings of St. Paul, I may bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. In flame my heart that I may show my faith by my good works, and that fulfilling the will of my Heavenly Father, I may make myself worthy of heaven. Amen.

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

At the Introit of the Mass, with the Church, praise God, whose mercy and justice extend to the ends of the world.

We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple. According to thy name, O God, so also is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right hand is full of justice. (Ps. xlvii.) *Great is the Lord and exceedingly to be praised, in the city of our God, in his holy mountain.*

Prayer.

Grant us, we beseech thee, O Lord, at all times, the spirit of thinking and doing what is right, that we who cannot exist without thee, may be able to live according to thee. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Rom. viii. 12-17.)

Brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the 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.

Who are they that live according to the flesh?

They who follow the voice of sensuality, rather than that of faith and conscience, and who practice such vices as St. Paul enumerates in his Epistle to the Galatians. *Now the works of the flesh are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmitics, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like.*

Such men are not guided by the spirit of God, for he remains not in a sensual man (Gen. vi. 3). They are not children of God, and will inherit, not heaven, but eternal death.

Examine yourself, therefore, whether you are not living according to the flesh, and, for the future, mortify fleshly and sensual lusts by prayer and fasting. Resist sinful desires, with God's assistance, and you will gain a crown in heaven.

Aspiration.

Grant me, O Lord, thy spirit, that I may always remember the happiness of thy kingdom, may mortify the lusts of the flesh, and may walk as thy child, in holy chastity.

Gospel. (Luke xvi. 1-9.)

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

Who are meant by the rich man and his steward?

The rich man is God, the steward is man; the goods intrusted to the steward are the different goods and gifts of soul and body, of nature and of grace.

Why did Christ use this parable?

To teach us that God requires of every man a strict account of whatever has been given to him, whether more or less, to

encourage us to be liberal to the poor, and to warn us against dissipation and injustice.

What do these vices lead to ?

They carry a man on from one sin to another, as they led this unjust steward to forgery and perjury. The like often happens with men who culpably incur debt upon debt, and then endeavor to extricate themselves by fraud and dishonesty, conveying their property to others, and robbing their creditors; by which course both they and their confederates become bound to make restitution, particularly if they have sworn falsely.

Why did the rich man praise the steward ?

He praised not the injustice, but the prudence of the man. The lesson to us from this is, if the wicked are so prudent in regard to their temporal affairs, how much more careful and prudent should Christians be in regard to their eternal happiness.

How are we to understand the direction, to *make unto us friends of the mammon of iniquity* ?

Riches are called the mammon of iniquity because they so easily lead us to injustice, avarice, excess, and dissipation. Jesus, then, intended thereby to say, that we should, according to our ability, employ in doing good those worldly goods which so easily carry us into sin. But he is not to be understood as saying that we should steal, or cheat, or use goods otherwise unjustly obtained, to give alms.

What friends are we thus to make ?

The good works which render us pleasing to God, and open to us heaven; the poor, the saints of God, the angels who rejoice in our benevolence, and become our intercessors, and finally Christ, who regards what is given to the poor as so much given to himself (Matt. xxv. 40). The hands of the poor, says St. Chrysostom, are the hands of Christ; through them we send our goods to heaven beforehand, and through their intercession we obtain the grace of salvation.

Aspiration.

Grant me, O most just God and Judge, grace so to use the goods intrusted to me on earth, that with them I may make myself friends to receive me, at the end of my life, into everlasting habitations.

Practical Instruction against Slander.

“And the same was accused unto him.”—*Luke xvi. 1.*

The steward in the Gospel was justly accused to his master, whose goods he had wasted. But such accusations are not always occasioned by injustice and wrong; for how many are there who, without any fault of theirs, find themselves brought, by slanderous tongues, into evil report! their honor and good name destroyed! What evil slanderous tongues cause! How common this vice is! How little is thought of it! and how difficult is it to repair the injuries it inflicts!

When do we become guilty of slander?

1. When we report, in regard to the living or the dead, vices which did not truly belong to them; or when we magnify faults which they actually were guilty of. 2. When we make known to others a sin committed privately on the part of our neighbor, and not previously known; doing this with the intention of injuring him, and without being bound to reveal it. 3. When we impute a bad motive to our neighbor's acts; 4, and deny or lessen their good deeds and qualities. 5. When we keep silence, or speak ambiguously of our neighbor in cases where we ought to praise him.

Is slander a great sin, and why?

Slander is, in itself, contrary to all Christian charity, and therefore, even in the lightest instances, violates the first and weightiest of the commandments. But when the occasion is important, and the slander is deliberately uttered, with an evil will, when one's neighbor is thereby grievously injured, and his good name damaged, every one may see for himself how great and detestable, in such a case, this sin is. Such an act:

1. Violates that weighty commandment, to love one's neighbor.
2. It robs him of a possession more valuable than gold and

riches (Prov. xxii. 1); takes from the person slandered the ability of doing good; for instance, of admonishing his inferiors with effect, deprives him of the confidence of his fellow-men, and by consequence, of the opportunity to earn his bread, and may, perhaps, be the occasion of both his temporal and eternal ruin. 3. It is the cause of innumerable calumnies and sins, of which the slanderer must bear the burden. 4. The injury thereby done can only with great difficulty, or perhaps never be repaired, no more than one can recall the stone which he threw from his hand, little thinking of the harm he was doing. Thus violating, at one time, both charity and justice, slander excludes from the kingdom of God (1 Cor. vi. 10).

Would that this were thought of by such as make it their business to repeat detraction and calumny of their temporal and spiritual superiors.

Is it then always a sin to disclose the faults of our neighbor?

To make public the faults and sins of our neighbor uselessly, and merely for the entertainment of idle persons, is always sinful. But if, after trying in vain to correct his faults and sins by brotherly admonition, we make them known to his parents or superiors, for his punishment and amendment, so far is this from being a sin, that it is rather a good work and a duty of Christian charity; indeed one would sin grievously by not giving the information which might easily put a stop to sin, and save the author of it, and those belonging to him, from great unhappiness.

Is it a sin also to listen willingly to slanderers?

Yes; for thereby we furnish the slanderer an occasion of slandering, and give him encouragement. For which reason St. Bernard says: "Whether to slander be a greater sin than to listen to slander, I will not lightly decide." In such cases as where impure and scurrilous language is used, we must try to interrupt or put a stop to such discourse, or else withdraw; but if neither of these can be done, we should testify our displeasure by a sad expression of countenance, for, as the Scripture says, *a sad countenance drives away backbiting tongues, as the north wind does rain* (Prov. xxv. 23).

What obligation does the slanderer incur?

The obligation of retracting his calumny, and of making good the injury which he has done to his neighbor, in his temporal goods, or in his good name; and where this has been done publicly, public reparation is obligatory. But if this may not be, without even worse consequences, he must at least endeavor to prevent the further spreading of the slander—must, according to his ability, and according to truth, speak well of the slandered person; and, in general, do what, in such case, he would wish to have done to himself.

What ought to restrain us from slander?

The thought, 1. Of the enormity of this sin. 2. Of the immense number of sins occasioned thereby, and of which the slanderer, as the occasion of them, becomes partaker. 3. Of the difficulty, nay the impossibility, of making good all the harm thereby done, since we cannot know the full extent of the injury, nor can we stop the thundering tongues of people: thus we are unable to put an end to the working of the evil; and yet one cannot hope for forgiveness without making satisfaction according to his ability. Finally, we must think on the eternal punishment which follows this sin. *Hast thou heard a word against thy brother, let it die within thee, trusting that it will not burst thee* (Ecclus. xix. 10). The holy fathers say, that of young persons who shall be condemned, the greater part will be condemned for impurity, but of the old, for slander.

Aspiration.

Watch over me, O most loving Jesus, that I may not be so blinded, either through hatred or envy, as to destroy by slander the good name of my neighbor, and thereby make myself guilty of so grievous a sin.

Consolation under Calumny.

If your good name has been taken away by evil tongues, nevertheless comfort yourself that the good God has permitted this to befall you that you should not become vain and proud, but that you might practice humility and patience; that you might be more careful to mark your faults, and might the

better know yourself. That you may not become impatient, raise your eyes to the saints, those of the old, as well as those of the new law. The chaste Joseph, accused as an adulterer, must be cast into prison (Gen. xxxix. 20); David be railed at and cursed by Semei, as a man of blood (2 Kings xvi.); and the innocent Susanna pronounced guilty of adultery and condemned to death (Dan. xiii.) Jesus Christ, the king of saints, is accused as a blasphemer of God; a friend of the devil; a glutton and a drunkard; a deceiver of the people; is condemned, and put to death. Remember, besides, that it cannot injure you with God, if all earthly evil be falsely imputed to you; and that he takes care of the honor of those who trust in him, for whoever touches the honor of such as fear God, touches the apple of his eye, and shall not surely go unpunished. Finally, as St. Chrysostom teaches, "Are you guilty, be converted: are you innocent, think of Christ."

Aspiration.

O most innocent Jesus, who for my sake didst submit to be calumniated, I give myself up entirely to thy divine will, offering up to thee, in satisfaction for my sins, all attacks on my honor and good name, which I leave in thy hands, in firm confidence that thou wilt protect and defend them according to thy good pleasure, and that thou wilt deliver me from the hands of my enemies.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

Call upon God for help and assistance against all temptations of your enemies, both visible and invisible, and say with the priest, at the Introit of the Mass, *Behold, God is my helper, and the Lord is the protector of my soul; turn back the evils upon my enemies, and cut them off in thy truth, O Lord, my protector* (Ps. liii.) *Save me, O God, by thy name, and deliver me in thy strength.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Let the ears of thy mercy, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy suppliants, and that thou mayest grant what thy petitioners desire, make them ask those things which are pleasing to thee. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 Cor. 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 he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall. Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.

What does St. Paul here teach us?

To overcome our evil inclinations; not to murmur against God in adversity; not to trust in ourselves; and, since God will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able, to resist temptations manfully, in order to conquer them and secure an eternal victory.

Can one sin, therefore, by thought and desire alone?

Certainly, if one desires evil and unlawful things, or of his own free will dwells upon them with pleasure; for God forbids not only evil deeds, but also evil thoughts and desires in regard to the wife of our neighbor and his goods (Exod. xx. 17), and Christ says that he *who shall look on a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart* (Matt. v. 28). But evil thoughts which one does not give occasion to, and which he does not willingly admit and entertain,

are so far from being sin that they become rather an opportunity of gaining merit, if we earnestly strive against them. For this reason, God sometimes permits them to assail the good. Resist them, therefore, at once and earnestly.

What is it to tempt God ?

It is, without sufficient and weighty reasons, presumptuously to expect signs of God's omnipotence, benignity, providence, and justice. Such a sin it would be, 1. Unreasonably to desire that matters of faith should be made known and confirmed by new miracles ; 2. Without real necessity, or obligation thereto, to expose one's self to danger of body or soul, expecting God to deliver us ; 3. In a dangerous sickness, or in other peril, to reject the ordinary and natural means of deliverance, trusting in God's immediate assistance. To tempt God is therefore a mortal sin, which he has expressly forbidden (Deut. vi. 16), and on account of which he punished the Israelites with fiery serpents.

Is it a mortal sin to murmur against God ?

One may see that it is, by the punishment inflicted on the murmuring Israelites ; for besides Kore, Dathan, and Abiron, whom the earth swallowed up alive, there were many thousands destroyed by fire, although they had not murmured against God, but against Moses and Aaron, whom he had set over them (Exod. xxvi. 10). Whereby we may learn that one murmurs against God, who murmurs against what he orders and permits ; for instance, against the weather, or against the lawful authorities.

For this reason Moses said to the Israelites (Exod. xvi. 9), *Your murmuring is not against us, but against the Lord.*

Aspiration.

Cleanse, O Lord, I beseech thee, my heart from all evil thoughts and inclinations. Let it never come into my mind to despise thee, or to be displeased with thy fatherly providence. Suffer me not to be tempted beyond my strength, but enable me to overcome all temptations, and to profit by them to the salvation of my soul.

Gospel. (Luke xix. 41-47.)

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

Why did the Saviour weep over the city of Jerusalem?

Because it had not known and profited by its time of visitation, and through impenitence was hastening to destruction.

What was the time of its visitation?

The period in which God sent to the Jews one prophet after another, whom they derided and calumniated, stoned and put to death (2 Paralipom. xxxvi. 16). But especially was it the time of the ministry of Christ, who during three years had so often proclaimed his life-giving doctrine; had pointed out and demonstrated, by the greatest miracles, that he was the Messiah and the Saviour of the world, and yet was despised by this hardened and impenitent city, and even put to death on the cross.

Who are represented by this hardened and impenitent Jerusalem?

Hardened and impenitent sinners, and those also who live in indifference and lukewarmness; for are not such as hard-hearted as those who, seeing Jesus weeping, remained yet unmoved? Indeed they are rather more blameworthy, on account of having received richer graces; they have been washed in his blood and nourished by his flesh; the truths necessary to salvation have not been presented to them as to the Jews, veiled under figures, but as visibly confirmed by innumerable miracles, and carried out into practice by the

saints. And how often, too, has the Lord visited them and sought to waken them from the slumber of sin by admonitions, by inspirations, and by misfortunes! Oh, that all would think well on this truth! God desires the salvation of all, but the time of visitation has its end. Does one allow it to pass by unimproved, there remains only ruin and perdition. *Son, observe the time and flee from evil* (Ecclus. iv. 23).

Does God hide from the wicked the things that are to their peace?

No; but by their sins sinners blind themselves till they cannot see the truths of salvation, while at the same time they harden their hearts and wills so that the divine inspirations fail to move them and bring them to penance. *Destruction is their own* (Osee xiii. 9).

What do we learn by Jesus casting out of the temple those that sold and bought?

We learn how severely He who expelled from the temple the buyers and sellers of such things as were even needful for the divine service, will punish those who in Church forget where they are; forget that Jesus Christ is present in the tabernacle; who laugh, talk, amuse themselves, cherish sinful thoughts, and give scandal by their improper dress and unbecoming behavior. Ah, how terribly will he punish them! They should remember that he will shut them out forever from his kingdom.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, who didst weep over the city of Jerusalem, because it knew not the time of its visitation, I beseech thee enlighten my heart that I may know and profit by the season of grace; and grant that I may always behave with reverence in thy Church, and never turn it into a resort for evil thoughts and desires or for worldly cares.

Profitable Lessons upon Death-bed Repentance.

Can the sinner rely upon his being converted at the end of his life?

By no means: for this would be to sin against the mercy of

God; which is much the same as the sin against the Holy Ghost. "God," says St. Augustine, "usually punishes such sinners by allowing those at the last to forget themselves, who in the days of their health and strength have allowed themselves to forget him." God himself also says, *They have turned their back to me and not their face, and in the time of their affliction they will say, Arise and deliver us. Where are thy gods whom thou hast made thee? Let them arise and deliver thee in the time of thy affliction* (Jerem. ii. 27, 28). And although we have an encouraging instance of a late conversion in the penitent thief, yet as the same St. Augustine says, while there is one, that no one may despair, there is *only one*, that no one may presumptuously defer his repentance.

What may we hope of those who are converted at the close of life?

Every thing that is good, if they be truly converted; but this a most rare thing. "Of hundreds of thousands whose lives have been wicked," writes St. Jerome, "hardly one will be truly converted at the hour of death, and obtain forgiveness of his sins." And St. Vincent Ferrer says, it would be a greater miracle for a person who had lived wickedly to die well, than for one who was dead to be restored to life. And no wonder; for repentance at the hour of death is generally but an extorted repentance. It is not so much that the sinner forsakes his sins, as that his sins forsake him; and the resolution of amendment is one which he would hardly make, were he not driven to it by the agonies of death. What is there to expect from such a repentance?

When, therefore, ought we to do penance?

While we are the in possession of our reason and strength; for, as St. Augustine says, the repentance of the sick is a sickly repentance. In time of sickness, as experience teaches, the pains of his disease, the hope of recovery, the fear of death, the torments of conscience, the temptations of the devil, and the care of all depending on him, so continually distract a man, that he can hardly collect his thoughts at all, much less bestow them upon a work of a true repentance. If to many it is so difficult to do penance while they are yet in health, and hin-

dered by nothing from raising their thoughts to God, how much more difficult will it be when the body has already become weak? Of various sick persons, we have heard, after their recovery, that they had no knowledge of what happened to them during their illness, and even after having received the holy sacraments, they retained no recollection of having done so. Accordingly, Isaias admonishes us, *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near* (Isaias xxxiii. 6). And Christ says (John xii. 34, viii. 21), *You shall seek me and not find me, and you shall die in your sins*. If, therefore, you have committed mortal sin, delay not to return to God, by perfect contrition, and as soon as possible, by a good confession. Put it not off from one day to another; for repentance thereby becomes more and more difficult; since one sin unrepented of, as St. Gregory says, by its own weight impels a man to still further sins, and all the while makes him the weaker, and his adversary, the devil, the stronger; so that at last he cannot be converted without the extraordinary grace of God. But how can the presumptuous sinner expect such grace? God will laugh in their destruction, in like manner as they have despised his instruction, counsel, and reproof (Prov. i. 26-28). *Therefore, while we have time, let us work good* (Gal. vi. 10), for who knows whether we may not be suddenly prevented, by severe sickness, from working out our salvation? Alas for us, if then we die in our sins!

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, join with the Church in extolling the help of God, whereby we are defended against our enemies. *When I cried unto the Lord, he heard my voice from them that draw near to me, and he humbled them, who is before all ages, and remains forever. Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee* (Ps. liv.) *Hear, O God, my prayer, and despise not my supplications; be attentive to me, and hear me.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who dost particularly manifest thy omnipotence by sparing and showing mercy, multiply thy mercy towards us, that running to the possession of what thou hast promised, thou mayest make us partakers of heavenly goods. Through Christ, our Lord.

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. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: 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.

Explanation.

As the Holy Ghost gave on Pentecost the gift of tongues, so also he imparted to the faithful many other gifts, in regard to which it was of importance that they should hold just views. On this matter St. Paul is instructing the Corinthians. The token of a Christian is the Holy Ghost; and the evidence of possessing that spirit is the reverential confession of Jesus as the Lord. But this Spirit works in different ways. He confers not only ordinary, but extraordinary, graces on whom he will, and how he will, as he finds it for the edification of the body of Christ. Accordingly, to one he gives the word of wisdom, to understand the sublime truths of Christianity; to another, the gift of tongues, that he may announce the doc-

trines of Christianity with propriety and effect; to another, the gift of a faith which works miracles; to another, the gift of healing the sick; to another, the gift of prophecy, to declare things hidden, and things to come; to another, the gift of discerning spirits, to determine whether those who claim to be inspired by God are truly so or not; to another, the interpretation of speeches. But whatever gift any one has received, he must use for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, without being elated by it, since he has received it only of pure grace.

Aspiration.

Most benign Jesus, give us always those graces of the Holy Spirit which may make us humble, devout, chaste, merciful, forgiving, and worthy of eternal life.

Gospel. (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, as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God! be merciful to me a sinner! I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

Why did Jesus recite the parable of the Pharisee and the publican?

To warn us against pride, ambition, and vanity in our good works, which would thereby lose all their merits; to teach us not to despise or judge any man, although he should appear most impious; since, as the example of the Pharisee shows, we may easily be deceived; finally, to show us that if we would be heard in our prayers, we must appear before God with an humble and penitent heart. For God has regard only to the

prayer of the humble, and gives them his grace (Ps. ci. 18); but resists the proud (James iv. 6). When, therefore, you appear before God, present yourself in humility, with a contrite heart, like Abraham; remembering that you are only dust and ashes (Genesis xviii. 27), and on account of your sins, unworthy to appear before his face; be, therefore, outwardly retired, modest, collected in yourself, not noisy, not talking of worldly affairs to the very doors of the church; in general, avoid every thing which would indicate that you had less respect for the presence of God than that of men. For would not that be to offend rather than to serve him, and indeed to commit a mortal sin?

Why was not the Pharisee's prayer acceptable to God?

Because it was not a prayer, but rather an open-mouthed boast; for he had not asked any thing of God, but rather praised himself, attributing his good works to himself, instead of giving God glory for them; hiding his own love of praise under the cloak of piety. Thus despising and presumptuously judging others, he sinned the more against God, instead of making himself worthy of his praise.

Why was the prayer of the publican acceptable to God?

Because, though short, it was most humble and penitent. At the same time he did not, like the Pharisee, advance into the temple, but remained far off, as though he would acknowledge himself unworthy the presence of God and the fellowship of men. There he stood, with eyes cast down, in token that, for his sins, he was not worthy to look up to heaven; nay, he openly confessed himself a sinner, and in sorrow smote his breast, punishing, as it were, thereby, says St. Augustine, the sins which had come from his heart.

Instruction against Pride and Vainglory.

From the Gospel of to-day we learn that God looks down upon the humble, gives them grace, and exalts them; but as for the proud, he is far from them; he resists and humbles them (Ps. cxxxvii. 6). We must, therefore, combat pride, if we would please God.

Pride is nothing else but an excessive love and esteem of self, and an inordinate desire to excel others, and gain honor and praise. A proud man is great in his own conceit; makes himself out more than he is, and despises others. Thus it was with the Pharisee. He went into the temple full of himself and of the good works which he thought himself to have performed; full, also, of contempt for the publican. The humble man, on the contrary, makes nothing of himself; acknowledges his faults and sins; repents of them; and like an open sinner, entreats for forgiveness.

But see how the two stand before the all-wise and all-just God! The proud, self-satisfied Pharisee returns without grace, and even laden with new sins, while the humble publican goes home justified. Thus it remains forever true, that in the sight of God a humble sinner is better than a proud, self-righteous man; forever true is it, that he who boasts of his good works, or does them to please men, or gain thereby an idle honor, loses his reward with God; as Christ, in another place, expressly says: *Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven.*

Be afraid, therefore, of vainglory, like St. Ignatius, who said, "They who praise me, scourge me;" and St. Hilary, who wept when he saw himself honored, because he was afraid of receiving his reward on earth. Learn to despise vainglory, and think, in fine, what St. Augustine says: "God is most high; exalt yourself, and he withdraws from you; humble yourself, and he comes down to you." Consider, also, that to the ambitious and proud man it happens on his death-bed, as to one who, after many toilsome voyages, at last meets with shipwreck, and loses all his costly treasures. For even so the ambitious man finds at his death that he has toiled in vain, and lost all the merits that he might have gained by his good works, had they been done for the glory of God. To escape so great a misfortune, seek in all things not your own, but God's glory; accustom yourself, before every undertaking, to raise your heart to God by making a good intention, and you will, like the publican, find grace before God,

Aspiration.

O God, who hearest the prayer of the humble, but resisteth the proud, grant me, I beseech thee, an humble heart, that I may follow the humility of thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby merit to be one day exalted with him in heaven.

Instruction on Tithes.

“I give tithes of all that I possess.”—*Luke* xviii. 12.

Tithes are a contribution for the maintenance of the clergy, and for the supply of such things as are necessary for the divine service. In the old law, God commanded the Israelites to pay tithes to the Levites for the service of the tabernacle (*Numb.* xviii.) The Christian Church, through all ages until the present day, has maintained this law. The paying of the customary dues required by the Church, is accordingly both a duty of religion and an obligation of justice, which call for satisfaction whenever omitted, being indeed only a commutation for maintenance that it is obligatory on the faithful to furnish. In like manner it is the duty of every Christian to pay taxes, tribute, and duties. St. Paul expressly enforces this (*Rom.* xiii. 7); and Jesus Christ paid the poll-tax for himself and Peter, although he was not justly liable to it. To gain the merit of this duty, one should make such an intention as the following:

O my God, I will pay the imposts required of me to obey thee, to thank thee for those fruits of the earth which we have received, to contribute something to the dignity of the divine service, and to make some satisfaction for my sins. I will also pay them out of love to thee. Bless me and mine for the time to come; defend me from all evil, and grant me so to use temporal goods, that I may not lose those which are eternal. Through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, with the priest, pray God for brotherly love, and for protection against enemies, within and without. *God, in his holy place; God, who maketh men of one mind to dwell in a house, he shall give power and strength to his people* (Ps. lxxvii.) *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; and let them that hate him flee before his face.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O Almighty and everlasting God, who by the abundance of thy mercy dost exceed the desires and deserts of thy suppliants, pour forth thy mercy upon us, that thou mayest forgive what our conscience fears, and grant what our prayer does not presume to ask. Through Jesus Christ.

Epistle. (1 Cor. xv. 1-10.)

Brethren: I make known unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he arose 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.

What does this epistle teach us?

1. The certainty of the resurrection of Jesus; for by appearing to so many after he had risen, he removed all doubts.
 2. The certainty of our redemption and of our future happy resurrection, if we live according to our faith.
 3. In what

true humility consists. For as the holy Apostle Paul was not elated with vanity, by all the revelations he had received from God, but rather felt himself unworthy of them, on account of the sins of his previous life, ascribing it to God's grace that he was what he was, even so the truly humble man thinks little of himself, is willing to be despised by others, and gives glory to God alone.

Such humility is to our sensual nature a most difficult lesson. But is there any thing more proper? Are we not sinners, and far greater sinners than St. Paul was? and shall we then esteem ourselves highly? And granting that we have not to reproach ourselves with any great sins, and have even done much good, have we done it of ourselves? and if not, why then ascribe it to ourselves? Is it not presumption and robbery to claim for ourselves what belongs to grace? Let us learn, therefore, to be humble, and to count ourselves always unprofitable servants.

Aspiration.

O most humble Saviour, banish from my heart the spirit of pride, and impart to me the most necessary grace of humility. Give me grace to know that, of myself, I can do nothing that is pleasing to thee, that all my sufficiency for good comes from thee, and that thou workest in us *both to will and to accomplish* (2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13).

Gospel. (Mark vii. 31-37.)

At that time: Jesus going out of the coasts of Tyre, came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring to him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Who among Christians are like the deaf and dumb of this Gospel?

Those who are deaf to the voice of God, to the doctrines of the Gospel, to the reproaches of conscience, to salutary admonitions, and to the promises of God. Those also who are dumb in confessing their sins, in prayer, in the praise of God, in the defence of religion, and of the good name of their neighbor.

Why did Christ take the deaf and dumb man aside?

Because he did not seek the praise of men, and at the same time, was loth to provoke too soon the hatred of his enemies. By this means also he avoided every thing like boasting of the cure after it was done. Hereby we learn to practice even good works with such prudence and circumspection, that we may neither strive for the praise of men, nor needlessly exasperate them against us.

Why did Jesus put his fingers into the ears of the deaf and dumb, and spitting, touch his tongue?

To show this unfortunate person by signs what he could not make him understand by words, that it was he who freed him from his bodily evils, and that the healing power was not the consequence of secretly given remedies, nor did it, as some perhaps believed, proceed from magic art, but immediately from himself.

Why did Jesus look up to heaven and groan?

This most significant sigh of the divine friend of man was, perhaps, caused by the reflection, how manifold human misery is. By the act of looking up to heaven, he would intimate, 1. That he acted, not as mere man, but that he had received all power from heaven, from his eternal Father. 2. He would thereby awaken and animate the deaf and dumb man to confidence in his power, and belief in his divine mission. Learn hence to practice the beautiful virtue of compassion for others' sufferings, and to acknowledge the truth, that every good gift is from above.

Why did Christ charge them that they should tell no man?

That we might learn not to seek the praise of men for our

good deeds. The command of Jesus to tell no man this miracle increased his fame, and became an occasion of admiration. Our desire for praise has the contrary effect; it lessens the honor paid us, often causes it to be denied us, and sometimes to be changed into our confusion, by exposing our vanity. The very desire for praise alone is often enough, in the eyes of men, to darken the merits of our best deeds. From those who brought the deaf and dumb man to Jesus, learn to assist the unfortunate, or at least to intercede for them, if you cannot yourself help them. Finally, from the multitude, learn to make known the works of God to his glory; for he is continually working before our eyes every day so many wonders, in order that we may praise his benignity and omnipotence.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, great physician of souls, open mine ears to attend to thy holy will; loosen my tongue to proclaim and praise forever thy love and goodness.

Instruction on Ceremonies.

The use of ceremonies in the Catholic Church is justified by the acts of Christ as related in the gospel for to-day: for *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," that is, be opened.*

What are ceremonies?

Ceremonies are certain usages prescribed for the divine service, which, on the one hand, serve as emblems of the working of divine grace in men, and on the other, as a means of expressing outwardly and visibly the feelings and intentions of men.

Ceremonies are not essential to religion, but are worthy of honor, because they serve to excite and sustain pious thoughts.

Why has the Church instituted such ceremonies?

1. To remind us, by outward signs, of what is inwardly wrought in us by grace. 2. That, as we belong to God in body and soul, so we should serve him, not only inwardly, in

soul, but outwardly also, with bodily devotion. 3. That the divine service may wear a venerable aspect, properly distinguished from common and worldly acts. 4. That, by outward things, our minds may be raised to the contemplation of what is inward and divine. 5. That thereby we may edify our neighbors, and awaken them to a devotion like ours.

Are ceremonies, also, approved in the Holy Scriptures ?

Certainly, since besides those which Christ used, as related in the gospel of to-day, he also used, at other times, various ceremonies ; as when he blessed the loaves and the fishes (Matt. xv. 36) ; when he spread clay upon the eyes of the man born blind (John ix. 6) ; when, in praying, he knelt down (Luke xxii. 41), and fell upon his face (Matt. xxvi. 39) ; when he breathed upon his disciples in imparting to them the Holy Ghost (John xx. 22) ; and when, finally, at his ascension into heaven, he blessed them with uplifted hands (Luke xxiv. 50). So likewise, under the old law, many ceremonies were prescribed by God to the Jews. Of these the greater part were abolished under the new law, but yet many were retained ; and these were, by the Church, invested with new significance. Who would dare dispute that the Church has the right of so doing ? That they have an exalted Christian meaning, any one may see who will take the pains to examine them ; and that the use of them is most reasonable, no one will deny, when so many ceremonies are in use in ordinary life. Learn hence, then, the meaning of ceremonies, and be not ashamed thereby publicly to confess God.

Practical Lessons against Sins of the Tongue.

“ And spitting, he touched his tongue.”—*Mark* vii. 33.

There is no more dangerous member of the body than the tongue. *The tongue, says St. James, is indeed a little member, and boasteth great things : behold how small a fire, what a great wood it kindleth ; and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members, which defileth the whole body, and inflameth the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire of hell. By it we bless God and the Father,*

and by it we curse men who are made after the likeness of God: out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing (James iii. 5-11). There is no land, no city, no house, which evil tongues have not filled with contention, strife, reproach, discord, jealousy, impurity, and slander. An impious tongue assails God and his saints; falsifies the divine word; produces heresies and divisions; makes men intemperate, impure, envious, hateful, jealous. It is, in a word, a world of injustice and unspeakable evil. The tongue of the serpent seduced our first parents, and brought thereby into the world death and all evil (Gen. iii.) The tongue of Jeroboam seduced the Israelites from their God (3 Kings xii. 28). The tongue of Judas betrayed Christ (Matt. xxvi.) And what is the chief cause of war, that scourge of mankind, but the restless tongues of men greedy for gold and honor, who seek their fortune by war, and make their gains from its calamities? How many, finally, by their ungoverned tongues, have been drawn into the greatest unhappiness and sorrow?

What, then, is to be done to protect ourselves against so dangerous an enemy?

1. We must be, as St. James says, *slow to speak*; that is, we must consider well what we speak. 2. We must avoid oaths and falsehoods, whether in so-called jests or necessity; for there surely can be no reason to offend God, and to do so out of jest is manifestly worthy of punishment. 3. We should ask others to make us watchful over ourselves, and should punish ourselves for such faults as we have committed. By such methods may one avoid offending in word, and become a perfect man (James iii. 2). But as every nature of beasts has been tamed by the nature of man, while man alone cannot tame his own tongue, but needs therefore the special grace of God, let us, accordingly, often pray for it in the following ejaculation:

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door around my lips, that I fall not by them, and that my tongue destroy me not (Ps. civ. 3; Ecclus. xxii. 33).

[Read the Instruction on Slander, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost.]

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

The Introit of the Mass to-day is the prayer of an afflicted soul entreating God for assistance against its enemies. *Incline to my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me; let my enemies be confounded and ashamed who seek my soul (Ps. lxix.) Let them be turned backwards, and blush for shame, who desire evils to me.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O Almighty and merciful God, from whose gift it comes that thou art worthily and laudably served by the faithful, grant us, we beseech thee, to run without offence to the attainment of thy promises. Through Christ.

Epistle. (2 Cor. iii. 4-9.)

Brethren: Such confidence we have, through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient to think any thing of ourselves as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God. Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the Spirit. For the letter killeth: but the Spirit quickeneth. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious; so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is made void: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory; much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory.

Explanation.

St. Paul hereby says to the Corinthians that he delivers to them the pure and plain truth, and that they therefore ought to give heed to him and follow him. As evidence of this, he brings forward his life and the fruits of his labors, which are, as it were, a living epistle and a living witness to the same effect. He then introduces a comparison between the priesthood of the old and that of the new law, in order to show that the dignity of the priesthood under the new law (and conse-

quently the respect and confidence due to it), as far excels the dignity of the priesthood under the old, as the spirit does the letter—the truth the figure. For if the ministry of Moses, which consisted in the service of the letter, and imparted no grace, was so glorious, how much more glorious is that priesthood of the new law, through which is conveyed the sanctifying grace of God. And how much more veneration and obedience should accordingly be paid to the priests of the new law.

Aspiration.

O Lord, grant to thy Gospel such preachers, and to thy people such pastors, as may strive, like St. Paul, to gain honor for their office and fruits for their labors. Grant that we also may highly esteem thy ministers, may honor them in word and deed, and willingly obey their teachings.

Gospel. (Luke x. 23–37.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy 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? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and, having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way; and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the

host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go and do thou in like manner.

Why does Jesus call his disciples blessed?

Because they now had the happiness which so many kings, patriarchs, and prophets had desired in vain—of seeing the Saviour of the world, and of hearing his teaching.

We no longer see Jesus in person, but do we not see him with the eyes of faith, really, substantially, and truly present, under the appearance of bread? Do we not hear him continually through the mouth of his Church and of her ministers, since whoso hears her, hears him?

Believe, therefore, as if you saw him in person, and so will you have the promise of salvation (John xx. 29).

What sort of faith was it that Jesus praised?

Such as is active in love—the love of God and of our neighbor, for on these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.

[On the Love of God, see the Instruction for the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.]

Who is our neighbor?

Every man, be he a foreigner or a fellow-countryman, poor or rich, of our own religion or of any other, a friend or an enemy. This we are taught by the parable of the good Samaritan, who did not inquire of the man who fell among robbers who and whence he was, but proved himself a neighbor to him, by actively helping him when he needed help.

How are we to love our neighbor?

The Samaritan showed the wounded man all the love which, in like case, he could have desired for himself. We must, therefore, love our neighbor as ourselves; that is, must desire for him and do for him the same that, in like circumstance, we should desire for ourselves, and not wish for him or do to him what we would not wish done to ourselves (Matt. vii. 12).

In what way are we particularly to practice the love of our neighbor?

1. According to the example of St. Paul, by (1 Cor. i. 4) heartily rejoicing over the gifts and graces which our neighbor has received from God, and by sympathizing with him in misfortune. 2. By praying God to grant to our neighbor such gifts as St. Paul, on his knees, besought for the Ephesians,—the fulness of the knowledge of God, and of all perfection. 3. By overlooking and patiently bearing our neighbors' faults, disorders, and infirmities of every kind, according to the teaching of the same Apostle to the Galatians (vi. 2): *Bear ye one another's burdens and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ.* This, the young should particularly practice towards the old, the rich towards the poor, husbands towards their wives, and wives towards their husbands. 4. In general, by both the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. [See the instruction for the seventh Sunday after Pentecost.]

Why must we love our neighbor?

1. God implanted it in the heart of every man to respect and love others as he would wish the same for himself. 2. This law, obscured by selfishness and passion, was set forth anew by God, both in the old and the new law, so distinctly and so strictly, that he who loves not, does not fulfil the law (Rom. xiii. 8), does not love God, is a murderer of his brother, abideth in sin (1 John iii. 14), and cannot, therefore, be saved, although he should fulfil every other requirement. 3. We are all, not merely by descent from Adam, but much more through the grace of Jesus, children of God, members of one family, and should we not love one another? Might not even the dumb animals put us to shame, since they plainly love their own? 4. As children of God, we bear in us the likeness of God. But God loved, and still loves all men, for the salvation of all, he has given up his only Son, that all may be saved; shall we then love one and hate another, and yet think to be like God? 5. Through the grace of Jesus we are all redeemed, made members of his body, yes, partakers of his body and blood. Therefore St. Paul admonishes us, *You are all one in Christ* (Gal. iii. 28), *be therefore careful to keep the unity of*

the spirit in the bond of peace (Ephes. iv. 3). How natural is it for the members of one body not to wound each other. 6. Jesus, our Redeemer, gave his life for us when we were his enemies (Rom. v. 10), and even on the cross prayed for his murderers. We are his disciples. But can we be allowed to call ourselves so without possessing this mark of his discipleship (John xiii. 15). Thus every thing incites us to love: the law of nature and of revelation, the example of Christ, all the promises and hopes that we have. In truth, how, without love, could we hope to enter the kingdom of love? There can be no answer to this reasoning, "Would you be a disciple of Jesus, an heir of his kingdom?" then love like him; and he has shed his blood for his mortal enemies.

With what intention should we love our neighbor?

Not from the hope of worldly gain, nor from natural inclination; still less from any worse and more discreditable motives; for such love were merely natural, such as that of the heathen (Matt. v. 46, 47), or even of beasts; but we must love our neighbor in God, and for God's sake, because he commands it, and because such love is pleasing to him.

Aspiration.

O my God, give me a truly loving and merciful heart, that I may show love and beneficence to my neighbor for thy sake, and thereby become worthy to receive the same from thy mercy.

In what higher and spiritual sense is this day's gospel to be understood?

The holy fathers understand by the man who fell among robbers, the race of mankind, who through the disobedience of Adam, were deprived of original justice, and of the grace of God, and wounded and enfeebled in body and soul. The priest and Levite accordingly represent the old law, which had neither the will nor the power to repair this misfortune. Finally, the Good Samaritan is Christ, who takes up the wounded, pours into his wounds the oil of his grace and the wine of his blood, through baptism and the other holy sacraments, brings him to the inn, that is the Church, and commits

him to the pastor of souls, for further care and nursing. What love!

Instruction on the Holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

“He bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.”—*Luke x. 34.*

This act of the Samaritan towards the wounded man, may be regarded as a figure of the holy sacrament of Extreme Unction, in which Christ the true Samaritan, through the anointing with the holy oils, communicates his grace to the sick, healing and strengthening him, if not in body, yet in soul; provided that the sick put no impediment in the way.

Is Extreme Unction a sacrament?

Yes; for through it the grace of God is imparted to the sick, through an outward sign, instituted by Christ.

What is the outward sign of this sacrament?

The anointing with the holy oil (which is consecrated by the bishop on Maundy Thursday), and the prayer of the priest.

When was this sacrament instituted?

According to the Council of Trent, this sacrament was foreshadowed by the disciples anointing the sick with oil, and healing them (Mark vi. 13); but afterwards St. James announced it to the Corinthians, as a sacrament instituted by Christ, in these words: “*Is any one sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in his sins, they shall be forgiven him*” (James v. 14, 15). This St. James could not have said, unless Christ had so instructed and commanded him.

What are the effects of this sacrament upon the sick?

According to the above quoted words of St. James, its effects are, 1. That the sick either regains his former health, or else is enabled, by the divine assistance, to bear the pains of his sickness patiently and meritoriously. 2. A relief to the soul, in being freed from lukewarmness and feebleness for good; while, at the same time, by increased grace, it is strengthened and armed against disquietude of mind and the temptations of the devil. 3. Remission not only of venial

sins, together with the remaining punishments of them, but also of mortal sins; whether of such as he either forgot, or had not the opportunity to confess, provided that he receives the sacrament with worthy preparation. For this reason this sacrament is to be administered to children, after they have come to years of discretion, although they may not have yet received Holy Communion.

In what does this due preparation consist?

In the reception of the holy sacrament of Penance, and, if possible, of Holy Communion, and in acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, and other pious affections. The sick person therefore should not defer the reception of this sacrament until the violence of his disease, by taking away the use of sense and reason, renders him nearly unconscious of what is going on. By this precaution he will not die any sooner, but rather recover the more quickly, if it be for his soul's good; and, at any rate, he will thereby secure this advantage, that his sickness will be more meritorious, and his death the easier and happier.

Is this sacrament necessary to salvation?

No; but it would be indeed foolish to deprive ourselves of the grace which is necessary in order to enter upon the passage to eternity with child-like confidence in God.

Is this sacrament to be received more than once?

Yes; and as often as we are in probable danger of death; even though this should happen several times in the same sickness.

What preparations must be made for the administration of this holy sacrament?

When Extreme Unction is to be given to a sick person, there must be standing in the room where the person is, a table, covered with a white cloth, and on it are to be placed a crucifix, a blessed candle, and holy water, besides some common water and a plate with salt; also, some cotton for the priest. The salt and cotton, after having been used, are burned.

What does the priest say on entering the sick room?

He wishes peace to the house, and then sprinkles the sick with holy water, saying, *Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop.*

Have mercy on me, O God. He next prays God to bless the sick, and to send his holy angels to defend those that dwell in that habitation from all evil; to repel from them all assaults of the devil; to console and strengthen the sick, and to restore him again to health.

Why does the priest lay his hands upon the sick, praying at the same time?

The imposition of hands signifies the protection of God, and is done in accordance with the words of Jesus, *They shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover* (Mark xvi. 18). At the same time the priest says: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may all power of the devil be extinguished in thee, by the laying on of our hands, and by the invocation of all the holy angels, archangels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all saints."

What prayer does the priest say during the unction?

Dipping his thumb in the holy oil, he anoints the sick person, in the form of a cross, upon the eyes, saying, "Through his holy unction and his own most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by thy sight, Amen." He then anoints the ears, the nose, the mouth, hands and feet, making use of the same prayer, and adapting the same form to the several senses. While this is doing, the sick person should make an act of contrition for all the sins he has committed by the five senses, humbly imploring of God mercy and the remission of his deserved punishment. In the other prayers the priest asks of God that he will strengthen the sick and restore him to health in body and soul.

What must the sick do after having received this sacrament?

1. He should, from his heart, thank God for having caused him to be born and brought up in the true Catholic Church, and for having made him worthy to receive this holy sacrament, by which he becomes a partaker in the sufferings and death of Jesus. 2. He should pray God to render the grace of this sacrament effectual in him; to make him a sharer in the merits of Jesus, and to strengthen him to follow Christ to his glory, by the way of the cross.

How considerate does our holy Catholic Church show herself by the continual administration of this holy sacrament! Having received man at holy baptism under her maternal care, having provided him at confirmation with the arms necessary to meet sin, heresy, and infidelity; having cleansed him, in the holy sacrament of Penance, from the stains of his guilt; having, in the most holy Eucharist, nourished him with the bread of life, and strengthened him for the exercise of virtues, she does not forsake him at the last decisive moment—in the hour of death—but at that most dangerous hour, when the dying man lies on the bed of affliction, forsaken by all, often by his most intimate friends, and even regarded with aversion; when time closes upon him, and an uncertain and unknown eternity opens before him; when Satan is using all his strength to destroy his soul, and when the very thought of the coming judgment makes him tremble;—at this terrible hour, his faithful mother, the Catholic Church, does not abandon him, but sends her minister, the priest, as a consoling angel, to his bed, to encourage the suffering, and to reanimate the timid, by the divine word, to cleanse the unclean, and reconcile him to God, through the holy sacrament of Penance; to strengthen the feeble, and to nourish him with the bread of life; to confirm the combatant with holy oil, thus providing him with all the means of grace which Jesus has obtained for his Church, and conducting the soul before the face of the Eternal Judge, with prayers for grace and mercy, for the sake of his most holy name.

Considering this, O Christian, should you not rejoice to belong to the Catholic Church; should you not thank God, and faithfully adhere to this Church; for however well we may live in heresy, in her alone can we die well.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, pray with the Church for assistance against her enemies. *Have regard, O Lord, to thy covenant, and forsake not, to the end, the souls of thy poor: Arise,*

O Lord, and judge thy cause, and forget not the voices of them that seek thee (Ps. lxxiii.) O God, why hast thou cut us off to the end? Why is thy wrath enkindled against the sheep of thy pasture? Glory be to the Father.

Prayer

O almighty and eternal God, grant to us an increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may deserve to obtain what thou promisest, make us love what thou commandest. Through our Lord.

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," which is Christ. Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years, doth not disannul, 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.

Explanation.

St. Paul shows the Galatians that they could not be justified by the Mosaic law, but only by active faith. The promise, he says, which God gave to Abraham, that all nations should be saved through faith in one of his seed, pointed to Christ. Moses, indeed, proclaimed the law four hundred and thirty years afterwards, but this does not annul the promise: otherwise the promise of God would not be fulfilled.

Why, then, was the law given? To make the will of God known to the Jews; to prevent them from transgressing it, by the fear of punishment; and, in short, to prepare them for the coming of Christ. The law, then, is not against the promise of

saving of all men through Christ, but rather a preparation for its fulfilment. Accordingly, the law lasted no longer than till the coming of Christ, who was that promised seed of Abraham. Even the Scriptures mention, that notwithstanding the law and its sacrifices, the Jews remained sinners; it could not, therefore, by itself, justify man. It follows, therefore, that salvation was to be gained only through Jesus, who delivered men from the Jewish law. Let us, then, by active faith in him, make use of this grace for eternity.

Aspiration.

O God, grant that we who have the promises which thou gavest to the fathers, may also have grace to walk as worthy heirs of heaven.

Gospel. (Luke xvii. 11-19.)

At that time: As Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off; and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. Whom when he saw, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell on his face, before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole.

What is leprosy?

The law of Moses divided leprosy into three kinds: that of the flesh, showing itself in a noisome and contagious eruption; that of garments, appearing in red or white stains; and that of houses, showing itself in spots lower than the surrounding parts, like dints, and disfigured with paleness or redness (Leviticus xiii., xiv.)

In a spiritual sense, the *leprosy of the flesh* denotes the unchaste, who easily corrupt others. The *leprosy of garments* consists in luxury of dress and in scandalous fashions, by which not only are souls seduced into sin, but many are stripped of

all they possess, and whole families and communities plunged into temporal and eternal ruin.

If, in former times, God threatened the Jews with his vengeance for merely wearing strange apparel (Sophonias i. 8), what punishment will come upon those Christians who, by seductive dress and shameful exposure, draw so many thousand souls into sin?

The *leprosy of houses* is to be found where wicked and immoral servants are kept; where scandalous and obscene words are spoken; where immodest dances and too free plays are held; where indecent songs are sung, and licentious acts committed; where married persons behave towards each other with too little restraint in the sight of others; where mothers are without modesty in nursing children; where parents take children already well grown to bed with them, or allow children of opposite sexes to sleep together, and such like things; where meetings are allowed and encouraged to the injury of virtue and of our neighbor's honor, to the destruction of the peace of families and communities, to the furtherance of love affairs, of robberies, of extravagance in dress; or where assistance, counsel, or harbor is given to wicked undertakings of any other sort, injurious to our neighbor, and an opportunity afforded for neglecting the divine service. Woe to those who give, tolerate, overlook these scandals.

Why were the lepers to stand afar off?

Because it was so commanded in the law of Moses, that no one might receive the contagion from them. Hence we learn that we must carefully shun scandalous persons, companies, and houses, as we would the plague. *He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it, and he that hath fellowship with the proud shall put on pride* (Eccelus xiii. 1).

Why did Christ send lepers to the priests?

He did this, 1. To pay due honor to the priestly dignity and to the law of God, for it was commanded that lepers should show themselves to the priests, by whom they were to be pronounced clean or unclean (Leviticus xiv.) 2. It was done to try the faith, the confidence, the obedience of the lepers. For Christ would not heal them upon their simple petitions only,

but they must also assist in their healing by their own co-operation; that is, by their faith in his word, by their confidence in his power, by their obedience to his commands. And, in fact, as they went to show themselves to the priests they were made clean.

Thus, also, God deals with sinners; he is truly ready to cleanse them from the leprosy of their sins, so soon as they shall present themselves to the priests, by a sincere confession, shall make known the dangerous state of their souls, and obediently and faithfully make use of the means thereby placed within their reach; thus only will they be able to obtain the perfect cure of their souls.

Why did Jesus ask for the nine others who also were made clean?

To show how greatly ingratitude displeases him. Injuries done to him, he mostly submitted to in silence; but this ingratitude he will not suffer to pass uncondemned. So great a sin is ingratitude! On this account St. Bernard says, "Ingratitude is an enemy of the soul that destroys merits, corrupts virtue, and prevents grace. It is a scorching wind that dries up the fountain of the goodness, the mercy, and the influence of God." On the other hand, gratitude, as St. Chrysostom says, is the best preserver of benefactions; and whoever meets the benefits of God with thanks, as Cassian observes, prompts the giver to bestow still greater. Therefore be thankful (Coloss. iii. 15).

Why does God require of us to be thankful?

This question St. Chrysostom answers very beautifully by saying, "God requires thankfulness of us, only that he may confer on us new graces." But have we not, on other grounds, every reason to be thankful to him, since not a moment passes in which he does not load us with endless benefits? Forget not, therefore, to give thanks to God morning and evening, before and after every meal; thank him then as often as you recognize his blessing in your house, in your children, in your property, your cattle, your fields, your fruits. Particularly thank him when you have gathered in the fruits of the earth (Levit. xxiii. 10, *seq.*) St. Augustine says, "We cannot think,

speak, or write any thing better or more acceptable than, 'Thanks be to God!'

Aspiration.

O Jesus Christ, who, while upon earth, didst for our example and encouragement give thanks to thy Heavenly Father for all things, by thy thankfulness I beseech of thee grace to give thanks through thee, to our Father in heaven, at all times, for all things (Coloss. iii. 17).

Instruction on the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Go and show yourselves to the priests (Luke xvii. 14). The Saviour showed such honor to the priests of the old law, as to command that all lepers should appear in their presence, although they could not cure the leprosy; what honor and veneration do not the priests of the new law deserve, who through the sacrament of holy orders, have received power to heal the leprosy of the soul, with many still higher prerogatives!

What are holy orders?

A sacrament in which the ministers of Christ are consecrated to their sacred functions, and receive grace to discharge them.

What is the outward sign of this sacrament?

The laying on of the hands of the bishop, and the presentation of the chalice with bread and wine, together with the verbal communication of authority to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and to remit and retain sins.

When did Christ institute this sacrament?

At the Last Supper, when he, after having changed the bread into his true body, and the wine into his true blood, said to his Apostles, *Do this in remembrance of me* (Luke xxii. 19). The power of remitting and retaining sin he gave them before his ascension, when he said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained* (John xx. 22,

23). From which it follows, that not all Christians, but only the Apostles and their successors, were made capable of exercising these sacred functions. *Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as Aaron was* (Heb. v. 4).

Are holy orders reckoned a sacrament by the Apostles?

Yes; for St. Paul admonishes his disciple Timothy to stir up the grace of God received by the imposition of his hands. Hereby St. Paul teaches expressly that by the imposition of the hands of the Apostles, or of the bishops, who are their successors, the grace of God is imparted to priests, in which consists the substance of the sacrament.

In what manner are holy orders conferred?

The dignity of the priesthood is reached by several degrees. He who is called to it first receives tonsure, and next successively the offices of ostiarius (doorkeeper), reader, exorcist, acolyte, sub-deacon, and deacon, before he is admitted to the priesthood. These degrees have existed from the most ancient times. Of deacons we find mention already made in the Acts of the Apostles. This order was established to prepare for the priesthood those who aspired to that degree, to keep before their eyes the dignity of that calling, and to prove their fitness for it. On this account, he who was destined for the priesthood often remained several years in one and the same degree. The significance of these various degrees is full of meaning. *The tonsure*, which is the name given to cutting the hair from the crown of the head in the form of the cross, and the putting on of the white surplice, remind him that he is to renounce the vanity of the world, henceforth to acknowledge as king Jesus crowned with thorns, and to remember how necessary for an ecclesiastic is an unstained life. As *ostiarius*, or *doorkeeper*, he receives the oversight of the church and its furniture, and is charged with enforcing the respect due to the house of God. As *reader*, it is his place to read, in the church, from the Holy Scriptures. As *exorcist*, he receives authority to command evil spirits in the name of Christ. As *acolyte*, it is his duty to carry the censer at holy mass, to light the candles, to present the water and wine. To those who are admitted to these de-

grees are given, at their ordination, the implements which are significant of their respective offices. As *sub-deacon*, wearing the dalmatic (the garment of joy), it is his place to assist the priest at high mass, and to sing the epistle. As *deacon*, he receives full power to chant the gospel at high mass, to baptize, and to preach. He who has received only tonsure and the four minor orders, may return to the world; but he who has been made sub-deacon, must persevere in his vocation.

He who is to be ordained priest must prepare himself beforehand, for several days, by prayer, meditation, and confession. Before ordination, the bishop declares and announces, with a loud voice, that he who would receive the office of sub-deacon is bound, by the laws of the Church, to perpetual celibacy; that no one, therefore, should present himself for that degree who is not prepared willingly to submit to this law, which has been established by the Church in order that the clergy might the better devote themselves to the service of God and of their neighbor.

On the appointed day the bishop, after the epistle, sits in his chair, while those who are to be ordained are called, and their names read out. The arch-deacon then addresses the bishop thus: "Right reverend father, the service of the Holy Church requires that these deacons here present be ordained priests." The bishop says, "Do you know that they are worthy?" To the answer of the arch-deacon—"As far as human frailty permits, I know and testify that they are worthy,"—the bishop replies, "Thanks be to God." The bishop then calls upon the other ecclesiastics, and upon the laity present, to declare any thing that they may have to allege against any of these deacons; and after waiting a moment, if no one comes forward, he turns to the deacons, and sets forth to them how venerable the priesthood is, and how holy the duties are which they are about to undertake. The deacons then prostrate themselves, to indicate that they acknowledge themselves unworthy of such a holy office. The bishop kneels at the altar, and in the litany invokes the saints to intercede for those who are to be ordained priests, and imparts to them, as they lie prostrate, his

threefold blessing, by saying, "May God bless, sanctify, and ordain you to his service."

Then the bishop and all the priests present, one after the other, lay both their hands on the heads of the deacons, praying God to fill them, through the Holy Ghost, with the fulness of power from above. He then puts on each of them the stole, folding it over the breast in the form of a cross, saying at the same time, "Take up the yoke of the Lord, for his yoke is sweet and burden light." Hereby is denoted that the priest is to be armed with power from above, to carry the cross of Christ and the yoke of the divine law, and to instruct others in the same, by word and by pious example. In the same manner he puts on each the chasuble, with the words, "Receive the priestly garment which signifies love, for God can increase love, and perfect it in works." He then, having dipped his thumb in the holy oil, anoints the hands of each in the form of a cross, from the thumb of one hand to the forefinger of the other, saying at the same time, "May the Lord, through this unction, consecrate, sanctify, and bless these hands, that whatever they shall consecrate may be consecrated, and whatever they shall bless and sanctify may be blessed and sanctified." He then gives them the chalice with the wine and water, and the paten with the bread, saying, "Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God, and to celebrate mass for the living and for the dead, in the name of the Lord." Before the offertory the new presbyters come forward, two by two, each carrying a lighted candle in his hand, kneel down before the bishop, and, kissing his hand, deliver up to him the candles as an emblem of the enlightenment of their minds by faith, and of the love that has been enkindled in their hearts. They then immediately proceed to say mass, with the bishop, out of the missals prepared for them.

Shortly after the *Agnus Dei*, one of them goes to the bishop and receives from him the kiss of peace as a token of love and unity. Returning, he in like manner gives the kiss of peace to the one next him, with the words, "Peace unto you," and in this way it is communicated successively until the last is reached. All receive holy communion from the hands of the

bishop. Finally, they all say the Creed, in token that, henceforth they are to preach the Gospel. After this the bishop again imposes his hands upon them, repeating those words of Christ (John xx. 22, 23): "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins thou shalt forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins thou shalt retain, they are retained." Immediately after, their chasubles, which until now have been rolled up half-way on the back, are unfolded, in token that they are now in possession of the full power of the priesthood. The bishop then takes the hands of each of the new presbyters, and inclosing them in his, asks them, "Do you promise to me and to my successors due veneration and obedience?" After the answer, "I promise," the bishop embraces him with the words, "Peace be always with you." Finally, the bishop admonishes the new presbyters to observe, at saying mass, and at other ecclesiastical duties, the veneration, care, and exactness which are due to such sacred functions, and to the dignity of priests dedicated to God. For that end he implores the divine assistance; giving them in conclusion his threefold blessing.

From this instruction learn, then, to venerate and honor priests as being representatives of God on earth, and as possessors of that great authority by virtue of which they can forgive or retain sins. Profit by the use of this authority; and when you have fallen into mortal sin, go to the priest that you may obtain absolution; apply to him whenever you encounter great temptation, or on any account need his aid for the good of your soul. Pray too for the priests; asking fervently of God, particularly on Ember Days, to give to his Church faithful pastors. Jesus himself commands it, saying, *The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest* (Matt. ii. 37, 38; Luke x. 2). Finally, should you see a bad priest, consider that the priesthood is to be honored even in such as he, and be not scandalized, but remember what Jesus said, *Whatever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not, for they say and do not* (Matt. xxiii. 3).

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, join with the priest in awaking a fervent desire for heaven, by the words of the 83d Psalm. *Behold, O God, our protector, and look on the face of thy Christ; for better is one day in thy courts, above thousands. How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Preserve thy Church, we beseech thee, O Lord, with perpetual mercy, and since without thee mortal man goes astray, may we be ever withheld by thy grace from what is hurtful, and directed to what is profitable. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Gal. v. 16-24.)

Brethren: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit: and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things, shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.

What is it to walk in the Spirit?

It is, in all things, and at all times, to follow the inspirations of the Holy Spirit; and accordingly, not merely to abstain from the works of the flesh—fornication, and such like—but rather to crucify the flesh and its lusts, and earnestly to aspire after those fruits which the Holy Ghost produces in men, such

as charity, peace, and joy. So shall we belong to Christ, and become partakers of eternal life.

Is it not wonderful that all Christians desire to belong to Christ, and to be heirs of his kingdom, but are unwilling to crucify the flesh with its vices and concupiscences, and to destroy its lusts, as if believing this to be required only of the clergy—whereas it is to all Christians that Christ says, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

Aspiration.

Pray for me, O Saint Paul, that God may give me grace to crucify my flesh, with its vices and concupiscences, that with thee I may become a partaker of the kingdom of Christ.

Gospel. (Matt. vi. 24-33.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.

What is meant by serving God?

Doing the will of God in all things which he requires of us, as men, as Christians, as citizens, whatever state of life we

may be placed in, and doing this with fidelity, with unwearied zeal, and out of love to him.

Who are the two masters whom we cannot serve at the same time?

God and worldly gain; that is, if our hearts are inordinately set upon that. One cannot serve both, because they demand things that are contradictory. For instance, God forbids usury and stealing, to which an inordinate love for the goods of the world carries one. God commands the observance of Sundays and holidays, but desire of worldly gain induces men to neglect the divine service, and disturbs them even in church; so that while present in body, they are absent in their minds, which are gone after their worldly affairs.

Who are they that serve Mammon, or worldly wealth?

The avaricious, who, impelled by their longing for riches, offend God by manifold transgressions of his commandments, do frequent injustices to their neighbors, allow themselves no rest or repose, and neither concern themselves with God nor heavenly things.

Why does Christ refer us to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field?

To awaken in us confidence in the Divine Providence. In truth, if God feeds the young ravens (Ps. cxvi. 9) and the birds of the air, who neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns; if he decks so beautifully the flowers of the field, how much more will he not care for men, whom he has created after his own image, and adopted as his children? How carefully will not a man provide for a beast that is dear to him? And shall God, the Almighty, and All-good, who cares so lovingly for all his creatures, to whom all our wants are known before we cry to him for help—shall he forget us, his children? Will he refuse nourishment to the bodies which he has given us? Let us trust, therefore, at all times, in the Lord, and he who hears the cry of the young ravens, will also hear us in the time of our need, if we at other times obey his commandments.

Are we, then, to use no care or labor?

That by no means follows, from what has been said. The Saviour forbids only that anxiousness, proceeding from little

faith, which, in striving for a maintenance, neglects God's honor and commandments, and the good of one's soul. For the rest, God himself has laid upon man the command, that he must labor (Gen. iii. 17-19); and St. Paul says, *If any man will not work, neither let him eat* (2 Thess. iii. 10). In forbidding that faithless and excessive anxiety, he forbids only what would be of no more use to us than if by taking thought one should seek to add a cubit to his stature.

What should preserve us from excessive anxiety?

A firm and living faith that God can and will help us. That he can is clear, because he is almighty; that he will is certain, for the reason that he is love—that he has promised it to us, more than once, most expressly, and that he is faithful in keeping his promises. 2. The thought that God has given us his only-begotten Son. What should he deny us that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all? (Rom. viii. 32.) 3. Our own method of acting. We often intrust to the fidelity and love of men the dearest things we have; as our life, our goods, our honor. How much more, then, should we in all things trust to the fidelity, the goodness, and the love of our Almighty Father, who loves us more than a mother loves her child (Ps. lxi. 15); who makes his sun to rise upon the good and bad (Matt. v. 45), and who has promised, in the gospel of to-day, that all things shall be added unto us if we seek first the kingdom of God and his justice; that is, when, above all things, we strive to become more and more acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, to follow it with greater strictness, and to make it known to others, both by precept and example.

Let us, then, trust in God, and daily renew our confidence in him, particularly when we say the Creed, or when, in the Our Father, we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Aspiration.

O Jesus, give me a steadfast trust in thy divine providence, and daily increase the same in me, that in all necessities I may firmly believe that by seeking first the kingdom of God and his justice, all the necessaries of life will be added unto me.

Consolation in Poverty.

“Be not solicitous for your life.”—*Matt.* vi. 25.

If you have been made poor by war, deluge, fire, or any other calamity, or finally, by your own fault, still, in any case, be consoled by the consideration that God has sent you this poverty for your good, for *good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God* (Eccclus ix. 14); *and shall there be evil which the Lord hath not done?* (Amos iii. 6.) Receive it, therefore, from the hand of the Lord, without impatience or murmuring, as a medicine for the soul, that you in all likelihood need, lest by temporal prosperity you should have been led to forget God, and to cling too much to worldly goods; for riches have brought many to eternal ruin. But if you have lived in gluttony, impurity, and pride of dress, be-think yourself that the poverty into which God has suffered you to feel is a just punishment therefor, and thank him for having dealt with you so graciously. And is it not better for you to suffer for a short time in the world than to hunger and thirst eternally in hell?

But if you are innocent, still console yourself by the example of the saints, of whom St. Paul says, *that they took with joy the being stripped of their own goods, knowing that they had a better and lasting substance in heaven* (Heb. x. 34). But especially should you take courage from the example of Christ, *who, being rich, became poor for our sakes* (2 Cor. viii. 9), and had not upon earth *where to lay his head* (Matt. viii. 20). In your misery and poverty, say often, with Job: *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done; blessed be the name of the Lord* (Job i. 21, 22). *Fear not, my son,* says Tobias (Tob. iv. 23); *we lead indeed a poor life, but we shall have many good things if we fear God and depart from all sin, and do that which is good.* To serve God, and to be contented with little brings you, therefore, rich gain; while they who have served riches, as they brought nothing into this world, so also shall they carry nothing out of it, except their evil works,

and the punishment which they have thereby deserved (1 Tim. vi. 6, 7).

Practical Lessons against Usury.

“You cannot serve God and mammon.”—*Matt.* vi. 24.

To practice usury is to demand from one's neighbor, to whom one has furnished a loan, or who has otherwise become indebted to one, more than the customary interest, or the amount of the debt; or to oblige him, as the condition of a required loan, to give his note for more than he receives. They too, are usurers, who for the sake of their gains, make out a fictitious scarcity, in order to raise the price of goods above what is right. This is a mortal sin. God has threatened usurers with everlasting death (Ezech. xviii. 13); and Christ says, expressly: Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing thereby (Luke vi. 35; Exodus xxii. 25). Besides, usurers are indeed the leeches of the poor, sucking out, as it were, their sweat and blood. Finally, it is against the law of nature to take advantage of the poverty and need of our neighbor to enrich ourselves; still more is it against the law of God, which commands us to love our neighbor, and in his need to be to him the Good Samaritan. Would that usurers might bethink themselves of what the Lord says: *What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?* (*Matt.* xxi. 26.)

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

The Introit of the Mass is a fervent prayer from the 85th Psalm, which may be said in any need or adversity. *Bow down thine ear, O Lord, to me and hear me; save thy servant, O my God, that trusteth in thee; have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have cried to thee all day. Give joy to the soul of thy servant, for to thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

May continued mercy purify and defend thy Church, O Lord; and since without thee it cannot remain safe, may it ever be governed by thy bounty. Through Christ our Lord.

Epistle. (Gal. v. 25, 26; vi. 1-10.)

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

Explanation and Brief Lessons.

This epistle is a continuation of that of the last Sunday, taken from the epistle of the holy Apostle to the Galatians, in which, after having shown the insufficiency of the Jewish law, and that they could be saved only by the works of faith, he incites them to the performance of those works. They ought accordingly to practice, with diligence, humility and charity, as being the foundation of the Christian life. Humility should teach and admonish them to think little of themselves—to shun self-confidence and vainglory; charity should incite them, on the other hand, to be meek, loving, compassionate, and kind to every man, even to sinners; to administer correction to the erring only with charity; for if this were done with an imperti-

ment and insolent zeal, they would not only fail to correct offenders, but would themselves fall into the same temptations and sins; for God, by a common and just judgment, allows the proud, who look down upon others' sins, to fall into sin themselves, that they may learn to be humble, and to have compassion upon those who have gone astray. It is a lesson of the greatest importance, that we should not allow ourselves to believe that any thing contrary to what the Apostle has here taught, may be done or omitted without harm. This would be mere delusion, for the acceptance of the evangelical law binds us also to the obligations therein contained. By it God will judge each one of us; for what things a man shall sow, those also he shall reap.

Aspiration.

O Saint Paul, procure for me, by your prayers, the grace of God, that I may continually walk in humility, may always love my neighbor, and, in particular, may bear with patience his faults and frailties, that so I may fulfil the law of God, and reap an abundant harvest.

Gospel. (Luke vii. 11-16.)

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

Why did Christ have compassion on this widow?

To show us that God takes forsaken and afflicted widows under his care, and becomes himself their comforter and helper, and to teach us that we should do likewise. Woe to those

who oppress them, and force them to tears; for the tears of the widows and their cry will ascend to God, who shall punish the injury done to them (Exod. xxii. 22, 23).

Christ had, however, still other grounds for his compassion; for he foresaw in this dead youth of Naim the death of the sinner, and in the affliction of the mother, the grief which the Church would suffer over the spiritual loss of so many children. Should not this move our compassion also? Can we be children of the Church, if the death of her children, our brothers and sisters, goes not to our hearts? And yet, after all, what do we do? We see daily a multitude of souls die the death of sin, and that the Church, who could not preserve them therefrom, accompanies them to the grave with sighs and tears; but so far are we from weeping with her, that we go gayly on, and the perdition of so many souls gives us no care. We bewail the bodily death of our parents and friends, and would, if possible, prevent it at any cost; but at the spiritual death of our brethren we weep not, we pray not, although thereby we might preserve so many, ourselves included, in spiritual life, or prevail upon the all-merciful God to restore that life to many. Is not this an evident token that we love neither God nor our neighbor? Let us, then, take to heart the misery of the sinner, and rescue him by our prayers and sighs.

Why did Christ say to this widow, *Weep not?*

He meant thereby to intimate that he would restore to her her son, and at the same time to teach us that we should not mourn and weep to excess for the dead. St. Paul therefore admonishes us not to be sorrowful in regard to the dead, as others who have no hope of resurrection (1 Thess. iv. 12). Tears cannot bring the dead to life. That they are freed from the miseries of life, and are with God, should gladden rather than grieve us. In fine, a patient submission to the providence of God, quiet and continued prayer, and other good works, will be of more use to us and to the dead, than to shed a whole ocean of tears.

Why did Christ command the bearers to stand still?

It was his design thereby to awaken their confidence, and

to put it beyond doubt that the resurrection of the dead proceeded from him. This should teach us that a soul that is dead cannot be restored to life, so long as the passions which have caused its death, and borne it, as it were, to the grave, are not brought to a stop; for so long as the angry man does not cease from his anger, his cursing and swearing, the unchaste from his impurity, the drunkard from his excess, but they continue in their sins, their souls can never be restored to the life of grace.

What more do we learn from this gospel?

That no one, however young, is safe from death; and that every one, therefore, should be always prepared for it.

What is often the reason of early death with young persons?

1. Surfeiting and intemperance; for by surfeiting and intemperance more perish than by the sword (Ecclus. xxxvii. 34). 2. Unchasteness (in regard to which, see the Second Sunday after Pentecost). 3. Anger: *Anger killeth the foolish* (Job v. 2). *Envy and anger shorten a man's days, and pensiveness will bring age before the time* (Ecclus. xxx. 26). *If you bite and devour one another, take heed you be not consumed one of another* (Gal. v. 15). From irritating and provoking speeches, young persons usually proceed to strife and blows, and not unfrequently to murder itself. 4. Disobedience. We have dreadful examples to show that God has taken out of the world, early and suddenly, disobedient children; for instance, Absalom. Not without reason does God say to children: *Honor thy father and mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that thou mayest live a long time, and it may be well with thee in the land* (Deut. v. 16).

On Death.

Certain it is that we shall die, but uncertain the hour of our death. Would that we might never forget this truth; that we might earnestly think of it every day! How soon, then, would our lives become different! For would not such thoughts fill us with salutary fear, restrain our passions, strengthen us in temptations, and incite us to virtue? Suppose

there were shut up in one prison a hundred persons, under sentence of death, yet ignorant of the day and the hour of their execution; when, from among them, one after another, and often the one least expected, was taken out for death, would not each one's heart tremble at the opening of the prison door? Now, there is hanging over us all an unalterable sentence of death. Our bodies are the prisons in which we are confined. One after another is called out to die. Should we not, then, keep ourselves always ready, and with fear and trembling work our salvation? But who regards this? We live as if we were to live forever: we think only of the body, but take no more care for the soul than to load it with sins and vices. But is this reasonable? Is it not foolish and rash, all one's life long, to care only for the body, and to neglect the soul?

Remember, O man, says St. Francis of Sales, that at the hour of thy death the world, for thee, will come to an end: the honors, the pleasures, the riches which you have enjoyed in it, will then vanish like phantoms and smoke, leaving you nothing but the too late sorrow, that you should have sought those things with such longing, and for the sake of them should have neglected the care of your soul—your eternal salvation.

Then you will learn to value and desire to perform the repentance, the good works which in life you neglected; while the sins which you regarded as nothing will appear to you huge as mountains.

What, then, will the soul feel, if it must part from its body, so foolishly loved; must leave all its vain amusements, its societies, its friends, and go forth all alone, without any companion, into the unknown, terrible, fearful land of eternity? There it will find no friend, since it secured none on earth, but in God, whom it has made an enemy, it will encounter an inexorable, severe judge; and in the angels and saints, yes, and in the devils, will find most formidable accusers. Dost thou not shudder to think of this? Have mercy, then, on thine own soul. Oh, keep thyself in readiness; so live that thou mayest have no reason to fear death. Do, in thy lifetime, what in the

hour of death you will wish that you had done. Die daily, with St. Paul, by crucifying the flesh with its desires and lusts, and by voluntarily loosening thy heart from the world, its goods, and its vanities, before death does this for you by violence. In time of temptation and passion, think of these truths, and resist; then, to die, will not be too hard for thee.

Aspiration.

I must one day die! How then can I live on so carelessly? How so cling to the world, which I must leave? Never again shall this be! And you, my dear friends and relatives, will I in future love only with a love and affection sanctified and directed to God; such as shall not cease in death, but, like God himself, shall last for eternity.

Instruction on the Ceremonies of the Catholic Church at Burials.

“Behold, a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother: and a great multitude of the city were with her.”—*Luke vii. 12.*

From the people who thus accompanied the corpse of the young man, we should learn to pay the last honors to the dead, and to follow their bodies to the grave. This is a meritorious work, acceptable to God, when done, not out of vanity or self-interest, but for the honor of God, and with the charitable intention of helping the dead by prayer. It is therefore very wrong to keep up on the way only idle talk, and to have no thought for the dead.

Why is the cross carried before the corpse?

To signify that the deceased confessed Christ crucified, and departed this life, believing in him, and hoping to rise again through him.

Why are lighted candles placed around and carried before the coffin?

To signify that we pray the deceased may have eternal light. This custom is very old; for St. Cyprian, who was beheaded for Christ's sake about sixteen hundred years ago, was carried to his grave with lights and chanting.

Why are the coffin and grave sprinkled with holy water ?

In token that the Church desires for the deceased the comfort of God's grace, since, on account of sins not completely atoned for, he may yet have to suffer in purgatory.

Why are the corpse and the grave incensed ?

To signify that the deceased, according to his Christian vocation, had been *a good odor of Christ* (2 Cor. ii. 14, 15), and to remind the faithful, that their prayers and good works should, like the incense, go up to heaven for the deceased.

Why are the psalms, *Miserere* and *Benedicite*, sung ?

1. To obtain from God remission of those sins and penalties for which, perhaps, there has been as yet no satisfaction made. 2. To encourage those present to prayer. 3. To remind us of the teaching of St. Paul, that we should not be sorrowful on account of the dead, as others who have no hope of eternal life. 4. Thereby, also, we declare that we esteem the departed happy, on account of the rest of which henceforth they are made partakers (Apoc. xiv. 13).

This usage also descends to us from the Apostles, who buried St. Stephen with the singing of psalms and of hymns (St. Jerome, Ep. 53).

Why are the bells rung at funerals ?

To call the faithful to prayer for the dead ; for adults, that they may obtain eternal rest ; for children, to thank God that he has delivered them from all dangers and temptations, and received them into his heavenly kingdom.

Why is the corpse buried in the earth ?

1. Our bodies are members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost. It is proper therefore, even after death, to keep them sacred, and to guard them against any dishonor by men or by beasts. 2. By this interment men are reminded whence they came. 3. The lap of earth is the fittest place to lay the body, which, like the grain of corn, waits for the time of its rising again.

Why is a cross or headstone erected over the grave ?

To point out that here lies the body of a Christian and a brother, and to remind us of our friend, that we may remember him in our prayers.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, supplicate, with great confidence, the mercy of God. *Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have cried to thee all the day; for thou, O Lord, art sweet, and mild, and plenteous in mercy, to all that call upon thee* (Ps. lxxxv.) *Bow down thy ear to me, O Lord, and hear me, for I am needy and poor.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

May thy grace, O Lord, ever precede and follow us, and make us ever intent upon good works. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Eph. iii. 13-21.)

Brethren: I pray you not to faint 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 by his Spirit with might unto the inward man. That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth. To know also what is the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. Now to him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us: to him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, world without end. Amen.

Explanation.

St. Paul was in prison at Rome when he wrote this epistle, and was anxious lest the Ephesians might think that the faith, the proclaimers of which were thus persecuted, was not from God. He therefore exhorts them to remain firm in their belief; assures them that his sufferings would be for their glory, if they remained as firm as he; and prays that they may be enlightened to know the love of God—that is, what Christ had done and suffered for us. Hence we learn to ask earnestly of God grace to understand the mysteries of faith.

What does St. Paul mean by the breadth, length, height, and depth which the Ephesians may be able to comprehend ?

The mysteries of redemption through Christ, the *breadth* of which is, that God has designed redemption to be for all men ; the *length*, that the work of redemption is to be efficacious throughout every age, till the consummation of the world ; the *height*, that redemption separates us from the world, leading us to heaven ; the *depth*, that the work of salvation penetrates even the kingdom of death, delivering souls from purgatory. Thus St. John Chrysostom explains these scriptural expressions. *The breadth* of charity is that which extends it so widely as to love even its enemies. *Its length* is the patience with which it bears every hindrance thrown in the way of its practising good works. *Its height* is the loftiness of that hope which does not expect, for the good works it practices, any thing that passes away, but an eternal reward in heaven. And finally, *its depth* is the impenetrable mystery in which is determined the unmerited distribution of grace, which is only given according to the dispensation of God's eternal will, unknown to men.

Aspiration.

O Heavenly Father, according to the example of St. Paul, I humbly pray for all of us, that thy spirit, thy knowledge, thy charity, may be deeply implanted in us, that thou mayest possess our hearts, and that we, filled with all the fullness of thy grace, may serve thee more perfectly, and give the thanks forever.

Gospel. (Luke xiv. 1-11.)

At that time : When Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees, on the sabbath-day, to eat bread, they watched him. And behold there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying : Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day ? But they held their peace. But he, taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, he said : Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the sabbath-day ? And they could not answer him to these things. And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats

at the table, saying to them : When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him : and he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place : and then thou begin with shame, to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go ; sit down in the lowest place : that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee : Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled : and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Why did Jesus eat with the Pharisees ?

That he might have an opportunity to convert them. So should we zealously take advantage of every occasion of doing good, and make use of the intercourse which we may happen to have with our erring brethren, to bring them into the right way.

Why did the Pharisees watch Jesus so closely ?

To discover something in him on account of which they might censure and accuse him. How malicious!—and yet how like them are those Christians who watch every step of their neighbors, and particularly of priests, only to find something for which to blame them, and represent them as evil persons !

Who is, spiritually, like the man with the dropsy ?

The avaricious man ; for as a dropsical person never is satisfied with drinking, so the avaricious man never has enough ; and like the dropsy, too, avarice is hard to cure, since it grows worse with age, and commonly does not leave a man till he comes to the grave.

Why is avarice reckoned among the seven deadly sins ?

Because it is the root of many evils (1 Tim. vi. 10) ; for it leads to usury, theft, the use of false weights and measures, to the retaining of unjustly gotten goods, to the oppression of the poor, of widows and orphans, to the denial and suppression of justice, to apostasy from the faith, and to despair ; as was the case, for example, with Judas. Hence the Apostle says (1 Tim. vi. 9) : *For they that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snares of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition.*

There is not a more wicked thing than to love money, for such an one setteth even his own soul to sale (Ecclus. x. 10). Oh, how many ruin themselves by not restoring their ill-gotten gains!

An efficacious remedy for avarice is the consideration that we are only the stewards, and not the owners of our goods, of which we can take nothing with us at the hour of our death (1 Tim. vi. 7); and that one day God will require of us a strict account of what we have had.

[On Pride and Humility, see Instructions for the Tenth and Eleventh Sundays after Pentecost.]

*Instruction on keeping holy Sundays and Holy-days of
Obligation.*

“Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?”—*Luke xiv. 3.*

Why did Christ ask this question?

The Jews, and particularly the Pharisees, were so superstitious in regard to keeping the Sabbath, that they considered it to be desecrated by the very least labor; as, for example, by plucking a few ears of grain to eat: and they counted it a sin even to do a good work on that day; for which reason they would not acknowledge Jesus, who had healed the sick on the Sabbath-day, as their Messias.

To point out to them how the commandment to sanctify the Sabbath-day was to be understood, he put the above question to them, and forthwith healed the sick man. Thereby he has taught us how to *keep holy* the Sunday, which comes in place of the Sabbath, and other holy-days.

How, then, must we sanctify the Sundays and holy-days?

As the third commandment enjoins, according to the explanation and example of Jesus: that is, on Sundays and holy-days we must not only abstain from servile labor, but we must, as far as possible, attend the whole divine service, both in the forenoon and afternoon; for God has not said thou shalt be idle on the Sabbath-day, but thou shalt sanctify the Sabbath-day. One readily sees that it is not sanctified when one only attends a short mass, and spends the rest of the day in idle-

ness, in domestic affairs, in amusements. We ought therefore to attend the whole divine service; hear the word of God, and practice good works, according to the example of Jesus Christ. That we should hear God's word, and attend vespers and catechism in the afternoon, has always been the will of the Church. Accordingly, from the earliest times, the explanation of the gospel and preaching have been connected with the sacrifice of the Mass, and it has been enjoined that we should attend the parish services always, if practicable, and at least once a month. And how reasonable is this! Should not every Catholic openly profess his belief? Is it not his duty to show to the whole congregation a good and edifying example? Is it not just to devote at least one day to the honor of God, and the salvation of one's soul?

Many are ignorant of the state of their souls, and are at a loss what to accuse themselves of when they go to confession: would it not be a good thing if such persons on Sundays would think of their condition, would examine their disorders and frailties, would search out their causes, and consider the means of removing them? Oh, how much would they then find to confess, to amend, to atone for! But if we should not be able alone to occupy ourselves with such thoughts, might we not supply our inability by reading spiritual books; by holding and attending religious conversations; by asking advice of our confessors and pastors? But instead of this, what do we do? The Sundays and holy-days are spent in idleness, in dressing, in trifling talk, in buying and selling, in playing and dancing, in drinking, and perhaps in other things still worse, without the least uneasiness of conscience, without any thing to accuse one's self of! But will God suffer those who desecrate his holy day to go unpunished? No: he shall cover them with disgrace and scorn (Mal. ii. 3), and shall send upon them all the evils of the time. And will it fare better with them in eternity? Let this then be a warning to us.

Aspiration.

O most meek Jesus, grant us grace ever so to live that we may be justly reproached by no one, and that we may spend the rest of the Sabbath in the performance of good works. Amen.

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, praise the justice and mercy of God. *Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right. Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy* (Ps. cxviii.) *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant to thy people, we beseech thee, O Lord, to avoid the contagion of the devil, and with a pure mind to seek thee, the only God. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Eph. 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 calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all, who is blessed forever and ever. Amen.

Practice.

Every Christian must, according to his holy religion, think, speak, and act modestly and humbly. *Learn from me, because I am meek and humble of heart* (Matt. xi. 29). Thus it will become easy to bear the faults of others, and to preserve peace, particularly in the house, or in the parish. Selfishness, stubbornness, and pride must be laid aside. They are unbe-

coming a Christian. The words, *One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all*, confound those who assert that a man may be saved in any belief. There can be but one true religion; they who profess it should be united by the bond of charity, and their lives be worthy of their vocation to the true faith.

Instruction on the Faith by which alone we can be saved.

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”—*Eph.* iv. 5, 6.

These words of the Apostle show clearly that it is not all the same whether we profess this or that creed—this or that religion—although in our age, so barren of faith, there are many so-called enlightened persons who continually assert that it matters not what religion we are of, if only we believe in God, and live honestly. What an impious assertion! Consider, Christian, that there is but one God, and this one God has sent but one Redeemer, and this one Redeemer has taught but one doctrine, and has established but one Church. Had it been the will of God that there should be more churches than one, Jesus would have said it; he would have established them; nay, it would not, in that case, have been necessary for him to teach a new doctrine, and to institute the Christian Church, for the Jews all believed in God. But Jesus set aside both Paganism and Judaism, promulgating one new doctrine—establishing one new Church. He never speaks of churches, but of one Church. He says that we should hear that Church, but does not add that if we hear not this Church, we should hear some other. He speaks of but one Shepherd, and but one fold, into which all men should be brought. In the same manner he speaks of one kingdom upon earth, as there is also but one kingdom of heaven; of one father of the house, and one family; of one field, and one vineyard—by which he meant his Church; of one rock on which he was to build his Church. On the day before his death, he prayed fervently to his Heavenly Father, that all those who believed in him might be and remain one, as he and his Father are one; and he gave to his

Apostles the direct command to preach his Gospel to all nations, teaching them all things whatsoever he had commanded. This command the Apostles strictly fulfilled. Everywhere they preached but one and the same doctrine, establishing everywhere Christian communities, which were all united by the bond of one and the same faith. They were particularly careful to prevent divisions and schisms among the faithful; giving warning against heresies, commanding all heresies to be shunned, and anathematizing those who preached another gospel. As the Apostles had done, so also did their successors. The holy fathers all speak with ardent love of the necessary unity in faith, and deny any title to salvation to such as knowingly persevere in separating from and dividing the true Church of Christ.

Christian, learn hence that there is but one true Church. If there be but one true Church, it naturally follows that in it alone can we obtain salvation, and that to declare salvation attainable by any religion is false and impious. Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life, speaks of but one Church, which we must hear if we would be saved. *Whoever does not hear the Church*, he says, *let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican*. He further speaks of one fold, and promises eternal life only to those sheep who belong to this fold; follow the voice of the Shepherd, and feed in his pasture. The Apostles also were convinced that only the one true Church could guide us to salvation. *Without faith*, writes St. Paul (Heb. xi. 6), *it is impossible to please God*, and this faith is *one* (Eph. iv. 5). Had the Apostles believed that we could be saved in any and every religion, they would not have insisted so much upon the unity of faith; they would not have declared so solemnly that we should belong to Christ alone, receiving and following only his doctrine. As the Apostles taught, so also taught their successors; and all the holy fathers agree, that out of the Church there is no salvation. Thus writes St. Cyprian: "If any one out of the ark of Noe could have escaped, then he also who is out of the Church may find salvation." It follows, then, that there can be but one true religion or Church, in which we can be saved.

But what is this Church?

Certainly only the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church, for it alone was established by Jesus; it alone was sprinkled with the blood of the Apostles and of thousands of martyrs; it alone possesses the marks of the true Church with which Christ promised to be, notwithstanding all the attacks of enemies, until the end of the world. Three hundred years ago, they who left the Catholic Church asserted, as their descendants do now, that it had fallen into errors, and no longer possessed the true Gospel of Christ: if this assertion were true, Christ himself would be the occasion of it, for he it was who established this Church, promising to be with it, and to govern it by his Spirit, until the end of the world. He would then either have broken his promise, or have been unable to fulfil it. But who dare say this? The Catholic Church, founded upon the Rock Peter, was the first Church, was founded by Christ himself: when and why has she fallen away from the truth and lost the pure Gospel? No one can name the time when this took place, nor how it came to pass. On the other hand, the Church has already stood over 1800 years, while the greatest and most powerful kingdoms have been destroyed, and the firmest thrones cast down. If she had not been established by Christ as the one, true, and sanctifying Church, how would it have been possible for her to endure so long, since Jesus expressly says (Matt. xv. 13), *Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.* The Catholic Church would have perished long ago had it not been the Church of Christ; but at this day it yet stands, while its enemies who have opposed it have vanished, and will continue to vanish; for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, says the Lord. This, his promise, he has kept, and will keep, notwithstanding all the hostility and calumnies of implacable enemies.

You see, therefore, Christians, that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true one; the only one in which we can be saved. Do not, then, allow yourselves to be deceived by those who are neither cold nor warm, and who with those words—
“We can be saved in any religion, if only we believe in God

and live honestly"—try to destroy your faith, throwing you into the tempestuous waves of error and falsehood. Be firm in the doctrine that out of the Catholic Church there is no salvation, for thus Jesus, the Apostles, and the holy fathers have taught, and for this doctrine innumerable martyrs have shed their blood. Obey also the doctrine of the Church, be submissive to her appointments, use her means of grace, and often lift up your hearts and hands to heaven to give thanks for the invaluable benefit of being made a member of this one holy Church; and forget not to pray for your erring brethren who are yet out of the pale of the Church, that the Lord may bring in them also, and that what he has promised be fulfilled—*There shall be one shepherd and one fold.*

Gospel. (Matt. 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.

What is it to love God?

To acknowledge God as one's Lord, as the highest and most perfect good; to place one's delight in him, and to desire that he should be known, honored, loved, by all men; that his will should be fulfilled by all; to refer all one's thoughts, desires, and actions to him; and so zealously to observe his commandments, that one would rather lose all the goods of life, and even life itself, than to transgress these commands and be separated from God.

What does it mean to love God with the whole heart, &c.?

With thy whole heart, signifies with all the motions and inclinations of the heart; *with thy whole soul*, with all the thoughts, conceptions of the soul; *with thy whole mind*, with all the desires, wishes, and determination of the will; *with all thy strength*, with all the powers and faculties of body and soul—with all the acts and motions of the senses. All these should be directed to God alone, as the last object and end of man.

How can this be done?

By doing whatever we do, whether it be mental or manual labor, eating, drinking, or recreation, with the intention of doing what is the will of God, and what is pleasing to him. Herein is implied that idle talk, intemperance in meat and drink, and in general all sinful works, cannot be thus offered to God, because they are contrary to his will, and therefore deserve punishment.

Is that true love which loves God because he does us good?

That love is truly good and praiseworthy, but not perfect, for self-interest creeps in with it.

What, then, is the perfect love of God?

When we love God only because he is in himself the highest good, and most worthy of love. In such manner must we endeavor to love God; not out of self-interest, not from the expectation of reward, nor yet from fear of punishment.

Cannot fear then coexist with love?

Servile fear cannot, but childlike fear may; for servile fear is rather a fear of punishment than a fear of offending God. But where such fear is, love cannot dwell; and on the other hand, where love is this fear cannot enter, since he who truly loves God hopes for the forgiveness of his sins and the remission of punishment. Thus love casts out fear (1 John iv. 18). But childlike fear is the fear of offending God. This fear leads to love, and is, in fact, the effect of love, and the beginning of wisdom (Ps. cx. 11). Let us cultivate diligently this fear, for it will drive away sin as a watchman expels the thief (Eccclus. i. 27). It will gladden our hearts with joy and peace, and on the day of our death bring us to a happy end (Eccclus. i. 12).

What do we gain by loving God?

Every thing, for time and for eternity. For, if we love God, we are, 1. Loved by him (Rom. viii. 17). 2. He will come to us, and will make his abode with us (John xiv. 23). 3. He will forgive us our sins; for charity covers all sins (Prov. x. 12). 4. He will incite us to all virtues, and enrich us and fill our treasures (Prov. viii. 21). 5. He will defend us against all enemies, visible and invisible; and finally, 6. After a happy death, he will receive us into the kingdom of his love, where we shall be inebriated with the plenty of his house, and shall drink of the torrent of his pleasure (Ps. xxxv. 9); for the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Cor. ii. 9).

How can we arrive at the perfect love of God?

1. By dwelling upon his infinite perfections; such as his goodness, his almightiness, his holiness, his justice, his omniscience. 2. By considering what God has done for us. 3. By frequently making acts of charity. 4. By fervent prayer. Such exercises and prayers are to be found in any prayer-book. [See Monday after Pentecost.]

When must we practice this love of God?

1. So soon as we have arrived at the years of discretion. 2. Whenever the devil, the world, and the flesh, by their false goods and pleasures, seek to divert us from the one only true Good. 3. Whenever we have had the misfortune of departing from God by mortal sin. 4. At receiving the holy sacraments. 5. On receiving any special benefit from God. 6. When using food and drink, and other lawful pleasures. 7. At beholding the creatures of God. 8. Every day; and, 9. Especially on the day of our death.

But can every one thus love God?

Yes; for there is no state of life in which we cannot refer every thing to God. Love does not require great deeds; but that we should avoid evil, and refer every thing to God; and all can do this.

[On the love of our neighbor, see Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.]

Why is this commandment, to love God and our neighbor, called the great commandment?

Because in these two are contained all the others, so that he who fulfils these, fulfils the whole law. For whoever loves God with his whole heart, does not murmur against God; does not dishonor his name by cursing and swearing; does not desecrate the Sabbath-day, because he knows that all this is offensive to God. On the contrary, he hopes in God; gives thanks and praise to God; sanctifies the Sundays and holy-days, because he knows this to be pleasing to God; observes the precepts of the Church, because he knows it to be the will of God that he should hear the Church; honors his parents; does no injury to his neighbor; does not commit adultery; does not steal; slanders no one; bears no false witness; pronounces no unjust judgment; is not envious, malicious, unmerciful, but rather practices towards every one the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; and all this, because out of love to God, he loves his neighbor as himself. Thus love fulfils all the commandments.

What is the meaning of the question "What think you of Christ?"

Christ put this question to the Pharisees in order that, by their own answer, he might convince them that he was not merely a lineal son of David, but that he was the Son of God, begotten from eternity, on which account he called himself David's Lord. That Christ is the Son of God, our Lord, our Teacher, our Lawgiver, our Redeemer, and Saviour, we Christians know well, for we daily profess it; but how many of us, in deeds, deny it, since we will not follow his teaching nor observe his commandments! What, then, will Christ one day be to such? What but a judge to condemn, and a God to punish them.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, rich in love, who hast so earnestly exhorted us to the love of God, and of our neighbor, engrave deep in our hearts, we pray thee, this commandment of love, that whatever we do or leave undone, all our thoughts, words, and works

may begin and end in love of thee; and that no tribulation, temptation, or danger, nor even death itself, may ever separate us from thee. Grant, also, that out of love to thee we may love our neighbor, whether friend or enemy, as ourselves, and by this love may deserve to have thee as a Saviour and merciful Judge.

Ember Wednesday.

Epistle. (2 Esdras viii. 1-10.)

In those days all the people were gathered together as one man to the street which is before the water-gate, and they spoke to Esdras the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. Then Esdras the priest brought the law before the multitude of men and women, and all those that could understand, in the first day of the seventh month. And he read it plainly in the street that was before the water-gate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men, and the women, and all those that could understand: and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book. And Esdras the scribe stood upon a step of wood, which he had made to speak upon, and there stood by him Mathathias, and Semeia, and Ania, and Uria, and Helcia, and Maasia, on his right hand: and on the left, Phadaia, Misael, and Melchia, and Hasum, and Hasbadana, Zacharia and Mosollam. And Esdras opened the book before all the people: for he was above all the people: and when he had opened it, all the people stood. And Esdras blessed the Lord the great God: and all the people answered, Amen, anen: lifting up their hands: and they bowed down, and adored God with their faces to the ground. Now Josue, and Bani, and Serebia, Jamin, Accub, Septhai, Odia, Maasia, Celita, Azarias, Jozabed, Hanan, Phalaia, the Levites, made silence among the people to hear the law: and the people stood in their place. And they read in the book of the law of God distinctly and plainly to be understood: and they understood when it was read. And Nehemias (he is Athersatha) and Esdras the priest and scribe, and the Levites who interpreted to all the people, said: This is a holy day to the Lord our God: do not mourn, nor weep: for all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. And he said to them: Go, eat fat meats, and drink sweet wine, and send portions to them that have not prepared for themselves: because it is the holy day of the Lord, and be not sad: for the joy of the Lord is our strength.

Aspiration.

O Lord, send zealous priests, like Esdras into thy vineyard, the Church, and grant that we, with fervor like that of thy people who listened to him, may hearken to thy word preached to us by thy minister the priest, and may repent sincerely of our sins; thus seeking and finding in thee, our Lord, our only joy and strength.

Gospel. (Mark ix. 16-28.)

At that time, one of the multitude answering, said to Jesus: Master, I have brought my son to thee having a dumb spirit. Who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with the teeth, and pineth away: and I spoke to thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not. Who answering them, said: O incredulous generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him. And when he had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him; and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming. And he asked his father: How long time is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said: From his infancy: and often times hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do any thing, help us, having compassion on us. And Jesus saith to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears said: I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief. And when Jesus saw the multitude running together, he threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him: and enter not any more into him. And crying out, and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead. But Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples secretly asked him: Why could not we cast him out? And he said to them: This kind can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Practice.

Every passion is a devil; a tempter; an enemy, who possesses and torments man; inciting him, now to this, now to that misdeed. Supplicate for deliverance. From such a dumb spirit we cannot be delivered but by prayer and fasting; that

is, by self-denial, by crucifying the body, by depriving ourselves of food, and by confident, ardent prayer. Go and do this.

Prayer.

Uphold, O Lord, our infirmity by the help of thy mercy, that what by itself must fall, may stand upright by thy clemency. Through Christ.

Ember Friday.

Epistle. (Osee xiv. 2-10.)

Thus saith the Lord God: Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God: for thou hast fallen down by thy iniquity. Take with you words, and return to the Lord, and say to him: Take away all iniquity, and receive the good: and we will render the calves of our lips. Assyria shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more: The works of our hands are our gods: for thou wilt have mercy on the fatherless that is in thee. I will heal their breaches, I will love them freely: for my wrath is turned away from them. I will be as the dew, Israel shall spring as the lily, and his root shall shoot forth as that of Libanus. His branches shall spread, and his glory shall be as the olive-tree: and his smell as that of Libanus. They shall be converted that sit under his shadow: they shall live upon wheat, and they shall blossom as a vine: his memorial shall be as the wine of Libanus. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I will hear him, and I will make him flourish like a green fir-tree: from me is thy fruit found. Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know these things? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall in them.

Explanation.

The Prophet Osee, by the command of God, exhorts the people of Israel to penance, and seeks to move them by describing the happiness thereby obtained. What blessing and what joy come from a sincere repentance, in life, and particularly in the hour of death!

The gospel is the same as for the feast of St. Magdalen.

Prayer.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that while we keep these sacred solemnities with annual devotion, we may please thee both in body and mind. Through our Lord.

Ember Saturday.

Epistle. (Hebrews ix. 2-12.)

Brethren : There was a tabernacle made the first, wherein were the candlesticks, and the table, and the setting forth of loaves, which is called the Holy. And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies: having the golden censer, and the ark of the testament covered about on every part with gold, in which was the golden pot that had manna, and the rod of Aaron, that had blossomed, and the tables of the testament. And over it were the cherubim of glory, overshadowing the propitiatory: of which it is not needful to speak now particularly. Now these things being thus ordered, into the first tabernacle the priests indeed always entered, accomplishing the offices of sacrifices. But into the second, the high-priest alone, once a year: not without blood, which he offereth for his own, and the people's ignorance: the Holy Ghost signifying this, that the way into the Holies was not yet made manifest, whilst the former tabernacle was yet standing. Which is a parable of the time present: according to which gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot, as to the conscience, make him perfect that serveth, only in meats and in drinks, and divers washings, and justices of the flesh laid on them until the time of correction. But Christ being come, an high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hand, that is, not of this creation: neither by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption.

Gospel. (Luke xiii. 6-17.)

At that time Jesus spoke to the multitude this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. And he said to the dresser of the vineyard: Behold for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find

none. Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering said unto him: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and dung it. And if happily it bear fruit: but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. And he was teaching in their synagogue on the sabbath. And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years: and she was bowed together, neither could she look upwards at all. Whom when Jesus saw, he called her unto him, and said to her: Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue (being angry that Jesus had healed on the sabbath), answering said to the multitude: Six days there are wherein you ought to work. In them therefore come, and be healed; and not on the sabbath-day. And the Lord answering him, said: Ye hypocrites, doth not every one of you on the sabbath-day loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead them to water? And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when he said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the things that were gloriously done by him.

Practice.

This parable was a call to the Jews to do penance; that they who, as St. Jerome says, had been warned three times—through the law of Moses, through the prophets, and finally through Christ himself—might not at last go to destruction. At the same time it was a threat of approaching judgment. Let us learn hence to make good use of the days of God's long-suffering mercy, that we may not, like the unfruitful tree, be cut down and cast into the fire.

Prayer.

O Almighty, eternal God, who by salutary abstinence doth heal both our bodies and souls, we humbly entreat thy majesty, that appeased by the pious prayers of those who fast, thou wouldst grant us present and future support. Through Christ.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church prays for the peace which God has promised through his prophets. *Give peace, O Lord, to them that patiently wait for thee, that thy prophets may be found faithful; hear the prayers of thy servants, and of thy people Israel* (Eccles. xxxvi. 18). *I rejoiced at the things that were said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord.* Glory be to the Father

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Lord, that the work of thy mercy may direct our hearts; for without thy grace we cannot be pleasing to thee. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 Cor. i. 4-8.)

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

Brief Lessons.

St. Paul shows in this epistle that he possesses the true love of his neighbor, by rejoicing and thanking God that he had bestowed on the Corinthians manifold gifts and graces, and thereby confirmed the testimony of Christ in them.

Hence we learn, that in order to have true charity we should rejoice over the gifts and graces of our neighbors; should thank God for them, and pray him to fill all who are in the darkness of error with knowledge, and love, and all virtues.

Gospel. (Matt. ix. 1-8.)

At that time: Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water and came into his own city. And behold they brought to him one sick

of the palsy lying in a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the man sick of the palsy), Arise; take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men.

Brief Lessons.

I. They who brought the sick man to Christ, show us, by a praiseworthy example, how we ought to care for the sick, and procure assistance for them according to our ability.

II. This charity, full of faith, was so pleasing to Christ, that out of regard for it, he forgave the palsied man his sins, and healed him. Hereby we learn how often we might help those who are sick in soul, if either by faithful prayer, by impressive addresses, or by good example, we would bring them to Christ.

III. Christ did not heal the man sick with the palsy until he had forgiven him his sins. By this, he teaches us that it is chiefly sins which are the cause of the sicknesses and evils that pursue us; and that if we are sincerely repented of our sins, God would be likely to remove these evils from us. This is also intimated by the words of Jesus to him who had been sick eight-and-thirty years: *Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee* (John v. 14). This should be kept in mind by those who so impetuously beseech God to free them from their afflictions, but who think not to free themselves from the sins which are the real cause of them, by a sincere repentance and by leading a Christian life.

IV. *He blasphemeth.* Thus, in their perverted minds, the Jews thought of Christ; supposing that, by forgiving the sick man his sins, he had committed an encroachment on the prerogative of God, and thereby done him great wrong; for it is blasphemy against God to attempt to wrong him, or to think, speak, or do any thing insulting to him, or to his saints. These

evil-doers did not consider that by this rash judgment they themselves had fallen into blasphemy, by blaspheming Christ; who, by his healing of the sick man, and by other works surpassing all human power, had sufficiently declared his Godhead. But if he so strictly charged to the Jews, who did not acknowledge him to be God, a blasphemous thought against him, what will he do with those Christians, who, while claiming to be worshippers of God and Christians, still keep up the frightful habit of blaspheming, of cursing, of dishonoring the holy sacraments?

V. And Jesus seeing their thoughts said, *Why do you think evil in your hearts?* This is something to be considered by those who suppose their thoughts to be *free from scrutiny*, and to whom it does not even occur to make their evil thoughts matter of confession. God, the most holy and most just, will no more leave unpunished impure, proud, angry, revengeful, envious thoughts, than he will *an idle word* (Matt. xii. 36). Do not, therefore, give yourself up to evil thoughts; and in order to repel them, remember each time that God sees and punishes them. Would you not drive them away if men saw them? Why not, then, on account of God?

Aspiration.

How great, O Jesus, are thy love and mercy towards poor sinners, when thou didst not only forgive the sins of the man sick with the palsy, but, calling him son, didst also console and heal him. Encouraged by this, thy love, we pray thee give us grace to rise from the sick-bed of our sins by true repentance, and to amend our lives, that through the way of thy commandments we may enter into eternal salvation, where thou livest and reignest, true God, world without end. Amen.

On Indulgences.

“Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.”—*Matt. ix. 2.*

What Christ here said to the man sick with the palsy, the priest also says at confession to every sinner, to whom, by virtue of the power given him from God, he thereby remits the

guilt and eternal punishment of his sins, provided he has true contrition. But inasmuch as sins bring with them not only guilt and eternal punishment, but also temporal consequences, of which some, like loss of health or of honor, are natural, and others again are appointed by God or by the Church, and as these cannot always be remitted through the sacrament of penance, we must therefore use our diligence to deliver ourselves from them by gaining indulgences.

What is an indulgence ?

It is the remission granted by the Church, in the name of God, and on account of the merits of Jesus Christ and of all the saints, of the temporal punishment which men must suffer, either in this world or the world to come, for sins that have been already forgiven.

Whence do we know that after sins are forgiven, there yet remains a temporal punishment ?

1. From Holy Scripture ; thus God imposed upon Adam and Eve great temporal punishments, although he forgave them their sin (Gen. iii.) In like manner, at the intercession of Moses, he remitted to the children of Israel, who had murmured against him in the desert, the guilt, but not the temporal punishment of their sin, for they were all shut out from the promised land (Numb. xiv.) Moses and Aaron suffered like punishment for a slight want of confidence in God (Numb. xx. 24 ; Deut. xxxii. 59). David received from God, through the prophet Nathan, forgiveness for his adultery and murder, and yet was obliged to submit to great temporal punishments (2 Kings xii.) Finally, faith teaches us that after death we must suffer in purgatory till we have paid the last farthing (Matt. v. 26). 2. In like manner the Church, in the name of God, and by virtue of the authority derived from him, to bind and to loose, has always appointed certain temporal punishments for certain sins. Thus St. Paul imposed a severe punishment upon a Corinthian for incest (1 Cor. v.), but afterwards released him therefrom upon his subsequent amendment. The Church has always observed the same course, only the kinds of punishment have been different at different times. In the first century she was, in this respect, very severe. Thus, for

murder there must be twenty years, for adultery fifteen years, for perjury eleven years, for fornication seven years, which a man must spend in the strict practice of penance, and during all that time he was excluded from the mass, and from holy communion. These penances the Church sometimes remitted, either partly or entirely, on account of the extraordinary sorrow and sincere amendment of the penitents, or at the intercession of the holy martyrs; or sometimes she commuted them for other good works, which was nothing else but an indulgence. Circumstances have forced the Church to relax from this severity; but we must not, for that reason, suppose that she has less abhorrence now than formerly of those sins. She only adapts herself to our weakness, and assists us, by remitting to us those punishments, upon condition that we from the heart are sorry for, and renounce our sins, and perform some lighter penance.

Why does God, and the Church also, impose upon the sinner particular temporal punishment, after the sins and their eternal punishment are remitted?

1. To inspire man with a just horror of sin before committing it, and to preserve him from relapsing into it. 2. To repair scandal given, and to satisfy the divine justice. 3. The Church especially desires that the sinner should satisfy the divine justice here upon earth, that he may not have to suffer in purgatory.

Can the Church remit all temporal punishments, even those imposed by God himself, and why?

Certainly, by virtue of the power to bind and to loose, which Christ has given her (Matt. xviii. 18). For if the Church has received from God the power to remit sins—which is the greater,—she certainly has authority to remit the punishment of them—which is the less. Moreover, it is by the bands of punishment that we are hindered from reaching the kingdom of God. But if the Church can loose all bands, why not this? Finally, Jesus certainly had power to remit the temporal punishment of sins, and the power which he himself had, he gave to his disciples.

From what source are indulgences drawn?

From the treasury of the Church, which consists of the merits of Christ and of the saints; that is, God remits to the sinner his temporal punishment, on account of the merits of Christ and of his saints, from which he supplies, as it were, what is lacking in the sinner's satisfaction.

How many sorts of indulgences are there?

Two; plenary and partial. A plenary indulgence, rightly gained, remits all Church censures, and consequently all temporal punishments which might be removed by performance of the penance imposed by the Church. A partial indulgence, on the other hand, remits only so many days or years of temporal punishment, as, according to the discipline of the early Church, the penitent would have been obliged to spend in severe penance.

What is required in order rightly to gain an indulgence?

That one should be in the state of grace, and receive the holy sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. To gain an indulgence, therefore, we must lay aside all inclination to any sin whatever, and have a perfect horror of all sins, and of whatever leads to sin. We must also devoutly perform all the works prescribed by the Church, particularly by praying for the exaltation and propagation of the Catholic Church; for peace and unity among Christian rulers; for the extirpation of heresies, &c. For which purpose, as Pope Gregory XIII. recommends, one should at least say seven times the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father, and the Creed. If visits to a church are prescribed, it is all one in which church we receive holy communion, but the indulgenced prayers must be said in that church in which the indulgence is granted, and on the prescribed day.

But do indulgences release us from all other penitential exercises?

By no means; for, from what has been said, that we must be in a state of grace, which requires true sorrow and repentance, it evidently follows that it is not the intention of the Church, by imparting indulgences, to free the sinner from penance; but that rather, through the satisfaction of Christ and the penances of the saints, which, by indulgences, are ap-

plied to our benefit, she would assist our frailty, incite us to penance, and supply what our own penance lacks. If, however, we are unwilling, in our own persons, to do penance for our own sins, an indulgence will give us no share in the penances and merits of others.

Do indulgences profit the souls departed also?

Yes, in the way of intercession; since in fulfilling the prescribed conditions, we pray God for the merits of his Son, and of the saints, to release the souls in purgatory from punishment. This holds good, however, only when in the granting of the indulgence mention is made that it may be applied to the souls in purgatory. But it is most prudent not to depend upon the indulgences and good works which may perhaps be gained *for us* after our death, but at once to apply ourselves to securing our eternal happiness by gaining indulgences ourselves, and laying up good works of our own.

What is a jubilee?

It is a plenary indulgence granted by the Pope every twenty-five years, or oftener, at the discretion of the Sovereign Pontiff, to the Catholics of the whole world, whereby all the temporal punishments of sin, even in cases reserved to bishops, or to the Holy Father, are, in the name of God, remitted and forgiven to all who make sincere confession, devoutly receive holy communion, do true penance, and comply with the specified conditions.

What follows from the doctrine of the Catholic Church in regard to indulgences?

1. That an indulgence is no grant or license to commit any sin, as our adversaries falsely assert.
2. That an indulgence grants no forgiveness of past, and far less of future sin.
3. That no Catholic Christian is allowed to believe that by gaining indulgences he can be released from the obligation of penance and good works; from the necessity of a renewal of his heart; from the duty of combating his evil inclinations, passions, and habits; of restitution and reparation of scandal; of making amends for good works neglected, and of glorifying God in his doings and his sufferings.
4. That indulgences grant nothing but either a plenary or partial remission of tem-

poral punishment. 5. That by comparison with the severe penances of the early Christians, they put us in mind of our frailty and lukewarmness. 6. That they incite us according to our strength and means, to satisfy the justice of God. 7. That they call upon us to give continual thanks to God that he has given to our Holy Church, in the inexhaustible treasure of the merits of Christ and his saints, the means of aiding our weakness, and of supplying the defects of our penance.

Prayer for gaining an Indulgence.

We beseech thee, O Lord, graciously accept the petitions of thy Holy Church, that thou wouldst deliver her from all adversities, root out from her all heresies, unite all Christian rulers and princes, and exalt thy Holy Church on earth, that we may all serve thee in peace and quietness. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, God promises to hear the people who observe his law, and to help them in all their tribulation. *I am the salvation of the people, saith the Lord; in whatever tribulation they shall cry to me, I will hear them, and I will be their Lord forever* (Ps. lxxvii.) *Attend, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O Almighty and merciful God, graciously defend us from all that is hurtful, that, free in mind and body, we may with ready mind perform all that belongs to thy service. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Eph. iv. 23-28.)

Brethren: Be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every

man with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil. He that stole, let him now steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need.

What does it mean to be renewed in the spirit of your mind?

It means to change our thoughts and lives by true penance, to put off the old man of sin, and to live justly as new men, according to the obligation which God laid upon the first man, whom he created in innocence and holiness. The epistle of to-day particularly concerns such as live in falsehood, hatred, anger, injustice, impurity, or other sins. Perhaps we have often renewed our spirit at a jubilee, or a mission, or a spiritual retreat; we seemed then to be converted, and to have become new men, but how long did our spiritual renovation last? Alas, how soon were we sinners again! We thought that after making a general confession, every thing was done; instead of zealously using all means to preserve ourselves in this happy state of spiritual renewal, we allowed ourselves once more to resort to bad company and dangerous occasions, and gave ourselves up, as before, to idleness and indulgence. When shall we be lastingly converted?

Why does the Apostle forbid lying?

Because God, as the God of truth, must hate it, and because we are bound to promote the welfare of others—an obligation which the liar does not fulfil.

Why does he forbid stealing?

Because God commands us not to steal either little or much; because it is contrary to charity for our neighbor; because society could not exist unless stealing were prohibited. The Apostle says clearly that no robber, no thief, can enter the kingdom of God. Let us, therefore, avoid taking unjust and clandestine advantage of others, either by bad merchandise, by false measure or weight, or by work done badly, or not done in due time. Let us avoid injury to the goods of others—either their property or their good name—even in the least things. Let us be careful not to participate in theft by con-

cealing stolen goods, or by any other act. If you have taken away any thing from your neighbor, your duty is to make restitution. "The sin," says St. Augustine, "shall not pass away until the stolen goods are returned." "Pay what you owe" is meant for every thief, but how difficult is the discharge of this obligation!

Gospel. (Matt. xxii. 2-14.)

At that time: Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and, sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready: but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

Remark.—This parable is, in many respects, one with that for the second Sunday after Pentecost, and has the same meaning. See, therefore, the explanation of that gospel, and also of that for St. Catharine's day; in addition to which, consider also the following

Explanation.

1. In the present parable the king is our Heavenly Father, who has espoused his only-begotten Son to the Church. 2. The feast is made up of the doctrines of the Gospel, the holy sacra-

ments, with the other means of salvation, and of eternal joys. 3. The servants sent to invite the guests, are the prophets, Apostles, and disciples of Christ. 4. Those invited are the Jews, who, despising the honor intended for them, put to death the prophets and Apostles. For this reason they were given over by him to a just punishment, and, together with their city of Jerusalem, were destroyed by the armies of their enemies. 5. In their place others, that is, the heathen, were called from all quarters of the earth, who, having been in the broad road to destruction, now occupy the place of the Jews in the marriage-feast of the Church, and will one day occupy their place in heaven. 6. The wedding garment signifies charity, which shows itself by good works; without this, faith avails nothing.

We, too, have the happiness of being in the number of those invited. Let us accept the invitation, that we may not, like the Jews, be excluded from the feast, and others called in our room. But let us remember, also, that we cannot appear there without that wedding garment, woven from innocence, humility, and charity, which adorns the soul as dress does the body, and renders us fit to appear before God; for without that wedding garment we cannot be admitted to the feast, but must, with that unfortunate guest, be cast into the exterior darkness.

That the man without a wedding garment was silent when questioned by the king shows us, that no one will be able to excuse himself before God for not having charity, since every one may have it if he only ask it from God, and be willing to practice it. "As to other good works," says St. Augustine, "there may sometimes be allowed the excuse of impossibility or of too great difficulty, but who shall excuse himself for wanting charity? It is neither impossible to us, nor yet too difficult. We are not told, Go into far distant lands, sail over the ocean, in search of charity. Since what a man finds within himself, he need not seek from far. But charity is in ourselves; the heart is the place where charity works. Every one, therefore, who has a heart can practice it."

Aspiration.

I thank thee, O Jesus, that through thy incarnation, passion, and death, thou hast gained for me eternal happiness; give me also the wedding garment of charity, that I may be admitted to the heavenly marriage-feast, and not be cast into the exterior darkness.

Lessons of Consolation from the Joys of Heaven.

“The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son.”—*Matt.* xxii. 2. ♣

Heaven is compared by Christ to a marriage-feast, because there we shall enjoy, through perfect union with God, greater joys than we can imagine. In what these joys consist, St. Paul himself, though more than once caught up to heaven and allowed to see and taste them, could not describe. He only says, *That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him* (1 Cor. ii. 9). The Holy Ghost, however, gives us at times, in the Scripture, some little description of that happiness by comparing heaven, at one time, to a paradise of delight; at another, to a marriage-feast, where all kinds of enjoyment abound; again, to a costly pearl, or to a treasure which neither moth nor rust can destroy nor thieves steal; at other times he represents heaven under the figure of a kingdom, of a throne, of a crown, by which we are exalted to the highest honors; of a city built of gold, precious stones and pearls, lighted by the brightness of God, and filled with magnificence and royalty, where we may enjoy peace without molestation, and the greatest security.

These, however, are only images taken from the most beautiful, precious, and delightful things of earth, to teach us how great that bliss of heaven must be, in which all beauties, all delights, all joys, are found in the highest and most perfect degree; free from all evil, free from all anxiety and disgust, and free from all fear of ever losing them. In a word, in heaven man shall possess God himself, the source of all joy and

happiness, and shall, with him, enjoy God's own happiness for all eternity. *We shall be like him* (1 John iii. 2).

Is there need of any thing more to give us the highest conception of heaven?

Who, in contemplating this unending, incomprehensible, and indescribable happiness, would not readily despise the vain, contemptible, short, and imperfect pleasure of this world? Who would not willingly suffer with patience all the adversity and misery of this life, if he thought he might thereby make himself worthy of happiness so great, and that, too, the greater the more miserable he had been here? And what would it profit us to have enjoyed all the pleasures of earth, if, on the other hand, we were to be eternally debarred from the joys of heaven? How then can we cling to these transitory things which we must certainly one day leave, but by which we may lose the eternal forever? Let us, therefore, strive incessantly to enter through the narrow gate into the eternal kingdom.

Aspiration.

How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God (Ps. lxxxiii.) "How weary of the world am I, when I contemplate heaven" (St. Ignatius).

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.

The Introit of the Mass is a humble prayer, by which we confess that we are punished for our disobedience. *All that thou hast done to us, O Lord, thou hast done in true judgment, because we have sinned against thee, and we have not obeyed thy commandments; but give glory to thy name, and deal with us according to the multitude of thy mercy* (Dan. iii.) *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Be appeased, O Lord, we beseech thee, and grant to thy faithful pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their offences, and serve thee with secure mind. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Eph. v. 15–21.)

See, brethren, how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore become not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury, but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father: being subject one to another in the fear of Christ.

Practice.

Of the admonitions which St. Paul here gives, the two following particularly deserve our attention:

1. *To make a faithful use of time*; that is, of every occasion of doing good, and of gaining merits. This is the more necessary, as the days are evil; that is, full of dangers to the salvation of souls; and yet God demands a strict account. We ought therefore to repent for the time hitherto misspent; for how many graces and opportunities of doing good have we allowed to pass by unimproved; with how many sins have we filled up the moments so precious for our salvation! But we must not only repent, but also redeem the time. Let us therefore endeavor, for the residue of our life, to serve God more faithfully than we have in time past served the world. Let us take advantage of every minute; minutes make hours, and hours make days, weeks, months, and years. How zealously do we not employ every moment for our temporal profit, and how sorely we grieve over every loss! Does not our eternal salvation merit as much zeal? Shall we not on our death-beds lament bitterly every lost moment?

2. *To avoid drunkenness*; for it brings with it all kinds of

excesses, inasmuch as it produces a sinful excitement, a sensual jovialty, and a haughty presumption, by which the door is opened to all sins of the flesh.

Remark.—See an Instruction on Drunkenness on the Third Sunday after Pentecost. Here we will speak only of the sin of those who help to produce the intoxication of others.

The Persian King Assuerus, at a great feast, expressly forbade that any one should be obliged to drink (Esther i. 8). Thus this heathen, enlightened only by reason, held it to be a wrong to force any one to drink to excess: shall not the Christian, therefore, who has been taught by the clearness of divine revelation, count it a still greater wrong? Will not this heathen justly rise up in judgment against those Christians who, although illumined by faith, yet will neither acknowledge nor avoid this sin? Does not the language of the Prophet apply to them? *Woe to you that are mighty to drink wine, and understand to make others drunk* (Isaias v. 22). Hence St. Augustine warns us not to regard as our friends those who, by their fellowship in drinking, would make us enemies of God.

On the Duties of those who keep Public Houses.

If the above admonitions apply to all, they are especially suited to the persons just named. As a class, they are necessary in human society; but for this very reason it is within their power to do a great good or a great evil. They can accomplish great good, and prevent great evil, by keeping their houses out of Christian motives; by being just to all; by refusing to tolerate irreligious, defamatory, and impure discourse; by not permitting dangerous dances, plays, and assemblages, particularly of young people of both sexes; by being watchful, observing the laws; by refusing drink to drunkards generally, and particularly to such as have already had enough, or who, by drinking up their wages, would leave their families in need. In many respects the keepers of public houses can prevent more evil than the most zealous pastor. But in like manner, on the other hand, the keeper of a public house who regards only gain, can accomplish an endless amount

of evil, by permitting or favoring sin and vice; by putting persons of both sexes to sleep in the same room; by promoting loose dances, and by giving drunkards whatever they want to drink.

As it thus lies in their power to promote good or evil, they are bound to further what is good, to prevent what is evil. It is for this that God has given them the opportunity. Christianity requires it of them; and of this they must one day render a strict account to God. For, as the good which they have aided in accomplishing will avail towards their salvation; so will the evil which they might have prevented, but did not, tend to their damnation, inasmuch as by their neglect they encouraged evils and gave occasion for sin; for the evil is done when they do not fulfil their obligations. Let no one excuse himself by saying, that he could not thus prevent evil, because by too great strictness his guests would have been frightened away. The watchful host, though he see not every thing, will yet see much, and the fear of being observed by him, will prevent many an evil. For the rest, he can only be answerable for what he could have hindered. Good, honest guests will not be frightened away. On the contrary, they will be attracted; the house will gain a good name; the absence of bad and dissolute guests is no loss, since it is by them that the curse of God is brought upon a house. Is not this the explanation why so often persons in good circumstances, are temporarily ruined by the business of keeping public houses?

Every landlord, therefore, should devote his attention to discharging the duties of his place; to furnish good articles; not to adulterate his wines and liquors; not to charge exorbitantly; not to allow what is sinful; to behave like a Christian; to be watchful and just; and instead of looking to men and their words, to look up to God, who will be the rewarder of men for time and for eternity.

Gospel. (John iv. 46-53.)

At that time: There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his

son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to him: Lord, 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.

Brief Lessons.

I. God permitted the son of the ruler to fall sick, that he being thereby led to seek assistance from Christ, might obtain faith and salvation. In like manner, in order to convert sinners, he often permits manifold evils and misfortunes to come upon them, either in their own persons, or in their children, their herds, their goods. Hence David says, *It is good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy justifications.* And accordingly he prayed to God to fill the faces of sinners with shame that they might seek the name of the Lord (Ps. lxxxii. 17). The like happened to those of whom David said, *Their infirmities were multiplied, and afterwards they made haste,* in returning to God. Would that we might do the same! for if God sends upon us failure of crops, inundation, hail, famine, war, sickness, death of those we love, he thereby designs nothing else than to move us at least to abandon sin and to turn to him. But what do we? Instead of hastening to God we resort to superstition, and take refuge with the devil; instead of doing away our sins by a true repentance, we continually commit new ones by our impatience and murmuring; by our rash judgment, as if the injustice and malice of certain persons were the cause of our misfortunes; by our hatred and enmity. What will become of us if neither the benefits nor the punishments of God better us? God, indeed, sometimes sends afflictions upon the pious and innocent, or allows them to be vexed and tormented by wicked men; but he does this only to try their patience and love towards

him; to detach them from the world; to set them on their guard against sin; and to give them opportunity for gaining the greatest merits; *for to them that love God, all things work together unto good* (Rom. viii. 28). Such were the designs of God in regard to Job, Tobias, and others; and how profitable to them were these trials from God. But can we compare ourselves with these pious men, when instead of turning our trials to advantage by patience, we rather consider those our enemies whom God makes use of to sanctify us.

II. Christ says to the ruler, *Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not.* This was a reproof for his imperfect belief; for if he had really believed Christ to be the Son of God, and consequently almighty, he would not have prayed him to come down to his house; but rather like the centurion, would have believed that he was able, even while at a distance, to heal his sick son with a word.

Do not many Christians deserve the same reproof, who nearly lose all faith and confidence in God, if he does not by an instantaneous miracle help them in their need according to their wish? How such unbelief and distrust displeases God, he shows by withdrawing his shelter and protection from those who are thus fickle and distrustful (Ecclus. ii. 15).

III. How much good may not the example of a father of a family accomplish! Hardly had this ruler received the faith when his whole household was converted and believed in Jesus Christ. Thus fathers and mothers of families, by their good example, their piety, their zeal in prayer, their frequent receiving of the holy sacraments, by their meekness, their moderation, their modesty, may do incalculable good to their dependents and the inmates of their houses. Would that they might reflect on this! *For if they have no care for their own, and especially those of their own house, they have denied the faith and are worse than the infidel* (1 Tim. v. 8).

Consolation in Sickness.

“There was a certain ruler, whose son was sick.”—*John* iv. 46.

To console ourselves in sickness, let us bethink ourselves that God has sent us sickness for the good of our souls; that

we may thereby attain a knowledge of our sins, and make satisfaction for them; or, if we suffer innocently, we may exercise ourselves in patience, charity, humility, and such like virtues, and so increase our merits. Therefore, it was that one of the old fathers said to his companion who complained that he was so often sick, my son, if you are good gold, you will be thereby kept pure; if you are mixed with dross, you will be purified from it. "Many," says St. Augustine, "are wicked in health who would be virtuous in sickness." And St. Bernard says, "It is better to gain heaven through sickness, than to have health and be eternally damned."

To preserve patience in sickness, let us place before our eyes the suffering Saviour, who, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, had no spot that had been free from wounds and blows; in meditating on which, St. Bonaventure exclaimed, "O God, I desire not to live without sickness, when I behold thee thus wounded."

When sickness befalls us we must examine ourselves: 1. Whether we possess unjustly gotten goods, or harbor any other secret sins; and if we detect any thing of that sort, we must hasten to free ourselves from such sin by sincere confession and restitution, for God will not bless the medicines until the sickness has effected its purpose; that is, the amendment of the sinner.

2. Let a man employ a skilful physician, use carefully the prescribed means, and not permit himself to have recourse to such as use quackery and superstitious practices. To make use of the skill of the physician is the will of God, but to resort to superstition is to run the risk of both temporal and spiritual suffering, as was experienced by king Ochozias, who was punished with death because in his sickness he consulted the idol Beelzebub (4 Kings i.)

3. But before all else, let one betake himself to God, give himself up unreservedly to his will, pray him to enlighten the physician, and bless the means employed for his recovery, and subdue his inclinations if the prescription of the physician does violence to his former habits. For how otherwise should medicines have their proper effect?

Ejaculation of St. Augustine.—O Lord, here burn, here wound, only spare me in eternity.

Aspiration.

O Jesus, thou true physician of souls, who dost wound that thou mayest heal, and visitest men with temporal sorrows and adversities, that they may have health of soul, grant us grace to use every bodily pain, according to thy merciful providence, for the promotion of our salvation. Amen.

On the Care of the Sick.

“Come down before my son die.”—*John* iv. 43.

All who have the care of the sick should imitate the thoughtfulness of this father; that is, they should before all take care of the soul, and to that end call upon Jesus to come in the holy sacrament, before the sick person is past the point of receiving him with devotion. Parents, therefore, children, relatives, and friends, if they truly love the sick, should seek to induce him to receive the holy sacrament betimes. They should represent to him that he will not on that account die the sooner, but rather, after being cleansed from his sins and strengthened with grace, will either the sooner regain his health, or at least will be able to bear the pains of his sickness with the greater patience and merit; that to delay is a temptation of the enemy; that temporal affairs might then be the better attended to; that the temptations of the last moments are the strongest, and the danger of ruin is consequently then the greatest. They should say, generally, what agrees with prudence and regard for circumstances, and what Christian charity suggests for the salvation of the soul. Whoever neglects to advise the sick, must remember that he will have it to answer for, if the sick thereby should suffer, or perhaps be lost. At the beginning, and during the progress of the sickness, one should endeavor to encourage the patient to resignation and child-like confidence in God; should place before him the Saviour, suffering and glorified, as a pattern and consola-

tion; should pray with him, to strengthen him against desponding thoughts and the temptations of the devil; should frequently give him the crucifix to kiss; should repeat to him the holy names, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and other consolatory ejaculations, such as are to be found in prayer-books; should sign him with the sign of the cross, sprinkle him with holy water, and, before all, pray for a happy death: such is Christian-like care of the sick. One ought not, therefore, to lament and cry, by which the patient's dying is made the harder; nor ought one to hold with him unprofitable worldly conversation, which will hinder him from thinking earnestly on God and his soul's salvation, and for making ready for his last and most perilous combat.

Finally, there should not be allowed about the sick any persons who had formerly caused him to sin, or who might even yet do so, nor any who would distract and disturb him.

But in caring for the soul, the body is not to be neglected. We must call in time a skilful physician, give the sick person his medicines at the appointed times, keep every thing clean, observe particularly the prescribed limit as to eating and drinking, and not permit the patient to have his own will, for he will often desire what would be hurtful to him. In general, we should do what, in like case, one would wish to have done for himself, for there is no greater work of charity than to attend a sick person, and particularly to assist him to a happy death.

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass is said the prayer of Mardochai, which may be used in all necessities and adversities. *All things are in thy will, O Lord, and none can resist thy will; for thou hast made all things, heaven and earth, and all things that are under the cope of heaven; thou art Lord of all (Esther xiii. 9). Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Preserve, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy family by continued mercy, that by thy protection they may be free from all adversity, and in good works devoted to thy name. Through Christ.

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 deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God).

Explanation.

In this epistle the holy Apostle encourages us to the combat against evil, and points out both our enemy and the weapons we are to use. The enemy is not merely our own concupiscence and our fellow-men, but the powers of hell, which rule the world, lying in the darkness of error and sin, so far as God permits them. The weapons are introduced under the likeness of a Roman soldier's equipment. They are, 1. The girdle; that is, truth, by virtue of which we despise the goods of earth, and strive only for those that are true and imperishable. 2. The breast-plate; that is, justice, which renders to God, our neighbor, and ourselves, what is, by the law of God, due to each, and allows nothing to prevent it from the faithful discharge of duty. 3. The shoes; that is, readiness in regulating our lives by the Gospel. 4. The shield; that is, the faith, by the doctrines and promises of which we render harmless the fiery darts of the devil, and are taught how to repel the attacks of the enemy, opposing, for instance, to lust, the

pains of hell, which await the impure. 5. The helmet; that is, the hope of eternal salvation, which enables us to endure all temporal misfortune. 6. The sword; that is, the word of God, which, when we use it after the example of Jesus, the most powerful enemy cannot resist (Matt. iv.) Armed with these weapons, we shall be conquerors in the combat with Satan, and gain the crown of victory.

Gospel. (Matt. 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 pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he 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.

What would Jesus teach by this parable?

The king is God; the servant, every man; the ten thousand talents signify the enormous and excessive debts which men contract by their sins against God. Ten thousand talents are equal to ten millions of dollars; a sum so exceedingly great as to show clearly that the debt of every man to God is without limit, and for men truly overwhelming; perhaps, more-

over, thereby is to be understood every mortal sin, inasmuch as by himself man is incapable of making satisfaction for such sin: the hundred pence, a small sum, equal to perhaps six or seven dollars, denotes the offences which others have given us, and which, in comparison with our offences against God, are insignificant. By this parable, therefore, Jesus intended to say: As God forgives your immense debts, if you sorrowfully pray for forgiveness, so ought you to forgive your fellow-men their comparatively light debts, when they ask forgiveness of you. Unless you grant it, you shall receive no pardon from my Father.

Why did the king command that, besides the debtor, his wife and children should be sold?

Partly to point out thereby the greatness of the debt; partly because they had induced him to contract it, and had thereby become participators in it. In like manner, all those who participate in the sins of others, by assisting, counselling, commanding, inciting, consenting, keeping silence, overseeing, and defending, will also participate with them in punishment.

Who are like that unmerciful servant?

All unmerciful and hard-hearted persons; particularly,
 1. Rulers who oppress their subjects by excessive taxes.
 2. Those who oppress widows and orphans, and keep back from servants the wages due them. 3. Those who have no patience with their debtors when unable to pay at once, but would rather deprive them of house and goods than be indulgent to them. Such men will be accused before God by their own acts, which cry to heaven; by the holy angels, and by their own consciences; and God will deal with them in the other world as they have dealt with their neighbors in this.
 4. Finally, all implacable persons, who will not forgive injuries done them, but preserve hatred in their hearts; who bring such as have injured them before the courts, and even seek to injure them out of revenge. How can they hope to obtain mercy?

Why was the servant given over to the torturers after the debt was cancelled?

Not on account of the debt itself, for God repents not of his

mercies, and what is forgiven remains forgiven; but on account of his cruelty towards his fellow-servant, which was the greater sin, inasmuch as, out of gratitude to his master, he ought to have been merciful. The expression, "he delivered them to the torturers until he paid all the debt," denotes the eternity of punishment for the unforgiving and uncharitable. For how should man ever be able to pay the debt of his sins? O man, think of this in time, and forgive at once, and from the heart, thy fellow-men!

What is meant by forgiving from the heart?

It is to banish from the heart all hatred and desire of revenge; to bear in our hearts a sincere love towards our enemy, and to manifest it by works of charity. For it could not be called forgiveness, if we should exclude him who had wronged us from the benefit of our prayers and alms, if we should avoid him, refuse to speak to him, to salute him, to look at him, or to assist him in need when we might. Let no one say that his offence was too grievous. Does God command what is impossible? Have not Christ and the saints done this, and even more? For us, who were his enemies, Christ has given his life, and shall we think it hard to give even a good word to those redeemed with us? If we think of the multitude of sins which God has forgiven *us*, how can we refuse to forgive such trifling wrongs against ourselves? At any rate, let us not forget that God forgives us only when we also forgive from the heart.

Ejaculation.—Merciful God, grant me grace to be truly merciful towards my fellow-men, as thou art towards me.

Practical Lessons on Patience.

"Have patience with me."—*Matt.* xviii. 26.

That God has so great patience with us, ought to be more than sufficient to prevail upon us to have patience with our fellow-men, and to bear patiently the sorrows that are sent us from God. For ought we not to be like God? Besides, what good comes of impatience? Does it lighten, or change our trials? or does it better our neighbor? No; it makes afflic-

tions more oppressive, while as for our neighbor, he will receive unwillingly admonitions given with impatience, and finally will pay no attention to them. And to how many sins does not impatience lead! The impatient poor man begins to steal; the hot-headed, who can bear nothing, curses, murmurs against God, irritates others. Woe to those who lose patience (Ecclus. ii. 16). But blessed are those who are patient, for they shall possess their souls (Luke xxi. 19); for patience is the keeper of all virtue, making man perfect and worthy of the heavenly crown (James i. 4). It is indeed difficult for our corrupt nature at all times to have patience, but with God's help it is possible. Did the saints have a different nature from ours? and what they could do, with God's grace, why cannot we? To obtain patience, let us often say the following

Prayer.

O God, who, through the patience of thine only-begotten Son, hast humbled the pride of our old enemy, mercifully grant that, by considering what he has suffered for us, we may cheerfully and patiently bear our adversities, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost.

At the Introit of the Mass, pray with the priest for the forgiveness of your sins. *If thou shalt observe iniquities, O Lord, Lord, who shall endure it? for with thee is propitiation, O God of Israel. From the depths I have cried to thee, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice* (Ps. cxxix.) Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of mercy, attend to the pious prayers of thy Church, and grant that what we ask in faith, we may effectually obtain. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Phil. i. 6-11.)

Brethren: We are confident in the Lord Jesus, that he, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus. As it is meet for me to think this for you all: for that I have you in my heart; and that in my bonds, and in the defence, and confirmation of the Gospel, you are all partakers of my joy. For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

The epistle from which this extract is taken was written by St. Paul from Rome, where he was in prison on account of the faith, to the converts whom he had made in the city of Philippi, Macedonia. They had not only received the Gospel, but had also, for the sake of it, suffered many trials; besides, they had assisted the Apostles with pious gifts. St. Paul, therefore, rejoiced, and thanked the Lord. Whoever applies himself to the care of Christ's disciples, will participate in their merits. For this reason, the Apostle says he has the Philippians in his heart. How blessed must these good people have been, that an Apostle, like St. Paul, remembered them thankfully in his prayers to God! We may receive the same blessing by joining the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. The day of Christ, spoken of by the Apostle, is the day of judgment, which comes to every man at the very hour of his death.

Gospel. (Matt. xxii. 15-21.)

At that time: The Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us therefore, what dost thou think, is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose

image and inscription is this? They say to him: Cæsar's. Then he saith to them: Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God, the things that are God's.

Why did the Pharisees try to ensnare Jesus in his discourse?

That they might have cause either to accuse him before Cæsar, or to make him hated by the people: for if he had pronounced the tribute to Cæsar unlawful, they would have accused him of high treason; but if he had declared it obligatory, they would have denounced him to the Jews as a destroyer of their liberty. Like these Pharisees are those persons who, under pretext of friendship, prepare trouble for their neighbors, and seek to bring them into misfortune. But should they not dread that woe which Christ so often threatened to the hypocritical Pharisees?

Who are properly hypocrites?

They who, in order to deceive their neighbors, show themselves outwardly pious, while within they are full of evil dispositions and malice; who have honey on the tongue, but gall in the heart; who, like scorpions, sting when one least expects it. Such hypocrites are brethren of Cain, Joab, and Judas; of whom the first murdered his brother; the second craftily deceived and put to death his cousin Amasa; and the third sold his divine Master, betraying him with a kiss. But such men are cursed by God (Mal. i. 14). *The Lord hateth a mouth with a double tongue* (Prov. viii. 13). "Assumed sanctity," says St. Jerome, "is a double maliciousness."

What particular lessons does this gospel furnish?

That we should be just and pay to every one his due: 1. To the temporal authorities, taxes, duties, etc.; and, 2. To the spiritual authorities, the revenue and contributions due to them, for this is commanded by God (Luke x. 7; Rom. xv. 7; 1 Cor. ix. 14). These we should pay conscientiously, taking heed lest in any unjust manner we deprive the Church of her goods; for God has often punished horribly such as do so; and experience teaches us that such goods unlawfully gained bring no prosperity to their possessors. 3. We must pay to God

what is due to him—faith, hope, love, fidelity, and obedience, and that till death !

Aspiration.

Save me, O Lord, for there is now no saint ; truths are decayed from among the children of men : they have spoken vain things every one with his neighbors ; with deceitful lips and double heart have they spoken. O Lord, deliver my soul from wicked lips and deceitful tongue. Grant me grace by piety and virtue to preserve thy image in me. Direct my heart to justice, and keep it from avarice, that I may render to every one his own.

Practical Lessons against human Respect, or the vain Fear of Men.

“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.”—*Matt.* xxii. 16.

Christ spoke and acted without fear of men. Christians, disciples of Jesus, should act in like manner, and not be deterred from the practice of piety and virtue by human respect, or consideration of “What will people say?” How much really depends upon what men think and speak of us? Is it not enough if we can please God? He alone can truly help or harm us; and he alone, therefore, is to be feared; as Christ says, *And fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell* (*Matt.* x. 28). Besides, has not Christ expressly said that he will deny before his Father those who deny him before men? Finally, how many sins proceed from this fear of men—sins, too, which might be so easily avoided, if we only feared God and his judgment more than men!

How foolish is the conduct of those who, to escape offending certain men, hesitate not to offend God; who, to gain favor, assist others in oppressing innocent, poor, and forlorn persons, and in depriving them of their own; who comply with all new fashions and scandalous customs; who shun the divine services on Sundays and holy-days; who eat flesh themselves

and give it to others on prohibited days; who sing indecent songs, and, what is still more scandalous, turn holy things into ridicule to make others laugh! Still more foolish is it at confession, for fear of severe discipline, or of the bad opinion of the confessor, to conceal those sins which yet will one day be made manifest. In truth, what the devil could not do by himself, he does through this fear of men, which is a rope in his hand to hold the soul in his power, and drag it down to hell. It is not before the bar of men, but before the judgment-seat of God that we must one day stand; and he will judge us, not according to that common saying, "Others do it," but according to that teaching of the gospel, "Render to God the things that are God's."

On the Worth of our Souls.

"Whose image is this?"—*Matt.* xxii. 20.

This question we should often put to ourselves in regard to our souls, and particularly at the close of every day, "What have I made of my soul to-day? whose image does it bear? God's or the devil's? that of virtue, or of sin?" We should ask this question, too, when we are tempted to stain the soul with sin: "Whose image is this?" We should say, Is it not the likeness of the Triune God—a likeness painted, as it were, with the blood of Christ? Shall I defile this likeness with sin and lust? Far from me be such an act! For what in truth is there on earth more precious than the soul of a man in the state of grace, for which Christ has given his life—given it, not for all the goods and treasures of the world, but for the human soul? And is not the soul of man the temple of the Holy Ghost, the dwelling of the thrice holy God? Does not Christ truly and substantially enter into it to become one with it? And herein has not God done more for the souls of men than he has done for angels? So great is the dignity of man's soul. Originally the image of God, but defiled by sin, it was cleansed by the blood of the Lamb of God, that it might become partaker of the divine nature. Who can comprehend such exaltation? And yet there are many who value their souls so

lightly, that they barter them away for the pleasure of the moment—for the very smallest gains. How perverse! The body, man esteems so highly that he spares no pains to adorn it and keep it in life; but he will not care to preserve in the state of grace, or to adorn with virtues, the soul, the image of God! Oh, folly! Oh, shame!

Take care then of that which is most valuable within thee, of that which alone is precious, alone everlasting, the loss of which nothing can make good. Let your care for your soul be the greatest, the truest, the most enduring, till it shall be found worthy to be forever united with its Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.

The Introit of the Mass consoles us, and encourages us to confidence in God, who is so kind to us, and will not suffer us to be always in tribulation. *The Lord saith, I think thoughts of peace, and not of affliction. You shall call upon me, and I will hear you, and I will bring back your captivity from all places. Lord, thou hast blessed thy land, thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob (Jerem. xxix.)* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Absolve, we beseech thee, O Lord, the sins of thy people, that we may be delivered by thy goodness from the bonds of sin which, by our frailty, we have committed. Through Christ, our Lord.

Epistle. (Phil. iii. 17-21; iv. 1-3.)

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 their shame: who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made

like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown: so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beg of Evodia, and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women that have labored with me in the gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

Explanation.

In these words the Apostle gives warning against the false teachers of his day, who, although outwardly receiving and preaching Christianity, in heart hated the strict requirements of Christian morals, and lived according to their sensual lusts. He therefore cautions the faithful not to take them for patterns, for they are only hastening to eternal perdition, but rather to be followers of him, and of those who imitate his life.

These warnings and admonitions apply also to us. For are there not among us enemies of the cross of Christ, who are called Christians, but who will have nothing to do with self-denial, mortification, chastity, and such like virtues? who indeed despise them, and count those who practice them fools? Let us not be led astray by them. For what will be the end of them? Everlasting destruction. For he who does not crucify his flesh does not belong to Christ (Gal. iii. 24); whoever does not bear about his body the dying of Christ, in his body the life of Christ will never be made manifest (2 Cor. iv. 10). Whoever does not already walk in heaven, that is, direct his thoughts and desires to heavenly goods, will not find admission there after death.

Ejaculation.

O my God, would that I might say, with St. Paul, the world is crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal. vi. 14.)

Gospel. (Matt. ix. 18-26.)

At that time: As Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, behold a certain ruler came up, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall

live. And Jesus rising up, followed him, with his disciples. And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, he said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

Brief Lessons.

The ruler and the woman here mentioned teach us, 1. That in diseases of body or of mind, we should have recourse to Jesus with faith and confidence; and even when the malady continues, and seems to be incurable, we should not suffer our courage to sink.

2. The sick woman said to herself: *If I shall touch only his garment I shall be healed.* As she believed, so was it done to her. Condemn not, then, the faith of those who place confidence perhaps in a relic. It is not from the relic they expect help, but only from the author of life, God; and how often does God look with complacency on their believing disposition, and hear them!

3. At the very touch of the hem of his garment, the woman troubled with an issue of blood was at once made whole. If, then, the touch of the hem of his garment had such efficacy, what power must there not be in the reception of the holy sacrament? If, therefore, sickness of body or soul befall you, betake yourself to this divine physician; make your confession with sincerity; receive him into your heart with faith and confidence like this woman, and you also shall be made whole.

4. The young girl raised from death is an emblem of the soul dead in sin, which, through the all-powerful grace of Christ, rises as easily as one who sleeps. That Jesus restored this girl to life before only a few witnesses, the young man of

Naim before all the people, and Lazarus in the presence of many, amid tears, sighs, and prayers, is considered by most interpreters to signify three different stages of spiritual death. By the young girl is signified such as have sinned for the first time, out of human infirmity, and in secret only; by the young man of Naim, those who have sinned in act, out of malice, publicly; and finally, by Lazarus, open and hardened habitual sinners, who can be restored to spiritual life only by extraordinary graces and severe public penance.

5. That Jesus put forth from the room the minstrels and attendants, indicates that spiritual resurrection cannot take place amid the din of earthly cares, of worldly pleasures and assemblages. Would you then arise from sin, banish this confusion from your heart; shun those companies which would persuade you that sin is nothing so serious, that youth must have its revel, that it is time enough to do penance in old age, and hasten to Christ to raise you, by the power of his grace, from the deadly sleep of sin.

Practical Lessons against Mockery and Ridicule.

“And they laughed him to scorn.”—*Matt.* ix. 24.

When Jesus entered the house of Jairus, and said, “The girl is not dead, but sleepeth,” the multitude laughed him to scorn, because they understood neither the meaning of his words, nor what he was about to do. The like treatment sensual-minded men of the world often give to those servants of God who, by word and example, preach the contempt of honors, riches, pleasures, and the love of poverty, humility, and mortification. Because such sayings are unintelligible and hateful to them, they turn upon them their derision and scorn. How many evils these scoffers cause! How many are led away from the faith, deterred from virtuous acts, and betrayed into vice, by their scoffs! How many neglect the divine service, and the holy sacraments, despise pious people, give themselves up to gluttony and drunkenness, and in fine, do whatever the scoffers themselves do, rather than be laughed at and mocked! But woe to the mockers! *They are an abomination before the*

Lord (Prov. iii. 32). *He shall be a scorn to them, and they shall inherit eternal shame* (Prov. iii. 34, 35). Permit not yourself to be led astray by those who ridicule your zeal for virtue; pay no heed to them, according to the example of Jesus, and trust in him who was himself derided for your sake. Say to yourself, "I know, O dearest Jesus, that the servant is not greater than his master. When thou wast so often mocked, why should it appear strange to me to be jeered at and called senseless for endeavoring to practice devotion and virtue. I would not fare differently from thee, my Lord and my God."

Twenty-fourth and Last Sunday after Pentecost.

[N. B.—If there should be more than twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost, the masses after the twenty-third will be of those Sundays after Epiphany, which were passed over, and the following is the order to be observed:

If there be twenty-five Sundays, on the twenty-fourth is said the Mass and Gospel of the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

If there be twenty-six Sundays, on the twenty-fourth is said the Mass and Gospel of the Fifth, and on the twenty-fifth, that of the Sixth after Epiphany.

If there be twenty-seven Sundays, on the twenty-fourth is said the Mass of the Fourth; on the twenty-fifth, that of the Fifth; on the twenty-sixth, that of the Sixth after Epiphany.

If there be twenty-eight Sundays, on the twenty-fourth is said the Mass of the Third; on the twenty-fifth, that of the Fourth; on the twenty-sixth, that of the Fifth; on the twenty-seventh, that of the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

The Mass and Gospel of the Twenty-fourth, are always to be said *on the last* Sunday after Pentecost.]

The Introit of the Mass is the same as on the Twenty-third Sunday.

Prayer.

Stir up the wills of thy faithful, O Lord, we beseech thee, that more earnestly seeking after the fruit of good works, they

may receive more abundant helps from thy mercy. Through Christ, our Lord.

Epistle. (Col. i. 9-14.)

Brethren: We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of 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.

Practice.

This epistle teaches us that we should thank God continually, for the infinite grace of calling us to be Christians and members of the Catholic Church. In like manner should we pray, without ceasing, for still greater enlightenment, and greater strength in doing good, until, in our knowledge and in our practice, we attain to likeness with God.

Gospel. (Matt. xxiv. 15-35.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When you shall see "the abomination of desolation," which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand. Then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains. And he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take any thing out of his house: and he that is in the field let him not go back to take his coat. And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the sabbath. For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say to you: Lo here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, in so much as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert; go ye not

out: behold he is in the closets; believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Explanation.

1. The abomination of the desolation, of which Daniel and Christ make mention, is the desecration of the temple, at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, when it was profaned in the most frightful manner, by robbery, murder, conflagration, and the setting up of idols—about forty years after the death of Christ. While the Jewish population were perishing, the Christians, following the warning of Christ, fled over the mountains to the city of Pella.

2. Thereby Jesus would indicate how great the danger would be, should they be obliged to fly in winter, or on the Sabbath-day, on which they were allowed to make only a journey of five hundred paces.

3. Herewith Christ also speaks of the end of the world, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was a type, and of his coming to judgment. The Church appoints, both for the beginning and the end of the ecclesiastical year, a gospel relating to the last judgment, in order that Christians may always think of it, and thereby be deterred from sin.

4. False Christs and false prophets, like those here spoken

of, according to the testimony of Josephus, were Eleazar, John, and Simon, who appeared at the time of the Jewish war, and under the pretence of helping the Jews, plunged them into still greater misfortunes. Before the end of the world, a false Messiah will appear, who is the Antichrist. According to the opinion of the holy fathers, he will be born from among the Jewish people, and is called Antichrist because he will claim to be the redeemer and sanctifier of men, and will denounce Christ as an impostor. On account of his malice and cruelty, St. Paul calls him the man of sin, and the son of perdition (2 Thess. ii. 3), who, out of pride, will sit in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God, and will command all who will not worship him to be put to death. And he will, by his splendor, his promises, his false miracles, succeed so far, that not only many Jews (to whom the poor and humble Jesus was too insignificant) will acknowledge him to be the Messiah, but even many Christians will deny Christ and adhere to him. Even the elect would be in danger of being deceived by him, were it not that for their sake God will shorten those days, as he shortened the days of tribulation at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

5. This proverbial expression signifies that wherever may be the wicked, who have aimed at spiritual corruption, thither punishment hastens to destroy them.

6. (See explanation on the First Sunday in Advent.)

7. The sign of the Son of man is the holy cross: that this sign of his humiliation may be also the sign of his exaltation, and of the glorification of his disciples whom the world despised.

8. From this point Jesus goes on to define the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and says that many of his hearers shall live to see it; which was actually the case. But when the end of the world is to come, no one, he says, knoweth; no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone (Matt. xxiv. 36). Let us, therefore, keep ourselves always ready, by a pious life, for the coming of the divine Judge, and with that purpose let us often think on the significant words of our Lord: *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away!*

Aspiration.

O Jesus, my Saviour and my Judge, grant me, I beseech thee, grace to cleanse my heart, by penance, from whatever defiles it, to serve thee with steadfast fidelity, to strive for the glory which thou hast prepared for us, to become more and more like thee, by joy in tribulation, and thus to be prepared to look with confidence for thy coming. Amen.

Instruction on Swearing.

“Amen, I say to you.”—*Matt. xxiv. 34.*

The Son of God here, and elsewhere in the gospel, often confirms his sayings, as it were, with an oath; for swearing is nothing else than calling upon God, upon his truth, his justice, or other attributes, or upon his creatures, in the name of God, as witnesses of the truth.

Is swearing, then, lawful, and when?

Yes; but only when necessity demands it, and when the matter sworn to is true and just: when a man thus swears he imitates God, honors him as all-holy, all-wise, all-just, and contributes to the triumph of justice and innocence (*Jerem. iv. 2*). On the other hand, great sins are committed: 1. By those who swear in a false and unjust cause, which may be, besides, of little moment; for they call upon God as a witness to falsehood and wrong, thus violating his truth and justice. 2. By those who swear in a good cause, but without necessity or a sufficient reason; for it is certainly unseemly to call God as witness on every trivial occasion. [See the instruction for the Third Sunday in Advent.] 3. In like manner, they sin grievously and constantly who have become so habituated to swearing as to break out into oaths, without so much as knowing or thinking whether the thing is true or false, whether they will keep their word or not; whereby they expose themselves to great danger, both because they run the risk of swearing falsely, and also because they frivolously abuse the name of God, of his saints, and of his works.

Every one, says St. Chrysostom, who swears often, sometimes swears falsely; just as he who talks a great deal, some-

times utters things unseemly and improper. For this reason, according to the opinion of St. Augustine, the Saviour forbade Christians to swear at all (Matt. v. 33, 34), that they might not fall into a habit of swearing, and by reason of that, into swearing falsely. Whoever has this habit should take the greatest pains to overcome it. To accomplish which, it will be useful to him to reflect, 1. That if we have to render an account for every idle word we speak, how much more strictly will we be judged for needless, idle, and false oaths! *Remember thy last end, and thou shalt not sin.* 2. To remember that persons who swear so lightly, are generally less believed than others. 3. To repent each time that he swears, and to punish himself by certain penitential practices.

Instruction on what we must believe concerning Hell.

“And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with great power and majesty.”—*Matt.* xxiv. 30.

He shall come to judge the living and the dead; to reward every man according to his deeds—to receive the good into life eternal; to cast the bad into eternal fire. Would that all might consider this truth, earnestly and in season. 1. Hell is the never-ending punishment of those who die in mortal sin, unreconciled to God. In what this punishment consists is represented to us only in figures, but these figures point to whatever is most terrible. According to them, the punishment of hell is, first, an eternal privation of light, joy, and peace. This is signified by the expressions, “exterior darkness,” “weeping,” exclusion from the marriage-feast, the impassable abyss between the rich man and Lazarus, and the refusal of the drop of cold water. It is, moreover, a certain punishment, affecting soul and body. This is signified by the figures of the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the weeping and gnashing of teeth, the fire and brimstone. And this punishment is eternal, unalterable: those once damned can think of no redemption.

2. That there is a hell, the Holy Scriptures teach expressly. Whoever believes in their divine authority, must believe also

in the reality of hell. Not only do the above-mentioned figures signify as much, but Jesus and his disciples have positively declared its existence. *Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish* (Luke xiii. 5). *He that believeth not, shall be condemned* (Mark xvi. 16). *None who is unclean shall inherit the kingdom of God.* And what would be the meaning of the redemption of Jesus, if there were no hell, no eternal punishment, to redeem us from? Even reason itself perceives that God's justice must be appeased, and that he who dies in enmity to God cannot enter into his kingdom.

3. Therefore let us often think of hell;—of the greatness of its punishment, to which nothing temporal can be compared; of its duration, to which there is no end. Let us think that the way thereto is by unbelief, superstition, profaning the holy name of God, and in general by every grievous transgression of the commandments of God or of his Church. Let us think of all this in time, now, while God gives us grace for amendment, and proclaims mercy instead of justice. Let us think of this earnestly, and not fear the thoughts which may keep us from hell, but rather fear hell itself, which we can escape only by shunning what leads thither, and by doing what will preserve us from it. Oh, let us think of this daily, particularly in the hour of temptation; then let us say to ourselves, “What does it profit me if I gain the whole world, but lose my own soul?” or this, The pleasure is short, the pain eternal; for the sake of the one, shall I make myself heir to the other?

Feast of the Dedication of a Church.

The feast of the dedication of a church is the day upon which we annually commemorate its solemn consecration to God.

Why do we celebrate the anniversary of dedication?

To give thanks to God for having chosen a dwelling-place amongst us, for having shown us therein so many favors, and for having preserved us in the true faith. By such an anni-

versary we should also be incited to sanctify ourselves as temples of God.

Is it any thing new for churches to be dedicated and the anniversary of their dedication to be celebrated?

No; for we read in Holy Scripture (3 Kings viii.), that Solomon built a magnificent temple for the Lord, the dedication of which he solemnized during two weeks; that this feast was annually observed by the Jews, and attended by Christ himself (St. John x. 22). The early Christians, in like manner, dedicated their churches, and solemnly commemorated their dedication every year.

The ancient Martyrology ascribed to St. Jerome, makes mention of the consecration of the first church at Rome, built by St. Peter. In the earliest days of Christianity, on account of persecutions, the churches were not so solemnly dedicated as they are in our day; but as soon as those persecutions came to an end, under the Emperor Constantine, who embraced Christianity about the year A. D. 312, the bishops caused the dedications of churches to be solemnized with the most imposing ceremonies (Card. Bona., L. i., ch. 16).

Why are churches thus dedicated?

1. That they may thereby be particularly appropriated and sanctified to God's service.
2. That in them the divine service may be celebrated with fitness and honor.
3. That by them Christians may be continually reminded that they are figuratively the body of Christ, and a spiritual building, and that they may think of the unity and sanctity which should belong to them here, of the perfection they are to attain to hereafter.
4. That we may have a place in which to assemble together in the unity of the faith, in order, through prayer, the hearing of God's word, and the use of the holy sacraments, to cleanse and sanctify ourselves till we become fit for the indwelling of God.
5. That the power and malice of the devil, who seeks the destruction of such as pray, may not be able to assail them there.

On the Feast of the Dedication, at the Introit of the Mass, the Church, in order to inspire veneration for the temples dedicated to God, uses the words of the patriarch Jacob,

when he spoke of the place in which God appeared to him: *Terrible is this place; it is the house of God, and the gate of heaven, and shall be called the court of God* (Gen. xxviii. 17). *How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord* (Ps. lxxxii. 2). Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who doth renew to us every year the day of the consecration of this thy holy temple, and dost ever bring us again in safety to the holy mysteries, graciously hear the prayers of thy people, and grant, that whoever enters this temple to implore blessings, may rejoice in having obtained all his requests. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Apoc. xxi. 2-5.)

In those days: I saw the holy city the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people: and God himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away. And he that sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new.

Practice.

The Church applies this epistle, which properly describes the heavenly Jerusalem, or the Church triumphant in heaven, to the house of God, which by dedication becomes, as it were, a heavenly Jerusalem, and a spouse adorned for God, with whom he takes up his abode, that he may evermore dwell with men, to enrich them with his graces. And in truth, what graces are there that men may not partake of in the Church? Forgiveness of sins, real union with God in the holy sacrament of the altar, consolation in sorrow, relief in distress, counsel in doubt, and the like. What esteem and veneration do not churches therefore deserve, and how careful should we not be

to avoid profaning them! For if an earthly king regards the dishonor done to his spouse or his palace, as done to himself, how severely will God punish the desecration of his churches! He has indeed shown this in the Old Testament, as we may read in the book of the Machabees (2 Machab. xiv. and xv.), and how much more severely will he visit the desecration of the churches of the new law!

Gospel. (Luke xix. 1-10.)

At that time: Jesus entering in, walked through Jericho. And behold there was a man named Zacheus: who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was, and he could not for the crowd, because he was low of stature. And running before, he climbed up into a sycamore-tree that he might see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up, he saw him, and said to him: Zacheus, make haste and come down: for this day I must abide in thy house. And he made haste and came down, and received him with joy. And when all saw it, they murmured, saying that he was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner. But Zacheus standing said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have wronged any man of any thing, I restore him four-fold. Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

This gospel is read on the feast of the dedication of a church, because through that dedication Christ comes among the congregation, as he once did among the household of Zacheus, and dispenses grace and salvation, as he once did to that penitent publican. Furthermore, this gospel contains the following lessons:

I. Zacheus was a publican; that is, one of those persons who, in taking customs, were apt to commit many injustices, were addicted to avarice and usury, and, accordingly, commonly bore the name of sinners. But as he was anxious to see Christ, the Saviour met his desire, betook himself to him, and thus brought salvation to him and his whole house; that is, he forgave him his sins, and received him among the true children

of Abraham. How desirous is Christ to be with us! *His delights are to be with the children of men* (Prov. viii. 31). Why do we not go to meet him, like Zacheus? Why do we not receive him into our hearts, as often as we can, in Holy Communion? Would he not make us also, as he did Zacheus, children of God, and bring us grace and salvation?

II. As soon as Zacheus had Christ with him, he at once resolved to make restitution of all unjustly gotten goods, and to sin no more. This was indeed a most necessary condition for experiencing the virtue of Christ's presence. Is it not the same with us? We, too, cannot experience the benefits of Holy Communion, unless, like Zacheus, we restore the ill-gotten goods, make satisfaction for injuring our neighbor's good name, and shun, with care and perseverance, every sin and occasion of sin.

III. The visit of our Saviour to Zacheus probably gave rise to the custom of making visits to one another on the feast of a dedication. In this there is nothing censurable; rather is it praiseworthy, when done with the intention of rejoicing spiritually with one another that God has chosen in that place a dwelling for himself, and of congratulating one another that we are in possession of that faith by which alone we can be saved. But instead of this, what is done? Ah, who shall describe all the excesses, revels, quarrels, and scandals by which these feasts are desecrated, and which often surpass the intemperance, the impurity, and madness of the heathens at their idolatrous festivals? Is this fitting for Christians? Can such conduct be called gratitude for the graces and benefits which, through the year, God has bestowed on us in our churches? Could we wonder if, instead of blessings, God should send us curses? Christians, who possess reason, should be ashamed to take part in such a manner of keeping these feasts, and Christian magistrates should endeavor to put an end to excesses and scandals which threaten to bring down the wrath of God on them and on their country.

Practical Lessons on the Spiritual Temple, which is Man himself.

“For you are the temple of the living God; as God saith, I will dwell in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”—2 Cor. v. 16.

St. Bernard says with reason (in his first sermon on the dedication of a church), the Feast of Dedication is our feast also. For we too are temples—living temples of God—and as such were, in holy baptism, no less solemnly dedicated than are these temples of wood and stone. The ceremonies, too, for the dedication of a church have so great a resemblance to those of baptism, as to appear to have been copied from them; and a baptized man, the more he excels wood and stone, should so much the rather be called a pure and holy temple—a dwelling of God. Every Christian is, 1. *A pure and holy temple*; for as a church is first freed from the malice of the devil by manifold prayers, by exorcisms, by sprinklings with holy water, by repeated signs of the cross, by incense, so we, in holy baptism, by many prayers, by exorcisms and renunciations of Satan, by frequent signs of the cross, by the breathings of the priest, and finally by the sanctified water, thrice poured, with invocation of the all-holy Trinity, are purified from all diabolical malice and sin, and dedicated as temples of God. But if we are such, does there not, therefore, rest upon us a sacred obligation, as St. Augustine says, to maintain that purity which we have received in holy baptism, and to suffer nothing within the temple of our hearts which can offend the eyes of so pure a God? For, woe to those who defile and desecrate the temple of God! God himself, says St. Paul, shall destroy them (1 Cor. iii. 17). But the temple of the heart is defiled by every mortal sin, particularly by impurity. For by the act of sin, man, as it were, expels God from his temple, prepares a place for the devil, and sets up an idol. How grievously is God thereby offended! Flee, therefore, from sin! But if you have indeed driven God from your heart by mortal sin, and given place to the devil, banish him again by true repentance, and dedicate anew the temple of your heart with the blood of the Lamb,

through the holy sacraments, as a church that has been desecrated is re-consecrated and reconciled.

2. Every Christian should be *a holy temple*, in which God, according to his command (John iv. 23), should be adored in spirit and in truth, in which we should serve him in holiness and justice (Luke i. 75, 76): that is, the Christian should be adorned with all virtues, advancing from virtue to virtue. To this, the ceremonies of baptism point directly. Holiness, therefore, is something essential for the Christian. Indeed, a Christian who does not earnestly strive for it, is no true Christian. Is this any thing impossible? Surely not; for holiness consists in the love of God and of our neighbor, and in the exact and perfect fulfilment of the will of God. But to love God and to fulfil his will is not impossible, for God assists with his grace, which is strong in our weakness, and dwells with him who heartily desires to do this (John xv. 14). *But if God be for us, who is against us?* (Rom. viii. 31.) If God supports us, labors with us, suffers with us, combats with us, what can be called difficult, or even impossible?

Aspiration: from St. Augustine.

O God, who, for no merits of my own, but purely of thy grace, hast, in holy baptism, made me thy temple, grant that I may ever keep it pure and holy for thee. Purify this temple from all vices; adorn it with virtues; and permit nothing to be ever found in this thy dwelling, which may offend the eyes of thy Majesty. And grant that at last, as a living stone, hewn and prepared in the tribulations of this world, I may be built into the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.

Short Instructions on the Ceremonies at the Dedication of a Church.

1. The bishop who dedicates the church, together with the people for whom the church is dedicated, must, on the appointed day, fast till the dedication. This pious custom is derived from an apostolic tradition, according to which fasting was to be observed by every one before every high solemnity. At the same time, we are thereby reminded that we ought, by

invisible unction by which Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost.

9. The holy relics, before they are brought into the church, are carried around the church by the clergy in procession. The people follow them, chanting, *Kyrie eleison!* Lord have mercy upon us! Finally, the people enter the church together, after the bishop.

10. Under the guidance of Christ, we must follow the saints in order to arrive at the Church triumphant in heaven. Meanwhile we call without ceasing upon God, from this world, for mercy and grace, that we may one day gain admittance into the heavenly company of the saints.

11. On entering the church the 149th Psalm is sung.

Therein is set forth the joy of the saints, when Christ shall bring the elect into the heavenly temple to enjoy eternal glory.

12. The bishop inserts the holy relics in the altar, and closes up the stone, upon which he rests, with mortar prepared with the Gregorian water.

Thus shall the saints in heaven be incorporated with Christ, making one body with him; but we must remember that we can only receive through Christ what we desire to obtain by the intercession of the saints.

13. One of the priests passes around the altar, incensing it.

The priest represents that angel of whom the Apocalypse says (Apoc. v. 8), that he had golden vials full of odor before the throne of God. Incense is an emblem of prayer, and incensing, therefore, reminds Christians to pray with earnestness.

14. The twelve crosses are now anointed; which signifies the blessing of which the congregation are to partake in this church.

15. The bishop then forms five crosses from blessed incense and lays upon them five others of wax, which are lighted and burnt upon the altar.

These lights are symbolical of the offerings of the faithful; and of their hearts, enlightened by faith, and burning with the fire of love.

16. Finally succeed other anointings; the covers and linen for the altar are blessed and spread thereon; after which the bishop offers up the first sacrifice of the mass.

With such significant ceremonies the holy Catholic Church celebrates the dedication of a church, to the end that the faithful may be thereby edified and filled with holy veneration and respect for the house of God. At the same time she admonishes us, as living temples of God, to sanctify ourselves in this life, and to strive to attain to fellowship with the Church eternally triumphant in heaven.

mortification and abstinence, to dedicate our souls and bodies, as spiritual temples, to God; and that without penance we cannot enter into the house of God, eternal in the heavens.

2. The relics of the saints and three grains of incense, which are at the dedication to be inclosed in the altar, are, on the previous day, deposited in a place prepared, near the church.

The altar represents Christ: the placing of the holy relics in a separate place is therefore to remind us that the saints lived on earth as strangers, in order one day to be incorporated with Christ (2 Cor. v. 4). The insertion of the relics into the altar, is to remind us of the intimate union of the saints with Christ.

3. On the walls of the church are erected twelve crosses, before each of which is placed a candle: these candles are lighted before the commencement of the dedication. The holy cross is that sign, in which, after the example of St. Paul, we Christians should glory. The twelve lights represent the twelve Apostles, who were called by Jesus the lights of the world, and (Matt. v. 14) who proclaimed the faith in Christ crucified throughout the world. The lighting of the candles before the commencement of the dedication, signifies that the Apostles, before beginning to propagate the Church of Jesus Christ, were kindled with the fire of the Holy Ghost.

4. The bishop recites the Penitential Psalms, blesses water and salt, and therewith sprinkles, first himself and those next him, and then the walls of the church three times, within and without,—after each sprinkling knocking, with his crosier, at the church door, which is not opened till after the third time.

The holy water reminds us that we are cleansed through the blood of Jesus, and that we ought to appear before God with contrite hearts. The sprinkling three times reminds us, on the one hand, of the most holy Trinity, by whom all things are sanctified; and on the other, of the three hundred years of persecution of the early Christians. The opening of the door after the three knockings, signifies that the devil is overcome only by earnest combat; that we could never have entered heaven unless Christ had opened it for us by his death on the

cross; that we too must combat, and will conquer, if we fight under the cross.

The bishop therefore makes the sign of the cross on the threshold, and says, "Behold the sign of the cross; our enemies shall fly therefrom."

5. The bishop, accompanied only by those who serve at the altar, enters into the church, leaving the clergy and people outside the church.

This signifies the ascension of Christ, when, as conqueror of death and hell, he took with him a company of the elect into heaven, and established the Church triumphant, or victorious.

6. The hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus," is then intoned; the church is strewn with ashes; the Litany of All Saints and other prayers are said, and the Benedictus is sung; during which the bishop, with his crosier, writes in the strewn ashes the Latin and Greek alphabets, in the form of a cross.

Hereby is signified that through the power of the cross of Christ, people of different nations and tongues are gathered into the one Church.

7. The bishop blesses water, wine, salt, and ashes, mixes them together, and therewith sprinkles the altar and the walls of the church.

This water is called "Gregorian," because Pope Gregory the Great (in the 6th century) instituted this custom of blessing with water, wine, salt, and ashes mingled together. By it is signified the union of the divine and human natures in Christ; the water being the emblem of his human, the wine of his divine nature. The ashes are an emblem of death; the salt, of incorruptibility; and both together, of man, who consists of a mortal body and an immortal soul. The mingling of the water and wine, ashes and salt, denotes the intimate union of man with Christ through the holy sacraments; which is also indicated by sprinkling the walls, which are an emblem of Christian people, and the altar, which is an emblem of Christ.

8. On the table of the altar are engraved five crosses, which the bishop anoints with holy oil and chrism.

The five crosses are to remind us of the five wounds of Jesus. The anointing of them with holy oil and chrism, signifies that

MONDAY—escaping, in the combat with persecution ;

TUESDAY—contending, with forbearance and charity, against his enemies ;

WEDNESDAY—exposing hypocrisy and sensuality ;

THURSDAY—meeting the prejudices of the people ;

FRIDAY—contending against sectarian delusions ;

SATURDAY—rebuking the disposition to judge.

FOURTH SUNDAY.—*Jesus, Benefactor of mankind :*

MONDAY—zealous for the kingdom of God ;

TUESDAY—showing how good deeds are elevated to the rank of religious acts ;

WEDNESDAY—teaching to do good in spite of ingratitude and persecution ;

THURSDAY—to do good where others fall back ;

FRIDAY—and that the more when friendship or love call upon us ;

SATURDAY—to do good as in the sight of the Father.

FIFTH SUNDAY.—*Jesus, Saviour of mankind, sent by the Father :*

MONDAY—whose Spirit is poured upon him ;

TUESDAY—the Spirit who opposes the world ;

WEDNESDAY—who is one with the Father ;

THURSDAY—who shows himself in active love ;

FRIDAY—who is rejected by the world ;

SATURDAY—who shall one day triumph.

PALM SUNDAY.—*Jesus offers himself as a Sacrifice :*

MONDAY—

TUESDAY—

WEDNESDAY—

} by the sufferings which preceded his death ;

THURSDAY—preparation of the Sacrifice ;

FRIDAY—death of the Redeemer ;

SATURDAY—his victory.

Easter Sunday.

Jesus the Herald of life eternal :

EASTER MONDAY—showing himself to be alive ;

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER—bringing peace to the faithful ;

SECOND SUNDAY—the good Shepherd calling his sheep ;

THIRD SUNDAY—by sufferings preparing our happiness ;

FOURTH SUNDAY—encouraging us for the future ;

FIFTH SUNDAY—pointing to the Father, who will give eternal life.

Ascension Day.

Jesus going to the Father.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY—Jesus asking for the Holy Ghost ;
 PENTECOST SUNDAY—sending the Holy Ghost ;
 MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST—revealing the Holy Ghost ;
 TRINITY SUNDAY—Jesus one with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

Corpus Christi.

Jesus the Bread of Life :

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—communicating himself in love ;
 THIRD SUNDAY—the happiness of such as receive him ;
 FOURTH SUNDAY—blessing ;
 FIFTH SUNDAY—justifying and reconciling ;
 SIXTH SUNDAY—showing mercy and protection ;
 SEVENTH SUNDAY—keeping his promises ;
 EIGHTH SUNDAY—rewarding men according to their works ;
 NINTH SUNDAY—warning ;
 TENTH SUNDAY—showing the necessity of inward sanctity ;
 ELEVENTH SUNDAY—loosing the bands of sense ;
 TWELFTH SUNDAY—loving ;
 THIRTEENTH SUNDAY—helping ;
 FOURTEENTH SUNDAY—exalting ;
 FIFTEENTH SUNDAY—quickenng to the praise of God ;
 SIXTEENTH SUNDAY—perfecting the laws of men ;
 SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY—setting forth the law of God ;
 EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY—forgiving human weakness ;
 NINETEENTH SUNDAY—foiling human malice ;
 TWENTIETH SUNDAY—hearkening to child-like confidence ;
 TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY—forgiving acknowledged guilt ;
 TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY—distinguishing between the necessary and
 the unnecessary ;
 TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY—saving the helpless ;
 TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY—completing redemption and awarding judgment.

REVIEW:

SHOWING

THE CONNECTION OF ALL THE GOSPELS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

The word of God, preached during the year, proclaims Jesus Christ as the Sacrifice, Food, and Life of mankind, in the manifold relations of man to God, and of God to man. Thus we have at—

Advent,

Jesus previously announced and expected,

FIRST SUNDAY—as Redeemer of the world ;

SECOND SUNDAY—as Perfect Teacher and Worker of miracles ;

THIRD SUNDAY—as the Messenger from Heaven, who brings inward peace ; the Representative of the Most High.

FOURTH SUNDAY—as the Restorer of the order of God, and the Author of eternal salvation.

Christmas.

Jesus, God, appearing in the likeness of man,

With (a) Sanctity, (b) Justice, (c) Truth.

Epiphany.

Jesus appearing with his royal attributes, drawing all nations into his kingdom by the light of Truth.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY—Jesus imparting wisdom ;

SECOND SUNDAY—reigning with omnipotence over the elements ;

THIRD SUNDAY—over the spirit ;

FOURTH SUNDAY—over ill fortune ;

FIFTH SUNDAY—Jesus' love, by the effects of the Spirit through words ;

SIXTH SUNDAY—Jesus blessing the Divine Word, and developing the design of his appearing in regard to mankind.

Preparation for Lent.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY—Jesus defining the field and its labors ;

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY—blessing the laborers and the field ;

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY—the fruit of labor : offer of the love rejected by men. Jesus fulfilling his designs in regard to man.

Lent.

ASH-WEDNESDAY—Jesus confirming virtue, by valuing acts according to their spirit ;

THURSDAY—sanctifying, through sanctifying faith ;

FRIDAY—perfecting, by love ;

SATURDAY—completing, by implicit confidence.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.—*Jesus, the perfect pattern of mankind*—In the struggle between the spirit and the temptations of the senses ;

MONDAY—declaring good works, performed in the love of God, meritorious ;

TUESDAY—zealous for the service and temple of God ;

WEDNESDAY—restoring us to the place of children of God, by regeneration ;

THURSDAY—by adoption through faith ;

FRIDAY—by abolishing the law of the flesh ;

SATURDAY—by being supernaturally transfigured.

SECOND SUNDAY.—*Jesus, the Son of God, by his holiness :*

MONDAY—coming down from heaven ;

TUESDAY—by virtue, to exalt the earthly to the heavenly ;

WEDNESDAY—by humility, to raise from the servitude of sense to the freedom of the just ;

THURSDAY—by the consequences of sensuality, to show the superiority of spiritual things ;

FRIDAY—by showing the weakness of our enemies, to encourage us to virtue ;

SATURDAY—to make the return to virtue attractive

THIRD SUNDAY.—*Jesus, Protector of the just :*

PART II.



The Proper of the Saints.



INSTRUCTIONS

ON

THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS.

Part Second.

CONTAINING AN INSTRUCTION ON THE VENERATION OF THE SAINTS,
THE LIVES OF THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN MOST REMARKABLE,
AND EXPLANATIONS OF THE EPISTLES AND GOS-
PELS PROPER TO THEIR FESTIVALS.

INSTRUCTION ON THE VENERATION AND INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS.

In regard to the veneration and invocation of the saints, the Holy Catholic Church teaches: 1. That it is a practice in existence from the earliest times of Christianity, to honor the memory of the saints in heaven by feasts dedicated to them, and by their images and relics. 2. That the saints who reign with Christ present before God their intercession for men: it is therefore good and profitable to invoke them, in order to obtain divine benefits (Conc. Trid., Sess. xxv.)

I.—*On the Veneration of the Saints.*

What is it to venerate the saints?

To venerate the saints is to show veneration, love, and confidence towards these friends of God and coheirs with Christ, who, out of love to him, have gone through the fight, are now

honored by him (Ps. cxxxviii. 17), and reign with him in eternal happiness; who are also the friends of men, in whose happiness they take the deepest interest, and for whom they, without ceasing, supplicate God. In honoring, therefore, the worth and merits of the saints as the friends of God, we honor also God himself. The veneration of the saints is thus as far removed from the adoration which belongs to God only, as is the creature from the Creator, since the Catholic Church honors them not as God, but only as friends of God (to whom alone she pays adoration as God and Lord),—doing this to honor God, who has shown himself so wonderful in his saints.

But does not the veneration of the saints infringe upon the honor due to God?

No: it is rather a confirmation of it, since it refers only to God, and, in the saints, honors only him. Do we not honor the king when we honor his ministers; the father, when for his sake we honor his child; the friend, for whose sake we honor a friend? Do we not, therefore, honor God in honoring those who are his friends and servants?

Are we permitted, then, to venerate the saints?

Yes: and not only permitted, but we are also obliged to venerate them if we would honor God. For, as he is a liar, who although hating his brother, yet says that he loves God, so too is he who professes to honor God, and yet will not honor the friends and disciples of Jesus. Does not contempt of the servant reach back to the master?

Is it also lawful to venerate the relics of the saints; that is, their bones, and articles that belonged to them?

Without doubt it is. This, indeed, has been the unbroken practice, both under the old law and the new, from the earliest times; and God has sanctioned it by the most remarkable miracles. Thus, he brought a dead man to life by the bones of Eliseus (4 Kings xiii. 21). The woman troubled with an issue of blood was made whole by barely touching the garments of Christ (Matt. ix. 22; Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 20). By the shadow of St. Peter (Acts v. 15, 16), and the handkerchiefs and aprons of St. Paul (Acts xix. 12), different diseases were cured, and evil spirits expelled. And how innumerable are

the well-authenticated miracles, which in all ages have been, and yet are wrought, at the graves of martyrs and other saints!

Why ought we to venerate the relics of the saints?

The reason is well given by the Council of Trent (Sess. xvi.) They are precious remains of those bodies which, in their lifetime, were members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost, and which shall one day be raised up and glorified. They were the instruments of their virtues, and of countless benefits conferred by these men. Is it not, therefore, just and reasonable that they should be held in honor by us? Does not the child, the brother, the friend, preserve with honor the remains of beloved parents, sisters, or friends? And shall that be wrong in regard to religion which is right in regard to every thing else?

Is it lawful to honor images of the saints and the holy cross?

Yes; for if it is no sin to honor the likenesses of sovereigns and other persons, why should it not be lawful to honor the images of Christ and of the saints?

But is not the honor paid to images forbidden by the first commandment of God?

By no means; since, if it were, God himself would have broken this commandment when he directed Moses to adorn the ark of the covenant with two cherubim of beaten gold (Exod. xxv. 18), and to set up a brazen serpent (Numb. xxi. 8); and when he ordered various figures and carvings to be set up in the temple at Jerusalem (3 Kings vi. 29). This first commandment is only intended to forbid our attributing to images either the divine nature or the divine power: neither should we adore them, nor trust in them, as though they could help us,—like the heathen, who placed their hope in their idols. The Catholic Church permits nothing of this in regard to the images of the saints.

What is the aim of the Church in the use of images?

By setting up images in churches, she designs, as St. Gregory says, to place before men, as it were, a book from which they may learn the mysteries and the mercies of God; what Christ has done for us, and what the saints have done for

Christ and heaven; that thereby we may be moved to thankfulness, to the love of God, and to the imitation of the saints.

For the same reason, how much is it to be wished that in all Christian dwellings the immodest and scandalous pictures, by which innocence is so often seduced, might be removed, to give place to such as are edifying!

Is it lawful to build churches, to say mass, to offer sacrifice, to make vows to the saints, their images, or relics?

No; for such acts are acts of the worship that belongs to God alone. If, for instance, a mass is said in honor of a saint, it is not offered to the saint, but to God, in commemoration of the saint. Accordingly, St. Augustine says, "It is not to the martyrs that we build churches, but to God, the Lord of martyrs, even though we build them over the graves of the martyrs. No one of our priests has ever said, 'We offer to thee, O Peter, or to thee, O Paul!'" What is offered, is offered to God, by whom the martyrs are crowned." Therefore, also, the Church, on certain feasts of the saints, sings at the Introit of the Mass, "Let us rejoice in the Lord, as we celebrate the festival of St. N., on which the angels rejoice, with one voice praising the Son of God."

Can we then commit sin by going too far in our veneration of the saints, their images and relics?

Certainly: if we honor them as much, or even more than we do God himself; if we set God, as it were, aside, and direct to the saints the prayers and devotions that are due to him; if we repose in them a presumptuous confidence, as though they could and would help us of themselves; if, on account of particular devotion to certain saints, we promise ourselves a happy death and heaven, without taking care to lead a pious life; if we supplicate from them only temporal goods, such as money or treasures, using to that end superstitious prayers, invented, not by the Church, but by the devil and godless men; if we invoke the aid of the saints to commit crime; if we represent the saints in unbecoming and scandalous pictures; if we expose for veneration doubtful relics, not authorized by the bishops; or, if we trade and traffic in relics that are genuine.

Why do Protestants reject the veneration of the saints and of their relics ?

If they knew the doctrine of the Church, or if they would take pains to know what it is, they would not reject it ; but in general they denounce what they do not understand.

The Catholic Church does not command her people to venerate the saints, their images or relics, but she teaches that this veneration is pious and profitable. The Catholic does not honor the saints as he does God ; he does not believe, and is not permitted to believe, that there is any power or divinity in pictures or relics ; and from them, accordingly, asks nothing ; but only from Christ and the saints, whom the pictures and images represent : he puts his confidence, not in pictures or images, like the heathen, but in God alone, before whom the saints are heard in our behalf, on account of the merits of Christ.

Is it not a falsehood to say that the Pope makes saints of men ?

Yes, it is a calumny invented to slander the Catholic Church. God alone can make saints of men : only through his grace, and by faithful co-operation with it, can a Christian become holy and blessed. The Pope, as the head of the Catholic Church, merely declares that this or that Catholic Christian may be venerated and invoked, as one whom God himself has pronounced righteous, by the miracles which he has wrought through him. But, before any such declaration is published by the Pope, a long and very strict examination is held in regard to the life of him whom it is proposed to canonize.

What are the proceedings in the canonization of a saint ?

They are the following : When a person has died in the odor of sanctity, and the report is circulated that God has wrought miracles by him, the bishop of the diocese, upon the oaths of trustworthy persons authenticating the same, prepares a statement setting forth the fame of sanctity and the report of miracles. This statement is then sent to the Congregation of Rites, at Rome. By them it is opened and carefully examined. If it is found by them to be correct, it is communicated to the Pope,

who appoints one of the cardinals of the Congregation a commissioner to collect and produce all the evidence necessary for the process about to be instituted, in regard to the life of the saint, and report thereon. At the same time there are chosen opposers of the canonization, to subject it, as it were, to trial. After that, a real jury is impanelled; that is, cardinals are chosen who are sworn carefully to examine and judge the life of the saint, and all evidence for and against him. Before this jury advocates appear, of whom one or more undertake, under oath, the defence of the saint; others, the charges against him; and it is their duty to bring forward every circumstance, even the most trifling, which may cast an unfavorable light upon the life of the saint, in order that the truth may thereby be the more clearly elicited. Physicians, surgeons, and naturalists are also summoned, whose duty it is to examine the alleged miracles, in order to ascertain whether they were really miracles, or only natural occurrences. As soon as this jury is impanelled, and the trial begun, the saint receives the title of "Venerable;" which is as much as to say that he is worthy of beatification. His canonization, however, does not take place until fifty years after his death. During this period the trial is continued. First, all the works, conduct, and acts of the saint are investigated, and the least thing therein found contrary to good morals, causes the canonization to fall to the ground. If his works are examined, this causes the trial to be put off ten years, in order to the admission of more testimony in regard to the character of those works. After ten years, the virtues of the saint, as for instance, faith, hope, charity, and the four cardinal virtues, fortitude, prudence, temperance, and justice, which the saint must have practiced in the highest degree, are subjected to a careful and severe examination. For this purpose the Pope appoints commissioners to inquire how those virtues were practiced by the saint in the places where he lived and worked. After this examination is concluded, the Holy Congregation considers the report of these commissioners, the testimony of the witnesses, &c., and thereupon submits the whole trial, with all the documents relating thereto, to the conscientious inspection and examination of the Consistory, con-

sisting of all the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops of the Roman Court. Of this body there are several meetings, at which the Pope is often present, partly to examine for himself, and partly to ask counsel of the bishops.

It is only after the Pope has done this, after asking God for enlightenment, and even instituting public prayers to obtain the necessary light from heaven, that he publishes a bull permitting the ceremonies for the beatification to commence. As the day approaches on which the solemn beatification is to take place, St. Peter's Church, at Rome, the largest and most beautiful church in the whole world, is adorned with all possible splendor; thousands of candles gleam on all sides of the church; the wall and columns are covered, from top to bottom, with costly red satin; the high altar glitters with gold and precious stones, and over it hangs a picture, as yet veiled, of the saint whose beatification is about to be commenced. The Pope, surrounded by all the cardinals and bishops, appears, attended by his court. He kneels down, and again prays for enlightenment; then the cardinal who is to celebrate High Mass, coming forth, vested with a golden cope, and a mitre on his head, reads, in a loud voice, the brief of the Pope, in which is set forth that the venerable servant of God whose trial is now concluded, is allowed to be venerated and invoked as one of the saints of God, in certain places, and by certain religious orders. He then intones the *Te Deum*; during which, amid the roar of cannon, the veil falls from the picture, and the Pope and cardinals, together with the whole multitude, fall upon their knees to venerate the saint and praise God, who has glorified himself in him. This is only the solemn act of beatification; the canonization is not yet accomplished. That is the declaration that the saint is allowed to be venerated throughout the whole Catholic Church. Before this takes place, it must be shown that God has wrought fresh miracles through the saint since his beatification. It is only after this has been done that the canonization takes place, attended with solemnities like those at his beatification.

From all this, it is evident that no process is conducted with more care, conscientiousness, and severity, than the process of

the beatification and canonization of a saint; that judgment is finally given only when God has already decided the question by the miracles which he has wrought through the saint; and that, therefore, it is not the Pope, but God himself, who makes saints, and glorifies those servants of his who in life have kept continually before themselves his honor and pleasure.

How may and ought we to venerate the saints?

As God and the Church require: accordingly, we should praise God for the glory he has given to the saints; should show a well-ordered confidence in them, by invoking their assistance in time of need; should treat their relics and images with reverence, and sanctify with devotion the feasts dedicated to them—as has been said in the Instruction on the Ecclesiastical Year.

Are all the saints to be venerated alike?

As to that, degrees have been established by God and by the Church: by God, in that to some saints he has given greater graces, both before and after death; by the Church, in that, for this very reason, she has commended certain saints to a more zealous veneration. Besides, she has established certain choirs, or ranks of saints, according to the dignity of their vocation, and the manner by which they have glorified God.

The most distinguished veneration is shown by her to the Blessed Virgin Mary, as to the spouse, full of grace and truth, of the Holy Ghost, the Mother of our God and Saviour, and thereby the mother of us also.

Can any thing more be wanting to justify the Church?

After Mary, the Church pays particular veneration to St. Joseph, as the foster-father of Jesus; also to the holy angels, as our faithful protectors and models; and, for like reasons, to our own patron saints, to those of our church, our calling, and our country.

The ranks of the saints are the following: 1. *The angels*, who, although they are the most noble spirits and servants of God, are sent to the service of those who shall inherit salvation (Heb. i. 4). 2. *The patriarchs*, who were forefathers of Christ according to the flesh, and types of Christ by their virtues. 3. *The prophets*, who, as instruments of the Holy

Ghost, instructed men concerning the will of God, and prepared them for the coming of the Saviour of the world. 4. *The apostles*, who, as the witnesses of the Godhead of Christ, the messengers of peace, the fathers and pastors of the flock, are the foundation and pillars of the Church. 5. *The evangelists*, who left for us in writing the joyful news of the kingdom of God. 6. *The martyrs*, who, for the sake of faith and virtue, sacrificed all, even their lives, and with their blood so enriched the field of the Church that it brought forth an innumerable multitude of Christians. 7. *The bishops and priests*, who, as good shepherds, have faithfully fed their flocks with the holy sacraments, with the doctrines of the gospel, and with good example; have guarded them against wolves; and by offering up the holy sacrifice, have, in a manner, placed themselves as mediators between God and their people. 8. *The monks and hermits*, who, rejecting all the honors, goods, and comforts of life, have, as it were, buried themselves alive in solitude. 9. *The confessors*, who would not allow themselves to be carried away by mockery, or persecution, or by seductive example, from the faith and the strict observance of the evangelical law. 10. *The virgins*, who have kept unstained that virginal purity which they valued more than the pleasures of the world, and who therefore in heaven follow the Lamb, and sing a new song, which none but they sing (Apoc. xiv. 3, 4). 11. *The widows*, who have sanctified their state by humility, patience, industry, Christian education of their children, and resignation to the will of God. 12. *The penitents*, who, after having made shipwreck of innocence, have seized the plank of penance, and by subjecting themselves to the greatest austerities, walking in the narrow path, have entered into heaven through the narrow gate.

II.—*On the Invocation of the Saints.*

What is it to invoke the saints?

It is to address ourselves to the saints, that they may pray to God for us.

On what is founded our belief that the saints pray for us?

1. On the doctrine of the communion of saints. For, by reason

of this communion, there exists the closest spiritual union among all the members of the Church, as being members of the one body of Christ; so that the spiritual good of one is partaken of by all, and all continually make intercession for one another (James v. 16; Apoc. v. 8). 2. Upon the saints' love for their neighbors; by virtue of which, while yet on earth, they sacrificed every thing, even life, for their fellow-men. This love has not been extinguished in them by death (1 Cor. xiii. 8), but they have carried it with them into heaven, and now love us so much the more, as they are now so much the nearer to God. This love they would surely manifest by praying to God for us; especially since they know, from their own experience, to how many dangers our salvation is exposed.

Is it lawful, then, to call upon the saints for their intercession?

If a man may call upon his brothers and sisters for help, and upon pious people yet living for their prayers to God in his behalf, as God advised the friends of Job to do (Job xlii. 8), as St. Paul did (1 Thess. v. 25), as non-Catholics themselves do, why should not a man invoke the intercession of the saints in the presence of God, who are our brethren?

But is not the invocation of the saints opposed to trust in God, and to the mediatorship of Christ?

No; for we do not address ourselves to the saints in any such sense as if we would not address ourselves to God; but, confessing ourselves to be sinners, and unworthy to appear before God, we betake ourselves to these friends of God and glorified brethren of ours, that through their intercession, which prevails much before him, he may be gracious to us, and bestow upon us his favors. To call upon the saints, therefore, no way interferes with our calling upon God; for we call upon God as the author of every best gift (James i. 17), and such prayer to God is an act of divine worship; but we invoke the saints as intercessors, who are to pray for us and with us. In like manner, by the invocation of the saints no wrong is done to the mediatorship of Christ. Christ is and remains our only mediator through whom we have access to the Father (Eph. ii. 18); but the saints are only intercessors who must pray to God for us through Jesus Christ. Therefore, to God

we say, "Have mercy upon us! Hear us!" but to the saints, "Pray for us!" and all the prayers of the Church end, "Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

But do the saints have knowledge of our prayers?

The holy angels rejoice over the conversion of the sinner (Luke xv. 10), and offer up the prayers of the saints, as pleasing incense before the face of God (Apoc. viii. 3). Ought not the like to be allowed to the saints, as being the friends of God and of Jesus Christ, and as being partakers of like glory with the angels? (John xv. 14, 15.) Did not Onias and Jeremias, after their death, have knowledge of the sad condition of the Jewish people, and zealously pray for them? (2 Mach. xv. 12, *et seq.*) God has a thousand ways of making known to them our prayers.

How, then, must the invocation of the saints be conducted, to be pleasing to God and profitable to us?

In accordance with what has been said, it must, 1. Like the veneration of the saints, tend above all to the glory of God; 2. It must be through Jesus Christ, through whom alone we have access to the Father; 3. Our invocation must contain nothing unreasonable, nothing injurious to the salvation of our souls; 4. It must be accompanied by a life ordered in the fear of God, and after the example of the saints. How can the sinner, who is the enemy of God, expect to be heard, so long as he remains in sin? 5. In particular, as the Church proposes to us our own patron saints, and those of our country and church, not only as intercessors and protectors, but also as patterns, we should strive not only to obtain their intercession, but also to imitate their lives, that we may make ourselves worthy of their protection.

Devotion to a Saint on the day of his Feast.

O Saint N., I rejoice from my heart, and congratulate thee, that God gave thee grace to despise the world and all temporal goods, to aspire after virtue, and to persevere in good works until thou camest to him, through a happy death, and receivedst the crown of eternal life. God be praised by me for this, and from my heart I desire that he may be everywhere praised in

thee, and thou in him. I also beseech thee to obtain for me grace to follow zealously thy example, to despise temporal and aspire to eternal goods, that I also may obtain the happiness which thou enjoyest throughout eternity. Through Christ.

What are we to hold in regard to the veneration of saints in particular places, and pilgrimages thither?

What God and the Church teach us:

I. To make a pilgrimage is to visit a place become remarkable on account of some religious event (as, for instance, by miraculous answers to prayer), in order to pray there; whether one is animated with confidence of being more certainly heard in that place, or whether he goes thither in consequence of a vow, to thank God for graces received.

II. Now is such confidence, are such vows, in accordance with Christianity, and reasonable? They would not be, if one believed it necessary to go from where he was to some other place in order to be heard; if he believed that he could be heard without changing his life; if, on account of pilgrimages, he were to neglect higher obligations. But when such is not the case—where, rather, persons are animated by fervent faith, true confidence, penitence, and devotion—then, certainly, pilgrimages are not to be considered as opposed to Christianity, or unreasonable. For, 1. God has in all ages distinguished certain places by perfectly well-authenticated miracles, and bestowed rewards upon certain devotions. Thus the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, the shrines of St. Peter and St. Paul, many places and churches dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, as Loretto, Einsiedeln, Altotting in Bavaria, and innumerable tombs of saints throughout the Catholic world, have been, and yet are, bright with the splendor of the miracles wrought thereat.

2. What God, by miracles, has declared pleasing to him, the Church, with reason, has thenceforth sanctioned and promoted—most pious, learned, and holy bishops and priests, believing princes and their subjects, with penitential and holy purpose, have practiced; and thereby thousands and thousands have found rest and peace for their souls. These are facts which cannot be denied. How much, then, 3, must not the

thought that God, up to this time, has dispensed great graces at such a place, animate the soul, inspire confidence, and excite to fervent prayer! In fact, pious pilgrims pray at such places of grace with a glow of love and devotion, which often breaks out into tears, and which they never feel at home. 4. May we not, with reason, admit that God will be pleased to accept those prayers full of confidence, accompanied, as they are, with patience and privations, and grant to those who pray what they seek? Facts show that this is the case.

Considering this, what Catholic—nay, what reasonable man could censure pilgrimages? No one, indeed; and the less, inasmuch as in life, journeys similar to pilgrimages, for the sake of improvement, recreation, and other purposes, are considered proper.

III. If such devotions are wrongly understood, the fault lies, not in the thing, but in the man. Such pilgrimages should, therefore, be undertaken only in the spirit of the Church. This is done if, 1, we do not thereby neglect higher obligations; 2, when we go with the intention of honoring God and setting forward our own salvation,—avoid, on the way, and in the place itself, every excess, and bear with patience and resignation the difficulties of the journey; 3, if we endeavor to gain the grace of God by worthily receiving the holy sacrament, and by offering up our prayers with holy zeal; 4, if we try to preserve the good impressions we have received, and to lead a truly pious and faithful life.

Are pilgrimages of recent origin?

Pilgrimages were already made under the old law, and we find them among all nations. Abraham made a pilgrimage of three days, to offer up his holocaust according to the command of God (Gen. xxii. 3); and the Jews, at certain times, made pilgrimages to Bethel, which place Jacob had sanctified (Gen. xxviii. 18, 19); in like manner, according to the command of Moses, they made a pilgrimage, three times a year, to the ark of the covenant, and afterwards to the temple at Jerusalem (Exod. xxiii. 14). For what were these but religious pilgrimages? In the new law we read how the parents of Jesus, taking him with them, went in company with many others to

Jerusalem (Luke ii. 41, 42); how the Apostles and pious women came to visit the sepulchre of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 1; Luke xxiv. 1); and how St. Paul, though already a Christian, hastened to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of pentecost (Acts xx. 16). We find, also, in the History of the Church, that pilgrimages to holy places, particularly to the holy sepulchre in Jerusalem, and the graves of martyrs, were frequent in the early days of the Church, and have continued, without cessation, until now.

How should a pilgrimage be made?

With a pure and holy intention to glorify God in his saints, and in the spirit of true devotion and penance. One should not, therefore, visit holy places for pleasure or recreation; should shun, on the way and at the place, idle talk and sensual excess; bear cheerfully, in the spirit of mortification, whatever hardships and inconveniences he encounters; practice abstinence in eating and drinking; pray repeatedly, and with recollection; confess his sins with sincerity and penitence, receive Holy Communion, fervently thank God for all the graces he bestows upon us, make holy resolutions, and take care to preserve and manifest the good impressions which he has received by greater zeal in a pious life. Whoever makes a pilgrimage in this manner will derive from it great benefit.

Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle.

NOVEMBER 30.

His Life.

Andrew, a brother of St. Peter, born at Bethsaida, was first a disciple of John the Baptist. As he was one day pointing out Jesus, with the words "Behold the Lamb of God!" Andrew at once betook himself to Christ, and also brought to him his own brother Peter. Afterwards both the brothers were called by Christ, on the sea of Galilee, before all the other Apostles, with the words: *Follow me, henceforth I will make you fishers of men* (Luke v. ix.) Immediately they left

all, and became faithful disciples of Jesus, and witnesses of his deeds and sufferings, of his resurrection and ascension. After the descent of the Holy Ghost, Andrew travelled through Scythia, Epirus, and Thrace, and by his teachings and miracles converted vast numbers to Christ. As he was preaching at Patras, a city of Achaia, he was violently pressed by the proconsul, Ægeas, to offer sacrifice to the idols; but he nobly answered him, "I daily offer sacrifice to God; not the flesh of oxen, nor the blood of rams, but an unspotted Lamb; and although all the faithful may have partaken of his flesh, yet the Lamb remains as before he was offered, alive and undivided." Ægeas, enraged, committed him to prison, and on the following day caused him to be scourged; and as he persevered in his declaration, condemned him to be put to death by crucifixion. When he saw the cross, the instrument of his death, he greeted it with joy, embraced it, and said, "O good cross, that was adorned with the limbs of Christ; thee have I long desired; thee have I fervently loved; thee have I continually sought. Now thou art made ready for me, according to the wish of my heart. Take me away from men, and restore me again to my Master, that through thee I may come to him, who through thee has redeemed me." After this he was nailed to the cross. Two days he remained hanging thereon, but to him it was, in the mean time, a pulpit, from which he preached faith in Jesus, until his soul was taken up to Him whom he had so ardently desired to resemble in the manner of his death. His holy body lies in St. Peter's Church, at Rome.

Practice.

Wouldst thou have part in the glory of St. Andrew? Follow him, then, in the love of the cross. At the Introit of the Mass, the Church announces to us how greatly the Apostles were exalted by God, in making them teachers and fathers of the whole world. She cries out, therefore, *To me thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable; their principality is exceedingly strengthened* (Ps. cxxxviii.) *Lord, thou hast proved me and known me; thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

We suppliantly beseech thy majesty, O Lord, that as blessed Andrew the Apostle was both a preacher and ruler of thy Church, so he may be with thee as a perpetual intercessor for us. Through Christ. Amen.

Epistle. (Rom. x. 10-18.)

Brethren : With the heart, we believe unto justice ; but with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith : " Whosoever believeth in him, shall not be confounded." For there is no distinction of the Jew and the Greek : for the same is Lord over all, rich unto all that call upon him. " For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed ? Or how shall they believe him, of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear, without a preacher ? And how shall they preach unless they be sent, as it is written : " How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things !" But all do not obey the Gospel. For Isaias saith : " Lord, who hath believed our report ?" Faith then cometh by hearing : and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say : Have they not heard ? Yea, verily, " their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world."

Explanation.

Two things are therefore necessary to salvation : to believe with the heart, and to confess with the lips and life. And both are practicable : *to believe*, for the word of God is constantly and openly proclaimed by preachers whom the Church sends forth ; *to confess openly*, for the power of grace is greater than that of all inward and outward enemies. Hence the unbeliever of our days, and the Christian who dishonors his exalted name by a heathenish life, can as little as the Jews give the excuse of ignorance, feebleness, or the force of circumstances ; for grace would be more powerful in him than all hindrances, if he would but use it. Neither, therefore, the unbeliever nor the Christian-like heathen, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Gospel. (Matt. iv. 18-22.)

At that time: Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And he saith to them: Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them. And they forthwith left their nets and father, and followed him.

Brief Lessons.

I. Jesus chose poor and simple fishermen as Apostles, in order that the world might know, as St. Ambrose says, that the bringing in of Christianity was the work of God, and that no one might object that Christ had deceived the world by craft, or drawn it over to his side by gold and riches, or, finally, had compelled it to believe by his power, which undoubtedly would have been said had he chosen for his Apostles such as were distinguished either for wisdom, riches, or might.

II. To them he gave power to convert souls, and to gather them together in God, even as they had taken fishes in the net. All may be fishers of men who incite those with whom they live to good works, to frequent use of the holy sacraments, to the hearing of the word of God; who keep them away from bad company, and correct their faults with brotherly kindness. St. Augustine says that the father of a family in this way exercises the office of a bishop.

III. That Andrew so promptly followed the call of Jesus, teaches us, 1. That we should, on the spot, give ear to God when he inspires us with a good thought, or calls us to a better course of life; for the Holy Scripture says, *To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts* (Ps. xciv. 8). 2. That, in order to follow his voice, we should cast behind us all desires for temporal goods, and even leave our parents, if they should prove a hindrance to us, *For he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me* (Matt. x. 37; Luke xiv. 26).

Aspiration.

Mayest thou be forever praised, most amiable Jesus, that thou didst choose, not the wise, the mighty, or the rich, but what in the eyes of the world was foolishness, to confound the wisdom and power of the world, and didst accordingly graciously look upon poor fishermen, and exalt them to the height of the Apostolic dignity. Look also with fatherly regards upon us, thy frail children; call, nay draw us in such manner to thee, that, after the example of St. Andrew, we may suffer nothing in the world to detain us from following thee, and may always glory in thy cross, which is our salvation, our life, and our resurrection.

Feast of St. Francis Xavier.

DECEMBER 3.

History of his Life.

Francis Xavier, surnamed the Apostle of the Indies, was born of noble parents, in the year 1506, on April 7, at Xavier, a castle near Pampeluna, in Spain. In his eighteenth year he became one of the first members of the Society of Jesus, at Paris, and from that moment gave himself up so earnestly and perseveringly to meditation, self-denial, and the practice of Christian virtues, that by no desire was he so much animated, as by that of laboring and suffering for the glory of God and the salvation of men, wherever and however it might please God.

In the year 1541 he was sent as missionary to India. Of his labors and sufferings there, his works bear witness. He preached the Gospel of Jesus in fifty-two kingdoms, great and small, of India and Japan, and baptized about a hundred thousand pagans and Mahometans. Wherever he came, the idol temples were thrown down, and churches built to the true God. While he was desirous of winning over China to Christ, the Lord called him to himself from the island of Sancian, on December 2, 1552. He died poor and destitute of all

bodily comforts, but rejoicing in the Lord, with these words, "Lord, in thee have I hoped; let me never be confounded."

Let us learn from St. Francis Xavier to labor, according to our ability, for the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbor. Although we cannot become missionaries, we yet can pray, and we can join the Association for the Propagation of the Faith.

On the Origin of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith.

"The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest."—*Matt.* ix. 37, 38.

Christ expressly says, in the gospel for to-day, whoever will be saved must believe. But if all nations must believe in Jesus, the faith must also be preached to them. *For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? Or how shall they hear without a preacher?* (Rom. x. 14.) Christ, therefore, commanded his Apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. With restless zeal, and with heroic love, they fulfilled this command, establishing everywhere innumerable Christian communities. Many others, animated by a lively faith, followed their beautiful example, and propagated the Christian religion in countries where it was before unknown. The gospel, as Christ says (*Matt.* xxiv. 14), shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations, until the fulness of the heathen shall have entered into the bosom of the Catholic Church. Therefore it is, that even now, missionaries go every year into distant and unknown lands, where the people sit in darkness and the shadow of death (*Ps.* cvi. 10.), to carry to them the true faith. Let us, in spirit, accompany those noble-minded men, who, called by the Holy Ghost, and invested by the head of the Church, the Pope, with great power, leave parents, brothers, sisters, friends, in short, all that is dear to them, and cross far-distant seas to preach the gospel to the heathen, amid privations of every kind, amid afflictions, and at the continual risk of life. We see them, after the example of the Apostles, like lambs among

wolves, showing themselves among wild hordes of savages, and in the dens of cannibals, in order to tame those barbarians, and to gain them for heaven. We see them covered with dust and sweat, contending with bitter poverty, defying the most horrible tortures, bearing up against the most injurious influences of climate, and traversing inhospitable regions, to make men Christians, and to announce to the world the doctrines of salvation. And with what a blessing, with what glorious success, do they not labor in the vineyard of the Lord! Whole nations have been converted, have renounced the horrors of paganism, and from blind idolaters, have become zealous Christians.

But in our sad times Catholic missions have greatly declined. The convents from which had gone forth the greater part of these messengers of the faith, and from which they had received the greatest assistance, were almost everywhere secularized. The Society of Jesus, which within two hundred and thirty years had sent forth twelve thousand missionaries, seven hundred of whom had suffered martyrdom for Jesus, was suppressed: thereby many a splendid foundation was destroyed, and the greatest injury inflicted on Catholic missions; for no new missionaries could be sent; the older ones were dead, and those who were yet alive remained without assistance. Christians in lands where the faith had been planted, and moistened too, perhaps, with the blood of martyrs, but not yet firmly established, remained without spiritual help, exposed to the danger of relapsing into their old unbelief, into which some fall back.

Some good Christians, taking to heart this affliction of the Church, founded at Lyons, France, on the 3d of May, 1822, the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. They promised to pray for the salvation of the heathen, and, for the same purpose, to give contributions in money; in so doing they incurred no new obligations, but only undertook what they were already bound to; for every Christian is bound thus to pray. Christ, our Lord, says, *The harvest is great, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.* How can we one day excuse ourselves before Jesus, our all-knowing judge,

if we do not now pray for the propagation of the faith? But every Christian should also make his contribution to this object. This was, indeed, done by the early Christians, as we read in the Acts and Epistles (Rom. xv. 26; 2 Cor. ix. 1-6). Thus St. Paul writes (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2): *Now, concerning the collections that are made for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, so do ye also. On the first day of the week, let every one of you put apart with himself, laying up what it shall well please him, that when I come the collections be not then to be made.* We shall find encouragement to follow this example, if we consider that unbelievers in the remotest lands are yet men, and that, as our neighbors, we are bound to show them charity. But how can we better show it, than by relieving their greatest and most pressing need; by procuring for them the true faith, without which they cannot obtain true happiness, even in this world? To kindle a light among so many unbelievers, we require, above all things, missionaries. But even when they are at hand, the means for their temporal support are also wanted. The cost of their voyage alone is great, and there are, besides, many other necessary expenses. The inhabitants of the countries to which they are sent are mostly poor, and even in those heathen lands which are most favored, poverty and the number of the poor are rendered great by tyranny and oppression. After, perhaps, a long time, the poor only are converted; for the Gospel is first preached to the poor—theirs is the kingdom of God; while the rich have their consolation upon earth (Matt. v. 3; Luke iv. 18), and are afraid of a religion which prohibits all injustice and sinful pleasures, and enjoins humility and meekness.

The missionaries, therefore, although they give up all the comforts which they have enjoyed at home from their youth, must still derive their necessary maintenance from Christian lands, because those to whom they break the bread of the soul cannot give them the bread of the body. Often, too, their converts themselves are in need of assistance from their fathers in the faith, particularly in countries where the religion of Jesus is persecuted. Missionaries, besides, must often incur

great expenses for the divine service; as, for example, when in China, a bottle of wine for the sacrifice of the mass costs four dollars—while not infrequently they are robbed of their property by unbelievers. They must also, for the propagation of Christianity, build churches and school-houses, establish seminaries for the training of native clergy, and found convents, as one of the best means of strengthening religion. It is true there is much to be done at home, but we shall have the more sympathy for wants at home when we are moved by those of distant lands; we shall endeavor to earn the more, in order to be able to give the more aid; we shall deny ourselves the more, to increase our means of doing good.

To be a member of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, it is only necessary to say a short prayer—the Our Father—once a day, and to contribute a cent a week; so that poor persons, servants, and children can be members of it, as is in a great degree the case, particularly in France. But the harvest of merits which we may gain by this membership is great. A pious ecclesiastic writes: Thereby we join, as it were, the apostolate of those worthy men who give themselves up to every kind of hardship and trouble, in order to increase the family of the children of God, and we divide with them the merits which they gain at every step of their career. For the members of this society the converted Christians pray without intermission; here it is the Chinese converts who give thanks that, by the missionaries who have been sent through our contributions, heaven has been opened to them; here it is the Fathers of the Holy Sepulchre, who, with tears, thank us that we have helped to preserve that sepulchre from ruin. On the one hand, heroic confessors of the Christian faith promise us for our assistance a share in their merits; on the other, a martyr assures us, just before his death, that he will remember the members of the society before God. Finally, the Holy Father has approved of this society, and has granted to its members many indulgences, which may also, through intercession, be applied to the souls in purgatory. These indulgences are:

I. A partial indulgence of one hundred days, to be gained

by those members who (*a*) say once every day, Our Father and Hail Mary, adding, "St. Francis Xavier, pray for us." This may be done immediately after morning prayers.

(*b*) Who give one cent every week.

(*c*) As often as they perform any other good work of religion or charity.

II. A plenary indulgence; to be gained,

(*a*) On any day of the month on which one shall receive the holy sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, and perform the usual conditions of an indulgence.

(*b*) Every year, on the same conditions:

1. On the third day of May, the Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, the anniversary of the founding of the society.

2. On the third of December, the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, the protector of the society, or during the octave of his feast.

By a brief of Pope Leo XII., May 11th, 1824, sick and feeble members of the society are excused from the condition of visiting churches, if, in the judgment of their confessors, they shall have conscientiously fulfilled the above conditions.

The above indulgences were granted to members of the society in France, by Pope Pius VII., under date of May 15th, 1823. They were afterwards extended by Popes Pius VII. and Gregory XVI., in briefs dated, respectively, Sept. 18th, 1829, and Sept. 25th, 1831, to members of the society in every diocese where it was established, with permission of the ordinary, not only in France, but in other countries. Surely no good Christian, who knows what a grace it is to possess the true faith, would willingly be excluded from this society. Come, then, in troops, and be enrolled in this association. Be assured that the weekly cent will be returned to you with interest; for God's blessing is above all things. Above all, you may hereby secure your salvation, *for he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his ways, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins* (James v. 20).

Christians! hasten to take part in this great work.

It is an Apostolic work; for such weekly contributions were instituted by St. Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2).

It is a Divine work ; for thereby God's kingdom is enlarged, and his glory promoted.

It is a work of love for your neighbor ; for what better or greater good could we procure for Pagans, Mahometans, and others in the darkness of unbelief and error, than the light of true faith ?

It is a work for our own salvation ; because we help to save our own souls by furthering the salvation of others, and also because the prayers, labors, and sufferings of the missionaries, and of their converts, go up to heaven for us to procure us the grace of God. Let us, therefore, gladly join this society, willingly offer the prescribed prayers, cheerfully contribute the cent saved, that more and more souls may be won to Christ ; and that soon, very soon, that prediction may be fulfilled which says, that throughout the world there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

Feast of St. Nicholas, Bishop.

DECEMBER 6.

His Life.

This great saint, renowned throughout the world by the splendor of his virtues and the multitude of his miracles, was born at Patara, in Lycia, in the year 280. Himself the fruit of the prayers of his parents, he made prayer and the pursuit of virtue almost the entire business of his life. While yet in the cradle, he abstained on Wednesdays and Fridays from his mother's milk until evening, and retained, during his whole life, the practice of fasting on these days. He spent his whole life in such innocence, that he was to every one a model of sanctity. The early death of his parents made him the inheritor of great riches, which he divided among the poor, particularly among such as were ashamed to beg. Thus, to a certain poor nobleman he gave at three different times, secretly, as much money as enabled him to dispose in marriage his three

daughters, who were in danger of losing their innocence. So great a light of virtue was worthy to be set on a candlestick. And this took place in a miraculous manner. By divine revelation, that person was to be appointed to the vacant bishopric of Myra who should, of a morning, be first in the church. And this was Nicholas. It was only out of obedience to the declared will of God, that he accepted this dignity, in order that he might become more humble, more beneficent, and more perfect in all virtues. On account of the great number of miracles wrought by him, he was called the Man of Miracles. Virtue, however, is proved in trial. Accordingly God suffered him, on account of the faith, to endure persecution, exile, misery, chains, and confinement, until the Church obtained peace. After that he attacked with zeal idolatry and the new heresy of Arius, on account of which he went to the Council of Nice. Finally, after he had finished his combat, he died in the year 352, with his eyes raised to heaven, uttering the following words: "Lord, my soul has hoped in thee; receive it into thy hands." His holy body was buried in the church of Myra, and remained there until the year 1087, when it pleased the Lord to have it transferred to Bari, a city in Italy, where God glorifies his remains by extraordinary miracles. Pray, labor, do good, suffer, and combat like St. Nicholas, and to thee also shall be given the crown of eternal justice.

Introit of the Mass. *The Lord made to him a covenant of peace, and made him a prince, that the dignity of priesthood should be to him forever (Ecclus. xiv.) O Lord, remember David and all his meekness.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O Lord, who didst adorn the blessed bishop Nicholas with innumerable miracles, grant, we beseech thee, that by his merits and prayers we may be delivered from the flames of hell. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Heb. xiii. 7-17.)

Brethren: Remember your prelates who have spoken the word of God to you: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conver-

sation. Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day: and the same forever. Be not led away with various and strange doctrines. For it is best that the heart be established with grace, not with meats: which have not profited those that walk in them. We have an altar, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the Holies by the high-priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp; bearing his reproach. For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise always to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing to his name. And do not forget to do good and to impart; for by such sacrifices God's favor is obtained. Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls.

Explanation.

Hereby the Apostle admonishes the Jews, by steadfast faith, and other virtues, to imitate their fathers in the faith, and not to be led away by the new doctrines of wicked men, but to strive for the possession of grace as that through which alone the heart can be justified and sanctified. But this grace comes from Jesus Christ, who has offered himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. They should, therefore, hold fast to him, because he is always the same, and although to confess him might bring on them disgrace and persecution, this they should suffer willingly; should gladly do good, and be obedient to the superiors and pastors appointed by Jesus Christ and his disciples.

Let us well consider this lesson. Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever, and therefore his doctrines and institutions are always the same. Let us take heed, therefore, of innovators and false teachers. But this, too, we must consider, that to be disciples of Jesus, we must suffer with him, offer up ourselves with him to God, and show that we belong to him, by our works of mercy and obedience to our spiritual superiors.

Gospel. (Matt. xxv. 14-23.)

At that time Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: A man going into a far country, called his servants, and delivered to them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability; and immediately he took his journey. And he that had received the five talents, went his way, and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner he that had received the two, gained other two. But he that had received the one, going his way digged into the earth, and hid his lord's money. But after a long time the lord of those servants came, and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents coming, brought other five talents, saying: Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents, behold I have gained other five over and above. His lord said to him: Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the two talents came and said: Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me: behold I have gained other two. His lord said to him: Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

How is this parable to be understood?

The man going into a far country is Christ, our Redeemer, who, at his ascension into heaven, left to his disciples manifold gifts, for the use of which he will, at the hour of death, and at the end of the world, demand account.

By talents are to be understood the gifts of God. These are of three kinds, namely:

1. *The gifts of nature*; as for example, an acute understanding, a happy memory, intelligence, as well as health, beauty, strength, respect, riches.

2. *The gifts of grace*; that is, inward inspiration and enlightenment, faith, hope, charity, and other virtues.

3. *The gift of miracles*; the apostolate and pastorship, the gift of discerning spirits, of prophecy, of healing, of tongues, &c., &c.

These gifts God distributes variously, by virtue of his unlimited power, as supreme Lord over all creatures. To one

he gives much, to another little. But however much each one receives, with that he is bound to labor faithfully for the glory of God; and for what he has received he will have to render a strict account. Of him who has received much, much will be required; of him who has received little, there will be required little; of all, there will be required fidelity.

By the two servants, of whom the one with five talents gained five, and the other with two, gained two, are to be understood those who use faithfully the gifts they have received; that the master of the house gave to both equal praise, shows plainly, that God looks not at the greatness of our works, but our will, our obedience, our industry, our efforts, and that these are what he rewards. And how abundantly does he reward! The faithful servant of God shall not only partake of his joys, but enter into them. *He shall be placed over many things*; that is, he shall receive an inexpressible reward, because he has been found faithful over that which was but little, in comparison with the reward.

The slothful servant represents those worldly men, the slaves of earthly good, who make no use of the grace of God, neglect their duties, and who, although not openly wicked and seducers of others, yet spend their days in indifference, content that they are not murderers, adulterers, robbers; not considering that to omit good works is itself a sin. But there is coming a day of reckoning, when the useless tree shall be cut down, and the unprofitable servant bound and cast into the exterior darkness, while what he had shall be given to another.

Aspiration.

O Lord, I most humbly thank thee for all the gifts which thou hast intrusted to me. Will it not be with me as with the slothful servant? For how often have I buried my talent, instead of using it to thy glory, to my salvation, and that of my neighbor? What hitherto I have lost by neglect, I will henceforth endeavor to make good. For the time to come, I will be to thee a diligent and faithful servant. To this end, grant me, O Lord, thy grace, show mercy to me, and suffer me, at the day of judgment, to hear those joyful words: *Well done,*

thou good and faithful servant ! because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Amen.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

DECEMBER 8.

On this and the following eight days, the Catholic Church celebrates, with particular solemnity, the happy conception of the Ever Blessed Virgin Mary, who, from all eternity, was chosen to be the daughter of the Heavenly Father, the spouse of the Holy Ghost, the Mother of the Divine Redeemer, and, by consequence, the queen of angels and of men. The consideration of these prerogatives brought the most enlightened fathers and teachers of the Catholic Church to the pious belief that she was conceived immaculate, that is, without original sin. Thus they brought forward the words of the Canticles (iv. 7), in which the spouse, by whom is represented Mary, is called pure as the sun, and unstained. Origen concludes her immaculate conception from the words "*full of grace,*" which are never applied to any one but her. St. Ambrose teaches that Mary remained free from every stain of sin. How, indeed, should the Bride of the Holy Ghost, the Mother of the Most Holy, the Queen of Angels, those pure spirits, have been stained by any sin? Every heart that loves Mary the Mother of Jesus, most joyfully pays homage to this belief: for it cannot be admitted that Mary, the chosen daughter of the Heavenly Father, was ever a child of wrath; that the Bride of the Holy Ghost, of whom he says, *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee* (Cantic. iv. 7), was ever contaminated with original sin; that the Mother of the Divine Son ever could have been a slave of the devil. It is very remarkable, that among the shining hosts of saints who have, in every century, adorned the Church, no one wrote against this belief, while we find it confirmed by the decisions of the holy

fathers from the earliest times. St. Ambrose prays to God in the following words: "Receive me, O God, not from the hands of Sara, but from the hands of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin—the Virgin who, through grace, remained free from every spot of sin" (Serm. xxii. in Ps. cxviii.) Origen says of the Divine Mother, "She was not infected with the poisonous sting of the serpent (Hom. i.) St. Augustine concludes, from the words of the angel, "Hail! full of grace," that she was altogether excepted from the wrath of the first judgment. "This cloud" (Mary), says St. Jerome, "was never in darkness, but in light." In Ps. lxxvii., St. Amphilochius says: "He who created the first Eve free from stain, created the second also (that is, Mary) free from stain and sin." Sophronius calls the Blessed Virgin immaculate because she remained unstained; and St. Ildephonsus says: "It is certain that Mary remained free from original sin." The like has been asserted by great numbers of holy men and doctors of theology. The Franciscans have ever maintained this belief. St. Francis, St. Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus were prominent defenders of the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pope Pius IX., forced, as it were, by the faith and devotion of the faithful throughout the world, finally, on the 8th December, 1854, sanctioned, as a dogma of faith falling within the infallible rule of Catholic traditions, this admirable prerogative of the Blessed Virgin. It is, therefore, now no longer, as formerly, a pious belief, but an article of the faith, that Mary, like the purest morning light which precedes the rising of the most brilliant sun, was, from the first instant of her conception, free from original sin. Rejoice therefore, O Christian, that thou hast found a mother free from every stain of sin; praise her to-day and forever; venerate her immaculate conception with the greatest fervor, and often, particularly in solitude, in temptations, and troubles, use the words, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us sinners who have recourse to thee." Let us, then, venerate Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, but let us also strive to imitate her. But how shall we do this? Let us attend to the following considerations:

1. We, it is true, are not immaculate, but conceived and

born in sin; yet, in the holy waters of baptism, we have been born anew, and washed clean from the defilement of sin. Herein we have been made, as it were, equal with her; let us therefore take heed to preserve the innocence that we are thus invested with.

2. Mary, conceived without sin, remained also free from the consequences of sin, from the sinful inclinations born in every man. Nevertheless, what care to preserve innocence! She watches over her senses, shuns every danger, loves only conversation with God. Can you do any less, if you would preserve the innocence received through baptism? Surely not. Keep yourself free from all dangers, live for God and duty; pray and watch incessantly, that you may not lose the treasure which you hold in a frail vessel.

3. But the purest must also suffer. Sufferings are the way to our country. Ought not we, stained with sin, to be willing to suffer?

At the Introit of the Mass, the Church sings from Sedulius, "Hail, holy parent, who as a happy mother brought forth the King who rules heaven and earth from eternity to eternity." *My heart hath uttered a good word, I speak my works to the king* (Ps. lxiv.) Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Lord, to bestow on thy servants the gift of heavenly grace, that for those to whom the Blessed Virgin's maternity was the beginning of salvation, the votive solemnity of her immaculate conception may procure increase of peace. Through Christ. Amen.

Epistle. (Prov. viii. 22-35.)

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made any thing from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived, neither had the fountains of waters as yet sprung out: the mountains with their huge bulk had not as yet been established: before the hills I was brought forth: he had not yet made the earth, nor the rivers, nor the poles of the world. When

he prepared the heavens, I was present; when with a certain law and compass he inclosed the depths; when he established the sky above, and poised the fountains of waters; when he compassed the sea with its bounds, and set a law to the waters that they should not pass their limits; when he balanced the foundations of the earth, I was with him forming all things; and was delighted every day, playing before him at all times; playing in the world, and my delights were to be with the children of men. Now, therefore, ye children, hear me: Blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors. He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.

Explanation.

This lesson is, in the literal sense, a eulogy on the divine and uncreated wisdom, which before all things was in God; through which all things were made, disposed, and preserved; which rejoices in its works, and calls upon all its creatures, especially on men, to render to it love and obedience. Most of what is here said is also to be applied to Mary, of whom it may with truth be said, that, as the holiest and most admirable of all creatures, she occupies the first place in the heart of God. Therefore the Church also refers to her those words of the wise man: "*I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first born of all creatures*" (Prov. xxiv. 5). For she is, as Richardus says, the most worthy of all; no one has received so full a measure of purity and of all supernatural gifts; in no creature are the wonders of divine goodness so visible as in her. Admire, pious soul, this masterpiece of God's omnipotence, and rejoice at it. But rest not satisfied with this: listen to what Mary says to you. "*Hear me, ye children; blessed are they that keep my ways;*" that is, who follow in my steps, who walk as humbly, meekly, and purely before God as I. St. Alphonsus says: "Mary cries to us, blessed is he who hears my counsel; who is not weary of remaining daily at the door of my mercy, to invoke my intercession and my help." He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord. All ye who desire the kingdom of God, hear what is promised to you: "Honor Mary, and you find life and salva-

tion." Use, therefore, often the words of St. Chrysostom, "Hail, Mother of our God, and our Mother! Hail, O heaven, in which God himself dwelleth! O Throne of Grace, from which God dispenses all his graces! Pray to Jesus for us, that on the day of judgment we may obtain pardon and eternal happiness."

Gospel. (Matt. i. 1-16.)

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac. And Isaac begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Judas and his brethren. And Judas begot Phares and Zara of Thamar. And Phares begot Esron. And Esron begot Aram. And Aram begot Aminadab. And Aminadab begot Naasson. And Naasson begot Salmon. And Salmon begot Booz of Rahab. And Booz begot Obed of Ruth. And Obed begot Jessie. And Jessie begot David the king. And David the king begot Solomon, of her that had been the wife of Urias. And Solomon begot Roboam. And Roboam begot Abia. And Abia begot Asa. And Asa begot Josaphat. And Josaphat begot Joram. And Joram begot Ozias. And Ozias begot Joatham. And Joatham begot Achaz. And Achaz begot Ezechias. And Ezechias begot Manasses. And Manasses begot Amon. And Amon begot Josias. And Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren in the transmigration of Babylon. And after the transmigration of Babylon, Jechonias begot Salathiel. And Salathiel begot Zorobabel. And Zorobabel begot Abiud. And Abiud begot Eliacim. And Eliacim begot Azor. And Azor begot Sadoc. And Sadoc begot Achim. And Achim begot Eliud. And Eliud begot Eleazar. And Eleazar begot Mathan. And Mathan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

What do we learn from this gospel?

We are taught, 1. That all the types and predictions of the Old Law are fulfilled in Christ, inasmuch as he was the true Messiah and promised Redeemer. That St. Matthew introduces the book of the generation of St. Joseph, is done in conformity with Jewish usage, but thereby it is shown at the same time that his spouse, too, was descended from David; for Mary was the heiress of the family, that is, one who, for want of brothers, was to enter upon the inheritance of her father, and on that account was not permitted to marry out of her own tribe (Numb. xxxvi. 6). St. Luke has, at the same time,

given, in the third chapter of his gospel, the ancestry of the Blessed Virgin.

We are taught, 2. That as he was pleased to derive his descent from a line of sinners, so it is his will to redeem and make happy all, without distinction of race or position.

We are taught, 3. That it is Mary who sustains all the promises; she is shown to us as the purest virgin, the Mother of Jesus, our God, who through her conveys to us salvation.

Let us then worship Jesus as our God; despise no sinner, for the Son of God became man for all; honor the Immaculate Virgin, call upon her as the Mother of our God and Saviour in full confidence, particularly in all temptations against purity, and she will be our consolation and our help.

Aspiration to Mary.

O most pure and Immaculate Virgin, how beautiful and perfect art thou! There is not the least stain on thee! O full of grace, I praise thee for the grace of thy Immaculate Conception which God has granted thee! Oh, pray for me, most pure and blessed Mother of God, that while, unlike thee, I was conceived in sin, my life may at least be pure like thine, and that though I have inherited original sin, I may yet strive to avoid every sin that depends on my own free will; and enable me, through thy all-prevailing intercession, to regain, by penance, the innocence which, by sin, I have lost, that at my death thy Son may say to my soul, Thou art all fair, my love, and there is not a spot in thee. Amen.

V. O Mary, conceived without sin,

R. Pray for us to the Father, whose Son thou didst bear.

Prayer.

O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, didst prepare for thy Son a worthy dwelling-place, we pray thee, that as through the merits of the death of this thy Son thou didst preserve her from all stain of sin, so through her powerful intercession thou wouldst grant to us to appear before thee in purity, through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Praise.

May the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary be ever praised.

[Pope Pius VI. has granted an indulgence of one hundred days to those who say this praise to Mary with devotion and penance.]

*Ejaculation to Mary, to be said in time of Temptation
against Purity.*

Through the inviolate virginity and Immaculate Conception, O purest Virgin Mary, purify my heart, my body, and my soul, in the name of the ✠ Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost. Amen.

Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle.

DECEMBER 21.

His Life.

Thomas, also called Didymus, or the twin, was a fisherman of Galilee. After having been received among the Apostles, he accompanied Jesus in all his journeys, and uniformly showed docility, zeal, and love towards him, particularly on the occasion of his going to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead. For when the Apostles were afraid to go thither, because the Jews desired to kill Jesus, Thomas, full of courage, said, *Let us also go that we may die with him* (John xi. 16). His faith, indeed, wavered for a moment in regard to the Resurrection of Christ; but no sooner had Christ satisfied him thereof by showing his wounds, than he cried out with firm faith, "My Lord and my God." St. Gregory, thereupon, says, "God overruled the doubting of Thomas to our good, since that very doubt has profited us more than the ready belief of the other disciples, inasmuch as thereby Christ was induced to give so

much clearer proofs of his resurrection, in order to confirm us in the belief of it. Thomas showed the firmness of his faith by the innumerable labors which he undertook, and by the sufferings that he endured for Christ. He traversed the most extensive and remote countries, and preached Jesus to the Armenians, Medes, Persians, Parthians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and other barbarous and wicked nations, enduring, in the course of his labors, with astonishing firmness, the greatest sufferings for the honor of God and the salvation of men. Finally he came to India, when, in the city of Calamina, or Meliapor, he underwent a glorious martyrdom, being pierced through with lances, by order of the idolatrous priests, as he was praying at the foot of the cross. So much did the Apostle do to repair a single fault; but we, who every day commit so many—what do we do to repair them?

A Lesson to be observed.

Thomas had, for three years, been associating with Jesus, and was a very zealous disciple, and yet he fell into unbelief. How shall we be able to preserve our faith if we have an aversion to spiritual exercises, instructions, prayers, and the like; if we are fond of associating with indifferent persons, and with such as deride our faith; if we read bad books?

[NOTE.—See the Introit of the Mass on the Feast of St. Andrew.]

Prayer.

Grant us, we beseech thee, O Lord, to glory in the solemnity of thy blessed Apostle Thomas, that we may be ever assisted by his patronage, and follow his faith with suitable devotion. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Ephes. ii. 19–22.)

Brethren: Now you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord. In whom you also are built together into a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Explanation.

With the above words the Apostle assures the Ephesians that they have become truly members of the family of God, and that henceforth Jews and Gentiles, being united by the bond of one hope, one faith, one charity, make one building, one church, which daily increases, as in numbers, so also in virtue and piety. We too, through holy baptism, from strangers, have been made members of God's household, and built into the same Church. Oh, that we may strive, by faith and charity, to be living stones in this house of God! Otherwise what will our baptism have profited us?

[NOTE.—The gospel and an explanation of it, are to be found on the First Sunday after Easter.]

On Faith and Superstition.

What is it to believe?

It is, through the illumination of divine light, to receive as true all that God has revealed, and, through his Church, proposed to be believed. This faith is, says St. Paul, the life of the just man (Rom. i. 17); that is, as the soul is the life of the body, so faith is the life and strength of the soul. It penetrates all the faculties of the soul, enlightens the understanding, clears it of uncertainty and doubt; purifies the heart from sin and fear, infuses into it confidence and the love of God, and gives to the will a strength which subdues all things. And as it thus works upon the Christian within, so it manifests itself outwardly by deeds. The Christian who is thus actuated by faith lives according to faith; he prays diligently, uses earnestly the means of salvation, shuns every sin and occasion of sin; fulfils faithfully the duties of his calling; employs himself continually in works of mercy; is never, in any place, ashamed of his faith; and all this he does because he is animated by the living faith that God is a severe punisher of evil, and a liberal rewarder of every good work done out of love to him; that heaven suffers violence, and that only the violent bear it away (Matt. xi. 12). Such is the working of Christian faith wherever it is a living faith.

What is superstition?

It is to attribute to certain things a power which, according to the design of God and of the Holy Church, they cannot have. Thus, some fancy that by the repetition of this or that prayer, by visiting this or that church, by the wearing of amulets, scapulars, and the like, they can be saved, without, at the same time, taking pains to order their lives according to the commandments of God. This is superstition; for although the performance of these devotions and other acts is good in itself, yet by the persuasion that a person can be saved by them alone, without repentance, an efficacy is attributed to them which they do not possess. Wilt thou enter into life—*Keep the commandments*, saith the Lord. There are other persons who suppose that by saying particular prayers, invented by deceitful men, or by the pronouncing of certain blessings and exorcisms, they will be able to expel diseases; to protect themselves from temporal harm; to gain treasures; to discover and drive away thieves; and who think to foretell future events by dreams and cards. That this is superstition no one can doubt. But it is very sinful, and on that account absolution in such cases is, in many Dioceses, reserved to the Bishop. Indeed, it can be no light sin to set God aside, and instead of him, to betake one's self to creatures of his to which no such recourse is permitted, and even to the devil himself. And if God curses those who turn away their hearts from him, and put their confidence in man, what must they expect who practice such superstition? Beware of it, therefore. If one is in doubt whether a certain thing be superstitious, let him consult his pastor, and take his advice dutifully.

Aspiration.

O most benign Jesus, who didst permit the unbelieving Thomas to touch the prints of thy holy wounds, and didst thereby deliver him from his unbelief, oh, heal the wounds of my heart; give me a living, firm, and enduring faith in thee, such as may ever incite me to do what shall be pleasing to thee, and to shun whatever may displease thee. I beseech it

of thee by thy mercy to Thomas in showing *the prints* of thy wounds to him.

Feast of St. Stephen.

DECEMBER 26.

The epistle of to-day contains a short account of the life and sufferings of this saint. It only remains to be added, that on account of his virtues, his wisdom, and his zeal for the faith, the Apostles thought him worthy to be chosen the first of the seven Deacons, whose office it was, in addition to the preaching of the word of God, to serve the poor, and properly to distribute the alms of the faithful. In this office he united with a self-sacrificing love for his neighbor, an extraordinary zeal for Christ, by which he drew upon himself the hatred of the Jews to that degree that they stoned him to death. Thus he was the first who witnessed with his blood for Christ. To this event it is that those words of the Introit refer: *Princes sat and spoke against me, and the wicked persecuted me; help me, O Lord, my God, for thy servant was employed in thy justifications. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord* (Ps. cxviii.) Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant us, we beseech thee, O Lord, to imitate what we honor, that we also may learn to love our neighbors, as we celebrate the feast of him who knew how to beseech even for his persecutors, our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, who, &c. Amen.

Epistle. (Acts vi. 8-10; vii. 54-59.)

In those days: Stephen full of grace and fortitude did great wonders and signs among the people. Now there arose some of that which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them that were of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke. Now hearing these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth at him. But he being full of

the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And they crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking, and saying: Lord Jesus receive my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord.

Practice.

I. The exasperated Jews suborned false witnesses, who should say that Stephen had blasphemed God and the law. Grievous as this accusation was, it did not grieve him, because his good conscience acquitted him. Learn hence, that as there is no more terrible accuser and tormentor than an evil conscience, so, on the other hand, there is no better defender than a good conscience. It is a continual feast (Prov. xv. 15), and the best consolation in all adversities. It goes along with one in prison, in suffering, in death, and even before the judgment-seat of God. Be careful, therefore, always to have a good conscience.

II. Stephen is unjustly persecuted; yet he prays for his persecutors. Can we excuse ourselves if we do not love our enemies? Were not Stephen, and others who have imitated him, men, like ourselves? With the grace of God, could not we do what they have done? Could we call ourselves Christians were we not to do this? No; for the love of our neighbor, and of our enemy also, is the chief token of the Christian; since it is only by this love that we become like Christ, and resemble our Heavenly Father, who makes his sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rains upon the just and upon the unjust (Matt. v. 45). Let us, therefore, imitate the love of God, of Christ, and of St. Stephen, and then we may one day be able to give up our souls with calmness into the hands of our Maker.

Gospel. (Matt. xxiii. 34-39.)

At that time Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees: Behold I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold your house shall be left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see me henceforth till you say: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Who are here meant by the prophets?

The Apostles, and all who preach the Gospel. These, says St. Jerome, are prophets, for they foretell the future; wise men, for they know what they say; scribes, for they are learned in the law.

Did the Jews actually put any of these to death?

Yes; they stoned to death Stephen, beheaded James the brother of John, threw another of the same name from the temple, scourged Peter and others, while Paul and Barnabas had to undergo, at their hands, one persecution after another. In like manner, as St. Paul says (2 Tim. iii. 12), all they who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.

Who are they that in our days stone and kill the prophets and preachers?

All who in any manner persecute them. All, therefore, who, by their evil backbiting, defame their pastors,—who mock at and despise preachers and sermons; for to the servants of God this is a great torment and source of grief; it destroys their courage and paralyzes their efficiency. On this account it provokes the anger of God, as through the prophets he often told the Jews; and its consequences are generally such, also, as befell the Jews, namely: that the true faith is taken from such

men, and given to those who are worthy of it. Guard against such practices, therefore, lest the same thing befall thee.

What is meant by the words, *That upon you may come all the just blood?*

It is a Hebrew way of speaking, as if one should say: that upon the Jews should come the punishment of all the innocent blood shed by their fathers, whose acts, by their proceedings against Jesus, they sanctioned, in whose malice they participated, and the measure of whose wickedness they filled up.

Why does Christ compare himself to a hen?

A hen, by her call, draws to herself her wandering young ones, that no harm may happen to them; seeks to shelter them from the hawk, and will sooner allow herself to be torn in pieces than expose one of them. Infinitely more than this parable can describe, had the Son of God done for hundreds of years, by the law and the prophets, and, for three years, by himself. What heavenly love he showed them; what miracles he wrought among them; and they heard him not—followed him not. At the last he gave his life for them, that they might be delivered from eternal death. What he has done and is doing for the Jews, that he has done and is doing also for us. How often, and in how many ways, does he call us to do penance! How often does he warn us against the misfortunes into which sins and impenitence plunge us, pointing us to his blood, in which is our salvation! Would that we might give heed to his call! This similitude is at the same time a lesson for preachers, for parents, and heads of households, inasmuch as it places before their eyes, in lively colors, how diligent they should be, by admonitions, by entreaties, by warnings, and by threats, to preserve those under their care from evil.

What is the meaning of the words, *Your house shall be left to you desolate?*

They refer to the destruction which, on account of the unbelief and impenitence of the Jews, should befall their city and temple. And how frightfully was this accomplished forty years after the death of Christ! Let us learn hence, 1. That the punishment of sin and impenitence, though long delayed, will yet come. 2. That he whom God forsakes, will necessa-

rily become the prey of enemies, who will desolate his house ; that is, his heart ; will break up his peace, and horribly torment his conscience. 3. That he who neglects to bring forth the fruits of faith, and to return to God, will be punished either by the withdrawal of the light of faith, or else by seeking Jesus too late will not be able to find him, but must perish in his sins.

Supplication to St. Stephen.

O St. Stephen, first of the martyrs, who wast filled with fortitude, grace, and love, whose guiltless face shone like the face of a pure angel, I beseech thee, by the grace which rendered thee worthy to see heaven opened and Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father, that thou wouldst, by thy prayers, procure for me from God a pure conscience, and a holy, meek love, that like thee I may readily forgive those who injure me ; may pray for them ; may not only desire for them whatever is good, but may do them good indeed, and thereby merit the grace of a happy death. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Feast of St. John, the Apostle.

DECEMBER 27.

His Life.

John, the brother of St. James the Greater, was a son of Zebedee, a fisherman of Galilee, and of Salome, a cousin of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Matt. iv. 21). He was the youngest of the Apostles, and, with Peter and James, was the most trusted of the disciples of Jesus, by whom he was most tenderly beloved, on which account he is called the Disciple of Love. Of this Jesus gave the most convincing evidence, when, at the Last Supper, he allowed that disciple to lean upon his breast, and when, from the cross, he committed to the care of John, his own mother. This distinction John repaid by his

fervent, enduring love towards Jesus; for example, by being the only one of the disciples who did not desert him during his passion. After the ascension, he preached the gospel in Palestine; afterwards went to Asia Minor, fixed his residence in Ephesus, and established many churches there. He was, with the other Apostles, taken prisoner and scourged by the Jews, and in the year 95, under the Emperor Domitian, before the Latin Gate, at Rome, was thrown into a vessel of boiling oil. Having endured this torture without injury, he was then banished to the island of Patmos, where, by command of the Lord, he wrote the Apocalypse, or Revelation, concerning the fortunes of the Church. On returning from his banishment, he again governed the churches of Asia Minor, as chief pastor, as he had done before, and, at the age of nearly one hundred years, died at Ephesus, a peaceful and natural death. The writings which this Apostle has left behind him, are, 1. The Apocalypse. 2. The Gospel, which he wrote at the repeated request of the bishops of Asia, when nearly at the ninetieth year of his age, and in which, like an eagle, he rises to the Godhead of Christ, defending it against the heresies of Ebion and Cerinthus. 3. Three epistles, which treat chiefly of the love of God and of our neighbor. This love he constantly inculcated, and, throughout his eventful life, uniformly practiced. When, in his old age, he was obliged to be carried to church, he always preached these words: "My children, love one another:" and upon being asked why he always repeated the same thing, gave this beautiful answer: "This is the commandment of God, and if observed, this is enough;" that is, he who keeps this commandment, keeps all. Let us learn, from St. John, to have such love; let us strive to live, like him, chaste and pure, and then true wisdom, the love and the contemplation of God will be our reward.

The Introit of the Mass is: *In the midst of the Church the Lord opened his mouth, and filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and clothed him with a robe of glory* (Eccclus. xv.) *It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing to thy name, O Most High.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Mercifully illustrate thy Church, O Lord, that, enlightened by the doctrines of thy blessed Apostle and evangelist St. John, she may arrive at gifts everlasting. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Ecclus. xv. 1-6.)

He that feareth God will do good: and he that possesseth justice shall lay hold on her, and she will meet him as an honorable mother, and will receive him as a wife married from a virgin. With the bread of life and understanding, she shall feed him and give him the water of wholesome wisdom to drink: and she shall be made strong in him, and he shall not be moved: and she shall hold him fast, and he shall not be confounded: and she shall exalt him among his neighbors, and in the midst of the church she shall open his mouth, and shall fill him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and shall clothe him with a robe of glory. She shall heap upon him a treasure of joy and gladness, and our Lord God shall cause him to inherit an everlasting name.

What does this epistle teach us?

What glorious fruits come from justice and the fear of God. Justice consists in uninterrupted endeavors always to fulfil the law and the will of God, for God's sake, and is therefore the sum of all virtues, for it controls both the inner and the outer man, his thoughts and his acts; it is purity of intention, chastity, love, and all virtues. Such justice is, as it were, the light of the spirit, the nourishment and strength of the heart; it procures for man the friendship of God, and is the fountain of perpetual joy. Look at St. John: On account of his justice and fear of God, he was endowed with so great wisdom and knowledge, that St. Augustine said of him, that in spiritual perception he was an eagle; for he not only soared above earth, but above all the ranks of the spiritual powers, until he came to him by whom all things were made, saying: *In the beginning was the word.* Wouldst thou increase in wisdom; wouldst thou have tranquillity and joy? then, before all else, give heed to Christian justice.

On Purity.

He that loves wisdom, saith the Holy Ghost, will obtain it ; for it will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins (Wisd. i. 4). St. John was from his childhood an angel of purity, on which account he was particularly beloved by Jesus, and endowed by the Holy Ghost with such wisdom and knowledge that, as St. Augustine has remarked, he commences his gospel in a manner more lofty and sublime than the other three evangelists. For while they walk with the God-man upon earth, speaking comparatively little of his divinity, St. John, as if despising the world, soars beyond the vault of heaven, above the hosts of angels, and comes to him by whom all things are made, saying, *In the beginning was the word.* At the last supper, he was permitted to lean on the bosom of Jesus, but what he there drank in secretly, he imparted openly. Apply thyself therefore to purity of heart, and thou shalt be like St. John, a beloved disciple of Jesus, and shalt be filled with heavenly wisdom.

Gospel. (John xxi. 19-24.)

At that time: Jesus said to Peter: Follow me. Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on his breast at supper, and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray thee? Him therefore when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? follow thou me. This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He should not die; but, So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? This is that disciple who giveth testimony of these things, and hath written these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

How was Peter to follow Christ?

In the chief pastorship of the Church, in the likeness of his life, and particularly in the manner of his death.

Why did Christ rebuke Peter?

To punish his curiosity. Hereby he teaches us not to busy ourselves with the doings and omissions of our neighbor, but

rather to occupy ourselves with following him. Whoever, without being obliged to do so, concerns himself with his neighbor's affairs commonly neglects himself, and causes, besides, much strife, disquiet, and trouble.

Supplication to St. John.

O St. John, purest and most beloved disciple of Christ, who, at the last supper, lay upon his breast and there drew in thy heavenly wisdom; to whom Jesus on the cross commended his mother, I beseech thee, by these thy great graces, that thou wouldst obtain from God for me a pure heart, a fervent devotion to the dying Saviour and his mother, a burning love for God and for my neighbor, and finally, a happy death. Amen.

Why, on this day, is wine blessed and given to the faithful to drink?

This is done, 1. That all who drink this blessed wine may be preserved from disease and fatal epidemics, and retain health of body and mind, like St. John, who, according to the prediction of Christ (Mark xvi. 18), drank poison without being thereby harmed. 2. That through the intercession of St. John, who took the poisonous draught only out of love to God and to his neighbor (namely, for the conversion of an idolater), we may be filled with the same love. On this account the priest, at offering the wine, uses the words, "Drink the love of St. John, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Feast of the Holy Innocents.

DECEMBER 28.

The account of the martyrdom of these children is given in the gospel for to-day. The Church justly honors them as martyrs, since they confessed Christ, if not with the mouth yet with their death, which they suffered by reason of Herod's hatred against Christ.

Introit of the Mass. *Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings thou hast perfected praise, because of thy enemies, O Lord. O Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth (Ps. viii.)* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, whose praise the martyred Innocents confessed on this day—not by speaking, but by dying—mortify in us all the evils of vices, that our life also may confess by actions thy faith, which our tongue proclaims. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Apocalypse xiv. 1-5.)

In those days: I beheld a Lamb standing upon Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand having his name, and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder: and the voice, which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the ancients: and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb: and in their mouth there was found no lie: for they are without spot before the throne of God.

Explanation.

This vision of St. John's is applied by the Church to the Holy Innocents, because, on account of their innocence, they are numbered with the virgins of whom mention is here made. St. John describes the prerogatives of purity, and relates how he had seen the Lamb of God, Christ, on Mount Sion, that is, in heaven, surrounded by one hundred and forty-four thousand of such virgins. To this number belong all those who have kept themselves from the idolatry of the world; particularly those who have not been defiled with fleshly lusts, and who have preserved their innocence unstained. Such pure souls have this to distinguish them from all other saints: that they are marked with the name of the Lamb, and enjoy in his com-

pany a great and peculiar happiness, which is signified by the new canticle which no saints but they can sing. This is the reward of their victories, and of their exertions in contending with the flesh, and in overcoming so many temptations. What a treasure, then, is purity! And will you, then, young man, or young woman, lightly sacrifice it, out of human respect—for the sake of a momentary pleasure—for a mere nothing?

Gospel. (Matt. ii. 13-18.)

At that time: An Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee: for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him. Who arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Then Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry; and sending killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: "A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Why did Herod seek the life of Christ

Because, being ambitious, and consequently suspicious and cruel, he lived in continual fear lest he should be deprived of his throne. For this reason he had already put many persons to death, and among others even his own sons and nearest relatives. The like ambition now incited him to attempt the life of the new-born King of the Jews, who was, as he supposed, about to establish a worldly kingdom. How ruinous is it to be the slave of such a passion! Are you, perhaps, ruled by any such? Root it out, then, betimes; resist manfully the first motion of every evil inclination, that it may not become powerful, and carry you, against your wish, first into sin, and then into destruction.

What persons are like Herod?

All those who destroy innocent children, in body or in soul;

for example, imprudent and careless mothers who injure the fruit of their womb by excessive dancing, by heavy labor, by vehement anger, or immoderate grief; unmanly men who are cruel to their wives while with child, who strike them, incite them to anger, or terrify them; heedless parents, who neglect their little ones, who take them into bed at the risk of suffocating them, who do not take pains to keep them clean and healthy; those corrupt and godless women who destroy the fruit of their shame either before or after birth, and while yet unbaptized. But more cruel than all these, and even than Herod himself, are they who scandalize little children by impure conversations, by indecent songs, by acts of unchasteness in their presence, or by inciting them to the like; for thereby they plunge the souls of the children into destruction.

What reward did Herod receive for his cruelty?

He was soon attacked with a loathsome and painful disease, of which he died, forsaken by every one, eaten by worms, and given up to the extremest despair. But if the cruelty which Herod directed only against the bodies of the Innocents was thus punished, what must they look for who deprive the innocent not only of temporal, but of eternal life?

What is signified by these words, *A voice was heard in Rama? &c.*

They denote that the grief of the mothers over the loss of their children was so great, that their lamentations might have been heard in Rama, a place some hours distant from Bethlehem. To weep over the loss of children is natural, but is it not unreasonable to give way to excessive weeping and mourning? Would these mothers have thus wept, if they had considered that their children by so early a death entered into an eternally happy life? How then can Christian mothers be so inconsolable at the death of their little ones, knowing that God has taken them to himself; that they are delivered from a thousand dangers to their salvation which their parents, with the greatest watchfulness, could hardly be able to preserve them from?

What more do we learn from this occurrence?

Much more: 1. As God saves his Son, not by a miracle, but,

according to the natural course of things, by flight, so we should expect no supernatural and miraculous assistance, so long as we possess natural means of deliverance. 2. How great was the faith, how prompt and exact the obedience of St. Joseph, in undertaking at once, without dispute, the long and toilsome journey, with the child and his mother. How instructive, and how confounding is this ready obedience to us, who submit so reluctantly to the requirements and commandments of God? 3. As cruel as God's dealing with the innocents may have appeared to the mothers of those children, it was nevertheless pure kindness. For how many of them would, probably, in later years have plunged into sins and vices; like others would have rejected the Messiah, or would even have taken part in his crucifixion? If God, from time to time, deals in like manner with others, is it not for their eternal welfare? Is there not many a one in regard to whom it were to be wished, that he had been taken out of the world while as yet he had not become the slave of sin? 4. But what wrong have these children done that God should visit them so severely and cause them to die? What folly to raise such questions. *Because thou wast acceptable to God,* said the angel to Tobias, *it was necessary that temptation should prove thee* (Tobias xii. 13). We ought, therefore, by no means to argue that a man is displeasing to God, because he has much to suffer; but rather should say, this man must be acceptable to God, because he is so severely tried. For it is the surest proof that God loves us, when by earthly afflictions he rescues us from destruction, and gains us for heaven. 5. Herod sought to kill Jesus. Vain design! The child whom he seeks, he finds not. What avail all the designs of the wicked against God and his servants? It is plain that he who fears God immovably confides in him, stands firm, like Mount Sion. The mountains stand fast, though storms rage. So with the just man, though all hell should rise up against him: God is his friend; what should he fear? God is his helper; who can prevail against him?

[The Church uses to-day the purple color, in token of her horror at the cruelty of Herod; but on the octave she uses

the red, to indicate her joy at the glory which the Innocents gained by their martyrdom.]

Supplication to the Holy Innocents.

Ye innocent little ones, who have glorified God not by your words, but by your death, and who now continually follow the Lamb, pray for us, that we may confirm, by a Christian life, the faith which we profess with the mouth; and that, purified by persecutions and afflictions, we also may be found worthy to share in that glory which you now enjoy forever.

Last Day of the Year.

As time is one of the greatest favors which we receive from God, so to make good use of it is one of our chief duties. There is nothing which the damned in hell will more regret than the loss of time; nothing that they will more desire than even a few moments for repentance.

One year is now gone; how have we spent it?

We owe to God every moment of our lives, but how little of the years that are past have we given to him, and to the salvation of our souls? How much, on the other hand, have we not given to the world, to vanity, to the comforts and pleasures of sense? Have we used the twentieth part of our time to the end for which God gave it to us? How many occasions of doing good, of exercising charity, humility, patience, meekness, and other virtues, have we not had, and how have we profited by them? How many admonitions, inspirations, and good impulses have we not had, at sermons, from spiritual books, at the reception of the holy sacraments, and how have we neglected them? Even though we may not have fallen into grievous sins and excesses, yet how great has been our inactivity in the service of God, our distraction in prayer, our inattention in receiving the sacraments, our impatience under trials! Can we then remember the year past, except with bitterness of soul?

But what ought such remembrance to bring forth in us?

This much; that we heartily repent of our neglect, humbly implore pardon of God, and firmly resolve, if he shall spare our lives, to make better use of the year to come. We may hope that he will thus spare us, but it may be that the year we are about to begin will be our last; it may be that we shall not live through it. Let us keep this wholesome fear before our minds, as the best means of restraining us from sin, and of inciting us to good works. We could not but be anxious always to live piously if we considered each day as the last of our life.

How short is a year! Let us reflect where and what is now the year past? Have not all its joys and woes disappeared like smoke? So too will it be with the rest of our life; it passes by like a quick running stream, like a flying arrow. Ought it, then, to be so hard for us to take advantage of this quickly passing time, by devoting it to the service of God and the salvation of our souls, when thereby we gain an eternity of happiness? Will not pleasures and amusements pass away as quickly as the trials of God's service and the difficulties of securing our salvation? Are pleasures which last but a little while fit for our hearts, that can be satisfied only by eternal joys? O Christian! if you will be prudent, choose the safe way; let not your salvation depend upon a time that may never come—on the unsafe chance, "Perhaps I may live a long time yet!"

You have lived to see the last day of this year, but you do not know that you will live to see the first of the next. Set your conscience, therefore, at rest, and however much time you may have misspent, spend now at least one day well and profitably, that at evening you may have this consolation, that you have not altogether lost the year. Adjust, to-day, your account with God. Examine, then, 1. What graces you have received from him, and how you have employed them; and when you find, as you will, that for innumerable benefits you have not only been thankless, but have actually used them to the dishonor of your Benefactor and the injury of your neighbor, then humbly pray God for pardon; thank him, for once at least, with your whole heart, and promise, for the time to

come, to employ his favors to his glory and the salvation of your soul. 2. Recollect all the sins by which, during the year, you have so often offended your greatest Benefactor; repent of them in bitterness of heart, and prepare yourself, either to-day or to-morrow, to be reconciled to God through a sincere confession and true penance; resolve firmly in the ensuing year to be on your guard against all sins, especially against such as you are most inclined to, and to do as much good as you remember to have committed evil. Offer up to God, the Lord, all the good which has been done in the year past, or which shall be done in the year to come, in thanksgiving for all his benefits, and in satisfaction for all your sins. By such means you will, in a measure, make amends for your past neglect.

Prayer at the end of the Year.

O Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, I thank thee, from the bottom of my heart, through Jesus Christ, thy only-begotten Son, that thou hast, like a father, given me this year in which to amend my life, and hast borne with me so long. I am heartily sorry that I have so misused the time and graces which thy abundant kindness has bestowed upon me for the salvation of my soul, and that I have not employed them for the amendment of my life. Pardon me this, my neglect, for I am resolved, in the year to come, if thou shalt prolong my life, to serve thee with all zeal and fidelity. I will delay no longer. I perceive the danger to which I have exposed myself. This day, this moment shall be for me the time of an unchangeable and lasting conversion. Henceforth I will dedicate all the hours of my life to thy honor alone and to my salvation. What I have heretofore left undone in thy service, by guilty negligence, I will make good by renewed fervor in good works, and the less I have loved thee heretofore, the more I will love thee now. Bless, O Heavenly Father, my good resolutions, and grant me thy grace, that I may faithfully fulfil them. When thou givest me pleasure, let me enjoy it with moderation and thankfulness; when thou sendest suffering, enable me to suffer with patience, resignation, and in the

spirit of penance, securing thereby the benefit thou didst intend. Guard us against all dangers of soul and body; bless my friends and enemies, our country, and all men. Preserve us in thy love; confirm us in faith; strengthen our hope; let us always walk before thee in simplicity and purity of heart; and grant that finally, blessed in the memory of our brethren, we may come where there is no change of time, no separation, no suffering; where we shall be forever united with thee and thy elect, in eternal and undivided love and happiness. For this we beseech thee through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Feast of St. Valentine, Bishop.

JANUARY 7.

His Life.

St. Valentine, before the middle of the fifth century, left his own country, washed by the Northern Sea, with the intention of preaching the Gospel to the people on the banks of the Inn and the Danube. But first he went to Rome, to receive the Apostolic benediction. From Rome he proceeded to Passau, and there commenced to announce the doctrine of Christ to the inhabitants. But not succeeding in gaining a hearing, he was thereby so much grieved that he determined to go to some other place to plant the banner of the cross. Accordingly, he again repaired to Rome, to obtain the necessary instructions. St. Leo, who at that time governed the Church (A. D. 440-461), answered the Saint, "Announce the doctrine, and persevere, whether you find it easy or difficult." After this he consecrated him bishop, and dismissed him, strengthened with his blessing. St. Valentine soon appeared again in Passau, and, with fresh strength, applied himself to the preaching of salvation. But this time, also, his words were fruitless. The inhabitants—Arians and Pagans—rose up against him, and with shameful ill-treatment, forced him beyond the boundaries of their country. He thereupon went to Raethia, preaching

everywhere the word of redemption, and reaping thousand-fold fruits of the injuries he had suffered. Next he went to the mountains of Tyrol, and there introduced the kingdom of Christ. Finally, he settled down at Mais, near Meran, and had the consolation of seeing the seed which he planted sprout and flourish. Occasionally he made journeys in the direction of Italy. Zealous and constant as he was in preaching, he was no less amiable and attractive in his life, and first showed by his deeds what he undertook to inculcate by words. To refresh the spirit and heart, which without the heavenly dew become dry, he was accustomed to spend a part of every night, and as much as he could gain from the day, in prayer and meditation. That he might escape from the tumult of men, and be the more absorbed in God, he built himself a small cell, which is still shown to strangers, in the Palace of Newberg, under the name of St. Valentine's cell. He also founded a congregation of priests, who lived under one rule, and aided him in his Apostolic labors. On the 7th of January, A. D. 470, he entered into the peace of the Lord. His disciples buried his body in the church built by him at Mais, but when that place was taken by the Longobardi, his remains were removed to Trent, and afterwards to Passau. Let us persevere, with patience and forbearance, to teach those whom God has confided to our care. Does not the farmer plough and sow in all years, though all years are not productive? Even though they hear us not, and follow us not, we shall have done the will of God, and he will reward us.

Feast of St. Peter's Chair.

JANUARY 18 AND FEBRUARY 22.

What does the Church celebrate on these two days?

On the 22d of February she commemorates the establishment, by St. Peter, as Supreme Representative of Christ on earth, of his Episcopal See at Antioch, in Syria; but on the

18th of January, the founding, seven years later, of his See at Rome, where he afterwards suffered a glorious martyrdom.

Why did St. Peter remove the Apostolic See to Rome?

It was undoubtedly done through Divine Providence. For, as Rome was at that time the chief city of the world, and the centre, as it were, of all errors and superstitions, so it was fit that, as St. Leo says, it should become the centre and head of Christianity, and that by the Apostolic authority, the light of faith should be carried among all nations from that very place, whence, by worldly power, error had been spread over all parts of the then known world.

What ought Catholics to do on this day?

They should thank God that he has caused them to belong to the Roman, Catholic, and therefore Apostolic Church, and should pray to him for the Supreme Head of this Church, the Pope, that God would be pleased to give him that zeal for his honor, and for the salvation of souls, which glowed in St. Peter, and the grace to follow him in Apostolic love and humility, as he follows him in the Apostolic See.

The Introit of the Mass. *The Lord made to him a covenant of peace, and made him a prince, that the dignity of the priesthood should be to him forever (Ecclus. xiv.) O Lord, remember David and all his meekness.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who conferring the keys of the kingdom of heaven, didst deliver to thy blessed Apostle, Peter, the sacerdotal power of binding and loosing, grant that by the help of his intercession we may be delivered from the chains of our sins. Who livest.

Epistle. (Peter i. 1-7.)

Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, unto the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus

Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that cannot fade, reserved in heaven for you, who, by the power of God, are kept by faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein you shall greatly rejoice, if now you must be for a little time made sorrowful in divers temptations: that the trial of your faith much more precious than gold (which is tried by the fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Gospel. (Matt. xvi. 13-19.)

At that time, Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the son of man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 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 to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou 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.

Feast of St. Sebastian, Martyr.

JANUARY 20.

His Life.

St. Sebastian was born of Christian parents, and brought up at Narbonne, a city in the south of France. On account of his splendid talents and irreproachable conduct, the emperor Diocletian appointed him captain of the first legion of his body-guard. Of this office he made great use in relieving the poor, and assisting Christians, particularly such as were in prison. He assisted them, consoled them, and encouraged them to persevere firmly in the faith—to suffer, and to die for Christ. By his fervent zeal, he effected the conversion of many pagans, among whom was the judge Cromatius, who,

being baptized, together with his family and fourteen hundred slaves whom he set free, resigned his office and retired to a villa. When Cromatius' successor, Fabian, heard of this, he ordered Sebastian to be brought before him, and reproached him with having converted Romans under his command to the Christian faith. The saint replied, "I believe that, by so doing, I am rendering the greatest service to the State; for the more faithful we are to Christ, the more faithful shall we be to our temporal master." The emperor, being informed of what had taken place, in a rage commanded the soldiers to tie Sebastian to a post, and then to pierce him with arrows. The sentence was executed, and the soldiers left the saint, believing him dead. But a Christian woman, named Irene, who went out in the night to bury him, found him alive, and brought him to her house. In a short time he had recovered from his wounds, and having a desire, which he could not be persuaded to lay aside, to suffer martyrdom, he went before the emperor and said, "Sir, is it possible that you still believe the calumnies against the Christians? I come again to tell you, that in your whole empire you have no subjects more useful or more faithful than the Christians, who in their prayers implore the happiness of the empire." Diocletian, surprised to see Sebastian still living, exclaimed, "What! are you yet alive?" "Yes," replied the saint, "the Lord has preserved my life, that I might tell you how impious you are in persecuting the Christians." Hereupon the emperor, exceedingly incensed, gave orders that Sebastian should be scourged to death, which was done accordingly; and thus he went to heaven, to receive his martyr's crown, on January 20, A. D. 288. His body, which was thrown by the pagans into a filthy canal, was found by a woman of great virtue, named Lucina, hanging on a hook; she caused it to be cared for, and buried at the entrance of the cemetery, which is to this day called the Catacomb of St. Sebastian.

Sentences of St. Sebastian.

1. Whoever in this life, which so rapidly passes away, enjoys nothing but pleasures, shall lose them in the other world, which never ends.

2. The Christian does not fear the pains of this life, because he knows that by sorrows he purchases eternal happiness, and, after a short affliction, comes to everlasting joys. If we desire to be forever happy with Christ, let us not fear to suffer the pains of the body for an hour.

The Introit of the Mass is, *Let the sighing of the prisoners come in before thee, O Lord; render to our neighbors seven-fold in their bosom; revenge the blood of thy saints, which has been shed* (Ps. lxxviii.)

Prayer.

Have regard to our weakness, O Almighty God, and, since the weight of our own deeds is grievous to thee, may the glorious intercession of thy blessed martyr, Sebastian, protect us. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Hebrews xi. 33-39.)

Brethren: The saints by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in war, put to flight the armies of foreigners: women received their dead raised to life again. But others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection. And others had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons: they were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins, in goat-skins, being in want, distressed, afflicted: of whom the world was not worthy; wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth. And all these being approved by the testimony of faith, received not the promise in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

The saints through faith subdued kingdoms (as Gideon and David), wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions (like Samson, David, Daniel), quenched the violence of fire (as the three young men in the furnace), escaped the edge of the sword (as Elias and David), recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle, put to flight the armies of foreigners; women received their dead raised to life again (as the widow of Sarepta, through Elias, received her

deceased son). But others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection (as the Machabee brothers). Others had trial of mockeries and stripes, &c.

Explanation.

The Apostle shows, by many examples from history, particularly from the Old Testament, what virtue living faith has, and what strength it imparts to its possessors, to endure even the greatest pains and torments.

Where, now-a-days, shall we find such faith? For fear of a trifling mockery, a paltry mark of contempt—and that too from persons who have abandoned their religion—even otherwise pious and believing Catholics will sometimes omit the public profession of their faith, and the practices which belong to it. On such, the word of the Lord will one day be made good. *He that shall deny me before men, I will deny him before my Father, who is in Heaven* (Matt. x. 33).

Gospel. (Luke vi. 17–23.)

At that time: Jesus coming down with them, stood in a plain place, and the company of his disciples, and a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea-coast both of Tyre and Sidon, who were come to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases. And they that were troubled with unclean spirits, were cured. And all the multitude sought to touch him, for virtue went out from him, and healed all. And he, lifting up his eyes on his disciples, said: Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for you shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for you shall laugh. Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the son of man's sake. Be glad in that day, and rejoice; for behold, your reward is great in heaven.

Feast of St. Paul, the Apostle.

JANUARY 25.

The history of this conversion is fully given in the epistle taken from the Acts.

The Introit of the Mass is taken from 2 Tim. i. 12, to remind us that the conversion of St. Paul was fruitful in good works, and to show us what value God puts upon our good works, when he reserves them for eternal reward. *I know whom I have believed, and I am certain, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day, being a just judge. Lord, thou hast proved me and known me, thou hast known my sitting down, and my rising up.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who didst teach the whole world by the preaching of blessed Paul, the Apostle; grant us, we beseech thee, that we, who this day celebrate his conversion, may advance towards thee by his example. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Acts ix. 1-22.)

In those days: Saul as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high-priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues: that if he found any men and women of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus: and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Who said: Who art thou, Lord? And he said: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. Now the men who went in company with him stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they leading him by the hands, brought him to Damas-

cus. And he was there three days without sight, and he did neither eat nor drink. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias: and the Lord said to him in a vision: Ananias. And he said: Behold I am here, Lord. And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas, one named Saul of Tarsus. For behold he prayeth. (And he saw a man named Ananias, coming in and putting his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight.) But Ananias answered: Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief-priests, to bind all that invoke thy name. And the Lord said to him: Go thy way, for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house: and laying his hands upon him, he said: Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, he that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest: that thou mayst receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and rising up he was baptized. And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples that were at Damascus, for some days. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. And all that heard him were astonished, and said: Is not this he who persecuted in Jerusalem those that called upon this name; and came hither for that intent, that he might carry them bound to the chief-priests? But Saul increased much more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, affirming that this is the Christ.

What do we learn from this history?

1. Not to despise any sinner, nor to despair of his salvation: For like Paul on the road to Damascus, the greatest sinner may, by the grace of God, be suddenly converted, and become a saint. 2. To pray diligently for sinners, as St. Stephen prayed for Saul. To pray for the conversion of sinners is to pray that the sufferings of Christ may be fruitful in them. How pleasing is this to God, how profitable to men! St. James says (v. 20): *He that causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.* 3. How our own conversion must proceed, in order to be true. St. Paul at his conversion was

deprived of sight, but in spirit was so enlightened that he cried out, *Lord, what wilt thou to have me to do?* At the command of God he accepted Ananias as his leader in the way of salvation, and became as zealous for the honor of Christ, as he had previously been intent on persecuting him. In like manner, a convert must shut his eyes to all by which he has heretofore been led astray, and must give heed to that only which God commands; he must further place himself in the charge of an experienced spiritual director, and follow him in every thing; finally, he must be as much devoted to the honor of God and the practice of virtue, as he has previously been to the service of the world, the devil, and the flesh, and whatever is evil; and from this new way he must not allow himself to be diverted either through ridicule or persecution.

Gospel. (Matt. xix. 27-29.)

At that time, Peter said to Jesus: Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee: what, therefore, shall we have? And Jesus said to them: Amen I say to you, that you, who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting.

What does this gospel teach us?

I. Peter said, *We have left all things.* How could he lay so much weight on that, when he was only a poor fisherman, and had so little to forsake? "But," says St. Gregory, "we must consider the love one has for a thing, rather than the thing itself." Although Peter possessed but little, yet he gave up all desire for that little, and thereby, in effect, gave up much. To renounce honors and riches is of no use, unless, also, one renounces all desire for them; for Christ says, *Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth* (that is, who does not renounce it in regard to desire for it), *cannot be my disciple* (Luke xiv. 33).

II. Peter not only left all, but he followed Christ. Christ required of the rich young man to follow him. Hereupon St.

Jerome remarks. "It is not enough to leave all, but we must also follow the Lord;" that is, must live as he lived. Wouldst thou be a disciple of Christ? Then follow his life.

III. The Apostles, on account of their following Christ, and not merely for leaving their temporal goods, received the promise, that as they had renounced, with and for him, all human honors and riches, and in consequence had lived in poverty, contempt, and crucifixion of the flesh, they should sit on thrones with Christ, and together with them, all who for Christ's sake had done likewise. What a change, after so short tribulation! Leave, therefore, for Christ's sake, whatever thou hast; follow him in the way of the cross. See! one day, and that in a little while, you shall reign with him.

IV. By the hundred-fold recompense, St. Jerome understands spiritual goods, the grace of God, virtues, inward consolation, and the eternal happiness, which are a hundred-fold, that is, infinitely more precious than worldly goods. Oh how little is that which we give up for the love of God—and that little, only something of which death would one day certainly deprive us—in comparison with those goods which God bestows upon us in this world, and in the world to come! *The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him* (1 Cor. ii. 9).

Aspiration.

O God, who would not, for thy sake, leave all, when thereby we gain so much! Grant us, therefore, thy grace, that although we may not actually give up all that we have, we may at least put from us whatever is superfluous, or injurious to our souls, and that we may not become so attached even to that which is necessary, as thereby to lose the goods that are eternal.

Supplication to St. Paul.

O St. Paul, great Apostle of the world, whom the powerful voice of God felled to the ground, that thou mightest rise again to true penance, and who thereby, from an enemy, became the most zealous friend and preacher of Christ, procure

for me from him, I beseech thee, grace at last truly to know him, whom I have heretofore so often denied, offended, and, by my sins, crucified anew; to follow him, and, after thy example, to be henceforth as diligent in doing justice as I have formerly been in practising evil; that I may one day attain to that happiness which thou hast gained, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Feast of St. Charles the Great.

JANUARY 28.

History of his Life.

St. Charles the Great, son of King Pepin, subdued the Pagan Saxons in Germany, and brought them over to the Catholic faith. He erected churches, founded the bishoprics of Paderborn, Hildesheim, Munster, Osnabruck, built schools, and invited learned men into his empire, to instruct his subjects. On his travels, he caused his children to accompany him. The princes, his sons, were carefully instructed in the necessary arts and sciences, and his daughters were taught to employ themselves in weaving and spinning. At table he observed the greatest moderation. His clothes were so plain that they could hardly be distinguished from the common dress of the people. He protected the Popes against rebellions, and endowed the Roman Church with various gifts and privileges. At an Imperial Diet he collected the decrees of the Councils, and incorporated some of them into the laws of his empire. He established solemn divine service, and even instituted singing-schools. He relieved the poor, gave lodging to strangers, and sent alms to the Christians in the East, sighing under the yoke of the Saracens. Several times during the night he rose from sleep to pray, and to read edifying books. In the year A. D. 800, the Pope solemnly crowned him, in St. Peter's, Roman Emperor, because he deserved well of the Church and Empire.

His earlier years, it is true, were not free from stain. But if he followed David in sin, he followed him also in penance. Towards the end of his life he gave up all temporal care, read

day and night in the divine word, prayed more and more fervently, gave alms more abundantly, and admonished his son, Louis the Pious, to govern justly and mildly, and to protect the Holy Church. At the approach of death, after he had received the holy sacraments, he placed his body in the position in which he was to be buried. He laid his feet together, stretched out his hands, and with the words, "*O Lord, into thy hands I recommend my spirit,*" quietly expired, on the 28th of January, A. D. 814, in the 72d year of his age, and the 47th of his reign, and the 14th of his imperial dignity. He was buried at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), in the Cathedral which he had built there. The badges of his worldly greatness, the crown and sceptre, which were borne with him into the vault, commanded less respect than the book of the Gospels, placed within his hands, and the penitential habit which he had so often worn for the mortification of the flesh.

The Introit of the Mass is: *The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak judgment; the law of God is in his heart* (Ps. xxxvi.) *Be not envious of evil-doers, nor envy them that work iniquity.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Almighty and merciful God, who dost not exclude from thy glory any state of life, we most humbly beseech thee that, as thou hast given to thy blessed confessor Charles, after his reign on earth, a throne in thy heavenly kingdom, thou wouldst grant to us thy servants, through his merits and intercession, the reward of eternal happiness. Through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (Ecclus. xxxi. 8-11.) Same as on the Feast of St. Joachim.

Gospel. (Luke xix. 12-16.)

At that time, Jesus said to the multitude this parable: A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And calling his ten servants, he gave them ten pounds, and said to them: Trade till I come. But his citizens hated him: and they sent an embassy after him, saying: We will not have this

man to reign over us. And it came to pass that he returned, having received the kingdom: and he commanded his servants to be called, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. And the first came, saying: Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary;

Commonly called Candlemas-Day.

FEBRUARY 2.

On this day the Church solemnly celebrates the presentation of Jesus in the temple, and therein the obedience and humility both of Mary and her Divine Son, who, though not subject to the law in regard to purification and presentation, yet subjected themselves to it. Hence this feast is called the Purification of the Virgin Mary. In common speech we call it also Candlemas, because on this day the candles required for the divine service are blessed and carried in procession.

What is the design of this custom?

1. It is to remind us that Jesus, the light of the world, was offered up to his Heavenly Father, by Mary, in the temple at Jerusalem, where he was called by Simeon *a light for the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel.*

2. To remind us, also, of several important truths, to which the priest refers in the prayers at the blessings. Thus he prays that as the earthly light dispels the darkness of night, so Jesus, with the light of his divine doctrine, may clear away our spiritual blindness and ignorance, and lead us in the way of virtue; that as the Holy Ghost enlightened Simeon, so he may also enlighten us to acknowledge Jesus as the true light, to love him and follow him, to keep our hearts from the way of sin, and to guide them in the way of virtue, and to kindle them with the fire of holy love; finally, that God may preserve, in soul and body, those who use blessed candles with devotion, may hear their prayers, and grant them entrance into the kingdom of the eternal and ever-blessed light.

What should we be thinking of during these ceremonies?

We should, 1. Thank God that he has given us the light of the true faith. 2. Make a resolution, like the prudent virgins, to go to meet Jesus with the burning light of faith, charity, and good works, and to show before our fellow-Christians the light of a good example. 3. Finally, offer up ourselves, with Jesus, to God, beseeching him to uphold us by his grace, to preserve us in our last moments, through the intercession of Mary, from everlasting darkness, and to make us partakers of eternal light.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church sings: *We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple; according to thy name, O God, so also is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right hand is full of justice* (Ps. xlvii.) *Great is the Lord and exceedingly to be praised in the city of our God, in his holy mountain.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Almighty, everlasting God, we suppliantly beseech thy majesty, that, as thy only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance of our flesh, so thou wouldst grant us to be presented to thee with purified souls. Through the same Lord.

Epistle. (Mal. iii. 1-4.)

Thus saith the Lord: Behold I send my angel, and he shall prepare the way before thy face. And presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple. Behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts: and who shall be able to think of the day of his coming? and who shall stand to see him? for he is like a refining fire, and like the fuller's herb; and he shall sit refining and cleansing the silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold, and as silver, and they shall offer sacrifices to the Lord in justice. And the sacrifice of Juda and of Jerusalem shall please the Lord, as in the days of old, and in the ancient years, saith the Lord Almighty.

Explanation.

The angel or messenger who is to prepare the way of the Lord is John the Baptist, but the long-desired Lord is Christ, who on this day comes to his temple. He is called the angel of the testament (Malach. iii. 1), because he made a new and far better testament between God and man than had been made with the Jews, inasmuch as he gives to Christians not merely temporal, but eternal goods. The coming of this Lord is described by the prophets as at the same time both glorious and terrible. Observe, therefore, that pure as purified gold should he be who would in the sacrament of the altar worthily receive the Most Holy, and who would offer the most acceptable oblation. Purify thyself, therefore, O man, by the tears of penance and the fire of love, when thou art about either to receive Christ or offer him up in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Gospel. (Luke ii. 22-32.)

At that time: After the days of Mary's purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord." And to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons. And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was in him. And he had received an answer from the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he also took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace: because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Why was Jesus brought into the temple at Jerusalem?

To be offered to God as the first-born of Mary; for, in thankful remembrance that their first-born were preserved alive, when the first-born of the Egyptians all died, the Jews

were commanded to offer all their first-born male children to God, and to redeem them by certain gifts (Levit. xiii. 13).

Were Jesus and Mary bound to observe this law?

No; for plainly, Jesus, as the Son of God, and author of the law, was not bound to the observance of the Mosaic ceremonies. In like manner Mary, having conceived by the Holy Ghost, was consequently without sin, and therefore in no need of purification. In Mary, says St. Bernard, there was nothing unclean, either at the conception or at the birth of her Son.

Why, then, did they comply with the law?

They did it, not to give scandal to such as were ignorant of their being exempt from the law, to show, as it were, from the first, that Jesus was come to redeem sinners; and finally, to leave us an example of humility and obedience. Learn hence to comply with laws which are not binding upon you, when you can see that your non-compliance would give offence to weak and ignorant persons, and strive at all times to show a good and edifying example.

Why did not Mary offer a lamb, like the rich (Levit. xii. 6), but only a pair of doves, like the poor?

Because she was poor. And being so, she was not ashamed to show it before the world. Be not ashamed, therefore, that you are poor, but rather love the poverty which helps you to resemble Christ and his Mother. But if you are rich, at least be poor in spirit, *for blessed are the poor in spirit* (Matt. v. iii), and love the poor and oppressed in heart and in deed.

Why did Simeon desire to die, when he held Jesus in his arms?

Because his wish was now fully accomplished. What more had he to desire, when he had not only seen, but had held in his arms, him who was the expectation of the nations—whom the fathers had so longed for in vain? what, but to leave this world full of miseries, and to give back his spirit into the hands of his Saviour? How happy is he who, with holy Simeon, can give up his spirit into the hands of God! But such happiness, only the just and virtuous can enjoy.

Why did Simeon call Jesus a light for the enlightenment of the Gentiles?

Because Jesus had come into the world as the true light (John i. 9), who should free the Gentiles from the darkness of their superstitions, and from the slavery of their sins; the Jews from their servitude to the Mosaic law; and translate both into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Gal. iv. 31).

Aspiration.

Heavenly Father, look down from the throne of thy mercy upon thy only-begotten Son, in whom thou art well pleased, and who to-day is offered up to thee, in thy temple, for the sins of his brethren. Let this innocent offering please thee, and move thee to mercy towards us poor sinners. For the sake of his humility and obedience, forgive our pride and disobedience, and grant that, purified by his blood, we may sleep the sleep of peace, and be presented to thee in the temple of thy glory, to behold, to love, and to praise thee, the everlasting light, world without end.

Instruction for Women after Child-birth.

The law of purification in the Old Testament, it is true, no longer applies to Christian women, because the Church has done away with Jewish ceremonies. But the spirit and intention of that law the Church would yet have complied with. She permits women, therefore, to remain at home, with a good conscience, for six weeks after childbirth, or so long as circumstances may require, without attending the divine service, in order to care for their health. This permission is, at the same time, an excellent admonition;—to women, that, in order to their recovery, they should refrain from anger, from exposure, from hard labor, from injurious food; to men, not to refuse their wives, during this period, set apart by God himself under the old law, the rest and attention which their nature requires.

But when this time is past, the Church desires that women should, after the example of Mary, repair to the Church with their children, to procure the blessing of the priest, to give thanks to God for their safe delivery, to dedicate their chil-

dren to him, and to implore of him, with the priest, grace to bring up their offspring in piety and holiness. In this consists the so-called Churching of Women; and, from what has been said, it is evident, not only that it contains nothing to be ashamed of, but that it should by no means be omitted by such as desire God's blessing. This, too, is plain, that the churching of women was not instituted to prevent their being harmed by the devil, by malicious persons, or by ghosts, and it would be not only a foolish fear, but a superstition to be condemned, if one were to suppose that a woman were liable to harm if she should go abroad before she were churched. Who can do us any harm against the will of God? Who can touch even a hair of our head, without his knowledge. Remember Job.

The feeble health of both women and children, after child-birth, is almost always owing to their having injured themselves by want of care.

Prayer for Women after Child-birth.

Almighty and merciful God, who didst lay upon our mother Eve the fit punishment for her disobedience, that she should bear children in sorrow, I offer up to thee all the pains of my child-bearing in propitiation for my sins; and I thank thee that, through thy help, the fruit of my womb has been safely brought forth into the world, and new-born in baptism. According to the example of the mother of thy only-begotten Son, I also offer up to thee my child for thy holy service, and will earnestly strive to bring it up to thy honor. To this end, give me, through the intercession of the most blessed Virgin, thy grace; bless me and my child, and grant that we may live according to thy will here, and hereafter may obtain everlasting happiness. Through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Feast of St. Blase.

FEBRUARY 3.

His Life.

St. Blase was born at Sebaste, in Armenia, of which place he was subsequently appointed bishop, on the solicitation of the people. At the time of the persecution against the Christians under Licinius, he betook himself to Mount Argæus, and there hid himself in a cavern. One day Agricolaus, who had been sent to Sebaste to search for Christians, ordered a hunt to be held by his soldiers on the mountains. A deer, running to the cave where the holy bishop was secreted, caused him to be discovered as he was kneeling in prayer before a crucifix. He was immediately brought by the officers to Sebaste. Agricolaus, first by flattery, then by torture, endeavored to dissuade him from his adherence to Christ. But neither promises, nor the painful scourgings which he endured, nor the torture of the sharp iron instruments with which his flesh was lacerated, could shake his faith and love. Finally, having been three times brought before the court, and having each time shown the same constancy, he was taken outside the city and beheaded, in the year 316.

This saint wrought many miracles, and is yet invoked in dangerous diseases of the throat, because he saved the life of a rich widow's son, who had nearly died in consequence of swallowing a fish-bone. The Church accordingly sanctions a special blessing of throats on his day. Holding the blessed candles near the throat, in the form of a cross, the priest says: "Through the merits and intercession of St. Blase, bishop and martyr, God deliver thee from all diseases of the throat, and preserve thee from every other evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

If we take part in this pious custom of the Church, we should, above all, consider that while we unite our supplications with the prayers of the Church, that we may be preserved from bodily illness, we ought to guard our souls against sin,

particularly sins of the tongue and of the palate, as being more dangerous ills than any that can afflict our bodies.

The Introit of the Mass is: *O ye priests of God, bless the Lord; O ye holy and humble of heart, praise God* (Dan. iii.) *All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord, praise and exalt him above all, forever.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who givest us joy by the annual solemnity of St. Blase, thy holy bishop and martyr, mercifully grant us, in the fulness of thy love, that we may rejoice in the protection of him whose festival we to-day joyfully celebrate. Through Christ.

Epistle. (2 Cor. i. 3-7.)

Brethren: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation; that we also may be able to comfort them who are in all distress, by the exhortation wherewith we also are exhorted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us: so also by Christ doth our comfort abound. Now whether we be in tribulation, it is for your exhortation and salvation: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation: or whether we be exhorted, it is for your exhortation and salvation, which worketh the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer. That our hope for you may be steadfast: knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Gospel. (Matt. xvi. 24-27.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me: For he that will save his life, shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then will he render to every man according to his works.

Feast of St. Matthias, the Apostle.

FEBRUARY 24 OR 25.

Of this Apostle we know nothing certain, except what is contained in the epistle.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church sings (Ps. cxxxviii.), *To me thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable; their principality is exceedingly strengthened. Lord, thou hast proved me and known me; thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who didst associate blessed Matthias to the company of the Apostles, grant, we beseech thee, that by his intercession, we may ever experience thy tender mercy towards us Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Acts i. 15-26.)

In those days Peter rising up in the midst of the brethren, said: (now the number of persons together was about an hundred and twenty,) Men, brethren, the scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David, concerning Judas, who was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus: Who was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. And he indeed hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity, and being hanged burst asunder in the midst: and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: so that the same field was called in their tongue, Haceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms: "Let their habitation become desolate, and let there be none to dwell therein. And his bishopric let another take." Wherefore of these men who have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day wherein he was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And praying, they said: Thou, Lord, knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen to take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas hath by

transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place. And they gave them lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

What does this epistle teach us?

I. The infamy and the consequences of avarice. With the reward of treachery, a field was bought for the burial of strangers, which received the name of the Field of Blood; but the traitor hanged himself in despair. What an end for one chosen to be an Apostle? What now has he gained by his avarice? Learn from his unhappy fate the danger of avarice and of every other passion which is not rooted out betimes.

II. After such an end, how pitiful appears the treachery of Judas! But what less does he do who sets his heart upon gold and goods; who to gain them uses unlawful means, and hardens his heart against the needy? Does not such an one betray the law of God for base lucre? In the needy, does he not show contempt to Jesus? Does he not put justice to sale for a paltry gain? Can the punishment of such treachery be long delayed?

III. From the example of the Apostles, who prayed with such earnestness at the choice of Matthias, learn how necessary prayer is upon occasion of choosing ministers of the Church, that God may direct the choice to such as are truly fit for the office. Who else is the *searcher of hearts and reins*? Who else knows all the human and worldly regards by which they who are to choose may be influenced? Who is it that leads hearts like a brook? On such occasions, therefore, we should be earnest in prayer; for if the choice, instead of being directed by God, as in the case of Matthias, should be governed by the designs of men, instead of a Matthias, we might easily have a Judas. And then, what indescribable misfortune for the whole flock!

IV. From the fact that no one of the disciples presented himself as a claimant of the apostolate, we learn not to force ourselves into spiritual office and dignity, but to await the call of God, since otherwise we could not be sure of the necessary grace.

V. Finally, this epistle contains a most important lesson in regard to our choice of state in life. All mankind compose the great family of God. But as in one family all have not the same duty to discharge, but each one has his own peculiar office, and that in such a manner that for one member to undertake what is assigned to another, would produce disorder and confusion, in like manner God has assigned to every man a certain sphere in which to work, and out of which he cannot work, either to his own advantage or to that of others. Or, as in one body there are many members, but each has its own function, so also in human society, each one has his own vocation assigned him by God. Every one sees at once how important it is that each one should know what this vocation is, and should live according to it. By this means only, can man fulfil the will of God; by this means only, can man walk in the way of salvation; by this means only, can one, in truth, profit himself and others. Surely it comes from mistaken vocations, that there are so many unquiet, discontented, useless men; for, as they are not in the places for which God intended them, and for which their abilities were given them, so neither are they fit for any thing else, and, by consequence, are discontented with themselves, with others, and with the circumstances in which they find themselves, not knowing how to subject and accommodate themselves to any thing. Every one, therefore, to whom the will of God is a sacred thing, to whom salvation is dear, ought, at the time of choosing his vocation, to endeavor to know to what state God has called him. To this end he should, 1. Pray to God, with fervor and perseverance, to enlighten him, as the Apostles prayed before choosing St. Matthias. 2. He should make himself worthy of this divine enlightenment by a God-fearing life. 3. He should examine carefully his inclinations, his talents and abilities, as in the sight of God, and neither choose of himself a state for which he is unfit, nor allow himself to be forced into any such by others. 4. He should neither trust nor follow a first excitement or inclination, nor a vehement passion. Passion is both blind and blinding; and as the step is so important—usually, indeed, decisive for one's whole life—certainly it ought not to

be the result of mere inclination, but should be deliberately and earnestly considered in the sight of God. 5. He should call upon his pastor, his confessor, and his parents, for counsel. They may often know one's capabilities better than he himself. Besides, they are the guides appointed for us by God, and our natural counsellors. In this case, if ever, their advice is to be made use of. He who believes in, and follows himself, says St. Bernard, has a fool for his guide. 6. Such counsel is not to be first sought when it is already too late to change, but at the very beginning. Here, however, it is to be observed, that parents are to assist in the choice of a right vocation, but not to make the vocation; and accordingly, they sin grievously when, from worldly considerations, they force a child into a calling to which his will and inclinations are opposed, or when they determine, while the child is yet in the cradle, what he shall be. The Apostles besought God for light; so too should parents in choosing the vocation of a child.

Gospel. (Matt. xi. 25-30.)

At that time Jesus answered and said: I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father: for so hath it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me by my Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth any one know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him. Come to me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet and my burden light.

What is the meaning of those words, *I praise thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.*

The wise and prudent, are the proud Scribes and Pharisees, who, in their imaginary wisdom, would not receive the incarnate and suffering Son of God, but despised and rejected him; in general, they represent also, all who in their pride would measure every thing by their own understanding, and to whom,

consequently, the mysteries of faith seem foolishness. The little ones are the Apostles, who, although taken from a low condition of life, without a learned education, but rather ignorant, were enlightened by God to know the deepest mysteries, because they had docile and humble hearts, desirous of salvation. Thus God gives grace to the humble, while the proud go away empty.

How has the Father given all things into the hands of Christ ?

In sending him into the world, he made him the Teacher and Exemplar, the King and Guide, the Redeemer and Judge of all men, and gave him all power in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18).

Who are they of whom Jesus speaks as those that labor, and are burdened ?

1. Firstly, those of his hearers who had to bear the burden of the Pharisees' precepts. 2. Those who are under the yoke of sin. 3. Those who are bowed down under the cares, sorrows, and temptations of this life. Finally, 4. Those who must use violence to enter the narrow gate.

How does Christ refresh them ?

The first sort, by removing the obligation of those precepts, and by showing them a higher kind of justice; the second, by remitting to them, when penitent, their sins, and the punishment of them; the third, by comforting and strengthening them to bear their sorrows and temptations joyfully, without being discouraged; the fourth, by imparting to them grace, to overcome all hindrances to their salvation.

What should we learn from Christ ?

To be meek and humble of heart. *We are meek*, when, according to his example, we suffer, patiently, injuries inflicted upon us, without taking revenge; *we are humble of heart*, when, acknowledging our frailty and short-comings, we think little of ourselves, and are unwilling that others should esteem us better than we are.

What does Christ promise those who bear his yoke, and follow him ?

Peace of mind, temporal and eternal happiness: and, indeed, must we not confess, that as often as we are disquieted and

discontented, the cause of it is, our selfishness and want of submission to the will of God, our pride and vanity. Learn, then, to love to be meek and humble, if you would enjoy peace, here or hereafter.

Aspiration.

O most meek and humble Jesus, we thank thee that thou dost invite us, laden with so many burdens, to come to thee, that thou mayest give us refreshment and rest. But give us also the grace, in all trials and afflictions, to fly to thee with true confidence, and by meekness and humility to make ourselves worthy of thy reviving consolation.

What we must Believe in regard to Keeping the Commandments.

“My yoke is sweet and my burden light.”—*Matt. xi. 30.*

Many persons say that it is impossible to keep all the commandments. But such an assertion is rash and well-nigh blasphemous. For has not Christ said, *My yoke is sweet and my burden light?* Has he not promised us his assistance, with which we can overcome the world? Would not God be unjust, to impose upon us burdens which we were unable to bear? Indeed, if he required of us more than we were able to do, would not he himself be the author of sin?—which one may not think even, far less say, without blasphemy. On the contrary, he has given us commandments which we *can* keep, and has made the observance of them easy, by the example of Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, and by the rewards and crowns of victory which he has promised, in the world to come, to such as keep his commandments. Christ himself did those things which we are commanded to do, in order to obtain eternal life, and thus showed that these commandments can be fulfilled. It is with keeping the commandments as with travelling a difficult road; one goes on with the more courage if he sees some one else before him.

Accordingly, Christ assumed a body and a nature like ours, walked before us in the way, and himself fulfilled the commandments, that we might the more easily follow him in the

way to heaven. Thus the command: *If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other* (Matt. v. 39), was fulfilled by Christ in taking no revenge on that servant of the high-priest who gave him a blow; but, showing the greatest meekness, he said: *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil, but if well, why strikest thou me?* (John xviii. 23). Again, having taught that we should patiently suffer calumnies, he illustrated his teaching by his deeds. For when they said of him, that he had a devil, and called him a Samaritan (John viii. 48), he did not destroy them, or punish them for their malice, but rather showed them kindness, and cast out the evil spirits which possessed some of them. In like manner, he one day said: *Pray for those that persecute you* (Matt. v. 45), and he fulfilled his precept when, as he hung nailed to the cross, he prayed: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (Luke xxiii. 34). Thus, what he enjoined, he also exemplified. Among the saints, also, we find similar examples of virtue, as is proved by their lives, and, in particular, by the life of St. Matthias. By them God shows us that the keeping of his commandments is not only possible, but that it is easy. The same lesson is derived from the promises given to those who shall keep the commandments. Thus Jesus, having taught *Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you*, immediately adds, *that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven* (Matt. v. 44, 45). In like manner he said: *Blessed are ye, when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven* (Matt. v. 11, 12). The Apostle teaches the same thing by divine revelation: *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him*; that is, that keep his commandments (1 Cor. ii. 9; John xiv. 15). Who, then, would not willingly fulfil all the commandments, in order to be a child of the Father in heaven, to secure this great reward, this inexpressible happiness? We must consider, further, that to all who have this desire, God has promised his grace and assistance. *Abide in me*, says the Lord, *and I in you* (John xv. 4). *As*

the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; that is, he shall be rich in good works. Therefore St. John writes: Of his fulness we all have received, and grace for grace (John i. 16); and St. Paul confesses, that of himself he could do no good works, but that the grace of God was powerful in his infirmities (2 Cor. xii. 9); he even exclaims: If God be for us, who is against us? (Rom. viii. 31). Let us, then, follow the examples of Christ and his saints; let us earnestly co-operate with the grace of God, and faithfully and inviolably keep his commandments, that we may hereafter obtain the joys of life everlasting.

Prayer to St. Matthias.

O Saint Matthias, glorious Apostle and martyr of Jesus Christ, who, by the special providence of God, wast added to the eleven Apostles, in the room of the traitor, I humbly beseech thee to obtain for us the grace of him who chose thee from all eternity, that assisted thereby, we may, after thy example, keep the commandments of God, practise good works, and thus merit to be numbered with the elect; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Feast of St. Joseph.

MARCH 19.

His Life.

St. Joseph was descended from the kingly line of David, and was a kinsman of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Matt. i. 1-16). The Gospel gives him the praise of being just (Matt. i. 19), that is, a man distinguished for all virtues. And surely, as he was chosen from all other men, by God, to be the foster-father of his Son, he undoubtedly excelled, in virtues and sanctity, all saints then living. Of his youth, nothing certain is known to us, and of his later life we know only what the Gospel relates.

He was a carpenter (Matt. xiii. 55), and lived at Nazareth, in Galilee (Luke ii. 4). Being espoused to Mary, he was inclined, upon learning that she was with child, to put her away privately; not desiring to expose her to public reproach; but being instructed by an angel, he took her to himself, in obedience to the command of God, went with her to Bethlehem, and afterwards, with Mary and the new-born child, fled, without timidity, to Egypt (Matt. ii. 13). At the command of the angel he returned thence, and again dwelt in Nazareth (Matt. ii. 23). From this place they went every year to the feast at Jerusalem, where it happened that Jesus, then twelve years old, remained behind them in the temple, and was anxiously sought for by them. More than this is not told us. At the time of the marriage at Cana, it would seem that he was no longer living, since there is no mention made of him. Little, however, as is said of him, that little is rich in profitable instruction. How worthy to be admired and imitated is his example—his chastity, his tenderness towards Mary, his forbearing to pronounce a judgment in regard to her condition, when he could not explain it, his quick and unreserved obedience towards God and the commands of authority, his love for Jesus, and his care for both the Mother and the Child. On account of his sanctity God has specially distinguished him by miracles, and the Church honors him in a particular manner. In the Litany of the Saints he is named among the Patriarchs, and the feast of his patronage is celebrated on the Third Sunday after Easter. Venerate, therefore, St. Joseph; choose him for your protector in life and in death, and, to make yourself worthy of his protection, follow his example.

Joseph a Pattern for Christian Young Men.

Although the virtues of St. Joseph deserve to be imitated by all men, in all states of life, yet he is more particularly a bright example for young men. Indeed, there would be fewer crimes to complain of, parents would have less disobedience to grieve over, families less discord and distress to bear, if young men would only take St. Joseph for their model. Let him be your pattern; copy him; and learn from him what

will make you happy in time and in eternity. Learn from him, then, 1. *Fear of God*. St. Joseph had God constantly before his eyes, endeavoring always to fulfil his will, and to shun every sin, by which means he gained the name of a just man. He cheerfully visited the temple to worship God there, and prayed daily at home at certain hours. In like manner, you, young man, must strive to keep God before your eyes; to avoid sin as the greatest of all evils; to flee whatever leads to it; to attend diligently the divine service; to hear gladly the word of God; to attend carefully to your prayers, particularly at morning and night.

2. *To work with industry*. Joseph was a mechanic, worked with diligence to earn his bread. Do you, Christian young man, do the like; for God has given you strength to this very end. Idleness has always been the source of all vices. From your youth, therefore, accustom yourself to work; avoid being without employment and lounging about; keep away from dancing-houses, bar-rooms, plays, and mischievous societies, and instead, keep at your work, and spend your spare time at home, with your own family. He who works hard rests well; he is tired, but has a good conscience.

3. *Chastity*. The crown and glory of youth is a chaste heart and life. How carefully St. Joseph preserved purity! Impurity profanes the temple of God, drives away the Holy Ghost, deprives us of God's blessing, and when grown into a habit, is hard to correct. This experience shows. Love, therefore, O young man, chastity. Fly from every thing that puts it in danger—such as idleness, drinking, private meetings with persons of the opposite sex, particularly at night, all unchaste talk, and dangerous company; make use, on the other hand, of the means by which chastity may be protected and preserved—prayer, the holy sacraments, labor, flight from danger. Finally, learn from St. Joseph, if you are about to enter into marriage, not to choose your companion for life out of passion, nor for mere outward beauty, nor yet on account of riches or other worldly considerations; but, first of all, consider the matter as in the sight of God, and have regard rather to virtue, the fear of God, and homelike dispositions. Remember Joseph pre-

ferred Mary, the daughter of Joachim, poor, but virtuous, and rich in grace, to all the daughters of Juda.

Joseph a Pattern for Mechanics.

Like Joseph, every mechanic should be industrious at his trade. 1. Joseph worked perseveringly day by day, to earn his daily bread. So, too, the mechanic should not think it sufficient to work merely while need drives, but every day, in order to provide for himself, and for those belonging to him, not only a momentary support, but something that may be laid up against the wants of the future. Surely it is no light sin when mechanics refuse to work, and squander on Sundays and holidays the earnings of the week. By such courses they lose their ability to do good, in case of sickness or want, become a burden upon others, and, where they have families, leave them to starve. How will they be able to answer for this?

2. Joseph worked well and diligently, and fairly earned his wages. In like manner, the mechanic should not do his work superficially or badly; should not ask more than he has earned; should not work slowly to gain the more pay, for this would be robbery; but it is his business to furnish good work, at the right time, and for fair wages. Justice brings a blessing. The unjust person is the cause of many sins, and brings down upon himself the curse of God.

3. *Joseph worked for God's sake.* Let the mechanic, accordingly, work with a good intention, and with devotion, as for God; not merely for temporal rewards, but above all, for the sake of the eternal; and therefore let him not curse and swear when things go not as he would wish, but let him be quiet and subdue himself; in this way, by his labor, he will gain heaven.

Introit of the Mass. *The just shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow up like the cedar of Libanus, planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God (Ps. xci.) It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing to thy name, O most High.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Lord, that we may be assisted by the merits of the spouse of thy most holy Mother, that what of ourselves we are unable to obtain, may be given to us by his intercession. Who livest.

Epistle. (Ecclus. xlv. 1-6.)

Beloved of God and men; whose memory is in benediction. He made him like the saints in glory, and magnified him in the fear of his enemies, and with his words he made prodigies to cease. He glorified him in the sight of kings, and gave him commandments in the sight of his people, and showed him his glory. He sanctified him in his faith and meekness, and chose him out of all flesh. For he heard him, and his voice, and brought him into a cloud. And he gave him commandments before his face, and a law of life and instruction.

Practice.

What the Scripture here says of Moses, in a striking manner applies to St. Joseph, for which reason the Church causes this epistle to be read to-day. That St. Joseph was highly beloved of God, is shown by his having been chosen to be the foster-father of Jesus; his memory is therefore blessed and praised by all true Christians. His purity, his fidelity and love made him a very great saint. God took him into the cloud by revealing to him—what was concealed from other men—the mystery of the incarnation of the only-begotten Son, and by receiving him, after death, into heaven, where he now beholds God face to face, and pleads as a powerful intercessor for men.

Gospel. (Matt. i. 18-21.)

When Mary the mother of Jesus was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins.

Why was the ever-blessed Virgin espoused to St. Joseph?

This doubtless took place by the providence of God, who orders all things in mercy.

St. Jerome adduces the following reasons for it: 1. That, by the descent of St. Joseph from the house of David, it might be established that Mary and Jesus belonged to the same line; inasmuch as, under the old law, a woman could not, where there were no male heirs, marry out of her own tribe.

2. That Mary might not be stoned to death—which would have been her lot had she borne a child out of wedlock—and that Jesus might not be looked upon as an illegitimate child, and on that account be despised and rejected.

3. That Mary, with the child, might have useful assistance, particularly at the time when she fled with Jesus into Egypt.

Why was Joseph inclined secretly to leave Mary?

Because, not being yet instructed in regard to the divine mysteries, he wished, as a just man, to take the justest course; he was unwilling to violate justice by marriage with a person in any way dishonored, but as he knew not the circumstances of the case, he was also unwilling to violate charity, which does not pronounce judgment where it has not exact knowledge, which does not give itself up to suspicion, but acts with forbearance. From him learn to be just, and to have true charity.

Why did not Mary herself reveal the mystery?

Out of humility, by virtue of which she would rather draw upon herself evil suspicion, than make known the great graces which God had conferred upon her. Besides, she could not but expect that God himself would assist her, and make her innocence known. What a reproach to those who so readily trumpet forth to the world their good works, and who are nearly ready to despair at the lightest breath upon their good name.

Instruction on the Veneration of St. Joseph.

The example of Jesus Christ, writes St. Alphonsus Liguori (who, while upon earth, venerated St. Joseph so highly that all his life long he was obedient to him), ought to be sufficient to inflame all hearts with devotion to this great saint. Truly, he

who was so highly exalted by the King of kings deserves a particular veneration from men. To encourage us to such veneration, St. Teresa wrote, "I do not remember to have asked St. Joseph for any thing which he did not grant me. The great favors which God has granted me through him, and the many dangers of soul and body from which he has freed me, truly deserve admiration. It seems that God has granted to other saints the grace of assisting, in particular needs, those who invoke their intercession; but of this glorious saint, I have had experience that he assists in all needs. The Lord seems thereby to indicate that, as he was subject to Joseph on earth, so now he grants him whatever he asks for. The same thing has been experienced by persons whom I have advised to recommend themselves to him." "I would gladly advise every one," continues St. Alphonsus, "to have a great devotion towards this saint, since I have had experience what graces he can obtain from God. For several years I have asked of him, on his feast, some particular grace, and every time my petition has been granted. As we all have to die, we should have a particular devotion towards St. Joseph, that he may obtain for us a happy death; for all Catholic Christians consider him to be an intercessor for the dying, and that he assists, at the hour of death, those who venerate him; and this for three reasons: 1. Because Jesus loves him, not only as a friend, but as a father, on which account his intercession is more powerful than that of any other saint. 2. Because St. Joseph obtained special power against the evil spirits who tempt us at the hour of death. For as he delivered Jesus from the snares of Herod, so God gave him power to protect the dying from the snares of the devil. 3. The assistance which Jesus and Mary gave to Joseph at the hour of his own death, procured for him the right to obtain a holy and easy death for his dependants. If, in their dying hour, they invoke his aid, not only will he assist them, but he will obtain for them the assistance of Jesus and Mary." Ought not these words of a great saint to encourage you to venerate St. Joseph every day? Should not the hope of dying one day, under the protection of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, move you to devotion to the foster-father of Jesus?

Prayer to St. Joseph.

O most chaste Joseph, who, by thy purity and other exalted virtues, wast worthy to be chosen for the spouse of Mary and the foster-father of Jesus, I beseech thee, by the great graces of which thou wast made partaker, that thou wouldst, by thy intercession, obtain for all parents grace to rear their children piously; for all married persons, who are distressed and afflicted through poverty and tribulations, consolation and encouragement; for all unmarried persons who have devoted their chastity to God, the grace of perseverance; and, finally, for all the dying the grace to come, after a happy death, to thy foster-child, Jesus Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

MARCH 25.

This feast is so called from the Archangel Gabriel announcing to the Blessed Virgin that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. In the Introit of the Mass the Church refers to this high dignity of Mary's. *All the rich shall entreat thy countenance; after her shall virgins be brought to the King; her neighbors shall be brought to thee in gladness and rejoicing* (Ps. xlv.) *My heart had uttered a good word, I speak my works to the King.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who didst please that thy Word should take flesh, at the message of an angel, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant to thy suppliants, that we, who believe her to be truly the Mother of God, may be blessed by her intercession with thee. Through Christ.

[See the Epistle and its explanation on Wednesday of the Ember-week in Advent.]

Gospel. (Luke i. 26-38.)

At that time, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who, having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and 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, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David, his father, and he shall reign in the house of Jacob, his father, forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.

Why does the Evangelist describe so minutely the announcement of the incarnation of Christ?

That we may bring to mind, believe in, and meditate upon, the mystery of the incarnation, from which our salvation springs.

Was the incarnation necessary to our redemption?

Yes; for the Son of God could not suffer as God; but, without an infinitely meritorious suffering, no sufficient satisfaction for the sins of men could have been rendered to God; nor would sin have appeared in all its enormity. How horrible, then, must be the evil of sin, when it could not be atoned for by a pure man, nor even by the satisfaction of an angel, but only by the sufferings of the God-man! O sinner, think on this!

Why was Mary troubled at the message of the angel?

Partly out of humility—partly out of modesty. She was

so humble that she considered herself the least of all women, and could not therefore understand how such an honor should be assigned to her. She possessed further, such modesty, and loved so dearly virginal purity, that she was troubled at hearing from the angel that she was to be a mother. What an instructive lesson for young women! The most precious ornaments, and the most needful virtues for them are humility, modesty, and love of purity, without which they are only the skeletons of virgins. Would that they might all prize these treasures, watch over them, and, to preserve them, fly from all occasions of sin, and pray, as did Mary!

By what means did the angel remove Mary's fear?

By the assurance that God had thought her worthy of the particular grace of being mother to a son who should, at the same time, be the Son of the Most High, and should establish a new, spiritual, and everlasting kingdom, which had been prefigured by that of David; and further, by declaring to her, that while she should become a mother, she should yet remain a virgin; which, with God, the Almighty, was no less possible than for Elizabeth to conceive a son in her old age. These words are, in many respects, full of instruction for us. They show, 1. That Jesus united the nature of God and the nature of man, in one person: the nature of God, as being the Son of the Most High, begotten of his substance from all eternity; the nature of man, in that, without any earthly father, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, he took a human body of Mary.

They show, 2. How pleasing Mary was in the sight of God, and what dignity was given to her. She is the mother of the God-man.

They teach us, 3. What confidence we should place in God, who, having power to do all things, easily can and will help us, at the most critical moments, even when all help seems impossible, if it be for our good, and if we call upon him.

Did Mary then assent?

Yes; with the deepest humility, with the most tender love of God, with the most submissive obedience, with perfect resignation, and with ardent desire to co-operate in God's de-

sign, she spoke those words of salvation which atoned for the disobedience of Eve, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.* And in the same moment the inscrutable mystery of the incarnation was accomplished in her. Let us prostrate ourselves in the dust and adore the Thrice Holy God; let us thank him in word and deed, that he should humble himself so low, to make us partakers of the divine nature. And let this be a daily practice, even as the Church, by introducing the "Angelic Salutation," would incite us to continual recollection, adoration, thanksgiving, and earnestness. Or is this, perhaps, too much of a return for such infinite gifts?

Aspiration.

O daughter of the Eternal Father, chosen from all eternity, true Mother of his only-begotten Son, Virgin-Bride of the Holy Ghost, we humbly look up to thy glory, and beseech thee to obtain for us poor sinners, through him who was born of thee, grace to imitate thy virtues, like thee to order our lives in humility, chastity, and obedience, and one day to be received into thy glory.

Instruction on the Angelus Domini, called also the Angelic Salutation.

To excite us to continual thanksgiving and adoration on account of the mystery of the incarnation, and that we may profit thereby, there has been established in the Church the salutary custom of saying, three times a day, the Angelic Salutation, the signal for which is given by ringing a bell, commonly called the "angelus bell."

The usage is to repeat three Hail Marys, introducing before each certain words of Holy Scripture relating to the incarnation; thus, before the first, *The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived of the Holy Ghost.* Hail Mary, etc. Before the second, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done unto me according to thy word.* Hail Mary, etc. Before the third, *And the Word was made*

flesh, and dwelt among us. Hail Mary, etc. Next is said the following

Prayer.

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, thy Son, has been made known by the message of an angel, may, by his passion and cross be brought to the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The threefold repetition of the Hail Mary is to adore the Most Holy Trinity, who co-operated in the incarnation; to sanctify, by uniting our works with those of Jesus, the beginning, the middle, and the end of the day, and to incite us continually to whatever is good; and to invoke the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, against all our enemies, visible and invisible, who at morning would hinder us from beginning, at noon from pursuing, and at evening from completing works pleasing to God. Upon every heart susceptible of feeling, how salutary must be the effect of thus remembering the love of God so manifestly displayed in the incarnation! How must it quicken our thankfulness towards God, and our earnestness for the salvation of our own souls! Let us, then, say this salutation, 1. Constantly. 2. With gratitude for the love of God. 3. With sorrow for those sins of ours, on account of which Christ became man. 4. With devotion; that is, with thoughtfulness of what we are saying. 5. And lastly, with suitable bodily reverence, in particular by kneeling, save at Easter-tide, when we pray standing, in remembrance of Christ's rising from the grave. But to understand rightly what we pray for, read attentively and repeatedly the following

Explanation of the Hail Mary.

Why is this prayer called the Hail Mary, or Angelic Salutation?

Because it commences with the same words which the Archangel Gabriel addressed to the Blessed Virgin when he announced to her that she should be the Mother of God.

Of what does the Angelic Salutation consist?

1. Of the words of the Archangel Gabriel ; 2. Of the words of St. Elizabeth ; 3. Of words which have been added thereto by the Catholic Church.

Which are the words of the Archangel Gabriel ?

Hail (Mary), full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women.

What is the meaning of these words ?

The words *Hail Mary* indicate that profound veneration for the Blessed Virgin which was felt by the Archangel Gabriel, and which we, in imitation of his example, ought also to cherish. The words *full of grace* remind us that God bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin greater graces than upon all men and angels together ; and that not for herself alone, but for us also ; they therefore encourage us to pray to Mary with fervor and confidence, that by her powerful intercession she will obtain for us the graces necessary for our salvation. *The Lord is with thee* ; these words express the peculiar complacency with which God has regarded her ; on account of which he wrought in her special miracles of wisdom, omnipotence, and benignity. Let us rejoice with Mary over these prerogatives, and implore her to effort for us, that God may be with us also, to sustain us by his almightiness, to govern us by his wisdom, to incite us to all that is good by the fire of his infinite love. Finally, the words *Blessed art thou among women*, are as much as to say : Thou art the happiest of all women, since thou only, of them all, hast no stain of sin on thee ; thou art chosen to be the Mother of God ; thou shalt conceive him by the Holy Ghost, and shalt bring him forth without losing thy virginity. Thus it was that the angel saluted the Most Blessed Virgin, and yet there are men who are ashamed thus to salute Mary, and to give praise for the graces which God conferred upon her. What can this be but stupidity, ingratitude, and malice ?

Which are the words of Elizabeth, and what do they signify ?

And blessed is the fruit of thy womb ; the word *blessed* is equivalent to *praised*. In saying these words, therefore, we desire that the fruit of Mary's womb, Jesus, may be worshipped and praised by all men.

Which are the words which the Catholic Church has added ?

To the words *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb*, she has added *Jesus*, in order thereby to explain them, and to indicate that this prayer is to be offered in the name of Jesus. Thereupon follow the words, "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

What do these words mean ?

With those words, Holy Mary, we apply to her who is full of grace, as our intercessor, and thereby are reminded to strive to imitate her holiness, if we would be sure of her intercession, and of being heard before God. We call her mother of God, because she brought forth Jesus, the Son of God. Thereby we at the same time remind her that she is our mother also, and pray her to care for us as a mother ; not as though we believed she could of herself help us, but with the design that she should offer to God her all-prevailing prayers for us ; hence we say, *pray for us*, adding, *sinners*. By these words we remind Mary of our misery, and ourselves of our powerlessness for good, and of our guiltiness in the sight of God, praying her to procure for us the grace of God to do true penance, to acquire virtues, and to gain true peace, and that *now*, inasmuch as at every moment, and throughout our whole life, we have so many dangers to meet, so many virtues to gain ; *and at the hour of our death*, that we may overcome the temptations of the last decisive hour, and stand complete victors before the throne of the eternal Judge. *Amen*, so may it be, is, as it were, to repeat and make stronger the whole prayer.

Salutation to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

Hail Mary, full of grace ! I rejoice, and give joy to thee, that thou hast been chosen the mother of the Most High, and the queen of heaven and earth. With thee is the Father who begot, from all eternity, him whom thou didst bring forth as God-man in time ; with thee is the Son, whom thou didst bear in thy virginal womb ; with thee is the Holy Ghost, overshadowed by whose power thou didst become the mother of the Redeemer of the world. Praised, therefore, be thou, thou

blessed among women; thou daughter of the Most High; thou bride of the Holy Ghost; thou joy of heaven; thou ornament of the Church of God; thou honor of Christians. Oh, pray God for us, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

[For the Feast of the Seven Dolors, see Part I.]

Feast of St. Ludgerus.

ON WEDNESDAY AFTER THE SUNDAY JUBILATE.

His Life.

St. Ludgerus was born in the year 744, in East Friesland, of parents who were Christians and people of rank. For the sake of having him instructed in divine learning, they placed him under the charge of St. Gregory of Utrecht. In his twenty-second year he went to York, in England, and there attended, for several years, the lectures of the celebrated Alcuin, to whom the Emperor Charlemagne afterwards gave the management of all the schools of his empire. When Charlemagne began war upon the heathen Saxons, because they were accustomed every year to break into France, plundering and murdering, Ludgerus returned to his country, and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Holland and Friesland, until he was banished by the pagan duke Wittekind. Charlemagne, having conquered him and deprived him of Friesland, called the saint from the monastery on Mount Cassino, to which he had retired, and committed to him the charge of the church of Mimigard. Ludgerus built the first Christian church that was built there, but he settled on the right bank of the river Aa, opposite Mimigard. Near the church he built a house, in which, with his priests, he lived a monastic life. Many of his converts built houses for themselves near the church, and thus commenced a new part of the city, which, from the monastery, was called Munster. In consequence, the old name disap-

peared. In the year 793 St. Ludgerus erected the abbey of Werden, which was destroyed in the Thirty Years' War, and invited thither the Benedictines for the education of youth. For ten years he continued to travel through the forests, preaching Jesus Christ. In these apostolic journeys, he went as far as the borders of Denmark. In the year 802, in obedience to the Archbishop of Cologne, he suffered himself to be consecrated the first bishop of Munster. The holy bishop, who was well versed in Holy Scripture, let no day pass without explaining some passages thereof to his disciples. His body he mortified by severe fasting and constant watching. He wore a penitential garment of hair-cloth, which was first known after his death. If, sometimes, out of neighborly kindness, he ate flesh-meat, yet he never passed the limits of the most severe temperance. When obliged to be in company, he managed, with adroitness, to turn the conversation to spiritual things. What remained to him from his father's estate, and from the income of the cathedral, he spent in alms. He loved prayer so much that he was always recommending it to others. His activity ceased only with his years, as he feared nothing more than to be found idle by the Lord. On the last day of his life, March 25, 809, being Passion Sunday, he preached at Coesfeld at high mass, and then went six miles further to Bilerbeck. There he preached a second time, declared that he was about to die the next night, and designated the spot in the monastery of Werden where he wished to be buried. His prophecy was fulfilled at midnight, at which hour God called him to himself by a precious death.

(For the Introit, see the Feast of St. Liborius, p. 787.)

Prayer.

O God, who hast sanctified this day by the festival of thy confessor and bishop, St. Ludgerus, graciously grant us that, while we rejoice in his merits, we may also be awakened by his exemplary life, and, through his intercession, obtain forgiveness and life everlasting. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Feast of St. Adalbert.

APRIL 23.

His Life.

St. Adalbert was born in Bohemia, in the year 956, and was of a noble family. As soon as he had passed the years of childhood, he was placed by his parents under the care of Adalbert, archbishop of Magdeburg, to be educated. He gave the youth, at confirmation, his own name, in place of that by which he had been hitherto known, and which was *Woytiech*—in the Slavonic, “trust of armies.” Upon being chosen bishop of Prague, in the year 983, he divided his revenue into four parts; the first was devoted to the support of the Church, the second to the support of the canons, the third to the assistance of the poor, and the fourth to the wants of his house. In his room there was to be seen a common bed, although he did not use it, but slept upon a penitential garment, or upon the bare floor, and spent a part of the night in prayer. He preached and visited the sick every day. He was forced, however, to endure much trouble from the disorderly people, whom he was compelled, on that account, to leave. He thereupon went to Italy to consult the Pope, John XV. With his permission, he put on the Benedictine habit in the monastery of St. Boniface. Five years afterwards, the Pope, on the petition of the Duke of Bohemia, commanded him to return his flock. The citizens of Prague received him with joy, but were not long obedient to him. The saint thereupon took the resolution to leave them forever. On the way back to his convent, he preached the Gospel to the Hungarians. Pope Gregory V., successor to John XV., sent Adalbert once more to his diocese—the repeated petitions of the Archbishop of Mayence having prevailed upon him to do this. The saint obeyed. On his way, he heard that the people of Prague had put to death three of his brothers; he therefore went to Poland, to his friend Boleslaus, whom he begged to find out whether the Bohemians were disposed to receive him. The Bohemians answered the

ambassadors of the duke: "We are sinners; he is a saint. Why does he ask about us, but to revenge the death of his brothers? Let him remain where he is." The saint, seeing that the way to Prague was closed to him, put in practice a design which the Pope had approved, and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Silesia and Poland. After three years, he left his brother Radzin in the archiepiscopal see of Gnesen, and, with two companions, Gaudentius and Benedict, journeyed to Prussia, upon which country the light of the faith had not yet risen. At Dantzic, his preaching was followed by happy results. He now wished to penetrate the interior of Prussia. In the first town at which he arrived, he was greeted with blows, and driven out again amid the greatest abuse. The like treatment he was obliged to submit to often. At Fischhausen, in the province of Samland, the idolatrous priest, Siggo, thrust a lance into his breast while he was saying Mass. Six other pagans also pierced him with their lances, and thus he completed his glorious martyrdom on April 23, 997. Duke Boleslaus ransomed the corpse of the saint, and deposited it in the abbey church at Tremezno. The following year it was brought to the cathedral church of Gnesen, where it was exposed for the public veneration of the faithful. God glorified his servant by many miracles. He is called *the Apostle of Prussia*. The Emperor Otho III. made a pilgrimage to his grave, in pursuance of a vow made by him in his sickness. Upon this occasion, he conferred upon the duke the title of king. In return he received an arm of the saint, which was afterwards brought to Rome, and came into possession of the church of St. Bartholomew, on the island of the Tiber. It not seldom happens, says Pope St. Gregory, that the most zealous bishops and servants of God sow the seed of the divine word without success, and that their labors and pains for the salvation of the souls committed to them are fruitless. But this is no detriment to the merits which they have laid up with God, or to the reward which is prepared for them. Both, indeed, are the greater, in proportion as—by reason of the indocility of their people, and the ill success of their exertions—they have received the less consolation from the world.

(See the Introit of the Mass on the Feast of St. Valentine. The Gospel, the same as on the First Sunday after Easter.)

Prayer.

O God, grant that the holy bishop and martyr, Adalbert, may procure for us thy indulgence, that thou mayest grant us forgiveness of our sins, and the benefits which we desire. Through Jesus Christ.

Feast of St. George.

APRIL 23.

His Life.

St. George was a Christian prince of Cappadocia, and lived under the Emperor Diocletian. Upon the death of his father, he accompanied his mother to Palestine. The most widely known fact of his life is his having saved the life of a daughter of King Aja, by putting to death a dragon which was about to devour her. Diocletian esteemed him highly and offered him important commands in his army, which the Christian hero declined because this emperor was then commencing his persecution of Christianity. This occasioned his arrest and imprisonment; and as his courage and constancy in confessing himself a Christian could neither be overcome by flatteries, nor by threats, he was finally beheaded, April 23, A. D. 303. St. George is the patron of soldiers, and is commonly represented as a knight on horseback killing a dragon under his feet, and bearing a white banner on which is a red cross.

Introit of the Mass. *Thou hast protected me, O God, from the assembly of the malignant; from the multitude of the workers of iniquity* (Ps. lxxiii.) *Hear, O God, my prayer, when I make supplication to thee; deliver my soul from the fear of the enemy.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who givest us joy by the merits and intercession of blessed George, mercifully grant that we, who implore thy benefits through him, may obtain them by the gift of thy grace. Through Christ.

Epistle. (2 Tim. ii. 8-10; iii. 10-12.)

Dearly beloved: Be mindful that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen again from the dead, of the seed of David according to my gospel. Wherein I labor even unto bands, as an evil doer: but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, afflictions: such as came upon me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra: what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me. And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.

Gospel. (John xv. 1-7.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: I am the true vine; and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me, that beareth not fruit, he will take away: and every one that beareth fruit he will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean by reason of the word, which I have spoken to you. Abide in me: and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If any one abide not in me: he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.

Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist.

APRIL 25.

His Life.

Mark, or, with his full name, John Mark (Acts xii. 12), was the son of a certain Mary, of Jerusalem, in whose house the Apostles often assembled, and a relative of Barnabas. He seems to have been instructed in Christianity by St. Peter, by whom he is called son (1 Pet. v. 13). Subsequently he accompanied St. Paul and Barnabas (Acts xii. 25; xiii. 5; xv. 37), on their apostolic journeys, and was the companion of St. Paul in his twice repeated imprisonment at Rome. There he appears to have come into nearer communication with Peter, who was at that time at Rome with Paul, and by him was encouraged to write the gospel which we possess under his name. That St. Mark labored under the direction of St. Peter is the opinion of all Christian antiquity, for he is commonly called the interpreter of St. Peter, the relator of his gospel. Of the remainder of St. Mark's life, no further particulars are known. According to St. Jerome, Eusebius, and the Greek and Latin Martyrologies, he suffered martyrdom at Alexandria. St. Mark preserves his clients from impenitent deaths. He is represented with a lion, denoting that royal dignity of Christ which the evangelist announced, and also, as some have supposed, referring to that solitude of which his gospel seems to speak, when it begins with the voice of one crying in the desert.

The Introit of the Mass is, *Thou hast protected me, O God from the assembly of the malignant, allelujah! from the multitude of the workers of iniquity, allelujah, allelujah* (Ps. lxxiii.) *Hear, O God, my prayer when I make supplication to thee; deliver my soul from the fear of the enemy.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who didst exalt blessed Mark, thy evangelist, by the grace of preaching the Gospel, grant, we beseech thee, that

we may ever profit by his erudition and be defended by his prayer. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Ezec. i. 10-14.)

The likeness of the face of the four living creatures: the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side of all the four: and the face of an ox, on the left side of all the four: and the face of an eagle over all the four. And their faces, and their wings were stretched upward: two wings of every one were joined, and two covered their bodies: And every one of them went straight forward: whither the impulse of the spirit was to go, thither they went: and they turned not when they went. And as for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like that of burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps. This was the vision running to and fro in the midst of the living creatures, a bright fire, and lightning going forth from the fire. And the living creatures ran and returned like flashes of lightning.

Gospel. (Luke x. 1-9.)

At that time: The Lord appointed also other seventy-two: and he sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come. And he said to them: The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send laborers into his harvest. Go: Behold I send you as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way. Into whatsoever house you enter, first say: Peace be to this house: And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall return to you. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they have. For the laborer is worthy of his hire. Remove not from house to house. And into what city soever you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you; and heal the sick that are therein, and say to them: The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

Feast of St. Philip and St. James, Apostles.

MAY 1.

Life of St. Philip.

Philip, born at Bethsaida, was one of the first followers of Jesus (John i. 43), and was chosen to be an Apostle (Luke vi. 14). From the first he was a faithful and zealous disciple of Jesus, to whom he brought Nathaniel (John i. 45), and afterwards the Gentiles who desired to see Jesus (John xii. 20). Christ had great love for him, and sought, by repeated trials, to confirm him in faith and charity. After receiving the Holy Ghost he preached the Gospel in Scythia and Phrygia, converted great numbers to faith in Jesus, and finally, was first crucified, and then stoned, at Hierapolis, in Phrygia. Learn from Philip, after you yourself have found the truth, to seek, by word and example, to win others to Christ, particularly such as you may have led astray.

Life of St. James.

James, the son of Cleophas, called the lesser, or younger, to distinguish him from James the brother of John, on account of his sanctity called the Just, and on account of his near blood-relationship to Christ, called the brother of our Lord, was, with his brother Judas Thaddeus, chosen an Apostle in the second year of Christ's ministry. He was, from his youth, dedicated to God as a Nazarene, ate no flesh, drank no wine or strong drink, wore no shoes, and only coarse linen garments. In the holy place of the temple, which he was, on account of his sanctity, permitted to enter, he was almost continually prostrate on his face and knees, in prayer for his people. The skin of his forehead and knees became, in consequence, as hard as the hide of a camel. When the Apostles dispersed themselves into all the world, they left him behind as first bishop (Gal. i. 19; ii. 9; Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18). He wrought many miracles, converted many of the respectable Jews to the faith, and on account of his piety, solitary life, and beneficence, was held in such esteem, both by Jews and Gentiles, that they fell

on their knees before him, and kissed his garments. But when, one day, being requested to preach against Christ, he publicly acknowledged him to be the Messias, in whom men were bound to believe, the Jewish priests became so enraged that they threw him down from a pinnacle of the temple, cast stones upon him, and finally killed him outright with a fuller's rod. Though half dead, and lying on the ground with broken bones, he yet prayed, "Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We possess one epistle from him, in which he speaks particularly of the necessity of good works to salvation, and of extreme unction. He wrote, as he lived, full of zeal for practical Christianity. Learn from him, not only to believe, but to live according to your belief, and in particular, to requite good for evil.

The Introit of the Mass is taken from 2 Esdras ix. *In the time of their tribulation they cried to thee, O Lord, and thou heardest them from heaven. Allelujah, allelujah. Rejoice in the Lord, ye just ; praise becometh the upright.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who givest us joy by the annual solemnity of thy Apostles Philip and James, grant, we beseech thee, that we may be instructed by the example of those in whose merits we rejoice. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Wisdom v. 1-5.,

The just shall stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them, and taken away their labors. These seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation, saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit: These are they, whom we had some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints.

Practice.

On which side do we stand? On that of those who deride, or of those who are derided? Examine, and consider what

the end will be. Are you derided? Then rejoice, for glory awaits you. But are you of those who deride? Take heed, lest, too late, you be sorry for your foolishness.

Gospel. (John xiv. 1-13.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you: I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be. And whither I go you know, and the way you know. Thomas saith to him: Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith to him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also: and from henceforth you shall know him, and you have seen him. Philip saith to him: Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us. Jesus saith to him: So long a time have I been with you, and have you not known me? Philip, he that seeth me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, show us the Father? Do you not believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself. But the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works. Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? Otherwise believe for the very works' sake. Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do: because I go to the Father. And whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that I will do.

Why did Jesus say to his disciples, let not your heart be troubled?

He said this in order to give them consolation beforehand, so that they might not be downcast, or waver in their faith, in case the tribulations spoken of in the preceding discourse should actually come upon him and them. Thus it is, that God never fails to comfort those who suffer persecution for his sake.

What is the meaning of those words, *I go to prepare a place for you?*

That by his death, resurrection, and ascension he had opened for us the entrance into heaven, which our sins had closed

against us. Christian, who lovest God, what a joyful thought; Christ has gone before to make ready for you an eternity of happiness! What is there now upon earth to distress you? Is it persecution, or sickness, or death? But see, all this can last but a little while, and your Lord will receive you as a faithful servant in the place which he has prepared for you.

What is meant by the words *I am the way, the truth, and the life?*

St. Bernard says, Christ is *our way*, in his holy doctrine and example, by following which we cannot go astray. He is *the truth*, in the fulfilment of the prophecies, in his mysteries, in his promises and threatenings, in his Gospel, and in his Church, for, as God, he cannot err, neither can he lie, or deceive; finally, he is *the life*, in that, through his death, he has gained for us the life of grace and glory.

Why does Christ say, *If you had known me?*

Because, although they acknowledged him to be the Son of God—as Peter, in the name of all, had confessed—yet had they only most obscure conceptions of the three persons of the Most Holy Trinity, until they came to be enlightened through the Holy Ghost. Let us learn hence to make our knowledge of the truths of faith more and more perfect, and to this end let us pray God to guide us into all truth.

Why did Christ say to Philip, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father?*

Because, although different from the Father in person, yet in nature and substance he is equal to him. Christ accordingly adds, that he is in the Father, and the Father in him.

Aspiration to St. Philip.

O St. Philip, chosen disciple of the Lord, who brought Nathaniel to Christ, who most zealously preached thy Lord, Jesus Christ, and out of love to him, willingly gave thyself to be nailed to the cross, and put to death, obtain, I beseech thee, for me, and for all men, grace with zeal to bring others to the practice of good works, to have a great desire after God and his truths, and in hope of the eternal blissful contemplation of God, to bear patiently the adversities and miseries of this life. Amen.

Aspiration to St. James.

O St. James, who lived so temperately and strictly, who, like thy master, prayed so earnestly and constantly for thy tormentors, I beseech thee that thou wouldst procure us, from Jesus, grace, after thy example, to live sober and penitential lives, and to worship God in spirit and in truth. Obtain for us, therefore, the spirit with which thou didst write thine epistle, that we may follow thy doctrine, be diligent in good works, and, like thee, love and pray for our enemies. Amen.

Brief Lessons from the Epistle of St. James.

I. All the adversities of this life are to be regarded as graces from God, and to be borne with joy (chaps. i. and iii.)

II. Faith without works is dead, and avails nothing towards salvation (chap. ii.)

III. The religion of that man who does not govern his tongue is vain (chaps. i. and iii.)

IV. All our misfortunes proceed from our inordinate and ungoverned passions (chap. iv.)

V. The prayer of the just availeth much before God, and is the greatest consolation in sorrow (chap. v.)

Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross.

MAY 3.

Why is this day so called?

Because on this day the Church celebrates the finding, by St. Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, of the cross on which Christ died, after it had been for a long time lost.

Where had the holy cross been up to the time that it was thus found again?

At Jerusalem, near the holy sepulchre, hidden under a mass of rubbish. For the Emperor Adrian endeavored not only to desecrate the holy places of the death and burial of Jesus Christ, but also to hide the very knowledge of them. The

cave of the holy sepulchre was filled up, and by the erection of a temple of Venus, which the Gentiles built over the spot, came to be quite lost sight of.

How did Helena find the cross?

After the Emperor Constantine had successfully conquered his rival, Maxentius, by means of the holy cross, which appeared to him in the heavens, surrounded with a bright light, and decorated with the inscription, "In this sign conquer," he conceived such a veneration for the cross that he commanded it to be venerated throughout the whole Roman Empire, and forbade any one from that time forward to be crucified. He also resolved to build a splendid church at Jerusalem, in honor of the Holy Cross. St. Helena, who, at her very advanced age, had left Rome and gone to Palestine, undertook, with St. Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, to search out the holy places, and was successful in discovering the sepulchre. Close at hand were found three crosses, the nails, and the inscription which had been set up over the cross. To ascertain the true cross, St. Macarius, after having directed prayers to be said by all, caused a woman who was mortally ill to be touched with the three crosses. The two first produced no effect, but the third caused her immediate restoration to health. The miracle was satisfactory evidence that this was the true cross. The nails and one portion of the cross Helena sent to her son, but another and a larger part, she caused to be set in gold and precious stones, and exposed to public veneration, in the magnificent church which she built at Jerusalem, on the spot where the cross was found. Of this Holy Cross various pieces have been distributed throughout the world, for the veneration of the holy instrument on which the Son of God accomplished our redemption, gained the victory over hell, and *obtained for us all the graces of heaven.*

Introit of the Mass. *But it behooves us to glory in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection, by whom we are saved and delivered. Allelujah, allelujah (Gal. vi.) May God have mercy on us and bless us; may he cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us, and may he have mercy on us (Ps. lxxvi.)* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who in the remarkable finding of the saving cross, didst revive the miracles of thy passion, grant that by the price of the wood of life, we may obtain the suffrages of life eternal. Who livest and reignest.

Epistle. (Philippians ii. 5-11.) See Palm Sunday.

Gospel. (John iii. 1-15.)

At that time, there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night, and said to him: Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God: for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him. Jesus answered, and said to him: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith to him: How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born again? Jesus answered: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Wonder not, that I said to thee, you must be born again. The Spirit breatheth where he will; and thou hearest his voice, but thou knowest not whence he cometh or whither he goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered, and said to him: How can these things be done? Jesus answered, and said to him: Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things? Amen, amen, I say to thee, that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you believe not: how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.

What does this gospel teach us?

I. Nicodemus is desirous of salvation, and consequently of instruction. And how considerately did Jesus teach him! Be not ashamed, whatever your age or position, to seek instruction in the truths of the Catholic faith.

II. Nicodemus concluded from the miracles of Jesus, that he was sent from God—and rightly; but have we not before us miracles still greater, which have lasted now eighteen hundred years, and which say to us, that the Church established by him is divine, and the only one that is true? Let us then believe, and act according to our belief.

III. Incomprehensible as regeneration is, it is equally necessary; and that not only in baptism, as a sacrament, but also in all our thoughts and conduct. Are you regenerate? Or do you merely join the name of a Christian to the practice of a heathen?

IV. Thus early Christ points to the cross as the sign of salvation and life. O Christian, hasten to it; adore it, preserve it as your treasure, and by patiently bearing your daily cross, become like him who, on the cross, redeemed you.

Salutation of the Church to the Holy Cross.

O glorious and venerable cross! O precious wood! O wonderful sign, by which sin, the devil, and hell were overcome, and the world redeemed, through the blood of Christ, thou art exalted above all the cedars of the forest, for on thee hung the life of the world! On thee Christ gained the victory, and by his dying overcame death forever. Allelujah.

V. O Lord Jesus Christ, we adore and bless thee;

R. For through thy cross thou hast redeemed the world.

Prayer. [See p. 731.]

On the Veneration of the Holy Cross.

Why is the cross of Christ held in so great veneration?

Because it is, 1. The altar on which he offered himself for us; 2. The instrument with which he accomplished the work of our redemption; 3. The victorious standard, sprinkled with his blood, under which the devil has been and will be defeated.

Is it allowable to worship the cross of Christ?

No, for worship is due to God only; and if the Church at times uses language in regard to the cross which indicates a kind of worship, as if attributing to it our salvation, such lan-

guage evidently applies only to Christ, who, as the God-man, redeemed us by the cross.

Which is the best way to venerate the cross of Christ?

1. To sign ourselves openly with the sign of the cross, and not to be ashamed to be taken for a worshipper of the crucified. 2. To love the cross; that is, to bear patiently and joyfully the afflictions sent from God, and thus, according to the teaching of Christ, to take up our cross daily and follow him (Luke ix. 23).

Why are crosses set up on highways, and such like places?

To remind us continually of Christ and his sufferings, and to incite us to a thankful love, and continual union of our acts with his, according to the teachings of St. Paul. *Looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God* (Heb. xii. 2).

Why is the cross publicly carried before processions?

To show before the whole world that Christ crucified is our God and our all, and that we, accordingly, are not ashamed of the cross, but rather, like St. Paul, glory in it. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world* (Gal. vi. 14).

Why do we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross?

1. To testify that we are Christians, and worshippers of the crucified, and that we have no fellowship with the enemies of the cross of Christ; 2. To profess our faith in the Most Holy Trinity; 3. In honor and thankful remembrance of the sufferings and death of Christ; 4. In order to overcome the devil and his temptations, inasmuch as he hates the cross, and is by nothing more easily driven away than by the sign of the cross. Hence it is that the Church prays, "By the sign of the cross, deliver us from our enemies, O Lord." 5. For the successful accomplishment of our undertakings, and that we may be preserved from all evil, in soul and body. Whenever, therefore, temptations or any evil would hinder your good intentions, sign yourself with the sign of the cross, and you will surely have experience of its virtue.

Is it an old custom to make the sign of the cross?

The most ancient fathers of the Church make mention of this custom, and say that it came to them from the Apostles; nay, they charge Christians to make the sign of the cross, at eating and drinking, at walking and rising, at sitting and speaking, and, in a word, before every undertaking.

Why do we make the sign of the cross at the gospel, before sermon?

That by virtue of the cross, that is, by the merits of Christ crucified, God may give us grace, 1. To understand the gospel, and not be ashamed of it—in token of which we sign ourselves on the forehead; 2. To confess it with the mouth, that Christ also may one day confess us before his heavenly Father—in token of which we sign ourselves on the mouth; 3. To love it in heart, and to practice it in works—in token of which we sign ourselves on the breast.

Why do the priests at the divine service make the sign of the cross over the people?

That therewith there may be imparted to Christians the abundant blessing of grace which Christ has obtained for us by his cross, as St. Paul says, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ* (Eph. i. 3). A type of this custom was given by the patriarch Jacob, who blessed the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasses, with crossed hands (Gen. xlviii. 14). This custom is of great antiquity in the Church. The Council of Agde, for example, in the year 506, directed that after prayers the people should be dismissed by the priest with a blessing.

Prayer before a Crucifix.

(A plenary indulgence is to be gained by every one who shall say this prayer before a crucifix, after having received Holy Communion.)

Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus, while before thy face I humbly kneel, and with burning soul pray and beseech thee to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith,

hope, and charity, true contrition for my sins, and firm purpose of amendment; the while I contemplate with great love and tender pity thy five wounds, pondering over them within me, while I call to mind the words which David thy prophet said of thee, my Jesus: *They pierced my hands and feet; they have numbered all my bones* (Ps. xxi. 17, 18).

Supplication before a Crucifix.

O God, look upon the face of thy Son, who for our sake was obedient to thee, even unto the death upon the cross, and for the sake of his obedience, forgive us our disobedience. Behold, this high-priest has given himself to be slain upon the altar of the cross for our sins. Oh, remember not our transgressions, but have mercy upon us, who have been bought at such a price.

Feast of St. John Nepomucen.

MAY 16.

His Life.

St. John Nepomucen took his surname from the village in Bohemia in which he was born, about the year 1330. His parents, who had been long without children, having through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, obtained this child, called him John, as Zachary and Elizabeth did the son of their old age. While yet a boy he showed great piety; to serve at Mass was a great pleasure to him. As he grew up his parents sent him to the Latin school, at Saaz, from whence he came to Prague. His progress there was so great that he was made a doctor of theology and of ecclesiastical law. His great merits as a preacher and pastor caused him to be appointed, by the Archbishop of Prague, canon of his cathedral, and a preacher there. The whole city of Prague flocked to his sermons. Wenceslaus himself, who on the death of his father, Charles IV., became king of Germany and Bohemia, was among his hearers. The queen, also, often attended his

sermons and chose him for her confessor and director. While St. John was thus doing great good by his example, sermons, and advice, Wenceslaus was giving himself up to lust, drunkenness, and cruelty. He who is bad himself thinks evil of others. Such suspicion carried the king so far that he sent for the saint and demanded from him that he should reveal what the queen had said to him in confession, promising him honors and favors if he would do so. John, indignant at such an outrage, with firm courage said to the king, "I would rather die a thousand deaths than comply with your demand." As he persisted in this refusal, he was thrown into a deep prison where, for three days and three nights, he suffered without food. Finally, he was placed upon the rack and tortured with burning torches. The servant of God did not open his mouth to complain; only from time to time to invoke the names of Jesus and Mary. After great torture he was set free. He never made known the cruelty which he had endured, but as soon as he had recovered commenced preaching to the people again. On the third Sunday after Easter he preached on the words of Jesus, *A little while, and you shall not see me, and again a little while, and you shall see me, because I go to the Father*, and spoke very plainly of his approaching death, which God had probably revealed to him. He soon after went to Old Bunzlaw, to visit an image of the Blessed Virgin, which was very much venerated by the people, perhaps to implore her powerful intercession against the impending danger. As he was returning, towards evening, to Prague, the king saw him from his palace, and at once summoned him to the royal presence. The holy priest obeyed; but hardly had he made his appearance before the king when he was pressed to reveal what he knew of the conscience of the queen, and threatened, if he refused, with being thrown into the river and drowned. The saint fearlessly gave the same answer which he had given before. The king, enraged thereat, commanded him to be thrown, with his hands and feet tied, into the Moldaw, which runs through the city of Prague, and his command was executed in the night. This happened on the vigil of Christ's ascension, in the year 1383. But the Lord was about to make known the glory of

his servant, for there appeared on the water an unusually bright light, in the form of many sparkling stars, which floated upon the river until it stopped above the place where the corpse was. He was buried in the cathedral, where God glorified him by many miracles.

After more than three hundred years the corpse of the saint was disinterred, and his tongue was found in perfect preservation; and when, six years later, it was shown to the judges appointed by the Apostolic See, at that very moment it swelled, and the dark-red color was changed to purple. Pope Benedict XIII. canonized him in the year 1729. He has been chosen as the particular patron of Bohemia.

St. John Climacus says that God watches over his Church in regard to the secrets of confession. It is an unheard of thing, says he, that sins were ever revealed from the judgment-seat of penance. God thus orders it, in order that the sinner may not be deterred from confession, and thereby lose the only hope of salvation.

Introit of the Mass. *The Lord had given me a tongue for my reward, allelujah, allelujah, and with it I will praise him* (Ecclus. li. 50). *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue* (Ps. xxxviii. 1). Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, through the invincible silence of thy martyr John thou hast glorified thy Church with a new crown of martyrdom; grant us, through his intercession, that according to his example, we may govern our tongues, and one day be numbered with the saints who have not sinned with their tongue, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (2 Tim. ii. 8-10; iii. 10-12.)

Brethren: Be mindful that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen again from the dead, of the seed of David according to my gospel. Wherein I labor even unto bands, as an evil doer: but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of

life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patience, persecutions, afflictions: such as came upon me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra: what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me. And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.

Gospel. (Matt. x. 26-32.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Therefore fear them not. For nothing is covered that shall not be revealed: nor hid, that shall not be known. That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light: and that which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body into hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: better are you than many sparrows. Every one therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven.

Feast of St. Boniface.

JUNE 5.

His Life.

St. Boniface, who was first called Winfred, was born of noble parents, at Kerton, England, in the year 680. *He is the Apostle of the Germans.* Having devoted himself to learning, his desire was to enter the order of the Benedictines. But his father refused his consent, until St. Boniface, during a severe illness, expressed his confidence of recovering if he were allowed to join the order. He accordingly became a Benedictine monk, and in his thirtieth year was ordained priest. In the year 719 he went to Rome, and received his mission from Pope Gregory II. He thereupon preached in Friesland, Hessa, Thuringia, and Bavaria. In the year 723 the Pope invited him to Rome, where he was consecrated bishop on the 8th November. Eight years after he received the title of archbishop, with the power of appointing bishops. In the course of time he founded the Bishoprics of Salzburg, Regensburg,

Freysing, Eichstadt, Wurzburg, and others. As primate, he fixed his See at Mayence. He built various convents, as seminaries for the formation of good priests; of these the most celebrated was Fulda, now a bishopric. St. Boniface did much to civilize the Germans; he abolished slavery and the eating of horse-flesh, introduced the arts of reading and writing, and even occupied himself with correcting faults in the letters of the ecclesiastics. In the year 754 he returned to the Frieslanders. Foreseeing the approach of death, he caused a winding-sheet, and St. Ambrose's Treatise on the Advantage of Death, to be added to his baggage. This second mission was as successful as the former one, for he converted many thousand idolaters. At this the obstinate unbelievers were exasperated, and resolved to take the life of him who sought only their salvation. The saint, after having baptized many persons on the vigil of Pentecost, appointed a certain day in the week on which to give them confirmation. As they could not all be in the church at once, he determined to confirm them in an open field. The servants of the archbishop seeing the approach of the irritated idolaters, with lances and swords, went out of their tents to repel them. St. Boniface, hearing the alarm, called the priests whom he had with him, took some relics which he always carried about him, went forth from his tent, and said to his people: "Children, cease fighting. The Holy Scripture teaches us not to retaliate evil for evil, but to render good for evil. The day has now come which I have long wished for; have confidence in God, he will make us happy." Hereupon he admonished his priests, and all who were with him, to prepare courageously for martyrdom. The unbelievers fell upon them, sword in hand, and killed them all. They then robbed the tents, and carried off the boxes filled with books, expecting to find therein gold and silver. As, with this notion, they were about to divide their plunder, there sprang up among them a quarrel about it, which presently became so fierce that several of them were killed. The martyrdom of St. Boniface happened at Dokkum, in Friesland, on the 5th June, 755, forty years after his first visit to Germany, thirty-six years after his consecration, and in the

seventy-fifth year of his age. Fifty-two persons were his companions in martyrdom. His body was deposited in the Abbey of Fulda, which he had founded in the year 746. In every century many miracles have been wrought by God over his mortal remains.

St. Boniface hearing that Ethelbald, king of Mercia, darkened the splendor of his virtues by infamous impurity, and that his scandalous life found many followers, wrote to him in the strongest and most emphatic manner, to move him to penance. "Remember," he said to him, "how disgraceful it is for you to sigh under the tyranny of a beastly passion, and by such baseness to offend a God who has given you the rule over such a powerful nation. Have mercy on your own soul, and on the souls of your subjects, for which you must one day give account." The saint being once asked whether it were lawful to say mass with wooden chalices, gave this answer: "Formerly the Church had golden priests who said mass with wooden chalices, but now she has wooden priests who say mass with golden chalices."

Introit of the Mass. Let all thy works, O God, praise thee, and let thy saints bless thee; they shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and shall tell all thy power (Ps. cxliv. 10). Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just; praise becometh the upright. Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who hast been pleased to lead many nations to the knowledge of thy name, through the zeal of thy blessed martyr and bishop, Boniface, and his companions, graciously grant that we may be assured of the protection of those whose festival we this day commemorate. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Wisdom v. 1-5.)

The just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them, and taken away their labors. These seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation, saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit: These are they, whom we had some time in de-

riſion, and for a parable of reproach. We fools eſteemed their life madneſs, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the ſaints.

Gospel. (John xv. 5-11.)

At that time, Jeſus ſaid to his diſciples: I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If any one abide not in me: he ſhall be caſt forth as a branch, and ſhall wither, and they ſhall gather him up, and caſt him into the fire, and he burneth. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you ſhall aſk whatever you will, and it ſhall be done unto you. In this is my Father glorified; that you bring forth very much fruit, and become my diſciples. As the Father hath loved me, I alſo have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you ſhall abide in my love; as I alſo have kept my Father's commandments, and do abide in his love. Theſe things I have ſpoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled.

Why does Jeſus call his Father the husbandman?

Because the Father had ſent him into the world to teach, redeem, and ſanctify men.

Why does he call himſelf the vine?

Because, as the vine gives ſap and nourishment to the branches, ſo alſo he, by his teaching and death, gives grace, life, nourishment, and ſtrength to us, that we may follow his doctrine and attain to happineſs.

Why does he call his diſciples the branches?

Because by his divine grace, and through faith in his doctrine, he had united them moſt intimately with himſelf, had ſtrengthened them to announce and confeſs the Goſpel, and had forever joined them to himſelf in heaven. We alſo are branches of Jeſus Chriſt, called to the knowledge of him. Would that we might always remain united with him!

Instruction on Grace.

The grace of God, that is, the love and frienſhip of God, his aſſiſtance and conſolation, is a gift, unmerited by us, which God grants us through the infinite merits of Jeſus Chriſt. By

original sin we were deprived of it, became subject to the wrath of God, and unable of ourselves to think or do any thing good. But Jesus, our Redeemer, has by his death obtained this grace for us once more ; he has reconciled us with himself, and justified us ; and even should we have lost this grace through actual sin, we may, through him, regain it by true penance. The Holy Ghost imparts it to us. The necessity of it Christ declares, when he says, Without me, without the assistance of my grace, you can do no good works ; even as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine. St. Paul says that without grace we cannot even think a good thought. *To will and to accomplish, God worketh in us according to his good will* (Phil. ii. 13). Do we desire to be cleansed from sin ? It can only be done through the grace of God. Without it, no good work, no good thought is possible. *I can do all things in him who gives me strength*, says St. Paul. *Who abideth in me, and I in him, will bring forth much fruit*, says Christ ; that is, by grace enlightening our understanding and moving our will, we can both know the will of God and do the good which we perceive ; grace effects our sanctification, and is therefore called sanctifying grace. Should it prove hard for us to avoid sin and practice virtue, we have only to call on our Father in heaven, through Jesus Christ, for grace, and he will certainly give it to us. But when he has given it to us, we must make use of it ; we must employ the means to good works, as the mechanic uses his tools and the farmer his implements, so as to make some profit thereby. It is not sufficient to merely be a Christian, but it is also necessary to act as a Christian, and to do good. Every branch that beareth not fruit, that is, every one who does not become better and more devout, our Heavenly Father will exclude from the communion of the saints in heaven ; or, as Christ further says, *If any one abide not in me, through active faith, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up and cast him into the fire* (John xv. 4). If we have the desire to profit by God's grace, he will purify us ; that is, he will assist us to do more and more such works as are good, pure, and pleasing to him, and for them he will abundantly

reward us, because they have been done through him and for him. Let us therefore acknowledge our inability to do any thing good of ourselves; let us continually ask God for the assistance of his powerful grace, and let us preserve our union with the vine, Jesus Christ; then we shall make more and more progress in good works, increase our merits, and one day be forever happy in heaven.

Feast of Sts. Vitus, Modestus, Crescentia, Martyrs.

JUNE 15.

Their Lives.

Vitus and Modestus were from Sicily. Crescentia was the nurse of St. Vitus, and, with her husband Modestus, instructed him in the principles of the Christian faith, and infused into his mind the most fervent love of Jesus, and of purity of life. His pagan father, Hylas, having heard of this, with inhuman cruelty surrendered him to the governor of the province, Valerian, who saw himself at last overcome by the perseverance of a child. Crescentia and Modestus delivered him from the hands of his persecutors and fled with him to Italy, but they were apprehended in Lukaria, and received the crown of martyrdom in the persecution under Diocletian. St. Vitus is represented as a child with a wolf at his side, and sometimes with a book on which sits a bird, sometimes as boiled in a vessel of oil, sometimes with a cock at his side, a lion at his feet, and a palm in his hand, in allusion to his having been thrown before a lion which refused to harm him. Finally, he and his companions, Modestus and Crescentia, were most cruelly tortured till they expired under their sufferings.

Introit of the Mass. *Many are the afflictions of the just, and out of all these the Lord hath delivered them* (Ps. xxxiii).
Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Grant to thy Church, we beseech thee, O Lord, by the intercession of thy holy martyrs, Vitus, Modestus, and Crescentia, not to be high-minded, but to render ourselves pleasing in thy sight by humility; that, despising what is evil, we may with fervent charity practice those things which are right. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Wisdom iii. 1-8.)

The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure was taken for misery: and their going away from us, for utter destruction: but they are in peace. And though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality. Afflicted in few things, in many they shall be well rewarded: because God hath tried them, and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace he hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust he hath received them, and in time there shall be respect had to them. The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds. They shall judge nations, and rule over people, and their Lord shall reign forever.

Gospel. (Luke x. 16-20.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. And the seventy-two returned with joy, saying: Lord, the devils also are subject to us in thy name. And he said to them: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. But yet rejoice not in this that spirits are subject unto you: but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven.

Feast of St. Benno.

JUNE 16.

His Life.

Benno, born of a noble family of Hildesheim, in the year 1010, was at the early age of five years intrusted to his relative, St. Bernard, Bishop of Hildesheim, who committed him to the charge of the superior of a convent founded by him, under whose direction he made good progress both in virtue and in knowledge. In his eighteenth year he assumed the habit of St. Benedict, and was appointed, by the emperor Henry III. (who asked him of Pope Leo IX.), superior of the canons regular at Gorlan, where he educated many learned men. In the year 1066 he was made Bishop of Meissen. He had in many ways refused to be made bishop, and finally assented only at the earnest persuasion of Blessed Anno, Archbishop of Cologne. As bishop he was accustomed every year to visit his whole diocese, in order to correct whatever was amiss. Wherever he came he preached impressive sermons to the people, and exhorted them to a pious life. He was particularly occupied in the conversion of the Wendi, living near the Elbe. They had already been made acquainted with Christianity, but they first received the faith firmly under the teaching of St. Benno. During the unhappy quarrel between the Emperor and the Pope, he was, without any fault of his own, removed from his flock and cast into a dungeon where he suffered for a whole year, with patience and resignation to the divine will. After that he returned to his Episcopal See. He built churches and introduced into the divine service a soul-elevating chant. Shortly before his death he admonished his priests to mutual love, and then, having received the holy sacraments with edification, gently fell asleep in the Lord, after he had been bishop forty years. God glorified his tomb by many miracles: while alive he had possessed the gift of prophecy. He was canonized by Pope Adrian VI., on the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, in the year 1552. The inhabitants of his native country having, partly of their own choice, and

partly on compulsion, renounced the true Church of Christ, the pious princes of Bavaria caused the bones of the saint to be transferred to Munich, in the year 1576, in order that they might be preserved in becoming honor. St. Benno is the patron saint of Munich, and of all Bavaria.

Prayer.

O God, who protectest and defendest us through the glorious confession of the holy Bishop Benno, grant that by imitating his example we may increase in good works, and enjoy his protection. Through Christ.

Feast of St. Aloysius.

JUNE 21.

His Life.

St. Aloysius was born on the 9th March, 1658, at Castiglione, a castle of his parents, Ferdinand, Marquis of Gonzaga, and Martha Santena his wife. His pious mother took care to lay early in the heart of her little son that foundation of the holy fear of God which is the beginning of all wisdom and of all virtue. Would that all parents might imitate this mother, and often bring to the minds of their children the words, "Children, fear God; his eyes are upon you at all times, by day and by night: never attempt to do evil before the face of the Lord." The father of St. Aloysius, himself a brave soldier, designed to make his son a good soldier also; to this end he furnished him with all kinds of small weapons for playthings, and even when the child was no more than seven years old, took him into camp, where Aloysius often heard from the soldiers unbecoming words and expressions, which he repeated after them, without knowing what he was doing. But when he was reprimanded for this by his tutor, no one after that ever heard a bad word from his mouth, and during his whole lifetime he lamented and wept over this childish indiscretion as a great crime. Hav-

ing returned to the castle of his parents, by his quick obedience he gave the greatest joy to his mother and tutor; but he showed no further inclination to a soldier's life, and thought of nothing else than to devote himself entirely to the service of God. His father, observing this change, was displeased with him; yet he consoled himself with the thought that his son, though he might not be a great general, might yet be distinguished as a ruler over his people, and accordingly he sent him, with his brother Rudolf, to Florence, to make his studies there. There Aloysius, amid his tears, made a general confession; and as he had a child-like veneration for the Virgin Mary, carried along by the ardor of his devotion, he made a vow of perpetual chastity in honor of the most pure and Immaculate Virgin. To this vow he was faithful till death. In the year 1581 he received at the hands of the holy Archbishop of Milan, Charles Borromeo, his first communion, for which he prepared himself with the greatest care; and from this time there was to be seen in him an ardent devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, before which he often spent hours in meditation. From day to day he made more and more progress in the way of perfection, although in compliance with his father's wishes he spent some time, first at the court of the Duke of Mantua, and afterwards at the court of Philip II., King of Spain, where, true to his vow, he lived in angelic purity. Surrounded by the gay attendants of a court, his fear of God, his love of chastity, his distrust of himself, his confidence in Jesus and Mary, his frequent reception of the holy sacraments, and his persevering fervor in prayer, preserved him from every false step. His longing to consecrate himself entirely to God meantime grew stronger and stronger. He thought to find the accomplishment of his wish by joining some religious order; and as he was asking enlightenment from his mother Mary, and with that intention receiving holy communion on the day of her assumption into heaven, he distinctly heard a voice which commanded him to enter the Society of Jesus, and to make this command at once known to his confessor. He examined the matter and encouraged Aloysius in his resolution; his mother also bade him God-speed; but

his father would not hearken to a word about this vocation of his son. For three years Aloysius endured his father's opposition, until at last, overcome by the perseverance of his son, he gave his consent. The youth hastened with holy eagerness to the house of the Jesuits at Rome, after having first gladly given up to his brother Rudolf all the rights and titles to which he was heir. He began his novitiate in his eighteenth year, and by his punctual obedience, and by the practice of all virtues, soon surpassed all his fellow-novices. In the year 1587 he made his vows and received the four minor orders, the grace of which incited him to press forward more zealously in the way of perfection. In the year 1591, the plague appearing at Rome, Aloysius devoted himself chiefly to the poor sick, until, being himself seized with the epidemic, on the 21st June, 1591, in the twenty-first year of his age, he died the death of the just. On the evening before his death, the provincial visited him to inquire how he was. With a joyful voice the holy youth, then dying, cried out, "Father, we are going, we are going!" "Whither?" asked his father. "To heaven, as I hope, through the mercy of God," was the answer of the saint. There, in heaven, St. Aloysius now shines as an angel of innocence. Happy will it be for you, if you imitate him! Then you too shall receive an imperishable crown, like that which forever adorns the head of this holy youth.

On the Following of St. Aloysius.

For three hundred years St. Aloysius has received, in the Holy Catholic Church, the greatest veneration, as an example of innocence and purity, and innumerable are the graces obtained by those who have endeavored, with perseverance, to follow him. But particularly does Holy Church desire that the young should take this saint for their pattern; for experience has shown, that already many who have done this have been preserved from the corruption of the world, and kept their crown of virginal purity before the face of God. To this end young people of both sexes ought, every day, to recommend themselves to this holy youth; like him, should cherish a childlike veneration for the most pure Virgin Mary, blessed

above all; like him, should press deep into their hearts a holy-fear of God; like him, should distrust themselves, fly all occasions of sin, control their senses, especially their eyes, receive often the holy sacraments, and be persevering in prayer. At the same time they should not neglect to perform, every year, the six Sundays' devotion in honor of St. Aloysius. Pope Clement XII., in the years 1739 and 1740, approved this devotion, and granted to all who performed it a plenary indulgence on each of the six Sundays. This devotion, which is intended both for single and for married persons, consists in this: that on each of six Sundays, in succession, one should approach with contrition the holy sacraments of penance and of the altar, should on each of these Sundays select some particular virtue of St. Aloysius for meditation and imitation, and each time, after confession and communion, should say the prayers for obtaining an indulgence, and six times Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father, in commemoration of the six years which St. Aloysius spent in religion. But this indulgence of the six Sundays is to be gained but once a year.

Introit of the Mass. *Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honor* (Ps. viii.)

Prayer.

O God, the distributor of heavenly gifts, who in the angelic youth Aloysius didst unite a wonderful innocence of life with an equally wonderful penance, grant, through his merits and prayers, that we, who have not followed him in innocence, may imitate him in penance. Through Christ, our Lord.

Epistle. (Ecclus. xxxi. 8-11.)

Blessed is the man that is found without blemish: and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money nor in treasures. Who is he, and we will praise him? for he hath done wonderful things in his life. Who hath been tried thereby, and made perfect, he shall have glory everlasting. He that could have transgressed, and hath not transgressed: and could do evil things, and hath not done them: Therefore are his goods established in the Lord.

Gospel. (Matt. xxii. 29-40.)

At that time, Jesus answering, said to the Sadducees: You err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married: but shall be as the Angels of God in heaven. And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken by God saying to you: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And the multitudes hearing it, were in admiration at his doctrine. But the Pharisees hearing that he had silenced the Sadducees, came together: 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.

Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

JUNE 24.

His Life.

St. John could not have had any greater panegyrist than Jesus Christ himself, who calls him at one time an angel (Matt. xi. 10), at another a prophet (Luke vii. 28), and at another a burning and shining light (John v. 35). There hath not risen, says he (Matt. xi. 11), among them that are born of women (in the natural manner), a greater than John the Baptist. Like Isaias, he was chosen to be a preacher of penance and a herald of the Messias. The Lord therefore made him great, even from his mother's womb, by causing his birth to be foretold by an angel, by giving him his name, and by sanctifying him while yet in his mother's womb, through the presence of Christ. To escape from the world and its allurements, and in order to prepare himself for his important office, he withdrew to the desert, and lived there the life of an angel, occupying himself only with God and with what concerned his vocation.

His food was locusts and wild honey ; his clothing a garment of camel's hair, fastened by a leathern girdle ; his bed, the hard ground. Thus he lived till his thirtieth year, in which, by the command of God, he was to proclaim the coming of the Messiah, whom he himself afterwards baptized and pointed out to men as the Lamb of God. With extraordinary zeal and earnestness he preached the necessity of true penance. By his warnings, by his threats of divine punishment, and by his example, he pierced, as it were, with swords and arrows, the hearts of his hearers, and aroused them to prepare, by true penance, to receive the grace which was to come through the Messiah. His holy zeal having impelled him earnestly to reprove Herod for his unlawful connection with his brother's wife, he was by him thrown into prison, and finally, at the instigation of Herodius, beheaded. Thus this servant of God closed the course of his life, leaving all men the most beautiful example of innocence and heroic zeal for the salvation of souls. Let us learn from John to practice penance, whether we are innocent or guilty. For from the days of John *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.*

We celebrate the day of his birth rather than of his death, as is the case on most saints' days, because, while other saints arrive at sanctity only through long and difficult contests, John was already sanctified in his mother's womb. His birth was particularly mentioned in the Gospel, and distinguished by miracles, and that day was one of special joy, as being the day on which the light of truth began to rise.

The Introit of the Mass is taken from Isaias, chap. xlix. *The Lord hath called me by my name, from the womb of my mother, and hath made my mouth like a sharp sword ; in the shadow of his hand he hath protected me, and hath made me as a chosen arrow. It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing to thy name, O Most High.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who, by the birth of John, hast made this day worthy to be honored by us, grant to thy people the grace of

spiritual joys, and guide the minds of all the faithful in the way of eternal salvation. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Isaias xlix. 1-3 and 5-7.)

Give ear, ye islands, and hearken, ye people from afar. The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother he hath been mindful of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword: in the shadow of his hand he hath protected me, and hath made me as a chosen arrow: in his quiver he hath hidden me. And he said to me: Thou art my servant Israel, for in thee will I glory. And now saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, that I may bring back Jacob unto him, and Israel will not be gathered together: and I am glorified in the eyes of the Lord, and my God is made my strength. And he said: It is a small thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and convert the dregs of Israel. Behold I have given thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation even to the farthest part of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, his holy One, to the soul that is despised, to the nation that is abhorred, to the servant of rulers: Kings shall see, and princes shall rise up and adore for the Lord's sake, because he is faithful, and for the holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.

NOTE.—This prophecy refers, it is true, to Christ, whom God has made the head, teacher, ruler, and salvation of all nations. The greater part of it, however, may be applied to St. John, as is evident from his life.

Gospel. (Luke i. 57-68.)

Elizabeth's full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had showed his great mercy towards her, and they congratulated with her. And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him by his father's name, Zachary. And his mother answering, said: Not so, but he shall be called John. And they said to her: There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And demanding a writing-table, he wrote, saying: John is his name. And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came upon all their neighbors; and all these things were noised

abroad over all the hill-country of Judea: And all they that had heard them laid them up in their heart, saying: What an one, think ye, shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him. And Zachary, his father, was filled with the Holy Ghost: and he prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: because he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people.

Brief Lessons.

I. Zachary and Elizabeth at their already advanced age had no child, but they bore with patience their childlessness, which, among the Jews, was reckoned a reproach. Hence married persons without children should learn that, although they may pray to God for children, they should leave the granting of their petition with resignation to him. For many married persons, who would bring up children badly, and thereby ruin both their children and themselves, and for others, whose children after the most careful training would prove degenerate, is it not a mercy if God gives them no offspring? And when such would be the case is surely known to Him who knows all things.

II. The neighbors and kinsfolk of Elizabeth rejoiced with her at her happiness, and gave her joy. We too, in like manner, should be glad when any thing good happens to our neighbor, and thank and praise God therefor. For thus we become partakers in the happiness of others; whereas, by envy and grudging, we make ourselves miserable for time and eternity.

III. The name John, which signifies *avored by God*, was given to the child by God himself, and it was the constant endeavor of John to make his life answer to his name. We receive from the Church, in holy baptism, the name of some saint, that we may follow our patron saint in virtue. Let us strive, therefore, to correspond with this intention.

IV. Because Zachary would not believe the announcement of the angel, he became dumb; but when he believed, his tongue was loosened. Thus the Lord often punishes even the pious; but sooner or later he heals their wounds. So, too, he punishes sinners; but when they return into themselves, and change their lives, he either removes from them their punish-

ment, or gives them grace to bear it longer, for the sake of making greater satisfaction.

V. Zachary openly and publicly praised God for the favor he had obtained. Woe to those who bury in forgetfulness the benefits received from God, and render no thanks therefor. Can they hope to receive still more? No; *for the hope of the unthankful shall melt away as the winter's ice* (Ecclus. xvi. 29).

VI. What a one shall this child be? Fathers and mothers, often ask yourselves this question: What can, what ought to become of my children, considering the teaching, the example, the training that I give them? and then govern your conduct accordingly.

Prayer to St. John.

St. John, blessed forerunner of Jesus Christ, mirror of true penance, burning and shining light, who by thy teaching and example didst show to men the way to Christ, I beseech thee, by thy penitential life, that thou wouldst obtain for me, from him whom thou didst point out as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, grace, that fearing God's wrath against the impenitent, I may at last do true penance for my sins, mortify my sinful flesh according to thy example, serve God in purity and sanctity, and finally, in the land of eternal happiness, follow forever the Lamb who on the altar of the cross was slain for me. Amen.

Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles.

JUNE 29.

Life of St. Peter the Apostle.

Peter, formerly called Simon, was a son of Jonas of Bethsaida, in Galilee, and a brother of Andrew, by whom he was brought to Christ, who at once changed his name and called him Peter. When, soon after, Jesus said to both of them on the sea of Tiberias, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers

of men," they both left their nets and followed him. From this time forward, Jesus was constantly giving him particular proofs of his love. From the ship of Peter he taught the thronging multitude, and to him he promised, that on him, as upon a rock, he would build his Church, against which the gates of hell should not prevail. Our Lord took Peter with him at the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead; at his own transfiguration on Mount Thabor; at the beginning of his passion in the garden of Gethsemani. To him he promised the keys of the kingdom of heaven; for him he specially prayed that his faith might not fail; and him he commanded to strengthen his brethren. After his resurrection he appeared particularly to Peter, and three times commanded him to feed his flock. But Peter had, above all the other Apostles, made himself worthy of this pre-eminence, by his living faith, his humility, his love, and his zeal for the honor of Jesus; for he it was who, before the other Apostles, made the confession, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*. He showed his humility when, on taking a great multitude of fishes, he said, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*. Out of love he desired to remain always with Christ on Mount Thabor, to prevent him from suffering; and out of love he declared himself ready with Christ to live or die; nay, he even declared most confidently, that though all should be scandalized in Christ, yet he would not be. When Jesus was taken prisoner, Peter showed himself to be most courageous by cutting off the ear of one of his Master's enemies, and by following him to the house of Caiphas. Three times, indeed, did he, as no one else did, deny his Lord out of fear; but the look of forgiving love which Jesus cast upon him, forced from him tears of the deepest contrition, and three times afterwards, accordingly, he made that confession, *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*.

After he had received the Holy Ghost, full of courage, he confessed Christ crucified, and preached him in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Ionia, and Bithynia. At Jerusalem he was once already condemned to death, but was set free by an angel. In the year 54 he went to Rome, whence, after a nine years' residence, he was banished, with many other Christians.

Upon returning thither again he was confined in the Mamertine prison, and finally, on June 29, in the year A. D. 66, under the emperor Nero, he was crucified; his head, by his own desire, hung downwards, because he thought himself unworthy to die like Christ.

Let us honor Peter, the rock of the Church, in his successors, the Popes of Rome. Let us strive to make amends for our sins by such penance as his.

Prayer to St. Peter.

O God, who of a poor fisherman made St. Peter to be the prince of the Apostles and the head of the Church, we beseech thee, through his intercession, that thou wouldst make us true sheep of thy fold. Grant us, therefore, to hear his voice, to follow his doctrine, to tread in his footsteps, that we may come to the heavenly pasture, where the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, shall feast his elect forever with the blessed vision of God, and with joys unutterable. Amen.

Life of St. Paul, Apostle.

Paul, before his conversion called Saul, was of the tribe of Benjamin, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and a pupil of Gamaliel. Full of zeal for the law, he bitterly opposed the Christians. As he was travelling to Damascus to persecute them, he was, on the way, converted by Christ. How indefatigably he thenceforward worked in the vineyard of the Lord, and what dangers and persecutions he underwent, no pen can describe. It is almost incredible with what zeal and perseverance he preached Christ, in chains and fetters, under blows and scourges, in hunger and thirst, and untold times at the peril of his life. And yet he was so humble that he counted himself the least of the Apostles, and always praised God that he had thought him worthy to suffer for his name. After he had at last fought a good fight, and finished his course—having everywhere zealously preached the Gospel, and still more zealously practised it—he received the crown of justice (2 Tit. iv. 7). The emperor Nero caused him to be beheaded on the same day on which Peter was crucified.

Prayer to St. Paul.

Thou chosen vessel, St. Paul, who didst bear the name of Jesus before Gentiles and before kings, who didst suffer so much for him, and who didst not permit thyself to be by any thing separated from his love, and didst therefore receive from God the crown of justice, oh pray for me, that I, who by my sins and passions am a vessel of wrath and dishonor, may, by my zeal for virtue, become henceforth a vessel of honor; procure for me grace, that I may earnestly and unsparingly fight against the enemies of my salvation with the sword of God's word, and never suffer any trial or adversity to separate me from the love of Jesus; that having fought a good fight, I may receive, with thee, the crown of justice.

The Introit of the Mass consists of the words spoken by St. Peter after having been delivered from the prison at Jerusalem. *Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent his angel and hath delivered me out of the hands of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews* (Acts xii. 11). *Lord, thou hast proved me and known me; thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who hast consecrated this day by the martyrdom of thy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, grant to thy Church, in all things, to follow their doctrines, through whom the true faith was first proclaimed. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Acts xii. 1-11.)

In those days: Herod the king stretched forth his hands, to afflict some of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take up Peter also. Now it was in the days of the Azymes. And when he had apprehended him, he cast him into prison, delivering him to four files of soldiers to be kept, intending after the pasch to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same

night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And behold, an Angel of the Lord stood by him: and a light shined in the room: and he striking Peter on the side raised him up, saying: Arise quickly. And the chains fell off from his hands. And the Angel said to him: Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said to him: Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And going out he followed him, and he knew not that it was true which was done by the Angel: but thought he saw a vision. And passing through the first and the second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city, which of itself opened to them. And going out, they passed on through one street: and immediately the Angel departed from him. And Peter coming to himself, said: Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

Brief Lessons.

I. Herod, a nephew of Herod the Great, under whom Christ was born, a zealous Jew, persecuted the Christians, and accordingly caused St. Peter to be imprisoned, intending, after Easter, to have him put to death publicly, in order to furnish a spectacle for the immense multitude at that time assembled at Jerusalem. What infamy! to do evil, and even to put men to death, to please others and to gratify their evil passions. Have you never done the like?

II. The Church prayed to God without ceasing, for Peter, and her prayer was heard. So will the common prayer of the Church gain a hearing. Let us pray, therefore, for one another, that God may deliver us from our enemies and free us from the chains of sin. Are not these chains heavier and more disgraceful than those of St. Peter?

III. Peter slept quietly in prison, for he was imprisoned, not for any misdeed, but for preaching the cross of Christ, and he therefore committed his life and death to God. So it is with him who suffers innocently; although he feels the pressure of his sufferings, he is always of good courage, because he confides in God, who never forgets or forsakes his own.

IV. Thus all the designs of the enemies of the Church were defeated, and her Head wonderfully defended her against the

first attacks of hell. The enemies of the Catholic Church may oppress and persecute her, and subject her ministers and children to insult and death, but to prevail against her—no, that they will never be able to do. God will deliver and protect his spouse; and, should it be necessary, will send an angel from heaven. Never despair, therefore, O child of the Catholic Church.

Gospel. (Matt. xvi. 13–19.)

At that time, Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 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 to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou 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.

Why did Christ ask his disciples, *Whom do men say that the Son of man is?*

To give them an opportunity to confess their belief in him as the true Son of God, and upon that open confession to ground a promise of the highest importance. This question contains, besides, other lessons. It shows that though we should not be anxious as to what people say of us, yet neither should we be indifferent. When they speak evil of us, if with cause, we ought to endeavor to correct the evil; if without cause, we must console ourselves that we have a good conscience; but when they speak well of us, oh, then we should strive to be good, and to continue good; nay, continually to become better. That Jesus asked what the people, and not what the Pharisees said of him, shows that to learn the truth concerning any person, we ought not to inquire of his enemies.

Why does Christ call himself the Son of man ?

It was in order that, his Godhead being veiled under the form of man, he might thus test the faith of his disciples, and teach us that he was both true God and true man. This belief is as necessary to our salvation, as it was necessary to our redemption that Christ should be not only God, but man also. As God alone he could not have suffered, and therefore could not have made satisfaction for us ; but had he suffered as man only, there could have been no perfect and sufficient satisfaction.

What did Peter mean to say by those words, *thou art Christ, the Son of the living God ?*

He thereby confesses that Christ is the Son of God, begotten from all eternity, and therefore of the same substance with the Father ; that by him all things were made, and that from him comes our life, in soul and body. O divine Saviour, thou who art my life, grant that I, a feeble creature, may forever remain united to thee.

How did Peter know that Christ was the Son of God ?

Christ says that Peter knew this through divine inspiration, and not by human reasoning. Faith is a gift of God and a divine light, illumined by which man believes what God has revealed, not because he comprehends it by reason, but because God has said it.

What reward did Peter receive for his confession ?

Christ pronounced him blessed that God had given him such grace, conveyed to him the highest authority in his Church, and gave him the pre-eminence above all the Apostles, by promising him that upon him, as upon a rock, he would build his Church, against which the gates of hell should not prevail, and that he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. So pleasing and meritorious in the sight of God is humble and living faith.

What is the meaning of the expressions, *the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and to bind and to loose ?*

The keys of heaven, according to the usage of the language of the East, are an emblem of the chief power (Isaias xxii. 22). By giving to Peter, therefore, the keys of the kingdom of

heaven, Jesus invested him with the supreme power in his Church.

The expression, *to bind and to loose*, according to Isaias, signifies to open and to shut heaven, and here consequently denotes the power, as representative of Jesus Christ, to receive persons into the Church, and to excommunicate them from it; to forgive sins, or to retain them; to impose or to remit punishments for them; to establish laws and prohibitions, to abolish them, to change them, and, in general, to govern and direct in every thing, as shall be necessary for the preservation of unity and order in the Church, and for the good of the faithful.

Was the power to bind and to loose given to Peter only?

No, but to the rest of the Apostles also; the power of the keys, however, Jesus gave only to Peter. Peter, therefore, and his successors, possess this supreme power, while the other Apostles and their successors, the bishops, possess the authority intrusted to them by Christ, to be exercised by them in unity with the rock.

Aspiration

O Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, who hast built thy Church on St. Peter, as on a rock, who hast confided to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and constituted him and his successors thy representatives upon earth, grant us thy grace, that in all the laws we may obey them as thyself, that, resting upon the rock of truth, we may be immovable in all storms, and steadfastly persevere in the way of good works.

Of the Pope.

What is the Pope to the Catholic?

The representative of Jesus Christ, and the visible head, appointed by him, for the government of his Church.

Did Christ actually appoint such a supreme head?

Yes, and that in the person of St. Peter. He gave him the significant name, Peter—the rock; distinguished him always above the other Apostles—on which account the evangelists

name him always before the rest (Matt. x. 2; Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 14); to him, and to him only, promised to make him the rock of his Church, and to give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that is, the fulness of power for governing his Church; and finally, before ascending to heaven, in fulfilment of this promise, laid upon him the charge to feed *his lambs*, that is, the faithful, and *his sheep*, that is, the bishops themselves; and this power Peter uniformly exercised. He presided over the council on occasion of the choosing of Matthias; and at the council of Jerusalem, took precedence of all the others, and gave the final decision (Acts xv. 7).

Why did Christ appoint a visible head for the Church?

It might be enough for us to know that he had actually appointed such a head, but the appointment itself arises so plainly from the nature of things, that we may easily see the wisdom of it, unless we wilfully shut our eyes. The Church is an outward, visible society, united together not only by inward faith in Christ, but also by outward, visible signs. As such a visible head is as necessary for the Church as for a body, a family, a society, a state, to prevent disunion, confusion, and the consequent destruction of the whole, this supreme head is the centre of the whole, the final judge, the authoritative teacher. Thus only can order, unity, harmony subsist, and schisms, heresies, and their consequences, be prevented. Hence St. Jerome says, "For this reason one from among the twelve was chosen, that by the appointment of a head the occasion of disunions might be removed."

For how long time did Christ give a head to his Church?

Without doubt for so long as should be necessary; but a head must be necessary so long as men are men, subject to error, carried away by passion, and inclined to disunion and separation; that is, till the end of time.

Who is now this supreme head?

The Bishop of Rome, or the Pope. It is undeniable that Peter occupied the bishop's see at Rome, and that he died there. Equally indisputable is it, that the successor of St. Peter entered upon possession of his rights, and, together with the Episcopal See of Rome, inherited also the office possessed

by him. From the first centuries this has ever been acknowledged by the faithful, who have accordingly called the Bishop of Rome, Pope—that is, the father of the faithful. And how clearly does history show that Peter and his successors are the rock, upon which the Lord has immovably founded his Church! What storms have not broken upon the Church! Persecutions from without and within, heresies and schisms without number, and infidelity in its most hideous form, have raged against the Church, and what has been the consequence? Nations have often fallen away from the Church, single bishops have proved betrayers of their flocks, the Sees of the Apostles themselves have been subject to the vicissitudes of time. And amid all these storms, Rome alone has, for over eighteen hundred years, stood firm. She has come out of every contest victorious, has remained the centre of faith and discipline, and has preserved the unbroken succession of bishops from Peter. Who does not see herein the assistance of Him who forever fulfils that promise of his, *Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* The Pope is, therefore, the visible supreme head of the Church, appointed by Christ for all time; the invisible, all-governing head is Christ himself?

What should we learn from this?

1. How great a happiness it is for the Catholic to belong to the Church which is built upon this rock. 2. How heartily every Catholic should acknowledge this happiness, give thanks to God, confide in the government of the Pope, submit to his decisions and decrees. For whoever opposes him, whoever deserts him, deserts the rock, and casts himself upon the stormy waves of the sea of the world, a prey to destruction. Is not this the teaching of every schism and heresy?

What are the bishops?

They are the successors of the other Apostles, who in unity with the successor of St. Peter, or the Pope, are called to guide and rule the Church, to each of whom is usually assigned a certain district, or diocese.

What are the particular duties of the office of bishop?

They are the following:—1. The preservation and propaga-

tion of the Christian doctrine within his diocese. 2. The exercise of their sacred and mysterious functions. Of these they have assigned some to the office of priest, while they have reserved others exclusively to themselves. Of the latter class are the administration of confirmation, the ordination of priests, the consecration of bishops, the anointing of kings, the benediction of abbots and abbesses, the preparation of the chrism, the consecration of churches and altars, the blessing of cemeteries and of the sacred vessels. 3. The external administration of the diocese; in particular the making of laws in regard to affairs within their bishoprics, and a corresponding right of dispensing from them, the holding of a spiritual court with power of punishment, the superintendence of ecclesiastical institutions, such as seminaries, the power of investing with spiritual offices, the administration of church property, the collection of the customary dues for meeting the wants of the Church. Besides, the bishop has certain rights of honor, as, for example, the title Right Reverend, the Throne, the Episcopal dress, &c.

What are we to understand by an archbishop, primate, and patriarch?

Archbishops are the chief-pastors in their own dioceses, like other bishops; but at the same time they have an oversight over a number of bishops and dioceses adjacent to their own, and these different dioceses together constitute what is called a province of the Church.

A primate is the bishop of that See which, in any kingdom or state, is the oldest and most honorable of all. The title may be either one of honor only, or the primate may, as representative of the Pope, have a certain actual authority and jurisdiction.

Patriarchs are bishops who have under their supervision and authority all the bishops and archbishops of several provinces or countries.

Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

JULY 2.

This day is called the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, because on it Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, whom, as the angel had told her, God had blessed with a son in her old age.

[See the Introit of the Mass and the prayer on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, p. 651.]

Epistle. (Canticles ii. 8-14.)

Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills. My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart. Behold he standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices. Behold my beloved speaketh to me: Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: the fig-tree hath put forth her green figs: the vines in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come: my dove in the cliffs of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, show me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears: for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely.

Explanation.

In this lesson, according to the holy fathers, is described the miraculous advent of the Word in our flesh. Christ leaps over the mountains and skips over the hills by destroying pride, and making humility, as it were, the road by which we are to come to him. The roe and young hart are an emblem of swiftness. Christ hastens with ardent zeal to fulfil his work. The wall is human nature, under which Christ concealed himself; wherefore the prophet calls him a hidden God (Isaias xlv. 15). The windows and lattices are, partly, the Holy Scriptures, which speak of him (John v. 39); partly the enlightenment, trials, and graces by which he shows himself always present to men. In the words which follow, Christ speaks to his Church of his advent upon earth, and calls upon her, and upon all souls redeemed by his blood, to detach them-

selves from the world, to press forward in the way of virtue (Phil. iii. 13, 14), and to give themselves up entirely to his guidance, that he may bring them to perfection (Ps. lxxxiii. 3). By the winter which is past, is to be understood the time of heathenism and Judaism, which at his incarnation began to disappear, and to give place to the glorious fruits of Christianity.

Gospel. (Luke i. 39-47.)

At that time, Mary, rising up, went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord. And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour.

Brief Lessons.

I. As soon as Mary heard that Elizabeth was with child, she hastened to her. The alacrity of the Blessed Virgin teaches us that we should take part with gladness in the happiness of our fellow-men, and quickly make ourselves ready to discharge our duties, sacrificing for that object, if necessary, even our own much-loved retirement, our devotions and other exercises of piety.

II. Mary visited her cousin out of real love, not out of unmeaning ceremony. Would that her example were the pattern of our visits!

III. By the visit of the Blessed Virgin, John was sanctified in his mother's womb, and Elizabeth, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, knew, by the miraculous movements of her child, that Mary was the mother of the Lord. Such effects did this visit produce. What would Jesus effect in us, if we receive him with due preparation!

Exposition of the Canticle Magnificat, or "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

In this hymn, Mary with joy praises God, the Lord, that he has regarded her humility, and made her to be the mother of his only-begotten Son, wherefore she should be called blessed by all generations; and she declares the truths and mysteries which the incarnation brought to light. The mercy of God, namely, reaches from generation to generation, to them that fear him. He scatters the thoughts of the proud, and puts down from their seats the mighty; but he exalts the humble. He fills those who hunger for justice with good things, but those who think themselves rich, he sends away empty. He receives all true Israelites, and performs in them the promises which he gave to the fathers. This hymn is repeated by the Church every day at Vespers, in praise of the work of redemption, began by the incarnation of the Son of God in Mary. Would that every Christian, since he becomes one only by Christ being, as it were, born in him, might share those feelings which the Blessed Virgin and mother has expressed in this hymn of praise, and, with the Church, daily praise God for the mystery of the incarnation!

Aspiration.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who didst descend from the highest heavens to the womb of the Virgin Mary, didst therein rest for nine months, and with her didst condescend to visit and sanctify St. John, grant that we, by the practice of good works, particularly of humility, may become partakers of the fruits of thy incarnation.

Feast of St. Ulric, Bishop.

JULY 4.

His Life.

St. Ulric, Bishop of Augsburg, descended from the distinguished family of the Counts of Kybourg, Dillingen, and Wittlingen, was born in the year 890. His parents directed their entire attention to giving their son a good education, and with that object, for the further cultivation of his mind and heart, sent him to the convent of St. Gall, in Switzerland, the monks of which were at that time celebrated both for their learning and piety. Upon St. Ulric's returning thence to his parents, Adalbero, bishop of Augsburg, at once promoted him to the office of chancellor, in which capacity he perfectly answered all expectations. Upon the death of Adalbero, all desired that St. Ulric might be their bishop. He refused, however, to accept this important office, and was first consecrated bishop fifteen years later, upon the death of the successor of Bishop Adalbero, at a very trying time; for there was then not only disunion among the princes of Germany, such as almost to cause war between father and son, together with other calamities, but numerous bodies of Huns were advancing towards Augsburg, plundering and devastating as they came. They were defeated, however, on the Lechfeld. To this victory St. Ulric very greatly contributed; for he prayed day and night, assembled the people in the church, gave Holy Communion to the soldiers on the day of battle, and, with them, advanced against the enemy, wearing as a weapon only the stole, over his ordinary dress. Ulric was equally zealous in the administration of his diocese, and in all practices of piety. In particular, he was unwearied in prayer, and extremely kind to the poor, among whom, a short time before his death, he distributed all his goods. He died in the year 973. As many and great miracles were wrought at his grave (in the church of St. Afra), he was canonized in the year 992, and the church of St. Afra was from that time called St. Ulric's. In pictures he is represented always as a bishop;

an angel extends to him a cross, and he has by him a fish. Hereby it is signified, that in the battle with the Huns, he received a cross from an angel, and that on a certain day in Lent a piece of flesh was, for his sake, changed into a fish. St. Ulric was particularly distinguished for his zeal in prayer, by which he rose to so high a degree of piety. Pray, therefore, gladly, like St. Ulric, and you, too, will become good and pious. It is not possible, writes St. Chrysostom, to live virtuously unless we pray fervently. A soldier is not allowed to go into battle without arms, and a Christian should begin nothing without prayer.

[See the Introit of the Mass, the Epistle, and Gospel, on the Feast of St. Liborius, p. 789.]

Prayer.

O God, who seest that of our own strength we are unable to stand, mercifully grant that, through the intercession of thy holy confessor and bishop, Ulric, we may be defended from all adversities. Through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Feast of St. Willibald.

JULY 7.

His Life.

St. Willibald was born in England, about the year 700. He was of a holy and honorable family; his father was St. Richard, king of the West Saxons; his brother was St. Winnibald; his sister St. Walburga; his cousin St. Boniface, archbishop of Mayence. In the year 721, he accompanied his father and his brother Winnibald to Rome, to the tombs of the Apostles. At Lucca, the brothers lost their holy father, Richard. They thereupon went to Rome, and took the religious habit in a convent. Willibald at this time undertook, in company with some English noblemen, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. On the journey their food was bread and water,

and their lodging the bare ground. They prayed, sang, and carried on spiritual conversation. At Emesa, in Phœnicia, the saint was thrown into prison by the Saracens, as though he were a spy, and was closely confined for some months. But certain good men, who were edified by his virtues and affected by his misfortunes, represented his innocence to the Caliph (the ruler of the Saracens), and obtained his liberation, for which the saint most ardently thanked God. He now, with his pious companions, hastened to Palestine, where they visited the holy places according to the order of the life of Christ.

After seven years he returned to Italy, where, in the monastery of Mount Casino, he filled several offices which were conferred upon him, and by his example contributed very much to bring back the early spirit of the rule of St. Benedict.

In the year 738 St. Boniface arrived in Rome, and besought Pope Gregory III. that he might have his cousin Willibald as an assistant in his apostolic labors in Germany. His petition was granted. Willibald thereupon went with his cousin to Thuringia, was there ordained priest by him, and showed himself, both by word and deed, an efficient missionary. He labored both in France and Bavaria with the happiest results, and that he might carry on his work with the greater respect and advantage, St. Boniface consecrated him Bishop of Eichstadt (July 22, 741), where, at that time, there were but a few houses and a small chapel standing, in consequence of the city having been destroyed by the Huns. St. Willibald now redoubled his zeal, for the vineyard which had been assigned to him to cultivate required the most arduous labor. He exhibited extraordinary charity towards the unfortunate, and had a peculiar gift for comforting the afflicted. For the purpose of more easily attaining recollection in the sight of God, he betook himself at certain times to one of the convents which he had founded—that at Heidenheim. His love of solitude did not, however, hinder him from discharging the duties of a pastor; he took care both of the temporal and spiritual wants of his flock. His strict fasting he continued even at his great age. He died at Eichstadt on July 7, 786, in his eighty-seventh year. God glorified him by many miracles. In the year

1270 the Bishop Hildebrand caused a church to be built at Eichstadt, under his patronage, in which his remains yet rest. It is not the place, says St. Jerome, that makes a man holy, but the disposition of the heart, the holy intention, the fervent devotion. It is not merely to have lived at Jerusalem, but to have lived there holily, that is praiseworthy.

[For the Introit of the Mass, the Epistle, and Gospel, see the Feast of St. Liborius, p. 789.]

Prayer.

O God, who, as on this day, didst translate thy worthy bishop Willibald, heir of an English kingdom, to the eternal inheritance of the angels, mercifully grant that, through his merits and intercession, we may come to be joint-heirs with him in thy glory. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Feast of St. Kilian and his Companions.

JULY 8.

His Life.

St. Kilian was by birth an Irishman, and was descended from a noble family. He received an education suitable to his position, and made great proficiency in virtue as well as in learning. As often as he meditated on the love of Jesus, who shed his blood on the cross for our sins, his heart glowed with the longing desire to carry the light of the faith to the heathen, who were sitting in the shadow of death. The surest method of accomplishing his object appeared to him to be, to enter some religious order. For it was in the religious orders that the chief apostles of the faith were in those days educated. Accordingly he entered the order of the Benedictines, and therein learned the science of the saints. The brothers, believing him the most worthy of the office, chose him for their abbot, or superior, notwithstanding his opposition. Meanwhile

he grew more and more strong in spirit, by self-denial and prayer. He was greatly affected by those words of the Redeemer, *Lift up your eyes and see the countries, for they are white already to harvest* (John iv. 35). To him these harvest-fields were the heathen countries of Germany. With the Apostle he exclaimed, *Neither tribulation nor fear, neither hunger nor thirst, neither nakedness nor persecution, not even the sword shall be capable of separating me from the love of Christ.* He therefore left his monastery, his parents, his country, with eleven companions crossed the sea in the year 685, and landed safely in France. Passing through France he came to Germany, and, according to an old tradition, with the priest Colonat and the deacon Totman, settled on a mountain in Franconia, in order to learn the language and customs of the people. The hill on which the missionary planted the victorious sign of our redemption, the holy cross, is from that circumstance called Kreuzberg, or the hill of the cross.

The ancient Franks were wild hunters and rapacious warriors. Their abodes were in the thick, dark forests; they supported themselves by hunting and rapine, and under the name of Halla or Hulda, worshipped Diana, the goddess of the forest and of the chase. A temple dedicated to her was built by them on Schlossberg, near Wurzburg. They also built places for sacrifice in the neighborhood of large oak-trees. Besides Diana, they also worshipped Frei (goddess of unchasteness), Thor (god of thunder), and Woden (god of war). In honor of these divinities they held dances and drinking banquets in their temples. They made use of different kinds of incantations, predicted fortunes from the intestines of animals, and burnt their dead. For the rest, they were completely overrun with the vices which are inseparable from heathenism. Although, since the miraculous conversion of the king of the Franks, Clovis, in the year 496, some rays of Christianity had penetrated the darkness, yet the seed of the Christian religion which had sprung up was trampled down again by the idolatrous Huns, who, from 630 to 633, desolated Franconia, which at that time was reckoned to belong to the Duchy of Thuringia.

The missionaries, as soon as they had made themselves ac-

quainted with the language of the country, journeyed to Rome, in August of the year 686, to obtain from the vicar of Christ, the chief pastor of the Church, the requisite permission and powers for their great work of conversion; for the Holy Scripture says, *How shall they preach unless they be sent?* (Rom. x. 15.) They laid before the papal see their profession of the faith, and the evidence of their fitness to teach. St. Kilian thereupon was consecrated bishop by Pope Conon, and received authority to announce to the heathen the glad tidings of salvation. The zeal which burned in his heart did not permit him to remain long with his companions in Rome. Notwithstanding the severe season of winter, they commenced their return journey, arrived in February, 687, at Wurzburg, and after having invoked the Divine assistance, commenced to cultivate the wide-spreading vineyard of the Lord which had been assigned to them, beset as it was with many and great difficulties. The missionaries were to Christianize this heathen-land of the Franks; that is, they were to bring about the reception of a religion which obliges one without intermission to combat his passions—those passions which the corrupt man regards as the life of his soul and the source of his happiness; they were to procure the reception of a religion which enjoins humility, contempt of earthly goods, chastity, penance, forgiveness of injuries, love of one's enemies; of a religion which requires man to regard this world as a place of exile, and heaven as his country; to renounce, at least in heart, all temporal goods—those, namely, which he sees with his eyes, which he touches with his hands, which he knows by experience, and to take for good such things as he cannot comprehend, for which he has no inclination, and which lie in another world, into which he will enter after death. Let one but consider all these difficulties, and he will feel the truth of that saying of St. Paul's, *Neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase* (1 Cor. iii. 7).

The seed of the word of God which had been sown, soon bore plentiful fruit; for the preachers of the faith practised the lessons which they taught, and confirmed them by various

miracles. At that time Theobald governed the duchy, in the name of the king of the Franks. Kilian spared no pains to impart to the duke a knowledge of the true faith. He finally yielded to the impressive admonitions of the saint, and to the call of the voice of God, gave up his idolatry, and on the Feast of Easter, 687, was incorporated into the true Church of God by holy baptism. His name, Theobald, was changed to Gorbert (worthy before God). Many of his subjects followed his example; the idols were sunk in the river Maine. The whole of East Franconia would have been in a short time brought to the service of the true God, had it not been that a second Herodias, named Gailana, the widowed sister-in-law of the duke, had sworn the ruin of Kilian. Gorbert had married her; the saint thereupon represented to him that such a marriage was in contradiction to the divine law, and could not, therefore, be sanctioned.

When we see a man walking in the way of sin, let us, with charity, show him the abyss which threatens to swallow him up, and let us admonish him to do penance until he enters into himself, and turns to God.

The duke promised that when he had finished a war which was then about to begin, he would formally separate from Gailana. "For the love of Almighty God," said the well-meaning neophyte, "I have given up every thing, the possession of which is dear and delightful to me. Impelled by the same love, I will now give up my dear wife, since it is not lawful for me to keep her; for nothing is nearer and closer to my heart than the love of God." Gailana, upon learning this, broke out into ungovernable rage, and as the revengefulness of an enraged woman borders on phrensy and knows no bounds, she immediately determined upon murder, and engaged two pagans, with the promise of a large sum of money if they succeeded, to kill St. Kilian and his companions on a certain night. In this design she took advantage of the absence of her husband. At midnight the hired murderers rushed into the room of the saints, who were then just engaged in prayer.

St. Peter writes for all Christians (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13), *Think not strange the burning heat which is to try you, as if some*

new thing happened to you ; but if you partake of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, rejoice, that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. Imbued with this heavenly teaching, Kilian went to meet his murderers with courageous resolution, as Jesus did his betrayer, whereupon the three heroes of the faith were unmercifully beheaded. This happened on the 8th July, 689.

In order that the duke might not find out this cruel murder, the corpses of the saints, together with all the church utensils and priestly vestments, were thrown into a pit. But this evil deed was not allowed to go unpunished of God, who shortly after revealed it to the whole land. One of the murderers, seized with madness and delirium, rushed through the streets of the city, crying out most piteously, "O Kilian, Kilian, I see the sword dyed with thy blood hanging over my head!" At last, with his teeth he tore his own flesh, and so died a horrible death. The other assassin killed himself with his own sword, while the revengeful duchess became a lunatic, and was thus also brought to a frightful end. Let us not, either by word or by example, make ourselves partakers of the sins of others, for otherwise God will punish us as he does those to whom we give occasions to sin.

To promote confidence in the intercession of St. Kilian and his companions, many churches and altars were afterwards dedicated to their honor. Their portraits were stamped on both gold and silver coins, and were also presented to the world in statues of silver, in beautiful paintings, and on military banners. Portions of their relics were distributed to many hundred churches ; many pious Christians have in their last wills appointed these patrons of their country their heirs. Their burial-place, in the new minster church, is, on the 8th July, visited by many thousand persons. Thus are they honored after death, who during life have promoted the glory of God.

If St. Kilian were to appear in our times as a preacher, he would call out to us, as of old, *Enter ye in at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow*

is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it (Matt. vii. 13, 14).

Let us before all else seek the kingdom of God and his justice; that is the condition upon which the saints assure us of their intercession in our behalf before God.

The Introit of the Mass contains a prayer of consolation: *The salvation of the just is from the Lord, and he is their protector in the time of trouble. Be not emulous of evil-doers, nor envy them that work iniquity* (Ps. xxxvi.) Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who givest us joy by the annual solemnity of thy holy martyrs, Kilian, Colonat, Totman, mercifully grant that we may be animated by the examples of those in whose merits we rejoice. Through Jesus Christ.

Aspiration.

How happy for you, O holy Apostle of Franconia, that by the stormy sea of time you are come to the land of everlasting joy! Oh, remember the Church planted by your labors, watered by your sweat and tears, made fruitful by your blood, and pray the chief pastor, Jesus Christ, that he may be pleased to guide, protect, and strengthen, deliver and preserve us unto life eternal. Amen.

Feast of St. Henry.

JULY 15.

His Life.

Henry, surnamed the Pious, was born at Abbach, in Bavaria, the 6th May, in the year 792. His father was Henry the Short, duke of Bavaria, and his mother, Gisella, daughter of Conrad, duke of Burgundy. The charge of his education was intrusted to St. Wolfgang, bishop of Regensburg. In the year 995 he succeeded his father in the dukedom of Bavaria,

and soon after married Cunigund, daughter of Siegfried, count of Luxemburg; they both, however, took vows of perpetual chastity. On the death of the Emperor Otho III., Henry was elected Roman Emperor, and was crowned at Mayence, on the 6th of June, 1002. He never lost sight of the end for which he had been so highly exalted by God, and hence his great zeal to promote the honor of God and the dignity of the Church, to preserve peace in his territories, and to provide in all things for the welfare of his people. He engaged in no war, unless for the defence of his people. He sent zealous missionaries into Poland and Bohemia, in order to bring the heathen of those countries into the bosom of the Church. He gave a helping hand to St. Stephen of Hungary, in his undertaking of bringing those of his subjects who as yet were ignorant of Jesus Christ, to the knowledge of the truth. He was deeply impressed with the conviction that, according to our progress in that truth would be our progress in Christian perfection. By slanderers and evil tongues, the devil, who by these means has wrought so much evil in the world, excited in his mind the suspicion that Cunigund, who lived with him as a sister, had violated her marriage fidelity. Cunigund, who had observed this, cleared herself from this suspicion, by a method not unusual in those times, the ordeal of fire; she walked upon red-hot ploughshares, without suffering harm. This miracle deeply humbled St. Henry, who did every thing in his power to make amends for the reproach cast upon his chaste wife. No sooner had he heard of the innocence of St. Heribert, archbishop of Cologne—against whom, in want of proper knowledge, he had allowed himself to be prejudiced—than he threw himself at his feet, and would not rise up until assured of his sincere forgiveness. The churches which had been destroyed by the pagan Slaves he rebuilt at great expense; founded, in the year 1006, the Bishopric of Bamberg, built the cathedral there, and re-established the overthrown Sees of Hildesheim, Magdeburg, Basil, Meissen, and Merseburg. He was accustomed to attend the holy sacrifice with the deepest devotion, and very frequently received Holy Communion. He had a very great desire to renounce the world, and to spend

the remainder of his days under obedience, in the cloister; but pious persons strongly represented to him that his true vocation was to reign with wisdom, and to sanctify himself on the throne. While making a journey to Saxony he was seized with a severe illness at Gruningen, a castle near Halberstadt. He felt that his days were coming to an end; accordingly, he received the holy sacraments with great devotion, sent for the empress, and once more declared that he had done her injustice by having entertained suspicions of her fidelity. He then took her by the hand, and in the presence of many prelates, of the principal personages of his court, and of the relatives of the saint, whom he particularly sent for, he gave her up to them, with the words, "Behold, as you, or rather Jesus Christ, gave her to me, so I give her back to you, a pure virgin, as she was when I married her." Soon after the emperor was called away to a better kingdom, in the night of the 13th July, 1024, in the 52d year of his age, and the 22d of his reign. His corpse was, according to his own directions, taken to Bamberg and buried in the cathedral. The Lord gave witness to the sanctity of his servant by many miracles. He is the chief patron of all the diocese of Bamberg. As he was, during his reign, the terror of his enemies, his feast was inserted in the calendar in the year 1631, by Pope Urban VIII., at the request of the Emperor Ferdinand II., on occasion of the calamities of the Thirty Years' War.

After the death of her husband, St. Cunigund went to Kauffungen and procured the dedication of the convent church which she had built there. When this solemn ceremony was finished, she went before the altar, laid down her crown and robe of purple, adorned with gold, had her hair cut off, and put on the habit of a nun. All present were deeply moved, and shed plenteous tears. But she retired into the convent, and took her place in the community as the lowest among the sisters. To reading and prayer she joined handiwork and other penitential practices. On the 3d of March, 1040, she, so heavenly herself, was called to heaven. By her own request, her corpse was taken to Bamberg, and buried by that of her royal husband. Grateful posterity has raised to her a beautiful monument.

The Introit of the Mass. *The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak judgment; the law of God is in his heart* (Ps. xxxvi. 30). *Be not envious of evil doers, nor envy them that work iniquity.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who didst translate St. Henry from the height of a temporal to an eternal kingdom, we humbly pray thee that, as thou didst give him grace to overcome the allurements of the world, so too thou wouldst enable us to shun those temptations, and with pure hearts to come to thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (See the Feast of St. Joachim.)

Gospel. (Luke xix. 12-26.)

At that time, Jesus said to the multitude this parable: A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And calling his ten servants, he gave them ten pounds, and said to them: Trade till I come. But his citizens hated him: and they sent an embassy after him, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass that he returned, having received the kingdom: and he commanded his servants to be called, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. And the first came, saying: Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said to him: Well done, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities. And the second came, saying: Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said to him: Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying: Lord, behold here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin; for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up what thou didst not lay down, and thou reapest that which thou didst not sow. He saith to him: Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up what I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow: and why then didst thou not give my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have exacted it with usury? And he said to them that stood by: Take the pound away from him, and give it to him that hath the

ten pounds. And they said to him : Lord, he hath ten pounds. But I say to you, that to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound : and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him.

What is the meaning of this parable ?

The *nobleman* is Christ ; the *far country* is the glory of heaven, into which he entered after his passion ; the *servants* are the Apostles and all Christians who, by using their gifts faithfully, prepare themselves for his coming again ; the *pound* is the gift of Christianity ; the *citizens*, the Israelites who would not receive the truth, and all who oppose Christ.

What reward do they receive who make good use of their gifts and graces ?

Great happiness and glory in the kingdom of heaven.

Why is that servant who kept his pound laid up in a napkin called wicked ?

Because he who has not done any good works, has thereby already done evil.

Why is the pound that was laid up given to him who has ten pounds ?

Hereby we are taught that he who yields a willing and ready belief to the divine teachings, is carried forward in knowledge step by step ; while he who has no such disposition is deprived even of the scanty light that he has, and becomes more and more blind to the truth.

What will be the lot of the wicked servant ?

He must suffer the most horrible of deaths—death eternal, for the loss of the pound is the loss of grace ; and if grace be lost, happiness is lost.

Are they to be envied who have received from God uncommon gifts, such as bishops and princes ?

They are more fit to be pitied than envied ; for, according to the gospel of to-day, the account required of them will be according to their gifts.

Feast of the Holy Scapular.

THIRD SUNDAY IN JULY.

What does the Church celebrate on this day ?

The feast of the Confraternity of the Holy Scapular. The scapular was originally a penitential dress of hair-cloth, worn over the shoulders (whence comes its name), and had a two-fold object : thus, as a penitential habit, it was intended continually to incite one to penance, mortification of the flesh, and the observance of chastity ; while, as a token of remembrance given by Mary, decorated with her image, it was to remind one of her example, to inspire confidence, and to encourage the members of the confraternity to conduct themselves as her children.

This confraternity was founded by the venerable Simon Stock, a Carmelite monk, who lived in the middle of the thirteenth century. According to the trustworthy accounts of contemporary writers, it originated in the following manner : As he was one day praying before an image of the Blessed Virgin, she appeared to him with a scapular in her hands, which she extended to him with these words : “ This is a token of my love towards your order, a true means of promoting my honor, and so powerful a sign of salvation, *that whoever shall wear it with holy dispositions, and persevere in good works till death*, shall never be cast into everlasting flames.” The Catholic Church has granted to this confraternity many indulgences. It had no sooner become known, than vast numbers of Christian people hastened to be enrolled in it. Among its members have been St. Louis, king of France, St. Edward, king of England, and many princes and princesses.

From what has been said, it is plain that this confraternity has a holy object, and that it is well adapted to furnish a continual sign of warning to such light-minded persons as easily forget their obligations : further, that for these reasons it is so far from being despicable, that it is much to be wished that people would everywhere revive it, for the honor of Mary and for the salvation of souls, by a life fitted to that end.

What is to be observed by the members of this sodality ?

In order to have a share in the merits of the sodality, every member must, 1. Shun sin, and, according to his state of life, live chastely. 2. Say every day, if possible, seven times, Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father. 3. Strive to serve God by venerating Mary, and imitating her virtues.

These rules, it is true, are not binding under penalty of sin, but the breach of them deprives us of all merit ; and is not this something to be taken into account ? *He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly* (2 Cor. ix. 6).

[For the Introit of the Mass, see the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.]

Prayer.

O God, who hast honored the Order of Carmelites with the particular title of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, thy mother, mercifully grant that, protected by her prayers whose commemoration we this day celebrate with a solemn office, we may deserve to arrive at joy everlasting. Who livest. Amen.

Epistle. (Ecclus. xxiv. 23-31.)

As the vine, I have brought forth a pleasant odor : and my flowers are the fruit of honor and riches. I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth ; in me is all hope of life and of virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits. For my spirit is sweet above honey, and my inheritance above honey and the honeycomb. My memory is unto everlasting generations. They that eat me, shall yet hunger : and they that drink me shall yet thirst. He that hearkeneth to me, shall not be confounded : and they that work by me, shall not sin. They that explain me shall have life everlasting.

Explanation.

These ascriptions of praise are properly to be understood of the Eternal Wisdom of God. No one was so filled with the spirit of God, and with the heavenly fruits of this divine wisdom, as Mary. For this reason, the Church applies this epistle

to her, thereby encouraging us fervently to honor the Blessed Mother of God, in whom the Eternal Wisdom dwelt bodily, and through whom he was given to us, that by her intercession, our understanding may be enlightened, our will strengthened, and we inspired with fresh zeal to practice ourselves, and to prevail on others to practice also, whatever is chaste, becoming, and holy.

Gospel. (Luke xi. 27, 28.) [See Rosary Sunday.]

Feast of the Holy Penitent, Mary Magdalen.

JULY 22.

Her Life.

Mary Magdalen, a sister of Lazarus and of Martha, of Bethany, was a notorious sinner in Jerusalem. Moved by the preaching of Jesus, she did public penance. She went openly into the house of the Pharisee with whom Jesus was sitting at table, threw herself at his feet, anointed them with precious ointment, washed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Jesus, knowing her contrite heart, forgave her her sins (Luke vii. 37, 38), and from that time forward she became the most zealous and faithful of the women who were disciples of our Lord. She followed him, always ministered unto him of her substance (Luke viii. 3), and when he died, was standing under the cross.

Sinner! have you followed Magdalen in sin? Follow her, then, in penance, that in you too there may be verified what the Church sings of St. Magdalen. She who committed so many sins, returns from the abyss of hell to the gates of life; she who, by her frailty, scandalized many, from a vessel of shame becomes a vessel of glory.

At the Introit of the Mass, the Church, as if in the place of St. Magdalen, cries out, *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me; but I have understood thy testimonies, O Lord; I have seen an end of all perfection; thy commandment is ex-*

ceedingly broad (Ps. cxviii.) Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Lord, that we may be helped by the intercession of blessed Mary Magdalen, entreated by whose prayers thou didst raise up again to life her brother Lazarus, who had been dead for four days. Who livest.

Epistle. (Canticles iii. 2-5, and viii. 6, 7.)

I will rise, and will go about the city: in the streets and the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him and I found him not. The watchmen who keep the city found me: Have you seen him whom my soul loveth? When I had a little passed by them, I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him: and I will not let him go till I bring him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roses and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up, nor awake my beloved till she please. Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death; jealousy as hard as hell; the lamps thereof are fire and flame. Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it: if a man should give up all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing.

Brief Lessons.

I. By the *bride*, the holy fathers understand the soul which seeks its spouse, Christ; and by the *busy seeking in the city*, a too great and inordinate activity even in good works. But in vain is the spouse sought in this manner; for too much business confuses the mind, nourishes vanity, and by manifold cares fixes the thoughts on earthly things.

II. By the *watchmen* are to be understood the priests, teachers, and rulers of the Church. For you, O loving souls, who have lost your spouse, this is the way to come to Jesus: ask direction of these watchmen, and when you have received it follow it; give yourselves to prayer with perseverance, and with the resolution to seek thereby, not enjoyment, but God only. Whatever you do, do with a pure intention, for God's sake, and thus you will find Jesus again.

III. The soul that thus seeks Jesus, he goes to meet, gives himself up to, takes up his abode in, with all his love, with all his treasures. Who can comprehend this love and delight? Go and make trial of it!

IV. The soul which has found Christ, for delight forgets all outward things, and no longer has love or joy but for and in Christ. How should it be otherwise? What can be wanting to him who truly possesses Christ? This love for him who loved us unto death, shows itself by outward acts that are heroic. So Mary Magdalen loved Jesus. Follow her example.

Gospel. (Luke vii. 36-50.)

At that time, one of the Pharisees desired Jesus to eat with him. And he went into the house of the Pharisee, and sat down to meat. And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, and standing behind, at his feet, she began to wash his feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. And the Pharisee, who had invited him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: This man, if he were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner. And Jesus answering, said to him: Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. But he said: Master, say it. A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which, therefore, of the two loveth him most? Simon answering, said: I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said to him: Thou hast judged rightly. And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon: Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she with tears hath washed my feet, and with her hairs hath wiped them. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed my feet. Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less. And he said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves: Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman: Thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace.

What does this gospel teach us ?

I. Magdalen, who had sinned openly, openly did penance. In like manner, he who has given public scandal must seek to make amends for it by public good example.

II. Magdalen confessed her sins, says St. Ambrose, not with words, but with abundant tears of penitence. To tell her sins to Christ, the All-knowing, was not necessary ; but what a confession was there in the posture of humiliation, and in the tears that flowed from the contrite sinner. Would you obtain forgiveness ? Confess with contrition, like Magdalen.

III. When Magdalen washes the feet of Jesus with her tears, wipes them with her hair, and anoints them with precious ointment, she does penance in a manner corresponding to the manner of her sins. Her eyes had led astray herself and others ; for this they are now bathed in tears. Her hair, yes, and her whole head, were previously instruments of vanity, and enticements to sin ; for this she now lays her head at the feet of Jesus, as a sign that henceforth she will seek to please only him. The perfumes and ointments which before had ministered to sin, serve now to prepare Jesus beforehand for his burial. Behold here a genuine model of true penance. What formerly helped to sin, must now help the penitent to virtue ; thus our worldly goods and our strength must be made use of in doing alms-deeds and good works.

IV. After all, the Pharisee still looks upon Magdalen as a sinner, and accordingly feels contempt for Christ. How unjust, and at the same time how uncharitable ! But such is the manner of men. Blinded by passion, they judge others by themselves. Thus the avaricious man thinks another unjust, and the impure man believes another unchaste ; again, how unjust and uncharitable !

V. The words, *Thy faith hath made thee safe*, denote a faith active as love. Faith and love are in truth never separated, for he only truly believes who also loves ; and he only loves according to God's will, who believes in him. Therefore believe in truth, love, and show your love by earnest hatred of every sin, by flying from occasions of sin, by fighting against your passions, by change of your life, and by humble confes-

sion, and as true as God lives, you will be saved, as was Magdalen; the peace of God will enter into your heart.

Aspiration.

O most loving Jesus, with Magdalen, I fall at thy feet, and accuse myself that I have shamefully abused the fatherly kindness with which thou hast blessed me in body and soul, and have misspent all the time of my life past. Whither shall I go for help and consolation, but to thee, O most merciful Jesus, who hast come into the world that thou might seek and save sinners. Give me, therefore, an earnest will to forsake all evil, and to return to thee my chief good, to repent of my sins out of true love, to guard against them for the future, to shun the occasion by which I have hitherto been enticed into sin, and by the practice of good works to redeem the time lost. Grant me this, O Jesus, by thy bitter passion and death, and through the intercession of the holy penitent Magdalen. Amen.

Feast of St. Liborius.

JULY 23.

His Life.

St. Liborius, born in France about the year 310, gave at a very early age indications of his future sanctity. He possessed a great desire for learning, was distinguished for modesty and humility, was very much devoted to the divine service, and frequently manifested his inward devotion by singing psalms. On account of his extraordinary virtues he was unanimously chosen Bishop of Mans, in the year 348. Of the income of his diocese and the gifts of the faithful, he used for himself and his household only as much as was necessary; the rest he spent for the good of the poor and for new churches, of which, with the assistance of some noble families, he built seventeen in his diocese. At last the hour came in which he was to receive from the good man of the house, in whose vineyard he had labored unwearied, the reward of his faithful service. He

fell sick, and God so ordered it, that St. Martin, bishop of Tours, should visit him. Liborius, on his rough bed, was comforted by receiving the blessing of his visitor, and thereupon, on the 23d July, in the year 390, he gently and happily departed this life, to receive above the crown of immortality which God has prepared for all those that love him. The body of the saint was deposited in the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, which had been built near the city by the first bishop of the See, St. Julian. It remained there until the year 836, when, on the petition of Badurad, bishop of Paderborn, who had received a revelation from God, it was, with the permission of the Emperor Louis the Pious, removed to the cathedral of that town. (The right arm, however, was, by the desire of all, retained at Mans.) Upon the occasion of this removal of his remains many miracles took place, and continued to occur afterwards in Paderborn, where, through the intercession of the saint, various persons were freed from their diseases, and particularly from the pains of the stone. Particles of the bones of St. Liborius being sought for even by pious princes, the veneration of the saint thereby spread into many other places. How does it happen, asks St. Chrysostom, that we who consist of soul and body, take not even that care for the former which we do for the latter? We guard and protect the body in every way with care; we call in physicians, we deck it with costly clothing, we give it more food than it needs, we are anxious that it may be always in good health and free from every evil, and when any thing brings it into a state of disorder, we use every means to relieve it therefrom. If, then, we do so much for the body, which is so far inferior to the soul, let us at least do as much for the soul; let us nourish it with the word of God and with meditation on eternal truths; let us heal its wounds with suitable spiritual medicines; let us clothe it with good works; let us adorn it with virtues, with alms-deeds, with prayers; let us cleanse it with tears of contrition for our sins. Thus shall we enjoy the health which is necessary, and gain for ourselves the love of God, from whom, through the merits and grace of Jesus Christ, we shall receive the unspeakable goods of heaven.

Introit of the Mass. *The Lord made to him a covenant of peace, and made him a prince; that the dignity of the priesthood should be to him forever* (Ecclus. xlv. 30). *O Lord; remember David and all his meekness.* Glory be to the Father.

Epistle. (Ecclus. xlv. 17, 21, 25, 26; xlv. 3, 8, 19.)

Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God and was found just, and in the time of wrath he was made a reconciliation. There was not found the like to him who preserved the law of the Most High. Therefore by an oath the Lord gave him glory in his posterity. He gave him the blessing of all nations, and confirmed his covenant upon his head. He acknowledged him in his blessings, he preserved for him his mercy: and he found grace before the eyes of the Lord. He glorified him in the sight of kings, and gave him a crown of glory. He made an everlasting covenant with him, and gave him the great priesthood, and made him blessed in glory. To execute the office of the priesthood, and to have praise in his name, and to offer him due incense for an odor of sweetness.

Gospel. (Matt. xxv. 14-23.) See p. 647.

Prayer.

Almighty, Eternal God, who hast founded thy Church upon the confession of thy name, grant, we beseech thee, that she, celebrating the annual festival of thy holy confessor and bishop Liborius, may, through his intercession, be freed from all adversity. Through Jesus Christ.

Feast of St. James the Greater, Apostle.

JULY 25.

His Life.

James, by birth a Galilean, a son of Zebedee and Salome, was brother to St. John the Apostle, with whom he was called by Jesus to follow him (Matt. iv. 22). He was present at the transfiguration on Mount Thabor (Matt. xvii. 1), at the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mark v. 37), and

other like miracles, and at the bloody sweat in the garden (Matt. xxvi. 37). After the sending of the Holy Ghost, he preached the doctrines of Jesus in Judea, Samaria, and in Jerusalem, where Herod caused him to be beheaded in the year 44. His body was brought to Compostella, in Spain, where it is venerated by vast numbers of the faithful, who make pilgrimages to his grave. St. James was the first of the Apostles who shed his blood for Christ.

[For the Introit of the Mass, see the Feast of St. Andrew.]

Prayer.

Be thou, O Lord, the sanctifier and guardian of thy people, that, defended by the protection of thy Apostle James, they may please thee by their conduct, and serve thee with secure minds. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 Cor. iv. 9-15.)

Brethren: I think that God hath set forth us apostles the last, as it were men appointed to death: because we are made a spectacle to the world, and to Angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ: we are weak, but you are strong: you are honorable, but we without honor. Even unto this hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode, and we labor working with our own hands: we are reviled, and we bless: we are persecuted, and we suffer it. We are blasphemed, and we entreat: we are made as the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all even until now. I write not these things to confound you: but I admonish you as my dearest children: for if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus by the gospel I have begotten you.

Practice.

To do good, and to reap therefrom contempt, mockery, and persecution, was the lot of Jesus and his Apostles. The same awaits the true Christian. Does he desire to observe strictly the commandments of God and of the Church, immediately worldlings and sensual men jeer at him as a fool, and go on to persecute him by word and deed, allowing him to rest nowhere.

And what does he do who is thus persecuted, despised, and regarded as the scum of the world? He bears all in patience, does not curse and blaspheme back again, but blesses, suffers, prays, even for his enemies, does good to them, and seeks in every way to bring them to a better mind. Such is the portrait of a true Christian. He has, accordingly, two conspicuous traits, to be persecuted and calumniated, and to wish and to do good to his persecutors. By this means, O Christian, know yourself.

Gospel. (Matt. xx. 20-23.)

At that time: There came to Jesus the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, adoring and asking something of him. Who said to her: What wilt thou? She saith to him: Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answering, said: You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink? They say to him: We can. He saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink: but to sit on my right or left hand, is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father.

What did this mother ask of Christ?

With the mistaken notion that Christ was about to prepare a great temporal kingdom, she desired for her sons the first places in it. How often do men in general, and parents in particular, act in the like foolish manner! If only their children meet with success in the world, if they obtain dignities, or enter into the ecclesiastical state, they consider themselves to have gained every thing, and accordingly, to secure their object, they allow themselves to employ all sorts of means. But how often are their views false, their aims unworthy and earthly! How many a one is there who has in this manner been promoted to a position to which he never had a call, and which, therefore, will prove his ruin! What a responsibility rests upon such parents! In like manner, how often the seemingly good wishes of men proceed from views and opinions which are not of God! Ought we not to thank God that all which we, in our delusion, wish for, does not come to pass?

Why did Jesus answer, *You know not what you ask?*

To make them understand that her petition rested upon a

false notion. In the first place, they erred in believing that participation in Christ's kingdom was something desirable to the sensual man, whereas, to rule in his Church consists in suffering and patience, in serving and resignation. Then, too, they erred in supposing that he could dispose of the chief places in the kingdom of God arbitrarily. Woe, therefore, to all who enter upon offices in the Church, not with vocation and mission, but uncalled, and for temporal advantages. At the same time, they who are really called should remember that to rule in the kingdom of God is to be a servant, to practise resignation, to drink of the chalice with Jesus.

What are we to understand by the chalice of which Jesus speaks?

The chalice of suffering and affliction of which he was about to drink, and of which, at a later day, the sons of Zebedee were to drink also. James was beheaded, John suffered torture and exile.

Prayer to St. James.

O heroic Apostle, who first of all didst, after the example of Jesus, drink of the chalice of suffering, but now, in the kingdom of his Father, livest upon the holy mountain of Sion, obtain for me, I beseech thee, from Jesus, the grace not to shrink from the chalice of suffering and tribulation, but patiently to accept whatever the hand of God may present to me, whether agreeable or disagreeable, and thereby to become worthy one day to be inebriated with the streams of heavenly joy.

Feast of St. Ann, Mother of the Blessed Virgin.

JULY 26.

Her Life.

All that we know of St. Ann is, that she was married to St. Joachim of the tribe of David, and lived with him in all virtue and piety, but for a long time was childless. This she bore with all patience, till at last the Lord heard her supplications, and made her the mother of the Most Blessed Virgin, and

grandmother to the Saviour of the world. This distinction on the part of God is praise enough for her. On this account the faithful have always shown great veneration for her, and yet continually invoke her intercession. Let us also honor the mother of our mother, the grandmother of our Lord and Saviour, that she may pray for us to him.

At the Introit of the Mass, the Church sings: Let us all rejoice in the Lord, keeping festival in honor of St. Ann, on whose solemnity the angels rejoice, and with one voice praise the Son of God. *My heart hath uttered a good word, I speak my works to the king.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who wast pleased to confer upon St. Ann the grace whereby she became the mother of her who brought forth thine only-begotten Son, mercifully grant that we who keep her festival, may, through her intercession, find help with thee. Through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Epistle. (Proverbs xxxi. 10-31.)

Who shall find a valiant woman? far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her. The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils. She will render him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She hath sought wool and flax, and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands. She is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth her bread from afar. And she hath risen in the night, and given a prey to her household, and victuals to her maidens. She hath considered a field, and bought it: with the fruit of her hands she hath planted a vineyard. She hath girded her loins with strength, and hath strengthened her arm. She hath tasted, and seen that her traffic is good: her lamp shall not be put out in the night. She hath put out her hand to strong things, and her fingers have taken hold of the spindle. She hath opened her hand to the needy, and stretched out her hands to the poor. She shall not fear for her house in the cold of snow: for all her domestics are clothed with double garments. She hath made for herself clothing of tapestry: fine linen, and purple is her covering. Her husband is honorable in the gates, when he sitteth among the senators of the land. She made fine linen, and sold it, and delivered a girdle to the Chanaanite.

Strength and beauty are her clothing, and she shall laugh in the latter day. She hath opened her mouth to wisdom, and the law of clemency is on her tongue. She hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten her bread idle. Her children rose up, and called her blessed: her husband and he praised her. Many daughters have gathered together riches: thou hast surpassed them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands: and let her works praise her in the gates.

Practice.

In this epistle, the Holy Ghost draws for us the portrait of a virtuous mistress of a family, who works day and night for the bodily and spiritual, the temporal and eternal welfare of herself and of those belonging to her, and who thereby becomes the joy of her household, the happiness of her husband, the support of the whole house. Would that all wives were like this picture! How soon then would families become more Christian-like, and households more industrious! Would, also, that this picture might be heeded by those foolish wives who seek to gain reputation merely by beauty, by dress, by vanity; who know no other business than to eat and drink, to do nothing and to sleep, to pay and receive visits, to invent and imitate new fashions, to carry about and exaggerate suspicious reports; who count household cares the last things to be attended to; who leave their children and families to their fate, or even scandalize and lead them into evil by obstinacy, pride, quarrelsomeness, and forwardness; who ruin the fortunes of their husbands, and bring them into poverty, disgrace, and misery! Would that they might bethink themselves, in order that their conduct might not bring upon them, instead of reward, the judgment of God!

Gospel. (Matt. xiii. 44-52.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field. Which a man having found, hideth and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together of all kind of fishes. Which, when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth. 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. Have ye understood all these things? They say to him: Yea. He said unto them: Therefore every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, is like to a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old.

Explanation.

The hidden treasure is faith in the Crucified, who remains concealed from the wise of this world by reason of their pride; the hiding of the treasure denotes that faith is to be preserved only by humility; the selling of all that he hath, teaches that, for the sake of the faith, we must sacrifice all things, do all things, suffer all things. The parable of the merchant furnishes the same lesson. By the parable of the net, the Lord teaches that the universal visible Church of Christ, the kingdom of God upon earth, contains not only the elect, but those also who shall be condemned—the bad as well as the good. At the end of the world there will be a separation, and the bad shall be cast into everlasting fire. Alas for them! Would that they might reflect, and be prudent in time!

Aspiration to St. Ann.

Hail, O blessed mother Ann! Blessed art thou, who, for our consolation, didst bear the mother of our Redeemer. With the greatest veneration, therefore, and full of confidence, we approach thee, beseeching thee that thou wouldst supplicate our divine Saviour to bestow upon us the graces which we need to follow thy ardent devotion, thy fear of God, and to render us worthy one day to behold in heaven the blessed fruit of thy Virgin Daughter's womb, Jesus, and to rejoice forever in the contemplation of him.

Feast of St. Ignatius Loyola.

JULY 31.

His Life.

From time to time heretical teachers have arisen in the Christian Church, but God has also ever raised up holy men, filled with his Spirit, to combat them. Of this sort was Ignatius, whom, with his companions, God opposed to the Lutherans, Calvinists, and others. He was born in the year 1491, at the castle of Loyola, in Spain. Being severely wounded at the defence of Pampeluna (1521), he was, while on his sick bed, so much affected by reading the lives of Christ and of the saints, that he formed the resolution to devote the remainder of his life wholly to the Lord and his Church. In the year 1534, at Paris, he, with six companions (one of whom was St. Francis Xavier), took a vow to labor for the salvation of souls. To this they joined, at a later day, the vows of poverty, of chastity, of perpetual obedience under a spiritual superior chosen by themselves, and also a special vow by which they bound themselves to go to any place whatever, to which the chief pastor of the Church might send them, for the work of saving souls, and that without securing means for their sustenance, but relying only upon the charity of their neighbor. Pope Paul III., in the year 1540, confirmed this new order, of which St. Ignatius was chosen the first general, and gave it the name of "The Society of Jesus." Ignatius continued to labor for the salvation of himself and of others with unwearied zeal, and died completely worn out, on July 31, 1556, pronouncing, in his last moments, the name of "Jesus." St. Ignatius is represented in the habit of the Jesuits, the sweet name of Jesus (I. H. S.) either on his breast, or within a sun which he holds in his hand.

Epistle. (2 Tim. ii. 8-10; iii. 10-12.) See p. 737.

Gospel. (Luke x. 1-9.) See p. 724.

Prayer.

O God, who, through blessed Ignatius, didst strengthen thy Church militant with new support, for the propagation of the greater glory of thy name, grant that, fighting with his help and imitating him on earth, we may deserve to be crowned with him in heaven. Who livest.

Feast of St. Lawrence, Martyr.

AUGUST 10.

His Life.

St. Lawrence, a youth endowed with rare gifts of mind and body, out of love to God and for the salvation of his soul, chose the ecclesiastical state at a time when Christians, and particularly priests, were exposed to great danger by reason of the continual persecution of tyrants. On account of his singular merit he was, notwithstanding his youth, appointed by Pope Sixtus to be archdeacon, in which office, besides his service at the altar, there fell to him the care of the church treasury, and of the poor. When, in the year 258, the bishops and priests were, by command of the Emperor Valerian, sought out, Sixtus was also taken prisoner, and borne away to be put to death. As Lawrence saw him led away to death, he cried out to him, with tears, "Whither are you going, my father, without your son?" Sixtus comforted him, and said to him, in the spirit of prophecy, that in three days a greater martyrdom should befall him, and that meanwhile he should guard the treasures of the church. Lawrence heard him with joy. Valerian, when this was reported to him, required Lawrence to give up the church treasures. He obtained three days' time to consider this demand, and when that was expired, brought before the emperor the poor, among whom he had distributed the church property. Enraged thereat, the tyrant demanded that he should renounce the Christian faith. But Lawrence firmly confessed it, and was thereupon roasted alive by a slow fire, upon an iron grate. He bore this horrible death joyfully, and even

said laughingly to the tyrant, that he ought to cut a piece from his broiled body. He closed his earthly life with the most tender thanksgivings that God had thought him worthy to suffer so much, in order to enter upon life eternal. *He that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal* (John xii. 25).

Introit of the Mass. *Praise and beauty are before him; holiness and majesty in his sanctuary* (Ps. xcvi.) *Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle; sing to the Lord, all the earth.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, that thou, who didst assist St. Lawrence to overcome the fire of bodily torment, wouldst enable us to extinguish the flame of our vices, through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Epistle. (2 Corinthians ix. 6-10.)

Now this I say. He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly, and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings. Every one as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound in you: that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work, as it is written: He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor: his justice remaineth forever. And he that ministereth seed to the sower, will both give you bread to eat, and will multiply your seed, and increase the growth of the fruits of your justice.

Explanation.

This passage most suitably applies to St. Lawrence, who, by doing good to the poor, sowed abundantly for the day of the eternal harvest. In like manner, the poor are to us a field, which, the more plentifully we sow it with alms-deeds, the more plentifully does it bring forth fruit. But that alms may be fruitful, they must be given with cheerfulness. A sour temper and want of cheerfulness are signs of avarice. Let us do good, then! What we give to the poor, we deposit, so to

speak, in God's treasury, from which we shall receive it again with much interest.

Gospel. (John xii. 24-26.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal. If any man minister to me, let him follow me: and where I am, there also shall my minister be. If any man minister to me, him will my Father honor.

What are we to understand by the grain of wheat which dies?

1. Christ, our Lord, who must die in order to bring forth the fruits of redemption, his own glorification, and the conversion of men. 2. Every true Christian who, by mortifying his lusts and evil inclinations, brings forth the fruits of eternal life. Every such mortification is a kind of martyrdom, and as such will be gloriously rewarded by God. Kill and crucify the body, says St. Chrysostom, and you will gain the crown of martyrdom. To suffer patiently disgrace, injustice, and persecutions, to love those who hate us, is, says St. Gregory, a martyrdom of the soul; and St. Augustine writes: The whole life of the Christian, if led according to the Gospel, is a continual cross and martyrdom.

What is it to *hate his life*?

To reject whatever is injurious to the soul. But such hatred is true love, because thereby the soul is preserved to eternal life; whereas, by allowing the soul, out of inordinate love, whatever it desires, it is ruined forever. Thus, it is charity to a sick man not to give him what is injurious to him, though he may desire it vehemently. To such hatred, or rather to such true love of our souls, the Holy Ghost encourages us in Ecclesiasticus xviii. 20. *Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will. If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies.*

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Aspiration.

O Jesus, blessed fruit of the virgin womb of Mary, we thank thee that thou wast pleased, through thy incarnation, to suffer so bitter a death, in order to accomplish our eternal salvation. Oh that we rightly knew this grace, and by our lives imitated thee, as, like so many thousand martyrs, St. Lawrence did, who, by joyfully suffering frightful torments upon the fiery grate, glorified thy name before the whole world! Grant us the strength, with the patience, to bear the adversities thou mayest send upon us, and so to serve thee that we may be eternally honored as true and faithful servants, by thy Father. Amen.

Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

AUGUST 15.

Why is this feast so called?

Because, on this day, according to a very old and pious belief, the Blessed Virgin was, in body and soul, taken up into heaven. This feast is of very great antiquity; it was fixed on the 15th August at the request of the Emperor Maurice, and afterwards, by Pope Leo IV., was extended to the whole Church.

Why are plants blessed on this day?

The Church does it, 1. To testify her joy at the glorious victory gained by Mary over death, the devil, and the world, and at the splendid triumph with which, adorned with so many virtues, as with flowers, she entered into heaven. 2. That these plants, so blessed, may serve to the welfare, in soul and body, of all who use them.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church invites us to universal joy by singing, "Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating this festival in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, on whose assumption into heaven the angels rejoice and give praise to the Son of God." *My heart hath uttered a good word, I speak my works to the king.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

Pardon, we beseech thee, O Lord, the sins of thy servants, that we, who are not able to please thee by our deeds, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of thy Son. Who livest.

Epistle. (Ecclus. xxiv. 11-20.)

In all I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord. Then the Creator of all things commanded, and said to me: and he that made me rested in my tabernacle. And he said to me: Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect. From the beginning, and before the world, was I created, and unto the world to come I shall not cease to be, and in the holy dwelling-place I have ministered before him. And so was I established in Sion, and in the holy city likewise I rested, and my power was in Jerusalem. And I took root in an honorable people, and in the portion of my God his inheritance, and my abode is in the full assembly of saints. I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a cypress-tree on mount Sion. I was exalted like a palm-tree in Cades, and as a rose-plant in Jericho: as a fair olive-tree in the plains, and as a plane-tree by the water in the streets, was I exalted. I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon, and aromatical balm: I yielded a sweet odor like the best myrrh.

Explanation.

At the beginning of this epistle the divine wisdom declares how she seeks to communicate herself to all nations, but has taken up her proper abode only among the chosen people, by divine revelation. And as this abode was in the womb of the Most Blessed Virgin, we see at once why what is said of wisdom is by the Church applied to her. To her God said, as it were, on this day, "Possess the abode destined for thee from all eternity, and the inheritance intended for thee as first among the elect." There she surpasses in glory all other creatures, as the cedar surpasses all other trees; there she shines in the most splendid garments, like the ever-blooming rose of Jericho; from thence, at her intercession, the oil of divine mercy flows down upon the exiled children of Adam, whom she shades,

like the plane-tree, with her love, while like cinnamon, balsam, and myrrh, she refreshes with the sweet odor of her virtues, for the imitation of which she implores for them the grace of God.

Supplication.

O Mary, draw us after thee, that through thy intercession we may obtain mercy, and dwelling under the shadow of thy protection, may become partakers of heavenly happiness.

Gospel. (Luke x. 38-42.)

At that time, Jesus entered into a certain town; and a certain woman named Martha, received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard his word. But Martha was busy about much serving. Who stood and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her therefore, that she help me. And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Why does the Church read this gospel to-day?

Because it readily admits of being applied to Mary, the Mother of God, since she, far more worthily and lovingly than Martha, received, fed, and served the Son of God; with more fervor and attention, too, than Martha's sister, had she heard the word of God, kept it in her heart, and fulfilled it, and in both cases she chose the best part, because she did both with the greatest perfection, and thereby obtained the most glorious reward, which no one shall ever take from her.

What should we learn from these two sisters?

That like Martha, by whom is represented the life of action and business, we should be diligent in fulfilling the duties of our vocation, and in practising good works; but that thereby we should not forget to be like Mary, by whom is represented the life of contemplation, to be fervent in prayer, in hearing the word of God, in meditating upon it, upon the divine perfections, and upon ourselves, in order to render all our works acceptable and meritorious in the sight of God, to sanctify

ourselves, and become worthy of eternal happiness. This contemplative life Christ calls the best part, because, without it, all life and works are but a body without a soul.

What is the one thing necessary?

It is to seek in all things, and before all things, the glory of God and the salvation of the soul. Let a man, therefore, fulfil the duties which are binding upon him; let him take care even for temporal subsistence; be diligent and active; but in so doing, let him look only to God, avoid all uneasiness and distraction, all extravagance and excess, all that is unjust, and sooner sacrifice every thing than suffer injury to his soul. Oh, take care in this way to secure the one thing that is necessary! Of what avail is all else?

Aspiration.

Oh, that I had hitherto cared more for the one thing that is necessary! Oh, unhappy hours which I have squandered on the world, in vanity or pleasure! Ah, where are you now? What shall I one day have from you in eternity? Sorrow and despair. Would that I might recall my life so unprofitably spent! But since that is not possible, I beseech thee, O most merciful God, that thou wouldst grant me the grace to devote the rest of my life to thy service, and to working out the salvation of my soul.

Meditation on the Assumption of Mary.

I. When, where, and how Mary died, we do not positively know. But the belief, supported by a tradition which loses itself in the remotest antiquity, has always been maintained in the Catholic Church, that she died at the time when the Apostles, who had before been dispersed in the wilderness, assembled at Jerusalem, and that she was buried in the garden of Gethsemane. At the request of St. Thomas, who arrived three days thereafter, her grave was opened, but nothing was found therein except the winding-sheet; from which the conclusion was drawn that the Lord had preserved her mortal remains from corruption, and that exempting her from that general

law, as he had before exempted her from partaking in original sin, he had received her at once into heaven. What else was fitting for her from whom the God-man took his humanity; for her who was the daughter of the heavenly Father, the spouse of the Holy Ghost?

II. Throned in heaven, Mary now enjoys all the happiness of which a creature is capable. As this happiness is by the grace of God, so it was necessary for her to co-operate with that grace: her happiness is also the reward of her virtues. Would you come to the like joys? Consider that there is no other way for you, than that in which Mary walked—the way of virtue.

III. Mary is now the queen of all angels and men, our mother, the help of Christians, the consolation of the afflicted, the refuge of sinners, the channel through which, as the holy fathers say, God distributes his grace to men. Her love towards us is without bounds, her intercession with God all-prevailing. How consoling! Let us, therefore, fly to her in all our troubles, and we shall surely experience the power of her motherly intercession.

Prayer of St. Bernard to Mary.

O glorious queen of heaven and earth, at whose assumption the princes of the heavenly court cried out with astonishment, “Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights?” and sang songs of praise, procure for us through thy all-powerful intercession, the graces of which we stand in need. Obtain forgiveness for sinners, health for the sick, strength for the faint-hearted, comfort for the afflicted, help for those in danger, and deliverance for all thy children. Oh, pray on this day of joy that Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord, he who is God, blessed forever, may grant his grace to all who devoutly call upon thy name.

Feast of St. Joachim.

SUNDAY AFTER ASSUMPTION DAY.

His Life.

Joachim, also called in the gospel Heli, the happy father of Mary, and grandfather to Jesus, came of the royal line of David, and was from his youth brought up in piety and the fear of God. His married life with the pious and chaste Ann was childless until they had reached a great age. His continual prayer and other good works were then rewarded by God with that blessed child, whose birth was the beginning of our salvation. He reared her in the fear of the Lord, offered her in her tenderest years to God in the temple at Jerusalem, and soon after gave up his spirit into the hands of his Creator. Oh, that all Christian parents might learn from the parents of Mary to train up their children, not for the world, but for God, from whom they have received them, and who will one day require them again from their hands!

Aspiration.

Oh, blessed and happy pair, Joachim and Ann, to whom the Almighty gave for a daughter the Immaculate Virgin, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ; a grace which is a speaking evidence of your purity, and of your lives being perfectly ordered according to the will of God! Oh, obtain for me grace, that I may serve God chastely. Procure also for all Christian parents the help of the Almighty, that they may bring up their children in piety, and thereby become worthy to partake of your happiness. Amen.

At the Introit of the Mass, the Church particularly praises the liberality of Joachim to the poor, and sings from Psalm exi. *He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor; his justice remaineth forever and ever; his home shall be exalted in glory. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, he delighteth exceedingly in his commandments.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who wast pleased that, before all thy saints, blessed Joachim should be the father of her who bore thy Son, grant, we beseech thee, that we may ever experience his patronage whose festival we celebrate. Through the same Jesus Christ.

Epistle. (Eccelus. xxxi. 8-11.) See p. 749.

Explanation.

According to the declaration of the Holy Ghost, that man is blessed who leads an innocent and undefiled life before God, and flies from every shadow of sin as from a poisonous serpent; who does not pursue riches and treasures, and puts not his trust in gold, the idol and seducer of so many souls. He accomplishes a greater miracle than if he ruled over the elements; and he who has been thus proved is perfect, and merits eternal glory. Blessed also is he who, upon an opportunity to sin, does not offend God, and cannot be brought to sin, however strongly enticed thereto, for such resistance is very difficult: whence it is evident that we ought in no case voluntarily to encounter the occasion of sin, but rather carefully to shun it. Finally, he is blest, who, after the example of St. Joachim, assists the needy according to his ability. He thereby lays up treasure before the Lord, a rich reward in heaven. Live, then, O Christian, an unstained life; love not gold; fly from the occasions of sin; be kind to the poor, and you will be blessed even here on earth.

[For the Gospel, see the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.]

Feast of St. Bartholomew, Apostle.

AUGUST 24.

His Life.

Bartholomew, of Cana, in Galilee, is probably that Nathaniel who was brought to Christ by Philip (John i. 45). Chosen an Apostle, he was an eye and ear witness of all the great things which the Lord did. Filled with the Holy Ghost, he journeyed to India, preached the gospel everywhere, and converted great numbers to Christ. Returning thence, he came, after many labors and sufferings for Christ's sake, to Greater Armenia, smote with dumbness the devils which used idols as their instruments, and cast them out of many persons, one of whom was a royal princess; by which acts he converted a great multitude of persons, together with her parents, to the faith. At last he was cruelly tormented, flayed alive, and then beheaded by Astyages, brother to the king, at the instigation of the idolatrous priests. His body was brought to Rome in the year 983, where it is yet venerated in the church of St. Bartholomew. So much St. Bartholomew did and suffered that he might obtain the kingdom of heaven, and be a faithful disciple of Jesus; and you, O Christian, what are you doing and suffering?

[For the Introit of the Mass, see Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle.]

Prayer.

Almighty, everlasting God, who hast granted us a venerable and holy joy on this day, in the festival of thy blessed Apostle Bartholomew, grant to thy Church, we beseech thee, both to love what he believed, and to preach what he taught. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (1 Cor. xii. 27-31.)

Brethren: You are the body of Christ, and members of member. And God indeed hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly, doctors, after that miracles, then the graces of healings, helps, governments, kinds of tongues, interpretations of speeches. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all doctors? Are all work-

ers of miracles? Have all the grace of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But be zealous for the better gifts.

Explanation.

By the above words the Apostle teaches us, that all the faithful, by virtue of the one true faith, compose the body of Christ. No one is the whole body; each one is only a member. No one, therefore, should exalt himself above others, for all are necessary. No one should desire offices which lie out of his vocation, but each one should keep to that place in the body which is assigned to him—that is, to his calling; should labor therein with zealous love, and thereby contribute his share to the prosperity of the whole Church. Has God called you to be a laborer, envy not the proprietor. Is another more skilful than you, be content with your own gifts; does he fill a higher office, murmur not; for as in the body of man all the members cannot be eyes, so in the spiritual body of the Church all cannot be in high office and position. But what all can and should do, is to be zealous for greater sanctity and charity—for this is, for king and for beggar, the only way to eternal life.

Gospel. (Luke vi. 12–19.)

At that time: Jesus went out into a mountain to pray, and he passed the whole night in the prayer of God. And when day was come, he called unto him his disciples; and he chose twelve of them (whom also he named Apostles): Simon whom he surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon who is called Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot who was the traitor. And coming down with them, he stood in a plain place, and the company of his disciples, and a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea-coast both of Tyre and Sidon, who were come to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases. And they that were troubled with unclean spirits, were cured. And all the multitude sought to touch him, for virtue went out from him, and healed all.

Why does Jesus go up into the mountain to pray?

To withdraw from the throng of people, and to teach us, as St. Bonaventure says, that he who would pray earnestly must

lift up his mind altogether to God, and rise up from out of the depths of temporal and earthly things, if he would have his prayer of any avail.

Why does Christ pray by night?

1. To teach us that we must not only work, but also pray; 2. That the night is particularly fitted for prayer; since all things are then still and at rest, and we thereby are better enabled to collect our thoughts; 3. That we should by prayer arm ourselves against the wiles of the enemy, and against the temptations of the night; 4. To ask for the grace which we need by day, for ourselves and for our neighbor.

Christ was accustomed, says St. Gregory, to pray at night, because during the day he was occupied in teaching and working miracles for the salvation of his neighbor—man. How praiseworthy, therefore, is the order of those households in which it is customary to say in common, every day, the holy rosary, or litany, and the night prayers!

Why did Christ pray on this night in particular?

Because he was about to choose the next day twelve of his disciples to be Apostles, which was certainly a matter of the greatest importance. According to the example of Christ and his Apostles, the Church yet, on the four ember-seasons, fasts and prays for those who receive holy orders, because on the priest depends the welfare or the woe of the people. Let us, then, pray fervently, especially on the ember-days, that God may send us worthy priests and pastors of souls, and richly crown their labors for the salvation of souls.

And coming down with them, all the multitude sought to touch him, for virtue went out from him, and healed all. Thus Christ always joined temporal with spiritual benefits. Superiors, and particularly spiritual superiors, should take care to do likewise; for corporal benefits draw to them the hearts of people, as the magnet draws the iron, and their teachings and admonitions find the easier entrance when accompanied by temporal benefits.

Aspiration to St. Bartholomew.

O St. Bartholomew, who out of love to Christ didst not only part with thy goods, but didst also endure the most cruel death, pray God for me, a vain child of this world, that for love to my Saviour I may readily and joyfully renounce every thing earthly and temporal, crucify my flesh, and become thereby worthy to follow thee in heaven. Amen.

Feast of St. Augustine.

AUGUST 28.

His Life.

St. Augustine was born in the year 354, at Tagaste, a town of Numidia, in Africa. His father, who was first converted to Christianity in the year 371, was Patricius, his mother, St. Monica. His parents bestowed great care upon his education; and Augustine made at Carthage great progress in knowledge, but showed less proficiency in virtue; for he allowed himself to be led into many kinds of sin, and fell also into the heresy of the Manichees. St. Monica, day and night, besought God to have mercy upon her son. Her prayer was heard. From Rome, whither he had gone from Carthage, Augustine came to Milan. Here he often heard St. Ambrose preach, and by degrees the truth of Christianity found entrance into his heart. One day, while meditating in a garden, he heard repeated several times, as if by boys singing, the words, "Take it and read." He thereupon took up the Holy Scriptures and read the words upon which his eyes happened first to fall, and which was that passage in Romans xiii. 13, 14, *Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences.* From that moment his return to God was resolved upon, to the greatest joy of his mother, St. Monica, who had come to Milan

on his account. Augustine was baptized in the year 387; after the happy death of his mother he returned to Tagaste, and afterwards removed to Hippo (Bona), in Africa, of which city he was chosen bishop, in the year 395. After having lived a uniformly holy life, in the course of which he wrote many books concerning Christianity, he died in September, 426. St. Augustine is the patron-saint of doctors of theology, and is represented as a bishop, with a book, holding in his hand a burning heart, and having an eagle (the emblem of the evangelist St. John) by his side.

Epistle. (2 Tim. iv. 1-8.)

Dearly beloved: I charge thee before God and Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, by his coming, and his kingdom: Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. For there shall be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine: but according to their own desires they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables. Be thou vigilant, labor in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. Be sober. For I am even now ready to be sacrificed: and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day: and not only to me, but to them also that love his coming.

Gospel. (Matt. v. 13-19.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men. You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall not pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. He therefore that shall break one of these least com-

mandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Prayer.

Attend to our supplications, O Almighty God, and by the intercession of blessed Augustine, thy confessor and bishop, graciously grant the effect of thy wonted mercy to those, to whom thou grantest confidence to hope for forgiveness. Through our Lord.

Feast of St. Stephen, King of Hungary.

SEPTEMBER 2.

His Life.

Stephen was born at Grun, in Hungary, in the year 969. His father, the fourth duke of Hungary, was Gaisa, and his mother Sarloth. Before the birth of their son they were, with many other noble Hungarians, converted to the Christian faith. They provided for their son the best teachers, who gave him instruction suitable to his parentage. Upon the death of his father, in the year 997, the great work of Christianizing this idolatrous nation was first begun, and was completed by Stephen with success proportionate to the zeal with which he had prosecuted it. In order to devote himself entirely and without distraction to this great undertaking, and by consequence to the best welfare of his people, as well as to secure to himself the assistance of the neighboring states, in case he should need it, he made peace with them immediately upon entering on his reign. His nobles he was accustomed to assemble together, either in his palace or in whatever place he found himself, to lay before them the excellence and purity of the evangelical law. He often accompanied the preachers of Christianity, and himself appealed to his people most earnestly, to open their eyes to the light of truth. There were, however, many who remained firm in their superstition, and even went so far as to

arm themselves to defend it. Although he was inferior to them in numbers, he gained a complete victory over their leaders.

In gratitude he built a Benedictine convent, under the invocation of St. Martin, on the spot where the battle was fought, which was afterwards called the Holy Mountain. On account of the increasing number of Christians, Stephen had resolved to found an archbishop's see in Gran, and to divide his kingdom into ten dioceses. But as the judgment and sanction of the Apostolic See was requisite to the establishment of these bishoprics, he sent the Benedictine abbot Asterich to Rome, in the year 1000, to lay before Pope Sylvester II. the profession of his obedience. He also instructed the abbot to present a petition that his foundations might be confirmed, and that the title of king might be conferred upon him by the Pope, to the end that the honor of it might give the greater weight to what he intended to do further. The Pope sent him a golden crown, with the title of apostolic king, and also presented him with a cross to be carried before him in time of war. On account of his particular devotion to the blessed Mother of God, Stephen declared her the protectress of his new kingdom, and built a splendid church to her honor at Alba, afterwards called Stuhlweissenberg, because there was the residence of the king. To secure quiet for his people, he renewed the old treaties with all his neighbors. The most advantageous of these, both for himself and the Church, was that which he made with St. Henry, king of Germany, who was afterwards crowned emperor, since it prepared the way for his marrying Gisella, sister of Henry, a princess of great piety. She not only confirmed him in his designs for promoting the interests of religion, but increased, both by word and example, his zeal to do good. He was severe in punishing theft, murder, adultery, perjury, and blasphemy. To him is attributed the excellent code of laws which appeared under the name of his father, and which is even yet the basis of the Hungarian constitution. He made provision for the maintenance of poor families, took under his protection widows, orphans, and other helpless persons, and granted to all easy access to his presence.

He went by himself, even at night, and unknown, into the hospitals of the sick, to wait upon them, showing himself a most loving brother to the very humblest of men. He founded at Rome, in the rear of St. Peter's church, a hospital, which he endowed with an abundant income, for Hungarians who resorted to Rome to visit and venerate the holy places of the capital of Christianity. The holy king spent the hours of the day in attending to public affairs of church or state, but the hours of the night he devoted, in great part, to prayer, the reading of Holy Scripture, and meditation on eternal truths. When the Prince of Siebenburgen, his kinsman, invaded his territory, he fought a battle with him and took him prisoner, but afterwards gave him his liberty. The only condition he required upon releasing him was, that he should allow missionaries to preach the Gospel openly to his people.

There is hardly a saint who has endured such severe trials as this king. His children were taken from him by frightful sickness. Emerich, his first-born, the support and comfort of his father, who was canonized by Benedict IX., was the last of whom death deprived him. At last there came the time when the Lord was to reward the great virtues with which he had adorned this holy king. He was already much enfeebled by a malady which had lasted three years, when he was attacked by a fever which brought him to the brink of the grave. He received the holy sacraments with particular devotion, and gently yielded up his sanctified spirit, as from his tender devotion to the Mother of God he had ardently desired, on the day on which the Church solemnly celebrates her glorious assumption into heaven—the 15th August, 1038. He reigned forty-one years, reckoning from the death of his father Gaisa, and thirty-eight years from the time of his receiving the title of king; in all, he lived sixty-nine years. His sanctity was attested by numerous miracles. Forty-five years after his death his sacred body was disinterred, and deposited in the magnificent chapel at Ofen. Pope Innocent IX., in the year 1686, appointed his feast to be kept on the 2d September, because on that day the Christian army of the Emperor Leopold I., in union with the brave Hungarians, by the divine assistance,

gained a glorious victory over the Turks, through the intercession of St. Stephen. This feast is celebrated in Hungary with great solemnity.

[For the Introit, Epistle, and Gospel, see the Feast of St. Henry.]

Prayer.

Grant to thy Church, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that she may possess blessed Stephen, thy confessor, as a glorious intercessor and defender in heaven, whom she had as a promoter while he reigned on earth. Through Christ.

St. Gerard was born in Venetia, of pious and noble parents. He entered early into a monastery, where he fed his spirit with prayer and meditation. After some years, by permission of his superiors, he undertook a journey to Jerusalem. He directed his route through Hungary. St. Stephen, to whom he had become known, persuaded him to remain in Hungary. Seven years later he was appointed by the king to the bishopric of Ezanad, where there were many heathens, and where the Christians themselves were rough and ignorant. The saint preached the Gospel with great success in the city and in neighboring places. He built many churches, for which purpose he received abundant assistance from the king. He carried his charity to the poor so far as to cause their wounds to be dressed in his own chamber, and not unfrequently he gave them his own bed to sleep in, while he himself slept on the bare floor. He wore a penitential habit, and over that a rough woollen garment. In his house he often performed the tasks which belong to the servants. Some heathen noblemen were desirous of introducing idolatry again, and Andrew, a relative of the deceased King Stephen, who had himself been chosen king, acknowledged it. The saint, upon hearing this, thought it his duty to make earnest representations against it. Upon his journey with that design, certain hired assassins attacked him, took him from his carriage, dragged him about on the ground, and assailed him with stones. He prayed to God for his murderers, and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know

not what they do." While thus praying, one of the miscreants thrust a lance into his body, and in a few minutes he expired, on the 24th of September, 1046.

Two other bishops, Bextard and Buld, shared with Gerard the honor of martyrdom. The Roman Martyrology gives him the title of Apostle of Pannonia and Hungary. The Venetians received his remains from St. Ladislaus for veneration in the church of our Blessed Lady at Murano.

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

SEPTEMBER 8.

What feast is this?

It is a commemoration of that happy and joyful day on which the ever-blessed Virgin Mother of God first saw the light of day. The Church accordingly sings, on this day, "Thy nativity, Virgin Mother of God, has brought joy to the whole world; for from thee has come forth the Sun of Justice, Christ the Lord, who putting away cursing bestowed blessing, and by overcoming death obtained for us life eternal."

What ought we therefore to do on this day?

We should from the heart rejoice that in Mary, the Mother of our Redeemer, there is born to us a queen, a mother, and an intercessor; we should accordingly honor her as becomes her children, and to that end imitate her virtues. In this way shall we make ourselves worthy of her intercession.

Prayer of St. Alphonsus Liguori to Mary, on this Festival.

O holy! O heavenly child, chosen to be the mother of my Saviour, the great mediatrix of miserable sinners, have mercy upon me. Behold prostrate before thee an ingrate who flies to thee for refuge, who implores thy mercy. It is true that for my ingratitude to God and to thee, I have deserved to be forsaken by God and by thee. But I hear how thou callest me, and I firmly believe, because I know how great is thy mercy, that thou never refuseth to help him who with confi-

dence commends himself to thee. O most exalted of all creatures—for God only is greater than thou, and the greatest in heaven are small in comparison of thee—O holiest of the saints, O Mary, fountain of grace, help me, miserable. Obtain for me grace, that from a sinner I may become just, and that, freed from all earthly inclinations, I may be entirely inflamed with the love of God. O my queen, accomplish this for me, for it is in thy power. So I hope; so may it be. Amen.

Supplication to Mary.—From St. Augustine.

With the tenderest love and the purest desire, I send forth my sighs to thee, my mother. O that I were capable of loving thee worthily! Teach me, O Immaculate Virgin, how to think of thee, how duly to honor thee. For my mind shall honor thee, my heart shall love thee, my soul shall abide in thy service, my whole life shall be devoted to the glory of God and to thy service, O Mary!

[The Introit of the Mass, the Collect, Epistle and Gospel are the same as on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; but instead of the words “Immaculate Conception,” say “Nativity.”]

Meditation on the Prerogatives and Veneration of Mary.

There is no object, after God, more entitled to claim the love and veneration of Christians than Mary; and for that reason, next to the worship and love which we are bound to render to God, there is no devotion more profitable to us than the devotion to Mary.

So have thought the saints of every age, the most enlightened and pious doctors of the Church; so the Catholic Church herself has thought, acted, and decreed. Indeed, if *immaculate purity* be worthy of our veneration and love, where do we find it in the same degree as in Mary? Holy and immaculate she came from the hands of her Creator, and from the time that she knew him had no other object than his divine love. With her increasing years her love increased also. All her thoughts and desires, all the feelings and motions of her

heart, all her words and deeds were directed to God. Proceeding from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, from one degree of love to another still higher, she reached the highest degree of holiness that a creature is capable of arriving at. But further, the immaculate became the Bride of the Holy Ghost, the Mother of the Only-begotten of the Father. What earthly prerogative can be compared with this? Accordingly, the holy fathers are never weary of praising her exaltation and dignity. But to this are to be added the immeasurable benefits which, through her mediation, have descended upon the world. Who can enumerate them? Hence the fathers call her the channel of grace, and the Church gives her the titles of Refuge of Sinners, Comforter of the Afflicted, Health of the Sick, Help of Christians. Let us, then, venerate Mary with deep devotion, with fervent love; let us venerate her as a Mother of our Lord and mother of us. Let us not listen to the mockeries of God-forgetting rationalists, who dishonor Christianity by their disrespect to Mary; for who can love Christ and lightly regard his Mother?

Let us venerate her. In every age she has been in an especial manner honored and pronounced blessed; since the archangel called her *full of grace* her renown has sounded from century to century, and shall it now cease in our mouths? In all parts of the earth she is venerated and praised, every day and every hour, by thousands and thousands of pious souls, and shall not we join voices with this sublime choir? Churches, communities, kingdoms, have placed themselves under her protection; and where is there a Catholic village, or a Catholic Church in which her image is not displayed? Let us unite our voices with these; let us honor Mary, especially by imitation of those virtues of hers which are to us, as St. John Damascene says, an open book of instruction; let us rejoice in her prerogatives and glory; let us encourage others in the veneration of her; let us, in our need, have recourse to her, who, according to the name Star of the Sea with which the Church salutes her, shines for all who sail upon the dangerous sea of the world, that they may not make shipwreck, or that if they should so suffer, they may, by penance, come safe

to shore. For this reason St. Bernard calls out to each one of us, "Take not your eyes from the light of this star if you would not be overwhelmed by the waves; if the storms of temptation arise, if you are thrown upon the rocks of affliction, look to the star, invoke Mary. Are you confounded at the enormity of your sins, are you ashamed at the defilement of your conscience, are you terrified on account of the dreadful judgment, so that you begin to be overpowered by sadness, or even to sink into the abyss of despair, then turn your thoughts to Mary. In dangers, in distress, in doubt, call on Mary. She will not be far from your mouth, or your heart; and that you may obtain her intercession, omit not to imitate her conduct. When you follow her, you will not go astray; when you invoke her, you will no longer be in doubt; when she supports you, you will not fall; when she leads you, you will surely come to eternal life, and will find by your own experience that she is justly called Maria—that is, Star of the Sea.

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

SEPTEMBER 14.

This feast is a yearly commemoration of the erection, at Jerusalem, by Constantine the Great, and his mother, St. Helena, of the Cross on which Christ died. This took place under the Emperor Heraclius, by whom the Holy Cross which Cosroes, king of Persia, had carried into his own country, was, after fourteen years, recovered, brought back to Jerusalem, and borne by himself to the hill of Calvary, whither it had been borne by the Saviour. Upon this occasion a miracle occurred. As the above-mentioned emperor was about to carry the cross to the proper place on his shoulders, out of veneration for it, he found that while wearing the imperial dress he could not move it, until, by the advice of the Patriarch Zachary, he laid aside his royal ornaments, dressed himself plainly, took off his shoes, and in such manner made himself like the humble Saviour.

What should we learn by this?

That whoever desires to be like Christ, and to enter into the kingdom of heaven, must first take up his cross, remove from himself the pomp of the world, and humbly and patiently follow him. If the emperor could not reach the appointed place so long as he bore the cross wearing his royal dress, how much less will the Christian who leads a sensual life be able to enter the kingdom of God!

Introit of the Mass. *But it behooves us to glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection* (Gal. vi.)

Prayer.

O God, who on this day givest us joy by the annual solemnity of the exaltation of the Holy Cross, grant, we beseech thee, that we may deserve the reward of his redemption in heaven, whose mystery we have known upon earth. Through the same Lord.

Epistle. (Philipp. ii. 5-11.) See p. 288.

Gospel. (John xii. 31-36.)

At that time Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself. (Now this he said, signifying what death he should die.) The multitude answered him: We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou: The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man: Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little while the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Whilst you have the light, believe in the light that you may be the children of light.

Instruction on the Devotion of the Way of the Cross.

What is the Holy Way of the Cross?

It is a devotional exercise by which we meditate upon the passion and death of Jesus, and particularly upon his last way of sorrows, from the house of Pilate to Mount Calvary.

Constant tradition testifies that after Christ's ascension, the

Christians living in Jerusalem were accustomed particularly to venerate the holy places which had been sanctified by the passion of the divine Redeemer. But after Jerusalem fell into the hands of the infidels, so that thereby it became dangerous, and often impossible to pass over the very ground which our Lord had trod, the children of St. Francis of Assisi began to erect in their churches the fourteen stations of the Way of the Cross, by meditating on which the faithful might, in spirit, accompany the pilgrims to Jerusalem on the way to Calvary,—dwelling in thought on what Christ had suffered for men. Station here means a place to pause, a resting-point for meditation. This devotion has been examined and approved by many Popes, enriched with indulgences, and earnestly recommended to Christians. It may be found in any prayer-book.

Is the Way of the Cross a profitable devotion?

Yes; no exercise is more profitable to our souls than this. What can bring before us the love of God and the abominableness and frightfulness of sin, in a more vivid manner than the sufferings of the God-man? How can we any longer indulge in hate, when we hear Jesus pray for his enemies? How can we give ourselves up to sensuality and lust, when we see the divine Saviour scourged, crowned with thorns, and hanging on the cross? How can we murmur at our trials, when we think that Jesus innocent takes up the cross for us guilty? In truth, we should see our coldness and indifference disappear, as ice melts in the heat, we should grow more and more zealous in the way of virtue, if we would but rightly meditate upon the passion of Christ.

How are visits to the Stations of the Cross to be made?

Rightly to visit the Stations of the Cross, and to draw therefrom real benefit, we should at each station consider with attention, with devotion and sorrow, what Jesus has done and suffered for us. We should not content ourselves with merely reciting at each station the proper prayers and meditations, but should pause, to impress upon our hearts what is there represented, that we may be moved and quickened to wholesome resolutions.

In order to gain the indulgences, we must endeavor to be in the state of grace, and therefore at least, by way of beginning, we must have perfect contrition for our sins.

Mary, mother full of sorrow,
 Oh, divide with me thy pain;
 Deep upon my heart imprinted
 Let thy Jesus' wounds remain.

Feast of St. Matthew the Apostle.

SEPTEMBER 21.

His Life.

Matthew, also called Levi, a son of Alphaeus, and brother of the holy Apostle James the Lesser, was a receiver in the Roman custom-house on Lake Tiberias. Such officers were hated by the Jews for their injustice, and were called publicans, or public sinners. While he was sitting at the receipt of custom, he was called by Christ to be one of his disciples, and immediately, leaving his lucrative office and all that he had, followed him. On account of this distinguished zeal he was afterwards received into the number of the Apostles. After the descent of the Holy Ghost he remained in Judea, preached the Gospel, wrote the Passion of our Lord as contained in his Gospel, and lived strictly in the fear of God. At a later day he travelled through Persia, Ethiopia, and other countries. At last he was killed at the altar, by command of King Hirtacus, for opposing his marriage with the Princess Iphigenia, who, by St. Matthew's direction, had vowed to God perpetual virginity. His holy remains were brought to Salerno in the tenth century. Thus may great sinners become great saints, by following faithfully, like St. Matthew, the voice of God.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church sings: *The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak judgment; the law of God is in his heart, &c.* (Ps. lvi.)
 Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

May we be assisted, O Lord, by the prayers of the blessed Apostle Matthew, that what of ourselves we are unable to obtain, may be given to us by his intercession. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Ezech. i. 10-14, p. 724.)

Explanation.

This figure refers, as is well known, to the four Evangelists, who with one voice teach that Jesus is Man, King, Priest, and God. The fiery shape of this animal is an emblem of the zeal which should be kindled by faith in Jesus; the wings are an emblem of quickness to fulfil the will of God. Would that such zeal and quickness were possessed by all Christians!

Gospel. (Matt. ix. 9-13.)

At that time Jesus saw a man sitting in the custom-house, named Matthew: and he saith to him: Follow me. And he rose up and followed him. And it came to pass as he was sitting at meat in the house, behold many publicans and sinners came, and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And the Pharisees seeing it, said to his disciples: Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners? But Jesus hearing it, said: They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill. Go then and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the just, but sinners.

What do we learn from Matthew at once following Jesus?

1. That when God calls we should obey at once, lest, by not giving heed to his voice, he should cease to call us, or withdraw from us his grace. 2. To forsake the occasions of sin; as St. Matthew not only left the place where he sinned, but abandoned entirely the very house and office which had led him into sin. 3. That we should not only cease to sin, but, like St. Matthew, should follow Christ in poverty, humility, meekness, patience, if we would enter the kingdom of God (1 John ii. 6).

Why did Jesus eat with sinners in the house of Matthew?

His sitting down to eat in Matthew's house shows us that this publican was anxious to give to others an opportunity to hear Jesus. In like manner a converted sinner is not satisfied with his own conversion, but endeavors to bring into the way of salvation others also, particularly those who have been his companions in sin. He sat down to eat with sinners, to have an opportunity to convert them also. How praiseworthy and meritorious would it be for us to direct our conversation, particularly at meal-times, to profitable and holy things, and particularly when we ourselves, like Matthew, had been formerly open sinners! for thus we might aid in the conversion of sinners, which, according to the teaching of St. Dionysius, of all the things pleasing to God is the greatest, and, so to say, most God-like.

Who are they that are in health, the sick, and the physician?

They who are in health are the just, who live in the favor of God. How precious is such a life! Take every care, therefore, to preserve it. *The sick* are sinners, for every mortal sin defiles, wounds, or even kills the soul. How detestable, then, is sin, which despoils us of our greatest good! *The physician* is Christ; for it is said (Ps. cvi. 20), *He sent his Word and healed them.* O hasten, then, if you have sinned, to this Physician of souls, who comes to meet you in the holy sacrament of penance, that he may heal you, and that you may regain the health of your soul.

Aspiration to St. Matthew.

O holy Apostle, who hast made ready for us a glorious feast in thy Gospel, pray for me that thy Gospel may be in truth food for my soul; pray that in it I may devoutly consider the life, virtues, passion, and death of Jesus Christ, that I may faithfully follow, in all things, thy words, written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and by the operation of the same Spirit may be able to exclaim: *How sweet are thy words to my palate! more than honey to my mouth* (Ps. cxviii. 103).

Feast of St. Rupert, Bishop.

SEPTEMBER 24.

His Life.

Rupert, sprung from the line of the kings of the Franks, was already a bishop before he came to Bavaria, but probably such as were called regionary bishops, because they were established in no fixed sees. Before he left his own country, he lived at Worms. Theodo, duke of Bavaria, who had heard much of the holy life of Rupert, at the request of his wife Reginotrude, who was a zealous Christian, sent a special messenger to him, and invited him to Bavaria to preach the Gospel. Rupert came to Regensburg, and, with the help of two companions, in a short time succeeded so well that Theodo, together with his son Theodobert and the nobles of his court, after having been properly instructed, received the holy sacrament of baptism. Rupert's ardent zeal for the salvation of souls impelled him to embark in a vessel on the Danube, and to proceed as far as Lower Pannonia, sowing everywhere the seed of the Gospel. For some time he remained at Lorch, now called Ems. He thence came to a lake called the Wallersee, where he built a church at a place now called See-Kirche. Thence he went to what was formerly Juvania, a city destroyed by the Heruli, which is the modern Salzburg. Here he fixed his see, and, by the assistance and liberality of the Duke Theodo, built a beautiful church in honor of St. Peter, together with a Benedictine monastery. Rupert was, in the year 582, the first bishop of the see, and at the same time was abbot. Observing that the harvest was great and the laborers but few, he returned to his own country, Austrasia, and brought back thence with him twelve new laborers for this fertile vineyard, together with his niece, Ehrentrude, who became superior of a convent. Upon a hill near the city the saint erected the nunnery called Nonnbergh, dedicated it to the honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, and appointed his niece the abbess. Bavaria, which honors St. Ru-

pert as her Apostle, owes to him her two first churches, the so-called old chapel at Regensburg and the celebrated chapel at Altotting, from the last of which the holy bishop removed the seven planets that were there worshipped, and dedicated it to the blessed Queen of Heaven. After having carefully governed his diocese forty-one years, the day of his death was revealed to him by God. On the feast of Easter, March 27, 623, the saint celebrated mass, chose St. Vitalis as his successor in the episcopal office and in the dignity of abbot, went to the grave which he had caused to be prepared for himself in his lifetime, and then expired with the words, *Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit*. St. Rupert is the principal patron of the arch-diocese of Salzburg. The day of the translation of his sanctified body is there celebrated on September 24, with an octave.

St. Vigilius, fifth bishop of Salzburg, in six years built a church specially for a cathedral, and dedicated it to the honor of St. Peter and St. Rupert, on September 24, 773. He removed from the conventual church of St. Peter—of which he continued to be abbot—the greater part of the body of St. Rupert, together with the bodies of his two chaplains, Chunibald and Gislar, and deposited them in the cathedral, in order that the future occupants of that see might have before them a lively memento of the example which they should strive to follow. Vigilius destroyed the remains of idolatry in Carinthia, and in consequence has received the honorable title of Apostle of the Carinthians. He died on November 27, 784, and was canonized by Gregory IX. in the year 1233.

[For the Introit of the Mass, Epistle, and Gospel, see the Feast of St. Liborius, p. 789.]

Prayer.

Grant us, Almighty God, that the venerable solemnity of thy holy bishop and confessor, Rupert, may increase in us devotion and the fruits of salvation. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Feast of St. Michael, the Archangel.

SEPTEMBER 29.

Michael is the prince of the heavenly armies, who first contended against the proud Lucifer, and incited the other angels to fidelity to God. His humility, obedience, and zeal for the honor of God enabled him to preserve his place in heaven, and exalted him above the other angels, in like manner as the arrogance and disobedience of the proud Lucifer humbled him and cast him down to hell.

The holy Church honors him as a particular defender, and the faithful call upon him in all dangers of soul and body, but they particularly implore his intercession at the hour of death, in order that after having, according to his example, courageously fought against Satan, they may receive the crown of victory, and that their souls may by him be brought before the throne of God. Let us also venerate him, and, full of confidence, cry out with the holy Church, "Holy Archangel Michael, protect us in battle, that we may not perish in the tremendous judgment."

[For the Introit of the Mass, see the Feast of the Guardian Angel, p. 831.]

Prayer.

O God, who with wonderful order dost direct the ministry of angels and of men, mercifully grant that our life on earth may be protected by those who ever minister before thee in heaven. Through Christ.

Epistle. (Apocalypse i. 1-5.)

In those days God made known the things which must shortly come to pass: and signified, sending by his angel to his servant John, who hath given testimony to the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, what things soever he hath seen. Blessed is he, that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecy: and keepeth those things which are written in it. For the time is at hand. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you and peace

from him that is, and that was, and that is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood.

(This epistle is read to-day because St. Michael so bravely contended against the sedition of Satan, and, after gaining the victory, drove him and his adherents from heaven.)

Therefrom we may draw the following instructions: 1. By pride Satan fell from heaven and opened hell; by humility Michael gained the victory. God assists the humble; humility preserves God's grace and favor. 2. Michael contended powerfully for God, against Satan, the seducer. It is not enough to hate evil; we must fight against it, and exert ourselves to win a victory for the truth. 3. Michael, as his name denotes, fought in the strength of Almighty God, whose are heaven and earth, and against whom no one can stand. Here are your arms, with which you are to overcome the world—immovable faith, and steadfast trust in God. Say, then, "Who is like God—so powerful, so wise, so rich, so worthy of love? Him, therefore, will I serve faithfully." 4. A prince of heaven fell so low—so irredeemably. How can we boast of our own strength; how can we trust our resolutions? Oh let us, like Michael, be humble, watchful, trusting in God. 5. God spared not an angel. How can you hope to be spared, O sinner, unless you change?

Gospel. (Matt. xviii. 1-10.) See p. 831.

Prayer to St. Michael, the Archangel.

Great prince of heaven, St. Michael, to thy protection I commend my soul and body, and, by the glory which thou possessest in heaven, I beseech thee that thou wouldst ever assist me, particularly at the close of my life; that thou wouldst strengthen my faint-heartedness, and obtain for me, from God, the remission of my sins, and an entire submission

to his holy will, that my soul may depart full of comfort. Then receive it, and bring it, under the guidance of the holy angels, before the face of God, to enjoy the contemplation of him for all eternity. Amen.

Feast of the Holy Guardian Angel.

OCTOBER 2.

Why was this feast instituted?

1. To thank God that to each one of us he has given a particular guardian angel to conduct him unharmed through the dangers of this world. 2. To inspire us with gratitude to the angels who do us such great good, and to incite us to efforts to render ourselves worthy of their guardianship.

Whence do we know that every man has his own guardian angel?

From many places in Holy Scripture; for example, Gen. xlviii. 16; Job xxxiii. 23; Acts xii. 15; particularly from the words of Christ, *See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father, who is in heaven* (Matt. xviii. 10). The Catholic Church has always understood from these words that every man has his peculiar guardian angel.

What is the office of a guardian angel?

To guard men against dangers of soul and body. The ninetyeth Psalm says (v. 11), *He hath given his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways; in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*; that is, that thou mayest neither fall into sin nor misfortune. "Oh what great regard for us," hereupon exclaims St. Bernard, "what wonderful love! Who is it that has given charge? God! To whom has he given charge? The angels, those noble spirits, his own household. What charge has he given them? To guard and defend us, poor men! *O Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him!*" St. Paul calls the angels *ministering spirits* sent to minister to them who shall

receive the inheritance of salvation (Heb. i. 14). In Matt. xviii. 10; Judith xiii. 20; Luke xv. 10; Numbers xxii. 22; Ps. xxxiii. 8; xc. 11; Dan. vi. 22; Acts i. 10, 11; Luke xxii. 43; xvi. 22; and innumerable other places, they are represented as friends of children, guides of youth, defenders of innocence, promoters of good deeds, monitors against evil, guardians of the pious, protectors against misfortune, comforters in need, deliverers in danger, helpers in combat, companions of the souls in everlasting joy.

To what ought consideration of the protection and presence of our guardian angel move us?

According to the teaching of St. Bernard: 1. To *reverence* for his presence. 2. To *gratitude* for his care. 3. To *confidence* and *love*. Besides, his presence should encourage us, 4. To encounter fearlessly every danger of soul and body. Why should we fear, says St. Bernard, when we are standing beneath such powerful protection? They are faithful, strong, and prudent, why should we tremble? 5. To steadfast fidelity towards God. Were not they also obliged to fight, and were not their crowns gained only after winning victory? 6. To the practice of virtue, and that in secret also. For when no other creature sees you, the eyes of a pure, heavenly spirit are upon you. Oh, then, be modest, flee the shadow of evil, shun bad company, you who are surrounded by holy angels.

What should we do every day, but particularly this day?

We should thank God for having given us guardians so holy and powerful, and our guardian angel himself for the help he has rendered us; should think of and call upon him often, especially in the hour of temptation; finally, we should promise fidelity and obedience to his admonitions. Whatever in this regard is at any time binding upon us, should especially be done to-day.

Prayer.

Almighty, Eternal God, who of thy infinite goodness hath given to every man, from his very birth, a guardian angel, grant that I may honor, love, and obey my guardian angel, that by thy grace and his protection, being preserved in soul

and body, I may one day, in heaven, with him and all the holy angels, behold thy divine face for all eternity.

Holy guardian angels defend us in the strife, that we perish not at the tremendous judgment.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church sings, from Ps. cii., *Bless the Lord, all ye his angels, you that are mighty in strength, and execute his word, hearkening to the voice of his orders. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name. Glory be to the Father.*

Prayer.

O God, who by an unspeakable providence dost vouchsafe to send thy angels to guard us, grant to thy suppliants to be ever defended by their protection, and to rejoice eternally in their society. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Exodus xxiii. 20-23.)

Thus saith the Lord: Behold I will send my Angel, who shall go before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that I have prepared. Take notice of him, and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned: for he will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and my name is in him. But if thou wilt hear his voice, and do all that I speak, I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee. And my Angel shall go before thee.

Practice.

These words, in which God required of the children of Israel obedience to the angel who conducted them, under the penalty of heavy punishment, apply to all Christians. Would that they might never forget that holy angels, clothed with the power and authority of God, stand by their side, that they might therefore honor and love them, and fear to do before them any thing that one would be ashamed to do in the presence of a virtuous man!

Gospel. (Matt. xviii. 1-10.) *

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Who thinkest thou is the greater in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus calling unto him

a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven. And he that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into life, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their Angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

Brief Lessons.

I. In the false notion that Christ was about to establish an earthly kingdom, and consequently out of jealousy towards Peter, the disciples came to Jesus with the question, *Who is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?* Jesus avoids the question who is the greater in the visible Church, and teaches his disciples, as by words, so also by the act of pointing to an innocent child, wherein spiritual greatness consists. According to this, the greatest is he who is most humble. Unless you lay aside your pride and ambition, unless you become humble and unassuming, honest and open, thoughtful and believing as children, you cannot become citizens and heirs of the kingdom of God. So necessary is humility to the Christian.

II. The least thing whatever that we do in the name of Jesus, he regards as done to himself. Could there be presented a more powerful reason for not despising any one, and for doing good works? But in like manner, whosoever scandalizes one of these little ones that believe in me, that is, does evil to him, presents to him occasions of sin, or even seduces him to sin outright, woe to him! It had been better for him to have been drowned. What punishment then must be ex-

pected by him who gives scandal, when such a violent death were better for him! Beware, then, of doing so great an evil.

III. By the words *if thy hand, &c., scandalize thee*, our Lord teaches us that we should be firmly resolved to avoid and put away from us all persons and objects which are the immediate occasions of sin to us, or to those belonging to us, even though they were as dear and necessary to us as our eye, our hand, our foot.

IV. As a special motive to avoid giving scandal, Christ mentions the holy angels, those exalted spirits to whose care is confided the care of the little ones. Indeed, how depraved must that man be who presumes to destroy what God has sent the purest and holiest spirits to preserve! Would not such a one be fit servant and helper to him, who, once belonging to the court of God, but for his pride forever banished thence, now ceaselessly busies himself to destroy the kingdom of God; who deceived Eve, who made Judas a traitor, Ananias a liar; who goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour? And will not punishment fall upon the man who gives scandal, when God has cast down forever even such exalted spirits? Take heed, therefore, lest you give scandal.

Feast of the Holy Rosary.

FIRST SUNDAY IN OCTOBER.

This feast was fixed for the first Sunday in October by Pope Clement XI., in perpetual commemoration of a celebrated double victory gained by the Christians at Lepanto, in 1571, under Pope St. Pius V., and at Belgrade, under Pope Clement XI., through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, who had been invoked by saying the Holy Rosary. It is at the same time the principal feast of the Arch-confraternity of the Holy Rosary.

What is the Holy Rosary?

It is a form of prayer in which there is first said the Apostle's Creed, and then fifteen decades, each one of which consists of

ten Hail Marys. Each decade has one Our Father to be said before it, and is followed by a meditation upon some one mystery of our redemption. It is called the Rosary, or Wreath of Roses, because the joyful, the sorrowful, and the glorious mysteries, aptly symbolized by the leaves, the thorns, the flower, of which the rose consists—with the prayers and praises that are blended together—compose, as it were, a wreath or crown. It is also called the Psalter, because it contains a hundred and fifty Hail Marys, as the Psalter of David contains a hundred and fifty psalms, and because it is used in place of the singing of psalms, as practiced in former times.

Is there more than one part in the Rosary?

There are three—the joyful, the sorrowful, the glorious.

I. The joyful part consists of the five first decades, to which are attached five mysteries of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, through which, full of joy, we speak to Mary of him,

1. Whom she conceived while a virgin ;
2. Whom she bore to Elizabeth ;
3. Whom she brought forth while a virgin ;
4. Whom she offered to God in the temple ;
5. Whom she found in the temple.

(This is said particularly in Advent.)

II. The sorrowful part, in like manner, contains five decades, in connection with which there are presented for our meditation five mysteries of the passion and death of Jesus,

1. Who for us sweat blood ;
2. Who for us was scourged ;
3. Who for us was crowned with thorns ;
4. Who for us bore the heavy cross ;
5. Who for us was crucified.

(This is said particularly in Lent.)

III. The glorious part, consisting of the last five decades, reminds us of the glory of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin, by five mysteries in which we commemorate him,

1. Who rose from the dead ;
2. Who ascended into heaven ;
3. Who sent to us the Holy Ghost ;

4. Who received thee, O Virgin, into heaven ;

5. Who crowned thee, O Virgin, in heaven.

(This part is said particularly at Eastertide.)

How was this prayer introduced into the Church ?

St. Dominic had for many years preached against the errors of the Albigenses and other heretics, with such zeal and profound ability that they were often convinced. But nevertheless, the results were unimportant ; but few returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church. In this discouraging state of things, St. Dominic redoubled his prayers and works of penance, and in particular besought Mary for support and assistance. One day Mary appeared to him and taught him the Rosary. He zealously labored to introduce everywhere this manner of prayer, and from that time preached with such success, that in a short period more than one hundred thousand heretics and sinners were converted. The divine origin of the Rosary is testified to by the bull of Gregory XIII., of the year 1577.

Is the Rosary a profitable method of prayer ?

Yes ; for by bringing before the eyes of the spirit the fundamental mysteries of Christianity it supplies us with the strongest motives to love God, to hate sin, to subdue the passions, to condemn the world and its vanity, and to strive after Christian perfection, in order that we may gain those happy mansions which Jesus prepares for us. Or is there any thing that sooner begets a return of love, than the love of God as revealed in the incarnation ; any thing better adapted to arouse detestation of sin, than a remembrance of the God-man in his suffering ; any thing more attractive than heaven with its happiness ? The Rosary besides brings before us living examples—Jesus and Mary—whom we must follow, and encourages us to good works by pointing to the all-powerful grace procured for us by Jesus, and the all-prevailing intercession of the gracious mother of God. Let no one say the continual repetition is wearisome. Suppose this to be the case with many : is the fault then in the prayers, or in them that pray ? May not as much be said of every prayer and prayer-book ? Let us not be deterred by any thing from saying the Rosary ; let us not

be ashamed to carry the beads with us, for otherwise, we might be ashamed of being Catholics; let us say the Rosary often—every evening—as was the custom with Catholics in former times, and we shall find that, as in St. Dominic's day it was a wholesome check to error, so too in our times it will be, if said aright, a powerful weapon against heresy and unbelief, and will increase faith, piety, and virtue.

Are misbelievers, then, and would-be enlightened Catholics, right in despising the Rosary?

Surely not; for they despise what they neither know nor practice. For he who would consider the entire arrangement, and the significance, so full of meaning, of this prayer, could not but rather prize it, and make use of it for the good of his soul. For, not to dwell upon it, that this method of prayer has been daily observed by the greatest saints, as, for example, by a St. Francis of Sales, a St. Alphonsus Liguori, and others, it is a confession of our holy Roman Catholic faith, a repeated adoration of the most holy Trinity, and a Church-like way of venerating the most Blessed Virgin, whom the Holy Ghost himself has pronounced blessed: at the same time it is a thankful commemoration and meditation upon the most holy and important mysteries of our religion, and particularly in regard to our redemption, through the incarnation, passion, and death of Jesus Christ. As to the frequent repetitions of Our Father and Hail Mary—do not the angels and saints in heaven before the throne of God repeat without ceasing the same song of praise, "Holy, holy, holy," etc.? Can the heart that burns with true, deep love of God and of Mary repeat the praises of God and of Mary often enough? Is it ever satiated with its ascriptions of praise and love? Do we not enjoy every day, and, indeed, often during the day, the same bread without it losing its relish, or becoming distasteful or offensive?

How pleasing and acceptable to God is the Rosary—the sweet wreath of those flowers of heavenly fragrance, devotion, and prayer—and what powerful effects it produces before the throne of almightiness and mercy, God has shown, from the time when it was introduced, in the most striking manner, particularly upon occasion of public or private affliction and dis-

gress; and for this reason the Church has aimed at encouraging the faithful to the diligent practice of this method of prayer by the indulgences which she grants to such as say the Rosary devoutly, in the spirit of penance and in the state of grace.

O Christian, suffer not yourself to be lead astray by those who not only despise the prayers of the Rosary, but who in general use no prayers, and in their proud self-conceit often oppose most important laws of the Church, so that to them fitly apply those words of Jesus, *I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones* (Matt. xi. 25). Rather practice this method of prayer right diligently, according to the sense and spirit of our holy Church, and you will find by experience what wholesome advantage to your soul comes thereby.

How should we say the Rosary?

1. Properly; that is, as has been above described, and slowly, with a distinct pronounciation of the prayers and mysteries. 2. Devoutly, not only with the lips, but also with the heart. More particularly, we ought to meditate upon the mysteries that come before us; thus, at *the joyful mysteries* we should think of the infinite love of God to men and on his humiliation for us, thanking him, and promising our love to him in return; at *the sorrowful mysteries* we should have compassion on the Saviour suffering for us, should from the heart detest the sins which were the cause of his sufferings, and make the most earnest resolutions for the future; at *the glorious mysteries* we should remember the glory which awaits us also, if we follow Jesus and Mary.

[For the Introit of the Mass, see the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.]

Prayer.

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death, and resurrection, procured for us the rewards of eternal salvation, grant, we beseech thee, that commemorating these mysteries in the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may

imitate what they contain, and possess what they promise. Through the same Lord.

Epistle. (Eccelus. xxiv. 14-16.)

From the beginning, and before the world, was I created, and unto the world to come I shall not cease to be, and in the holy dwelling-place I have ministered before him. And so was I established in Sion, and in the holy city likewise I rested, and my power was in Jerusalem. And I took root in an honorable people, and in the portion of my God his inheritance, and my abode is in the full assembly of saints.

[For the Explanation, see the Feast of the Assumption.]

Gospel. (Luke xi. 27, 28.)

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.

Explanation.

1. This woman is particularly mentioned by the Evangelists, as Bede says, to perpetuate her fame as one who publicly and unshrinkingly confessed Jesus, while the Pharisees blasphemed and tempted him. Do you desire true fame? Seek it by confessing Jesus. 2. By his answer, Jesus would have us understand that his mother was not to be blessed merely because she bore him, the Son of God, but rather because she at all times endeavored to keep the word of God in her heart, and to observe it in her life. If you would be blessed, learn to be not only a hearer, but a doer of the word of God.

Feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

OCTOBER 4.

His Life.

St. Francis was born at Assisi, a city in the Duchy of Spoleto, in Italy, in the year 1181. His father, a rich merchant, intended him for trade, and Francis applied himself with aptness to this employment, in which, though fond of show, he exhibited, at an early day, a particular love for the poor. Agreeable and amiable, affable and kind to all, he was beloved by all around him, and the world sought to draw him to its side. But the love of God prevailed over the love of the world. Enlightened from above, and by heavenly apparitions rendered attentive to the call he was about to receive, he followed the leadings of grace which drew him on to imitate Christ in poverty and humility. Hearing one day at Mass the words of the Gospel: *Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff* (Matt. x. 9, 10), he began to regulate the whole manner of his life according to this precept of the Gospel, and at once commenced to preach penance with such evangelical poverty, and with such power also, that all who heard him were moved to tears. Disinherited by his avaricious father, who was greatly displeased at his poverty and open-handedness towards the poor, he threw himself altogether upon the providence of his Father in heaven, dividing with the poor the alms which he thus received. The extraordinary manner of his life soon brought around him disciples, and as the number of them increased daily, he wrote for them a rule, and then set out for Rome, to procure from the Pope a confirmation of it. He came back, rejoicing in the Lord that every thing at Rome had gone according to his wish, and established himself about a mile from his native city, at a small church belonging to the Benedictines, which he called Portiuncula (little portion). Here he led a life of the severest penance; here he prayed day and night, and here he laid the foundation of that order which has filled the world with the splendor of its vir-

tues. Here in this church, dedicated to the Virgin Mother of Jesus and to the Holy Angels, he received from Christ himself the celebrated indulgence known throughout the whole Christian world as the Portiuncula Indulgence; for while the saint was praying there with glowing devotion, on the day of the dedication of the church, in the year 1221, the Lord appeared to him and said: "Francis, ask whatever thou wilt for the salvation of the nations." He answered: "I desire the remission of guilt and punishment, a plenary indulgence for all who shall visit this church with contrite hearts and sincerely confess their sins." The Lord replied: "Go then to my representative, the Pope, and ask the indulgence in my name." Forthwith he went to Pope Honorius III., who first, by word of mouth, and afterwards by a proper Bull, confirmed to him the indulgence. The same indulgence was, at a later day, extended to all churches of the Franciscans, and by Pope Pius VII. to all parish churches (at least to all in Bavaria), and may be gained on the first Sunday in August of every year.

Burning with desire for the salvation of the people, St. Francis with his brethren, whom he sent out two by two to preach penance and the peace of God, labored to establish everywhere the kingdom of heaven. His love for sinners, and his ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, impelled him to visit remote parts of the world, to preach the Gospel to unbelievers. For this he was rewarded by God with miraculous graces, among which there is particularly to be mentioned that which was granted him upon Mount Alverno. While he was there engaged, separated from the world, in fasting and praying for forty days, as he was accustomed to do often, the Saviour appeared to him in the form of a seraph on the cross, and imprinted the five wounds of his own body on the body of St. Francis. On account of this, and for his ardent love for Jesus crucified, St. Francis received the surname of Seraph.

After this event the saint lived two years in manifold bodily distress and sickness, without murmur or complaint, with perfect resignation to the will of God. Some time before his death he caused his will to be written, in which he left to his

brethren poverty, as an inheritance in which they should find great treasure for heaven. As the hour of his dissolution drew nigh he had the passion of Christ read to him: he then said the 141st Psalm, and at the words, *Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise thy name*, he expired happy in the Lord, on the 4th October, 1226, in the 45th year of his age.

St. Francis founded three orders: the first and proper order of Franciscans, or the order of Friars Minor; then the order of Franciscan Nuns, or Clares, so called from St. Clare, their first superior; and lastly, that called the third order, for people in the world, of both sexes, who aim at perfection but do not desire to make the vows of the cloister. This last order, which has been approved by many Popes, particularly by Gregory IX., Innocent IV., and Nicholas IV., has spread throughout the whole world, and is becoming in our day more and more flourishing.

[For the Epistle, see the Feast of St. Aloysius, p. 749; for the Gospel, see the Feast of St. Matthew, p. 823.]

Prayer.

O God, who by the merits of blessed Francis dost increase thy Church by a new progeny, grant us by imitating him to despise earthly things, and ever to rejoice in the participation of heavenly gifts. Through Christ.

Feast of St. Gall.

OCTOBER 16.

His Life.

St. Gall was born in Ireland, and in his early youth was intrusted to St. Columba to be instructed, from whom he received also the religious habit. He was one of the twelve disciples who, with St. Columba, crossed over into France in the year 585. But Columba was obliged to leave the country on account of having censured the king Theodoric, for his

unlawful, unchaste life with the infamous Brunehilde. They proceeded as far as Lake Zurich, in Switzerland, where they commenced with zeal the work of conversion. Driven thence by the idolaters, they returned to Bregens. Here they tilled the land, and at the same time by their preaching gained so much influence, that they were suffered to throw into the lake the idols which had been set up in a chapel, and to pour out the beer which the inhabitants were accustomed to offer to Woden. This good success soon came to an end. Two of the disciples of St. Columba were killed by the inhabitants, and the missionaries were ordered by Duke Gunzo to depart, under the plea that their residence was injurious to the royal hunting-ground. Columba went to Italy, where, in the Milanese district, he commenced the convent of Bobbio, in which two years later he died happily, in the year 615. St. Gall being sick with a fever was unable to follow him, and accordingly caused himself to be conveyed to Arbon to the priest Willimar, at whose house he soon recovered. At Arbon, while engaged in choosing a place where he might continue his accustomed manner of life, he cast his eyes upon the mountains lying behind Arbon, which at that time were bordered on all sides by thick woods. He chose the pleasant valley which is watered by the small rivers Steinach and Irrbach. About the year 614, with two disciples, he entered this solitude, caused the trees to be felled, the timber removed, and some cells to be built. This was the small beginning of what afterwards was the so celebrated convent of St. Gall. The saint learned the language of the country, labored for the conversion of the pagans, of whom there yet remained a great many, and brought nearly all of them to a knowledge of the truth, so that he is with reason regarded as the Apostle of that province. After having, by twenty-six years spent in this manner, entitled himself to the gratitude of the country, he died at Arbon, in the 95th year of his age, of a fever which attacked him upon occasion of his preaching a sermon, at the invitation of Willimar, on the feast of St. Michael. This was on the 16th October, in the year 640. Immediately after, the people from all sides made pilgrimages to his grave.

Upon the death of St. Columba, Mang, the faithful disciple of the saint, became superior of the cells; but he soon left them to preach to the Swabians. He passed through Kempten, where he left behind his companion, Theodore, and came to Fuessen, in which place he preached the Gospel, drove out wild beasts (as did also Theodore, at Kempten), and died the death of a saint, in the year 666.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Lord, let us be recommended to thee through the intercession of thy holy abbot Gall, that what our own merits are not worthy of, we may obtain through his protection. Through Christ.

Feast of St. Hedwige.

OCTOBER 17.

Her Life.

St. Hedwige was the daughter of Berthold, of Andechs, margrave of Meran, and count of Tyrol, and aunt of St. Elizabeth, the landgrave of Hesse and Thuringia. From her childhood she was educated at the convent of Kitzingen, in Franconia, and in the twelfth year of her age was given in marriage to Henry, duke of Silesia and Poland. In her married life she preserved the same piety which she had learned in the convent; she observed herself, and prevailed upon her husband to practice such chasteness, that, by mutual consent, according to the advice which St. Paul gives to the married, they observed continence during Advent, Lent, and other fast-days, as also upon Sundays and festivals, in order the more to give themselves to prayer and spiritual exercises. After there had been born to them six children, three boys and three girls, they resolved for the future to live in perpetual continence, and to give greater strength to their resolution, they went to their bishop to place in his hands their mutual promise. Henry

also denied himself the use of gold, silver, and purple. At the request of his wife he founded, in 1203, at Trebnitz, near Breslau, in Silesia, a convent of Carmelites (now secularized), in which the pious duchess provided for the education of many girls, noble and not noble, of whom some devoted themselves to a religious life, and others were by her presented with dowries, to insure them a proper marriage. As she well knew how strongly St. Peter had recommended to women discretion and modesty, she was not only free from all desire for splendid robes, head-dresses, and such like vanities, but she even despised whatever might draw to her the looks of others. After she had made her vow of continence, her dress was a gray one, of common stuff, and of small cost. She served the sick with her own hands, and lepers seemed to be dearest of all to her; for in them especially she saw Jesus Christ, who, out of love to us, took upon himself the leprosy of our sins. Hedwige was not only great in what she did, but in what she suffered. When an injury was done her, her usual remark was, "Why have you done this? May God forgive you!" When she heard the sad news that her husband had been severely wounded in the crusade, and taken prisoner by Duke Conrad, she most courageously went herself to Conrad, who, by the aspect and resolution of this virtuous wife, more than by her words, was prevailed upon to set his prisoner free. The duke died in 1238, and thereupon she retired into the convent above mentioned, there to serve God with greater strictness. She put on the religious habit (but without making the common vows), the more easily to practice works of mercy, and to assist the poor in their necessities. She slept upon boards, except that in sickness she lay upon a sack of straw. Next to her body she wore a garment of horse-hair, and clad only with the poorest dress, she often went barefoot even in the rough winter season, so that many a time the earth and snow upon which she trod were stained with her blood. For forty years she ate no flesh meat. On Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, her diet was fish and milk; on Mondays and Saturdays, dried peas; but on Wednesdays and Fridays she fasted on bread and water. She prayed long and often. Every day she heard as many masses

as were said at the place where she was. Three years after the death of her husband, her son Henry lost his life in an unfortunate battle with the Tartars. Seeing the wife of her slain son, and her daughter Gertrude, then Abbess of Trebnitz, in deep distress, she said: "It was the will of God, and his will must be agreeable to us." The mysteries of the bitter passion and death of Jesus Christ were to her the subject of daily meditation. Often she interrupted her prayers by a bloody scourging. Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, she loved as a mother so ardently, that her face seemed to be illumined at barely hearing her name pronounced. God, who had given her the means of supporting so many poor, and of causing so many sick to be healed, also bestowed upon her the power of restoring sight to the blind, of curing different diseases, and even of saving the dying from death. Before others had observed her life to be in any danger, she asked for the sacraments appointed for the dying, and received them in a manner so edifying that all present were moved to tears. Her departure from this life soon followed, on the 15th of October, 1243. Twenty-four years afterwards Pope Clement IV. enrolled her name in the calendar of the saints, and authorized her feast to be observed in Silesia on the 15th of October. On the 25th of August, 1278, her holy remains were taken up and exposed for public veneration in the convent at Trebnitz. Pope Innocent, in the year 1680, extended this veneration to the whole Church, and for that purpose appointed the 17th of October. She is venerated in Poland and Silesia as the patroness of those countries. It was a principle of St. Hedwige's, "That the higher one is by birth, the more exalted should he be in virtue; and the more honorable we are by station, the better example should we show to others." Would that all who are high in place might regulate their conduct by this truth!

Introit of the Mass. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are equity, and in thy truth thou hast humbled me. Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear; for I am afraid of thy judgments* (Ps. cxviii. 75, 120). *Blessed are the undefiled in the*

way, who walk in the law of the Lord (Ps. cxviii. 1). Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who didst teach blessed Hedwige to pass with her whole heart from worldly pomps to the humble following of thy cross, grant that by her merits and example we may learn to trample upon the perishable delights of the world, and in embracing thy cross, to overcome all that is adverse to us. Who livest.

[For the Epistle and Gospel, see the Feast of St. Ann.]

Feast of St. Wendelin.

OCTOBER 22.

His Life.

St. Wendelin was born in Ireland, and came of royal blood. In early youth, longing to obtain evangelical perfection by humility and self-denial, he left his native country and passed unknown through various places until he came as a pilgrim into the diocese of Treves, and there began to lead the life of a hermit, in a forest. A nobleman living in that vicinity, from whom he asked alms, reproached him with having chosen that manner of life, and offered him the place of herdsman over his cattle. The humble servant of God entered upon this employment with diligence and great fidelity. At first he had charge of the swine, then of the cattle, and finally of the sheep. Upon occasion of temptations, from within or from without, he took refuge with God, by prayers full of confidence, by severe mortifications, and by pious contemplation of the true country towards which he directed his steps from this land of his earthly pilgrimage. Wendelin, who by his sanctity had gained the entire love and respect of his master, was at last even entreated by him to give up the life he had thus far been leading, in order to serve God without hindrance. The saint

thereupon retired to a cell not far from the Benedictine monastery of Tholey. At one time there prevailed among the cattle a great plague. The country-people around, in this misfortune, had recourse to the saint. They urged him to go with them into their villages to bless the cattle, and to pray God that the plague might be removed. Although his humility resisted their request, the afflicted people would not cease their solicitations until he went with them. He prayed, blessed the cattle, and the destructive plague ceased. Hereupon esteem for the saint rose higher than ever. An evidence of this was given by the clergy of the convent at Tholey, who unanimously chose him to be their abbot. Although afflicted with manifold diseases, he surpassed his brethren in all the exercises of the monastic life. On the 20th October, 560, he departed this life, to receive a heavenly crown, for the earthly one which he had refused. Before his death he revealed his lineage to his confessor. The body of the saint was buried in his first cell, where a chapel, and afterwards a church, was built. The village of St. Wendel (in Prussia), by degrees arose around the burial-place of the servant of God, and his remains are yet venerated in the church of pilgrimage which stands there.

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Lord, let us be recommended to thee by the intercession of St. Wendelin, abbot, that what we are unable to do by our merits, we may obtain by his protection. Through Christ.

Feast of the Holy Apostles, Simon, and Jude.

OCTOBER 28.

Their Lives.

St. Simon and St. Jude were, probably, brothers; the former received the surname, Canaanite, to distinguish him from Simon Peter, either because he was a native of Cana, or because of his zeal for Christ (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13). Judas

was surnamed Thaddeus, or Lebbeus, to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot. Both were chosen Apostles by Christ, and were constant witnesses of his life and deeds. It is related of them in the Martyrology, that the light of faith was communicated to Egypt and other countries of Africa, by Simon, and to Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Greater Armenia, by Thaddeus. Meeting in Persia, and propagating the Christian faith there by their preaching and miracles, they both gained the crown of martyrdom. There is extant an epistle of St. Jude which the Church has incorporated into the Holy Scriptures. From these two Apostles learn to have zeal for the glory of God, for your own salvation and for that of your neighbor.

[The Introit of the Mass is the same as on the Feast of St. Andrew.]

Prayer.

O God, who, by means of thy blessed Apostles Simon and Jude, hast granted us to come to the knowledge of thy name, grant that we may celebrate their eternal glory by making progress in virtues, and improve by this celebration. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Ephes. iv. 7-13.)

Brethren: To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ. Wherefore he saith: Ascending on high he led captivity captive; he gave gifts to men. Now that he ascended, what is it, but because he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.

Explanation.

St. Paul here teaches that graces are not given to all men alike, but in that proportion which Christ finds most suitable

for promoting the welfare of his Church and the salvation of the faithful. The dispenser of graces is Christ, who ascending on high, from thence distributes his gifts to men. Let us thank God for bestowing so many graces on us, and pray him that there may one day be one fold and one shepherd.

Gospel. (John xv. 17-25.)

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world: the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake: because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. But that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: They have hated me without cause.

Brief Lessons.

I. From the fact that Christ and his disciples were hated and persecuted by the world, the greatest consolation and encouragement may be derived by those who are obliged to suffer mockery, contempt, and persecution, because they are not of the world; that is, because they do not follow its foolish principles and sinful customs. But they who, to escape the derision and hatred of the world, side with it, rather than with Christ, may learn to be ashamed of their cowardice and baseness. For as it is an honor to the servant to be treated like his master, so is it a great disgrace to him to be treated better than his master; if, then, the master is pleased to submit to the hatred and persecution of the world, why do his servants refuse to do so?

II. When Christ says that the Jews could not excuse them-

selves on the ground that they did not know him, but had hated and persecuted him when it was easy for them to have known him by his works, he teaches us that ignorance is not in every case an excuse for sin. Those Christians, therefore, are in the highest degree culpable, who, like the Jews, might easily learn what they ought to believe and do, but who fail to do so either through maliciousness or neglect, and accordingly remain in ignorance by their own fault. Acting in this kind of ignorance, they become guilty of sin, and will be justly condemned forever. It is otherwise with men who, without any fault of theirs, hear nothing of Christ or of the true faith, on account of which they are not punishable, but who will be condemned for such sins as they commit against that natural law which is inscribed on the heart of every man.

III. Christ says of the Jews that they had hated him without cause. Is it not true of all other sinners? God loves man as the apple of his eye, and for him has given his only-begotten Son. That Son has offered himself up on the cross for the salvation of men, has given us his flesh and blood for food and drink, and every moment bestows upon us continual blessings in soul and body. If, notwithstanding all this, we yet sin, is it not hating God without cause?

Aspiration.

O Most Loving Jesus, we render thee perpetual thanks, that for love of us thou didst give thyself up to death, and we beseech thee that thou wouldst kindle in our hearts the flame of heavenly love that, according to thy commandment, we may love our neighbor as ourselves, and never, either through hatred or persecution, swerve from this love; remembering that we, the servants, are not better than thou, O our Lord and our God, and that we cannot complain if, like thee, we are hated and persecuted by the world.

Feast of St. Wolfgang, Bishop.

OCTOBER 31.

His Life.

Wolfgang, born in Swabia, of parents better known as Christians than as nobles, was carefully educated in piety and learning. To the humble origin of his family St. Wolfgang gave a great splendor by his knowledge in arts and sciences, a still greater by his dignity of bishop, but the greatest of all by his virtue and sanctity. As a scholar, he distinguished himself when his teacher, Stephen, who taught the higher branches of science at Wurzburg, being unable to resolve the doubts he proposed, he was thereby deprived of the benefit of public lectures, and obliged to pursue his studies alone, which he did with such happy success as to render himself qualified for the place of a professor. In the convent of Maria Einsiedeln he submitted to the rule of St. Benedict; but actuated by a higher spirit, he, with the permission of his abbot, left the convent, in the year 792, with the pious design of preaching the Gospel to unbelievers. This design he actually carried out in the districts of Lower Austria, after having first been ordained priest by St. Ulric. But the fruit which he there gathered was hardly adequate to his zeal. He brought but five thousand persons to the doctrine of Christ. Peregrin, bishop of Passau, kept the saint with him for some time, and recommended him to the Emperor Otho II., as the most suitable man for the See of Regensburg, which was then vacant. To get the better of the humility of Wolfgang, the emperor sent for him to Regensburg under pretence of certain business. Chosen bishop of that see against his will, in the year 973, Wolfgang showed his fine abilities in their full greatness. He did not lay aside his religious habit, and, as far as possible, followed the rules of monastic life. For improving the morals both of clergy and laity, he made use of three sorts of means. The first was, he led a holy and irreproachable life himself. The second, that he acted with entire disinterestedness, and was a remarkably free giver, so that people looked upon him as the father of the

poor, the supporter of the widows and orphans, and loved him accordingly. The third means was the word of God, which he preached with so much earnestness and unction that his hearers were always moved to tears. He devoted to prayer a part of every night, as well as every moment that he could spare from his other duties. Besides, he fasted and performed other works of penance to win God's blessing upon his people. The faithful servant of God had the consolation to see his diocese in great part put on an improved appearance. During the episcopal administration of Wolfgang, Henry, duke of Bohemia, sent an embassy to the Emperor Otho to petition for a bishop of their own, since the bishopric of Regensburg, which at that time included Bohemia, was too large to permit even the most zealous bishop to take proper care of it. The emperor considered this petition to be as important as it was just, and therefore consulted Wolfgang in regard to it. He laid the affair before the chapter of the cathedral, by whom different objections were raised, and particularly that of the diminution of revenue. The pious bishop refuted these objections, maintained with firmness that we ought to sacrifice temporal advantage for the sake of saving souls, and granted to the Bohemians what they had asked. He had governed the church of Regensburg about twenty-two years when the end of his laborious course drew nigh. On account of business he set out for Upper Bavaria, but on the way was seized with a fatal illness at Puppingen. He requested that he might be carried into the church of that place and laid before the altar of St. Othmar. There he received, with the deepest devotion, the sacraments of the dying, and waited with ardent love for the moment in which he should be forever united with God. The fame of his sanctity drew many people thither; it was proposed to remove them from the church, that the saint might not be disturbed. But he observed it, and ordered that they should be allowed to remain. "Jesus Christ," said he, "was not ashamed to die naked upon the cross before the face of the whole world, for our salvation. Let every one, therefore, see in my death what is to befall himself, that he may fear it, and prepare himself for it. May the good and merciful God have

mercy upon me, a poor sinner, who am now dying, and upon all who, with fear and humility, witness my death." After these words he closed his eyes, and softly fell asleep in the Lord, on the 31st October, 994. His holy body was carried to Regensburg, and at first deposited in the cathedral, but afterwards in the church of St. Emmeran, where it is kept in great veneration.

St. Wolfgang, of his own accord, restored to the convent of St. Emmeran whatever had been unlawfully taken therefrom by his predecessors under the title of abbot. An act in itself truly praiseworthy, and yet only one in which all those are bound to follow the holy bishop, who knowingly and unjustly possess the goods of others, though not taken by themselves, but perhaps inherited or received in some other manner. Remember the saying of St. Ambrose: "It is better to have no worldly goods and to be happy, than to have many temporal goods and withal to be damned. It is better that temporal riches should be lessened (by restitution of what has been unjustly gained), than to be forever ruined in soul and body." If you will not of your own accord deprive yourself, to your advantage, of the goods unjustly gotten from others, you will one day be deprived of them by force, according to the prophecy in the book of Job, *The riches which he hath swallowed he shall vomit up, and God shall draw them out of his belly* (Job. xx. 15).

[For the Introit of the Mass, the Epistle, and Gospel, see the Feast of St. Nicholas.]

Prayer.

O God, who didst give to thy people blessed Wolfgang as a teacher and minister of eternal salvation, grant that we may experience the benefit of his intercession in heaven, whom we honor as a guide while on earth. Amen.

Feast of All Saints.

NOVEMBER 1.

Why has the Church appointed this feast?

1. To honor God in his saints, in whom he has shown himself so wonderful, and to thank him, as the author of all sanctity, for the benefits he has bestowed upon them. 2. To put us in lively remembrance of the communion of saints; that is, of all true children of the Church, whether they belong to the Church militant on earth, to the Church suffering in purgatory, or to the Church triumphant in heaven; but more particularly to cause us to consider, with earnestness, the communion of the saints in heaven with us, who are yet combating on earth. 3. To encourage us to strive for the like sanctity with them, and to teach us that it is by no means impossible; for if thousands of men could become saints, why should not we, who can do all things through him who strengthens us, and has sent the Holy Ghost for our sanctification? 4. To pay honor to those saints to whom no particular day in the year is dedicated. 5. That, in consideration of so many intercessors, God may grant us perfect reconciliation, may give us a share in their merits, and may grant us the grace of one day sharing in their joy in heaven.

By whom was this feast instituted?

By Pope Boniface IV., who, in the year 610, appropriated the Pantheon (that is, the temple of all gods) to the divine service of Christians, dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin and all saints, and commanded this feast in honor of all saints to be celebrated at Rome every year. Gregory IV., in the year 840, extended this feast to the whole Church, and transferred it to the 1st November.

At the Introit of the Mass, the Church sings, Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a festival-day in honor of all the saints, at whose solemnity the angels rejoice, and give praise to the Son of God. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye just; praise becometh the upright.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O Almighty God, who hast granted us to venerate in one solemnity the merits of all thy saints, we beseech thee that, as our intercessors are multiplied, thou wouldst bestow upon us the desired abundance of mercy. Through Christ. Amen.

Epistle. (Apoc. vii. 2-12.)

In those days : Behold I John saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the sign of the living God ; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying : Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we sign the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them that were signed, an hundred forty-four thousand were signed, of every tribe of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda, were twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Ruben, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Aser, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Nephthali, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Manasses, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Zabulon, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand signed. After this, I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues : standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands : and they cried with a loud voice, saying : Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the angels, and the four living creatures ; and they fell down before the throne upon their faces, and adored God, saying : Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Explanation.

The words of this epistle refer first to the spreading of the Church of Christ on earth, and next to its completion in heaven. In the former view, St. John shows us that not all the Jews should fall into condemnation, but that a great number

—indicated by the one hundred and forty-four thousand—would be received into the Christian Church, while of the heathen an untold number should, within the Catholic Church, find deliverance from sin, death, and hell. In the latter view, the vision of St. John teaches us that the elect, both from Jews and Gentiles, shall one day enter into possession of the eternal glory, shall adore God forever, and sing continual praises to him for having delivered them from all dangers and crowned them with glory. The sign with which the elect are to be signed is, according to the interpretation of the holy fathers, the sign of the cross (Ezech. ix. 4). The white garments are the emblem of innocence and glory. The palms are tokens of victory gained. We too belong to the elect on earth—are children of the true Church. Oh, let us, then, labor and combat steadfastly against all enemies, to preserve the robe of innocence unstained. Then shall we be numbered among the host of the elect forever—the forever blessed.

Gospel. (Matt. v. 1-12.)

At that time: Jesus seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and when he was sat down, his disciples came unto him. And opening his mouth, he taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.

This gospel is read to-day, because it is by practicing what it contains that the saints have gained the eternal kingdom; we too, to arrive there, must go by the same way. Let us, then, consider carefully the following—

Explanation of the Eight Beatitudes.

I. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* The poor in spirit are, 1. Those who, like the Apostles, readily forsake all earthly things, and for Christ's sake become poor. 2. Those who, happening to lose their property by misfortune or injustice, suffer the loss patiently, in resignation to the will of God. 3. Those who, like Jesus (Matt. viii. 20), are content with their poor and humble position, seek no higher or happier one, and would rather suffer want than enrich themselves by unlawful acts, by fraud or theft. 4. The rich and noble who set not their hearts upon the riches and greatness of the world (Ps. lxi. 11; 1 Cor. vii. 30), but who use their riches and influence to relieve the misery of the needy and oppressed. 5. Finally, the truly humble, who, convinced of their weakness, their helplessness and misery, think lowly of themselves, and regard themselves but as beggars, who are always in need of the grace of God. To all these, therefore, in whose hearts the world has no place, there is assured, as their inheritance, the kingdom of heaven; here the kingdom of grace—there the kingdom of glory.

II. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.* That man is meek who does not murmur against God for sending afflictions upon him, who is not angry at men who do him injury, but who rather suppresses impatience, anger, envy, and revenge, nay, who seeks to recompense the evil done him by his neighbor, with good. Such a one is greater than he who takes by storm fortified cities (Prov. xvi. 32); he possesses an unfailing fountain of peace, quiet, and cheerfulness; by his meekness prevails over the most hostile minds, is by such means truly a ruler upon earth, and will one day, for his portion, obtain heaven, the land of the living, there to enjoy eternal peace.

III. *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* By them that mourn, we are not to understand such as grieve and lament over a death, a misfortune, a loss of worldly goods, or the like; but those who are grieved that God should be in so many ways offended by themselves and by others—

that his Church should be so heavily oppressed, and thereby so many souls lost that have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. The only evil really to be grieved for is sin, and the tears shed on account of sin, are the only tears that are profitable, for they shall be recompensed with everlasting joy.

IV. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.* Hunger and thirst denote the most ardent longing after those virtues which constitute Christian perfection; such as humility, meekness, the love of God and of our neighbor, penance. Whoever longs for these virtues as the hungry man does for food and drink, and prays to God for them with perseverance and earnestness, shall have his fill; that is, he shall be enriched with them, and one day shall be satisfied with eternal happiness.

V. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* The merciful here spoken of, are: 1. They who willingly forgive the injuries done to them. 2. They who have compassion on their poor neighbors, and, according to their ability, sustain them by alms. These shall obtain mercy; that is, God will forgive them their sins and endow them abundantly with the goods of this world, and of the world to come. Thus God deals with us as we deal with others (Matt. vii. 2).

VI. *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.* The clean of heart are they who preserve with care the innocence with which they are invested at holy baptism, or seek to regain it, when lost, by penance: they who keep their hearts and consciences unspotted from all sinful thoughts, particularly from all unchaste thoughts, desires, words, and acts, and who endeavor in all things to have a pure intention directed to God alone. They shall see God; that is, they shall know him even here upon earth; for, as the eye that is to see must be clean, so only souls that are pure and unstained can behold God. But further, our knowledge is like our hearts; the purer the heart, the clearer and greater is the knowledge of God. But in the world above they shall see, know, and possess him as he is. What blessedness! Strive, therefore, to keep your heart clean.

VII. *Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.* By peace-makers, we are to understand those who have peace with themselves, that is, a quiet conscience, and who endeavor to maintain peace among others, or to restore it when broken. Such are called the children of God, because they follow God, who is a God of peace (Rom. xv. 33), and who even gave his only Son to reconcile the world with him (Rom. v. 10), and to bring down upon earth that peace which the world itself could not give (Luke ii. 14, John xiv. 27).

VIII. *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Hereby all those are declared blessed who, on account of the true faith, of virtue, of the fear of God, of purity, are persecuted, calumniated, and even put to death, and who bear all this with Christian patience and constancy, nay, with joy. Thus have the saints done, and thereby they have gained the heavenly crown. Do we desire to be crowned with them, we must also suffer with them. And in truth, if we would apply ourselves zealously to virtue, occasions will not be wanting to us, *for all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (2 Tim. iii. 12).

Aspiration.

How lovely, O God, are thy tabernacles! My soul longeth and fainteth for thy courts, O living God, who art the crown and reward of the saints, and repayest their sufferings and sorrows in this world with eternal joy. How blessed are all they who, in this life, have served thee faithfully! They behold thee and the Lamb of God face to face; they bear thy name on their foreheads, and reign with thee forever. We therefore beseech thee, O God, through their intercession, to grant us thy grace to serve thee after their example, in sanctity and justice; to follow them in poverty, humility, meekness, repentance, in ardent longing for all virtues, in peace-making and patience, and one day, like them, to share in the joys of heaven. Amen.

[See the instruction on the Veneration of the Saints, at the beginning of this part.]

All Souls Day.

NOVEMBER 2.

What is All Souls Day?

It is the annual commemoration of all those souls departed this life in the grace and favor of God, who are still detained in purgatory.

What is purgatory?

Purgatory is that third place in the other world in which the souls of the departed suffer the temporal punishment of those sins for which in life they have not sufficiently atoned, and in which they are purified until they are worthy to appear in the presence of God. This place, properly the place of purgation, is so called because souls not entirely pure are there first purified perfectly, as gold is by fire.

Is there a purgatory?

Yes; it is a doctrine of our Faith. 1. Even under the old law the Jews held to this belief, and accordingly Judas Machabeus sent twelve thousand silver drachms to Jerusalem to procure the offering of sacrifices for the dead (2 Machab. xii. 43). 2. Under the new law, Jesus Christ seems to point to such a place (Matt. v. 26; xii. 32). The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians: *The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon (upon Christ), he shall receive a reward; if any man's work burn he shall suffer loss (by the fire of purgatory), but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire* (1 Cor. iii. 13, 14). A fire from which a man may be saved cannot be the fire of hell; for from hell there is no redemption. The words of St. Paul, therefore, can only be understood of purgatory. 3. In this sense has the infallible Church always explained, and in every age, and every place, believed them, as can be irrefutably shown by the testimony of the fathers of the Church, by the prayers of the Church, by the decrees of councils in every century. St. Epiphanius, so early as the fourth century contended against Arius, who denied the existence of purgatory.

What souls are they that go to purgatory ?

The souls of all those who, though dying in the grace of God, have yet something to atone for. Those persons dying in the grace of God, are still friends of God, and certainly God does not cast those who are his friends into hell. Inasmuch, however, as there are still upon them certain stains of sin, they are not yet worthy to come before the pure presence of God ; for, as St. John says, there shall not enter into heaven any thing defiled (Apoc. xxi. 27). It is, therefore, as suitable to the idea of God's mercy, as it is consonant to reason, that such souls should be first purified in purgatory.

What is the nature, the amount, and the duration of the suffering in purgatory ?

This is known only to God who regulates the punishment of purgatory according to his justice and mercy. But we know that it is the all-knowing and all-just God who judges his people, and that it is terrible to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. x. 30, 31). In the case of every one the most dreadful thing is, to be so far removed from God, so long kept out of heaven.

To what should this doctrine incite us ?

1. To remember the poor souls in purgatory and to pray God for their deliverance. 2. To use all diligence while yet among the living, to make satisfaction for our sins and daily faults, by good works, by mortifications, by prayers, by indulgences. 3. To be on our guard against not only mortal but also venial sins, since these last make us liable to purgatory, and therefore surely are not trivial. 4. To do what we can of ourselves, and not to rely upon what others may do for us after our death. How untrustworthy is that !

What should move us to assist the souls suffering in purgatory ?

The consideration, 1. That they are in a state of suffering, and that they endure inexpressible pains without being able to help themselves. 2. That those who thus suffer are friends of God, brothers and sisters of ours, and members with us of the one body of Christ. Where does one member suffer unless the others suffer also ? 3. To which is to be added

that every one must desire such assistance for himself; for who is so clean, so free from sin, as to hope that he will be able to enter heaven without passing through purgatory? He should, therefore, do for others what he would wish done for himself.

How can we assist the souls suffering in purgatory?

1. *By our prayers.* The holy Scripture says: It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sin (2 Machab. xii. 46). The Catholic Church has therefore always taught that the prayer of the faithful for the departed is holy and wholesome. 2. *By the holy sacrifice of the Mass*, the fruits of which are most beneficial to the souls in purgatory. For this reason Holy Church has always, from the time of the Apostles, remembered the dead in the Holy Mass. 3. By gaining indulgences, and other good works, by which we supplicate God to show mercy to the souls of the suffering, to accept what is performed by us in satisfaction for the punishment to be endured by them, and to bring them into the kingdom of everlasting peace and light (Eccclus. vii. 37).

For what souls should we particularly pray?

We should, on this day especially, offer up our prayers and good works for all the souls of the departed in general, but particularly, 1. For our parents, for our natural and spiritual brethren; for our sisters and relatives, our friends, benefactors, and pastors. 2. For those who have best entitled themselves to our prayers. 3. For those who have suffered longest, or who have yet to suffer. 4. For those whose pain is the greatest. 5. For those who are the most forsaken. 6. For those who are the nearest to deliverance. 7. For those who are suffering on our account. 8. For those who have hope in our prayers. 9. For those who are suffering on account of their faint desire after God and heaven, or on account of the little fear they had of purgatory. 10. For those to whom, in their lifetime, we have done injury, or who have done injury to us.

When and how was this yearly commemoration of the departed introduced?

The time of the introduction of this commemoration cannot be determined; for as early as the time of Tertullian, he mentions that the Christians of his day held a yearly commemora-

tion of the dead (Lib. de coron. mil.) Towards the end of the tenth century, St. Odilo, abbot of the Benedictines, at Cluny, directed this feast to be celebrated yearly, on the 2d of November, in all the convents of his order, which usage was afterwards enjoined upon the whole Christian world, by Pope John XVI. The feast of this day was probably established in order that, after having yesterday rejoiced over the glory of the saints in heaven, we should to-day remember in love those who are sighing in purgatory for deliverance.

With what ceremonies is this day celebrated by the Church?

On the vigil of this feast the Vespers for the Dead are said. On the day itself the altar and the vestments of the priest speak of mourning. The chants *Libera* and *Dies Iræ* remind us of death and judgment, and of the account there to be rendered of our whole life. The black cloth marked with a white cross, spread upon the floor, between wax candles, represents the cemetery. The priest standing there prays, and calls upon the bystanders to pray for grace and mercy, for deliverance from pain, for obtaining eternal rest. The lights denote the faithful of the departed, and the confidence of those that pray. The holy water and incense symbolize the desire that the prayer of the faithful may be pleasing to God. Where the cemetery is near by, these ceremonies usually take place over the graves themselves. Remember those who are suffering; remember death and judgment, and pray fervently with the Church.

The Introit of the Mass to-day, and of all masses for the dead, is: "Give to them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them." *A hymn, O God, becometh thee in Sion, and a vow shall be performed unto thee in Jerusalem. O Lord, hear my prayer; all flesh shall come to thee* (Ps. lxiv. 2, 3). Eternal rest, &c.

Prayer.

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the souls of thy servants departed, the remission of all their sins, that by our pious supplications they may obtain the pardon which they have always desired. Who livest and reignest.

Epistle. (1 Cor. xv. 51-57.)

Brethren: Behold I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not be all changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel. (John v. 15-21.)

At that time, the man went his way, and told the Jews it was Jesus who had made him whole. Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them: My Father worketh until now; and I work. Hereupon, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God. Then Jesus answered, and said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you: the Son cannot do any thing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doth, these the Son also doth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things which himself doth, and greater works than these will he show him, that you may wonder. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom he will.

NOTE.—The epistle and gospel place before our eyes the rising of all men to the judgment, in which every one shall receive what he has merited in life—good or evil, eternal happiness, or eternal damnation. Let us bethink ourselves of it on this day, and also on every day of our life, for it rests with us which of the two we will prepare for ourselves.

(Before the Gospel the priest recites the following Prose:)

Dies Iræ.

Nigher still, and still more nigh,
Draws the Day of Prophecy,
Doom'd to melt the earth and sky.

Oh, what trembling there shall be
When the world its Judge shall see,
Coming in dread majesty!

Hark, the trump with thrilling tone,
From sepulchral regions lone,
Summons all before the throne.

Time and death it doth appall,
To see the buried ages all
Rise to answer at the call.

Now the books are open spread;
Now the writing must be read,
Which condemns the quick and dead:

Now, before the Judge severe,
Hidden things must all appear;
Naught can pass unpunish'd here.

What shall guilty I then plead?
Who for me will intercede,
When the saints shall comfort need?

King of dreadful Majesty!
Who dost freely justify,
Fount of pity, save thou me!

Recollect, O Love divine!
'Twas for this lost sheep of thine
Thou thy glory didst resign:

Satest wearied seeking me,
Sufferedst upon the Tree:
Let not vain thy labor be.

Judge of Justice, hear my prayer!
Spare me, Lord, in mercy spare!
Ere the Reckoning-day appear.

Lo! thy gracious face I seek!
Shame and grief are on my cheek;
Sighs and tears my sorrows speak.

Thou didst Mary's guilt forgive,
Didst the dying thief receive,
Hence doth hope within me live.

Worthless are my prayers, I know,
Yet, oh, cause me not to go
Into everlasting woe.

Sever'd from the guilty band,
Make me with thy sheep to stand,
Placing me on thy right hand.

When the curs'd in anguish flee
Into flames of misery—
With the blest then call thou me.

Suppliant in the dust I lie!
My heart a cinder, crush'd and dry;
Help me, Lord, when death is nigh!

Full of tears, and full of dread,
Is the day that wakes the dead,
Calling all, with solemn blast,

From the ashes of the past.
Lord of mercy! Jesus blest!
Grant the faithful light and rest.

(At the Offertory in the Mass, the priest says the following prayer:)

O Lord Jesus Christ, deliver the souls of the faithful departed from the pains of purgatory, and from the place of their banishment. Deliver them from the mouth of the lion, that the pit may not swallow them up, and that they may not fall into darkness; but let the prince of angels, St. Michael, bring them into the eternal light which thou hast promised to Abraham and his seed, of old. For this end we offer to thee, O Lord, our praises and supplications. Graciously receive the souls we this day remember, and suffer them to pass from death to life, as thou hast promised to Abraham and his seed.

(Versicles to be said to-day, or at any other time, on visiting the graves of the departed:)

V. From the gate of hell

R. Deliver their souls, O Lord.

V. Lord grant them eternal rest,

R. And may perpetual light shine upon them.

V. Let them rest in peace. R. Amen.

V. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. R. Amen.

Feast of St. Martin, Bishop.

NOVEMBER 11.

His Life.

St. Martin was born in the year 316, in Pannonia, or Hungary, of pagan parents, but he early procured for himself secret instruction in the Christian religion, and in his tenth year was received into the number of the catechumens, that is, of those who are preparing themselves to receive holy baptism. At the age of fifteen he became a soldier, being, as is probable, forced to do so by his father, to whom the religion of the boy had become known. Out of love to God he not only kept himself aloof from all the excesses so common in this

state of life, but he took advantage of it to practice love for man, by dividing his pay among the poor. Being one day solicited for alms by a beggar, and having nothing but his arms and his cloak, he gave him half his cloak. The following night Christ appeared to him, wearing that half of the cloak, and said to him: "Martin, who is yet a catechumen, has clothed me with this garment." Moved by this comforting apparition, he received holy baptism, gave up the life of a soldier, and betook himself to St. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, in France. As he was careful for his own salvation, so also was he careful of the salvation of others, particularly of his parents and relatives, for the sake of whose conversion he undertook a journey to his native land. On his return he built, not far from Poitiers, the first convent in France, into which he received twenty-four monks, with whom he led a strict and virtuous life. His great faith made him like the Apostles as to miracles, and the fame thereof spread abroad to that degree that, in spite of his refusals, he was chosen bishop of Tours. This high dignity changed nothing in his manner of living; rather it increased his humility, his patience, under the greatest persecutions, his zeal for the glory of God, his love for his neighbor, and particularly for his enemies. After he had in such manner ruled over his diocese for twenty-six years, being then over eighty years old, the strength of life left him. He thereupon collected his disciples about him, and said: "Children, I am dying." They wept and mourned. Moved thereby, he in his prayers professed himself willing to labor longer if it were God's will. But he had labored for heaven enough, and God desired to place upon him the long-merited crown. With his eyes raised to heaven, he prayed incessantly, allowing himself no relief. At his last moments the enemy sought to confound him by a horrible apparition, but, full of confidence in God, the saint cried out: "What do you seek, cruel monster? In me you will find nothing that is yours;" and soon after his spirit gently sank to rest. Would that we might learn from this saint truly to love God, and to care not only for our own salvation, but for the welfare of our fellow-men in body and soul! Then we, too, might have nothing to fear in death.

Prayer.

O God, who seest that we cannot subsist by any strength of our own, mercifully grant that by the intercession of blessed Martin, thy confessor and bishop, we may be protected against all adversity. Through our Lord.

Epistle. (Eccclus. xlv., xlv.) See p. 789.

Explanation.

By this epistle, which literally refers to the great men of the old law, as of Henoch, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron, the Church would set before us the type of the office of high-priest or bishop of the new law, and at the same time the honor, the dignity, and the happiness of that office. Thus a priest or bishop should use all diligence to resemble these men, so acceptable to God and so zealous for the salvation of souls, in thought and in action, as he partakes in their dignity. He who does this may hope that God will pour out abundantly not only on him, but on the people committed to him, the blessing of his grace, and make him great not only on earth but in heaven. Thus we too, if set over others, in order to bring upon those committed to us the blessing and the grace of God, must, before all else, fulfil the commandments of God ourselves, and go before them in good example. Then the Lord will surely hear our prayers, will bless our endeavors, and we shall gain the crown of glory.

Gospel. (Luke xi. 33-36.)

At that time Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: No man lighteth a candle, and putteth it in a hidden place, nor under a bushel: but upon a candlestick, that they that come in may see the light. The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body will be lightsome: but if it be evil, thy body also will be darksome. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If then thy whole body be lightsome having no part of darkness; the whole shall be lightsome, and as a bright lamp shall enlighten thee.

What does this gospel teach us?

1. The same that it once taught the Jews; thus, *a.* Jesus is always the light of the world and he has not left himself without witness that he is so. This light is ever shining upon the world in his doctrines, his life, his acts, in his Church and in the mysteries of grace laid up therein, in the growth and preservation of that Church, and in the miracles which to this hour continue to be wrought within it. Hence, *b.* If we do not know him, if we do not obey and reverence his Church, it is but blindness and obduracy on our part; there is wanting to us a pure, sincere mind, that loves only the truth. This gospel accordingly admonishes us, 2. That we should acquire such a mind; for, says Jesus, as a sound clear eye keeps the whole body always in the right direction, and guides it in all its movements, while an eye that is awry, or otherwise defective, causes the body to fall, in like manner a heart that is pure and always turned towards God, gives the right direction to our thoughts, wishes, and actions, and causes us to see the light of truth, whereas a heart fixed upon the various goods of the world, but blinded to God, fills our thoughts, wishes, and actions with corruption and sin. How great in that case must be the darkness, the depravity, the misery! 3. This gospel contains the emblem of that which, *a.* All superiors, masters, heads of families, parents—and particularly priests—should be, namely, lights, like Jesus himself. For this they are set upon the candlestick. They are, accordingly, to give light by their teaching and life, by their avoidance of scandals; *b.* Of that which every Christian should be—a light, by his faith, his good works (Matt. v. 16). Finally, *c.* Of the temper with which the faithful and all inferiors should meet those who are set over them, with believing and trusting minds.

Aspiration.

O Jesus Christ, the eternal light, which only leads to happiness, grant us to follow thee, to give heed to thy inspirations, to keep the faith inviolable, and to witness to it by our lives, that we may never depart from the way of life, but steadfastly walking therein, may cause our light to shine before men, that

thou mayest be loved and praised by us all, here and through all eternity. Amen.

Supplication to St. Martin.

O St. Martin, precious heart of the priesthood, loving father of the poor, bright example of the religious, who, out of zeal for the glory of God, could neither be overcome by labor nor by death itself, at whose departure hence the angels therefore rejoiced, I implore thee, through thy powerful intercession, to obtain for me a heart full of compassion for the needy, for the apostolic pastors of the Church, true zeal, and for all, at the bed of death, the grace by which, after this life of misery, we may together enter into that joy of the Lord which thou, as a good and faithful servant, already possessest. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Feast of St. Leopold, Margrave.

NOVEMBER 16.

St. Leopold was born at Melk, on the 29th September, 1073. His father was the Margrave Leopold III., his mother's name was Itha. In 1096 he succeeded his father as Margrave of Austria, under the title of Leopold IV. At that time he built himself a residence at Neuburg, which is now called Kloster-Neuburg. Leopold distinguished himself as well by his mild and beneficent reign as by his unfeigned piety, so that the name of Pious was already given him by his contemporaries. He gave every one ready access to him, and even while present at an entertainment received petitions from his subjects. In the year 1106 he married Agnes, the widow of Duke Frederick of Hohenstaufen, daughter of the Emperor Henry IV., and mother of the Emperor Conrad III., a princess of great virtue, by whom he had eighteen children, seven of whom died in their innocence, while the remaining eleven, six sons and five daughters, lived to fill places of honor in the Church and in the State. As Solomon had once built a splendid temple at Jerusalem, so Leopold was desirous in this

respect to imitate him. He took counsel with his wife in regard to this design, and together they resolved to build a church under the title of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, and with it to connect a seminary of learned and pious men, by whom the salutary word of God should be preached to their subjects, the ignorant instructed in the necessary truths of the faith, the infinite merits of the Son of God dying for man, applied to men through the administration of the holy sacraments, and the glory of God promoted. The circumstance that while his wife was at the castle of Kohlenberg her veil was carried off by a sudden gust of wind, and afterwards found at Neuburg, induced him to build the new church there. The foundation-stone was laid on the 12th June, 1114. At first it was given to the secular and afterwards to the regular canons of St. Augustine. A son of Leopold's, by name Otto, as first provost of the Chapter of Canons at Kloster-Neuburg, had entered into the new flourishing order of Cistercians at Morimund. He begged his father to establish a convent in Austria for his religious brethren. The saint granted his petition. The great expense necessary for this purpose he considered well laid out, believing that by the prayers of pious priests, and by the continual praise of God in churches, the divine blessing would be obtained for his people, and the good of the whole land best promoted. Accordingly, in the year 1311, he built, about four miles from Vienna, in the pleasant vale of Sattelbach, the convent of the Holy Cross, for the monks of St. Bernard, together with a magnificent church, which he richly endowed, that they might there love and praise God in quiet, to which holy occupation, as is expressed in the letters of foundation, he could not devote himself as he wished, on account of the affairs of State to which he was obliged to attend. His youngest son, Conrad, who died archbishop, took the Cistercian habit in the new foundation. The saint had acquired so good a name throughout all Germany, that in the year 1125 the princes of the empire offered him the imperial crown; but he resolutely declined this dignity. After having reigned forty years, and for thirty lived happily with his wife, he was attacked by a severe illness, occasioned by

the cold, damp weather of the autumn. He bore his illness with the greatest patience, and comforted himself by various passages of Holy Scripture. The better to prepare himself for death, he confessed his sins with great contrition, received the most holy sacrament as his viaticum, and made ready, by reception of the holy sacrament of extreme unction, to encounter successfully the combat of death. Finally, on the 15th November, 1136, full of holy longing for his heavenly country, amidst invocations of the holy name of Jesus, he gently gave up his spirit into the hands of God. His corpse was brought to Kloster-Neuburg, and there laid in the vault which he had himself built. Through his intercession God wrought many miracles. He was canonized on the 6th January, 1483, by Pope Innocent VIII. His body was afterwards taken up, and in presence of Maximilian, king of Rome, of the Bishop of Passau, and of many mitred prelates, and of a large number of the Austrian nobility, inclosed in a coffin of silver, and placed upon the altar. In the year 1596, the yearly veneration of the saint, on the 16th November, was enjoined throughout all Austria. Many unreasonable persons fancy that all that is given to build churches and convents, and to support the clergy is so much badly laid out. How many hospitals, houses of refuge, and schools, they say, might be built with so much money! How many needy persons might be therewith supported. So Judas, when he beheld Magdalen anointing Jesus with the costly ointment, exclaimed: *To what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor* (Matt. xxvi. 7). What a zeal for the poor! But under the appearance of zeal was hidden his cursed avarice. *He was a thief*, says the Holy Scripture (John xvi. 6). He cared not for the poor, but for his purse; had the ointment been sold, and the money for it put in his hands, some part of it would have gone to himself, but as this was not done, he murmured against what he called *the waste* of the costly ointment.

[The Introit, Epistle, and Gospel, same as on the Feast of St. Henry, emperor.]

Prayer.

O God, who hast transferred St. Leopold from the cares of the world to heavenly glory, grant us grace so to use things temporal, that we may gain life eternal. Through Jesus Christ.

Feast of the Presentation of Mary.

NOVEMBER 24.

What feast is this?

A feast which the Church has instituted for the commemoration of the presentation of Mary in the Temple at Jerusalem, by her pious parents Joachim and Ann. Pope Sixtus V., in the year 1585, commanded the same to be celebrated throughout the Church. This presentation took place, according to old writers, in the third year of the life of Mary, in which her parents gave her to the priest to be educated, in order that she might be guarded against all defilement of the world. (Greg. Nyss. Serm. de Nativ. Christi.) There Mary grew up, full of grace and virtue. She had but one will, the will of God; but one desire, the desire of pleasing God. "No man," says St. Ambrose, "ever possessed in so high a degree as Mary, the gift of contemplative prayer, and her whole life was, as it were, one continued ecstasy; for her knowledge of God surpassed the knowledge of men, and in proportion to her knowledge grew her love, which consumed her heart like a holy flame." For this reason she shines forth through every century as the pattern for all, particularly for virgins, and has attracted innumerable persons to follow her shining example, as the prophet long before had foretold. *After her shall virgins be brought to the king* (Ps. xlv. 44).

Brief Lessons.

I. Joachim and Ann offered to the Lord their only and most beloved child, and gave her up entirely to his service. Great as the sacrifice was, they yet made it. The preservation of

the innocence of their daughter was to them before all else. Parents, God requires of you that you should not merely offer your children to him in the temple, but that you should take care to keep them pure and holy, as living temples which have been consecrated in baptism.

II. Mary gives and dedicates herself to God so soon as she is capable of serving him, and that without any reservation, for all time, and irrevocably. When, then, shall we once give ourselves in earnest to God? We have been indeed already given to him in holy baptism, we have been consecrated as temples of his, we have renounced the devil and the world, we have vowed to live only for God, and this vow have, perhaps, often renewed; but have we also kept it? What we gave with one hand—have we not taken it away with the other? Have we not defiled the temple of our hearts by shameful lusts, lived for the world and vanity more than for God? Ah, when shall we give ourselves up to God sincerely and forever? Perhaps when we are old! But will God accept our offering then? Will he be pleased that we first begin to serve him, when we can no longer serve the world? that we first begin to live for him when our life is soon to cease? No; God is a jealous Lord, and is not pleased with a heart divided between him and creatures. He requires us to love him with all our heart and all our soul, and to serve him with all our powers. Let us then do this, and do it from our youth; let us keep ourselves in body and soul undefiled for the Lord; such love, and such love only will he reward as perfect.

[Introit, Epistle, and Gospel, same as on the Feast of the Rosary.]

Prayer.

O God, who wast pleased that the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, the habitation of the Holy Ghost, should on this day be presented in the temple; grant, we beseech thee, that by her intercession we may deserve to be presented in the temple of thy glory. Through our Lord.

Aspiration to Mary.

O Mary, most acceptable offering to the holy Trinity, prepare my heart that it may become a worthy sacrifice pleasing to God. Obtain for me the grace, that henceforth there may proceed from my heart no thought, from my mouth no word, from me no deed, which shall not tend to the glory of God and the good of my neighbor. Cause my heart to be always directed to God, that I may do nothing neglectfully which concerns his honor and my own salvation. Take from me my perverted will, and procure me through thy intercession a will like thine own, that I may fulfil all my obligations and follow strictly in all things the commands of God. Following thy example, I this day lay my unworthy heart upon the altar of God, there to remain till it shall please him to translate it to the temple of his glory.

Feast of St. Corbinian, Bishop.

NOVEMBER 20.

His Life.

St. Corbinian was born at Chartres, in France. While yet a boy he was fond of prayer, attended diligently holy mass, and took pleasure in hearing the word of God, and in the reading of Holy Scripture. With equal diligence he afterwards applied himself to the pursuit of knowledge, refusing himself many things that were allowable, particularly in regard to food and drink, in order to practice himself beforehand in self-denial. For fourteen years he lived the life of a hermit, in a cell which he had built near a chapel. His sanctity, the splendor of which was heightened by the gift of miracles, and the counsel that he gave to such as came to consult him, made him celebrated throughout the whole country, so that the mayor of the palace of the kings of France, Pepin of Heristal, commended himself to his prayers. But the distractions occasioned

by intercourse with those that applied to him, caused him to seek out another solitary place, where he might live entirely unknown to the world. Having a particular devotion to St. Peter, he went to Rome, and there lived in a cell near the church of the prince of the Apostles. The Pope represented to him that he ought not to live a solitary life, when in so many nations there was a want of apostolical laborers; accordingly he consecrated him bishop in the year 716, and commissioned him to preach the Gospel. Corbinian thereupon returned to his native country, where his preaching brought forth many good fruits. On a second journey which he made to Rome, he passed through Bavaria, where he converted many idolaters. Pope Gregory II. commanded him to return into that country, which had been neglected, and to make it the principal theatre of his exertions. He obeyed; and as Christians from day to day became more numerous, in the year 724 he laid the groundwork of the diocese Freysing, by erecting a Benedictine monastery upon a mountain near the old church of our Blessed Lady, which had stood there a long time, and which had been given to him by Grimwald, duke of Bavaria. Grimwald professed, indeed, the Christian religion, but was destitute of the spirit of it. He married Piltrude, the widow of his brother. For this unlawful marriage the holy bishop rebuked him with freedom. But his zeal produced no effect but to draw upon himself persecution; Piltrude in particular vowed his destruction, and employed assassins to take his life. But God preserved his servant, while his enemies, on the contrary, came to a miserable end. Upon the death of the duke and his wife, Corbinian, who had been obliged to fly, returned to Freysing in the year 726, and continued his apostolic labors. God had revealed to him the time of his death. After having, therefore, transacted some business relating to his diocese, he put on his episcopal vestments, went to church, offered the holy sacrifice of the mass, and, having finished, went back to his house, tasted a little wine, signed himself with the sign of the cross, and then, in the presence of several of his clergy, without any previous sickness, without any sign of pain, gave up his spirit on the 8th September, 730. Having

a particular veneration for St. Valentine, bishop, he had directed his body to be buried near that saint at Mais, in Tyrol, a place in which he had formerly spent much time. God was pleased to glorify his name by miracles. His remains, with those of St. Valentine, were afterwards removed to Trent, and from thence, by Duke Thassilo II., to Passau, where the latter had been bishop. Aribo, the fourth bishop of Munich-Frey-sing (from 746 to 748), who regarded St. Corbinian as having asked to be buried at Mais because St. Valentine rested there, thought that, by the change of circumstances, he had a right to claim the bones of the saint, and he succeeded. This translation of the saint's remains is commemorated in the archdiocese of Munich-Frey-sing on the 20th November.

Behold I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart (Osee ii. 14). If, therefore, the duties of your calling permit, devote every year several days, one after the other, to such profitable solitude, and meditate seriously on your salvation, according to the directions of spiritual books written for that purpose. But if your occupations are so manifold and exacting that you cannot withdraw from them for several days, do not neglect to apply yourself, on Sundays and holydays, to this wholesome duty.

[For the Introit, Epistle, and Gospel, see the Feast of St. Liborius, p. 789.]

Prayer.

We beseech thee, O Almighty God, grant us, through the intercession of St. Corbinian, the grace to increase in devotion, and to gain eternal salvation. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Feast of St. Catharine, Virgin and Martyr.

NOVEMBER 25.

Her Life.

St. Catharine, a noble lady of Alexandria, had from her childhood made such extraordinary proficiency in the knowledge of Christianity, and in other departments of learning, that at the age of eighteen she put to confusion the wisdom of the pagan philosophers. The occasion of her doing so arose out of the persecution of the Emperor Maxentius. For, having heard that the young and beautiful Catharine had defended, in the most profound manner, the divine character of Christianity, he called together the most learned philosophers, and promised them a considerable reward if they would refute Catharine and bring her back to paganism. But the very contrary of this happened, for she demonstrated the divine origin of Christianity with such unanswerable wisdom that these philosophers received the faith, and gave their lives for it. The emperor, irritated thereby, sought to prevail upon her to abandon her faith by promising to marry her, and, when this means proved ineffectual, by imprisonment for eleven days, by blows, by hunger and thirst. But the consequence of this was, his wife and one of his generals, Porphyry, who visited Catharine in prison, were likewise converted to Christianity, and prepared for the martyrdom which they endured. At this the tyrant fell into a great rage, and gave orders to have the body of St. Catharine cut in pieces by a wheel set around with sharp knives and iron spikes. But upon the holy martyr making the sign of the cross over this frightful instrument of torture, it burst into pieces—a miracle by which many of the beholders were converted to the faith. Finally the youthful heroine obtained, by being beheaded, the double crown of virginity and martyrdom.

Lessons for Young Women.

St. Catharine is a pattern for every Christian young woman. Like her, every one should strive, 1. To gain a thorough

knowledge of the faith and of the practical doctrines connected therewith. 2. To preserve inviolate innocence in general, and virginal purity in particular, and rather to die than to suffer it to be wronged. Indeed a pure, chaste, innocent mind and life are the only true treasures of a Christian virgin. A young woman without innocence, is a skeleton in the grave. Use every effort, then, to preserve innocence; shun carefully the dangers which threaten it, and lay hold with earnestness of the means of deliverance, when innocence is in peril.

I. Among the dangers of innocence are, 1. The desire to please men; to draw upon us the eyes of the world, and to be praised by it. 2. Vanity in dress, which seeks to gain consideration and support by the colors and beauty of garments, by ornaments, by following the fashion of the day, and by immodest attire. 3. Imprudence in looks, in actions, and in words. 4. Bad company, dances, balls, theatres. The first step therein is too often the first step towards being seduced. 5. Flatteries in regard to peculiarities of mind as well as of body. 6. Thoughtless and unnecessary association with persons of the opposite sex, particularly at night.

II. The means to preserve innocence are, 1. The endeavor only to please God, which alone brings us true profit. 2. Decency in dress, modesty of looks, moderation and propriety of speech, discretion in actions. 3. Flight from bad company and dangerous intercourse. The daughter who cares for her innocence should often deny herself lawful pleasures, that she may the more certainly conquer in the contest with such as are unlawful. She should never trust a blind inclination towards any person, for such inclination is blind and blinding: the spark too easily becomes a flame. She should never be alone unnecessarily with a man, nor receive presents from any man, but think on the reward in heaven for combating steadfastly. Should it happen to her to be pursued, she must tell of it to her parents, or to her master or mistress. Should they give her no help, she should leave such service. Poverty and bodily want are more endurable than that spiritual want which comes from sin. At night she should lock her room and give no heed to the voice that would mislead her. At any attempt

to corrupt her she should take to flight, or if that be impracticable, resist, call for help, and rather suffer death than part with her innocence. 4. Prayer, frequent reception of the holy sacraments, and meditation on the truths of eternity. Never forget that a youth of pleasure brings a sad old age, and a wanton life is followed by a late repentance, and how shall one stand at last before the Eternal Judge?

May you, O young woman, who read this, thus think and act. Take Mary for your pattern, that following her in purity and innocence, you may one day be received into God's eternal kingdom. Let Catharine be thy example; contend like her, who, to save her faith and innocence, rejected all the promises of a powerful emperor, and gave up her body to every torture, in order to gain the crown of eternal life. Following her, you too shall one day be adorned with the crown of eternal glory.

At the Introit of the Mass the Church sings, *I spoke of thy testimonies before kings, and I was not ashamed; I meditated also on thy commandments, which I loved exceedingly. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who didst give the law to Moses on the summit of Mount Sinai, and didst wonderfully deposit in the same place the body of the blessed virgin and martyr Catharine, by means of thy holy angels, grant, we beseech thee, that by her merits and intercession we may come to the mountain which is Christ. Who lives.

Epistle. (Ecclus. li. 1-7.)

I will give glory to thee, O Lord, O King, and I will praise thee, O God my Saviour. I will give glory to thy name: for thou hast been a helper and protector to me. And hast preserved my body from destruction, from the snare of an unjust tongue, and from the lips of them that forge lies, and in the sight of them that stood by, thou hast been my helper. And thou hast delivered me, according to the multitude of the mercy of thy name, from them that did roar,

prepared to devour. Out of the hands of them that sought my life, and from the gates of affliction which compassed me about. From the oppression of the flame which surrounded me, and in the midst of the fire I was not burnt. From the depth of the belly of hell, and from an unclean tongue, and from lying words, from an unjust king, and from a slanderous tongue. My soul shall praise the Lord even to death, for thou deliverest them that wait for thee and savest them out of the hands of the nations.

Practice.

These words with which the wise man thanks God for deliverance from the danger of death into which he had been plunged by his slanderous enemies, the Church fitly puts into the mouths of those holy virgins who have given up their lives for Christ. For he was their most faithful helper and most powerful protector amid the dangers and temptations of the world. Although he permitted them to fall into trying temptations, dangers, and distress, yet he did this but to give them the opportunity of victory, and to make his assistance the more apparent. So is it always. God is the powerful protector of pure souls, and never will he allow them to fall into sin, so long as they trust in him. But can they promise themselves this protection who without necessity, and without benefit, voluntarily expose themselves to the greatest dangers, and take pains to seek out the occasions of sin? No; for he will not renew in their case the miracle of the Babylonian youths, but will leave them to perish in the danger which they love (Eccles. iii. 27).

Gospel. (Matt. xxv. 1-13.)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven shall be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish, and five wise. But the five foolish having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us of

your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now while they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last come also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answering said: Amen, I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.

What would Jesus teach us by this parable?

After having in the preceding chapter of this gospel spoken of the last judgment, and warned us to watch because this judgment would break upon us unexpectedly, he enforces what he had then said by this parable of a wedding to which the bridegroom came when he was not looked for, and to which he took with him those who were ready, but excluded those who were not.

The marriage is the everlasting possession and enjoyment of God; *the bridegroom* is Jesus Christ; *the bride* is his Church upon earth; *the marriage feast* is the union of Christ with his bride in heaven, which represents the marriage-hall; *the ten virgins* are all the faithful inasmuch as all are invited to the marriage of the Lamb and of the Bride, and to the everlasting feast which accompanies this union. *The wise virgins* are they who by their pureness from all sin, and by their good works keep themselves always ready for the coming of the Lord; *the foolish virgins* are they who, contented with the name of Christians, think but little on God and eternity, and perform no good works.

What are we to understand by the oil, the lamps, the vessels?

According to the interpretation of the holy fathers we are to understand by the *lamps*, faith; by the *oil*, charity; *good works*, mercy; by the *vessels*, the hearts and consciences of men.

What is signified by the "Tarrying of the bridegroom?"

His tarrying signifies the uncertainty of the hour of death and judgment; the slumbering and sleeping, that dulness of Christians by which they continue to live without good works

until they are overtaken by the sleep of death, from which they are at last awakened by the sound of the trumpet and the voice, *Arise ye dead, and come to judgment.*

What is meant by the foolish asking for oil and being sent to those that sell?

The asking for oil is to show that they who content themselves with a dead faith in order to escape the trouble of works of charity and mercy, will on the day of judgment beg for a share in the merits of the just, but without being heard. For the virtues of the just will not make good the deficiencies of the wicked. How will you feel when you then discover what you lack?

The sending of the foolish to those that sell is, according to St. Bernard, a severe reproach to hypocrites and to all who have served the world,—as much as to say to them, “You who have been always seeking to please men, must now after death look to them for your reward.”

Why did the bridegroom say to the foolish virgins, *I know you not.*

Because he saw not in them the tokens of his discipleship—good works. Work therefore and watch in time!

Why does Jesus say, *Watch ye, therefore?*

To this question St. Gregory answers, “If a man knew the hour of his death, he might devote one portion of his life to the pleasures of the world, and another to penance; but since that is concealed from him he ought every day to expect the last moment, every day to watch, to do good, to shun evil, and to be ready for the coming of the Lord.

Aspiration.

O Jesus Christ, teacher of eternal life, we thank thee for having taught us how to keep ourselves prepared for thy coming by a prudent, watchful life. But since we are unable to do this of our own strength, grant us thy grace, that the fire of thy divine love may burn in our hearts, in order that we may constantly do what is good, and with thee enter into everlasting joys. Ah, grant that at the last judgment we may not hear that terrible sentence, *I know you not*; but

that joyful summons, *Come ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* Grant us this, O Jesus, our God and Saviour, who hast redeemed us with thy precious blood, to whom is due honor, praise, thanksgiving, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX.

Patronage of St. Joseph.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Introit of the Mass. *The Lord is our helper and protector, in him our heart shall rejoice, and in his holy name we have trusted. Alleluia, alleluia. Give ear, O thou that rulest in Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep.* Glory be to the Father.

Prayer.

O God, who by an unspeakable providence wast pleased to choose Blessed Joseph for the spouse of thy Most Holy Mother, grant, we beseech thee, that we may deserve to have him for our intercessor in heaven whom we venerate as our protector upon earth. Who livest.

Epistle. (Gen. 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. 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. (Luke iii. 21-23.)

At that time: It came to pass when all the people was 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.

What we are to believe concerning the Evangelical Counsels.

In what consists the perfection of the Christian life?

In the perfection of love (Col. iii. 14). The more a man separates himself from the world, and unites himself with God, the more perfect he will be. The more he clings to worldly things, and separates himself from God, the more imperfect and wicked will he be.

By what means can we attain to the perfection of the Christian life?

Jesus Christ shows us the way which leads to perfection, and the means which render easy the fulfilment of the commandments of God.

What do we understand by the evangelical counsels?

We mean certain excellent practices which Jesus Christ lays before us, and to which he calls us, without directly commanding us to adopt them. So that the difference between the commandments and the evangelical counsels consists in this: that the commandments bind us, by an indispensable obligation, but the evangelical counsels do not. We cannot be saved, no matter what state of life we may be in, without keeping the commandments; but we may obtain salvation without practising the evangelical counsels. These no person is bound to keep except such persons as are bound thereto by vows.

Which are the evangelical counsels?

The principal are: 1. Voluntary poverty. 2. Perpetual chastity. 3. Entire obedience under a spiritual director.

By *voluntary poverty* is understood a free-will renunciation of the riches and goods of this world in order to follow Jesus Christ in his poverty. To the rich young man, who from his youth had kept all the commandments of God, the Saviour gave the counsel: *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me* (Matt. xix. 21). Further, he teaches us: *So likewise every one of you, that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple* (Luke xiv. 33).

By *perpetual chastity* we understand a free-will, life-long abstinence, not only from every thing that is contrary to purity, but also abstinence from marriage, in order to live only for God and his holy service in virginal purity. Of an unmarried life for the sake of heaven, Jesus said: *He that can take, let him take it* (Matt. xix. 12). St. Paul remained unmarried that he might be more at liberty to care for *the things of the Lord*. He also desires that all might be even as he, but he does not command it (1 Cor. vii. 7, 40).

By *entire obedience* we are to understand a voluntary renunciation of one's own will in order to follow the will and command of a superior whom one chooses for himself. All the Apostles kept faithfully, not only the commandments given by God for all, but through their perfect obedience to their Master, adhered to him, and preached the Gospel after he had ascended into heaven.

Since salvation may be gained without putting in practice the evangelical counsels, why does Christ present them to us for fulfilment?

He has presented them to us as practices most excellent in themselves, and as means for obtaining perfection.

How is explained that the evangelical counsels are most excellent practices in themselves?

There is nothing more excellent for a man than to offer up to God his body, his goods, and his own will; and this is done by living in voluntary poverty, in perpetual chastity, and entire obedience.

How is Christian perfection gained by the practice of the evangelical counsels?

The perfection of the Christian life consists in perfect renunciation of all concupiscence, and in union with God the Lord only. But this happy condition can be reached in no way so easily as when one lives in poverty, chastity, and obedience. For poverty withdraws us from the concupiscence of the eyes, chastity from the concupiscence of the flesh, obedience from the pride of life, which three things alone and only hinder us from being united with God the Lord as we ought to be.

How is it shown that, by practicing the evangelical counsels, the keeping of the commandments of God is made easier?

This is readily shown in the case of each one of them. It is a divine command, that the heart of man shall not be divided between God and a creature. To him who lives in virginal purity it will prove far easier to keep this commandment, than to him who is married (Matt. vi. 24; 1 Cor. vii. 32, 33).

It is a divine command, that man shall not set his heart upon earthly things. This will be easier for him who, of his own accord, gives up all worldly goods, than to him who retains possession of them.

It is a divine command, to deny and mortify one's self. It is the easier to do this when one places himself under a superior, all of whose directions and orders he obeys as those of a complete master over his conduct and actions.

How should we put in practice the evangelical counsels?

In practicing the evangelical counsels there are three points to be observed, in order that they may serve, or help to eternal salvation.

1. They must be practiced with *a pure intention*, seeking thereby nothing else than to please God and to praise his holy name.

2. With *great humility*, in no way giving ourselves preference over others.

3. By *great fidelity* in observing not only what one has vowed, but also what is commanded. Also, one should live diligently and strictly according to the commandments, otherwise the practicing of the evangelical counsels will be of no avail.

What persons may bind themselves by vows to keep the evangelical counsels ?

They who are in a proper state of life, and who possess a firm resolution to keep the evangelical counsels, to the salvation of their souls and to the glory of God, by the help of his grace.

Can it happen that persons living in strict observance of the commandments of God, without practicing the evangelical counsels, should be more pleasing to God than those who have taken vows to keep those counsels ?

When they who do not follow the evangelical counsels, but live in the world, have more completely renounced all concupiscence, are by charity more united with God, and keep more strictly the commandments of God and of his Church than they who have taken vows to keep and practice the evangelical counsels ; in this case, they who do not practice the evangelical counsels are more perfect than they who do, for perfection properly consists, not in practicing the evangelical counsels, but in the perfect charity and entire renunciation of the world and of all concupiscence, which may be attained, although with greater difficulty, without keeping and living according to the evangelical counsels.

What we must believe concerning Vows.

What is a vow ?

By a vow is to be understood a promise, in accordance with a foregoing pious resolution, made before God, whereby any one binds himself, under penalty of sin, to do certain good not positively commanded by the moral law, but counselled and recommended by it.

A vow is distinguished on the one hand from a simple pious or moral resolution, and on the other from those promises in which one vows to God either certain acts which, without that promise, would not be obligatory, or to perform something which is already binding before that promise.

Is it pleasing to God, and meritorious for us, to make vows ?

Yes ; for vows are tokens of special zeal for the service of

God, and of a praiseworthy love for him. Accordingly God approved the vow of Anna, the mother of Samuel, by which she offered up to him her child (1 Kings i. 11).

Are we bound to keep the vows we make?

If we promise a person any thing right, good, and pleasing to him, we must keep our promise. Should we not, then, keep to God what we have of our own free will, and after previous deliberation, promised to him? This Holy Scripture expressly enforces, saying, *When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to pay it, because the Lord thy God will require it. And if thou delay, it shall be imputed to thee for a sin. If thou wilt not promise, thou shalt be without sin; but that which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe, and shalt do as thou hast promised to the Lord thy God, and hast spoken with thy own will, and with thy own lips* (Deut. xxiii. 21, 22, 23).

The non-fulfilment of a vow would be not only a breach of fidelity, but a direct violation of the honor and reverence due to God. *If thou hast vowed any thing to God, defer not to pay it; for an unfaithful and foolish promise displeaseth him, but whatsoever thou hast vowed, pay it; and it is much better not to vow, than, after a vow, not to perform the things promised* (Ecclus. v. 3, 4).

How many kinds of vows are there?

They are several, but they may be generally included in two—*simple* and *solemn*. Solemn vows are those which are made in a religious order approved by the Church, at the expiration of a novitiate, with a loud voice, and received by a superior in the name of the Church. Simple vows are made without any solemnity, and not received by a superior in the name of the Church. It is not here necessary that a man should expressly say, “I promise to Almighty God, I vow, or I bind myself,” etc. It is sufficient if, in his mind, he does the same thing, or, what is equivalent, with the intention of thus binding himself under the penalty of sin.

What wise provision has the Church made to prevent abuses in taking solemn vows?

She has ordered that no one shall be allowed to take solemn

vows who has not previously gone through a novitiate of one year, during which period the novice shall have been faithfully instructed in the duties of a religious life, and trained in all the exercises thereof, in order that he may have time to measure his strength by the rules of the order, and that his superiors, as well as himself, may test and examine his vocation. When this time has expired, the Church allows the novice to take solemn vows, provided that he be full sixteen years of age, and that all be done with perfect freedom, without force, threats, enticement, or solicitation, either on the part of his relatives, or of the superiors of the convent.

In regard to young women, the Council of Trent has ordered that they shall not make a religious profession until the bishop, or some other person commissioned by him, shall have asked each one of them individually, whether she have not been forced or deceived in the matter, and whether she understand well what she is about to do. After it is ascertained that her intention is holy, and her will free, and that she possesses the requisite qualifications, she is then allowed to make her religious profession. And this Council further declares that it makes this decree, in order that their liberty may be preserved to young women who are about to be dedicated to God.

The same Council anathematizes all those who, in any manner, would force a virgin, a widow, or any female, save in those cases which are excepted in the canon law, to enter a convent, to put on the religious habit, or to make a profession; or who shall assist in so doing, by counsel or by deed; or who, notwithstanding they know the person to be acting without her own free will, shall by any such course lend their consent and aid thereto. Further, parents and guardians of a novice are not allowed to give to the convent any of his property until after he has made solemn vows, except what may be necessary for his food and clothing during his novitiate, for fear that he might thereby be deterred from leaving the convent again.

But what is to be done when one is not in a condition to keep his vows?

He is bound to make known to his spiritual superior the state in which he finds himself, and then the superior will

either commute his vow for some other good work, or will set the petitioner free from it altogether.

Who in the Church has power to commute vows, or to free persons from them?

They who have received in the Church the power to bind and to loose, each one according to the extent of his spiritual jurisdiction, and according to the limits of the power which the Church has given him.

The head of the Church, the Pope, can absolve from vows, or commute them, throughout the world. Bishops possess this power in their own dioceses; but they cannot exercise it in regard to those vows, absolution from which is reserved to the Pope. These are, 1. Of perpetual chastity; 2. Of entering a religious order approved by the Church; 3. Of making pilgrimage to Jerusalem; 4. To Rome; 5. To Compostella (the grave of the Apostle James, in Spain).

For a vow to be reserved to the Pope, it must be certain and complete. But if its validity be doubtful, or if the need be pressing, if, for example, a still greater evil would ensue from the delay, or if a recourse to Rome would be impracticable, in such cases the bishop of the diocese may assume the changing of the vow reserved to the Pope.

Can one be entirely freed from the obligations of a vow?

Certainly: this takes place when the vow loses its force. But he only can take away the force of a vow to whom belongs authority both over the will of the person who makes the vow, and over the thing vowed.

Fathers and guardians have power to invalidate the vows made by *sons* before the age of fourteen years, and by *daughters* before the age of twelve. No married woman can, contrary to the will of her husband, bind herself to certain things, which, though reasonable and good in themselves, would yet bring to confusion the order of a household.

Solemn vows are not subject to the law of invalidation, because they have been subjected to a previous investigation, before being accepted by the Church. "Repent not," says St. Augustine, "that you have bound yourself by a vow. Rejoice rather, that you no longer possess freedom with regard to

things as to which you could not, without loss, remain free. Put your hand courageously to the work, and fulfil the word which you have given. He who requires from you the accomplishment of your vow, will help you. It is a happy necessity, which, in a manner, forces us to draw near to God by a more perfect way" (St. Aug. Ep. 127).

What is requisite to lawful and valid absolution from a vow?

For lawful and valid absolution from a vow there is requisite such a cause as we can believe would move God to take off the obligation of the vow. Such causes are, want of full and perfect liberty, fear caused in an unjust manner, an essential error in the vow itself, absence of the final cause of the vow, and a moral impossibility of keeping the vow.

For what reasons may a vow be commuted?

1. When there is a change in circumstances, health, or state of life. 2. When a person has an invincible repugnance to that which he has vowed, so that in order to overcome it he must use towards himself a violence to which his courage is not equal. 3. When the vow produces distress of conscience and perplexity. 4. When, after carefully weighing everything, it is apparent that the thing vowed is not, in reason, suited to the condition of him who has made the vow.

What vows may be commuted by confessors during a jubilee?

They can commute, for other good works, all vows, even such as are reserved to the Pope, except: 1. Vows, *a*, of perpetual chastity; *b*, of entering some religious order. However, even these may be commuted if made only conditionally. Vows to enter some religious congregation do not come under the above exception. 3. Vows taken to guard against sin, wherever the good works for which they are commuted are as efficacious as the vows themselves.

The simple vows by which one enters a religious congregation, as for instance, the School-brothers, or the Sisters of Charity, are made for the benefit of a third party, and cannot be commuted by virtue of a jubilee.

Is a simple vow of perpetual (that is, of life-long) chastity permissible?

Of this there is no doubt. For although marriage is by the ordination of Divine Providence the state of most men who live in the world, and although a man who enters into this state with a Christian intention does well, yet he who prefers the unmarried state in order to follow the call of God, does better; for the state of virginity is not only a more suitable state in which to take care of the salvation of one's self and of others than the state of marriage, overloaded as it is with cares and troubles, but it also admits of a higher and more complete sanctification, making men, even upon earth, like angels. Upon this point St. Paul speaks in a manner which leaves no room for objection (1 Cor. vii. 8). *But I say to the unmarried and the widows, it is good for them if they continue even as I. He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God; but he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband* (1 Cor. vii. 32-35).

2. Christ has not only permitted generally, to Christians, the state of virginity, but where one feels a vocation to it, he has expressly counselled it (Matt. xix. 12). *For there are eunuchs who were born so from their mothers' womb, and there are eunuchs who were made so by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves so for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take.* Whatever Christ counsels for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (that is not only to spread the kingdom of heaven by teaching, but also that we may the more surely come to heaven and have there the greater reward), that we are certainly at liberty to vow; in order that, knowing how easily we are turned away from what is good, we may give a lasting direction to the unsteadiness of our will.

3. Whatever Christ counsels, what he promises to reward, must be possible, and although man has not the gift of chastity of himself, yet by watchfulness and prayer he can obtain it, and by the grace of God can overcome the temptations of

the flesh; for *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it* (1 Cor. x. 13). When, therefore, a man, of his own free will, with deliberation, and by the advice of the friend of his conscience, makes a vow of chastity, he is bound to keep it, and by going contrary to it contracts sin.

4. We have, from the earliest ages of the Church to the present hour, innumerable examples of servants of God, many of whom have been great saints, who have vowed perpetual chastity. Would they have done so had they not believed it lawful to vow perpetual chastity? Or will any man say that all these servants of God, all these great saints, have herein sinned?

5. By this virtue, more than by any other, man is brought continually nearer to God. *He that loveth cleanness of heart, for the grace of his lips shall have the king (of heaven) for his friend* (Prov. xxii. 11). Here we see the reason why, in the language of Scripture, there is assigned to pure virgins a peculiar place among the followers of the Lamb, and the special prerogative, that they shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (Apoc. xiv. 1-5). The observance of chastity will have its reward in every state of life, but there will be a peculiar splendor to the crowns of virgins. The reason why such glorious crowns are bestowed for the observance of chastity lies in this, that to gain its victories requires a firmer heroism than is requisite for other virtues. "Sublime, and full of courage," says St. Cyprian, "is the contest for virginity, but great also is its reward. The first place and the hundredfold fruit belongs to the martyrs; but the second place, and the sixtyfold fruit, to the virgins" (Matt. xiii. 8). Justly, therefore, does this saint call virgins the flower of the Church, the most praiseworthy part of the flock, the joy of the whole Church.

Such are the reasons why the preference of the state of virginity over that of marriage has, in agreement with Holy Scripture, been most distinctly acknowledged by the teaching of the Church, and by the practice of every age, and earnestly defended against both ancient and modern heretics.

If a person who has made the vow of chastity dare not, on account of violence of incitement, trust himself to live in the world with continence, and desires therefore to enter into matrimony, he must solicit a dispensation to do so from the Apostolic See at Rome. After the imparting of absolution for the change of purpose, the vow of perpetual chastity is commuted into some suitable and wholesome penance, usually into a confession once a month, and other works of penance and piety variously imposed, some of which are to be performed every day.

Upon the dissolution of the marriage by the death of one of the parties, the vow revives, so that to a second marriage a new dispensation is necessary.

18 April 1860

A SHORT COMPENDIUM

OF THE

CATECHISM BY PETER CANISIUS.

WITH REFERENCES TO EXPLANATIONS OF THE DIFFERENT POINTS, AS
CONTAINED IN THIS VOLUME.

CATECHISM is concise instruction how we are to become holy and happy, according to the true doctrine of Jesus, as known to us from Holy Scripture, tradition, and the decisions of the Church.

Under three general heads—Faith, Hope, Charity—we are taught, 1. What God has done. 2. What God will do. 3. What we must do to become holy, and to be saved.

The two last heads comprise, 1. The outward means of inward holiness—the sacraments. 2. The outward fruits of inward holiness—Christian justice.

To be holy, is of all things the most necessary; to be saved, is of all things the most desirable; and therefore instruction in catechism is of all things the most important.

FIRST CHAPTER.

“Without faith it is not possible for man to please God, to live holy, or die happy.”

The Apostles' Creed.

1. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth (p. 131).
2. And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord (p. 69).
3. Conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary (p. 64).
4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried (p. 291).
5. He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead (p. 342).

6. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty (p. 390).

7. From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead (p. 27).

8. I believe in the Holy Ghost (p. 400).

9. The holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints (First Sunday after Easter, p. 357).

10. Forgiveness of Sins (Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 564).

11. Resurrection of the body (Easter Sunday, p. 341).

12. And life everlasting (Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 571).
Amen.

The Chief Things contained in these Twelve Articles.

We believe, 1. God the Father to be the Creator of all things; 2. God the Son to be the Redeemer of the sinful world; 3. God the Holy Ghost to be our Comforter and Sanctifier. 4. These three persons to be one—one Almighty, all-knowing, infinitely good, holy, and just God (see Feast of Most Holy Trinity, p. 417). 5. That the soul of man is immortal.

SECOND CHAPTER.

Hope.

“All that you ask the Father in my name, he will give it you,” says Jesus Christ. What he teaches us to pray for, that we may also hope for.

The Lord's Prayer.

1. Our Father who art in heaven. 2. Hallowed be thy name. 3. Thy kingdom come. 4. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 5. Give us this day our daily bread. 6. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. 7. And lead us not into temptation. 8. But deliver us from evil. Amen. (Tenth Sunday after Easter.)

The Chief Things contained in these Seven Petitions.

1. We hope from God the grace (Fourth Sunday after Easter, p. 373) to know him more and more, to love him, and to honor him by a holy life. 2. Forgiveness of sins, and strength to resist temptation. 3. Deliverance from all evil, and eternal happiness in heaven. We may also hope that God will give us as much of temporal goods as we daily need for our support.

Together with the Lord's Prayer, Catholic Christians are accustomed to say the Angelic Salutation. (See the Feast of the Annunciation, p. 710.)

THIRD CHAPTER.

Love. (Pentecost Monday, p. 404.)

“Herein consists the love of God, that we keep his commandments.”
And God gave us his commandments only out of love, and therein commanded nothing but love.

The Ten Commandments of God.

1. Thou shalt believe in one God (First Sunday after Easter, and Trinity Sunday, pp. 357, 417).
2. Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain (Last Sunday after Pentecost, p. 602).
3. Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day (Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 549).
4. Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother (First Sunday after Epiphany, p. 101).
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery (Second Sunday after Pentecost, p. 452).
7. Thou shalt not steal (Second Sunday in Lent and Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, pp. 197, 538).
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness (p. 40).
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife (Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 497).
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods (Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 497).

The Chief Things contained in these Ten Commandments of God.

1. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind, with thy whole strength (Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 552).
2. The second is like unto it: Thou shalt *love thy neighbor* as thyself (Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 515). On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

“Wilt thou have life eternal? Keep the commandments.”

The commandments of the Church are principally these five:

1. Observe the holydays throughout the year. 2. Hear mass on Sundays and holydays. 3. Keep the prescribed fast-days. 4. Confess your sins, and receive holy communion at least once a year. 5. Thou shalt not marry at forbidden times. “He who does not hear the Church shall be to you like a heathen and a publican” (Second Sunday in Lent, p. 197).

FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Holy Sacraments.

A sacrament is a visible and efficacious sign, instituted by Christ himself, that we may receive, invisibly, grace and inward sanctification. There are seven sacraments :

1. Baptism (Trinity Sunday, p. 421).
2. Confirmation (Tuesday after Pentecost, p. 408).
3. The Holy Sacrament of the Altar (Corpus Christi, p. 487).
4. Penance (p. 48).
5. Extreme Unction (Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 520).
6. Holy Orders (Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 528).
7. Matrimony (p. 109).

FIFTH CHAPTER.

On Christian Justice.

Christian justice consists in avoiding evil and in doing good.

I. *The Evil which a Christian must avoid.*

A Christian must avoid sins and vices which deprive man of honor, goods, body, and life ; which separate him from God, and carry him to eternal damnation.

(a) *The Seven Deadly Sins.*

1. Pride (Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 506).
2. Avarice (Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 534).
3. Impurity (Second Sunday after Pentecost, p. 456).
4. Envy (Septuagesima Sunday, p. 141).
5. Gluttony (Third Sunday after Pentecost, p. 460).
6. Anger (Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 473).
7. Sloth (Septuagesima and Feast of St. Nicholas, pp. 141, 644).

(b) *The Sins against the Holy Ghost.*

1. Presumption of God's mercy. 2. Despair of God's grace. 3. Impugning the known truth. 4. Envy at another's spiritual good. 5. To have a heart hardened against salutary admonition. 6. Final impenitence.

(c) *The Sins that cry to Heaven for Vengeance.*

1. Wilful murder. 2. The sin of Sodom. 3. Oppression of the poor, widows, and orphans. 4. To defraud laborers of their wages.

(d) *The Nine Ways of being accessory to Another's Sin* (Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost, p. 584).

They partake in others' sins, 1. Who counsel ; 2. Who command ; 3. Who consent with them to sin ; 4. Who incite others to sin ; 5. Who praise the sins of others ; 6. Who keep silence as to their sins ; 7. Who overlook them ; 8. Who partake of them ; 9. Who defend the sins of others.

II. *The Good Works which every Christian should do.*

He should live *soberly, justly, and piously* before God and man, and secure his Christian vocation by good works (Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 491). These are—

(a) *The Three Chief Exercises of the Three Great Duties to God, Ourselves, and our Neighbor.*

1. Prayer (Fifth Sunday after Easter, p. 378).
2. Fasting (Instruction on Lent, p. 162).
3. Alms-deeds (see Feast of St. Lawrence, p. 797).

(b) *The Virtues contrary to the Seven Deadly Sins.*

1. Humility ; 2. Liberality ; 3. Purity ; 4. Benevolence ; 5. Temperance ; 6. Patience ; 7. Devotion (p. 103).

(c) *The Corporal Works of Mercy* (Seventh Sund. after Pent., p. 488).

(d) *The Spiritual Works of Mercy* (Seventh Sunday after Pentecost).

(e) *The Eight Beatitudes* (Feast of All Saints, p. 854).

“They who do good shall enter into life everlasting, but they who do evil into eternal torments.”

APPENDIX.

The Three Evangelical Counsels are, 1. Voluntary poverty ; 2. Perpetual chastity ; 3. Entire obedience under a spiritual director.

The Four Last Things.

1. Death (Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 542).
2. Judgment (p. 26).
3. Hell (Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 603).
4. Heaven (Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, p. 575).

“In all thy works remember thy last end, O man, and thou shalt never sin” (Ecclus. vii. 40).

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