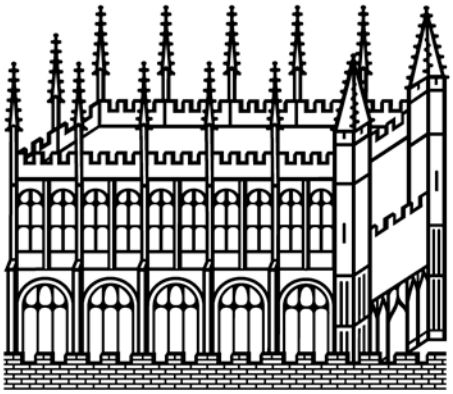

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A YEAR'S PREACHING

Nihil obstat

EDWARDUS T. MAHONEY, TH.D.

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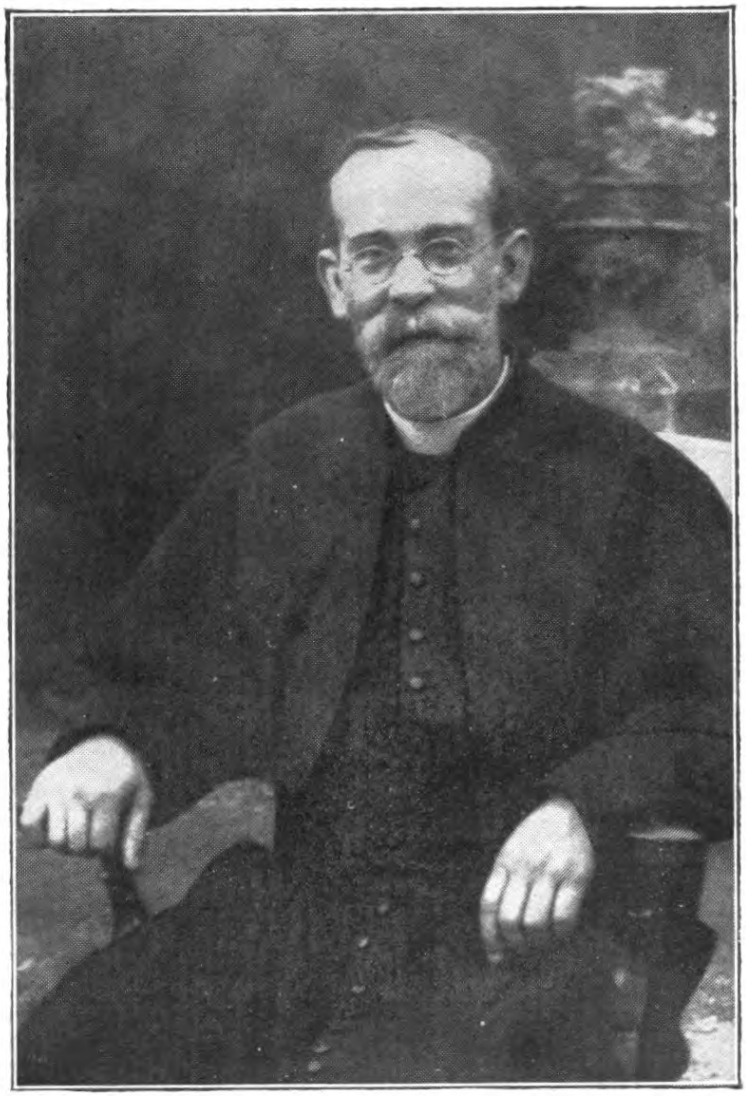

THE VERY REV. E. N. FARMER

A YEAR'S PREACHING

SIXTY-SIX SHORT SERMONS

BY THE LATE VERY REVEREND
E. N. FARMER
(*Of St. Joseph's Foreign Missionary Society*)

EDITED BY THE REVEREND
F. M. DREVES
(*Of the same Society*)

LONDON: SANDS & CO.
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EDITOR'S NOTE

THE Very Reverend Father Edmund N. Farmer, the author of this volume of Short Sermons for every Sunday of the Year, died in his 61st year, in November, 1929.

For more than twenty years, he was known and esteemed in the North of England as Rector of St. Peter's College, Freshfield, near Liverpool.

In 1924, he was transferred to Mill Hill, London, the Headquarters of St. Joseph's Missionary Society, as Vicar to the Superior-General of the Society. This change of work meant no sinecure, yet as a relief from desk work, Father Farmer soon volunteered to spend his week-ends in helping to foster the growth of new diocesan missions at Elstree and Burnt Oak in Middlesex.

Though a busy man, a ready and experienced speaker, and gifted with a retentive memory, he made it a point days ahead, if possible even on the Monday, to prepare and write every word of his sermon for the following Sunday. Consequently, he was always well prepared for his Sunday work, and to listen to him was a pleasure. He preached to the heart. Moreover, that he was a deeply interior man, a man of prayer, a saintly priest, will be easily gathered from his Memoirs which are now in preparation.

These Sermons, written and preached during the last two or three years of Father Farmer's long and fruitful ministry, were never intended for publication. Indeed, they may not be among the best of the many discourses he preached during the thirty-five years of his priesthood.

Yet, to the mind of the editor, they faithfully portray the apostle and the priest of God in the author. In the evening of his priestly career he was as zealous and as eager to work for the Divine Master as in the early days, when he stood on its threshold, and, as a newly ordained priest, he prayed the prayer of St. Francis Xavier: "Lord, give me souls!" He lived that prayer every day of his life.

In these short sermons, you can still hear the accent of his earnestness: "I want you to fear God more deeply, and to love Him more fervently!"

Mercilessly he denounces sin, and appealingly he implores sinners to have pity on their eternal souls, and to return to the love of Jesus and Mary.

After reading carefully through the sermons, a venerable Canon of the Northampton Diocese, himself a gifted preacher of the Word of God, wrote me:

"You must certainly publish them. There is something very attractive and charming about both matter and expression, and yet they are quite simple.

"I think they are sure to prove a great help and boon to some of our over-worked clergy, and they will be sought after, once they are published, I know."

Should then this publication help on a few more souls to a closer intimacy with God, His Blessed Mother, and the Saints, the editor—himself, a former spiritual son of Father Farmer—will feel amply rewarded for his labour in gathering up together the scattered fragments, written on backs of envelopes and odd scraps of paper, and presenting them, thanks to the added ability of the publisher, in this shapely volume.

With true filial devotion, he will in company with other confrères find comfort in the thought that the beloved Father "though dead, yet speaketh!"

F. M. DREVES.

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SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

ADVENT is a preparation for the coming of the Lord. But there is a threefold coming or advent of Our Lord—the first in human weakness—the second in the souls and hearts of Christians and the third in power and glory, to judge the world.

These three kinds of advent are intimately connected with each other, and each is either a preparation for or a result of the others. Christmas recalls the true birth of Our Lord which once took place—it effects His spiritual birth in the hearts of the Faithful—and thus prepares us for His future coming to judgment: Advent is above all the preparation for Christmas: and this preparation should remind us first of a great misfortune, and secondly of a still greater happiness.

The misfortune was the fall of our first parents. In them—the representatives of mankind—the entire human race fell, estranged itself from God, and became a prey to deterioration, sin and misery. From that one misdeed, sin steadily progressed till it acquired a veritable empire in heathendom, where Satan ruled the world, and hurled it from temporal misfortune to despair and eternal damnation. Generation succeeded generation in deeper degradation. It was one migration of the human race to Hell. The misery was universal and incurable, had God not taken compassion and come down to earth.

But, praise be to God, He took compassion on us and came, and that is the happiness Advent reminds us of.

The more the human race estranged itself from God, the nearer the promised Saviour approached, and prepared a special place for Himself in a particular nation, tribe and family—until at last He appeared in visible form, in the fulness of time, and repaired all.

He overcame the darkness of unbelief by the light of His doctrine. . . . passions by His Grace and example. He blotted out sin by His atonement, and saved us all from eternal death by His own death and Resurrection. He founded, in opposition to the Empire of Satan, the Visible Kingdom of His Church—a Kingdom which embraces all quarters of the globe, and all nations—which includes time and eternity—in which all freed from the ban of sin and the passions, enriched by His grace and led by His government, are to serve God in justice and holiness, peace and joy, and to journey towards the heavenly Kingdom.

We have the happiness of belonging to this Kingdom of Christ upon earth. Advent has come round again inviting us to open our hearts and prepare them so that Christ may come and establish His Kingdom within them at the Christmas Festival.

The Season of Advent should be observed in penance, prayer and trustful longing for our Blessed Saviour. We should first of all exercise ourselves in penance. We are sinners all: and sin is always atoned for by penance, and penance must in fact prepare the way for all that is good in us, and make God mercifully incline to us. This is the unanimous teaching of the Prophets, of St. John the Baptist and Our Blessed Saviour Himself "Do penance" —"and unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish."

Now Penance is interior and exterior. Interior penance consists in heartfelt contrition for the sins we have

committed, and the resolution not to commit them again, and especially in the right down earnest use of the Sacrament of Penance.

Exterior penance consists in any form of bodily austerity. It may be fasting—or abstaining from things that gratify our senses and mortify sensual pleasures or comforts.

All through this season the Church vests herself in the colour of sorrow at her services, indicating to us that we should abstain from vain pleasures as we do during an obligatory time of mourning. It is therefore the duty of everyone of us to do some penance at this season putting a restraint in some shape or form upon our indulgence in earthly delights and sensual pleasures.

The second characteristic of Advent is recollection, retirement, and prayer. Everything at this season reminds us of this. Nature recollects herself, as it were, by shedding its beauty and presenting the appearance of decay and death. Only in the Heavens above, where the world of stars unfolds its splendour, is life to be found, which draws our thoughts from earth, to heaven and eternity. The Church too prays more at this time and keeps the whole season like a solemn vigil before a Feast. St. Paul says in the Epistle of this Sunday that we must "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." This then must be our occupation during Advent—frequent thought of the Incarnation, and earnest prayer for the salvation of the World, the conversion of sinners, the necessities of the Church, and the realization of God's intentions in the institution of the holy season of Advent.

The third thing we must do in Advent is to long for and express our trust in Christ. The patriarchs of the Old Law are in this especially models to us. The coming Redeemer was the object of their faith, hope, love and desire. From heart to heart, from mouth to mouth,

passes this longing, and the cry for the Redeemer rings down the whole line of patriarchs and prophets. "Oh, that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down." "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just one." They cherished the divine promise God had given them, and they were confident in the promised Salvation of Him who as Isaias says, is our King, Our Lord, our Judge, He shall save us. The Church is filled with this same confidence, and she commences the Mass on this Sunday with the words "To Thee, O Lord, I have lifted up my soul—I shall not be confounded."

Thus penance, prayer and trustful longing are the proper occupations of Advent: and each of us should reflect as to what he can and will do in this respect.

As loyal members of Christ's Kingdom and as faithful children of the Church, let us follow the leading of our Mother when she teaches us to reflect upon the approaching anniversary of the Nativity of the Son of God, when she urges us to pray more frequently and more fervently for ourselves and for others and asks of us some form of penance, some like sacrifice for our own good and for God's blessing upon the world. Who knows if we shall live to see another Advent? Who knows if this be not our last? Who knows if we may not soon meet, as our Judge, the Saviour whom we are about to meet with joy as our Redeemer?

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

St. John the Baptist

When preparing us for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Blessed Lord at Christmas, the Church as is natural reminds us frequently in the Gospel of the wonderful personality and the preaching of the Saint who was created for the special mission of preparing God's people for His coming. The mere mention of St. John the Baptist carries our thoughts back to the early pages of the Gospel where are recorded the mysterious announcements of Angels proclaiming the approaching birth of a Child, who is to be the Prince of Peace, and of another who is to make Him known to men.

So closely was this latter child allied by family relationship and by vocation to the Incarnate God that the privilege of sanctification was granted him before his birth.

After the communication made by the Archangel Gabriel to our Blessed Lady, we are told of the visitation Mary made to her cousin St. Elizabeth, the Mother of St. John the Baptist. The unborn Jesus inspired His Mother to make this visit. Like Jesus walking swiftly to His Passion the modest Virgin sped over the hills of Juda to the dwelling of Elizabeth of Hebron.

The Everlasting Word of God trembled in the tone of His Mother's voice—and the other babe heard it, and "leaped for joy in his mother's womb"—and the chains of original sin fell from him, and he was justified by

redeeming grace, and the full use of reason was given him—and he made acts of love of God such as never patriarch or prophet yet had made—and he was raised to a dazzling height of sanctity—and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost thrilled his mother at the moment—and she was filled with God and her first act was a worshipful recognition of the *Mother of God* !

And all these miracles were accomplished before the accents of Mary's voice had died upon the air—upon the threshold of Zachary's house.

Straightway the Son of God enthroned Himself upon His Mother's heart, and borrowing her voice, He sang the incomparable Magnificat out of whose depths music has gone on streaming upon the enchanted earth ever since.

It was this Saint, so exceptionally blessed in his beginnings, who laid the foundations of the College of the Apostles in Peter and Andrew and John, who were his disciples. There was an attractiveness about him which it is hard to explain—And in what did it consist ?

Doubtless in gifts of nature as well as grace, for such is God's way. Yet it is difficult to see in what it actually consisted.

As the world counts things, he was an uncouth man. The savage air of the wilderness where he dwelt affected his rugged sweetness. His austerity (locusts and wild honey, covering of camel's hair and leathern girdle) might have driven men away from him either as an example or a teacher.

His teaching was ungrateful to corrupt nature. It was reforming and unsparing and dealt mainly with condemnations. Its manner was vehement, abrupt and singularly without respect of persons.

Yet all men gathered near him, even while he taught that his teaching was not final, that his mission was but a

preparation, and that he was not the deliverer whom they sought " After me there cometh one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoe I am unworthy to loose."

All classes, trades, ranks and professions fluttered round him like moths round the candle, sure to be scorched by his severity, yet—whether they would or not—attracted by his light.

Now what could his attraction be, but the spirit of exultation, of generosity of unearthliness, of the freshness of abounding grace? The whole being of that austere man was overflowed with gladness. He had drunk the wine of the Precious Blood when it was at its newest, and he was blessedly intoxicated with it to the last. Before he was born, it was said of him that at his birth men would rejoice: and yet there seemed no obvious reason why it should be so.

When he first heard the sound of Mary's voice, he leaped with exultation, with joy in his mother's womb. It was the gladness of grace. It was the triumph of redeeming love.

The removal from him of Original Sin while he was yet unborn was the first and freshest Victory of the Prince of Peace. When his ears were first opened the sounds that smote him were from Mary singing her Magnificat. How could a life know sadness that had so joyous, so musical a beginning?

In very childhood he went away into the wilderness lest the world should break the charm that was around his soul. He who did no miracles was himself a miracle: and in that wilderness he hid himself alluring Angels to the desert spot, soothing the fierce nature of the elements and nurturing his soul in spiritual grandeur. Innocent as he was, he would do penance as if he were a sinner, partly because he would not be outdone in generosity by

God and partly because the Spirit of God led Him, like the Holy Child, to love hardships and espouse poverty.

As to his Mission to the voluptuous world he came to, there was nothing to commend him. There was his wild appearance, his ignorance of human learning, his austere preaching of penance, his making no distinction between high and low, simple and learned. And yet, the whole world was attracted by his marvellous power as by a magnet.

And what were the causes of his power but his truckling to no human respects, his preaching to the heart, his supernatural austerities and his interior union with God? His constant theme to all was "Do penance. And unless you do penance, you shall *all likewise* perish!"

We, dear Brethren, like St. John, have been created for a destiny. We have a mission, a vocation—and each of us in the discharge of the work God intends us to do may take St. John for our model. In our own degree we are prepared by light from Heaven (which our own individual conscience proves) and by the grace of God for the fulfilment of our destiny, humble though it may be, even as St. John was prepared by God for his.

We shall accomplish the end of our creation if we ever live up to high principles, if we cultivate purity of heart, if we live lives of faith and fidelity to duty, realizing the invisible world, and aim at love of prayer and union with God.

This correct living, as true Catholics and Children of God, will give us power with God, not only to draw down His mercies upon ourselves, but to influence and lead others by example unto God, making ourselves thus heralds of Redemption to others, even as St. John has been to us.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The Value of Our Soul

" What exchange shall a man give for his soul ? "
(Matt. xvi, 26.)

Advent, dear Brethren in Jesus Christ, teaches us how Almighty God values the souls of men : for the burden of the message of Advent is the coming of the Saviour. It was for the souls of men, their rescue, their sanctification—their salvation, that the Saviour came.

Behold then, the value that God set upon our souls, for it was for their sake the Son of God came down from Heaven and became man. For their sake the Divine Infant was born at Bethlehem, and the stable was His first Church where He was worshipped by Mary and Joseph and the Shepherds. For their sake the Saviour sanctified poverty, daily toil, and a humble home at Nazareth.

Thirty years for their sake were spent in teaching us how to live ; and then for three years He taught and preached that our souls might know Him and believe in Him. And His public life was made wondrous by His kindly words and deeds and miracles, each one a lesson to us, revealing what the good God does for our souls by His graces and His Sacraments. Then to crown it all, of His own will He offered Himself for us in His Passion and was scourged and crowned with thorns, nailed to the Cross, and on it He died to purchase our souls from sin and Hell. This

is the value the Saviour set upon our souls. How proud and grateful we should be that God has so loved us as to give His only Son as the price and redemption of the souls of men. And do we treasure and value our souls as we should? Dear Brethren, in replying to this, we must distinguish. We all know what faith teaches us about the value of our souls, but we must own that our lives frequently in practice belie the profession that we make. For we know and profess that our soul is a spirit created to the image of God; that it is immortal, destined for heaven, redeemed and enriched with graces; that all the world and all that it can offer of pleasure, happiness and glory can never satisfy its yearnings, for our soul is meant for God. He is its first beginning and its last end. The possession of God and the blessed vision of His Majesty can alone be its eternal happiness.

But, alas, in act, in practice, how sadly different are we! How our lives contradict our profession! We may say, repeating Our Lord's blessed words "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?" And yet, our daily actions, with a meanness and a pettiness inconceivable, defile these souls with the selfishness of venial sin. And, alas! deluded by the tempter, we have bartered away our souls for some mortal sin—a shameful, short-lived pleasure or profit. Like Judas we have said to the devil: "What will you give me, and I will deliver it to you?"

Look back and deplore for what you have betrayed your own soul! Have all our past sins put together any equivalent to offer us in exchange for our soul? Has anyone ever struck a good bargain in exchange for his soul? Look through history, and you will find not one. Ask among the *lost* from the successful in this world, who won fame and money

and glory and everything they thought that they could desire, and their answer would be the same sad lament—" Alas ! what can a man give in exchange for his soul ? "

But the Saviour has had faithful ones, who have understood and valued their souls at their proper worth—those who, like Blessed Peter, have said : " Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee." And those who, like Mary Magdalene, have chosen the better part and consecrated their lives to Him who lived and died for love of them. Those—the Blessed Martyrs—who endured dungeon, fire and sword rather than lose their souls by denying their faith of being ashamed of the Cross of Christ.

All the Saints—all those who have persevered unto death—have practically and heroically despised the world and all that it can offer in exchange for their souls. All that the world could offer would pass away—and their souls were made for Eternity. All that the world could offer was a delusion and a lie : realizing this they despised all that the world could boast of, for the God of Heaven had purchased their souls for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Helped by their example and prayers, let us wisely treasure and value our immortal souls. Let us bring them to Him who purchased them with His Precious Blood. The Saviour came for our souls' sake. So, the offering that each should make Him at Christmas time is the soul that He created, the soul that He redeemed, the soul that He has loved so much. Let us prepare it as a home for Him. Repentance can cleanse it, devotion can warm it, humility can sweeten it, absolution can purify it. All else can be driven out, and the door kept open for His coming. And with the help of the holy Angels, who sang at His birth, we may hope to give Him a welcome when He comes to us in Holy Communion—the welcome of a soul which dedicates itself to His love and service.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Read Epistle and Gospel of Midnight Mass

" This day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."
(Luke, ii.)

The Gospel, dear Brethren in Jesus Christ, carries away our thoughts and hearts to Bethlehem. In spirit we are in that country where the shepherds were keeping the night watches over their flocks, when, behold, the brightness of God shone round about them and the angel of the Lord stood by them and said : " 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."

Our thoughts and hearts are at Bethlehem, because we too, have come " to see the word which has come to pass : " we have come to adore that God who became Man, that we, poor sinners, might become the Sons of God.

Our first duty must be to offer lowly adoration and thanksgiving to Him " who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." And where is this Redeemer ? The Gospel tells us : " This shall be a sign unto you " (and without it how could we recognize our God ?) " You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger." And beholding this, we must believe and adore—for, as the Angel says : " He is the Saviour, Christ the Lord." What a vast difference there is between faith and sight !

We see the picture that sight presents to us. The stable of Bethlehem, a rude cave on the hillside, used for cattle. And there we find two poor people who had been seeking in vain for shelter, but there was no room for them at the inn, though the poor young mother sorely needed a shelter that winter's night: and lying in the manger her first-born son.

And what does Faith depict? Faith bids us see in that poor Infant "the blessed hope, the glory of the great God, Our Saviour Jesus Christ." Faith tells us "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." And Faith gives us the reason why He came "that we might be made the Sons of God." And He came poor and an infant to win our hearts to Himself, to show He came to the poor and simple, to show us that He did not want fear, but love. And finally, both Faith and sight reveal to us that the God who came to redeem His own world was an outcast in that world.

And Faith tells us yet more. It tells us that His coming was successful in spite of the world. The world knew Him not, and rejected Him. And yet, what name is revered and adored the whole world over, 1,900 years after that Christmas night, but the blessed name of Jesus? Then, He only had a stable for a home; and now the countless Churches of the world are His home, and costly altars ablaze with lights, beautiful as man can make them, instead of the manger where His poor mother Mary laid Him. And millions of hearts are worshipping Him this day, bending in spirit over the Divine Infant, their aspiration and love centred on Him—Jesus alone influencing their lives and destinies.

And is this Christmas story a mere memory—a mere poetry of the past? Many may say so: but with us Catholics it is not so. Christmas to us is a blessed reality.

We believe that the same Lord and God becomes present on our Altar during Mass, who was found in the manger by the Shepherds with His virgin Mother by His side. Let us rejoice that we can come to the Babe in the Host, and adore Him as the Shepherds did—our newborn Saviour.

And to do this worthily we must imitate the Shepherds. They were poor, simple, obedient men. They did not argue, or dispute or contradict. They believed the words of the Angel and hastened to adore. Filled with their sentiments let us do the same: and while we approach to adore let us sing in our hearts with the holy Angels "Glory to God in the highest" and be filled with the blessed hope that we may all share in the "peace on earth to men of good will."

In the name of the Infant Jesus and of His Blessed Mother Mary and His foster father St. Joseph, I wish each and all of you the best and happiest blessings of Christmas-tide. You have entered upon the great festivity properly by paying homage to Him in whose honour this day is celebrated as no other day all the world over. Carry away with you the joy that Jesus, Mary and Joseph give you at the crib: and spend the day and the season in happiest enjoyment scattering wherever you go and among all you meet the gladness and the sunshine of the presence and blessing of the newborn King.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

I MAY not detain you with many words to-day. Great joy as well as great sorrow is often best expressed by silence. The past few weeks we have been looking forward to the great festival of to-day, the greatest festivity of the year—observed with greetings and rejoicings all the world over as is no other day in the whole course of the year.

Through the blessing of God, the participation in the great joy of Christmastide is granted to us—and it is the duty of each and all of us to give ourselves over to the full enjoyment of this happy festival, and to contribute our share in whatever capacity we can, to spread the spirit of happiness wherever we may be. The significance of the glad festival is sadly ignored by many: but it is well known to you who are trying to find happiness in life by lovingly and faithfully giving the good God His due.

The world rejoices at Christmas—because on this day God gave proof of His love for us, by giving us His only begotten Son that by His life and sufferings and death we might have life eternal. Centuries have passed since the Angels bade the world rejoice—for this day is born to you a Saviour—who is Christ the Lord—in the City of David. The rejoicing has taken place through the centuries ever since, and as each year the Christmas festival returns—the Church puts before us the picture of all pictures—the Christmas Crib which represents the actual occurrence for the first Christmas night. There we find the Creator Himself as one of the homeless poor. He is without home

who holds and sways all creation in the hollow of His tiny Hand.

He is without a shelter whose flaming Heart is the one eternal shelter of Angels, spirits and the souls of men. He is homeless—whose breast will one day be our eternal home.

The whole picture is an appeal to human love and human gratitude: and even the hardest heart cannot but be touched and deeply moved by what it beholds in the Christmas Crib.

But for us whose hearts are full of the blessedness of Faith the sight of the Crib brings all that is good and all that is best in us to the surface. It fills us with the desire to imitate the humble shepherds and rightly to honour the Almighty God—and in spirit with them we say those few tremendous words which make the angels and archangels bow down, and the strong bright thrones of heaven to totter and tremble:

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine et Homo factus est.

The Babe who lies in the Crib is the Source of all joy. He Himself is Infinite Happiness. He has come to make us all happy, to prove in very deed what was prophesied concerning them that His delights are to be with the children of men.

The palaces of the world and all the jewels and precious metals in the world are His, but He will have none of them.

He wants to abide in your holy house—in your poor heart. Take Him into your hearts and bear Him joyfully to your homes—and with Jesus dwelling with you, you will have the pledge of what I wish you from my heart, a thrice happy and blessed Christmastide.

FIRST SUNDAY IN JANUARY

"Most Holy Name of Jesus."

Dear Brethren in Jesus Christ: Our Blessed Lord has left us a sacred legacy in His most sweet and mighty Name —Jesus, our Saviour.

It is a name of *power*, for it is a sacramental, the very invoking of which brings help to our soul by the ordinance of Christ Himself.

It is a name of *sweetness*, for the Name recalls Himself, the humble, tender-hearted Saviour.

To see its *power* and the veneration in which it was held, look back to the olden days of faith. From the day on which St. Peter said: "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk," the Church regarded it as a means of holiness and a protection from the enemy. "There is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved."

The devil hears it and trembles, and is driven away.

Sinners are won over by it.

Hearts are melted that were obdurate against rebukes and threats of the anger of God.

Saints are inflamed by it as their ecstasies and miracles prove.

God Himself is powerless against it, for He is pledged to listen to it.

And whose Name is it? It is the Name of One crucified on Calvary—abandoned, forsaken—Yes, but not forgotten.

So the miracle of its influence, and power and the veneration in which it is held—its being the one Supreme Name all these centuries, proves the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Thus He stands revealed by means of His Sacred Name before all the vast multitude of souls that He is intent upon saving. So well we know Him, His words, His actions, miracles, mercies, sufferings and death—that the very invocation of His Name flashes back their memory upon our soul.

He has left that Name as a *means of Holiness*: by that Name we pray. Repeatedly He has told us to ask in His Name. "Amen, I say to you." In the Church we use that Name: our prayer books are full of it: but most of all, it is the prayer of those who try to remember the presence of God during the day. At work, pleasure, in conversation, in sorrow, in suffering, in temptation and trial—just the one sweet Blessed Name of Jesus is the prayer from the heart.

"Sweet Name of Jesus, may you be on our lips constantly in life, exciting us to faith, hope, charity, contrition, and devotion and protecting us from evil of soul and body."

It is the Name in which poor sinners hope for mercy. Where must the burden of their sins be laid, but at the foot of the Cross of Jesus? "He came to save His people from their sins" and as long as His Name is Jesus He cannot forget or refuse to be a Saviour.

It is the Name of Him, Who gives the Sacraments their power. He is both the author and the chief worker in every Sacrament and they are all administered in His Name.

It is the Name with which we hope to breathe out our souls to Him Who bore it. But how much, dear brethren, does that depend upon ourselves? If we seldom think of it now, show no reverence for it, have no love for it—or if

we use it carelessly, or irreverently, how can we expect that blessed favour at our death ?

But if it has been our constant delight and endeavour to have it always in our heart and frequently on our lips then we may humbly hope that our piety will be rewarded and the good habit and practice blessed to the very end. And this is what the Church wishes. To gain the last blessing at the hour of death, the invocation of the Holy Name Jesus is prescribed as a necessary condition. It must be invoked if the dying person is conscious : and if it cannot be spoken, it is enough if he can hear, recognize, or in his mind implore that Blessed Name which another invokes aloud on his behalf.

Dear Brethren, may the last word we murmur, and the last name we hear be " Jesus." At that sound the devil will recoil from us, banished by that Name of power—and the Angels will come forth to meet us and receive our soul, and present it to the Most High. Our Blessed Lord, hearing us pronouncing His Holy Name, will regard it as a cry for mercy, and will be ready to forgive the past, and will say in the words of the psalmist : " protegam eum quoniam cognovit nomen meum "—" I will protect him because he hath known My Name."

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EPIPHANY

SINCE I last saw you, the Old Year—with its thoughts words, and actions, its trials, its defeats, and its victories, its sufferings and consolations, its sorrows and its joys—is past and gone. And we are now starting out on a New Year with the makings and fair hopes of a happy year before us. Please God the year will bring us all the happiness we have wished each other. But whether this happiness will reach us will depend largely upon ourselves.

The year will be happy in proportion to our use of the means which will surely bring us happiness.

It would be well for us to give ourselves a few minutes' recollection in order to review the past year and to put to ourselves the question " Will this do ? " Few of us, I fear, will be able to answer this question in the affirmative : and if we cannot, then the obvious thing to do is to conclude that it will not do, and we must adopt the means to make the present year more satisfactory.

The main resolution of all of us should be *Onwards* and *Upwards*. Onwards—resisting, pushing aside, and removing everything that might hinder our pleasing Almighty God : and Upwards—aiming as high as we can in everything and higher than we ever aimed before.

This is, of course, a general resolution : but we shall improve our lives if we determine on things more specifically : and therefore I would suggest that all renew with fresh fervour the resolutions we made at the beginning of last year, and which I am sure most of you made an

effort to accomplish. These resolves are—giving God His due by faithfully saying the morning and evening prayers—saying grace before and after meals—the use of ejaculations during the day, especially in times of trial and temptation—the regular reception once a month of the Sacrament of Penance and Holy Communion—and an abiding, childlike devotion to the Blessed Virgin. The Child Jesus started His life under the protection of Mary. Let us start our year in the same way: and if we permit ourselves to be guided in all our affairs and protected by Mary we shall not only escape many pitfalls, but the blessing of God and the blessing of happiness will be upon our year.

And now let us turn our thoughts once more to the Crib where at Christmas we left the Child Jesus adored by Mary and Joseph and the humble Shepherds. We are celebrating now the Royal Feast of the Epiphany: and a change has come over the scene, a change which at first sight seems little in keeping with the characteristic lowliness of Bethlehem.

A cavalcade from the far East arrives. The camel bells are tingling. A retinue of attendants accompanies three kings of different oriental tribes who come with their various offerings to the new born King. These swarthy men are among the wisest of the studious East. They represent the science and learning of their day. The corruption of the world, which, as kings, they might see from their elevation far and wide, pressed heavily upon their loving hearts. They, too, pined for some heavenly Visitant, for a new beginning of the world, for the coming of a Son of God, for one who should save them from their sins. Never yet had kings more royal souls.

In the dark blue sky there arose a new and hitherto unnoticed star. It trailed a line of light after it, lowly yet with visible movement, and seemed as if it beckoned to

them, and had not shot too far ahead during the bright day, but was found and welcomed each night as a faithful indicator pointing to the Cave of Bethlehem.

Doubtless, too, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit drew them to the star. They followed it as men follow a vocation, hardly seeing at first that they are following a divine lead. After due consideration, they pronounced it to be the star of the old prophesy—and therefore God was come. They left their homes, their State, and their affairs and journeyed westward, they knew not whither, led nightly by the star that slipped onward in its silent course.

They were representatives of the heathen world moving forward to the feet of the universal Saviour.

They came to the gates of Jerusalem, and here God withdrew the guidance of the Star, because now the guidance of the Synagogue was at their command. They heard that the Law proclaimed that Bethlehem was to be the birthplace of the Messiah and the Wise men passed on to the humble village. Again the Star shone out in the blue heavens and slowly sank earthwards over the Cave of Bethlehem: and presently the devout kings were at the feet of Jesus.

The three kings are intended to be an example to us in our journey through life. Like them in their travels we too have to pass through constant change, through dangers and difficulties and disappointments. But we must ever go forward as they did with confident faith and firm hope, for our end is the same—Jesus.

God gave them a Star. But He has given us a better star in Mary. She infallibly leads to Jesus all who are truly devout to her.

The kings thought nothing of all they had gone through, but felt themselves amply rewarded by one sight of Jesus and one look and conversation with His Blessed Mother.

How different with us. We have not kissed his hands and feet but once, but even received His Blood in Penance and Himself—Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity—in Holy Communion thousands of times over : and if He prolongs our life, we have the happy prospect of receiving Him as many times again, before we go to enjoy His eternal vision in Heaven.

Pray to Mary to teach you to appreciate this enormous grace and to love Jesus more and serve Him better. While the kings are offering their costly gifts, offer Him your resolutions for the New Year, and try to make life, by your daily offering of love, prayer, and self-denial, one prolonged offering of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh of the first Feast of the Epiphany.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Feast of the Holy Family

On what plan of life, dear Brethren, can we more wisely fashion our own than on the life of the Holy Family? And yet our worldly wisdom and our common sense feel it difficult to agree to this, when we study and realize what that life was—a thorough self-effacement "He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them."

Nazareth, a commonplace, contemptible little village situated on a mountain slope of Galilee. At one time it was regarded as a lovely spot. Its children are said to have been beautiful beyond all the children of Juda. It was noted for its vines, honey, oil, and fruits which were as abundant and luxurious as those of Egypt. But at the time of Our Lord it seemed to have lost all its glories—and to the Jews, Nazareth was a byword of contempt. It was shut up within green hills, and its inhabitants were known only for their coarseness and rusticity—and probably for their ignorance and stupidity.

The character it bore is evidenced from the text: "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?" And yet the Eternal God became a Nazarene—He Whose eye saw down into every wooded hollow and penetrated every wooden glen upon the globe, who saw the white walls of fair cities perched on their hilltops or basking in the sun by the blue sea—even He chose that inglorious, ill-famed spot for His earthly abode—and here it was He and his Mother were

brought by St. Joseph to settle from their exile in Egypt. Here it was that the Light of the World was hidden till He was thirty years of age.

Now if our life is to be modelled on that of the Holy Family it is obvious we must overcome ourselves, and embrace and choose for our lot obedience, poverty, and labour. We can be quite sure Our Blessed Lord made the best and wisest use of every hour of His short life of three and thirty years. He came to redeem the world, to teach it the way to Heaven, to win the hearts of men—and yet until He was thirty he lived the hidden life of Nazareth. He gave us this long, weary, patient example, not sparing His Mother or St. Joseph because most of the lives of men are spent in obedience, poverty, and labour.

Most men have to obey a master of some kind, to submit to the circumstances of life, and for the most part against their will, and murmuring at the decrees of Fate: most men feel the pinch of poverty, or at least are dissatisfied, and want more than they have. . . . All men, by the ordinance of God, have to labour with their brains or their hands. Often there is failure after all their work—and always a poor reward, a scanty wage for their labour and toil.

Thanks be to God, all this is changed if we imitate the Holy Family. Perfect peace and contentment dwelt in that little home. They knew they were fulfilling the Holy Will of God. Obedience transforms our lives. We know we are doing right when we obey—we know we shall be rewarded if we obey. We know it is not the things we do, but the way we do them—the obedience—that makes them acceptable in the eyes of God. What a happy, contented, peaceful world this would be if mankind only understood obedience.

And poverty was no dreaded guest in the home at

Nazareth. From the very beginning, from the stable of Bethlehem Our Lord had chosen poverty for Himself. St. Joseph was content with it—and to be poor never for a moment ruffled the placid peace of the Virgin Mother's soul. Poverty ruled at Nazareth that we might learn that we are pilgrims here—and our home is in Heaven. . . . But not for a moment must we think that the poverty was not real, was not felt by the Holy Family. They had to battle with it as other poor people have to do—and hence theirs was a *life of labour.*

St. Joseph was the village carpenter, and when the Child was old enough He too would help, and thought it no shame, no disgrace to work at the carpenter's bench. No, He blessed and sanctified labour for all poor toilers hereafter. He who created all things by His word toiled laboriously, fashioning wood into some useful shape. The world was waiting to be converted : men's souls hungering for the Word of Truth, the sick and the afflicted longing to be cured : but Jesus made no sign, but patiently laboured in poverty and obedience.

And all this for thirty years to teach us by good example ! What a seeming failure it all was. For what was Nazareth after all the example of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph ? It is no conjecture but the plain words of St. Luke that sadden and amaze us. Shortly after the commencement of the Public Life of Our Lord, the Gospel tells us : " Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee ; and the fame of Him went out into the whole country. And He taught in the synagogues, and was magnified by all. And He came to Nazareth where He was brought up : and He went into the synagogue according to His custom on the Sabbath Day ; and He rose up to read, and the Book of Isaias the Prophet was delivered unto Him. And as He unfolded the book, He found the place where it was written

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me, to preach the Gospel to the poor He hath sent me, to heal the contrite of heart.". . . . Then closing the Book, He proceeded to explain that He Himself was the fulfilment of this prophecy. "This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears. . . ." And how did they treat Him? "Is not this the son of Joseph?" they cried. "And all in the synagogue 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."

And was this the result of the good example of the Holy Family for so many years? Surely those people well deserved the character "Can any good come from Nazareth?"

But do not be tempted, dear Brethren, to think that the example of the Holy Family, teaching us obedience, poverty, and labour was a failure. Look up and see heaven peopled by those who have taken the example to heart and been faithful to it. The example is living still and is brought before us by the Church to teach us and encourage us. The surest way to Heaven is to imitate the Holy Family. Their memory tells us how God loves obedience, poverty, and labour in this world, and blesses and exalts them for ever in the next. O yes indeed, something good has come to us from Nazareth—the example of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIFE OF JESUS."

THE Season of Christmas with the festivals connected with the Birth of Christ is past and gone: and the Church is already drawing our attention to Our Blessed Lord's Public Ministry by reminding us of the first of His great miracles—the changing of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana at the expressed wish of His Blessed Mother.

But before Our Lord entered upon His Public Ministry a long period intervened about which the Gospel is silent save for the account of one solitary event when He went up to Jerusalem at the age of twelve, and was lost, and after three days was found in the Temple by Our Lady and St. Joseph. Then, we are told: "He went down to Nazareth —and was subject to them." Nothing is on record of what happened from the twelfth to the thirtieth year of His age, except that "He grew in wisdom, and age and grace with God and Man."

There are, however, certain characteristics which marked His life during all that period, and which we cannot fail to notice from the time of His birth till His death upon the Cross. Some of these I think we may briefly consider with profit to ourselves.

First of all, there was His *love of silence*. He, the Great Teacher, the utterer of parables, the preacher of the world —stirring sermons, the oracle whose single words were vocations, institutions, and histories, surrounded Himself

with an atmosphere of silence. In His childhood, He let speech seem to come to Him slowly, as if He were acquiring it like others ; so that under this disguise He might prolong His silence, delaying thus even His sweet conversations with Mary.

In His eighteen years of Hidden Life—silence prevailed in the Holy House at Nazareth. Whatever words were spoken were brief, infrequent, and not recorded : " And Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart."

In the three years' Ministry, which were given up to talking and teaching, He spoke with reserve, as a silent man would speak, or like God making revelations. Then —when the end was approaching—in His Passion—when He had to teach by His beautiful way of patient, submissive suffering, His utterances became fewer than ever, and silence came back again—just as an old habit returns at death—and became a characteristic of His Life to the very end.

Secondly, *His life of poverty.* It would seem as if the circumstances of His Infancy had been providentially contrived with a view to bringing in as many of the incidents of poverty as were possible without seeming unnatural. From Nazareth to Bethlehem : from Bethlehem over the wilderness to Egypt : from Egypt back to Nazareth—and from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the three days during which He begged His bread, the life of Jesus was full of the varieties and pressures of poverty.

He would not be born at home, but took advantage of the Roman census to be as it were a child of exile, and a waif upon His own earth.

He would be rejected from the doors of Bethlehem as the least worthy of all the mixed multitude crowded there.

He would be born in a stable, amidst the animals used to the yoke—He Who was afterwards to tell us His yoke should be sweet and His burden light.

And the poverty of Bethlehem and the poverty of the wilderness were only a preparation for the poverty of the life of toil at Nazareth. And He suffered from them all far more than we can tell.

When age grew upon St. Joseph and his infirmities increased, the yoke of poverty became all the more galling to Our Blessed Lord. The poverty that pressed on Mary, pressed tenfold more heavily on Him from the very fact of its having first pressed on her.

He wanted to teach us that though God Himself is untold wealth—the riches of the world are not Godlike. Had He come supported by the affluence of riches, what would you think of Him ? The mere idea of wealth would uncrown Jesus in our minds and strip the Incarnation of its sacredness.

Think of Him then—for eternity throned in Heaven—and now dwelling upon the earth of His own creation—the despised and rejected of men—the reproach of men and the outcast of the people—and can a deeper depth of poverty be conceived ? It looks almost like a change in the unchangeable.

A third characteristic of His life was *neglect*—varied only by persecution. He loved men with tenderest love. From eternity it was His delight that He would one day be among them. He came—and there was no room for Him. Hearts and homes were full of other things and people. He was unseasonable ! The miseries He came to deliver mankind from were not felt as miseries by them. When He was born some shepherds came to Him—but none of the neighbours troubled. Three kings came from afar—but King Herod tries to include Him in a wholesale massacre. There was safety for Him where there was nobody in the desert sands or in Egypt, His land of exile. There He was a stranger. When exile was over, there

was danger for Him in Jerusalem. So He retired to Galilee into despised Nazareth. His upbringing there only surrounded Him with an atmosphere of contempt. "Can any good . . .?"

To these characteristics of Silence, Poverty and Neglect, we may add another which prevailed all through his life, and that was His *view of the sins of men.*

Though sin to us is unfortunately a common thing—the word Sin is a real terror. It expresses a whole world of darkness. It is the negation of all that is bright, hopeful, desirable, or attractive. The possibility of one sinning is a thought which should make us tremble: and the likelihood of our sinning should be our deepest fear: and our actual sinning is by far our most real unhappiness. At the same time, we can scarcely understand the saints fainting away at the bare mention of the name Sin: and if this is so, how far are we from being able to fathom Our Lord's horror of sin?

Supposing we use disease as an emblem of a holy thing, and compare a wounded eye to the soul of Our Blessed Lord. We may say that the wretched and sinful world was to Our Lord's soul what a beam of the noonday sun is to a mortal eye—something intolerable! It was a spiritual agony—seemingly unendurable for a moment yet actually endured His whole life long.

If He could have been surprised, His soul would have been appalled by the revelations His knowledge made to Him of sin. He saw the sins of all men in their horror and foulness, their loathsome varieties, their uncleanness, their number, multiplication, relapses, and their long-enduring consequences. Their weight crushed Him every moment. And above all, He saw the sin of Sins—Deicide—the murder of God—the martyrdom of the Creator. And most of all, He had to take all these sins into His own heart,

and as it were, violate the sanctity of His Soul by clothing Himself in them, making them fit tight and burn into the sanctuary of His very life.

The angels sang sweetly at his Nativity—but the vision of Sin was there. When He fled across the wilderness, during His stay in Egypt—and back again—the vision of sin was everywhere. He spoke kindly to the Nazarenes—at work or at the well—and to the vine dressers—but His blessed soul was stifled all the time with the vision of Sin !

" Poor Jesus Christ ! " exclaims St. Alphonsus. Is He not worthy of our pity and love ? And shall not we, dear Brethren, out of sheer compassion for Him, and in gratitude for His wonderful love of us :

(1) Make reparation for our sins of the tongue by exercising the virtue of silence.
(2) Patiently enduring poverty and privation if such things fall to our lot.
(3) Bearing with resignation the neglect of our friends.
(4) Chiefly resolving to do our share this year in consoling His Sacred Heart, by abandoning sin and making frequent and fervent use of the Holy Sacrament of Penance ?

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Resolutions for the New Year

During the past week the Church concluded, with the Octave of the Epiphany, her festivals which commemorate the coming into the world of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the chief events connected with the Sacred Infancy. The New Year has started; and though we have already passed the middle of the first month, it is not too late for us to halt a moment in order that we may review the past, and beg God's blessing upon the time to come.

We all know the years we have passed, and how we have spent them: but God alone can tell how many more or how few we have to pass, before the end.

We are now at a new beginning—and this New Year will inevitably have an end like all those that have gone before it. We cannot help it—but the ending of each year makes us think of the ending of our life. How many lives have ended during the last two months, which this time last year had no more appearance of being near the end than our own had! And how many of those lives were ended rapidly—some suddenly—without time to put their souls in order. If they had only known last January, they would have spent last year so differently. Let us then, dear Brethren, be wise in time and do now what we shall have wished to have done when we come to die.

We shall wish that we had looked back and taken a serious review of how the last year will stand the test of

God's judgment. I am afraid that in that retrospect most prominently will stand out our sins, negligences and infidelities. To some of us, even mortal sins will loom out like ugly giants in the past. Their glamour has gone, their enticement and the pleasure we thought we should get from them: and now, with a dull, aching regret, we wonder why we ever committed them. And to others their venial sins—countless as the Egyptian plague of flies—rise up. What utter carelessness and selfishness and forgetfulness of God must have been ours. And how can we tell how near to mortal sin many of them may have been? Even to the very best of us enough sinfulness rises up to cause us keenest regret and forces the humiliating confession that we are but unprofitable servants.

Our first duty, dear Brethren, now is sorrow for past sin—not mere general sorrow, but sorrow for that especially which we see now has been a peril—and perhaps caused spiritual ruin to us this last year. We must be truly contrite and all that that means—sorrow from our hearts for all our faults—mortal sins—venial sins and imperfections. Secret sins—forgotten sins—sins of commission, sins of omission—sins of childhood, sins of youth—sins of later years. We must look straight into the Face of Jesus Christ crucified and say "I will never sin deliberately even venially ever again."

And in looking back we see a multitude of quite different things, namely God's graces and blessings to us during the past year. Some are spiritual and some temporal, but all freely bestowed upon us, in spite of our unworthiness, by the good God. Our preservation in being is a continuation of His act of creation of us: and this one manifestation of God's goodness to us comprises countless other blessings which have come to us from Him alone—every breath we have drawn—every beat of our heart, every pulsation of

our blood, the use and power of all our senses, the ease of motion and gesture by day, and the restoration derived from sleep at night.

Besides these, seldom thought of, fundamental blessings—He has provided us daily with food and clothing and shelter, and the comfort of many things which are best known personally to ourselves. And even when He has sent us the Cross, He has been merciful to us, and not afflicted us all to our deserts.

As for graces to support our souls and to advance our life of virtue, I will not attempt to count what cannot be counted in kind, number, variety, seasonableness, superabundance, and unintermittingness—suspended only when we sleep. Each one of us probably has more than the highest saint has ever corresponded to.

But I must specially mention one immense grace which God has placed within your reach—and that is the giving of you this Chapel during the past year.[1] To show His special love and compassion for you He has come to dwell among you personally in His eucharistic presence. Here you can come and visit Him whenever you wish: and He has brought the Holy Mass—the source of all blessings within your reach. How truly He might say to you, as He said to the Apostles "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen ye"—and He might add, "I have made you the nucleus of what I hope may become through your fidelity to my graces a centre of Catholicity where now little but heresy and forgetfulness of God abound."

Surely, dear Brethren, all these blessings and merciful graces of the past year call for deepest gratitude and fervent resolution that this year, with God's help, there will be no wasted graces, nor neglected ones, nor despised ones by us. Let us all therefore resolve to do better this coming year.

[1] Elstree (temporary church).

The past may fill some hearts with fear: and, unless we strive, we may be quite sure that next year will be worse still. But even at the very best—suppose some can honestly look back and thank God that the last year has been the very best they ever spent, if this present year were to be their final year on earth, would they not wish it to be better still? Surely no one would be content to say: "I stake my claim to Heaven on this last year." We could all find plenty to improve upon if we knew for sure that it was our last; and is it not enough, dear Brethren, not to know but that it may be our last? Then let us be in earnest lest it happen to be the end.

There are two grave mistakes—one or the other of which is frequently made. Delay, putting amendment off to another year, is the first great danger. It makes so little of God's warnings and is an insult to His Divine Majesty. The second mistake is to think we can make the desired improvement by our own powers. When year after year we have found no improvement, although we seemed to try—it was all this mistake of trusting to ourselves.

The wise thing to do is humbly to pray to God to give us the goodwill to start and the power to go on and accomplish. Both this goodwill and the accomplishing come from God. As a sign of goodwill, let me ask you to make one resolve, and that is, to re-form a habit you all had, I am sure, when you had facilities in the past, and that is to go to the Sacraments regularly—and make your monthly Communion without fail. Let us aim at making the First Sunday of the month our Communion Sunday—and give our Lord the joy of a General Communion. With this, dear Brethren, I am confident, that all else will follow and in every respect you will be blessed with a happy and prosperous year.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER."

(WRETCHED state of leper.) At a certain place, probably near Capharnaum, a leper presented himself to Our Lord to be cured.

Leprosy was a terrible disease: in the first place, it disfigured its victims and made them hideous. The skin became discoloured, the limbs swollen, wounds and ulcers set in, a discharge exuded from the eyes—the voice sounded hoarse—the nails fell off—the whole body decayed and its members gradually fell away. The leper was scarcely more than a living corpse.

Secondly, the disease was very painful, because of the irritation and twitching in all the limbs: and to physical pains were added the mental sufferings, melancholy, uneasiness and a morbid longing for death.

Thirdly, leprosy was degrading, because it entailed Levitical uncleanness. He could not approach Sanctuary or have intercourse with brethren. He had to depart from society, and wear conspicuous clothing to warn people not to touch him. He had to go bareheaded and get food in an appointed place set for him as if for a wild beast. To complete his misery there was always connected with the disease the thought of impurity, of sin and punishment.

Lastly, leprosy was a very infectious disease and was always mortal. So the condition of the leper was one of extreme abandonment and misery. And this was the

state of the man in question, for it is said (St. Luke) he was " full of leprosy."

(How he was healed.) Apart from his wretched condition, which must have inspired everyone with compassion, it was surely the leper's disposition of soul which conduced to his cure. He had probably heard of the goodness and miraculous power of Jesus—and so he pushed his way through the multitude to Our Lord—though such an act was forbidden by law: and falling on his face, he adored Him saying: " Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

So his whole behaviour showed not only great respect, but also extraordinary faith and confidence in the power and goodness of Jesus. " If Thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

Now, on the part of Our Lord, it was, firstly, compassion for the poor leper that induced Him to work the miracle. He gave the sign of His compassion by touching the loathsome sufferer with His hand and thus effecting the cure.

Secondly, we may attribute it to Our Lord's delight in the faith of the sick man. For Our Lord replied immediately " I will. Be thou made clean," and by a mere touch and a mere word He effected the cure.

(Conditions imposed by Our Lord.) Our Lord imposed two conditions on the cleansed leper. The first was that he should fulfil the law, present himself to the priests in Jerusalem, offer the Sacrifice, and get himself declared clean of his leprosy.

The ceremony required by the law was this: outside the town a sparrow was killed. A second sparrow was dipped in water mixed with the blood of the first one, and then allowed to fly away.

In the Temple the cleansed man had to offer a lamb, and was himself sprinkled with its blood and anointed with oil.

And why did Our Lord require this?

Firstly, the sudden cure might easily have led the man to disregard the law, and so have aroused the indignation of the priests, as though Our Lord wished to abolish the law. According to the law the treatment of leprosy was the peculiar duty of priests.

Another reason was that Our Lord intended to give the priests in the Temple further information about Himself—in order to cleanse them from the far worse leprosy of unbelief. . . . And thirdly that he might institute, in the healing of the leper, a type of the cleansing from sin in the Sacrament of Penance. For this reason Our Lord sends all lepers whom he heals to the priests so that the declaring of the leper cleansed might fully symbolize the purification from sin in the Sacrament of Penance.

The second condition was the strict charge not to say anything about the miracle. Obviously Our Lord's reason for this was to give a lesson in humility to His disciples and also to us—that good is never to be done for the purpose of obtaining praise for ourselves.

Secondly, as to the man who was cured. After a blessing like this received from God, it is better for a man to withdraw himself into solitude and, instead of attracting attention to himself as a marvel, to think over the benefit he has received and give thanks to God for it.

Lastly, Our Blessed Lord wished to avoid unnecessary excitement among the people and among His enemies. And what happened? The poor man—no doubt with a good intention and out of enthusiastic gratitude, published the miracle far and wide—with the result that there was general excitement and everyone flocked to Our Lord to be healed, and He could go nowhere without causing a sensation. For this reason, St. Luke tells us, He withdrew from the people and gave Himself to prayer.

Leprosy, dear Brethren, is a type of sin. It is caused in the body by corruption of the blood. And it is from the corruption of our nature by original sin that all our sins proceed.

Leprosy disfigures the body horribly: and in the same way sin disfigures our soul and makes it so hideous that if we were allowed to see it, we could not bear the sight of it. . . .

The leper knew all the particulars of his disease, its hideousness, shame, and danger. He was truly desirous of being healed and he applied to Our Blessed Lord with confidence and humility—and earnestly asked for his cure.

Our Lord was touched with compassion and granted Him perfect health.

The compassion, charity, and power of Jesus Christ are as vigorous as ever: and if we, like the leper, only felt our spiritual diseases and sincerely desired deliverance from them—and asked to be cured with humility and confidence, we should obtain our request.

In the case of the lepers, they were only considered cured after the declaration of the priests. In the same way, however great our contrition may be we must always do Our Lord's bidding: "Go show thyself to the priest" and receive from him the blessing of absolution. God only forgives on this condition. But the healing of sin has this superiority over that of leprosy—that the absolution effects it, while the priests of the Old Law only declared and published it.

Let us thank God for instituting the Sacrament of Penance. Let us beg him to flood our souls with His Divine Light that we may see ourselves as we are in His sight. And when we find ourselves infected with the leprosy of sin, let us hasten to confession and show ourselves to the priest that we may be happily cleansed.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"STORM AT SEA"

SEVERAL of the miracles of Our Blessed Lord are connected with the Lake of Genesareth, or as it is sometimes called the Sea of Galilee. Our Lord had a special fondness for it because it had been a kind of second home for the Apostles in the days when they were but poor fishermen, supporting themselves and their families by the dangerous and venturesome occupation from which He called them to be fishers of men.

An unusually great crowd of people had been gathered around Our Lord during the day: and though He had dismissed them at the end of His discourse great numbers gathered about the place of His abode; and seeing that any needful rest was not to be hoped for there, Our Lord resolved that same evening to seek the lone hills on the other side of the Lake: and He said to His disciples: "Let us pass over to the other side."

The Apostles obeyed this order promptly and willingly —although it was a disagreeable one—after a hard day's work, and at the approach of night—and especially if there were then any signs of the gathering storm.

Our Lord's little ship was accompanied by other vessels, each one, amid the rustling night winds and under the starlit sky, making quiet headway towards the opposite bank. Jesus, seating Himself in the stern of the ship, rested His head on the pilot's pillow, and very soon He was

asleep, wearied with the toils of the day. But hardly had He closed His eyes in sleep when the whole outlook overhead and round about them changed. The east coast of the Lake is surrounded by steep heights and deep ravines through which wild hurricanes often burst over the Lake, and, in an instant, whip its waters into wild and seething waves.

Our Lord permitted a storm of this kind to arise in quite a natural manner—the little vessels were scattered far and wide, while that of the Master was left alone, with the waters beating into it on every side. The tempest must have been a violent one, and they were in real danger of either sinking or being dashed upon the coast.

All this time Jesus slumbered on—while the Apostles dared not waken Him. And how did they behave? Of course, they did everything in their power to keep the ship afloat: but, as the danger became more and more threatening, they lost courage and thought there was only one thing to do—to waken Our Blessed Lord. And this they did throwing themselves around Him in great agitation and desperate eagerness, crying out: "Master, Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish! Save us, Master: we perish!"

The fault of the Apostles did not consist in their trembling and thinking they could not weather the storm in the natural course of things—but in thinking that Our Lord could help them only if He were awake. This clearly showed a want of lively and perfect faith. There is almost a tone of distrust and petulance in their query—"does it not concern Thee?"

And what, on the other hand, is Our Saviour's behaviour? He sleeps quietly on, even in the midst of the violent storm. His awakening is just as tranquil as His repose had been. He rises and gives His first attention to

them, considering it more important to calm their hearts rather than the angry waves. He reproves them not for their anxiety, but for their faintheartedness and want of confidence in Him. " Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? " . . . Then He looked out on the storm and the waves—and simply said : " Peace. Be still." And by this one command He did two things. He stilled the wind, and brought sudden smoothness and calm upon the water —which otherwise remains in motion for hours—or even days—after the wind has ceased.

The sight of the unclouded plains of heaven and the sea once again silent and placid filled all with wonder—and above all with awe at the nearness of the Godhead : and the Apostles and the crew of the ship exclaimed : " Who is this that He commandeth both the winds and the sea and they obey Him ? "

This storm, dear Brethren, and all those which take place at sea are only a feeble image of those which souls undergo in their passage through this world.

Those at sea are usually of comparatively short duration, often mere squalls. Those of souls, on the contrary, are continual and often real tempests.

There is no perfect calm either in youth or in old age, either by day or by night. Often indeed the vessel is shattered, and only a plank of it remains on which we may reach the harbour.

The storms at sea only endanger fortune, or at most, life : those, on the contrary, which souls experience expose them to damnation for ever.

Storms at sea are always visible : and by the fear they inspire we are led to use prompt means not to be engulfed by them. But those of souls are often invisible. They are often disregarded through infatuation : and one may perish by them before realizing the fatal danger. One

may be already at the bottom of the sea while he flatters himself he is still safely sailing towards the harbour.

Exposed as we are and must be to these spiritual storms and tempests, we must ever take care to have Jesus with us by keeping our souls in a state of grace. Whatever extremity of peril we may encounter, His presence will keep us safe. While He is with us we have nothing to fear. If during the calm we establish Jesus with us, we shall be prepared for the storm. And when the storm arises, we must call Jesus to our aid. He may seem to sleep and leave us to our lonely struggle : but if He sees our reliance is not in ourselves, but in Him alone, let us have confidence that He will awake at the time He has appointed—with the same power He manifested upon the Lake. He will still the waves and restore calm.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"WHEAT AND COCKLE"

WHEN Our Blessed Lord was delivering the Parable of the Wheat and the Cockle, He was looking forward prophetically to the history of the Church. Nor had He far to look when He knew that already among His own chosen disciples there was one who would turn out a true child of the Wicked One. "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." And He saw—what would always be a marvel of His Saints, and the special cross of His dearest friends—that the field in which the Gospel seed would be sown, when the time came for the fruits of the sowing to become manifest to the outward eye, would be found to be full of a growth which certainly was not of the Gospel.

To this unprofitable growth, He gives the name of "cockle" or "darnel" which is a common weed in Palestine, very similar to wheat and only distinguished from it when the fruit begins to ripen.

Our Lord prophesies that such weeds will always be found in the Church. But the Church will not consist entirely of weeds. Amongst all the evil that may exist, God will ever find faithful and devoted souls who in life and death bear upon them the mark of His elect.

Now, whence comes the cockle? The originator is not God, nor the Church. It arises *in* her, but not *from* her. Her doctrines of faith and morals may be the occasion but not the cause of it. The evil does not come from the

observance of the precepts, but from departure from them. The Church has never recognized the cockle as her fruit.

How could the Church have retained her mark of ***oneness*** all through the ages if she had allowed all heretics to remain in communion with her? You see the utter confusion resulting in the Church of England to-day from what is called its comprehensiveness—or tolerating all sects in its all-embracing system.

The Church of Christ has but one Faith and one Moral Law. She will never forfeit one iota of either: and should anyone arise and refuse to accept either in its entirety, he is cut off from her communion as a withered, unprofitable, and lifeless branch.

But not only in the Church do we see the growth of the cockle. There is not a calling, not a profession, not a pursuit from the most laborious, scientific investigations to the simplest occupations, relaxations, and recreations—in which some evil seed has not cast to occupy the ground where nothing but what is good and wholesome should flourish.

The whole of society may be looked upon as a field sown by the hand of God, and intended to return to Him the fair fruit of obedience to His Law and glorification of His beauties and benefits to man. And yet we find evil everywhere. And there can be no truer picture either of the Kingdom of the Church or the society of man than that which Our Lord here gives—the picture of a field with two growths of seed, side by side, the one good, and the other evil.

The originator of the cockle is always the Evil One, who makes use of the instability and the faults of men to advance his own interests. Our Lord's words—that a wicked and hostile man—an enemy has sown the cockle—are often a literal fact in the East, where one man, out of revenge or ill will, sows weeds in the field of another, thus rendering a good crop impossible for years.

SEPTUAGESIMA

"THE WORK OF LIFE"

"Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

THE parable in to-day's Gospel is intended to describe God's invitations from time to time in the world's history to various races and peoples to enter the True Church and to be saved. But it may be applied to His dealings with each individual soul, and each one of us may take Our Lord's question in the text as addressed directly to Himself. The parable and the question are especially suitable on this day when the Church strikes the keynote of those lessons of personal duty and accountability which will be impressed upon us during the coming season of Lent.

The parable reminds us of that solemn truth that we have an appointed work to do on earth. Each man that comes into the world is but an agent sent by God on a special embassy: and each man that dies only goes back to give an account of its performance. Practically from the cradle to the grave we are bound up with accountability. Nor should this sadden us. If God were a tyrant—if He reaped where He did not sow—if He exacted what was beyond our strength—if in His judgment of us He did not take into account the circumstances of each one—his opportunities, ignorances, and even his weaknesses, then indeed the thought of our accountability would be a dreadful and depressing one.

But since our Master and Judge is a God Whose compassion is as great as His power, Whose service is our highest satisfaction, Who knows whereof we are made and Who in His judgment remembers mercy—the thought that each one of us has an appointed work to do is not only an incentive to duty but the secret of happiness.

There is *nothing pleasant* in a life *without responsibility*. Rest, indeed, is pleasant : but rest implies that labour has gone before ; and it is the labour that makes the rest sweet and precious. A life *all rest*, with nothing special to do, without aim, without obligation, is a life without honour and without peace. They who spend their time rushing from one amusement to another, know nothing but uneasiness and disappointment.

Now the main business of life is the service of God. The secret of life is the realizing that wherever I am, whatever I do, I am the Child of God, doing His Will and in some way or other extending His Kingdom on earth.

God looks down from heaven upon the world ; and distinctions among men vanish—nationality—education—station—wealth—all vanish : only one distinction remains the distinction between the good and the bad—between him that serves God and him that serves Him not.

The world is the field of human probation—the scene of the great struggle between good and evil, between heaven and hell, the battle that began when " Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought with his angels. Into this arena each generation has entered one after another to show their valour. Once it was the turn of the Saints of the Old Testament and the New—and heaven and earth were watching them. They did their work well. Then there were the Martyrs who gave their hearts' blood for God and the Faith. Then there were others who were not canonized Saints, for they were not

called to deeds of heroism : but they were good men, who in simplicity of heart fulfilled each duty and served God with clean hands and pure hearts. And the penitent came in their turn. Once they were unwise—the world deceived them—they followed their own will : but afterwards turned to God, and redeemed their former sins by penance, and died in the number of those who overcame the Wicked One.

And now it is our turn ! The herald has called our name : and as the early martyrs, condemned to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre, nerved themselves by the thought of the thousands of spectators ranged around, let us think of the multitudes in heaven watching our strife and crying to us from heaven to be valiant—to be strong—and to do battle for the right.

Our Lord's words not only remind us we have an appointed work to do, but also that we have an allotted time to do it in. Every right-minded man acknowledges that religion is a thing to be attended to. But when ? Some think it enough to attend to religion at Easter and Christmas and at other times left alone—some at still more distant intervals—and others propose to attend to it in old age—or a man actually makes his peace with God at any time before he dies, there is not much to be regretted. How different is God's view of the matter. Think of the labouring man. He rises very early in the morning—in the winter long before it is light—and goes up to his work. He works all day till evening—with a brief pause at midday to eat his frugal dinner.

Now it is thus God wants us to work out our salvation. We must work from morning till evening—from beginning of life to the end of it. A man who does his duty begins to serve God early in the morning. In the morning of life a sweet voice speaks to his soul, " Son, give me thy

heart "—and he heeds that voice. The time comes for First Communion, and he goes. He does not fully know the meaning of it. It is too great and deep. He knows God is very near him, and he is very happy.

But by and by the time comes for Confirmation. The candidates stand before the Bishop—and that boy is among the number. Soon after that he changes from what he was. He grows to be a youth—he is more thoughtful and reserved. He knows now what temptation means—he has seen the shadow of sin—he has felt the attraction of the world's pleasure; but he does not waver—he is bold and resolute for the right—and he receives the Sacraments to get grace for the conflict of life.

And time goes on—and he passes through the most dangerous part of life. He is a sound man—goes into business—gets married. He is in the thick of life—it has its troubles, it has its temptations—even his faith is tried, and at times it seems as if the only good was the enjoyment of the world: but he sticks to his prayers, and watchfulness and a fixed will carry him through—and he passes the most critical period of life without any stain upon his soul. Thus passes the noonday of life, and he comes to its decline.

It draws towards evening—the shadows lengthen. The sun and the light and the moon are growing dark and the clouds gather. He is an old man and feeble. But there he is with the same heart he gave to God in his youth, and he has never recalled the offering. He has been true to his faith, true to his promises, true to his conscience, and at the hour of death he can sing his Nunc Dimittis—and go to the judgment seat of Christ humbly to claim the reward of the true and faithful servant.

You may tell me this is a mere fancy picture. I tell you that this is the life God intended you and I should live. There have been men who have lived such lives—

and thanks be to God there are men living such lives to-day. And if we find our lives are not like to this, it is not too late ; we take Our Lord's reproach as addressed to ourselves : " Why stand you here all the day idle " —and then start at redeeming the past by penance.

God still calls us to labour in the vineyard of our souls. He pledges to give us the necessary graces, and we have His divine assurance that the reward will not fail. Another Lent is coming—a season of penance and prayer. Prepare yourselves for that holy season by examination of your conscience. Refuse not to work in Our Lord's vineyard. Offer no more excuses and make no delay.

Work your work while it is day, that when the evening comes, and the Lord gives the labourers their hire, you may be found a faithful workman worthy of an eternal reward.

SEXAGESIMA

"Failure and Success of the Gospel"

"Saying these things He cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

There is a measure by which if Our Lord's work were tried, it might be pronounced a failure, and that is by the measure of great immediate, visible results. Some might think it strange Our Lord was not more successful than He was. He was the Son of God. No one ever spake as He did. He conversed with multitudes of men as He went from place to place. He died in the sight of a whole city—and what was the result of it all?

On the Day of Pentecost, His disciples gathered together in the Upper Chamber numbered 120! So it is likewise with the Church. After all, what has she done? Put her numbers at the highest, say she has, according to latest statistics, 334 millions and a half. What are they to the other hundreds of millions that inhabit the globe? There are said to be 900 millions of pagans still—and of these 400 millions are in India alone! Has Christianity, then, accomplished the results that might have been looked for? Is it not a failure?

The answer to this question is: Christianity is not a failure, although it has accomplished only partial results. And partial results belong to every human thing: and though Christianity is a divine religion, by coming into

contact with the world, it became subject in many ways to the laws that govern human things.

For example, Christianity demands *attention.* "He that hath ears to hear." Now attention is a thing hard to get from men. The want of attention is one of the greatest wants of the world. We see this everywhere. Take the instance of young men at College. After passing several years there, at considerable expense to parents, for the sake of acquiring an education, some of them know nothing but the names of the things they have been studying. The result of all they have heard and read is the acquisition of some of the terms made use of in science—some gain a confused and partial knowledge which for practical purposes is useless, those who get precise, accurate and useful information are few indeed.

The same in business. Every trade and profession is crowded with bunglers who do not know their own business, because too lazy to learn it, and who grumble at the success of others who have taken pains. It is the same in politics. How few there are who really understand politics. A great many read the papers—they do not pass any independent judgment on the statements—they saw it in the paper and that is quite enough for them.

This being so, it should not surprise us that men give but little attention to religion. If learning, business, and politics—which touch our present interests so closely—can only partially engage men's thoughts, will religion be more successful? How do men act about religion?

Some listen to its teaching only *with their ears*—like a busy man in his office listens to a street musician with a violin or a hand organ. So Gallio listened "and cared for none of these things."

Some listen *with their hearts*, i.e., with attention enough to arouse a passing emotion or sentiment. So Felix listened

when he trembled at St. Paul's teaching, and promised to hear him, at a more convenient time ! Only a few listen with attentive ears and hearts and hands—the only true way of listening like St. Paul, " Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ? " When you say then that Christianity has produced only partial results, you are saying that men are frivolous and thoughtless—that there are many who do not listen to religion, or do not listen with earnestness and take to heart its lessons.

Our Blessed Lord foresaw that the success of His Gospel would be but partial. We see this in the Gospel to-day. There is something melancholy in the way the evangelist introduces the parable. " And when a very great multitude was gathered together and hastened out of the cities to Him, he spoke by a similitude : " A sower went out to sow his seed."

This was the thought aroused in Our Lord's mind by the sight of the very great multitude pressing around Him : how small a part would give heed to His words or appreciate them ; how in some hearts the word would be trodden down—in others be choked or wither away—and this is the secret earnestness with which He cried at the end of the parable : " He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

There are two practical lessons I must put before you, one relating to our duty to others : the other relating to our duty to ourselves.

We all ought to labour for the conversion of others. There is certainly a great deal of good to be done around us. How many in this country—in this village—are out of the Ark of Safety—the Holy Catholic Church ? Now many in her fold need our efforts to make them better ? Why are we not more active in helping them ? We say it is no use—we have tried and failed. Those whose conversion

we had most at heart seem farther off than ever from the truth. It is no use hoping for the conversion of non-Catholics. They are too set in their ways. Surely this is not the spirit of Christ. You will put up with no failures ! Christ and St. Paul were content to meet with many failures for the sake of some success. Christ was rejected and crucified by those He came to teach. The Apostles were despised and died in Martyrdom. And you will not labour because you cannot have immediate success ! But some success will result from your efforts, for there is nothing well done for the truth that falls to the ground. So, labour on, as far as opportunity may be given to you. Blessing must come from this kind of work, and reward from Him who has promised that " they that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity."

The other lesson we learn is one which teaches us how to guide ourselves in a world of sin and scandal. It is no uncommon thing for men to draw injury to their own souls from the disorders around them, by making them a pretext for neglecting their own salvation, or taking a low standard of duty. One says—" *there* is a man who does not attend to his religious duties," and he makes out of this an excuse for his own neglect. Christ's answer to him is " What is that to thee ? Follow thou Me."

There is another who does go to the Sacraments—but his life is disedifying. You find he is profane, quarrelsome, untruthful, sly, and artful. Perhaps he is guilty of worse sins than these ! Again " What is that to thee ? Follow thou Me." My love, my life, my teaching is to be the rule of thy conduct : not the lives and doings of others.

There are people who vex themselves with that question —Are there few or many that will be saved ? There are few if few—many if many. Few, if few hear and obey ; many, if many hear and obey. Our Lord cries out " he

that hath ears to hear, let him hear." One hears, lays it up and ponders it in his heart, like Mary—and becomes a saint. Another hears—like one who looks in a glass and immediately forgets what manner of face he has.

Here is the distinction which produces salvation and damnation. To which of these classes do I belong?

Beg Almighty God to give you an understanding heart to know the things that will bring you peace, before they are for ever hidden from your eyes. And pray that you may not have the misery of passing through life slothful, careless, inattentive—and so losing the heavenly wisdom God gives you the chance to learn.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

TUESDAY next is the first day of March—the month dedicated to St. Joseph, Foster Father of Jesus—the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and the special patron of the Universal Church. He is the patron of domestic life, being the one solitary individual out of all mankind chosen to the high elevation of being the father and therefore the bread-winner of the Holy Family. Poor as he was and humble, hard-working toiler as he was, St. Joseph was the happiest of men *in life* bound up as he was with Jesus and Mary. Their conversation and their example were to him a constant joy and a source of eminent holiness. St. Joseph was also the happiest of men *in death.* He died waited on, comforted and encouraged by Our Lady, his Spouse and in the arms of our Blessed Saviour—His Creator and Judge. The Saints assure us that we can ask him nothing in vain. Pray much to him this month for your spiritual wants—and for your temporal wants: and not only this month—but daily through life pray that St. Joseph may obtain for you the blessing of a happy death.

Wednesday next is Ash Wednesday—the beginning of the Great Fast, the opening of the Holy Season of Lent. It will not be possible for most of you to be present at Mass and to receive the Ashes on Wednesday morning. So we shall repeat what we did last year, and make the Stations of the Cross on Wednesday evening, and the blessed Ashes will be distributed after the Stations. I hope all of you will try to be present. For some of you, it will

mean a sacrifice. But Lent is intended to be a season of sacrifices and we could not give Our Lord better proof of our determination to spend Lent well than making a sacrifice that we may follow Him in the Way of the Cross.

ASH WEDNESDAY

As Lent is the season of penance, it is very fitting that it should be inaugurated by the placing on our heads of ashes, which have always been regarded as a symbol of penance. In the Old Testament we find everywhere that when the people of God were threatened with divine punishments, ashes were used as a part of their penance. David says "I did eat ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping." We read of Job and Judith and Mardochai (in Esther) and many others putting ashes on their heads in sign of their penance. Our Blessed Lord recalled this practice when He said "Woe to thee Corozain, woe to thee Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon the mighty works had been done that have been wrought to you, they would long ago have done penance in sackcloth and ashes."

In the early days of the Church, the Bishop on Ash Wednesday used to sprinkle the penitents with ashes, saying with his clergy the seven penitential psalms and the Litany of the Saints. Then he led them out of the Church, reminding them of Adam being cast out of paradise. Then standing at the entrance he exhorted them not to despair of divine mercy: but by fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and other good works to make themselves worthy of being received again into the Church on Maundy Thursday. Public penances were abolished in course of time—but the Church enjoined the imposition of the blessed ashes upon the heads of the faithful—without exception—that all might be reminded of the necessity of doing penance.

The ashes used on Ash Wednesday are the ashes of the burnt palms that were blessed on Palm Sunday the previous year. Psalms are a symbol of peace: and their ashes remind us of the peace with God and with ourselves being lost to us—and as it were, burnt to ashes, by our many sins. They remind us of the sad fact that heaven is lost to us by sin—and we have no hope of recovering it by our natural faculties. But by the grace of Jesus Christ we can find rest again for our souls and recover our right to Heaven if by penance we renew our participation in the merits of Jesus Crucified.

Ashes are the remains of substances destroyed by fire. When the best of created things are burnt, nothing remains but ashes—and hence they are regarded as a symbol of the vanity of earthly things. Whatever this earth can offer you is nothing more than ashes; "vanity of vanities—and all is vanity," says Solomon, "except to love God and serve Him alone." The charm of temporal joys is to so many poor souls what the bait is to the fish—the cause of death.

It is this important truth that the Church urges upon us to-day—that all visible things are as if they were ashes—and all earthly things pass away and the glory of them. Therefore, it is wise for us to detach our hearts from them, and give ourselves to the care of our immortal souls. This should be our main task during Lent, mortifying our bodies, detaching ourselves from the things of earth—all of which are perishable—and giving our earnest attention to purification of our immortal soul—which is the only thing about us which will not perish.

"Remember man, that thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return."

These words are uttered by priests over myriads of heads to-day. They are intended to be listened to by all. They

are intended to be a warning to all that our Lent may be our last Lent—and it might be God's will that for some of us this will be our last Lent ! And how many deathbeds all through the year depend on last Lents ? Let me, therefore, dear Brethren, urge you to enter into this Lent with sentiments of profound humility and deepest contrition for past sin, with a determination to serve God faithfully—avoiding sin, modifying some bad lapse or habit, forgiving injuries, saying your prayers and examining your consciences—preparing to receive the Sacraments as frequently as you can, and repeat the reception of them before Lent is over—denying yourselves, small things in point of taste—if you are unable to fast, and making up by charitable alms to the poor.

In fact, do all you can to show Almighty God that you are endeavouring to learn your own nothingness and unworthiness and sinfulness—in order that you may come to appreciate more than ever the copious Redemption wrought for you by the Sufferings, the Passion and the Death of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

"A Call to the Individual Soul"

Lent has come again bringing its warning and its call for penance. The Church's teaching is ordinarily given to a congregation, small or great, to crowds, to multitudes. But when Lent comes she speaks to us as individuals. She calls us one by one, young and old, to kneel before the Altar, while she places ashes on our foreheads, and says "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return." She separates each one of us from the rest and gives her message to each in particular. It is only another way of expressing St. Paul's admonition to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself."

Now is this admonition necessary? Do not men attend to themselves quite enough? In one sense they do—but there is more than one self in man. There is the self made up of our passions—our failings and disgusts—our comforts and conveniences. This is the self that speaks so loudly in our own heart, and makes itself so disagreeable to others. When indulged, we call this selfishness—and it is one of the main objects of religion to repress it.

But there is another self in a man—his true and noble self—that self which makes him an individual being, which asserts itself most distinctly in that part of his soul where it comes into closest contact with God, namely his *Conscience*. And this self, it is possible for men to forget. A man may be a priest and have care of souls and be employed in preaching and administering Sacraments: or he may

be a Bishop and live an active life governing his Church—and yet he may forget himself in this sense. How easy then must it be for a man to forget himself in secular occupation ?

Tell me this : Those eager crowds one meets with in the streets of London, hurrying hither and thither, do you think each one of these realizes that in a certain sense there is no other in the world but God and he ? Or in a crowded Church on Sunday, when the preacher is enforcing a duty or denouncing a vice, that woman sitting in the bench or that man standing in the aisle, does he, does she realize that the words are spoken to them individually—that it is a lesson they are to lay to heart and to practise ? No. There are some who pass through life without ever once awakening to their own individual existence, apart from the world around them, and their own individual relations to God.

A man may practise his religion, know a great deal about it—may listen to sermons in Church—may say his night prayers, may even go through some method of Confession and Communion without fully awakening to these things. There are not a few men who know other people but are on terms of slightest acquaintance with themselves.

And I will give you one proof that this is true. You know how troubled men are in sickness, or on a sleepless night or in times of great calamity. Some are troubled at a storm, at thunder roll and the lightning flash. Of course, we have to allow for nervousness, physical causes, and other considerations—but is there not very often something deeper than any of these ? Is it not something that the man has done yesterday, or last week—or last year—and that he has never set aright : some unjust transaction, some evil deed—some neglect of duty, some miserable passion cherished, some bad words spoken, some cruelty, or falsehood, or mischief making ?

It is not mere imagination. It is a fact. He remembers but too well: he knows when it was done, and its consequences—everything comes up distinctly. He shuts his eyes—but he cannot shut it out. "My sin is always before me," says the Psalmist.

You know the clock ticks all day long. Amid the cares of the day you do not hear it; but how distinct and loud it is at night time when your ear catches it. Did you ever have an aching tooth, which you could just manage to bear during the excitement of the day, but which began to throb and become intolerable when all was still at night and you had gone to bed? So the uneasiness I have mentioned is a real pain of the soul, which we manage to keep down and forget or deaden during times of business: but in hours of loneliness and danger makes itself felt.

And what does this show but that you do not attend to your real self—that there is some dark corner of your heart in which you fear to look. You keep the veil down, because you know there is a skeleton behind it and you are afraid to look at it. And so you go through life playing a part—something that you are not—with smiles on your lips and honeyed words in your mouth, laughing and jesting, eating and drinking and sleeping, working and resting, going in and out, paying visits and receiving them, seeking admiration and flattering others—while deep down in your soul, there is that nameless something, that grief like *lead* in the bottom of your heart, that wound that you are afraid to probe, or to uncover or even to acknowledge.

And yet—on the other hand—for a man to face himself, to excite himself to a consciousness of his own individuality, and to a fulfilment of his own personal obligation to Almighty God, is the way to a peaceful and happy life.

When describing the prodigal's return, the Scripture says: "He came to himself"—and whenever we speak

of a man's seriously reflecting on his destiny and duty we say he enters into himself. These expressions teach us that something is to be done that no one can do for us. Each one for himself must make his own personal election sure. Each one must go down into his own heart, search out all dark corners, repent of its sins, resist its passions, direct its aims and desires. It is not a work done in a day. It is sometimes a difficult work. There are times when it pierces to the very quick of our sensitive being—but it is the real and only way to true peace.

Therefore, dear Brethren, do not look abroad for your happiness. It is to be found in yourselves.

I have led your thoughts, dear Brethren, in this direction, that you may see each one of you has a great work to do, that he must do himself. It will not do for you that you have had a pious mother or a good wife or husband. It is not enough that someone around you, who lives near you, or sits near you in church, is a good Christian. It is not enough that you are a Catholic. Religion is a personal, individual thing. All other men may stand or fall: that does not affect you. Each one stands independently before God.

If you are one of a family, if you live in a house with others, or work in a room with many companions, if you are one of a gang of labourers, or a clerk in an office where others are employed, or even a scholar in a school, there is a circle around you that separates you from each of your companions.

. . . . .

And now, if your conscience tells you there is something unsatisfactory in your character, something sinful in your conduct, it is for you to set it right, and to do it without delay. It is the first duty of Lent. The forty days of grace and penance are given for redeeming our sins and

saving our souls. What then should be each one's resolution? *I* will enter into *myself*! Not *we* will do this, and I will do it if my friend does—but *I myself* will enter into myself. I will ask myself what this strange, mysterious life of mine means and whether I am to-day safely advancing to my destiny. I will break off with my sins and cleanse my soul from them by a good confession—and I will pray. It is in prayer that I shall understand my duty. It is in God that I shall find myself.

The solemn words of the Church shall not be uttered in vain for me this Lent. "Dust thou art—and unto dust thou shalt return."

I.—THE NECESSITY OF SALVATION

THIS, dear Brethren, is a small congregation. A day will come when, with the blessing of God, and your own efforts after holiness, it will be much larger. Small as it is, it is priceless in the sight of God. Even if it were much smaller, it would be worth endless toil and labour to save for ever the souls of each one that formed it. St. Francis de Sales says that one soul is diocese enough for a Bishop.

If I were to ask each one of you what his business is, I should probably receive a great variety of answers. The men would tell me that their occupation is at the office, or the warehouse, or the shop, or at some form of manual labour. The women would tell me that theirs was mainly some branch of domestic work.

But no, my brethren, it is not so. This is not your business. Your words may be true in the sense in which you use them : but there is a great and real sense in which they are not true. Trade and commerce and labour—these are not your employments. Your avocations are not so varied as you think they are. Each one of you has the same business. All men who have lived in the world have had the same business. And what is that ? The salvation of their souls. However varied your dispositions, your conditions in this world, your duties—the end of life is absolutely one and the same for all. Yes ! wherever a man is, whatever his position, whatever his age, he has one business on earth—and only one—to save his soul.

All other things can be dispensed with—but this cannot

be dispensed with. This is his true, his necessary, his only duty. Do not think I am exaggerating things in making this assertion.

Our Divine Saviour Himself has taught us this lesson. He said to Martha: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary?" And what that one thing is, He has taught us in these memorable words He uttered on another occasion "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, etc.—or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

But what then, must everyone go into a cloister, must everyone who wishes to do his duty forsake the world, leave house and parents, lands and possessions and nourish his soul with continual meditation and prayer?

No. This is not Our Lord's meaning.

The end of life is indeed the salvation of our souls, but we must work this out by means of the daily employment appropriate to our several conditions.

We must prepare ourselves for the life to come by the labours of the life that now is. We must bear our part in the world, but we must do so always with an eye to eternity. We must be in the world but not of the world. We must be the salt of the earth and give it the good flavour of God, and lead others to salvation by good example.

No one can be excused of doing this. The law of God imperatively requires this of every one of us! This is your duty to your souls! This is your only duty. This done, all will be done. This neglected, all will be in vain. What I want chiefly to impress upon you now is that the salvation *of our souls* is properly *our work.*

The grace of God is indeed necessary to accomplish God's will in our regard: but without our co-operation—

the grace of God will not save us. Consequently St. Paul, writing to the people of Corinth, exhorts them " to work out their salvation." It is only little children, who die soon after baptism—and those who live like children—that are saved by a sovereign act of divine power. But with regard to all others—God has made their eternal destiny dependent on their own actions.

Bear this in mind :—

No one will be saved merely because Christ died for us.

Or because He founded the Catholic Church as the Ark of Salvation, and made us members of it—

Or because He has instituted life-giving Sacraments—

Or because God wishes all to be saved—

Or because He gives His grace to all—

Or because the Blessed Virgin has such power with God—

Or because the priest can forgive sins.

No one will be saved because he has had inspirations of grace, good instruction, good desires, and good purposes. In spite of all these—one may be lost. For the Holy Spirit has distinctly said " Work out your own salvation."

It rests then with you to save your souls. The grace of God is indeed necessary. You cannot be saved without the death of Christ—or the Sacraments of the Catholic Church, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit or the patronage of Mary, or the absolution of the priest.

But all these things are within your reach : they are all in your power. And now during the Holy Season of Lent they are offered to you with special liberality. God on His part has done, one may say, all that He could do to make your work easy to you. To make this an acceptable time, it only remains that you do your part. And this everyone can do. However great your difficulties, however urgent your temptations, however strong your passions, however inconvenient your evil companions, however

deeply seated your bad habits, you can, each one can, by the help which God is now willing to render him, save his immortal soul.

Thus, we have seen this morning, we stand as distinct, independent, and individual beings in the sight of God. We have a distinct, independent, and individual work to do. We see now what that work is—the one thing necessary—the saving of our soul. Fix this thought firmly in your minds. I must save my immortal soul. Once saved, saved for ever. Once lost, lost for ever.

II.—THE NECESSITY OF SALVATION

Our souls are our most precious possession

DEAR Brethren, we have souls. When God created man, He formed his body—out of the dust of the earth. It was as yet a helpless form—a beautiful statue—but God breathed upon it—and man became a living soul.

This soul—the supernatural substance God breathed into the body—was formed in resemblance to the Divine Essence, i.e., endowed with a spiritual nature, and possessed of understanding and free will. " Let us make man to our image and likeness," said Almighty God—and the Sacred writer tells us, " God created man to His own image " and to give greater emphasis to this statement, he repeats " to the image of God He created him."

Man therefore is a compound being—consisting of a body and soul—allied to the material world through his material body—and allied to the world above, that is, to God and the Angels through his soul.

Now the excellence of all creatures is in proportion to the degree in which they partake of the perfections of God—the Author of all being and all goodness.

All existing substances partake of His perfection in some degree : at least they reflect His omnipotence Who made them : and therefore Holy Scripture calls on the fishes of the sea, the beasts of the earth, the fowls of the air, the sun, moon, stars, earth, mountains, and hills, to join with angels and men in blessing God.

But Angels and souls are superior to material creatures because they show us not only what God can do but what He is. Like Him, they are *spiritual beings*. They are not gross substances as our bodies, but pure, subtle, immaterial essences. They are *immortal* like Him—at least so that they can never die. They do not need food nor sleep. They are not subject to decay, or old age, or death. They are endowed with understanding and free will—to know many of the things God knows, and to love what He loves ; but above all to know Him and love Him.

Hence, the value of a soul is immeasurable, and all the treasures of the earth are not to be compared to it. . . . Take the poorest slave on earth—the most wretched inmate of the darkest prison—the most afflicted sufferer whom disease has reduced to a mass of corruption—that man's soul is more precious and glorious than the riches of all the monarchs in creation—than all the treasures of the whole earth and all the precious metals and jewels that are hid in the mines and caves beneath the surface of the earth.

Our Lord one day permitted St. Catherine of Sienna to see a human soul, and as she gazed transported at its exceeding beauty, He asked her if He had not good reason to come down from heaven to save so glorious a creature. The Saint said the soul was so beautiful that, if one could see it, one would be willing to suffer all possible pains and torments for love of it.

If, dear Brethren, when you go back home you should find in your house an Angel with his face bright as the sun, his eyes like burning lamps, his body as transparent as crystal and his feet like burnished brass, what would you do ? Would you not, like St. John, fall down before his feet and worship him ? Would you not be transported with amazement, or if you were so strengthened that you

could look upon the glorious vision, would you not gaze upon it with deep and loving awe ?

Well—such a being you will find there when you go home. It will go hence with you. It will remain there as long as you remain there. It will come away when you come away. This bright thing I am speaking of is no visitor in your house, it is an inmate, it rises with you in the morning, accompanies you through the day, is present with you when you eat, is with you in sickness and in health, in life and in death.

This bright being is yours. It is more yours than anything else in the world. It is the only thing in the world that is really yours. Poverty cannot strip you of it, death cannot tear it from you, eternity cannot rob you of it. And this being is your soul—your precious, spiritual, immortal soul. All things else will forsake you, property, family, friends—but this will never forsake you. It is yours—yours inalienably and for ever.

We are told of some of the Saints that they used to make an act of respect to every one they met, by way of saluting his guardian angel : and of others that they bowed down before those whom they knew (by the spirit of prophecy) would shed their blood for the faith. But have we not cause enough to honour man, for the very fact that he has a soul—an immortal soul—a soul which shall one day see God ? Shall we not feel ample respect for each other, dear Brethren, when we think of what we are ? Who could ever speak suggestive, much less an improper word before another, if he thought of the dignity of the human soul ? What young man or young woman would dare to go to places where they would blush that their mother should be present—if they remembered that they took their own soul along with them ? Who would tell a lie, or cheat, or calumniate, or steal—if he thought of his

soul? Surely this is a great and overpowering thought!

Let us go into the streets of London and look around us. There are stately buildings, expensive cars and numberless gay and brilliant shops—but what are all these material things to the concourse of human beings, the crowds of immortal souls who are, day by day, working out an immortal destiny?

There is the old man tottering along on his stick, there is the little child on its way to school, there is the youth and the maiden or the professional man hastening to the shop or the office or the place of practice, there are the wealthier ones with their jewels and costly fabrics, there is the labourer with his spade or his bag of tools setting out to his daily toil—and each one has a soul—each one will live for ever.

Let us strive to take in this great thought. The tide of human beings flows on from morning to evening. New faces continually appear. They come and they go. We do not know their history: but we know each one has a spiritual nature—is made to the image of God—is possessed of a bright and glorious soul. We shall meet them again, every one. New populations shall come in the place of these who now inhabit the world. The stones of the greatest buildings shall be reduced to dust—and each soul that now lives in London will survive in its own individuality and immortality.

There are some, it is true, who seem as if they had no souls. There are some who have lost all sense of respect and decency: some habitually given to drink and sensuality. Their conversation is wicked—their countenances so devoid of shame and self-respect that they seem, through neglect of their souls, to have lost them. . . . But even they have souls. They are human, they are made to the image of God—and so they must ever remain!

A surgeon was once called to attend a man who was

afflicted with cancer. This terrible disease had affected one entire side of the face and made in it most dreadful ravages. The cheek was one mass of putrid flesh, the nose was undistinguishable from the other features, the eye completely eaten out, and the bone of the forehead perforated like a sponge. But on turning the face of the man, the other side presented a wonderful contrast. It was no way affected and showed no trace of sickness except an excessive pallor. The countenance and features were of a noble dignity and beauty, and strikingly like the expression ordinarily seen in pictures of Our Blessed Lord.

So it is with men's souls. Sin has eaten deeply into them, has deprived them of comeliness, has almost defaced the form they once had, has blinded their minds and deprived them of the interior eye. But still there remain traces of nobility, of the image of God.

Dear Brethren—it matters not how deeply a sinner may be sunk in sin—his body may be as filthy as a drain—his heart may be the prey of every passion—and the slave of every vice—he has a soul—he may indeed have lost much—but he has much remaining. We all have that which is of more value than all else in the world—that which is absolutely of more value than all material things—and which to us is of more value than all spiritual things, than all created things in earth and heaven.

Remember always, dear Brethren, you are great and noble and spiritual and immortal. You are capable of virtue, happiness, and heaven. You are like to God—you resemble Him. His image is stamped upon you. And how little you realize this. Alas, you will realize it at the time of death ! Dear Brethren, think of your soul—think of its ultimate destiny be humble, be contrite, and as Holy Scripture says: "Remember thy last end, and thou wilt never sin."

III.—THE NECESSITY OF SALVATION

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

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

We have seen that each one of us has an individual responsibility towards Almighty God—that we have something to do which no one else can do for us—that every human being is or should be engaged in the same business —for only one thing is necessary, and that is to labour for the salvation of our soul.

On Wednesday, we saw that this obligation arises from three truths :—

(1) That our soul is our most precious possession.
(2) That we are in danger of losing our soul.
(3) That the loss of our souls is the greatest of all losses, because it is irremediable.

We examined the first of these truths and came to the conclusion that our soul, which is stamped with the image of God and therefore allied to Him and the Holy Angels, is of more value than all material things and all spiritual things and all created things in the Heavens above or on the earth beneath. We come now to consider the second truth : that we are in danger of losing our souls.

To lose them in the literal sense is, of course, impossible, for as we have already seen they are immortal and will

remain with us for ever. It would be in some way a happiness to the wicked if they could, in this sense, lose their souls, for it would free them from a miserable eternity. But that cannot be ! The loss of our souls of which we are speaking is the loss of God Who alone is the sufficient and satisfying object of our affection. " Thou hast made our souls for Thee," says St. Augustine, " and they are not at peace until they rest in Thee ! "

The loss of our souls is occasioned by sin, which separates us from God : but it is not final and irremediable until death overtakes us in this state of estrangement from God.

The danger of losing our souls, then, is the danger of falling into mortal sin and dying in that state.

Now the danger in sinning is inseparable from the possession of a soul. Free will is a high privilege—but while it fits us for the highest state possible, it renders sin also possible.

As soon as God created the Angels, a large part of them rebelled against Him, and were cast out of Heaven. As soon as God made man, our first parents fell, and were cast out of paradise. It is only a rational, moral being that can sin : because sin is the *voluntary transgression* of the Divine Law : and therefore cannot be committed by any creature but one who has a *will*, that is an *understanding* and the power *of choosing*.

Almost all the material acts of sin which men commit are committed by brutes also. For example, there is the rage of the tiger, the sly thieving of the fox, the treachery of the snake, the gluttony of the swine—and so of the rest. But there are no sins in these brutes, because they have mere blind instincts.

Man, however, has a reason, and a will ; and therefore, he is bound to control the instincts which he shares in common

with the brutes : and his failure to control these constitutes sin.

He has a soul which belongs to God, and of which God is the Sovereign : and his failure to control his passions is rebellion against God and pride. " Non serviam "—" I will not serve "—said Lucifer.—" I will not obey. I will not do your bidding—but I will do just as I like."

Moreover, as the possession of a soul renders sin possible, so the inclination or proneness to evil, which we inherit from the Fall, and the temptations of the world, render sin exceedingly probable.

I do not know a more striking example of this than the Fear of the Saints about their salvation. Their sense of the value of the soul, their deep knowledge of their own hearts and of the root of evil that was in them, the weakness of man without grace, and the uncertainty of correspondence with grace—all these things have kept men of the greatest sanctity, men who have wrought miracles, who have cast out devils, raised the dead to life, always anxious about their perseverance, always begging of God never to allow them to commit a mortal sin. St. Philip Neri, the Apostle of Rome, used to say : " Keep thy hand on me, O Lord, this day, lest I betray Thee."

But if these are reasons enough to make saints tremble, what reasons have not ordinary Christians to fear? A chain of evil habits, free and easy and unguarded intercourse with men, constant contact with the world—how fearfully do they increase the risk of losing our souls which all necessarily run in this world.

Just listen to the conversation of a dozen men taken at random in any town or city—or walk for half an hour through any town or city with eyes and ears open—and see if occasions of sin are not more frequent than one cares to utter. This is deeply felt by men in the world themselves

who want to save their souls. It almost makes them despair. They say it is almost impossible for them to save their souls in the world ! They say it is all in vain to try—that sin meets them at every step.

It is not, of course, true that sin is inevitable. If it were, it would not be sin. But it is true that the atmosphere of the world is fearfully surcharged with evil.

There is many a home of human beings, many a place of public resort, many a den of secret iniquity, many a house for drinking and gambling over which there is an inscription legible to the Angels, written in letters of fire " The gate of Hell ! "

There are many places where souls are sold daily and hourly—and, oh, at what a price ! Thirty pieces of silver was the price offered for the Redeemer of the World, but the soul is often sold for much less and for something still more miserable. It is true the Evil One does not carry on business openly—but the danger is only so much the greater. The occasions of sin are everywhere spread under our feet like traps and snares, and encircling us on all sides like nets.

But even this is not the worst.

The loss of God is not only *possible* because of our free will—and *probable* because of the corruption of the world —but in many cases it is already certain.

Men, on all sides, have lost God, and need only an unforeseen death to make certain the loss of their souls. Who can tell how many are living in a state of mortal sin, month by month, day by day, year by year ? They go on securely, smilingly, externally, all goes on smoothly. They are successful and seemingly happy. They have plans for many years to come. But a voice has spoken : " Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee."

How many died in mortal sin last year, and how many will die in mortal sin this year? Who can tell? It needs only a little thing—a false step on a slippery pavement, a railway accident, an attack of fever, a change in the weather, a fit of apoplexy—and they are launched into eternity without warning and without preparation—death sealing for everlasting perdition those it finds deprived of the grace of God.

One of the early Fathers of the Church, speaking of the great responsibility of the priesthood, discourses at length on the impossibility of a priest being saved without great exertion and watchfulness. And if it be difficult for a priest to save his soul, what must it be for that portion of the laity, who have the Faith and have unfortunately lapsed into the ranks of lax-Catholics.

No one can attain that for which they do not care and to which they give no thought. And so it is with the salvation of the soul. Who thinks about it? Who takes any pains about it? Who makes any sacrifice for it? The soul is more precious than anything else, and yet everything else is put before it.

It is trampled under foot in business, betrayed in friendships, choked by domestic cares, imprisoned in the degraded bodies of the licentious and, as it were, stupefied if not annihilated in those who drink. It is forgotten, neglected, outraged, despised, ignored. It is not so much sold as thrown away.

The body is cared for with supreme solicitude. Every pain and ache is relieved. Long journeys are undertaken to recover health lost or threatened. The most skilful physicians are sought with eagerness.

But the soul is allowed for weeks, months, and years to go on in a state of spiritual death. Confession, prayer, the Sacraments—means so easy—so infallible—and within

the reach of all—are neglected, on pretences the most frivolous—without reason—without care.

The prophet Jeremias cries out : " Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes, and I will weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." (Jer. lx, 1.)

IV.—THE NECESSITY OF SALVATION

WE have seen that the business of life for each and every-one of us is to work for the salvation of our soul: and the obligation of attending to this is the outcome of three truths: first, that our soul is our most precious possession: secondly, that we are in danger of losing it, and thirdly, that the loss of our soul is the greatest of all losses because it is irremediable. We have examined the two first of these truths, and we turn now to consider the third, that the loss of the soul is the greatest of all losses because it is irremediable.

I will not attempt to go into all that this truth contains. It is too great a subject for us at present. I will not dwell on all that is meant by the loss of our souls—but I will consider it simply as it is—the failure of reaching our end and destiny—entailing a loss, which is irreparable—and the result of that failure, the exclusion from Heaven and the confinement of Hell.

And to help us to realize this I will summon as a witness one who was the first to come short of his destiny—the devil. We do not know how long it was after the creation of the Angels that the devil sinned and fell. Like the rest of the Angels he was created in the state of sanctifying grace, endowed with the supernatural gifts of Faith and Hope and Charity, and furnished with all actual graces to enable him to live for the end he was created for. He was the brightest and the best gifted of all the heavenly spirits. He was perfectly happy in the enjoyment of all

heavenly raptures, rejoicing in the greatness of his endowments and filled with the hope of immortality. But there came a moment of darkness. He took pride in his own excellence. He rebelled against God his Creator, and said in his heart: "I will ascend into heaven: I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I shall be like the Most High." Thus he sinned: he was judged: he was cast out of Heaven: and he sank into Hell. There he is now, confined in chains and darkness. The tree has fallen and as it has fallen to the north or to the south, so must it lie for ever.

Behold, dear Brethren, in this—the result of living for any other purpose—but for the one thing necessary—the labouring for the salvation of our souls. Other mistakes may be rectified, but this, never.

A loss in business may be made good by greater exertions and prudence, a broken-down constitution may be repaired by medical skill and careful nursing. A lost reputation may be recovered by rectitude and consistency in well doing—earthly sorrow may be healed by time and distraction—sin may be rooted out by penance. But the loss of the soul is an evil, complete and irreparable, and brings with it an undying remorse.

In the book of Job we read: "A tree hath hope. If it be cut down, it groweth green again, and the boughs thereof sprout. If its root be old in the earth, and its stock be dead in the dust, at the scent of water, it shall spring and bring forth leaves as when it was first planted."

But man—when he shall be dead and stripped and consumed, where shall he be? The cry which the first lost soul uttered when he made the terrible discovery that he was really lost is still ringing in the abode of the damned, and the keenness of his misery is still unabated. Ages shall go on, the last day shall come, and an eternity shall

follow it: and that cry of despair will be as thrilling—and that anguish as new and irremediable as ever.

The soul's real end and destiny is Heaven. If it fails to reach this end, it makes its way to another place. It is the home of those who have had their trial, and lost their cause, and with it have lost God for ever.

Here is grace which has not borne fruit, or whose fruits have rotted upon the tree. Here are Sacraments which have come to nought. The cross has been a failure, and God's intentions have been successfully resisted and direfully overthrown.

Our Lord once showed a holy Carmelite nun the loss of a soul, and several times in a vision compelled her to study the separate tortures of that place and seeing her in tears, Our Lord said: "Why weepest thou?" she replied: "Lord, for the damnation of that soul, and the manner in which it has been damned." Our Lord replied: "Daughter, it hath chosen to damn itself. I have given it many helps of grace that it might be saved: but it would not profit by them."

Horrid as that place is, it is well for our own sakes sometimes to think of it. As truly as the land of France lies across the Channel, so truly is there such a place as hell, all alive this hour with the multitudinous life of those who have failed to reach their end. Except the Blessed in Heaven, none live so keen or conscious a life as those millions of ruined souls. It is wise for us to impress upon ourselves that it is not impossible that we may go there too. When we pass along the streets, we must often see those who will dwell there for ever!

There are some there now who were not there an hour ago! There are some now in the green fields, or in busy towns, or comfortable beds, or on the sunshiny seas—who in another hour perhaps will have gone there! This

is a dreadfully real truth ! Oh, dear Brethren, how grateful should we be to God that we are here—we are free—but we ought to have been—there—and slaves for ever !

Now, dear Brethren, I have laid the consideration of this all-important matter before you : and what does your reason, your conscience, your self-interest say ? You would not be listless and indifferent if I were to speak to you of your property, your health, your reputation : but now I speak to you of your souls—your precious, immortal souls—your own, your greatest good—a good that you are in danger of losing—the good whose loss is overwhelming and irretrievable. They are in your hands for life or for death.

There was once a heathen soothsayer who was famous in his skill in discovering hidden things, and a person once came with a living bird in his hand and asked the seer to tell whether it was living or dead. The inquirer intended to crush the bird with his hand if the wise man should say it was living, and to let it fly if he should say it was dead, and thus, in either case, to put the magician to shame. But the soothsayer suspected the design and replied : " The bird is in your hand, to kill it or let it live."

So, dear Brethren, I say to you. Your souls are in your hands, to kill them or let them live. You can crush them in your grasp and smother their convictions, or you can open your hand and let them fly forth in freedom and gladness. Oh, have pity on your souls ! Your souls are yours. No one will be the loser by the loss of your souls, but yourselves. God will not be the less happy if you are damned : the Saints will not lose any of their happiness if you fail in your salvation : the Angels will be as light and blissful : the earth will go on just the same as when you were on it. Only *you*—you yourselves will feel it—and you will feel it hopelessly.

One of the courtiers of Francis I of France when he was dying said: "Oh, how many reams of paper have I written in the service of my monarch! Oh, that I had only spent one quarter of an hour in the service of my soul!" And Cardinal Wolsey, when he fell from the favour of Henry VIII, exclaimed: "Had I but served my God with half the zeal I have served my King, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs."

Once more, dear Brethren, I beg you to take pity on your souls. If you have never before seriously taken to heart your eternal interest, at least do so now. Behold now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. Make good use of this Lent. Set aside the thought of other things, and give your thoughts to this alone. Take the opportunity this Lent of making your peace with God and saving your soul.

Is there anything that keeps you back? See what it is, and weigh it in the scales with your immortal soul. Is Confession difficult? A Confession before the whole world will be more so. Is it hard to lose a little gain? It will be more so to lose your soul. Is it hard to break some tie of longstanding? It will be harder to break every tie and live in eternal desolation. Is it hard to bear the remarks of bad companions? It will be harder to bear the taunts and jeers of the devil and his angels.

No one loves you more and pities you more than the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He stands before you with outstretched arms to welcome you, to embrace you—and brimming over with the tenderness of divine compassion, says to you: "Come to me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Negligent Christians

"*He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth.*" (Luke xi, 23.)

There are many seeds planted in the ground that never come up. There is a great deal of fruit on the trees that never comes to ripeness. So, among Christians, there is a great deal of good that always remains incomplete and insufficient. Who of us has not seen such?—people who have some faith, some religion, but they bring no fruit to perfection.

Now what is the blight that destroys all their goodness? It is sloth, negligence, and tepidity. Religion certainly influences, but it does not control them. They do not reject it—but they do not obey it—at least consistently and in principle. They are languid Christians. They are not the worst—but they are not good. They seek with eagerness the pleasures of the world, and make no conscience of avoiding smaller sins, even when wilful and deliberate. They neglect the means of grace, prayer, sermons and Sacraments with but little scruple—or approach them carelessly. They allow themselves a close familiarity with evil—just enough to avoid sin, and they do not resist temptation as promptly as they should. So they go through life, conscious that they are living an unsatisfactory life, but making no vigorous efforts to better it.

Now this kind of negligence displeases God because it prevents our fulfilling the end for which we were created. God made us for Himself and for His glory: and consequently our end must be to love and serve Him—and to do this with perfection and alacrity. God is worthy of something better than a reluctant and imperfect service.

Suppose a king were to appoint a day to receive the homage of his subjects, and while he was holding his court, and one after another was coming forward to bend the knee and kiss his hand—someone—carelessly dressed and with slovenly gait—should approach and offer a heedless reverence. Such a thing would be taken not only as an offence, but an act of contempt.

Now God is our King: and He holds His court every morning and invites all creation to renew its homage. The sun, the rain, the mist, the dew, the frost, the snow, the mountains and hills and the grassy plains all worship Him by doing his will. The birds sing His praises—and the waters move and sparkle. Good and humble men rise from their beds to enter on their daily course of duty and prayer. The Spirits of the Just in Heaven with the ten thousand times ten thousand Angels bow down before the Throne of Him that lives for ever.

And while this great and universal Act of Praise is being offered to the great Creator—there comes in the negligent Christian—cold, distracted, and unprepared to take his part. He does not kneel down to pray. He goes to his work without a blessing. He does not think of God—and what wonder then that in His very presence he says and does unseemly things. Is he not a blot upon the picture?

In the Old Testament, God complained of the Jewish priests because they brought to Him the halt and the blind and the sick for sacrifice. He says: "Offer it now

to thy prince, will *he* be pleased with it ? or will he regard thy face ? " (Mal. i, 8.) So, in like manner, God complains of the negligent Christian : for he brings to Him a " lame sacrifice "—that is—his feet stumble so often in the way of justice : and a " blind," " sick " sacrifice—that is, his heart so fond of the world and so weak in the love of God.

Fervour in our duties is due to God as our Creator, and it is due to Christ as our Redeemer. St. Paul says : " The love of Christ urges us. Christ died for all, that they also that live may not now live to themselves but to Him who died for them."

His idea was that the love of Christ was a debt that could never be paid—that it was a claim on us that pressed continually, and was never satisfied. And surely it is so. Who is Christ ?—the Son of God, the Splendour of His Father's glory and the Image of His Substance. And who are we ? Lost sinners. And for us He became man and did not refuse to bear our infirmities and to carry our sorrows. He gave His body to the smiters, and turned not away from those that rebuked Him and spat upon Him. He gave His blood a ransom for many—and laid down His life for sin. Was there ever love like this ?

While gratitude lives among men—what return shall be given to Christ by those He has redeemed ? Is the return we are making such as He deserves ? Was it for this that He died—that we should not commit *quite so many* mortal sins ? Was it for this that He hung upon the Cross, that *only now and then* we should omit some important duty. Was it for this that He sweat those great drops of blood that we should live a slothful, irreligious life ?

Mortal Sin

We have seen that God created us for Himself, and

imposed upon every one of us the duty of attending to the main business of life—the salvation of our immortal soul. We have seen the result of not labouring for our end and destiny—namely, exclusion from God and confinement in Hell for ever. We have seen that Hell is no mere pious exaggeration—not an imaginary or fanciful locality—but a place in reality whither souls are hastening the whole livelong day.

Now, what is it actually that sends them there? Mortal sin. And what is mortal sin? Mortal sin is a grievous offence against God. And why is it called Mortal? Because it kills the soul and deserves Hell.

Understand me, dear Brethren, I am not speaking of sin in general. Every transgression of God's law is not mortal. There are some sins men commit which are forbidden, but by which they do not surrender the friendship of God—some sins in which the matter is very small—some sins which come from ignorance or frailty, but not from malice. God, although displeased with them, does not regard them as grievous. He punishes them, but is not mortally offended, and consequently does not completely withdraw His favour. If He did, who could be saved?

But every sin whereby the soul chooses between the friendship of God and the gratification of unlawful passion—in which, with full deliberation and in defiance of any grave precept of God or Holy Church the soul obeys corrupt nature—every such sin is mortal, i.e., it grievously offends God and strips the soul of Divine Grace.

Mortal sin is an insult to God—to Almighty God. Remember how He delivered His Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The mountain trembled with earthquakes, and breathed forth flames and smoke—the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled around its head. The people

fell back affrighted and terrified. And what was the cause of these convulsions of nature, and this term of the people? God was speaking! He spoke and the earth trembled! And it is His words then spoken that the sinner defies!

Open the heavens and see the Angels—thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand are prostrate before Him. See all the Saints adoring Him —the Immaculate, the sinless Blessed Virgin Mother of God trembles before His greatness and awful purity. And you dare to insult Him? And what are you? A creature, a dependent, a slave! What would a master do if his slave should strike him?—And you, a servant, a slave, a mere nothing, have not hesitated to raise your hand against Almighty God!

What has He not done for you? He takes care of you and gives you all you have. It is He who warms you by the sun, refreshes you by the air, gladdens and nourishes you with the green fields and golden harvests. It is He who made you a Catholic—gave you your parents, friends and every blessing. He who brought you through the dangerous age of childhood, He who led you up to manhood, who redeemed you by His Bloodsheddings to you in the Holy Sacraments—and gave you the hope of Heaven beyond this life—and you have grieved and hated Him! And is this gratitude?

See Jesus Christ before the Jews. He spent His life doing them good. He laboured for them and is about to die for them. And now they spit upon Him, they strike Him, they crown Him with thorns, and bow the knee in mockery before Him.

To every sinner I can say—" Thou art the Jew that did this. By mortal sin thou hast made Him an object of scorn! Thou hast spit upon Him and stabbed Him to

the heart ! " If God could die or cease to be, mortal sin would kill Him ! Mortal sin aims a blow at the life of our best benefactor—at the life of God—and this is what passes in the world as a light matter—a matter of no account !

And now—to make this matter personal and practical —as we are *preparing for our Easter duties*—let us turn our eyes upon ourselves and make a rapid survey of *the life we have lived and the sins we have committed.*

If I know that my sins have been confessed, absolved and forgiven, I may thank God for ever. But a survey of them will help to retrieve my contrition, and to renew my esteem of God's wonderful love and mercy to me. So I now rapidly recall the years, the months, the days and the hours of my life which some day will be exposed for my judgment.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy great Mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out mine iniquities !

(1) *The Sins of my Childhood.* Can I remember my first sin ? St. Augustine thus addresses himself : " Since the first dawn of reason, of what have I thought ? To whom did I give the first movements of my heart ? What use did I make of the first movements of my liberty ? Alas, Lord, I seek in vain, any time, any place, which has seen me without iniquity, when I was still young, I was already a sinner."

(2) *The Sins of Youth.* Where shall I not find memories of sin ? The persons I have associated with ! The places where I have been ! The conversations I have held. I find vestiges of sin everywhere ! In my home—my Father's house—in the schools where I went for my education. The scenes of

my games, amusements, and recreations. How have I conducted myself—in thought, word, and deed ?

(3) *Sins of riper Age.* When I became more capable of sinning—during the years which succeeded those of early youth. Where was the day that had not its sin ? Examine the companions you had—the employments in which you were occupied. What do they recall but frequent falls ?. . . . Go through the Ten Commandments. Is there one of them you have not transgressed ? Examine past temptations. How few did you resist ? In how many did you fail ?

Examine all your faculties of soul and body. Are they not all guilty ? Memory—Understanding—Will ! Examine all your senses—sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Which of them has not served as an instrument of sin ?

Take the seven deadly sins : Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth, and try yourself by them in thought, word, and deed.

I need say no more. All this makes a sad and sorry sight. What a piercing picture it all is ! Everybody else seems so good, except ourselves—and we, so intolerably hateful, so repulsive, such a burden to ourselves. And if it is so plain to our dull sight, what must it be to the clear penetration of the All Holy God ? Well may we say with St. Peter : " Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

What remains for me but to betake myself to the Cross whereon God is dying in torments to save me from Hell—And I marvel why He has singled me out for so much mercy, patience, and love. I think what He might have done to me a thousand times over, in all justice, leaving me to the natural consequences of my madness and folly.

And I look up to His bleeding Brow and wounded Hands and Feet and pierced Heart, and I see what He has done instead. And then, at His Feet with Mary Magdalene and in the presence of His Blessed Mother, weeping for my sins, I ask myself—what have I done for Christ in the past? or rather—what have I not done against Him? What am I doing now for Christ? And—what am I going to do for Him in the future?

Effects of Mortal Sin

In our last consideration we studied the iniquity of mortal sin which grievously offends Almighty God because it is a transgression of His Divine Law. And we looked into our own lives and made a survey of our own sins—the sins of childhood—the sins of youth—and the sins of riper age—till the present time. It was a humiliation to make this despicable review. We betook ourselves to the Feet of Jesus crucified, expressed our sorrow and implored His pardon—and firmly resolved to put an end to sin and to serve Him better in future.

We will now consider the effects of mortal sin. Its direct effect is to kill the soul. There is a twofold life of the soul. One is a natural life—and this it can never lose—not even in Hell, for it can never cease to be—and the other is the life of grace.

You know, dear Brethren, that in the heart of a good Christian there dwells a wonderful quality—the gift of the Holy Ghost—which we call grace. It is given first in Baptism, and resides habitually in the soul unless it is lost by mortal sin. It renders the soul acceptable to God, capable of pleasing Him, and of meriting Heaven. It ennobles, beautifies, elevates, strengthens, and enlightens the soul in which it dwells. In fact—it is the life of the

soul. This grace abides in the soul of every faithful Christian, the little child, the virtuous young man and young woman, the old man and the matron, the rich and the poor, everyone who possesses this grace is in the state of friendship with God. He may be poor and destitute, he may be sick and weak in body, he may be as disgusting as Lazarus—but if his soul is endowed with this gift of grace, he is the friend of God.

But the moment that one commits a mortal sin—the moment that a baptized Christian turns away from God to the creature—that moment his soul is stripped of divine grace. The moment a mortal sin is committed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, that robe of grace falls from the soul and leaves it in its deformity and weakness.

God cannot remain united to the soul which has cast Him off by an act of complete and formal rebellion. Oh, no ! God bears much with us—He retains His friendship for us as long as He can—He restrains His displeasure when we are weak and irresolute and tired in His service. But once make a full choice between God and the creature—and God's friendship is lost ! You cannot reject it and retain it at the same time. God sees things exactly as they are : as you act towards Him, so He will act towards you.

How can I describe the change that takes place at that moment ? It resembles the degradation of a priest. If a priest commits certain great crimes, the Church prescribes that he be solemnly degraded from the priesthood, and nothing is more dreadful than the ceremonial. He stands before the Bishop clad in his sacred vestments, with alb and cincture, and maniple and stole, and with the chalice in which he used to consecrate the Blood of the Lord in his hands. The sentence of degradation is pronounced and the chalice is taken out of his hands. He shall offer the

Sacrifice of the Lord's Body no more. The chasuble is taken off his back. The stole is seized from off his neck—for he has lost the stole or emblem of happy immortality. The white alb is torn from him, for he has lost the beauty of innocence—and last of all his hands, on which at his ordination the holy oil was poured, are scraped—for he has lost the unction of the Holy Ghost.

So it is in the soul the moment one commits a mortal sin. When in a state of grace—nothing is more beautiful in God's sight. He dwells in it—makes it His home. But the moment mortal sin is committed—and God departs—then the degradation of the soul takes place. The devil tears away the garment of justice, the splendour of beauty, the whiteness of innocence, the robe of immortality which makes it a companion of angels and a friend of God. All—all are gone !—and the poor soul is left in abject wretchedness !

Now, do not think, dear Brethren, that this horrible process is of rare occurrence. No. It takes place in every case of mortal sin. What wonder then that the Prophet cries out : " Know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord, thy God."

. . . . .

But I have not as yet described the full effects of mortal sin. It immediately makes us liable to the eternal punishments of Hell. That is what Hell is made for. It is the prison for mortal sin. Each one of us is a candidate for Heaven or Hell at this moment. Hell is not something arbitrarily assigned to us. We dig our own Hell for ourselves. When we first commit a mortal sin, we open Hell under our feet—and every time we commit a fresh mortal sin, we deepen that Hell. Some die in the very act of sin. The fallen angels sank into Hell the instant they sinned. If God dealt so with the angels—there is nothing unjust

in cutting off the days of a sinner at the time of his sin. He has made His choice. Just as the Jews chose Barabbas to Christ—so the sinner insults Almighty God by choosing sin in preference to God—and if death overtakes him before he returns to God by penance he is lost for ever.

Go down into the dungeons of Hell and ask Dives, ask Judas, ask the fallen angels, ask each one who in that dark abode is dragging out a long eternity—ask them what brought them there—and they will tell you, mortal sin. It is mortal sin that kindles the flame, that feeds the fire, that makes them burn for ever. Listen to the lost souls crying out like the Prophet, " It is an evil and a bitter thing to have left the Lord, thy God."

Such, dear Brethren, is mortal sin—it does not require many mortal sins to lose God's grace and incur damnation. One is enough—one deliberate rebellion against God and His Holy Law—and the result is everlasting misery.

LOETARE SUNDAY

"Our Lord's Innocence"

(The Passion)

We are now more than half way through the Season of Lent, and we are hastening towards Passiontide. We have spent several weeks in the consideration of our treatment of the good God; and having sufficiently investigated the iniquity of our sins to fill us with shame and confusion and to express our sorrow for the offences we have committed against Our Sovereign Lord and God—we now commence to consider, so far as time will allow, what God has done for us.

And our thoughts must be directed not towards the general blessings and favours—material and spiritual—which have ever been and are still poured out in abundance upon us by His ever-open Hand—"filling with blessing every living creature"—but especially towards that work of Redemption wrought for us by the Only Begotten Son of God in His Most Sacred Passion.

And by way of preparation for the contemplation of the untold pain Jesus Christ endured for us in His Passion, I will speak this evening of one view only—out of the manifold views we might take of the Passion—and which are enough to distract the fixed contemplation of an angel. We might easily dwell upon the awful profane wickedness of the Passion, or the diabolical inspiration of it. We

might analyse its crowded and multiform cruelty and barbarity. We might astonish ourselves recalling the humiliations of the Passion—bearing in mind all the time the venerable glory of His everlasting Divinity, and the extreme sweetness of His outward demeanour. But there is one view—which we should specially impress upon ourselves at the outset—a view which I venture to think was foremost in Our Lady's mind—and that is His Innocence. Take any single pain or affront—from the smallest to the greatest He endured—and couple with it the fact of His incomparable innocence—and you will conclude that His innocence is the most heartbreaking thing about the Passion.

We can hardly think of Innocence suffering at all without feeling of astonishment, if not of horror. No one can look upon a little child suffering without pity and dismay —or a baby in its agony. But innocence treated as guilt occasions more horror still—and yet we know, dear Brethren, it was one of the artifices of His Love for us to clothe the innocent with guilt in His Passion. And it was not merely innocence clothed with guilt, but enveloped in rudest, maddest violence—innocence tortured with cruelty—innocence the gentlest that could be suffering the peculiar agony of injustice.

He was first brought to Annas, the High Priest of that year, who passed Him on to his son-in-law Caiphas, to try Him on the point of doctrine and who condemned Him for blasphemy. Having no power to deliver Him up to death, they hurried Him to the prætorium or judgment hall of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. Pilate could not but have heard of Our Lord : and like a prudent man, would reflect on the sudden charge against Him : and seeing His modesty and gentleness, could not help seeing that He had been delivered up by the envy and

malice of the priests. Pagan as he was, he discerned His innocence and inquired: "What evil hath He done?" showing clearly his doubt or disbelief in the charges of the priests.

The Face of Jesus was piteous then, yet not wholly disfigured: and on that countenance and in every feature of it was clearly portrayed the mark of innocence. What wonder then that Pilate should inquire a second time: "What evil hath He done?"

His Innocence was as clear to the Jews as to Pilate and yet they chose "Barabbas!" I was going to say that this was a wickedness without name—but we had best say little about it—for alas! our choices have been the worst features of our life. How many Barabbases have we preferred to Jesus Christ?

And why does He not speak? One word, one tone, one sound, would have made His beauty irresistible. It would have calmed that raging sea of hatred and cowed the multitude into adoring love. There were mothers in the crowd: yet no one saw what to Mary was so infinitely beautiful.

Still for our sakes it was surely better He did not speak lest He should clear Himself—and then what should we do?

It is almost a relief to us—considering the necessity of our Salvation to hear that discordant cry—"Away with Him. Let Him be crucified!"

A third time Pilate said: "What evil hath He done?" And then, as if there could be no question of His condemnation—"I find no cause in Him." Pilate could not believe the Jews would still persist—for, to him, the very face of Jesus was *such* conviction of His Innocence.

But for our own sakes again—would we not like to have told Pilate he was wrong with his finding no cause in Him.

All the sins of the world are upon Him—is not that *guilt*? He alone can expiate them—and is not that *cause*? and cause of death also—for only by death can He expiate them. For a moment there is hesitation and uncertainty and we wonder whether Pilate will give way against his own conviction of His innocence. But they were instant with loud voices requiring that He might be crucified. And their voices prevailed. Pilate shows, however, that he is smitten and has fallen in love with innocence—and, taking water, he washes his hands, saying: "I am innocent," and nevertheless—putting the blame upon the Jews—he gave sentence that it should be as they required. Oh, yes—and as we require: for if there is a necessity on earth, it is our salvation through the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Dear Brethren, there have been sacred moments in our lives when the sufferings of Our Blessed Lord have been vividly presented to us, and when, in the strength of the grace that was given us, we felt that the crime of the Jews was so heinous, and the innocence of Jesus made so strong an appeal to us that we felt we could do anything—even sacrifice our very lives to save Him.

He will indeed love us for cherishing such a wish. He will some day compensate us for our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for Him. But Jesus has made it a greater love in us to *let ourselves be saved by Him* than that we should prevent the sufferings of the Passion and save Him from the Cross.

Pray, dear Brethren, that your hearts may be replenished with this greater love, putting no obstacles in the way of grace, but *allowing* yourselves to be saved by the plenteous Redemption of our Innocent Lord and Saviour—Jesus Christ.

PASSION SUNDAY

It would be incongruous on Passion Sunday to give our thoughts to the consideration of any subject but the Passion of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is a theme as ancient as Christianity itself. It is a tragedy we are all familiar with, and from infancy we have heard the story of the Cross over and over again. We heard others speaking of it, and felt we were being led step by step from the Garden of Olives to Calvary. We have seen paintings of the God-man bathed in blood and bruised by the cruelties of His enemies. But alas ! there have been times when the lessson was forgotten, and before long our conscience has arisen as an accuser, saying, you have again crucified your Lord and Saviour. And so the conclusion forces itself upon us that the story of the Cross cannot be too often told.

(The difficulty is how best to tell it. For such a theme words are too feeble ; and language is beggared and silenced. The Crucifix itself is the most touching of all sermons on the Passion of Our Lord. The Crucifix alone is the most eloquent of all preachers. It is a revelation of all He suffered for us, a compendium while it represents the consummation of the Passion.)

With the thought of the guilt and the multitude of our sins before us, the memory of them being revived by our previous reflections—we might well put the question : " Can God love such a creature as I am ? " It may seem incredible, but it is in reality so. Not only God *can* love

us, but He has given proof in His Sacred Passion that He *does* love us—giving the highest proof of love for us, by suffering and dying for us that we might have life eternal. He has taken upon Himself to be the universal Victim for human nature—a victim unto death: and He would be a poor representative of human nature, if there was any grief incident to a human soul of which He did not bear the brunt.

Let us go to the Garden of Gethsemane, and recall what happened there on the night before His Crucifixion.

There we find the Son of God with every limb of His beautiful body from head to foot filled with more than human sensitiveness—every nerve surcharged with delicate feeling ready to be bared for the sharp instruments of God's awful justice. Yet, at the moment, when all is ready—before an enemy has come in sight, or a hand raised against Him, the mighty Victim falters and trembles. As the shades of evening close around Him, by the light of the Paschal moon, His disciples gaze in wonder upon pallid features and a sinking frame: and they listen in astonishment to that Voice which had often awed multitudes into silence, now sunk to gentlest accents and proclaiming that His soul was sorrowful even unto death.

He moves forward among the silent olive trees, and then falls down with His forehead pressed to the very earth like a man with a burden on him heavier than he can bear. The Victim, with the sins of a whole world upon Him, lies crushed beneath the weight. There was no need of the help of demons to paint upon His imagination scenes of guilt and horror. He had but to turn His inward eye upon what He knew of all the sin that had been and was then, and was to be till doomsday—and the knowledge of the dread reality was enough to break His loving Heart.

But another tempest comes across His soul. His face

grows paler still, and His limbs tremble. Like an army from Hell there arises the thought of all the suffering His Passion would involve. You know, dear Brethren, that as long as a brave man can look unappalled on torture and death, he can defy his enemies. Even disgrace is powerless over the man who can bear up under it. But when once he is unmanned by fear, he bids farewell at once to dignity and honour.

Visions of His awful Passion come crowding on His soul and scare Him with wild affright.

Is He to give His body to His enemies to do their very worst upon—when a single word would bring millions of angels to His side !

The dreadful judgment against Him—the dark visages of His enemies and the sentence of death—all rise before Him. He foresees the blows and spittings on His face, and He shrinks with repugnance and disgust—as a modest maiden shrinks from an insulting crowd.

Then another scene appears. In shame and nakedness He stands tied to a pillar, while His virgin flesh is torn to strips by the awful scourge.

Then he sees a mighty crowd of His own people deliberating on His fate—as He stands before them with a crown of thorns about His matted hair tearing His temples, while the blood is filling up His hollow eyes and pouring down His cheeks. And He sees the crowd swaying to and fro with contending passion, till looks of savage hate converge upon Him—and their wild cry : " Crucify Him, Crucify Him ! " rings in His ears.

He turns in horror from the scene—but the demons press upon Him still : " Think not to die yet," they cry, " the worst is yet to come."

He sees that the poor suffering Manhood must be crushed to earth by the weight of the Cross, and die a thousand

deaths—while the God-head keeps it still alive to suffer.

And worse than all—His Mother's eyes are there, piercing His breaking heart with her speechless agony, for she too, must suffer with Him, and not a blow can reach His soul, but through her virgin bosom: and she must hear the nails crash through his hands and feet and see the tortured frame stretched living on the framework of the Cross.

And all this is only a portion—or the prelude of what constituted His agony in the garden. No scourge has touched His flesh—no thorn has pierced His brow—or nail His hands and feet—and yet—the Sacred Heart sends out its Precious Blood. " And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground." The silent stream wells forth to show how with spontaneous love, the Heart of Jesus longs to die for man.

Who will dare now complain how hard it is for flesh and blood to fight against itself and tread the narrow, weary path to Heaven, since Jesus allowed His own flesh to shrink, and by His shrinking canonized the very weakness of the human breast, and framed the matter of a sacrifice out of the varying moods of our feelings.

Blessed and praised for evermore be Jesus—because after His example, even we may dare to offer to God the very weariness of mortal life, discouragements and repugnances to good—the flagging spirit and the despondent mind. And when the trial is too sore for our poor weary hearts, and we all but feel inclined to give up the very wish for saintliness, as though it were a dream, then what a comfort it is to turn to Jesus and implore Him, by the Agony of His Passion, by His fear and trembling, by His Cross and dereliction—to help us in our utmost need, to drag the fainting spirit on—till we consummate our sacrifice and go to rest with Him in Paradise.

GOOD FRIDAY

On this sacred day the Church calls all her children to Calvary; and by the majesty and tender pathos of her liturgy in the Mass of the Presanctified makes us almost witness again the Crucifixion of our Blessed Saviour. Our sight is arrested by the uplifted cross; and the thrice repeated cry: "Ecce lignum crucis" rivets our whole heart and soul and mind and strength on Jesus Crucified. We adore Him on bended knees, and we kiss His wounded Feet. They are dead now, dead to fatigue and dead to torture, and dead, alas! to our lips that quiver as we kiss them with pity and contrition. The hastened Communion in the mutilated Mass being ended we depart, leaving the sanctuary as at no other time, so lone, so desolate, leaving our Blessed Lord hanging dead upon His Cross —and—unburied.

With an aching void in our hearts, and oppressed by the appalling loneliness and emptiness of His resting-place, we have now returned to recall something of Calvary's scene of suffering and sorrow and to "look on Him whom we have pierced."

It was about the third hour (9 o'clock) when Jesus set out on the way to Calvary; and it was towards the sixth hour (12 o'clock) that He reached the place of His Passion. For long hours the previous night, His Sacred Flesh had been furrowed to the bone with the scourging. And now those wounds, grown cold in the chill of the night, were opened once more, when from His Sacred Body they rudely

dragged His garments all clotted with dried blood and cleaving to His wounds.

His head was still encircled with the crown of thorns with which He had been twice crowned: for it had been beaten upon his head in the first instance, then torn from it again in the stripping, and once more forced upon His brows.

They left Him thus sitting in the cold withering morning wind; and they began to prepare the crosses for the Crucifixion. He sat patiently waiting in His wounds upon the top of that hill; and, at last, when the Cross was ready, He was nailed upon it.

The Cross was lifted up in the sight of men; and the Son of God was seen stripped and stretched upon it, hanging by the weight of His whole body upon the nails, driven through His hands and feet.

They then began to crucify the thieves that were with Him. And some time passed while He was all alone in His agony. They were so busy plying the hammer and the nails in the cruel work of crucifixion; and the people who stood by were so fixed upon the scene of horror, that no one perceived that the sky was growing sickly, that the morning became yellow, that a mist was covering the sun, and that shadows like the shadows of the evening were falling upon the earth. These things they did not perceive till of a sudden the thick darkness became palpable. Then they became conscious of it in a moment. They felt it to be a portent and a sign of the anger of God! People began to stream away from the top of the mount and from that sight of horror, struck with fear, but not with repentance—scared by the horror of that supernatural darkness.

And if there was fear on Calvary, what was there in Jerusalem? If the birds became silent and the beasts

of the field herded together as in some unwonted terror, what was the fear that fell upon men ?

What was the terror that fell upon the multitude who had cried out : " His Blood be upon us and upon our children ! "

Along the streets of Jerusalem men could not find their way. They encountered one another in the darkness, they fell flat on the earth for fear, or sat on doorsteps not knowing where to find their homes.

And if there was fear in the streets of Jerusalem, what was there in the houses of Annas and of Caiphas, and of Pilate ?

The darkness was also upon the Temple and in the courts of the Temple, and in the Holy of Holies, and the priests could not see to accomplish the sacrifice. The sacrifice was interrupted, and they could not see each other's face. Such was the darkness, dear Brethren, which covered all the earth ; and, in the midst of it, Jesus spoke His seven last words, then bowing His Sacred Head —He died.

Jesus was nailed to the Cross at noon, and at 3 o'clock He gave up the ghost.

Then the darkness began to disperse and gradually the light returned. The white roofs of the city became visible again. And, as all things became clearer, people at a distance could see disclosed against the darkness the bloodless body of the Son of God, indescribably venerable in the excess of its disfigurements, hanging on the Cross. And standing beneath the Cross, now saturated with the Precious Blood, they could see Maria Desolata, the broken-hearted Mother—the Mother of God, and now also the Mother of Men. Standing at one side is the virgin Apostle, St. John, great, holy and privileged, whose beauty of soul had taken captive the human Heart of His Creator.

Kneeling in tears at the foot of the Cross is the glorious Magdalen, the brightest trophy of God's love, a very picture of the uttermost forlornness of human sorrow, transfigured by the radiance of adoration into more than angelic beauty.

" O Magdalen ! Thou art there to tell how the hopes of all men may be so bold as to take refuge upon Calvary ! "

This, dear Brethren, is the Passion, the Passion consummated. Hell is the result of forgetting this and Heaven is the result of remembering it : and Saints are mortals like ourselves, but who have made themselves striking likenesses of Jesus Christ Crucified.

Of those who stand beneath the Cross, there is one who claims our exclusive regard when we are contemplating the great sin of the world and the Son of God is slain by sinful men. For all the while the poor Mother of the Victim has been bearing her part in the gigantic sacrifice which has been accomplished : and she stands there now, quivering from head to foot in the transfixion of her soul, meriting her title Queen of Martyrs, and appealing for our compassion in those touching words : " O all ye who pass by the way, attend and see if there be sorrow like to my sorrow."

As the cataracts of the deep contributed to the Deluge, and hastened on the ruin which was being wrought by the floods of heaven, so the great sea of Mary's sorrows was increased by the fountains of love and grief which broke forth within her heart under the pressure and anguish of what her eyes beheld of the Passion of her Son. And as it is impossible for us to estimate the extremity of her affliction, so no one would dare to say how many times the sword pierced her immaculate heart while she stood on Calvary. Still we may venture to indicate seven sword

thrusts which must have made deep wounds that God alone could heal.

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The first of the seven swords was her pain and disappointment that she might not die with Jesus. When the Macchabee brothers were martyred, Holy Scripture says : " Lastly was slain also the Mother." She was a happy Mother, in this more blessed than the blessed amongst women, for she died with her children. But Mary might not die, neither for her Son, nor with her Son. Death would bear Him, who was her life, away, and inflict upon her the pang of parting ; that, separated at last and so cruelly, she should be left to linger on in exile and bereavement.

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Another sword was that her presence during His Passion, though a consolation to her dying Son, in fact increased His pain. Extreme was the distress of our Blessed Lord that so much which was inhuman and unseemly in His manner of death should be inflicted in the presence and sight of His Mother. And Mary had no remedy for this inevitable suffering, of which she herself was the innocent and sorrowful cause.

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A third sword was her feeling that she was helpless, absolutely, hopelessly unable to prevent, diminish, or alleviate a single pain or suffering that He was enduring.

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Another sword was the deadly anguish which her eyesight and other senses made exquisitely sensitive by sympathy caused her to feel through her whole being. But for a miracle, her soul's crucifixion would have manifested itself in her mortal frame. Every lash, every thorn, every blow would have appeared on that living corpse,

standing beneath the Cross saturated with the sufferings of her crucified Son.

It is said that the lightning flash, striking a tree and one beneath, will transfer to the body of the dead an exact pattern and copy of the leaves and branches.

So does the fire of divine love reproduce in those who shelter in the shadow of Jesus a true copy of the Tree of Life and its Fruit. Even an image or a crucifix often embraced and handled will work such wonders when hearts are true and tender. Many Saints could not remain long looking at a Crucifix without tears in torrents.

In St. Francis of Assisi on Mount Alvernus you have a complete example of this. He saw in the sky a living seraph of dazzling light, bearing the five wounds and the likeness of Jesus crucified. And the sight melted Him, and the wounds pierced him as with so many darts of fire, and he became a living image of Jesus Crucified, with the nails in his hands and feet and the wound in his side. If such effects are produced by visions in those who love Our Lord, what was the result of the reality to her who stood beneath the Cross and watched His Sweet Life ebb away ?

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The fifth sword was the sacrilegious crime of deicide, the appalling certainty that God Himself, in His human nature, was being put to death, that the Author of Life was being slain. She could not forget the Song of the Angels at His Birth ; and here around her were men and devils howling and shrieking blasphemies while they killed Him. A fearful sword indeed to pierce one full of grace !

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A peculiar and special horror attaches to the sixth sword. Its wound was that Mary should remain at her post on

Calvary, watching and guarding the Body of the Lord, and yet be unable to prevent the thrust of the spear, that dastardly outrage on the lifeless body of Jesus.

Let men say what they will, to have perpetrated this wanton, savage deed in the presence of the Mother was one of the worst infamies of Calvary.

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And the seventh of these swords? What was it but that in spite of all these bloodsheddings of the Son of God, sin should still continue.

She foresaw in that hour, as He foresaw the multitude of souls that notwithstanding all His sufferings would never be saved, the redeemed souls who shall go down alive into Hell—souls in multitudes who should never hear His name and yet would live sinning against Him—souls in multitudes still worse, who, having heard His name, would still sin against Him—souls on whom He had poured out the grace of His Holy Spirit, and who enjoyed the opportunities of His saving Sacraments and who nevertheless would fritter away their chances and perish impenitent, and go down like the leaves in autumn, countless in their multitude, into eternal death.

Oh! infamy worse than Calvary's will be ours if, after pondering these thoughts on such a day as this, if after gazing on Jesus and Mary in the Passion, we deliberately commit fresh sins, and in the foresight of His Immaculate Mother "crucify again to ourselves the Son of God, and make a mockery of Him."

Let us pray, dear Brethren, on this day of Bountiful Salvation, that the Crucifix and the Mother of Sorrows may soften our hearts, moisten our eyes, and bring us blessed tears. A day will come when our last tear will creep from our dying eye, when the crucifix will be placed in a cold, white hand, laid meekly on a breast as cold.

Let not that tear be our only tear, and let not that firm grasp of the crucifix be our only embrace.

May the Hand of God while we live often wipe away better, holier, sweeter tears before that day arrives.

And then may Jesus, and Mary and Joseph comfort us and bid us enter into the joy of Our Lord.

EASTER SUNDAY

FOR many long weeks we have been advancing to this most happy day. We have come up from the desert, through the wilderness of sin. We have dwelt upon the horror of mortal sin, its guilt and its punishment. We have seen how we were redeemed from sin, and repeatedly we have gone along the sorrowful way of the Cross, and only the other day we rested on Mount Calvary, gazing upon the Five Sacred Wounds, and upon the desolation of the Son of God.

To-day it is our privilege to rise to a new life in union with Jesus Risen, and to enter with the rest of the Faithful of Christ's Church into the Kingdom of the Resurrection, associating ourselves with the Blessed Mother of God—sinless always, with the Beloved Disciple, St. John—who was without spot and with Blessed Saint Mary Magdalen—at one time stained through and through and now white as snow. What blessed companionship for such as we know ourselves to be ! There they stand with us in the Kingdom of the Risen Saviour—the type of saints and penitents—all redeemed by the same Lord and Saviour—all washed in the same Precious Blood—all partaking in the same Paschal joys and graces of Jesus Risen.

Let us recall the happenings of the first Easter morn. While it was yet dark—before the dawn—Mary Magdalen, laden with precious ointments, sets out for the sepulchre. She passes over Calvary—and lingers at the foot of the Cross which is still standing—and throws herself on the

ground to kiss the soil reddened with her Saviour's Blood.

Suddenly as she raises her eyes to cast an adoring glance at the Cross, she sees it is gilded by the red gleam of the coming Easter sun. Thus recalled to herself, she kisses the sacred tree, and tears herself from it and hurries off to fulfil the work she had in hand.

The moment she arrived at the sepulchre " there was a great earthquake " says the Evangelist, St. Matthew, " and an angel of the Lord descended from the heavens, and coming rolled back the stone, and sat upon it : and his countenance was like 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 woman : ' 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 go quickly, tell His disciples that He is risen, and behold, He will go before you into Galilee.' "

See how she runs from the sepulchre as fast as she could. She had come to anoint the dead body of Jesus : but there is no need for that now. For Jesus is alive ! He is alive ! And she knows it ! She has seen the empty sepulchre ! And shall she wait to see Him ? No ! She must do the Angel's bidding and go *quickly* and tell His disciples.

With nimble feet and eager countenance she hurries back to the city, seeks out the well-known house where were Peter and James and John and the other disciples fearful and sorrowful. She rushes into their midst with the exclamation : " Jesus is alive ! He is risen from the dead ! "

Imagine the panic that seized each one of them. Is it alarm, or fear, or misgivings or awe ? Or is it bliss, enchantment, ravishment, ecstasy ? There is no time to analyse their feeling. With breathless speed one and all arise and hasten away to see for themselves and to share

the joy, the gladness, the delight of the happy Magdalen. And in the midst of all this sudden anxious exultation—while the heavenly courts were resounding with Alleluias sung by the Angel choirs—the Risen Jesus—the Mighty Conqueror of sin and death—goes on His way distributing on earth and in Limbo the treasures He has purchased by His copious Redemption.

As on the day of a King's coronation, the sight which is coveted above all the pomp and pageantry of the royal progress is a glimpse at the King himself—so let us dismiss all other thoughts for a moment and comfort our souls with a view of our Risen King shining in all the brightness of His Resurrection.

Of all the disfigurements made in His Body during the Passion He retains only the marks of the Five Sacred Wounds in His Hands and Feet and Side, as everlasting trophies of His Victory. And so, in His glorified Risen Body, we see no marks of the Crown of Thorns upon His brow—yet He looks more than ever a King.

The placid sunrise is beautiful, but there is not half so much quiet beauty about it as reigns over that incredibly sweet Face. What maturity, and yet what youth! Look into His eyes—what a *depth* of love—what a *tenderness* of love—yet what an overwhelming *power* of love.

Then that smile upon His lips—so royal and yet so wonderfully familiar—how human it is in its gentle winning gravity. What a light of unspeakable expression shines over His whole Face, glows like sunshine on His beautiful hair, and runs down like an unction into His comely beard!

But He must not speak! If He speaks, we shall be bewildered with His love. It is true He *will* speak to us the very first time we see Him; but He must not speak now. But what is that peculiarly special beauty of Jesus Risen? Is that beauty the old beauty of the Babe of

Bethlehem ? Or is it the beauty of the look of the Boy at Nazareth ? Or is it the sweetness of the preacher and the miracle-worker of Galilee ? Dear Brethren, it is *all* of them—and it is none of them. It is something of its own. Somehow the resplendent Human Soul of Jesus fills all the features marvellously with a most human loveliness—and yet His Divinity shines through with a masterful majesty, and with a gladness so bright that it makes us worship—to look at it. " All hail, dear Conqueror, all hail ! Oh, what a victory is thine. How beautiful Thy strength appears. Thy crimson wounds and how bright they shine ! "

The revelation, dear Brethren, of this beauty and this joy of Jesus is withheld from us now. But it is held in reserve for us as the first of an eternity of joys which He will reveal to us when our life is over.

The Easter joy of Jesus in Himself was a constellation of all His joys together ; and among them all even we contributed a share. He thought of us—of each one of us by name and look—and of our salvation.

He thought of the joy it would be to Him—at the particular judgment to pass a favourable sentence upon us and of the joy it would be to Him then to know He had redeemed us, and of the joy it would be to Him to see His Blessed Mother's gladness at our salvation, and of the joy it would be to Him to see the beauty and sweetness of our souls fit to enter heaven, and of the joy it would be to Him and to us in our unutterable, everlasting joy.

Oh, dear Brethren, Easter is a happy day. But I think our true Easter will not be until we look that first time on the beautiful welcome of His Easter Face.

EASTER SUNDAY

"Dies quam fecit Dominus."

After the solemn commemoration of the last week, it would be quite natural for us to ask "Can there be light after such a night? Peace after the death of God, joy after the Passion of our dearest Lord?"

What is Easter really like? It is like the beginning of Eternity—like the dawn of God's endless day!

Easter, dear Brethren, has come with its thousand graces: and how can the Church express it but with that sublime simplicity, that artlessness of a child which is close upon the wisdom of an angel. She sums it all up in one phrase—"Haec dies quam fecit Dominus"—"This is the day which the Lord hath made."

"Which the Lord hath made!"

But this is the one joy of all things—that God made them. It is our joy too that *we* are created by God and by such a God. So we congratulate all creatures that they like ourselves have the happiness of having been made by God. That there are some things He makes especially and keeps a special royalty over them—and one of these things is Easter Sunday, upon which the Church cries out: "This is the day which the Lord hath made. Let us be glad and rejoice therein."

But did He not make all days and cause all suns to shine? Oh, yes—but never a day like Easter day, the sunrise of

the Everlasting Saviour. Easter day is the day of days because from it comes the blessing of all days.

Because it is full of the glory of Jesus—and the glory of Jesus was infinitely dear to His Heavenly Father.

Because He is the true sunshine of the earth and without Him there can be no brightness.

And there is no sun and moon in Heaven but His glorified body which rose from the tomb on Easter Day.

And He is the sun who has no setting. He is the day which is all morning—fresh, pure, grateful, full of sweetest light and sweetest odours.

THE RESURRECTION. The sun is not yet above the hills. In the early dawn we see St. Mary Magdalen looking down into the sepulchre. Why does her face shine so brightly if the sun is not yet risen? It is from the two angels in white sitting in the sepulchre! How her tears glisten in the light!

Dear, loving Magdalen! Is it the memory of the Passion which make her weep? The angels beaming with gladness say to her: "Woman, why weepest thou?" As if to say "Who has any right to weep at Easter?" She replies "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Earth without Jesus! To Magdalen such a misery could not be. So she asks as Jesus had asked about her brother Lazarus: "Where have you laid him?"

When she had said this, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, but she knew not that it was Jesus. She turned herself back—for what were even Angels when she was seeking Jesus? And Jesus—as if refreshing Himself with her fond, faithful love, said to her in a feigned voice: "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?"

Thus did Our Lord, as it were, play with her grief and love—asking His servant such a question—Whom seekest

thou?—as if Magdalen could seek any but Himself! She, thinking it was the gardener, saith to Him: "Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away."

What! take Him away in thine arms like a child—as thy great namesake carried Him at Bethlehem and in the wilderness of Egypt? "I will take Him away"—as if He were hers—as if He should not be a charge to anyone but her—as if she were hostess of Jesus by office, now and for ever!

Then she seemingly turned her face to the sepulchre. And Jesus saith to her—behind her—in *that* voice she knew so well: "Mary!" Does she live, or has that one word broken her heart with the abruptness of its jubilee? She, turning—oh, with what speed, with what surprise, with what unimaginable ecstasy of love!—said "Rabboni!"—which is to say "Master!"

In the long history of the world how many sweet surprises has love contrived for love—but was there ever any one half so sweet as this?

Joy, dear Brethren, says short words and few. Her beautiful bright face may have told the Apostles *all* when she met them, for her face had been sad enough for days past; but, as for her tongue, she could only say "I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me!"

Oh, happy, happy Magdalen! Help us to our Heavenly Easter, to that morning when Jesus our Judge will have spoken a few words to us. It is only a little while now, and then we can come to thee in Heaven, and repeat thy simple but all-sufficient words: "I have seen the Lord! and these things—the welcome to a happy eternity—He has said to me!"

LOW SUNDAY

God or the World

St. Augustine tells us there are two loves which make two different cities or kingdoms—the love of God which makes the city of God, the Church of the elect ; and the love of the world and of self, so centred as to exclude God, which makes the city of the wicked, which is the kingdom of the devil by whom it is possessed and ruled.

St James says : " Know you not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God ? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God." This is the friendship that makes men insubordinate, disobedient and displeasing to God. And St. John says : " Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him."

Now let us see plainly and exactly what is meant by the world and the friendship of the world. By the world here is meant vain and vicious people who love transitory and earthly things inordinately—that is to the exclusion of God : and also who love these very things themselves which they seek, and desire, and grasp, and cling to, that they may be enriched, praised and exalted in this short life. . . . The evil and the danger of it all is this : we are in the world, and have to be in the world and mix with the world. Where is the evil, then, in loving the things of the world ?

God's love has to be first and foremost in our hearts,

and wherever and whenever things of the world seek to take this first place, *there* is the evil and the danger. Therefore duty to God ever calls upon us to watch, to despise, to break with and even to hate the things and friendships of this world, in so far as they hinder us, or actually prevent us, from seeking and loving God. "For," as St. John says, "all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but of the world." We must then thus far overcome the world that we shall not allow it or any creature friend of it so to entice us that, for the desire or love of it, we shall transgress the law of God.

As, according to St. James "the friendship of this world is an enemy of God" we see plainly that we cannot be friends with both. God and the world have nothing in common: their ends are diametrically opposed to each other. The world bows down to wealth, influence, sneers: Christ blesses poverty, meekness, persecution. The world makes the most of the present and the things of life, for it knows in its heart that it passeth away. Christ bids us remember that we are pilgrims and wayfarers here, to rejoice if the world hates us, for our true home is Heaven, whither we are tending. "Wonder not, brethren, if the world hates you." (St. John.)

The world advances a twofold attack against the servants of Christ. First, adversity threatens us that we may lose courage, and through fear be induced to sin. The world tried this for three hundred years of persecution in the early ages. It has tried it again in later times in many countries and especially in England and Ireland. And the glorious martyrs gave a triumphant answer, and gladly laid down their lives for the love of God. The children of the Church have not changed with the lapse of centuries. In the same blessed choir of Martyrs we behold Ignatius of

Antioch and Thomas More, Cyprian and Oliver Plunkett, Laurence and Campion.

And the second mode of attack is an insidious one—namely, the seductions of pleasure and prosperity, amusements and love—to entice and attract, to deceive and ensnare the hearts of the unwary and imprudent.

This is the attack to which, in our days, so many, especially the young and the impulsive, fall victims. Too self-willed to heed warnings, resenting interference, or affected by indifference, they are swept on with the crowd of pleasure-seekers—and forget God and forget their souls : the love of the world slowly and surely takes possession of their heart and rules it. He alone can withstand this attack who, with the eye of faith, looks up to God, and for His love and honour and glory despises and rejects the blandishments of created things.

St. John tells us what power it is that overcomes the world—our faith : " This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." The faith that tells us Jesus Christ is our Saviour and our Judge, and therefore that our lives and hearts should be all for Him. A lively, strenuous faith is most pleasing to God. It is above all riches and honours and the substance of this world. It is the gift of God, but we can pray for it, and pray for more of it.

May that faith be ours which, as St. Augustine says, " saves sinners, opens the eyes of the blind, restores poor penitents to God's favour, increases the merits of the just, crowns martyrs, preserves all in a sinless life, and places the elect with the angels in their eternal inheritance."

May the great and Blessed God deign to bestow this faith upon us all !

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Tenderness of Jesus

The Gospel to-day speaks to us pre-eminently of the tenderness of Jesus, describing Him as the Good Shepherd and likening us to the sheep of His flock. This characteristic of tenderness in Jesus is visible in every stage of the mystery of the Incarnation—in the Sacred Infancy, the Hidden Life, the Passion, the Blessed Sacrament. If we take the common life of Jesus among men, we find tenderness everywhere.

1. There was tenderness in His outward deportment. His way with His disciples and His way with sinners made Him not only attractive, but irresistible.

2. There was tenderness in His looks. One look alone He cast on Peter, and Peter realized the wickedness of his sin—wept till his tears made furrows in his cheeks and became the prince of penitents.

3. There was tenderness in His conversation. There was no straining for effect in His discourses, there is a tone of gentleness in all His parables, and though there is directness of speech in the evils He denounced, there is absence of horror in all His sermons—and His teaching throughout is a declaration of an abyss of forgiveness for sinners.

4. There was tenderness in His answers. When He was accused of being possessed by the devil, He showed no annoyance at the degrading affront, but gently replied

from the depth of His wisdom and put them to confusion. When struck upon the face, probably with a mailed fist, He showed no animosity at the outrage—but replied with a serenity that would soften a savage.

5. There was tenderness in His reprimands. What could be more tender than His words to the adulteress, to Magdalen, to the Samaritan woman, and to Judas who betrayed Him ?

6. There was tenderness in His zeal. When His Apostles James and John asked Him to call down fire from heaven and consume His enemies He gently rebuked them. When their mother asked Him to give her sons seats on his right and left hand in heaven, He gently replied that they would be occupied by those who merited them.

To teach His Apostles how to secure Heaven, He set a little child in the midst of them saying : " Unless you become as this little child, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Even when His wrath was enkindled, He never failed to show sweet meekness in His divine indignation.

When Our Lord wishes to describe His tender solicitude for mankind, He uses the simile of the Good Shepherd, because Holy Scripture frequently represents the guidance of the Jews by God and His representatives under the figure of a shepherd leading His sheep. Our Lord claims to be the Good Shepherd, having the marks of the Good Shepherd, namely lawful authority or pastoral care aright.

He is not only the legitimately appointed Shepherd—but He is the source of all authority. Therefore, He does not say He has been admitted by the door-keeper—but that He Himself is the door : and He maintains whoever does not enter the sheepfold through Christ, and His appointed representatives, cannot be a shepherd or a teacher. Nay, is not even a member of the flock. Whoever therefore

enters by this door is the shepherd of the sheep—whoever breaks in elsewhere is a thief and a robber.

The Good Shepherd is the one who exercises his pastoral power aright, i.e., with disinterested labour, tender charity, and a real shepherd's care. He knows and calls His sheep, choosing them out, exhorting and urging them to good, and warning them against evil. He goes before them by His example and protection. He feeds them by doctrine, grace, and guidance. And all this from the loving desire that the sheep may have life, and may have it abundantly, i.e., by sanctification here, and by resurrection and glory hereafter.

Finally He gives the Good Shepherd's best mark of tender love and fidelity to his flock, going so far as to deliver Himself up to death for His sheep—to defend them from the wild beast—the world and the Evil One.

The application to ourselves consists in this. Touched by the tenderness of Our Lord's appeal, we delay not to give ourselves unreservedly to this Shepherd of our souls. We should do this first because He is our rightful Shepherd, being our Lord and our God, secondly, because in all the mysteries of His life, He is a Shepherd and the Good Shepherd. In *His Incarnation*, He forsakes Heaven for our little earth, to seek poor strayed sheep. *In Public Life*, He hastens after poor sinners over hill and dale, through thorns and thickets, carries them gently back, heals them by His grace, leads them to good pastures by His teaching and example, and nourishes them with His own Flesh and Blood. *In His Passion*, He dies in our stead that we may live. *In His Risen Life*, He gathers His sheep together again, gives them the Holy Ghost, and eternal life. Everywhere and always, He is the Good Shepherd.

Let us remember, dear Brethren, we *must* have a shepherd —we *must* belong to *some* flock, and *some* shepherd. We

have only the choice between Christ and the world and the Evil One. Is there a more selfish and cruel tyrant than the world and its prince? Whereas Our Saviour promises us life, abundant, beatific, eternal.

Let us follow Him and permit ourselves to be guided aright, when He wishes to hold us back from the poisonous pastures of worldly joys and lurking wolves, full of confidence that if the Good Shepherd is with us, we shall want for nothing.

Let us, therefore, be good sheep of the Good Shepherd—Let us learn to know Him by His word, example and footprints.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

"*A little while.*" (John xvi, 16.)

In the Gospel to-day, Our Lord makes frequent use of the phrase "a little while," and its frequent repetition suggests that it was not uttered without a purpose. The words are short and simple; and happy should we be if we had them continually echoing in our souls! They would help us to go through life earnest in good, unscathed by evil: for that "little while" is the key to eternity.

How is it that people can go on living in sin and in indifference to God, amusing themselves, and completely taken up with the things of this world? Because they forget that it is only for "a little while." A little while of self-indulgence, of seeking after pleasure, of gratifying every desire—followed by an eternity of pain—not a drop of cold water to cool their tongue; not a kind word for all eternity.

"A little while" of neglecting prayer, of putting God off, of evading the duties demanded by the Church! It is all done so easily—and nothing seems to come of it. No, not for "a little while": but the end comes all too soon for the careless and the slothful, and then remorse for ever and ever. What was the good of all that neglect? What came of it? Oh, the bitterness of eternally asking that question! If they had only asked it—before it was too late!

"A little while" of self-satisfaction, and of being

somebody in their own little circle—where is the harm in it? But where was God during that "little while"? There was no time for God in business hours. Friends, too had to be looked after—one had to be like others. Quite so, and therefore, there was no time to give to God at all! No—but an eternity of misery will be exacted by the great God, who was begrudged a thought, a prayer, a Mass in their life on earth.

This "little while" is an all-important thing, for heaven depends upon it. Ask the Saints why they gave up their nights to prayer, why they were so incessant in their labour for souls: how is it they knew no fatigue, cared nothing for being worn out? Their answer is: There is only "a little while" for labour, and an eternity for rest. How can we do enough for the good God?

And instead of being unhappy and despondent when day after day we have to labour and suffer, and be tempted and beset by sin, we should remember that it is only for "a little while." The Master is only trying us, to see if we are worthy of Him. He will not desert us in our struggle, or abandon us when we feel we can do no more. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God has promised to them that love Him." (Jas. i, 12.)

What power should these few words have over those who are careless, wakening them to see the falseness of their contentment: and what power should they have over devout souls, urging them to renewed endeavours, to more patient acceptance of hardships, and to more determined perseverance.

These words have been the making of many a Saint—the world abandoned for a hermitage—life given up for a martyr's crown.

Think of the blessed band, the Forty Martyrs, left to

be frozen to death on the ice. Stripped, frostbitten, perishing—to them how long seemed that winter's night ! But they knew—it was only for a little while—and thinking of eternity, they prayed for perseverance. " We are forty : may forty persevere ! " Alas, one turned coward : the little while of perishing was too much for him. The guards relieved him, warmed him, fed him—and in a little while he died ! The pity of it ! Only a little while longer of courage, and he would have been a Saint for ever ! But another stepped into his place. This soldier from the bank had seen a vision of crowns coming down from heaven for the martyrs : but he could only count thirty-nine crowns, and there were forty victims. When the one gave way, he understood about the missing crown. The vision gave him the faith : and stripping himself, crying out that he too would be a Christian, he joined them on the ice. And the Martyr's prayer was heard : " Let forty persevere ! "

At daybreak, as they were carting the frozen corpses away, one of the martyrs, the youngest, was found to be alive. The guards, hoping to pervert him, left him, but his mother, who was watching on the bank, raised him in her arms. To fondle and caress him ? No. To cast him in the cart with the others. " Bear up a little while," she said. " Behold Christ stands at the door, helping thee." And as the heroic mother carried him, he died in her arms. His little while was over.

When the light of heaven dawns upon us, dear Brethren—then it will be no longer—for a little while. The seed of a little will have grown into a happy eternity. Praised by the mercy of the good God, that prayer, sinlessness, and His faithful service for a little while can merit eternal glory.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

" Whither goest thou ? " (John xvi, 5.)

THE words of Our Blessed Lord in to-day's Gospel: " Whither goest thou ? " are important for everybody. In worldly concerns, how clear, definite, and keen are men about the " whither they are going." The captain of a ship, taking his observations, studying the charts, watching the wind, anxious if a fog envelop the ship, or a gale arises. Why ? " Whither goest thou ? " he asks himself.

The engine driver speeding along, his eye now on the signals, now on the register ; his hand ready to check the headlong rush. Why ? Because he is keen about the safety of the train. The man of business keeps his books, balances his accounts, looks to every detail, is absorbed in the one question, making money or losing it ?

Every one seems on the alert—except about their souls. Our soul is hastening through the short years of life: and how seldom do we question it: " Whither goest thou ? "

If whither we are going is important, why are we not anxious ? Can we come back again and make a second journey ? Are we bound—compelled to go at all ? Most men seem to be satisfied with this world—to have forgotten that they are simply wayfarers—to have something that they have fixed their hearts upon, that makes them content and long to stay.

It must be then that our going is a long time off ; that

there will be years of warning and preparation. That is not so. The very opposite is the truth, for Our Blessed Lord has said: "Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour."

That we are going to the home of our eternity is a solemn truth: and how childish and foolish it is of us to try to forget it, and not rather to be hourly solicitous to see if we are going safely and securely.

Here, dear Brethren, in God's house, before His altar, during Holy Mass, we can ask ourselves seriously, "Whither goest thou?" We can look back at the past week and see whether we have wandered from the path of duty or kept to it manfully: whether we have loitered, grown lazy, broken our resolutions—and lost our way! And each Sunday we can ask Him who said: "I am the way" to help us to start again, to start us on the right road: to show us the direction, to give us strength and fresh determination to persevere. How glad we shall some day be if regularly our soul has studied this question, "Whither goest thou?"

And what will those do who never come to Holy Mass, or come just when they like, or are careless and distracted when they do come? Are they watching whither their soul is going? Have they no fear that disaster is approaching? No. They have no fear. The worries or the pleasures of life give them no time to think. The voice of conscience cannot make itself heard amidst the gossip, the quarrellings or the laughter of their foolish days. And if the thought does, by the grace of God, catch their attention for a moment, they put it aside with an excuse. They will see to their souls and put them in order sometime or other, but not now. *Sometime*, but not God's time! And they trust their immortal souls to sometime, instead of seeing now to their security.

"Whither goest thou?" is a question that requires more than an answer. It has to rule and guide our lives. Yet men leave it to be answered in sickness, in the delirium of fever—to be answered when speech has failed. How can we hope to care for our poor, neglected soul then? With all our sins upon us, what a mockery will the beautiful prayers of the Church sound then. "Go forth, Christian soul"—Oh, horror! Go forth! Whither?

Please God, we that are here are not putting off the saving of our soul to the end. We will not insult Our Blessed Lord by putting Him off. We will say now "Thou art the way: lead me aright." Let us thank God for this word "Whither goest thou?" and pray that it may live in our memories to awaken us if we are careless, to speak to us in the hour of temptation, to leave us no peace, if we fall, till we confess our sin and receive Holy Absolution.

What a change that memory would make in our prayers! How fervent would our Masses and Holy Communions be! What contentment and resignation it would give us in the sorrows of life! What do trials and hardships matter if our soul is sure whither it is going?

Turn your eyes from the present life—and look at the road that leads whither you should be tending. It is not bleak and lonely. It is the royal road to Heaven. Look at it and you will see it peopled by those you know who are beckoning you and encouraging you. Your friends who are now Saints have all trod that road. Little children have cheerfully toiled along. Poor sinners, in spite of the burden of all their past, have started and persevered. And your good Angel is ready, if you will, to take you by the hand and lead you safely, as Raphael did Tobias.

And when you reach the "whither," will not all your toil be well repaid? The everlasting rest, the contented

joy will more than compensate the care, the watchfulness, the prayers, the confessions, and Communions, the Masses, the sufferings of this short life. It will be our eternal blessedness then that we trained our souls to heed " Whither goest thou ? "

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

" Ask and you shall receive." (John xvi, 24.)

In the Gospel of this Sunday we are urgently exhorted to pray : and Our Blessed Lord assures us that if we ask we shall receive. These words of Our Lord serve as a fitting introduction to the Rogation days which occur this week. The word Rogation is derived from the Latin word *Rogare* which means " to ask " : and the Church calls the three days before the Feast of the Ascension Rogation days, because on these days by processions and by the singing or recital of the Litany of the Saints, she has recourse to God principally to obtain the divine blessing on the fruits of the earth.

The origin of the Rogation Days and of the processions is ascribed to St. Mamertus, Archbishop of Vienne, France, who established them to avert three great scourges, viz., earthquakes, fires, and the ravages of wild beasts. If these particular calamities are not our special dangers at the moment, there are others equally destructive, such as pestilence, famine, and war and other overwhelming evils, which we pray Almighty God to avert from us in the Litany of the Saints.

And if there ever was a time when Christians in this country should acknowledge their dependence upon God, and pray and pray and pray without ceasing to be delivered from the dangers that hang over us, surely it is now when the greatest party-crisis in history is duelling in this

country. It is not for me to express any view of the right or the wrong of this lamentable struggle: but it is the duty of God's priest to encourage God's faithful people to pray and pray that we may speedily come to the end of this paralysing misery in blessed peace and safety.

The prevailing circumstances being what they are, we could not select a more fitting subject for our consideration to-day than the subject of prayer: and though much might be said upon this subject, we will confine ourselves to *God's love of prayer.*

In St. Luke's Gospel we read; "And it came to pass, that as He was in a certain place, praying:" when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

The disciple *watches* Jesus: and then says, Lord teach *us* to pray. Evidently He had looked most beautiful at prayer, as the disciple gazed upon him and became filled with a desire to be able to pray as His Divine Master prayed.

It is very natural that many things should surprise us in God: and one of the things which surprises us most is His intense love of prayer. Think, dear Brethren:

First, of the overwhelmingness of His immensity. He is higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell, broader than the sea. He is everywhere, knows and sees all things, even the most secret thought of every one of us. The Apostle exclaims "Oh the depth of the riches and of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways."

Second, think of the blessedness of His self-sufficiency. He is in need of nothing—His possessions know no limit, He is infinite in happiness and in all perfections—"For," as the Apostle adds," of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory for ever."

Third, yet, notwithstanding all this—He finds vast

pleasure in being asked—in being prayed to by creatures so low and vile and contemptible as we are.

Fourth, the superabundance of His riches gives rise to the perfection of generosity in Him: and the Heart of God is full of a desire to give—yet this desire is curbed by and subjected to His love of prayer. Hence His desire makes Him exhort us—"*Ask* and you shall receive."

Immense things, and things which appeared impossible, He often does for prayer. The age of miracles is not past. We still hear of them in our own day in answer to prayer and the faith of the suppliant. And on the other hand God still holds to an ancient principle whereby He often does no mighty works because of unbelief.

Prayer seems to have a power of altering Him, of obscuring Him, of changing His divine Will—in spite of the unchangeableness which we adore in Him.

And after all, what sort of prayer is it that He gets from us? When we take an account of our prayers and make a true estimate of them, surely if anything could surprise God, it would be our little love of prayer. We cannot realize that prayer is by far the greatest power in the world: that a life of prayer is a life without disappointment or failure: that it is from beginning to end a life of victory. There are people who pray for something spiritual or temporal, and who lose confidence in God when what they ask is not directly granted. A day will come when they will discover that the days of their unanswered prayers were full of greatest gifts and heavenly favours.

Now, dear Brethren, let me commend to your consideration this remarkable feature of God—His fondness for prayer. And, in order that you may give the good God the pleasure of listening to you and granting your prayer, make an examination of your prayer and ask yourselves:

(1) How in respect of quantity;

(2) How in respect of reverence ;

(3) How in respect of perseverance and importunity—urging God which is our greatest reverence ?

(4) How in respect of sincerity ?—Can we be insincere in prayer ? Yes, perhaps in nothing more insincere.

(5) How in respect of fervour ? To an Angel, what a strange thing cold prayer must be.

(6) How in respect of faith ? Oh, if we would only pray believingly we would at once touch, lay hold, and grasp Almighty God, and we would feel His arm is wound round us with a presence which, when we have felt it once, we can never mistake for anything else.

O, dear Brethren, how much more God is longing to give us at our prayers, if only we would ask for more—and ask it more boldly, more hungrily, and more believingly!

SUNDAY WITHIN OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION

"There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (Romans viii, 1.)

I AM sure you all feel that we have abundant reason to thank Almighty God for relieving us of the strain and fear and alarm which harassed us last week. The good God graciously heard our prayers perhaps more speedily than most of us had expected; and in His mercy and goodness delivered us from evils that menaced us and which we prayed Him last Sunday to turn away from us.

From many points of view the experience we have had during this crisis[1] has taught us, and the nation and the Empire and the whole world many lessons from which we may hope that mankind individually and collectively may derive wisdom and profit for the future.

We have now a duty to discharge of thanksgivings to God for His deliverance of us from evil: and to implore His Divine Spirit to inspire all concerned in the settlement of affairs to aim only at what will produce justice, peace and contentment. We have reason too to be grateful that we live in a Christian nation: and that in the public utterances of those in authority there was repeated mention of God, and of the necessity of prayer for God's help and guidance. And of all the public utterances we may rejoice that not one of them was more reverently received nor impressed more deeply the minds of men than that of our

[1] The Great Strike, 1926.

Cardinal Archbishop. He stood alone, among them all, as God's representative, announcing man's duty in point of the obedience owing to God—and that no one could refuse that obedience without sin against the authority of God Himself. Not only upon Catholics but upon the whole nation, His Eminence's words produced a singular effect.

What we have been going through is similar to a huge judgment. We have all been on trial and tested as to what we are made of. Both the rulers and the ruled have been weighed in the balance, and the dispositions, the sayings and doings of all have been subjected to close examination. Surely this is a picture of human life wherein the rulers and the ruled are being weighed in the divine balance: but the settlement is deferred till human life has run its course, and the souls of men are summoned into the presence of the Divine Adjudicator.

The great thing that matters for each and all of us is that when our final reckoning comes to be made, we may escape condemnation. And to effect this, it should be our aim, in all the varied vicissitudes we may pass through, so to acquit ourselves of the duties of our state of life as to merit in the end the blessing and happiness of the divine approval.

Many beautiful words have been uttered in this world which have lived on for generations, like axioms which will hold good to the end: but few more beautiful than those which came to the mind of St. Paul while making tents at Corinth—and which he wrote to the Romans: "There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

(1) No condemnation! Is not this just what we want. When people are on trial, what is the uppermost feeling that possesses them but the hope that there may be no condemnation? And we surely are on trial: it is just our

business as creatures to be judged—and therefore to be ready.

(2) Conscience judges us from within, and the world without: we fear the stern truth of the inward judge, and we chafe under the invariable unkindness of the outward one: all happiness and unhappiness depends on these judgments.

(3) But God, Who knows all, understands all, sees the secret truth of all—and is unutterably just and holy.

We who have not been directly concerned in this party strife have been, to a certain extent, the unofficial judges of the disputants. But it is hard for us to form a just judgment in human proceedings where plausibility is put forward on both sides. Each party defends itself and accuses the other. What one party asserts to be the truth, the other denies. It is impossible for us to know what may be the aims and motives in the minds of those who are in the quarrel. But say what we will—or do what we may—we can disguise no aims or motives from the all-seeing eye of God.

(4) And to be condemned by God! It is very easy—very likely. All merit it—and to know we should not be condemned and that we should be saved: would not that be heaven beforehand? Well, dear Brethren, St. Paul tells us there is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

But who are in Christ Jesus?

1. Those who have the true Faith—and practise it.
2. Those who have a great sorrow for their sins.
3. Those who love others for Our Lord's sake (forgive.)
4. Those who are trying to be good, just, and holy, even if they are not so yet.
5. Those who wish to love Our Lord—though they do not feel as if they loved Him yet.

Dear Brethren, you may have many years to live yet: and in those years many temptations, many tribulations, many privations. It may be that you will meet with much unkindliness and want of sympathy and consideration. You may have much sorrow and much suffering and the miseries of infirmity. Such is the common lot of the Saints, and if you find it to be your lot, it is certain sign of your future election to glory: and to make your election sure you have only to go through life repeating to yourselves —as men murmur songs they love, those encouraging words of St. Paul: "There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

PENTECOST (1927)

We are celebrating to-day one of the greatest festivals of the Christian Year, the Birthday of the Church of Christ—the completion by the Holy Ghost of that Institution which Our Blessed Lord came on earth to found.

The event is told simply enough. A few men were gathered together in an upper room—men who had heard their Master telling them that He was about to disappear from their sight, but that He would not leave them orphans: that He would send them the Paraclete—the Spirit of Truth—who would abide with them for ever. Suddenly, while they were praying, they heard as it were the rushing of a mighty wind—and upon their heads appeared tongues of fire—and we read: they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. In that instant they were changed into other men: their understanding was illuminated, their wills were strengthened, they were confirmed in the belief of the truths they had received from their Master. They were knit together with one mind and one heart by the Spirit of God. And thus was cradled the Infant Church which was destined to grow and increase till it would fill the whole world.

The Apostles left that Upper Room, fearlessly, for the first time and immediately began to preach Christ Crucified—the Messias. And as they preached, those who stood by—no matter what part of the world they come from, understood those poor illiterate fishermen as though they spoke in their native tongues. No wonder they were

amazed, and inquired: "Are they not all Galileans? And yet they speak knowing every tongue!"

But it was not illiterate fishermen who were speaking, but the Holy Ghost preaching through the Apostles of Jesus Christ in every tongue—thus proclaiming that *the truths of Christianity* were not to be confined in any particular place, but were destined for all men—as all men were called to Salvation.

Our Blessed Lord foresaw the tendency of man to question, to investigate and to doubt these truths: and therefore He promised and sent at Pentecost that divine authority—the Holy Spirit—which was to remain for ever with the Apostles and their successors, teaching and illuminating the world through them.

Hence it is that the Supreme Pontiffs have the right to convene Councils to-day, as they did in the time of the first Pope—St. Peter, and to define for men what truths they are obliged to believe. The Supreme Pontiff in our day has the right to say, as the Apostles did in their first Council of Jerusalem: "It hath seemed good to us and the Holy Ghost to decree that you shall receive this or that truth and to reject this or that heresy." Therefore, it is that even to-day men receive these same truths as coming from God Himself—and are as certain of them as though they heard the voice of God Himself speaking to them.

And what a beautiful picture of our holy religion is given by the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church. It shows us men differing in opinion, differing in nationality, divided on political questions—even warring with each other for the possession of states or countries—it shows us all these men in peace and harmony, without division and without difference in their religious belief. It shows us the learned and the unlearned—the rich and the poor—all

knowing and all believing the same heaven-sent truth.

The Holy Ghost is thus the Teacher of the World. But, besides being the Teacher, He is also the Sanctifier. When the child is brought for Baptism, the priest breathes upon it and says: "Depart from this child, unclean Spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete." Again, when presented for Confirmation, the Bishop prays: "May the Holy Spirit come down upon you, and may He bestow upon you His sevenfold gifts." The young man who presents himself for Ordination is made an instrument of salvation by administering the Sacraments—through the Holy Ghost: "Receive you the Holy Ghost—whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven."

The infusion of the Holy Spirit in these three Sacraments marks the soul with an indelible seal of relationship to Him—in Baptism as a child of God: in Confirmation as a soldier of Christ; and in Holy Orders as God's priest for ever.

But not only does the Holy Spirit operate in the Church for its sanctification as a universal organization, but often and often He leads souls captive and makes them partakers of His Sanctity.

When St. Augustine was twenty-eight, he was master of all the sciences—but his knowledge did not preserve him from vice. He had run the giddy round of pleasures: and his poor mother St. Monica could but weep and pray for his conversion. One day, hearing of the austerities of St. Anthony the Hermit, Augustine said to his friend Alypius, "What! the ignorant take Heaven by violence—and we shameful wretches, with all our miserable science, rise not above flesh and blood! How long, O Lord, shall I say 'to-morrow, to-morrow'? Why not to-day—why not this very moment?" As he said these words, he heard interiorly the Holy Spirit saying to him: "Tolle, lege."

" Take up and read ! "—and picking up a volume of St. Paul at his feet, he opened and read the passage : " Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ : and make not provisions for the flesh in its concupiscence."

His past life swept before him in all its hideous deformity —His understanding was illuminated by the Holy Spirit— he saw the truth, and the love of God and of Holiness flowed into his heart. Augustine was converted, and to-day is known among the greatest Saints and Doctors of God's Church.

St. Mary of Egypt, after leading the life of a public sinner—steeped in vice of every kind—is held back from entering a church on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. She is told by a secret voice to go beyond the Jordan and do penance. There, in the desert she lived for forty-seven years, leading the life of a penitent and a saint.

St. Margaret of Cortona was led back from her wicked life by the sight of the putrefied body of her lover. She was stricken with fear of the Divine Judgment, and became in a moment a perfect penitent—and after the remaining twenty-three years of her life spent in austerities was numbered among the Saints.

This same work of sanctification by the Holy Spirit still goes on. To-day, it is through the voice of a preacher —the death of a friend—the force of good example. To-morrow—it is through reading some pious book—or the mere straying into a church—or assisting at a funeral. Infidels have been changed into Saints by casually entering a church during Benediction.

A banker's clerk entered a church accidentally one evening—the priest was kneeling in the sanctuary saying

the Rosary with his people—the young man listens to the responses—marks the devotion of the people—goes out and confesses that never before in his life had he heard what might be called a prayer. The Holy Spirit had touched his heart, flooded his mind with light, he sees the errors of his life—places himself under instruction, is received into the Church, and dies a saintly Archbishop of the Catholic Church. Thus the Holy Spirit continues His work of perpetually teaching and sanctifying men.

Pray, dear Brethren, to-day that the same Holy Spirit may descend upon you, bringing you all His strengthening and comforting gifts and graces. Pray that He may give you an obedient spirit to the voice of Holy Church through which He teaches and directs you. Pray that you may have a docile spirit, ever alert to His Holy inspirations, urging you to make due uses of the means of sanctification He offers you. Promise Him that you will frequent the Sacraments, be faithful in assisting at Holy Mass, and be present whenever you can at any public devotions in honour of Our Lady. Promise you will place no obstacle to the sanctifying power of Him who is ever wrapping us round with His eternal love, longing to lead us willing captives to the joys of His jubilant Home.

TRINITY SUNDAY

" Oh the depths of the riches of the wisdom of God ! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable are His ways ! " (Romans xi, 33.)

THE word " revelation " means the discovery of something that was not known before, or the making clear something that was obscure. The Christian Revelation abounds in mysteries. By mysteries, I mean *truths* which are imperfectly comprehended. A doctrine which *contradicts* reason is not a mystery : it is nonsense : a doctrine which is unintelligible is not a mystery : it is simply unmeaning. A doctrine which is in part comprehended, and in part not, is a mystery.

Now in Christianity we meet such mysteries on every side. The Sacraments are mysteries ; grace is a mystery. The Person of Christ is a mystery. And, above all, the doctrine we commemorate to-day—the Most Holy Trinity—is a mystery : the Relationship which exists in God whereby the Three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are united eternally in the *undivided unity* of the Divine Essence.

Mysteries, dear Brethren, are necessary attendants on Religion. There can be no Revelation without them. There can indeed be no *knowledge* without them.

To a little child the earth is a plane of no very great extent—and the stars are lamps hung in the canopy of the night. But, as he grows older he learns that the earth is

very big: and that the stars are very far off, and that there are many systems of worlds above us. As he gets on with his schooling he is introduced to many questions, as, for example—What is the history of this universe? How old is this earth which we inhabit? Are the stars inhabited? He finds that science gives him some little satisfaction: but he finds too that for every question she sets at rest—there are many new ones she raises: and at last in every department of science there comes a point where she gropes, and loses her way, and stops altogether.

If you light a candle in a large room, it casts a bright light on the table you are sitting at, and on the pages of the book you are reading—but gives only a dim light in the distance. You see there are pictures on the walls, but you cannot discover their subjects. You see there are books on the shelves, but cannot read their titles. When the room was quite dark you did not know they were there at all, and now you know them imperfectly. So every light which knowledge kindles brings out a new set of mysteries or half-knowledges.

Hence you find a truly scientific man talks carefully. The loud-talking philosopher—who has no difficulties—has no depth of knowledge. He is clear because he is shallow. But a highly educated man *knows* there are many things he is ignorant of—and therefore his language is modified and qualified. He knows that truth is boundless as the sea. When he forgets this—when he forgets how much he is ignorant of—when he is boastful, overpositive and inconsiderate in his statements, how applicable to him becomes God's reproof to Job:

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if thou hast understanding. Upon what are its bases grounded? or who laid the corner-stone thereof? By what way is light spread, and heat divided on the

earth ? Who is the father of the rain, or who hath begotten the drops of dew ? Dost thou know the order of heaven, and canst thou set down the reason thereof on the earth ? Tell me if thou knowest these things ? "

This is an appeal to our knowledge of common, ordinary things. And if it is so scant can we be surprised that our limited understanding is baffled by religious knowledge ?

Reason teaches us that there is a God, and it tells us something of His nature. But it speaks to us about Him only in riddles. God is unchangeable—yet He is perfectly free—who shall reconcile these together. God is Infinite—Infinite in Essence—infinite in all His attributes—try to comprehend Infinitude if you can.

Again, what a mystery there is in the creation of the world and all it contains—out of nothing ! What a mystery is the union in man of matter and spirit—matter which shall perish and spirit which shall never die ! Everywhere mystery is the necessary accompaniment of knowledge : and the more we know, the more mysteries will we have.

If then God reveals to us anything about Himself—additional to that which reason can ascertain—mystery must still be the consequence. It is revealed to us that in God—without injury to His simplicity—there is a threefold Relationship. There are three distinct Persons united in One Divine Essence—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. That the Father, contemplating Himself from all eternity, has conceived a perfect Image of Himself—and that this Image is His Son, consubstantial and co-eternal with Himself : and that the Father and the Son have loved each other with a mutual, eternal love—and that this Love is the Holy Ghost—that thus the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are Three distinct, eternal necessary Subsistences, existing in one ever adorable Essence of divinity.

Well does the prophet exclaim "Verily, Thou art a hidden God—the God of Israel—the Saviour!" It cannot be otherwise. And in consequence we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection. The time will come in Heaven when, by the light of glory, our intellects shall be marvellously strengthened, and we shall see Him "as He is"—but now we must be content to see as through a glass darkly.

On this Feast of the Most Holy Trinity we should exercise ourselves in profound adoration and in humblest fear of God. Think of the great God receiving homage from all outside Himself—because He is an Infinite God—Infinite in all perfections. And of all His perfections—the attributes of holiness is that in which He takes most delight. It is by proclaiming His holiness that men bless Him on earth, and Angels praise Him in Heaven. Holy, Holy, Holy, is the never-ending hymn in Heaven. It is Holiness alone which God esteems, loves, and rewards. He hates and punishes nothing but sin—which is contrary to His holiness.

Let us endeavour to make our thoughts, words, plans, and actions holy and worthy of the esteem, love and rewards of Almighty God. Let us ask the Adorable Trinity—the Father Who made us, the Son Who redeemed us—the Holy Ghost Who has sanctified us, to strengthen the Faith that is in us—and give us grace ever to live in loving humble Fear and in complete dependence upon the Infinitely Holy God.

FIRST SUNDAY IN MAY

"DEVOTION TO MARY THE GREAT GIFT OF JESUS."

THERE is much in the world to make us sad if we give ourselves to serious thinking and compare things as they are with what they might be. Yet there is no truly devout Catholic who cannot help feeling a certain jubilee of heart in thinking that the Month of God's Mother has now begun, that each day of it is bringing more and more glory to God and more help to the Church, because millions upon millions of souls in every clime and of every blood, are daily growing in deep reverence and deeper love for the Blessed Virgin, the Immaculate Mother of God.

Oh, that we had it in our power to meet day by day throughout this month of blessing and refresh our spirit with discourse upon the mighty Queen of Heaven and thereby grow full of that sweet enthusiasm of Jesus, Whose natural outburst is devotion to His dearest Mother.

If there is anything that helps to diminish the drabness of life, it is the mutual intercourse of friends. Friendship is often cemented by a bestowal of gifts or a readiness to share what we have with our friend. There is always great pleasure in receiving gifts, especially gifts from those we love. And if this is true of human gift giving, what must be the pleasure of receiving gifts from God. Yet, dear Brethren, all life is this. But Our Blessed Lord says it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive. And if it is always a huge pleasure to the generous-hearted to give,

how immense must be the pleasure of God in bestowing His gifts momentarily upon us, and without which we could not exist.

The gifts of Jesus.

Our Blessed Lord spent much of the time of His public ministry in giving gifts to men : His gifts were priceless—surpassing in value those that might be bestowed by the most generous of friends. And hence arose a peculiar sweetness in receiving gifts from Jesus. His gift-giving did not cease with His earthly life. His bounty has been poured out upon His friends in favour either of body or soul ever since, either in answer to fervent, persevering prayer, or directly by Himself abiding in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

But He has *one* gift, an immense gift—of huge importance for time, and still more important for eternity. And not only an immense gift, but a choice one, one that He gives most of to His dearest Saints—one that was and is a part of His own heart and character—and one which He is not so much ready to give us, as intensely burning to give us.

This gift is the grace to love His Blessed Mother ! If we did but prize and value this grace as we ought to prize it, as He Himself prizes it, we should be already half-way to Heaven, because we should have ensured our final perseverance.

It is the characteristic grace of Jesus : because He would give us such a gift :

As would make us love Himself most.

As would make us most like to Him.

As would most honour His Blessed Mother.

As would be most advantageous to ourselves.

As would make Him love us most.

All these things are combined in the love of Mary.

Surely, dear Brethren, it is not only an intense joy, but the real perfection of human happiness to resemble Jesus ! How then ought we to cultivate and multiply this queenly grace of loving Mary ? Happy indeed are you who have it : happier still are you who greatly prize it : and happiest of all are you who are all on fire with it : for it is a fire which Jesus Himself has kindled in your hearts.

Love of Mary is the fair light of eternity, the sensible touch of God, the golden prophecies of a happy death, the cheerful security of a joyous judgment. Happy the souls who are blessed with this gift of Jesus—and may God be praised for their abounding happiness. But unhappy are those souls—the most unfortunate of men—most unfortunate at least of all men who are not yet the victims of the eternal prison—those who have not this devotion. There is much *on* earth, which bears, and rightly too, the title of misfortune : but of all God's creatures upon earth, they are the most unfortunate who have no devotion to God's Mother.

Dear Brethren, there can be no repentance in Heaven—otherwise when we see Mary we shall wish we had known her better and prayed to her oftener, and loved her more. For we shall see brighter places than our own, further forward in the glory of Heaven, where we might have been had we loved Her more and served Her better.

THE SACRED HEART

" Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath done great things : shew 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."
(Isaias xii, 5–6.)

The Image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a compendium of the two great mysteries : the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Redemption of the human race. It is the figure of God the Son made Man, in the full and perfect development of the human body He had assumed in His Incarnation and His hands and feet and side and heart are pierced with gaping wounds, the signs of His Passion, the pledges of our redemption.

In consequence of a sweet revelation made by Christ Himself, the figure has in later times been completed by the exposure upon His Breast of His divine heart, that tender depository of His love, that sacred urn of flesh, which contained the precious Blood and distributed it throughout His adorable body and gave it forth in the Blood-sheddings for the redemption of mankind.

In the endearment of Christian devotion to Jesus Christ, it is ever our feeble endeavour to mark this representation with every delineament of human perfection, to give it dignity and beauty, to make it winning and attractive, even to encompass it with divine fascination.

The attitude is that of supreme condescension, while

the laying bare of His Divine Heart, all radiant upon His breast, is a silent appeal for our love, and an invitation for us to accept of His.

Words are not needed to express the desires of the Sacred Heart. But the Church has associated with this touching representation of our merciful Lord and Saviour, those comforting words of the Gospel: "Come to me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls."

He, dear Brethren, was the blest Creator of the world. With the Father and the Holy Ghost, He had created the vast Universe. He had built up the earth, poured out the oceans, and distributed the lights in the heavens above.

His own creatures had rebelled against the laws established in the counsels of divine Providence, and were doomed to perish eternally. On no compulsion whatsoever, but by love alone, He Who was the Image of the Father and the Figure of His Substance descended from Light Supernal and assumed our mortal flesh.

His mission into this world was to sinners, to those labouring and heavy laden with sin, to those who needed refreshment and rest to their souls. He came to effect the world's Redemption, which is simply the recovering of creation's lost birthright, the bringing back of joy to a sorrowing world. For what is the end of creation, but that creatures may enter into the joy of their Lord? He loved the entire mighty work of His creation; He loved His creatures both animate and inanimate. But human hearts, won back from wickedness and cleansed from sin, are the jewels He covets for His crown.

We, dear Brethren, look upon the sinfulness of the world and the wickedness of sinners, and our view, as a rule, is dark and depressing. But God's view of the world and

sinners is very different. We see externals only; but the heart which God sees is often much better than the actions we see, so the world is less dismal than it seems.

Christ came to seek and to save what was lost, and the more lost a soul was, the more especially He came to seek it and to save it. His predilection was for sinners. He seemed to prefer the society of sinners to any other: and all Holy as He was, it is wonderful how He contrived at once to exhibit His own perfect holiness and the peculiar attraction of His Sacred Heart for sinners. Those sinners who came nearest to Him often became His most chosen friends. Their memories are a joy to us, for His way with them fills us with confidence in the mercies of our loving Saviour. Be your sins, dear Brethren, multiplied as the stars of Heaven, never despair of pardon: for, from the wound in your Saviour's side, there flows from His Heart a perennial stream, in which you may wash away your sordid stains in the chastening Blood of the Lamb.

Never did our merciful Saviour speak harshly to a sinner who acknowledged his guilt. To the confession of the Prodigal Son—"I have sinned against Heaven: I am not worthy to be called thy son!"—Jesus answers: "Make haste and bring the first robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his finger 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, he was lost and is found."

What more touching than his tender compassion towards her, who, for her crime, was brought in ignominy to His feet. Dark and deadly was her guilt—so dark that human pride shrank from her in horror, and Scribe and Pharisee full of their pretended righteousness stood aloof, lest perchance her presence might contaminate them. And Jesus, the All Holy God, He before whose awful sanctity

the Seraphim stand veiled, how does He act? Does He, too, turn in abhorrence from the sinner, who, in an agony of shame and terror, crouches at His feet?

The Heart of Jesus understood as none other could the appalling enormity of sin. But among His divine attributes one there was which shone pre-eminently—His mercy. He, Who is rich in mercy, speaks, but not to reproach. He pronounces her sentence. You know it, dear Brethren: "Has no man condemned thee? Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more!"

Then consider the triumph of grace wrought in the soul of her who was the wicked and notorious sinner of the city. Glorying in the power of her sinful fascination, she parades the streets in the elegance and haughtiness of her beauty and her charms, the jewels sparkling in her hair, throwing shameless glances around her with sin in every look and gesture. She goes to defy the power of the Great Preacher, who is so strongly moving men's minds and conquering all hearts. A fitting subject indeed for the mercy of the Sacred Heart!

With the suddenness of the lightning flash, a change comes over her, as she comes into His presence and fixes her eyes upon Him and hears the music of His voice. One look alone, like to that converting glance cast on Peter, He directs towards her. She is conscious of the penetration of that glance piercing into the most secret recesses of her sin-laden heart, and discovering to Himself while equally revealing unto her the degradation and corruption of her abandoned soul. Convinced He saw and knew her inmost soul in all the appalling horror of her heaped-up crimes, and, lighting up her own intelligence to know and acknowledge her iniquity, her former exultation in her sinful power abandons her, the blush of shame rises to her cheeks, and her proud heart is crushed within her. He, whose mere

look saw her as she was and showed her what He was, must be none other than the Searcher of hearts. She felt, besides the manifestation of her guilt, an invitation to open acknowledgment and generous pardon. Publicly had she sinned, publicly would she atone and seek forgiveness.

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking," and a Pharisee had invited Him to a banquet. She knew He would be there. Among the guests may have been some who had been accomplices in her guilt. These she would make the witnesses of her humiliation and atonement. Armlets and jewels and costly attire she threw aside, and, covering herself in a penitential garb with her hair flowing in disorder from her head, she makes her way as she had never walked before, in breathless speed like a soul in chase, to the hall in the Pharisee's house.

In astonishment and confusion the eyes of all are turned on the intruder as she boldly enters the room and looks for the chief guest of the banquet. She is drawn to Him like a spell. Silently and fearlessly she makes towards Him, Who to all appearances, is unconcerned about her presence; while in truth His Sacred Heart is palpitating with joy unspeakable at the progress of the conversion, and pouring out upon her copious streams of grace enabling her to accomplish the reparation she has begun. She crouches down behind Him and creeps to His Sacred Feet. Fearing to delay, she ventures to impress a kiss upon them with her polluted lips; she pours her precious unguent upon them, filling the hall with its odour, and her deluge of tears having coursed down upon them, with her dishevelled hair she wipes them.

Not a face in that room but expresses disdain at the Prophet who submits thus to the administrations of a harlot! But He, rejoicing to confound the proud conceit of their heart, and to exalt the humble, commands them all to

" look upon that woman." And speaking to the host He said: " Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house. Thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she with tears hath wiped them. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with ointment 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. And He said to the woman: Thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace." (Luke, viii.)

See, too, how He tries to soften the heart of Judas by an appeal to their friendship. " My friend," He says to him, " whereto art thou come? " When He finds that the miserable man will neither repent of, nor confess his crime, a cry escapes from His Divine Heart: but it is a cry of love, the wail of a despairing Mother at being unable to save a Son: " Judas, dost thou betray thy brother, the Son of Man, with a kiss? "

To the thief who blasphemes Him, Jesus makes no reply; and the moment He confesses his sins, the Redeemer addresses to him those words, brief, but full of consolation: " Amen, I say to thee, this day, this very day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

Such, dear Brethren, are the manifestations He gave to real sinners, to sinners like ourselves, of the wondrous love and compassion of His Sacred Heart, to sinners who were privileged to see Him in the likeness of our sinful flesh.

But that Heart pined for a perpetual manifestation of His love. And that its love might remain perenially fresh He contrived to create a presence among His own that were in the world, that by it He might proclaim the truth of His assurance that, unto the end of the world, He loved them. The divine Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist was the outcome of the love of the Sacred Heart. And in

this Blessed Sacrament, His manifestations of love supersede a thousand, thousand times the wondrous deeds of mercy which marked His three and thirty years.

He craved for dominion over human affections, and for the possession of all hearts. He understood the feebleness of a human nature, and the violent incursions made upon the souls of His creatures by the devil, the world, and the flesh. To counteract this triple evil influence one only hope remained, and that was by rendering sacred the bodies and souls of His creatures, not merely by presence with them, but also by union ; dispelling by His brightness the ministers of darkness and giving robust strength and sustaining help to the poor wayfarer, enfeebled by enemies from within and from without.

And is it not evident from the mythology of the ancients that it is natural to man to crave after union with the deity ? For among the ancient heathen, sanctification was supposed to be effected by partaking of the sacrificial victims. And how this natural craving is appeased in the Blessed Sacrament, they know best who love the Sacred Heart.

What a vision do not the Angels behold at Holy Mass, when devout hearts, clarified by sacramental penance, full of a sense of their own nothingness and sinfulness, are disposing themselves for the Sacred Banquet ? And when He at length comes into their souls, they witness the allaying of fear and the outpouring of tranquil joy, and the silencing of the world, and they see the speechless soul struck dumb by the beautifulness of God. They see, to the joy of Jesus, God satisfied by the fulfilment of His Heart's desire in being enthroned King and Master of the human heart. True indeed the vision to angelic eyes soon fades away, and the sanctified creature returns to the distracting cares and duties of the day ; but the radiance of the morning's glory diffuses its light around the

communicant, whithersoever his duties take him. These are the happy souls, frail and feeble, sometimes falling, but ever amending and never despairing, reconciled to their tender Saviour a thousand times over by that sweetness of His words: "Go, and now sin no more."

But:

> "Summunt boni, summunt mali
> Sorte tamen inaequali.
> Vitae vel interitus.
>
> "The gift is shared by all, yet tends
> In bad and good to differing ends
> Of blessing or of woe."

The devotion of the Sacred Heart is a manifestation of His pity, tenderness, compassion, and mercy to sinners and to penitents. But its chief characteristic is His disappointment at the returns we make for so much love.

And where does He experience so much disappointment as in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar? I will not speak now of the horrors of human ingratitude, the story of disbelief among Christians outside the fold, and of the wanton neglect, sometimes of sacrilege of those within. Suffice it to say that the adorable heart of Christ was saturated enough with human ingratitude in His life on earth. And who of us is there who cannot by the grace He gives us break our league with sin and Satan, and make our hearts worthy of His perpetual divine companionship?

Must it not grieve Him, too, to enter a heart, once in childhood's days His fair and spotless tabernacle, and now violently stripped, by a hasty confession, of hideous monsters lately dwelling there, and soon again He knows to be the den of ravening wolves. He was dragged through the courtyard of Annas, He was mocked in the Hall of Herod, He was tried in the house of Caiphas, He was

condemned at the tribunal of Pilate ! Why should we repeat these indignities in the heart He longs to make His home ? And is it hard to establish the Kingdom of God within you, when He, the Lord Himself, supplies you with the means ?

Ages before He came had the promise been made : " You shall draw waters of joy from the Saviour's fountains." The cleansing waters of sacramental penance are ever open to you, and the sustaining draught of His Precious Blood, flowing through His Sacred Heart into the depths of your souls, is given to you in the Sacred Host. And day by day, and every day, you may make these sacred draughts your own.

Thanks be to God, dear Brethren, you have this beautiful Church, this tabernacle of His Divine Majesty, in which you assemble to pay homage to God, the King of Kings. The resting place of the Lord's feet is a sacred place. And well might we tremble when we cross the threshold of this House of God and remember the daring and brutal array of our multiplied crimes against the God of glory. But, fear not, dear Brethren. He says to you from the Tabernacle, as He said to His disciples of old, " It is I, be not afraid. Come to me all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Prove your gratitude for the mercies of our Blessed Lord, by frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and by the frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. Thus will you bring down the fullest blessing of the Sacred Heart as a perennial font of grace, enabling you to advance in holiness, as also in material progress and prosperity, and keeping you in a state of preparedness to meet in judgment your merciful Saviour, and to receive the plentiful reward He has prepared in Heaven for the lovers of His Sacred Heart.

THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

" And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."
(Luke i, 76.)

In human life the day of birth with its anniversary always counts as an important event. In a family, it is the chief day on which special marks of affection and esteem are given. In a nation, those who rule, and are conspicuous for heroism or greatness are greeted and honoured upon this day as it recurs.

We might have thought that the Church would have disapproved of this practice, and would have told her children that the day of baptism, not of birth, was the proper day of rejoicing. Yet, she has not said this. She knows that God loves the world, the earth He has created and blessed, the inhabitants with whom He peoples it. She knows that the new-born naked little savage has the Creator for its Father in Heaven, and the lifting up of its little hands may be counted as an unconscious thanksgiving for the gift of life.

The Church, however, has another day on which to celebrate the better birth of her children in the better land of bliss. It is on their entrance into the land of the Blessed that she rejoices in their nativity, and calls on us to keep their birthday, and share her joy in the glory of the Saints.

Only in the case of three does she celebrate the birthday

of a natural life, because the supernatural life of grace accompanied its entrance into our world.

These days are, the Birthday of Our Lord, the Fountain of all grace: the Birthday of His Blessed Mother Mary, full of grace: and the Birthday of St. John the Baptist, His precursor, who was sanctified by grace in his mother's womb, before he saw the light.

We celebrate the Nativity of St. John the Baptist to-day, and cannot reflect on the happy appearance in the world of this prophet of the Most High, this herald of redemption, without recalling the marvellous sanctification wrought within his soul while he was yet an infant in his mother's womb.

Our thoughts on this day are carried back to the early pages of the Gospel where are recorded the mysterious announcements by Angels of the approaching birth of a child who was to be the Prince of Peace, and of another who was to make Him known to men.

Jesus, the Son of God, had taken up his abode in Mary's bosom. Her increasing sanctification and adornment and that of St. Joseph had been his main delightful work since the first moment of His conception.

But now, rejoicing like a giant prepared to run His course, He will signalize His advent by a work of redeeming grace, which should be second to none but the Immaculate Conception, unless indeed the same unrevealed privilege had been accorded to St. Joseph. Hidden in his mother's bosom—like himself there is another unborn child, some six months older than himself, Who in reality is the Eternal God.

This other child has been from everlasting elected to mighty things. He has been chosen to be Our Lord's precursor. His destiny is so great that hitherto no man born of woman has had a greater: and in some sense therefore it was greater than St. Joseph's. God pressed St.

Joseph more closely to Himself, as a mother almost hides her child in her bosom by the closeness of her embrace: while the Baptist was more held forth at arm's length to men, that they might see his light, and his light shine full and free upon them.

This child is one of God's most beautiful elections. But at the present moment he lies in darkness. The stain of original sin is on that soul which is capable of such a mighty indwelling of divine light. He is in the power of the evil one. God's great enemy has a kind of dominion in him, and by the common law of things, he must be born before his fetters can be broken, and he can be free to fly and nestle in the bosom of his Creator.

God has never yet conferred these blessings before the time of birth for anyone included in the decree of sin, unless it was for the prophet Jeremias, and for St. Joseph.

By a wonderful forestalling of mercy, the unborn Jesus will now go and redeem the Baptist gloriously, while he too is yet unborn.

Like a new pulse of impetuous gladness the Child in Mary's bosom drives her forth. With swift step, the Mother traverses the hills of Juda, while St. Joseph follows her in an amazement of revering love. Like Jesus walking swiftly to His Passion so the modest Virgin sped onward to the dwelling of Elizabeth in Hebron.

The Everlasting Word within trembled in the tone of His Mother's voice—and the other babe heard it, "And leaped in his mother's womb," and the chains of Original Sin fell off from him, and he was justified by redeeming grace, and the full use of reason was given him, and he made acts of love such as never patriarch or prophet yet had made: and he was at once raised to a dazzling height of sanctity: and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost thrilled his mother at the moment, and she was filled with God,

and her first act was a worshipful recognition of the Mother of God. And all these miracles were accomplished before the accents of Mary's voice had died away upon the air.

Straightaway the Word of God arose within His Mother's Bosom, and enthroned Himself upon her sinless heart, and borrowing her voice, He sang the unfathomable Magnificat out of whose depths music has gone on streaming upon the enchanted earth ever since.

As Jesus comes to us, so also He came to John, through Mary. In the sweet sound of Mary's voice came the secret power of the Infant Redeemer's absolving grace. From behind the veil John worshipped Him who had absolved him from Original Sin, had broken his fetters, filled him with eminent holiness, and anointed him to be His own immediate precursor.

He was to prepare the way for the Child to be born in a stable at Bethlehem. His light was to fade as the light of Jesus grew fuller in the sight of men. Strange tenant of the wilderness, in uncouth apparel, companion of angels and of wild beasts, a feeder on savage food—he was to be hidden from the gaze of men during the long first years of his life, just as his own forerunner Elias was to be through the long centuries of his closing life up to the very scenes which shall herald the coming Judgment.

He was bidden to be Our Lord's Superior, and with all humility, he argued against his own elevation, and bowed only to the gentle command of Him who sought baptism at his hands and gave for others a cleansing sacramental power to the water that could but simulate ablution to His spotless soul.

His was a hermit spirit, cradled in the solitudes of the desert, not chafed evermore by the crowding of uncongenial men. He was a light that burned as well as shone, and of

him it was that the Incarnate Word declared that none born of woman had yet been so great as he.

Christian art has loved to depict the Infant Jesus and St. John as children together. With what haste would not St. John press into the presence of Jesus, his soul bounding with the exultation of his sinless sanctity, his heart overflowing with speechless gratitude, feasting his eyes on the beauty of that Face, while the mother's accent in the Child's voice thrilled through his whole being, like the keen piercings of an ecstasy. Yet how, while he ran forward with all this in his soul, would it not be arrested all at once and changed to something unspeakably higher, as he called to mind Our Lord's divinity. He would tremble with delighted awe, while he felt the streams of grace flooding his glorious soul from the nearness of the Divine Child.

Exultation, gratitude, generosity with God, a magnificent indifference to earthly things—these were obviously the characteristics of John's devotion to the Word made flesh.

Happy they who catch his spirit! Happy they on whom God bestows an especial attraction to this resplendent Saint.

Attraction to St. John the Baptist is one of the ways which lead to Jesus, and a way of His own appointment, and upon which a peculiar blessing rests.

He was chosen to prepare men's hearts to be thrones of their Lord. It was he who laid the foundations of the College of the Apostles in Peter and Andrew and John who were his disciples.

Attractiveness was hung around the Baptist like a spell. And in what did it consist?

Doubtless in gifts of nature as well as grace; for such is God's way. Yet, it is difficult to see in what it resided. As the world counts things he was an uncouth man. The

savage air of the wilderness affected his rugged sweetness. His austerity might have driven men away from him either as an example or a teacher. His teaching was ungrateful to corrupt nature. It was reforming, unsparing, and dealt mainly in condemnation. His manner was vehement, abrupt, and singularly without respect of persons. Yet, all men gathered near him, even while he taught that his teaching was not final, that his mission was but a preparation, and that he was not the deliverer whom they sought.

All classes, trades, ranks, and professions fluttered round him, like moths round the candle—sure to be scorched by his severity, yet whether they would or not, attracted to his light.

Now, *what could* his attraction be but the spirit of exultation, of generosity, of unearthliness, of the freshness of abounding grace. The whole being of that austere man was overflowed with gladness. Before he was born it was said of him that at his birth men would rejoice: and yet there seemed no obvious reason why it should be so. When he first heard the sound of Mary's voice, he leaped with exultation, with joy, in his mother's womb. It was the gladness of grace. It was the triumph of redeeming love. It was the first and freshest victory of the Prince of Peace.

When his ears were first opened, the sounds that smote them were from Mary singing her Magnificat. How could a life ever know sadness that had so joyous, so musical a beginning? In very childhood he went away into the wilderness, lest the world should break the charm that was around his soul. He who did no miracles was himself a miracle.

As Elias is hidden now on some bare, cloud-capped mountain, or in the shades of unknown groves, wearing out in ecstasies his expectant age, so John, who was successor

and forerunner of Elias, was hidden in the wilderness, alluring angels to the desert spot, soothing the fierce natures of the beasts, making himself insensible to the tyranny of the elements and nurturing his soul in spiritual grandeur. Innocent as he was, he would do penances as if he were a sinner, partly because he would not be outdone in generosity by God, and partly because the spirit of God led him, like the Holy Child, to love hardships and espouse poverty.

Such was the child of the Precious Blood, whose unborn soul had been steeped in the beauty of the Magnificat. Such was the fair creation of grace which the Infant Creator made in one instant through the sound of His Mother's voice.

Happy they who, by a special devotion to him, make themselves the special companions of him who was the companion of the Infant Jesus.

As to his Mission to the voluptuous world he came to, there was nothing to commend him. There was his wild appearance, his ignorance of human learning, his austere preaching of penance, his making no distinction between high and low, simple and learned. And yet the whole world was attracted by his marvellous power as by a magnet.

And what were the causes of his power, but his truckling to no human respect, his preaching to the heart, his supernatural austerities, and his interior union with God.

We, dear Brethren, like St. John, have been created for a destiny. We have a mission, a vocation ; and each of us in the discharge of the work God intends us to do may take St. John for our model. In our own degree we are prepared by light from Heaven, and by the grace of God, for the fulfilment of our destiny, humble though it may be even as St. John was prepared by God for his.

We shall accomplish the end of our creation if we ever live up to high principles, if we cultivate purity of heart, if we live lives of faith, realizing the invisible world, and aim at love of prayer and union with God.

This will give us power with God not only to draw down His mercies upon ourselves, but to influence and lead others by example unto God, making ourselves thus heralds of Redemption to others, even as St. John has been to us.

FEAST OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL

THE thoughts of every Catholic to-day are carried away to the City of Rome, the Capital of the Christian World, and also to the days when Jesus went among the streets of Palestine and along the shores of the lakes, with one divine purpose ripening in His Sacred Heart—to found, by His life and by His death, a living Church, which, when the clouds of heaven would have hidden away from the eyes of men the glory of His transfigured face, might stand before the world as His representative, might bear on her unwrinkled brow the crown of His beauty and power, and in her heart that tender affection for men that burned within His own.

And He cast His eyes around Him for men who might be worthy instruments for so great a purpose, and above all, for one man, who would be of such heroic mould as to bear upon him the whole weight of the structure, which His divine hand would build for the salvation of men.

He wanted a man to whom His Divine wisdom could say: "Thou art not a wavering heart which the world can turn away from a high purpose, over which the flesh can throw the spell of its allurements, which the devil can surprise and conquer in an hour of weakness." No. "Thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

And such a man Jesus found, engaged in his fisher's toil on Lake Tiberias, seeking his daily bread from the uncertain waves, and finding full scope for all the energies of which

he was conscious, in just as lowly an employment as can possibly fall to the lot of anyone who is here to-day.

Such a man he found in Simon, and He laid his hand upon him, and drew him from the crowd, and turned his feet away from the narrow path through which his boyhood and youth had led him on to manhood, and placed him among the press of men upon the highways of the world, placed him on a throne, so lifted above the thrones of earth, that his name could never be forgotten.

From that eastern land St. Peter came to Rome, then the mistress of the world—the ruler far and wide of land and sea : rich with the spoils of many a land, rich in the homage of many a nation, and rich, above all, in the historic glories of a thousand years of conquest and of Empire.

Small stir his coming made. Never a one who met the undistinguished stranger who bore upon his brow the bronze of an eastern sun, and who came travel-stained and way-worn, and passed to the city along the Appian way : never a one dreamed for a moment that he bore in his apostolic heart the destinies of the world.

Imagine St. Peter and St. Paul standing at the gates of mighty Rome—the poor, hoary fisherman, and the tent-maker, in their outlandish, uncouth garbs, looking through the lines of ferocious guards into its hard, uncongenial heart. Patricians and ladies of high rank, senators and other dignified officials, corrupted citizens, steeped in idleness and luxury : philosophers and sophists, orators and poets, with an imperial court uniting every element of man's highest powers and attainments. Such are the inhabitants : while every material object exhibits grandeur or beauty, whatever can excite admiration or inspire attachment to things of earth.

It is to these men that they are sent, to induce them to uproot and cast off attachment to all these things.

They enter the city in humility, but filled with the indomitable bravery of Christ, in stout reliance on the comforting words of their Captain: "Fear not, little flock, for it hath well pleased your Father to give you a kingdom."

Who in all the throng that coursed through the streets of Rome on the day that the two Apostles passed through its gates thought that in spite of persecutions unparalleled in history, levelled by the powers of mighty Emperors against them, they were to survive the horrors of refined cruelty, and not only that, but that they would dethrone the Cæsars, build there the centre of Christ's Empire and establish themselves upon the throne of the Eternal City.

For three long centuries the Roman Emperors carried on a most brutal series of persecutions against Christianity. When the people tired of the gladiatorial combats and a novel turn was required, Christianity formed a new use for the circus. Old men and venerable matrons, young boys and little maidens were led into the arena. The wild beasts of the forests let loose upon them sometimes crouched down at their feet, as if held back by an invisible hand. At other times they sprang upon them and produced a general carnage which drew forth the frantic applause of 80,000 spectators surrounding the imperial chair.

Every public calamity, every popular trouble was attributed to the Christians, as the revilers of the national gods. As Tertullian puts it: "If the Tiber rises over its banks, if the Nile does not overflow, if the skies above are not clear, if the earth quakes, if war and pestilence come, up goes the cry at once, 'The Christians to the lions!'"

For three whole centuries every convert to Christianity had to run the risk of popular hatred and infamy, confiscation of property, tortures, and death; and an innumerable number of martyrs of every age and sex and condition have

triumphantly stood this test. Instead of diminishing, Christianity spread all the more rapidly. And the fact that it did so is a grand historical proof of its divinity.

While all this persecution was going forward, beneath the surface of that mighty Rome a power had been at work that was to supplant the Empire that had gathered round itself the glories of a thousand years. That power was in the hands of Peter. Peter and the first Popes had no earthly power: but they had a power, greater than which, then or now, there is no power on earth. They had the power of supernatural truth; and one thing they knew well—they knew how to suffer and to die for truth and for Christ. Accordingly Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the first Pope, consecrated for all time the Papal Chair by dyeing it in the crimson of a martyr's blood. Within the walls of Rome, he was crucified with his head downwards; while the head of St. Paul was severed from his body at Trefontane a few miles distant from the city walls.

Simon died, but Peter never dies! Peter lived on in his successors: and they, grasping his sceptre, seized also on the spirit with which his hands had swayed it. And they too had learned well the lesson, how to die for God and God's people and God's holy Church. For two hundred and fifty years every successor of St. Peter, every Bishop of Rome, died a martyr's death.

The great and glorious City of Rome had its day, and then tottered to its fall. The later Emperors deserted the city, and left their people a prey to fierce barbarians who swarmed from the German forests and the northern shores. The people in their desolation turned to the one power that could save them. And so in those wild, lawless days uprose the temporal sovereignty of the Popes. In course of time the modern city began to appear. The modern city respected the ruins of the ancient city and

spared the unhallowed walls, whose chief plea for mercy was their tottering age.

Let human pride and ambition wander awhile among the remains of Ancient Rome, and they may learn a useful lesson.

The old dull piles of bricks and rubbish were once the residence of the conquerors and rulers of the earth: this heap of dusty ruins was once the capital city of the world; not merely of the surrounding territories, but equally of all other countries, nations, and races.

Rome was The City—the central seat of government, and the whole world was to receive the edicts she sent forth. She resisted her Christian conquerors with all the resources that man can command or devil suggest.

Heathen Rome is now no more: its Empire is ended, its wars are over, its slaves set free, its monuments, the Capitol, the Forum, the Palace of the Cæsars, the Baths of Caracalla are all in ruins, sullen and desolate.

These crumbling walls are relics rather than ruins, and for this they are venerated that they were sprinkled with martyrs' blood. The shifting sands of the silent Colosseum have been wet and crimsoned with the sacred tide, for this sacred spot was the first battlefield of the Church where, during three hundred years, countless martyrs gained their crowns and where so many Sovereign Pontiffs successively laid down their meek lives for the flock bequeathed by Peter to their care.

With a veneration which is indescribable the Christian pilgrim from distant lands wends his way about this City of the Saints, with his mind almost driven to distraction by what he beholds at every turn of the weakness of human strength, and the woeful overthrow of human greatness; and the strength of the Church of God, the imperishability of Rock-built Christian Rome, the city of supernatural

destinies, proclaimed by the voice of the wilderness surrounding her to be in very deed the Capital of the World.

It is 1900 years since Peter died. The pilgrim can stand to-day upon the place of his martyrdom, can see some of the things which Peter saw when he looked his last on earth, but can see more than these.

There are the purple outlines of the Alban hills in the soft distance, the bare Campagna stretching between, so lonely and so desolate, that it might well seem the sepulchre of the buried greatness of pagan Rome.

But nearer still, the City lies below—and how changed. The Cross is on the summit of the Capitol, and at its foot the Mammertime Prison is, now, one of the most sacred spots in Rome : and above the countless domes of the Sacred City, rises the one that has well been called a miracle, that throws its vast span over the tomb of Peter, in that grandest temple that man has ever raised in memory of a martyr, and to the honour of the martyr's God.

Crowning the Vatican Hill is this gorgeous basilica of St. Peter, exemplifying the Church of Christ, built upon a Rock, and in and around the city about her rise the smallest domes and pinnacles of 430 churches : while the triumphal arches and amphitheatres, thermal halls, the palaces and temples of Ancient Rome, her persecutor, sleep tranquilly in ruins at her feet.

Standing on the steps of St. Peter's

> " Full in the panting heart of Rome
> Beneath the Apostle's crowning dome,"

the eye turns fondly to the palace of the Vatican on the left, and the mind is filled with loving thoughts of Peter's successor in the person of Pius XI.

To that spot the eyes of the Universal Church will turn to-day, and to him who abides near the place where Peter

died, his aged heart made heavy by the wickedness of men. And from every heart shall rise a fervent prayer for him who sits on Peter's Chair: that God may bless him, our Father and King.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

" If therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother : and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift."
(Matt. v, 23–24).

BEFORE Our Blessed Lord came into the world, it was considered the correct thing to resent injuries. But He came and promulgated a new doctrine : " Love your enemies : do good to them that hate you : and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."

With the coming of Christ, the world received a new light ; and in that light the reign of Christian forbearance had its rise. Not only were we taught to show kindness and consideration to our friends, which is an easy thing, but we were commanded to love our enemies—which is a hard thing. Now we who are trying to follow Our Blessed Lord may ask ourselves this very day if we are striving to fashion our lives according to His teaching.

It is very likely that at some time of our life we suffered an injury, either real or imaginary : and we experienced feelings of anger and resentment—and a desire to wreak vengeance on the offender. Meanwhile, morning and night we knelt beside our bed, and said " Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

Now how can anyone who appreciates the meaning of these words harbour feelings of resentment in his heart ?

We ask God to forgive us in the same way we forgive others —and if we are unwilling to forgive others, how can we expect God to forgive us? No one who realizes the meaning of the "Our Father" can look to God for mercy if he is unwilling to show mercy to one who has offended him.

Whoever prays to God in this way while he remains unforgiving towards any human being, invokes not mercy, but judgment on his head. One small victory over our dislike for another—one honest effort to banish feelings of revenge will be far more pleasing to God than the vain repetition of an empty prayer.

But you may say it is a very hard thing to forgive a man who has deliberately insulted us—one who has ruined our reputation, or deliberately told lies about someone we love: that it is a very hard thing not to resent such a thing. Quite so. But that is not the resentment which Christ condemns. He refers—not to the feeling of bitterness which arises in our hearts in the heat of anger—but to that spirit of *malice* which, in our calm, sober moments, we deliberately nourish.

We are all human. We are naturally set against the man who injures us. But we differ from the heathen in this—that we are willing to forgive, that we hesitate, in our better moments, to plan a revengeful attack. That is the Christian law in contradistinction to pagan practice. "Revenge is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord." The day will come when the Lord Himself will avenge all injuries and set right all wrongs.

To forgive those who have seriously injured us is never an easy task for human nature. To do so merely from natural motives requires a nobility of soul which belongs only to the few. But God's grace is sufficient for us. If God commands us to love our enemies, surely He will

give us courage and strength to do it. If a man is honestly sincere in his efforts to forget injuries done to him, he will not be long in driving such feelings from his heart.

No man who is honest in this matter can take up the Crucifix and look upon the thorn-crowned brow, the pierced hands and feet, and the torn side of His Saviour—or go through the scene of Calvary in his mind, listening to the angry shouts of blasphemy and revenge hurled at the Son of God: no man can think seriously of that day when his Saviour prayed for His murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and come away from such contemplation with feelings of hatred in his heart.

The one great trouble with most of us is that we are too easily offended. And we think we are always in the right. Yet we know that in this life, it is hard for all of us to look upon the same thing exactly in the same light. Every quarrel has two sides: and it is quite possible we are on the wrong side. No doubt you have known families in which such feuds have existed for years—father against son and mother against daughter.

Life is all too short for nursing grudges. We go to Mass on Sundays, say our daily prayers, approach the Sacraments at certain intervals, we go through all these externals of religion, believing we are pleasing God. It is well then to remember the words of Our Lord: "If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift."

There are some people—after being injured by another—have resolved that whatever the obligations of Christian Charity may be—they will never forgive him. And they

do think that, in so doing, they show themselves strong and spirited—but it is in this precisely that they prove themselves Christian cowards.

It is only a man of character that can walk up to an enemy and say: "You have injured me: you have grievously wronged me: but I forgive you—and I will try to forget." Such a man, according to the world's standard, may be a weakling: but according to Christ's standard, he is a hero, for he has achieved the greatest of all victories —the victory over self.

It often happens that, when a man has made a mistake out of thoughtlessness or human frailty, he looks for a kind word or a cheering voice in vain. There are men and women who seem to delight in the downfall of others. Give them half a chance, and the scandal goes on its way gathering volume: and the unfortunate delinquents go down deeper and deeper, because they feel the whole world is turned against them.

Learn a lesson, dear Brethren, from Our Lord and Master. What would have become of Mary Magdalen if Christ had repulsed her? Would she have had the strength to rise from her dead life if Christ had dealt harshly with her? "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." It was the cheering word she had waited for so long: and in that word she raised herself from her sinful life to the companionship of that other Mary—who is the ever Blessed and Immaculate Mother of God.

Where would the soul of St. Peter be to-day if Christ had resented his threefold denial? Would he have persevered in good, if Christ had cast him aside for ever?

There may be some around us who are pining for that word of comfort—hearts well-night broken and that long for one kind word. If you know them, give it to them.

It will not cost much, but the good it may do cannot be estimated. That is the spirit of Christ. That is the doctrine that makes you different from the heathen. That is the example of Our Blessed Saviour. Let us all do our very best to follow it.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

" I have compassion on the multitude." (Mark, viii.)

To the east of the Sea of Tiberias, there was a place called Decapolis, inhabited partly by Jews and partly by Pagans. Our Blessed Lord was not a stranger, for people whom He had dispossessed of the devil had made His power known on all sides : and, on one occasion, His coming there had hardly become known when they brought a deaf and dumb man to Him, and besought Him to lay His hands upon him.

Our Blessed Lord had gone there simply for peace and quiet—and, even to perform this cure in privacy, He took the invalid's hand in His own and led him away from the throng. Then He laid His fingers lightly upon his ears—to denote that they were to open ; and with a little saliva He touched the tongue that was to be loosed : then raising His eyes to Heaven, he groaned—saying " Epheta—Be thou opened ! " And immediately his ears were opened : the string of his tongue was loosed—and the dumb man spoke distinctly.

Jesus enjoined secrecy, but they followed the promptings of heartfelt gratitude—" The more He forbade them to speak, the more they published it abroad." " He doth all things well," they said : " He hath made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

It was in vain that Our Lord sought solitude in the wild and desolate country : and from a hill slope where He was

resting He saw a great crowd of country folk pushing their way up to where He sat. They were bringing all manner of dumb and blind and lame and maimed—and these they put down at His feet—fully confident they would rise up sound and well.

Touched by their faith, Jesus granted the petitions of each and all—" insomuch that the people were struck with wonder when they saw the dumb speaking, the cripples made whole, the blind seeing "—and in their joy even these pagans of Decapolis " loudly glorified the God of Israel."

However, the concourse was growing greater from hour to hour, and in a short time four thousand men, without counting women and children, had gathered together in this far-off wilderness. For three whole days they remained close to Him, desiring only to follow Him. Whatever little food they had soon disappeared, and being far from any village, they naturally began to suffer hunger.

Our Lord called the Apostles and said: " I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their own home, they will faint in the way, for some of them came from afar off."

The Apostles were utterly astonished at the suggestion. For though He had fed His own people miraculously on a previous occasion, they had no notion He would lavish similar bounty on these pagans. So they answered: " From whence can anyone fill them here with bread in the wilderness? " Our Lord simply asked them, " How many loaves have ye? " " Seven," they replied, " and a few small fishes."

Then, Our Lord bade them sit down upon the ground. He took the seven loaves and the fishes. Then, giving thanks, He broke them, gave them to His Disciples, and

the Disciples gave them to the people. The four thousand men, the women folk, and the children ate and were filled. The Apostles then went round gathering up the fragments that were left—and they filled seven large hampers. And the meal being over, Our Lord dismissed the concourse who were overcome by the power of their Blessed Master. On the previous occasion, the Jews wanted to take Him by force and make Him King. But this time, all showed their willingness to obey His wishes and departed, leaving Him in peace.

This miracle seems to have been wrought by Our Lord out of sheer compassion. He saw this vast multitude far from home—and already three days without food. He understood their want and sympathized with them. That sympathy and compassion is a feature of His whole life. To save the hosts at a wedding feast from embarrassment when the wine was finished, He performed His first miracle. To show His sympathy for the widow following her dead son to burial, He restores him to life. A young man comes up to Him and asks Him the way to Heaven, and " Jesus loves him." If there is one distinctive feature in Jesus, it is that He was sensitive and full of sympathy and compassion.

Now this is a disposition of mind which all of us should desire to have, because it makes us so much like to Christ Himself. *Compassion for the wretched* is one of the surest signs that we shall be saved, because of all the virtues, it is the one which draws down most grace from Heaven. Holy Scripture is full of sayings and examples which prove this truth. This is because God, who is goodness by Essence, takes pleasure in showering favours on those of His children in whom He sees a greater abundance of this lovely tender-hearted perfection.

We should thank God if He has given us a compassionate

heart—and, on the other hand, we should fear, if we have a heart which is pitiless towards the wretched.

Compassion for the wretched is a sign of salvation, because it is the virtue which makes us like to Jesus Christ. It was compassion for the human race that caused the Divine Word to become Incarnate. His whole life was simply one succession of acts of pity—and out of compassion for us, He died.

We should have every hope of salvation if we are compassionate, and if we exercise our compassion not merely out of human sympathy—but in imitation of and for the love of Our Blessed Lord.

It is the virtue concerning which the promises have been made. Jesus Christ will say to His elect at the last day: "Come ye, the blessed of my Father, possess the Kingdom which He hath prepared for you. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me to drink."

Thrice blessed will they be who shall be addressed in these words. If we really wish it, they will be spoken to us. Let us see in every afflicted person we come across God's suffering child—and if it is in our power let us relieve them out of love for Him. If our sins give us cause to fear the judgments of God, our compassion for those in misery will help to arouse our confidence—for this Compassion is one of the principal means of inducing God to be propitious to us.

And now, as for ourselves. Although Our Lord is no longer visibly present on earth, yet He is ever mindful of us, and not only understands and sympathizes with us, but is ever providing for our daily needs. Every day He renews this far-famed miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. He feeds all mankind. He causes the fruits of the earth to grow. He makes them ripen for all. He

provides for everything. And all this in spite of the fact that few think of His wonderful care, few return Him thanks and many use His very gifts against Himself to offend Him.

You will notice how the multitude followed Our Lord into the desert, without thinking of taking with them what was necessary, fully assured that in following their Divine Master they would want for nothing. Our Lord once said to His disciples: "When I sent you without purse and script or even shoes, did you want for anything?" And each one of us can say that ever since we began to serve this admirable Master, so far from wanting anything he has been better provided than he was when serving the world and the devil.

Let us therefore lovingly and trustfully commit ourselves to the compassionate Providence of God just as did the pagans who formed the multitude at Decapolis. We have only to be virtuous and prove to Him that we realize we are His children, His friends, His true worshippers: and He will keep a particular watch over us, love us more tenderly, protect us more carefully, and lead us by safe paths to a supernatural end.

On our side we should be energetic in all matters that concern us, and yet we should trust God as if we felt we could do nothing without Him. Or, as St. Ignatius puts it: we should work as if everything depended upon ourselves: and we should pray as if everything depended upon Him.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

" By their fruits you shall know them." (Matt. vii, 20.)

In the Gospel to-day Our Lord gives us a piece of plain warning. He says we are to be on our guard against false teachers. He suggests one test for distinguishing the false teacher from the true : " By their fruits you shall know them."

Now I do not suggest that you are in danger of being deceived by any of the various religious sects that are all around us. Yet, you will deepen your appreciation of your Faith if you apply the test " By their fruits you shall know them," and make the contrast between the Catholic religion and every other religion.

Two characteristics of the Church of Christ stand out in bold relief, namely—its world-wide unity and its teaching authority.

There is no doubt that Our Lord intended and promised that His Church should be One. Its very name of a Kingdom suggests this. He warns us that a Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. He calls it a city, a sheepfold : and He says there must be one fold and one shepherd. He founded His Church upon a rock, which was the guarantee of its steadfastness and of its unbroken unity. And His dying prayer was that His followers might be one.

Secondly, it is equally clear that whatever and wherever is the true Church it must claim to be a teaching body, and to use the authority of God Himself in teaching and

governing. " Go ye and teach," is His command. " Teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you." He attaches severest penalties to the refusal to accept its doctrine: " He that believeth you, believeth me: and he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Finally, He gives His own divine guarantee that they will not fail in thus teaching. " Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

Note the phrase, dear Brethren, " I am with you." It occurs nearly one hundred times in the Old and New Testaments: and everywhere it bears the same meaning. It is a guarantee of the success of the mission He entrusts to another. For instance, when Moses complained he could not free the Israelites from Pharaoh, God replied: " Fear not, I am with you." Thus it is that the Church has her Founder's assurance that she will not and cannot fail in delivering the message He has entrusted to her. " By their fruits you shall know them." What religious body in the world even lays claim to these two qualities—universal unity—and a teaching authority? And what religious body in the world can prove its claim to these two qualities? Only the Catholic Church.

For example. Take the established religion of this country whose adherents are bitterly divided on the vital question, as to whether the Blessed Sacrament should be adored in very Truth as God or not. Some say to adore it would be idolatry—and it would be undoing the work of the Reformation. Now what steps have been taken by the episcopate of this religion? Have they fulminated penalties against those who dare to do so? Far from it. They baulked at giving any decision. Instead, they allowed each individual congregation to choose which service it should have—that in which the Blessed Eucharist was adored, or that in which such adoration was denied.

And for this purpose the ritual is re-edited in a new form containing both types of services.

Now, supposing the Catholic Church was divided on a similar mighty question, would it re-edit the Missal and allow the congregations to decide which form of the Mass it was to have? If the Catholic Church did this, would it not expressly forgo all and every claim to be a teaching body? Would it not confess that it had no message from God to deliver? "By their fruits you shall know them." Where there is no teaching authority, there is no true Church.

And now, to deepen your love for our God-made religion, look round the world to-day and see the miracle of the world-wide unity of the Catholic Church. Some three hundred millions of people, differing in colour and character, in language and politics—united with and submissive to one supreme, spiritual ruler.

Doctrinal questions, binding the whole world, are given from the central authority and are accepted as final by the millions of the Catholic Church. Questions of discipline are settled for places as distant as Alaska and China. A poor woman who has no money to pay ecclesiastical lawyers submits the tangled question of her marriage to the Roman courts, and gets the same impartial justice as does the millionaire's daughter married to an English Duke. The Negro and the Chinese Catholic—the Indian and the English Catholic—the Catholic in New York and the Catholic in New Zealand, these have all one and the same belief—one and the same sacrifice—and accept one and the same guiding and teaching authority. "By their fruits you shall know them."

What other religion than the Catholic Church can show such unity combined with such universality? If any Church claims to be the Church founded by Christ, it must

prove it by reproducing those qualities which Christ promised that His Church should have.

But these words, "By their fruits. . . ." have a very practical importance for us. Your non-Catholic neighbours are aware that the Catholic Church has a sublime teaching, that she claims to have powerful means for keeping her children free from sin—that in her Master's name she pronounces pardon for the penitent sinner—that she claims to administer the Sacraments instituted by Christ, and that she feeds her children on the Body of Christ our Lord. Hence the non-Catholic is quick to notice instances where practice does not agree with belief. There is many a Protestant husband of a Catholic wife who wonders what can be the good of Confession and Holy Communion, when the home circle continues to be disturbed by bad temper. And there is many a non-Catholic who has similar doubts—when he finds Catholic business men using "sharp" and questionable methods.

But not only our neighbour, but God must see the fruit of our holy religion in us. "Be ye perfect," says He, "as your Father in Heaven is perfect." That is the standard Our Blessed Lord puts before us. Both before our Heavenly Father and in the eyes of our fellow men, we must show the fruits of faith.

"By their fruits, *you* shall know them": and by *your* fruits they shall know whether you be true children of the Church, a credit to your Church, and a credit to your Lord and Master.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Unjust Steward

"The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." (Luke, xii.)

Our Lord once said to His disciples, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And it was his constant aim to induce people to put their treasure in heaven and to lift up their hearts and desires above the things of this world. Because worldliness is an insuperable obstacle to all true spirituality.

In the Sermon on the Mount—when Our Lord publicly promulgated the Christian religion—He showed the utter opposition between the spirit of the world and His spirit. His spirit is expressed in the Beatitudes, each one of which is a condemnation of some worldly doctrine or practice.

"All that is in the world," says St. John, "is in the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." The world aims at power, enjoyment, and success. But Christ will have us aim at poverty, meekness, patience in suffering, a love of justice, purity of mind and body, and a real joy in being treated as social outcasts for His sake. "My Kingdom is not of this world," He said at the end—and the way to His Kingdom is to overcome the world.

In the Parable of the Unjust Steward, Our Lord's object is to teach us the right use of material possessions—and

in it He gives us a typical instance of what men will do to secure comfort and enjoyment in this world. The manager of a big business concern is discovered to have cheated his master to a considerable extent, and is about to be dismissed. He at once starts making provisions for the future. He calls on his master's customers, and he gives one of them 100 barrels of oil for the price of 50, and another 100 measures of wheat for the price of 80—and so on with the rest.

He gave away right and left what was not his to give—in order that he might make friends who would help him when he would be out of a job. The master, hearing of this, could not help remarking that his steward was certainly a man who knew how to look after himself. But, as he looked after himself at his master's expense, he was called upon to give a full account, and was dismissed from his stewardship.

After speaking the Parable, Our Lord said, " The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." That is to say : men of the world who live for what they can get out of the world are very shrewd in their dealings with one another. They plan everything beforehand with a view to their *material* interests. But how seldom do we find even good people taking such pains to secure the eternal welfare of their souls !

And Our Lord urges us to great efforts by this very thought—worldings labour for position, power, and wealth, even though they know they can only enjoy these things a short time. And how foolish it is for us Christians—children of light—not to plan and work at least as hard to gain heaven, which we will enjoy for ever !

Then Our Lord gives us the lesson we are to learn from the parable : " Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive

you into everlasting dwellings." In other words, use the goods of this world to make for yourselves friends in heaven. The lesson of the parable is for everyone—rich and poor alike—use the things of this world to make yourselves friends in heaven. You may have much or you may have little, use that much or that little, but be it much or little, use that much or that little for eternity.

The unjust steward in the Parable robbed his master, and gave away what was not his own in order to make friends who would receive him in their houses.

Do you, dear Brethren, be faithful stewards of your own goods. Stewards, I say—for what you have is not your own to do what you like with. You will have to give a strict account of how you use it. Therefore use it in the way God—Who will be your judge—points out. He says: "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." Use the goods of earth to make treasures in heaven—use what God has given you in this world to make friends who will receive you into eternal dwellings. And who is it that will receive us into eternal dwellings? Jesus Christ—the Judge of the living and the dead. We must use all things in this world to make friends with Him. We must not think more of our worldly goods than we do of Him and His. Judas sold Him for thirty pieces of silver—and there have been many Judases ever since. Do not be affected by Judas' spirit—loving worldly goods more than God.

And now, how are we to do this? We must remember that Our Lord has interests in this world which He has given into your keeping. There are first of all His poor, whom he has left to your charity. "The poor you have always with you: and whenever you will, you may do

them good." What you do to them He takes as done to Himself.

Secondly, remember that Christ, Our Lord, has a religion in this world, the Catholic Religion, a world-wide religion—with priests and nuns and teaching and working brothers —and churches and schools and orphanages and hospitals and refuges for the homeless and houses for the aged and other institutions of this kind—and that the carrying on of all these works and the spreading of our holy religion depend largely upon material support: and He has left that support to be given by the Faithful out of our worldly goods.

Thirdly, remember Our Blessed Lord has interests in Purgatory. Souls are there most dear to Him, and whom He longs to have with Him in Heaven, but who cannot go there because some debt of temporal punishment still remains against them. We can cancel that debt by causing the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to be applied to them —a Sacrifice of Satisfaction which will release them from prison and bring them to Heaven. What a blessed thought —that by a good use of worldly goods we can make friends who will receive us into everlasting dwellings.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
(Evening)

"*But when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth.*" (St. John xvi, 13.)

IT has often happened in the history of the world that men, blessed with genius and the power of influencing others, have striven to make the memory of themselves perpetual, and to retain their influence over men, even when the inevitable grave had closed over them and their ambition.

There have been men—history is full of them—who strove to do these things—but not one of them succeeded. Before their tombs were old their empires had perished: when a few generations had passed away, their *names* no longer lingered on the lips of men: their *opinions* ceased to have weight or worth in the guidance of the world or the affairs of men. And I shall tell you why. There are only two ways in which a man can hope to mould others to his will—either by *brute force*, or by the *influence of persuasion.*

(1) A tyrant, with the material force of the sword, may for a time bend the most stubborn necks. And though the sword cannot enforce upon others a belief in his right to be a tyrant, it may make them silent slaves, uttering no word of indignation—waiting in patience or in despair for a better time.

And to the slaves of tyrannical power, a better time always comes. After long days, or longer years, the hand

grows weak that held the sword. Time and death are the allies of an enslaved people, and the day dawns when the Empire, established by the sword, is as lifeless as the hand that made it terrible. So it has been in the past—so it shall be to the end.

(2) Again, a man of intellect and genius conceives certain opinions. He puts them before men with all the fascination of poetry and eloquence. Men may be charmed with the novelty of his views. Some may hail him as a master. Some, refusing to submit to him, may be unable to refute his teaching. But his teaching is the conception of the human intellect, and the human intellect is fallible—and in a little time—other intellects, as powerful, or more powerful, arise to confute him, and his power is overthrown.

Such, dear Brethren, has been the history of the world—no man has ever succeeded in founding a lasting empire over either the bodies or the minds of men.

Yet, dear Brethren, there has been *one empire* founded—crowned by the homage of 1900 years of the human race—an empire that has reckoned its subjects from every class—that has found itself at home and honoured in every clime—that has appealed to men of all ranks and classes and conditions—and which bears upon its breast the undying promise of a stability that shall outlast the world itself. This one Empire has been established by Jesus Christ. It is His Church—the Holy Catholic Church to which you have the privilege to belong.

In a remote corner of an eastern land, little favoured by nature, appeared a Man who called Himself and was known to His followers as Jesus Christ. On a certain day He was seized by His own people, and outside the Holy City of His race He was crucified between two thieves. In the hour of His desolation, there was none to compassionate His sufferings save the Mother who bore Him—and

one disciple—and the woman who had been a sinner but was then a penitent. With the tears of only these upon His dead face He was committed to the tomb.

And what has happened since?

This has happened. He has come out of the tomb and gone into the whole world! This also has happened—is happening at this moment—that we, separated from the land in which He lived and died by many a league of land and sea, separated from the time in which He lived by no less than 1900 years, we are here to-day in an enclosure and before an altar erected to His honour. Above the altar is fixed the symbol of His ignominious death: but the Crucifix has become the glory of our Catholic lives.

Not only are we here to call Him God, and to join with the Angels of Heaven in adoring His Presence in the Tabernacle, but His name has become our hope, His law the standard of our lives. We carry His Sacred Faith into the affections of our homes and the business of our streets; and when we come to die, it is our fondest wish that the last word on our dying lips may be the Sacred Name of Jesus, uttered in accents of the contrition and the love that shall save us from the eternal doom and bring us safely in the glory of Heaven.

And how has it come, dear Brethren, that He alone has succeeded in establishing an Empire as wide as space and as lasting as time? Of course, you answer, and I answer, "Because He alone is the only begotten Son of the Eternal God." But there is something about the way in which He founded His Empire which shows His love for men. It shows His special love for the great mass of the people who have few but God to care about them—whose history the hard world sums up in these three stern words—"to be born—to toil—to die"—and above their graves may be placed these further words: "To be forgotten."

His Method. Like other leaders of the people, He selected a way which proved His love for His people. He wrote no books—He lived among the people. He showered His benefits upon the people—He died for the people—and when He was about to save the world, He gathered around Him a few disciples. But mark this, dear Brethren, He gathered them not from the rich, or the noble, or the learned, but from the obscurity of the toiling people: and to them He said: "Go, teach all nations! Go, preach the Gospel, not merely to the learned who can examine its doctrines, not merely to the rich who have leisure to study, but preach the Gospel to every creature."

Thus, dear Brethren, there was established by the divine authority of Jesus Christ, a living body of men who alone would have a right to teach, because they alone would themselves be taught by the spirit of God. This living body is the Church of God, speaking by her Pastors, and their infallible Head—the Successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

This Church has come to you pointing out to you the way to heaven. She comes to you not with empty hands. She comes bringing her doctrine to enlighten you, her tribunal of penance to wipe away your sins, her Sacraments, rich with the infinite merits of Christ's Precious Blood, to consecrate every momentous crisis of your lives. She comes, not only lifting up above her altar the sacred symbol of her crucified Lord, but renewing daily the very sacrifice of Calvary—and holding Jesus Himself imprisoned in the bonds of His undying love for men—holding Him, a willing captive, in the Adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Thus has Jesus Christ established His Empire, and brought it to the homes of the poor and the toil worn and the weary. Thus has He established the Chair of Truth,

that everyone may gather around it and be taught the way to Heaven.

These things are yours—your very own. The riches of the Church, which are the riches of God Himself, are for the people.

Let these few words, dear Brethren, serve to awaken in you a knowledge of the advantages you possess in being Catholics. Let it be your endeavour to make use, all through life, of the means of sanctification given you by the Church, that you may be ready to meet Him when the Lord shall come. Let each one's conscience answer what would trouble him most if his hour had come. For us the hour has not come. God's trumpet of judgment has not yet sounded. When shall the hour come, when shall the trumpet sound?

Ah, dear Brethren, neither you nor I know anything of that. Let us pray to Mary, the Refuge of Sinners, that when the Lord shall come, He may find us—watching.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"SEEING THE CITY, HE WEPT OVER IT."

THE incident recorded in this day's Gospel, expressing as it does the tender affection of Our Lord for the City which had been blessed with His teaching and miracles all through the Sacred Ministry, occurred only a few days before His Passion and Death, when He was about to enter Jerusalem amid the acclamations of the people on Palm Sunday.

As he was approaching the city with His disciples, He sent two of them ahead, telling them they would find at the entrance of a village beyond, an ass tied and a colt with her—and to loose them and bring them to Him.

The disciples knew that Jewish traditions had proclaimed that the Messiah would choose no other equipage on the day of His manifestation. And so, they thought at last the hour had come when the Master would establish His Kingdom in which they hoped to figure conspicuously. So they tore off their mantles and decked the ass as richly as they could ; and then making Our Lord sit upon it they thronged about Him with shouts of joy.

Then they advanced towards Jerusalem. Lazarus and the Apostles were nearest to Our Lord's side, while the ass walked slowly alongside her foal. The people came out from Bethany and joined the throng. Some cast their garments on the ground. Others, stripping the fig trees of their leafy boughs, covered the roadway with fresh green. All took part in celebrating the wondrous deeds

of Christ, and honouring Lazarus whom He had brought back from the tomb.

The route along which Our Lord was advancing climbs over the crest of the Mount of Olives: and from this point the Holy City rises in full view: and in those days the beautiful city of Jerusalem was one of the wonders of the oriental world. Girdled around with towers and battlements, and crowned with palaces, the brilliant town reached out to the East and the West, as if bent upon impressing the beholder with its splendour. According to Josephus the historian, the sunlight, beating upon the white marbles and golden roofs of the Temple, resembled a blaze of fire, and was too much for the dazzled sight to behold. And, as soon as this beautiful vision unrolled itself before them, the Apostles burst forth into songs of triumph: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be the King of Israel who cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Amid all these cries of gladness, Jesus alone was silent. He had halted—and was looking down upon the city where He was about to die. By that time Sion had heaped up the full measure of ungratefulness: and the patient, blessed Saviour was filled with bitter grief and wept aloud over her.

Addressing the City He mourned: "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 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." (Luke xix, 41.)

No one but Jesus foresaw this catastrophe. The disciples saw Him weeping and felt a momentary thrill of disquiet,

but the impression left them. So many times had the Lord's brow grown sad, and His tears had flowed freely, that they were not astonished at the sight of them. And the joyous acclamations proceeded as before.

Forty years later the prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled. The legionaries raised a rampart round the City which transformed Jerusalem into a prison : and a little later it became the tomb of eleven hundred thousand Jews surprised within its confines. And when the Roman cohorts withdrew, they left behind them a heap of ashes where once was the Temple, while the whole town was so completely razed to the ground that the Jews themselves were scarcely able to trace out the vestiges of former days amid the wreckage.

In this incident, dear Brethren, we have an example of the tender compassion of Jesus towards those He came to save. He loved the City of Jerusalem because it was the scene of His ministry—but more especially He loved the souls that were in it : and He wept for their sins and for the punishments that those sins would bring upon them. The destruction of the City which He prophesied was but an image of the destruction of sinners which all His tenderness and compassion was not able to avert.

And when we look into our lives, we cannot fail to see how similarly we have stood in relationship to Our Lord. Have we not, too, like the Jews, had endless instances of Our Lord's patience, long suffering, and compassion for us ? Have we not too, often and often, given Him cause for tears ? Have we not, too, had the blessing of His repeated warnings, calls, and graces ? And have we not, too, shown ourselves obdurate and indifferent, and shown Him that we cared little for the time of His visitation ?

I appeal to you, dear Brethren, to open your hearts to the tender attractions of Our Blessed Lord—and to accept

the graces and opportunities He offers you that you may escape the destruction that must inevitably fall on sinners. Say to Him with St. Paul: "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"—and He will reply—"Cease to sin—accept my graces—follow Me—and you shall be saved." And what penance for the past will He require of you? No penance. Only be sorry. What reproof will He give you? Absolutely none. How long will the process of forgiveness last? Momentary. What forfeit must you make? None. Just as if He were the obliged person, not we.

Dear Brethren, there have been many souls touched by the tenderness and compassion of Jesus, and have changed their lives, and saved their souls. You and I have seen many here in darkness—in struggle—in sin—and then in repentance—in the fight of poverty—and the coldness of the world's neglect—even in the achings of a comfortless and hard sick-bed—(but with the priest at their side): and they are now in the bosom of Jesus in Heaven—so bright—so glorious—so radiant and beautiful—that we should die if we beheld them. Dear Brethren, only love Jesus—and serve Him—and an unspeakably happy eternity is yours.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
(Evening)

"The Presence of God"

In our Catechism we are asked "Where is God?" and the answer is—"God is everywhere." Dear Brethren, is this possible? Is it possible that God is everywhere, and man is what he is, and we are what we are?

"Does God know and see all things?"—And a terrible truth proceeds from infant lips in reply—"Yes, God knows and sees all things, even our most secret thoughts." A terrible truth for the creature who must one day stand in judgment before his Maker—terrible for the soul who is called to a life of sanctity in the world—terrible for the Religious in her enclosure—terrible for the monk in his cloister—terrible for the priest who is called to sanctity (the most angelic, the most sublime, who is appointed and anointed to stand with pure hands and clean heart at the Altar of God, and to offer supplications for the living and the dead).

So far as our exterior is concerned, God knows and sees it all. But besides this, our interior is also known to Him: for He knows even our most secret thoughts.

And why did God make me? God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in the next.

But in spite of God's omnipresence, in spite of His clear penetration into the secret chambers of our heart,

in spite of our own knowledge of the end of our creation—how is it that we dare to play the cheat with God? How is it that God so seldom enters into our calculations? How is it that there is such small effort on our part—to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him, if not for His own dear sake, at least for the sake of the glory which He has prepared for us in Heaven?

Dear Brethren, the whole of this material creation is replenished with reproductions of God's bounty: it is filled with reflections of the beauty of the master-mind that made them. True indeed in the material order there is nothing lasting in this world of ours. Everything around us, we may say, is branded with the word "corruption": and in God's own time all these things shall pass away and be no more. But while they last, they praise and glorify their Maker.

Even the most minute organism in existence tells of a mind and a perfect being whose intellect surpasses in an infinite degree all human knowledge. The very vilest weed on the road-side, the most venomous snake or beast in the forest, fulfils the end for which it was created. Even the deformities we behold in things created fulfil the end of their being by proclaiming the beauty of their Maker in the very negation of beauty that they display.

But man alone of all God's creatures, withholds from his Maker the reverence, respect and honour which is His due. Different from all other creatures, as we read in Genesis: "And God created man to His own image, to the image of God He created him—male and female he created them." And mark those words, dear Brethren, "to the image of God He created them."

And would that it had not been so than that man should be what he is and we should be what we are. Better a thousand times that we had not been born than that we

treat Him the way we do ! What wonder that the Prophet sat near the walls of the City and cried aloud : " With desolation is the whole world made desolate because there is no one who thinketh in his heart." And since that moan of complaint issued from the lips of the Prophet, cycles of centuries have rolled by, and man is what he ever was, forgetful of his God !

Let us glance a moment at a very limited portion of our universe—not thinking of the poor souls in heathen lands, without True God, without a hope to soothe them—not thinking of the vast continents which form the abode of man upon this globe of ours : but think of that little minute spot in England—the Metropolis of London—and think how little of time, of place, of thought, of worship is given there to God in the course of a single day.

Make your way into that busy city in the early morning and you will see hundreds and thousands of human beings, approaching from every house and every street and every turn, hurrying along hither and thither—some bright and happy—some dull and serious—some rich, some poor—some robust and healthy—some with a look in the face which clearly shows their days are numbered, and that very soon life for them must depart and they must stand before their Maker as their Judge. Trains dash along above and beneath the ground and conveyances of every description above it—crowded with their living freight—carrying them off to their various occupations—from whence they earn their daily bread.

And as the morning advances the offices are opened, the shops are filled, the arcades and markets are crowded. The broker begins his speculations—the banker receives deposits and parts with money on lawful demand—the Courts are opened for the administration of justice—divorce is asked for here—criminal cases tried elsewhere—

bankruptcy and libel somewhere else. Parliament holds its sittings—institutions of various kinds hold meetings to consult their own interests. The crowds in the streets become thicker, the traffic denser and almost unmanageable. Sightseers come to gaze with wonder upon anything and everything. Accidents happen and crowds gather. The injured are jostled into an ambulance and conveyed to the hospital—and the crowds again disperse to look for excitement somewhere else.

And thus, dear Brethren the day wears on, and the great city begins to show an aspect of weariness and fatigue : and it empties itself of its little parasites who rush along in thousands like busy ants—to seek amusement and release from the toil and anxiety of the day. And with sunset a Babylon of pleasure begins. Amusement in every conceivable form is offered to God's creatures. Theatres—operas—cinemas—parties—dances—receptions—exhibitions —music—painting—sculptures and iniquity—civilized iniquity—criminality in its utmost refinement is invented and offered for the relaxation of the creature who is made to the image of the all pure and holy God.

But let us leave the city before this sinful hour arrives : and before you do so, stop a moment and ask yourself " Where is God ? " Again the Catechism makes answer : " God is everywhere." Is it possible ? Surely not ! Surely He is not with the inhabitants of this city ! Surely this must be a godless generation ! Did we see anything the whole day long to remind us of Him ? No. Did we so much as hear Him mentioned ? No. But close your ears else you may hear it. But, alas, not in honour but in execration. Hurry back to your home in the country and sit down and grieve that God is what He is, and man, too, is what he is, and we are what we are.

And as you ponder over those millions of God's creatures,

revelling in their luxuries and amusements of every kind, think of the patience and long suffering of Almighty God who is present in all places in that city. Every moment He repeats the stupendous work of creation by preserving each one of His creatures in existence.

He is so immediately present to each and every one of them that as St. Paul says, "In Him we live and move and have our being." His immensity knows no limit, and thus He is present everywhere.

But there is another presence of His upon which a grateful heart cannot but love to dwell. Hidden away in lonely lanes and unnoticed places, the living God lies sheltered in humble tabernacles — longing — waiting—expecting—imploring souls to come near and speak with Him. "Come to Me, all you that labour, and I will give you rest!" "Son, give me thy heart! Come and drink! My Flesh is meat indeed, my Blood is drink indeed. My delight is to be with the children of men." And still His suppliant voice is unheard and unheeded. He sees His creatures hurry by and give their heart to that which must eventually work their ruin.

Oh, dear Brethren, is this not a sad aspect of the relationship between God and His creatures? But, instead of filling our minds with wonder and indignation at mankind, let us rather look into ourselves and say, "We, too, are doing our share to fill up the measure of man's iniquity." Who of us is there who lives with the conviction that he is living in the presence of an all Holy God? We know it, it is true: but do we live up to that conviction? Who of us is so completely detached from creatures that his sole effort is to know God, his sole aim to love God—his sole desire to serve God? Who of us is there who has given his heart to creatures and has not learnt by experience that small though his heart may be, and limited his affections,

still, no creature can give it the satisfaction it desires? And the reason is your heart was made for God, and none but God shall fill it.

Is there, dear Brethren, one soul listening this evening who will take these words to heart—will give himself entirely and unreservedly to God—will sympathize with Jesus Christ in His Sacramental presence and make reparation for the ingratitude and forgetfulness of men? Is there no one who will take God's interests in hand and make them his own? Oh, that a Saint would spring up here in our midst and revive the wonders of the Saints of old! What glory would he give to God! What a harvest might he reap of souls!

But if God sees us unworthy instruments for promoting His glory, let us never be an impediment to the good He desires to do without our instrumentality—either directly by Himself or by means of others. Let us ask God to send a Saint in our midst—or a Saint into the world, filled with Apostolic zeal—inflamed with the fire of Divine Love—in whom men may see an ideal creature and who reveals in every instance that he is made to the image of God, and who, abandoning all creatures, makes it his aim to know, love, and serve God—who will with energy undertake war against sin and Satan—and fight the battles of the Lord.

Pray that God may give this spirit to all His Priests, and thus Almighty God will renew the face of the earth. Thus will our daily prayer be fulfilled. Thus may we hope God's Kingdom will come, and that His will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN"

OFTEN and often when Our Blessed Lord was instructing His Apostles, He denounced the world and the pride of life, and urged upon them the necessity of aiming at humility of mind and heart.

When instructing the people publicly, He usually had a number of Pharisees among His hearers. These people are depicted in the Gospel as being eminently worldly, who had made a practice of earning a respectful reputation by apparently living goody-goody lives, particularly fond of the limelight and playing up to the gallery. There was plenty of moral decency in them, plenty of respectable observance, plenty of religious profession: and yet, when Our Blessed Saviour went among them, they were farther from grace than the publicans and sinners. They simply hated Our Lord, who lost no opportunity of reminding them of their hypocrisy. The Magdalen, the Samaritan, and the woman taken in adultery—these gathered around Jesus, attracted by His sweetness, and touched by the grace which went out from Him. The Pharisees only grew more cold and more haughty, more self-opinionated, until they ended by the greatest of all sins, the crucifixion of Our Lord.

Our Lord's aim in the parable to-day is to recommend to us the virtue of humility, especially when we pray, and to warn us against pride. He had not to go far for living

pictures to illustrate His meaning—and He selected two men in the Temple of God, going there into a public place of prayer, a place set aside only for the worship of God.

One of these men was a Pharisee—the very picture of pride and self-righteousness—even in prayer. He shows this in his outward bearing—his position and his gestures. He walks into the Temple and "stands" there. But it was not exactly the standing posture that betrayed pride: for the Jews prayed sometimes lying prostrate on the ground, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting.

But this "standing" had a special meaning. He planted himself there, so to speak, in an ostentatious, insolent manner, like a praying statue—to be admired by all who saw him, and as though he came into God's house by way of compliment to the Almighty. His wretched pride is shown more plainly in his prayer, which exactly expresses his thoughts and sentiments. It has a positive and a negative side. It begins with praise and thanksgiving, a very good thing to do, but it very soon veers round to praise of self. Instead of remembering his sins, he thinks only of his virtues and merits, and makes a public exhibition of them, and you will notice they are all external works of piety.

Instead of fasting like other people at the usual time of the year, he fasts twice a week! He gives away a portion, not simply of his general income, but of everything, even of his fruits and vegetables. Lucky soul, he has nothing to pray for, for he has everything he wants. He has nothing to ask pardon for. He is a holy man, and only needs to give thanks: and even his thanksgiving reminds him of his virtues, just as everything around him reminds him of his superiority to other men. Compared to him they are all blackguards, common thieves, dishonest men, adulterers. Having patted himself on the back so far, he

probably looked round under the corner of his eye to see if anyone was there to see and hear him, and his side glance fell upon the publican whom he condemned immediately.

This, indeed, is terrible pride, to think one has no faults, nothing but virtues and *all* the virtues, and to boast of them before God, and to condemn everyone else.

Dear Brethren, there can be no greatness before God: but here we find something like it in this immaculate creature!

The poor Publican, on the other hand, is the very picture of interior and exterior humility. He is of the lowest and most abject class of the people and feels himself to be really guilty and sinful. He has no confidence in his own goodness, and relies wholly and entirely on the mercy of God. His outward bearing corresponds to his interior feelings of humility. He does not push his way arrogantly into the Temple. He rather considers himself unworthy to approach it, and remains standing at the door "afar off." In contrast to the Pharisee, he does not even dare to look up for very shame. He strikes his breast in sign of contrition and penance and says: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" He openly acknowledges his guilt and asks God's pardon for it! This is true humility.

Now, Our Lord pronounces judgment upon the two men in these words: "I say to you, this man (i.e., the publican) went back to his house justified rather than the other (i.e. the Pharisee)." From these words it is clear that the Publican alone gave true glory to God: the Pharisee gave none and was condemned. For Our Lord immediately continues: "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." And it is quite certain one can be justified in God's sight only on the ground of humility.

At all events, the Pharisee's whole behaviour is anything but a good preparation for justification, and Our Lord in His mild way showed he was not justified, but condemned by God; and this was the just punishment of his having declared himself just, and of his having condemned every one else, the Publican in particular. So God's judgment is exactly the reverse of his own.

Our Lord evidently wishes here to teach us humility, especially in our dealings with God. True humility of heart and consciousness of our sinfulness is the most natural and seemly behaviour before Him. We get on best with these virtues. God bends in condescension to the humble, whereas He resists the proud and drives them far from Him with a curse instead of a blessing.

On another occasion when urging them to serve God alone, " for no one can serve two masters," the Pharisees derided Him. And He said to them " You are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is high to men is an abomination before God."

Our constant effort should therefore be to aim at a humble opinion of ourselves and to exercise humility on all occasions but especially in our prayers and our relations with God. Humility is the queen of virtues, whereas pride is the queen of vices, and it has in its train a hideous court: boasting, presumption, hypocrisy, obstinacy, discord, quarrels, disobedience. We all know how all these evils are an abiding obstacle to domestic happiness. Therefore, it should be our resolve to cultivate this Christlike virtue of humility, which will bring us peace of mind, peace of conscience, and the blessing of domestic peace within the borders of our own homes.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Spirit of Sacrifice

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service." (Rom. xii, 1.)

There is among many people who profess Christianity and who practise Christian virtues to a certain extent one remarkable want, and that is, the spirit of sacrifice.

I feel it necessary to speak to you on this subject because the parish is now fairly formed, and in the near future it will create its own wants, and these wants will be made known to you: and I want you to bear in mind that, when you are asked to support God's cause, you are to do so, not niggardly, nor in a spirit of discontent, but in the spirit in which you have started, that is, in a spirit of religion and sacrifice.

The spirit of sacrifice is necessary. God requires it of us. On this point some people make a mistake. They think that a willingness to make sacrifices for God is one of the ornamental or heroic parts of religion, and should not be required of every one of us. It is an essential part of our holy religion. In fact, there is no religion without a sacrifice. There never has been—nor indeed could there be—a true religion without some external act of sacrificial worship.

And why is this necessary? Not simply because we

are sinners and need propitiation : but because by sacrifice we express our sense of God's Supreme Sovereignty.

In a sacrifice something is offered to God and destroyed : thus signifying that God is the Author of Life and Death, our Creator, our Ruler, our Supreme Judge.

The excellence of the Christian Sacrifice, viz., the Sacrifice of the Mass, consists in this, that the Victim—even the Incarnate Son of God—who by His Life and Death rendered most worthy homage to the Divine Majesty, and still offers the same homage in every Mass that is said.

This is what the Mass is given us for. This is why we are required to assist at Mass, that we may unite in the Holy Sacrifice, and in a perfect and worthy manner acknowledge God's sovereignty and our complete dependence upon Him.

Then, a worship of Sacrifice implies a life of Sacrifice in those who offer that worship. This is beautifully illustrated in the life of St. Lawrence whose Martyrdom the Church celebrated only a few days ago.

St. Lawrence was a deacon of the City of Rome in the third century of the Christian era. As deacon, it was his office to serve the Mass of St. Xystus who was Pope at that time. When persecution broke out under the Emperor Valerius, St. Xystus was seized and carried off to martyrdom. As he was on his way, St. Lawrence followed him weeping and saying : " Father, where are you going without your son ? Whither are you going, O holy priest, without your deacon ? You were not wont to offer Sacrifice without me your minister. Wherein have I displeased you ? Have you found me wanting in my duty ? Try me now and see whether you have made choice of an unfit minister for dispensing the Blood of the Lord." And St. Xystus replied : " I do not leave you, my son : but a greater trial and a more glorious victory are reserved for you who are strong

and in the vigour of youth. We are spared on account of our weakness and old age. In three days you shall follow me." And, in fact, three days later St. Lawrence was roasted to death on a grid-iron, his faith rendering him joyful, even mirthful in his sufferings.

Now I do not say we are all bound to be as holy as these great Saints. I do not even say we are bound to desire martyrdom. But I do say there is not one kind of Christianity for the Saints and another for ordinary Christians: one kind, all self-denial for them, and another, all self-indulgence for us.

God is to us what He is to the Saints—our Creator and Sovereign and He demands of us the worship of Sacrifice—a willingness to do all He demands of us now, and a readiness to do greater things the moment He makes it known to us that such is His will.

How many difficulties does this spirit remove? It puts an end to all our struggles against the decrees of God's providence. How much misery comes from murmuring against the Providence of God! One is suffering under sickness and pain—another is overwhelmed with reverses and afflictions—another troubled by continual temptations. No one can deny that these are severe trials: but the spirit of sacrifice disposes of them. It says to the sick man—here are the materials for a beautiful act of sacrifice. It wants only a meek heart for a victim, and love to light, to flame, to turn the sick-bed into an altar of purest worship, and the language of complaint into the language of praise.

Again, it sometimes happens that a man gets involved in relations of business or friendship, or becomes addicted to some indulgence which threatens to ruin his soul, and he is required to renounce them, to give up the intimacy, to change his business, to deny himself that indulgence. The command of God is distinct and peremptory: "If

thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." How does he receive it? He says: "It is too hard!" Too hard! And is it then only God for whom we are willing to do anything hard? We must make sacrifices of some sort in life, and heavy ones too. We cannot get rid of the necessity of making them, do what we will. The world requires them of us. Our families require them. Our health requires them. Our pleasures require them. Nay, our very sins require them. And what we do willingly for the world, for our families, for our health, our pleasure, our sins, shall we refuse to do for the great and good God and His Church—for Christ our Blessed Saviour Who did not refuse his Passion and His Cross to give us an example?

If there is a sacred place on earth, a home of peace, a hallowed shrine, a holy of holies, a place where heaven is nearest, where God descends and takes up His abode, it is in the heart of the man who is penetrated with the sense of God's greatness, and who walks before Him in a spirit of sacrifice with reverence and continual worship.

Dear Brethren, I covet for you such a spirit. Whatever you do, do it for the eye of God and the Angels. I want you to fear Him more deeply, and to love Him far, far more fervently. Ask yourselves, is the service you are rendering Him at all worthy of Him? Look at the earth and the sky that He has made: look at the glorious Throne of Light from which He sways the Universe. Look at the Cross. Look into your own hearts and say: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: and of His Kingdom let there be no end."

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

We ought to Love God—and Why?

When the lawyer mentioned in the Gospel put Our Lord to the test, asking Him how he could possess eternal life, Our Blessed Lord referred him to the Law of God. The lawyer replied that he read there God's great command "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbour as thyself." Our Blessed Lord confirmed the Law by adding "Thou hast answered rightly: do this, and thou shalt live—or have eternal life."

The law quoted in this incident had been promulgated centuries before the time of Christ, and applied to all mankind who had lived till then. It applied to all who were living at the time of Christ—and to all who have lived in the world ever since. It applies to the millions who are living to-day.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," is a law that applies to each of you and to me. It applies to the thousand of priests who are offering the Sacrifice of the Mass to-day. It applies to the thousands and tens of thousands of holy Religious who are praying in their cloistered homes. It applies to the millions of God's Faithful who are discharging their duty of keeping the Sunday holy by hearing Mass and resting from servile work—and it applies just as much to those who make no attempt at keeping Sunday holy, but keep it as a pagan might, satisfying his own good pleasure without any reference to God whatever.

Considering that this Law is a universal one, from which there are no exemptions, it is amazing to think of God being so little loved. The purpose of His bringing us into our loving service—for God made me to know Him, to love Him and serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him for ever in the next. This purpose too, is universal, admitting no exception. For that purpose He made you and me and the man that has just passed down the lane having eaten his breakfast and will spend the day fishing in the reservoir at the end of the road. But even that is harmless recreation and is perfectly legitimate, provided it does not interfere with God's law or deprive Him of the honour that is His due.

But we have reason to fear that only in too many instances, the law of God is interfered with and God is deprived of the honour which is His due. Think of the immensity of the majesty of God—higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell. His eyes are open upon all the ways of the children of Adam; and consequently think of the dreadfulness of disobeying Him, of offending Him.

What must happen to those who do not love Him? Can we wonder that, all love as He is, He punishes even in this life His erring children? All the miseries of this life are because of God being so little loved. He sees Hell is filling hourly and He wants to save us from eternal ruin.

God being treated as He is, so differently from what He commanded, it is astounding to think of His wonderful forbearance. See how He restrains Himself with *individuals* —sinning and repeating and persevering in sin. How He restrains Himself with *nations* when they set out in open rebellion against Himself, His law, His Church. How patiently He endures the depravity of the *world* He has made, and watches its sad progress in silence. Nay, all the while He continues His blessings to individuals and

to nations and the world—making the sun to rise upon the good and the bad, the just and the unjust. He maintains His forbearance even through a quiet deathbed. But then—horrible thought—then comes the terrible awakening.

With these two considerations of God being so little loved and God being so infinitely forbearing, let us think first of ourselves and then of others. As for ourselves, we *ought* to love God and love Him better than we do. We know He has heaped graces upon us—and we are always relapsing into sin and making ourselves guilty of fresh rebellions. We know how negligent we are in His love and in His service, and we do not become as generous as we ought with Him considering His continual new forgiveness.

Then as regards others. If we know, as unfortunately we do, that God is so little loved, surely we cannot be indifferent to this. But does it give us any real sorrow or uneasiness, and are we doing anything to hinder or diminish it? We may say we love God: but love is work. God must have work from us, real, thorough work. We can at least begin at once, to-day, this morning, and we must begin in earnest. We cannot go on as in the past. That will never do. And we cannot stop at self. Our piety is not to go to sleep while the world is perishing. But what can we do? We can pray for others, help others all we can—pray down the sins of the place in which we live—bring someone to Mass on Sundays—or bring some poor sinner to the Sacraments. Any of these is a work of love. I am sure Our Blessed Lord would say to you: "Do this and you shall live!"

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE MATERNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

THE Feast the Church celebrates to-day is one which should teach us to love more and more the Blessed Mother of God, one which should fill us with confidence in the power of her prayers, and the certainty of her constant protection, and one which should inspire us to love simplicity, docility, obedience, and submission to our Superiors in imitation of the Son of God, Who exercised in a perfect degree all these virtues towards Mary His Immaculate Mother.

If we were not so fond of having our own way, if we were not so proud and self-willed, we should not find it so hard to be obedient, and to carry out the wishes of the Superiors whom God has placed in authority over us.

To teach us humility and to teach us obedience, this feast is in great measure celebrated, though at the same time it helps us to understand how great is the dignity of the Mother of God, and how great an honour it is for us to be her children also—because being the Brethren of Jesus, we are naturally the Children of Mary.

The Maternity of our Blessed Lady commemorates the two-fold office which the Blessed Virgin holds. She is the Mother of the Spotless Son of God, and she is the Mother of the sinful children of men.

When Jesus decreed to come on earth, to live and suffer and die for us, He first chose for Himself a fitting Mother.

He would not have an ordinary child of Eve to be His Mother, but He would create a special Mother for Himself, one who from the first moment of her existence should be as fresh as the rose, as fair as the lily, whose soul and body should be free from the defilement of original or actual sin.

Having chosen this Mother for Himself, He placed Himself under her fostering care from childhood. He was infinitely superior to her. His dignity was that of Supreme God. Yet, He did not permit this to diminish His complete dependence upon her. He might have lived like an angel on invisible food, but He chose to receive His daily nourishment from her.

He went wherever she carried Him.

He came whenever she called Him.

He partook of whatever she gave Him.

He occupied Himself with whatever would please her.

He was in every respect a child with her, and she was never anything else to Him than a most tender and loving Mother.

Only once He seemed to break through that close attendance on her which He always practised, and that was when He remained in Jerusalem to fulfil a commission of deep mystery for His Heavenly Father. But lest we might be tempted by this special event to suppose that Jesus had cast off at so early an age all subjection to His parents, the Gospel is careful to inform us immediately after this "He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them." So this was only a mysterious exception, not a termination of His submission and obedience to Mary and Joseph.

Under her care then He lived beyond the ordinary age, even till He was thirty years old. His first miracle was performed at her request, though His time had not yet

come. So, too, nearly His last words were an acknowledgment of her as His Mother, when He bequeathed us to her as her children.

What influence can be imagined greater than that of Mary who was allowed to hold and exercise such authority over Jesus. Even now in glory He still calls her by that sweet name of Mother, and she may still address Him by the sweet name of Son.

Now the Church of God has always believed that when Jesus upon the Cross recommended John to His dear Mother as her Son, it was not merely that disciple individually but every one of us whom He had in view. For certain it is that, from the earliest times, Mary has been considered not only the Mother of Christ, but also the Mother of all those that love Him—the Mother of all the Faithful.

If Mary is said in Scripture to have laid up and preserved in her heart those first words of her Son's ministry, can we imagine that she did less for His last words—His dying legacy on the Cross ?

But Jesus did not content Himself with this single address to His Mother. He took care again and again to call us His Brethren and to treat us as such—so that it might seem natural we should have the same Mother. Immediately before His Passion, He contented Himself by calling His disciples, friends—" I will not call you servants—but you are my friends." Immediately, after His Passion, does He not bid Magdalen : " Go to my brethren and say to them. . . ."

Time and time again in His life, He gave us His own Father to be our own Father : to be our Father, different in nature and infinitely exalted above us in every way. And having a Mother of our own flesh and blood, one who could have compassion upon us in our wants and miseries,

He would give her to us too, that we might regard her as our own dear Mother.

And if all Christians are her children, are you not her children in a special way? When a mother is sending a child into danger, when she is sending it across the seas into distant lands, among perils unknown, she feels for this poor child much more than for those who remain at home in peace and safety.

Our Blessed Lady knows full well, dear children, that you are destined to fight your way to Heaven, through a world which is full of peril, and difficulties of every description. And to none is she more ready to stretch her hand than to you. While you are here, you are in safety, for there is every help given you to be good, to avoid sin, to grow up in piety and in happiness. But when this is all changed for you—when you go away to a situation, perhaps among non-Catholics, how much more difficult it will be for you to persevere in Catholic practice and piety. There will be no morning bell to call you to daily Mass, no sound of voices like your own saying aloud morning prayers, consecrating the day and its work to God; no one to remind you of your Grace before and after meals, countless distractions at the moment the clock strikes, so that you may forget to commend yourself to Mary now and at the hour of your death; no companion perhaps to keep you from sin or to occupy you with edifying conversation or amusement. No bell-call to summon you to receive the solemn blessing of Jesus at Benediction, when the day is drawing to a close. No gentle voice to commence your night prayers and to call down God's blessing on your night's repose.

All this will be changed. You will be left entirely to yourselves. And if you do not exercise these practices of piety you may have no one to blame you, and no one

to rebuke you. It is quite possible that everything may induce you to neglect first one thing, then another, then Sunday Mass, then Confession, then Holy Communion, finally ending in the terrible state of the bad Catholic.

I say this, dear children, not to discourage you, but simply to show you that dangers and perils await you in the wicked world. Now is the time to prepare for dangers. Now is the time to learn obedience and all Christian virtues taught you by the Child Jesus. Now is the time to acquire a persevering, faithful love and devotion to your ever Blessed Mother.

The child of Mary will never perish, which means that Mary will never permit a child of hers to fall into the snares of the devil, the world, and the flesh, provided her child is constant in devotion to her, and when dangers come, when trials and afflictions and temptation come, the child sends up to her throne a cry of distress, a plaintive prayer for help. She is the Help of Christians, helping us through life's troubled strifes, and bringing us through the gate of Heaven, to the endless peace and happiness of the Blessed in Heaven.

THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

TO-DAY is the feast of the beautiful mystery of our dear and Blessed Lady's Assumption into Heaven. We may call it the first grand function of the Church Triumphant in Heaven, after the Ascension of Christ Our Lord.

The end for which God created man was that he might know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world, and be happy with Him, be crowned with Him, be enthroned with Him in the Kingdom of Heaven. And on this festival, we see Almighty God fulfilling the end of creation in the Assumption, the exaltation, the coronation of the fairest of the daughters of Eve—His ever Blessed and Immaculate Mother.

Our Blessed Lady's life, like that of her divine Son, was one of poverty and lowliness. It was a life most hidden and obscure. Holy Scripture is almost silent about her, and mentions her but seldom at different periods of the life of Our Blessed Redeemer. And if her holy life was hidden and obscure, much more hidden still were the last sacred events which immediately preceded her holy and peaceful death.

Were it not for the traditions of the Apostles, and the writings of devout servants of God in the early ages of the Church, and the revelations made to Saints, we should be entirely without information regarding the happy end of our dear Lady's earthly life.

The Church therefore commemorates to-day :—

(1) Our Blessed Lady's great desire for death.

(2) Her dying, not of pain or disease or bodily infirmity of any kind, but dying of love alone.

(3) Her burial by the Holy Apostles.

(4) The glorious resurrection of her body.

(5) Her majestic entry into Heaven.

(6) Her reception by the Eternal Father " mid Heavenly fires."

(7) Her coronation as Queen of Heaven and Earth, Queen of Angels and of men.

(8) Her empire over all Angels and Saints.

(9) Her diligent care of the Souls in Purgatory, and lastly her never-failing protection of us, poor sinful children of men.

The story of her holy death is simply told. It pleased Almighty God to ordain that His Immaculate Mother should die—not in punishment of sin, but in imitation of her Divine Son—who died to redeem us by His death. And also that by her holy death, she might teach us how to die—and that she might have compassion on those that die, because she was to be the Advocate of all at the time of death.

Rightly, therefore, we hourly say in life: " Pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death."

Probably the Angel Gabriel was sent to announce the tidings of her approaching death. We can imagine him saluting her as at the Incarnation: " Hail, full of grace ! " and having heard the glad news, we can hear her ever humble reply: " Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to thy word ! "

Tradition relates how the Apostles with a great number of disciples, miraculously gathered together at her lowly bedside. They were all filled with grief, lamenting her departure and recommending themselves to her prayers. She comforted them all, prayed for them, gave them her blessing with great affection, and then calmly closed her

eyes in death, in the embraces of her Divine Son Who descended at that moment to receive her.

Her blessed remains were interred with all possible pomp by the Apostles: and it is said that astounding miracles were worked at her tomb. But, on the third day, when the Apostles went to visit her sepulchre, they found the stone rolled back; the body of God's Blessed Mother was gone. A bed of lilies and roses alone remained to mark her last resting place.

Myriads of bright angels were sent to the sepulchre, filling the air with heavenly music and rapturous song. And Mary's Immaculate soul being once more united to her sinless body, this Ark of Gold, as she is called, began to ascend, supported by Cherubim and Seraphim—piercing the clouds with jubilee and ineffable joy until she reached the throne of the Eternal God. And thus ended the earthly side of Mary's life.

Borne aloft by Angels, radiant with joy and glory, Mary ascends into Heaven. The Angels cry aloud in the words of the Psalmist: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes and be ye lifted up, O ye eternal gates!" And the Angel guarding the portals of the Heavenly Jerusalem inquired of them: "Who is she that cometh up from the desert flowing with delights?" And the Angelic Choirs reply "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be lifted up, and the Queen of Glory shall enter in!"

The sweet-voiced Cherubim were then silent—and the keen-eyed Seraphim veiled their eyes before the meeting in Heaven of the Mother and her Son.

Above Angels and Archangels, above Principalities and Powers, above Cherubim and Seraphim, above the Seven Spirits who minister at the very Throne of God, Mary is lifted to her place. Her throne is next to the throne of Jesus. Upon her brow He places a crown, and by the

acclamations of all Heaven, she is proclaimed for ever Queen of Angels, Queen of Saints, Queen and Mother of the children of men.

And now that our dear and Immaculate Mother has been borne aloft to her glory in Heaven, we may ask ourselves what strikes us most when we come to consider the grandeur of her virtues and the height of her majesty in God's blessed Kingdom.

Surely we must be impressed by the fact that, being the highest of God's creatures, she is also the humblest.

Though all virtues and perfections shine forth in her, the most striking of all is her incomparable humility. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" are her words—to teach us on all occasions humility in our daily life and submission in all things to God's most Holy Will. How different the words of Lucifer! He did not say "Behold the servant of the Lord" but "I will not serve!"

Finally, let us unite with all devout children of Mary who throughout the world to-day are rejoicing in this glorious festival of our Blessed Mother—greeting her in those words of her little Office:

"Virgin renowned, unspotted in God's sight
Blest Mercy's Queen, star-crowned and clothed with light
All fair art thou, Immaculate and chaste,
Higher in glory than the Angels placed.
In golden vesture, privileged to stand
By Heaven's exalted throne on God's right hand.
Mother of grace, sweet hope is found in thee:
Heaven at thy prayer will set the guilty free.
The Ocean's guiding Star serenely bright.
The port that gladdens the wrecked seaman's sight
Heaven's opened gate! Health of the weak, Oh bring,
Bring us with Saints to gaze upon the King."

THE ASSUMPTION

IT is a common taunt to us Catholics that we make too much of the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Mother of God. In doing our very utmost to honour her, we are only very frankly imitating Almighty God Himself. " He that is mighty hath done great things to me," are our Blessed Lady's own words. And now that we are celebrating the Feast of the Assumption—the supreme triumph of Mary—let us recall the great things the Lord has done for her.

Mary had various triumphs—triumphs of faith, of love and mercy, endurance and mercy, and of glory. And in God's Providence they led up one to the other, one a preparation for the next, to the culmination—the glorious Assumption into Heaven.

Her first triumph was at Bethlehem on Christmas night. She had believed the word of the Lord—the word Gabriel had brought to her at Nazareth : " Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee." " Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great and be called the Son of the Most High. . . . And of His Kingdom there is no end." Now this word has come to pass. Faith had triumphed—the Saviour of the world was born. Mary's Immaculate Heart that night was making melody with the Angels of God on high : " Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill."

Her second triumph was of Faith too, and a prolonged one. Her glory was that the *Divinity* of her Son was made evident in His public life. The crowds thronged to hear

Him, and He spoke as one having power. They followed Him, fascinated, forgetful of food or rest. They brought to Him all that were sick and diseased and He healed them. Even the devils cast out of them that were possessed proclaimed Him Christ, the Son of God. And poor sinners came to Him, and He said to many a one of them : " Thy sins are forgiven thee." And, as His enemies objected " Who can forgive sins but God alone ? " He openly proclaimed to be the Son of God, and that He and the Father were one. The very dead raised to life—Lazarus given back to his sisters—proved Him the Resurrection and the Life. Mary kept all these words in her heart. And this triumph of hers, a prolonged one of three years, was to strengthen her for the next triumph, the triumph over a mother's heart, the triumph of love and mercy for sinners.

Calvary is the next scene of Mary's triumph. She consented to her Son's Death—She offered Him up a Sacrifice for sin, through pity for us poor sinners. We reverence the Martyrs, braving the rack and the sword, scourging and fire for their Lord's sake. But Mary is the Queen of Martyrs ! As the soul transcends the body, so the sword thrust that pierced her soul was more agonizing than any bodily suffering. The shadow of the Cross had been hovering over her since the Child was born. And at last the hour had come foreseen for three and thirty years. And Mary nerved herself, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, to stand by the Cross, to witness the Atonement, to take her part in it, giving up her divine Son and taking us for her children in His place.

It is over. . . . And as Our Blessed Lady had partaken of the sufferings of the Cross, justly did she participate in the triumph of the Redeemer in His Resurrection and Ascension. The Gospel is silent. There is no mention of Mary the Immaculate at Easter. That was our Lady's

humility. But we may reverently congratulate her on the joy of Easter Day. To behold her Son, risen, glorious and immortal, what a triumph ! That one moment of restful joy more than compensated for the many sorrows she had gone through.

All too quickly the forty days passed on, and from Mount Olivet Jesus ascended into Heaven. Would it not have been a beautiful ending if Mary had been taken up to Heaven with her Son ?

There was another triumph she had to pass through first—the triumph of patience. The infant Church needed a Mother. It needed her to tell them all those words she had kept in her heart. The Evangelists needed her for the Gospel records. Her example, guidance, and presence were needed—and she gave twelve long years without a murmur.

What endurance and patience ! For, what a bleak, dreary world to her it must have been—and Jesus gone ! In memory of those years let us school ourselves to submit to the Holy Will of God, to embrace all the monotony, weariness, and sufferings of life in imitation of Our Blessed Lady.

She thus prepared herself for the final triumph—and so can we. And now comes the crowning glory of all—the holy, peaceful slumber of death, the Assumption into Heaven, the Crowning of Our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and of Earth ! Look at the contrast what Mary's life had appeared to the world and what God saw in it—immaculate, loving, obedient. Words fail to tell of it : but the glory that is revealed in the Assumption, tells what that life has been.

Imagine how Heaven had looked forward to this solemnity. The Angels longing to see their Queen enthroned in Heaven —the spotless Virgin who had been chosen to be the Mother of God !

Think of the Saints ready to do homage and bid her welcome. Think of St. Joseph, glorifying God for the reward exceeding great prepared for her whom he had loved and guarded with such fidelity ; and lastly, think of Our Blessed Lady herself and how she must have longed for the day of her heavenly triumph to dawn, the dawn of eternal joy and glory. Think of her enthroned as Queen of Heaven, and say to her in the words of her little Office : " Virgin renowned, unspotted in God's sight," etc.

O Mary, remember us in all your joy and triumph. Every soul saved adds to your glory. Poor exiles as yet, we look up to Heaven, and exalt and praise God for the glory He has given to thee—our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE LEPERS

THE scene presented in this day's Gospel is one of the most touching in the Public Life of Our Lord, and one of deep significance for our everyday lives in this modern world.

First of all, we see this group of unfortunate individuals, afflicted with the most loathsome disease known to antiquity. Following this, we hear of the marvellous miracle of their instantaneous cure when they followed out the simple direction of Our Lord to show themselves to the priests: " and as they went, they were made clean." Then finally, we witness the return of the one grateful leper to give thanks to his benefactor, " and this was a Samaritan."

Ingratitude, dear Brethren, is a hard-hearted attitude in life, yet unfortunately is a not uncommon failing. Even dumb animals seem to outdo us in this respect. The faithful dog appreciates every pat and every kindness of his master, and puts to shame the great majority of mankind who neglect to make adequate return for favours received. As human beings we think so much of ourselves. We are lords of the world with the earth as our footstool, and are inclined to consider every blessing of this life and the next as belonging to us by some inherent right. Our natural tendency is to accept all blessings, comforts and advantages as being definitely due to us and as carrying no obligation of gratitude It is commonly said that the young are almost universally ungrateful. But this statement

needs qualification. The little child, of course, is instinctively selfish. As yet he has no appreciation of the rights of others or of his duties towards them, and is entirely wrapped up in his own little body and the comforts and conveniences that minister to it. But the boy or the girl who has passed out of the period of childhood, and who has more or less become aware of the world about him—such a boy or girl has, I believe, a real sense of gratitude. This is particularly true when they have been so fortunate as to have been brought up in a home where "please, mother," and "thank you, mother," are insisted upon, and where the atmosphere is one of kindness and good manners.

Such children show themselves appreciative of every attention; and kindness towards them is always rewarded by the way it is received and in the little returns they try to make.

But in the older boy and girl—who are attaining the young man and the young woman period—ingratitude very often seems to become once more a dominant characteristic. Young people of this age are out to carry all before them, to make the most of themselves—and in consequence to claim and show their independence.

Happy are those young people who are cured of this curse before entering upon their work in the world, and happy are those mature persons who have learned the lesson of giving thanks and of showing appreciation of their neighbour's kindness. These alone are blessed with the love and friendship of those about them—and without the affection and friendship of those with whom we live and labour, the world is surely a dreary place to live in.

Now all of us have much to be grateful for. We all enjoy in some degree the creature comforts of life. We seldom meet with a real case of abject poverty. Probably

all of us have some leisure time to enjoy ourselves, though sometimes leisure only offers an occasion of temptation against the law of God.

But it is to things eternal I woud call your attention now, reminding you of the debt of gratitude you owe to God for the great blessings He has showered upon you. The lepers in the Gospel were afflicted with a terrible scourge. They were outcasts of society. For their restoration to health and to the companionship of their fellow-men, Our Lord was justified in expecting some expression of gratitude.

But there is another leprosy more deadly than that of the body, to which all of us are more or less subject throughout our lives. This leprosy appears not in ulcers and blotches that disfigure the countenance and rot away the extremities of the limbs. It rather disfigures us in the sight of God and cuts us off from companionship with Him. This leprosy is sin.

But no matter how deeply we may be infected with this moral decay, there is ever a cure at hand. And to all who have contracted this spiritual leprosy are addressed the same words of Our Lord to the lepers in the Gospel: " Go, show yourselves to the priest ! " The Sacrament of Penance is ever at hand as a cleansing bath to remove every stain disfiguring the soul, rendering it clean and acceptable in the sight of God.

We have not only a cure for this disease, but also a spiritual repast to carry us through the convalescent period from sin to strength of soul making us firm and strong in future temptation. This strengthening food, dear Brethren, is ever awaiting you in the Tabernacle. The best guarantee against future infection is the frequentation of the Holy Table, thus building up in our souls a vital resistance against moral contagion for the future.

For these two great gifts—the Sacraments of Penance

and of Holy Communion—there is pressing upon us the duty of gratitude. And though all our lives should be one continuous act of gratitude for the good things God has given us, there is one special time when we should return special thanks, and that is after the reception of these two Sacraments.

Confession cures the leprosy of the soul, and makes us clean in the sight of God : Holy Communion builds up the spiritual life thus restored, and establishes a firm bond of union between ourselves and God. Therefore, after receiving these great blessings make it a life habit always to spend some time in prayer, asking God's forgiveness for sin, adoring and praising Him, and making whatever petitions you feel necessary or conducive to happiness in life.

Gratitude offered to God is the surest guarantee of God's bountiful outpouring of blessings upon us during the rest of our lives.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"I BELONG TO GOD!"

FROM our infancy, dear Brethren in Jesus Christ, we were taught to know that God made us. As we grew older, Faith came to our assistance and supplied what our reason could not teach us—and with its help we came to know that we were created by a Creator, and that Creator is God who made me and everything I see around me.

If God is my Creator—He is my Lord and Master. As He is my Lord and my Master—I belong to God. I am the property of God. The King has a right to the obedience of his subjects. The father has a right to the submission and respect of his children. The master has a right to the services of his servant. The man who by his toil and ingenuity makes a thing has a right to dispose of it as he chooses.

But I—the creature of God—belong more to God than the subject to the Sovereign—the child to the father—the servant to the master—the picture to him who painted it—or the tree to him who planted it.

By all titles I belong to God: for what is there in me that does not belong to God? As St. Paul says: "What have you that you have not received?"

Supposing God took back what He has given me. What would remain to me? If He took back my mind, what should I be? If he deprived me of my sight and speech and hearing; if He deprived me of life and motion; if

He took back my whole being, what should I be? A simple nothing!

Now, as we belong to God, we are not our own masters, but God is our Master. You will have noticed that there is one wish ruling over all mankind, and it is a wish which is never gratified in any single instance. Each one wishes to be his or her own master. It is the child's beatific vision—to have what he wants—to do just as he likes—and it remains to be most people's ruling passion to the end of their lives.

But the fact is, life is a service. The only question is whom we will serve.

First, if we try to become the property of ourselves, what is the result? Habits of sin at once begin to rule imperiously over us and drive us to pain and death. Then, we experience the misery of so many wants which gnaw us to the heart if we do not satisfy them. Then there is the continual mortification of not getting our own way: and everlasting self becomes such a task master and such a tyrant that there is not a vestige of liberty left to us.

Secondly, if we try to become the property of the world, what is the result? To prosper in the world, one must be successful. Success is a perpetual struggle, which means absence of repose. To be worldly, you have to have unlimited self-respect which is unbearable tyranny. Worldly pleasures are full of false promises, rendering the human heart more distressed, the more they are indulged. As for sympathy and kindness, which we so much love, the world does not know them.

Moreover, both these services—the service of self and of the world—make us in reality the property of Satan.

But now think how vastly different it is to be the property of God. I was made by God and for God—I belong to God!

What is all else to me? "Deus meus et omnia"—"My God and *my all*!" We belong to Him by all titles: but He will have us give ourselves to Him ourselves. "My yoke," says Christ, Our Lord, "is sweet, my burden light."

In His service every hardship has its own reward, every sorrow its special consolation.

In joy, in grief, in rest, in work, in weariness, in sickness, in death, we are the property of God. If we meet with sorrows in His service, there is sweetness in the thought that they come from Our Father, and He feels the greatest compassion for us in our grief, and our pain shall be rewarded eternally.

If we meet with joy in His service, there is a sense of security in it—that it is pleasing to God, and of a heavenly character, and leaves the soul at rest.

In our daily work, we have the constant comfort of knowing it is all for God, and that we are occupied in doing our Father's business. There is no fretfulness about success—and we work away generously, full of spirit and courage, because we are His, and all we do is for Him and to please Him.

In weariness, after hard work, there is a strange feeling of sweetness in being fatigued for God. On His Sacred Ministry, Our Blessed Lord was often fatigued for us. And He Himself is ever our Comforter—ever our kind Father, and no task master.

Finally—in death—when our service is over, the great moment comes full of solemnity, but not of terror. We regard it as a beginning, not as an end—and with trembling joy we experience the increasing nearness to God, whose property we are—the God who made us. And then, He takes His property back again, and we go to Him, and then and not before, and there and not elsewhere, we are

at rest. For His bosom is the home of the weary—our very own delightful home.

"No man can serve two Masters," says Christ. Let us therefore in this Holy Mass make the resolution that we will henceforth with God's holy grace abandon the service of self, abandon the service of this deceitful world, and serve the good God faithfully and generously for the rest of our lives.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

The Most Holy Name of Mary

During the past week the Church has observed a festival in honour of the Birthday of Our Blessed Lady, and yesterday we celebrated the Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary. It is God's Will that our sanctification shall largely depend upon our devotion to His Blessed Mother: and blessed in life and death is the soul whose persevering piety has come to bear upon it the heavenly hall-mark of the Most Holy Name of Mary.

This name suits all our needs and wants—a name dear to the sorrowful, appealed to by those in need, and cherished by the joyful as they glorify God for His goodness to them.

The word "Mary" was common to various countries in ancient times, and it varied in its meaning or signification according to the language in which it was used. So, by God's decision, this mystical name of "Mary" was given to Our Blessed Lady. It is an epitome—or summary of her life on earth, her care of and advocacy for us, and her glory and majesty in heaven.

St. Jerome, the great scholar, tells us that "Mary" signifies "the bitterness of the sea" or "grief"—a fitting name for the Mother of Sorrows, and descriptive in one word of her life on earth. For although the dignity of the Divine Maternity, the dignity of the Mother of God which was given her, transcends all the other honours, and filled

her heart with ineffable joy, yet unspeakable sorrow—sorrow that increased each day of Her Divine Son's life—was her portion. The Cross was looming in the distance all those years. And Mary was brave enough to face it—nay to stand by it—when the dread day of Calvary should come, there to offer her Son's life for the Redemption of mankind.

O Mother of Sorrows, teach us in our sorrows and falls and repentances to invoke that blessed name of thine and to take courage and consolation from its meaning.

What Mary is to each of us is explained by St. Bernard when he tells us that the name of Mary means " star of the sea." She is our guide, our hope, our safety in the perils and storms of life. In a well-known passage of his, he bids us in the storms and temptations and tribulations not to lose sight of the blest shining of this star. If the waves of pride or ambition, of envy or destruction overwhelm us, look up to the Star, call upon Mary. If the hidden rocks of remorse, of a bad conscience, of terror of the judgment or despair threaten us with destruction, look up to the Star, call upon Mary.

In the perils and uncertainties of this life, what a blessing it is to know, to remember, and to invoke the Star of the Sea—to be devout to Mary.

What a help and strength, dear Brethren, God has given to us in the advocacy and solicitude of His Blessed Mother. We shall not be discouraged and faint-hearted if we continually look up to this fair Star and have confidence in Mary.

As for the dignity of Mary, St. Peter Chrysologus tells us how her name foreshadowed her glory in heaven, for it means " lady or queen." This we feel is becoming and proper, and it is a beautiful completion to the triple meaning : Her life on earth, her care for us, and her glory

in Heaven—the Mother of Sorrows—the Star of the Sea, and the Queen of us all.

For Mary is Queen of Angels as well as the Refuge of Sinners. As the Angels worship with awe that God Who became Man and died for our salvation, so they honour and glorify that Virgin Mother who bravely shared the sorrows and sufferings of her Son and is the loving refuge and Mother of those poor sinners for whom He died. If there is joy before the Angels of God over one sinner doing penance, what exultation it must be to them to have in their midst the Mother of the Redeemer whose prayers lead poor sinners to find repentance and forgiveness.

This holy name of Mary, then, is a power to us, a power suitable for every occasion, for every condition of this life of ours on earth. The sick, the dying, the sorrowing, the broken-hearted can find solace in praying to the Mother of Sorrows. Even the hard-hearted, who feel no compunction for their sins, can scarcely keep back their tears if only they kneel down and pray to the Mother of Sorrows who saw her Son die for their very sins.

What a help it is to us, battling through life, tempted and worried, to keep up our hearts and courage, remembering Mary the Star of the Sea, the Mother so quick to hear, so quick to succour. May her sweet name be ever in our hearts and on our lips ! May we continue, day by day, to invoke her now, and then how natural, how easy, familiar, and comforting to call upon her when our last hour comes !

Oh, may we deserve, by constant daily devotion to her in life, to have Our Lady with us at the hour of our death.

Mary, Mother of Sorrows, Star of the Sea, Queen of Heaven, pray for us, and be with us at the end. Amen.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

A Lesson from the Enemies of Christ. "They watched Him!"

To-day, my dear Brethren, let us learn a lesson, not from the words or miracles of Our Blessed Lord, but from His enemies. Let us notice the Gospel. There is much more in it than we may imagine.

It was a Sabbath day. It was the house of a Pharisee that Our Lord entered. A man suffering from dropsy was there by design, and they watched Him. Seven different miraculous cures were worked by Our Blessed Lord on the Sabbath Day—and scandal was taken each time by the Pharisees.

Here they appeared to be friendly. They invited Him to dine with them. But they laid the trap of the palsied man before His Divine Mercy and Compassion—and they watched Him.

But they might watch Our Blessed Lord—and take scandal—but no scandal did He ever give! They were covered with confusion time after time when trying to ensnare Him.

Like its Divine Master, so is the Church watched: and its members—our own unworthy selves.

We bear the name of Christ—our lives are either an honour or a disgrace to our Master. It is a weighty and responsible thing to be a Catholic. The world is ever watching us, for it knows our profession and our obligations

full well. The Sunday's Mass—and the unbeliever's eye is watching to see if we attend, if we act up to our belief or not. The abstinence on Fridays, the days of Lent, the Ember Days—and although they sneer at such observances, they are watching to see if we are faithful and obedient to fast and abstain. And how they despise those who fail to observe them ! Confession they may not be able to watch, but they have their eyes on those who practise it. And if Catholics are noted for drinking, gambling, running into debts, being quarrelsome or unneighbourly, how the world watches, and the devil watches too, gloating over such scenes : and all the dishonour falls upon Him who died to take away our sins. The Church groans under the misdeeds of her children. Our lives, our actions, give either good example or scandal : but "woe to him," says Our Lord, "by whom the scandal cometh."

Should it not shame us that we are so remiss in watching over ourselves to live strictly, carefully, fervently ? And our enemies are so keen to watch our misconduct, our weaknesses, our falls, which scandalize Christ and His Church.

Should not *we*, His friends, watch and pray to Him, watch to please Him, watch to know what He would have us do ; watch to learn to be like Him, and imitate Him ?

Yes, His enemies could watch. Time, trouble, scheming, and planning were nothing to them. Envy and spite gave them activity in their perseverance against Our Lord. Repeatedly in the Gospel we notice this : but most especially as His Passion and Death drew near. Then most painfully do we notice the contrast between His enemies and His friends. The night before He died, see how busy, energetic and watchful His enemies were. They had all arrangements made. Their bodies knew no fatigue, their

eyes no sleep that night in their anxiety to seize Our Lord.

And the disciples, what of them? They had listened to His tender words of parting. They had received their First Holy Communion. They went for the last time to the Garden where He had spent many a night in prayer. "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.'"

Judas had hastened away from the supper table. The band of soldiers were ready, and he was leading them over the Brook Cedron to the Garden he knew so well, to betray his Blessed Master. Yes, Judas was all alert and watchful: and there in the Garden Our Lord cometh to them and findeth them sleeping. And He saith to Peter "Simon, sleepeth thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour with me? Watch ye, and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

St. Peter never forgot that night. He had not watched, he had not prayed, and he fell! And how he remembered it! Thirty-five years afterwards he writes: "I who am a witness of the sufferings of Christ, beseech you to 'be sober and watch.'" Let us take this word from him in all humility, treasure it, and make this watchfulness the foundation of our fervour and fidelity.

Dear Brethren, we all have free will, and if we choose we can practically forget and neglect God. But remember, God is ever watching us; and some day—we shall all watch Him. And our anxiety and fear, watching Him, will be in proportion to our negligence and sinfulness now. Scoffers and unbelievers, brave men at drinking and wickedness, disregarders of the Church and its holy laws, will then, at judgment, in fear and agony, watch the face of Jesus Christ—all too late to implore mercy, hope all gone, their ruin all their own fault, they will stand there

trembling, waiting, watching for those lips to pronounce their sentence.

How different will that watching be for the humble, faithful, obedient ones! They have watched Him in life, day after day, to learn His Blessed Will and do it. Conscious indeed of many a fall and negligence, they have always looked up and begged for mercy. Their prayer will be: "Lord, by all the times I have watched for Thee at Holy Mass, looking up to Thee reverently at the Elevation and adoring Thee—my Lord and my God, give me hope and confidence to watch for Thy smile of welcome, bidding me to Thy Kingdom, and may I watch before Thy throne for ever and ever."

O Jesus, Blessed Saviour, what rapture will it be
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie, and gaze and gaze on Thee.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"St. Michael and the Angels."

On Tuesday next, the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, and while honouring him we are led to pay homage to all the blessed spirits who form God's heavenly army over which St. Michael rules. . . . To speak of the Angels and their early history, we must lead our thoughts back to very distant ages—before the Nativity of Our Lord, over 1900 years ago, and even before the 4000 years of the world's history which preceded it. It is a dizzy thought to contemplate what existed from all eternity before the world was created and everything in it: for nothing existed but God.

And who is God? God is the Supreme Spirit who alone exists of Himself and is infinite in all perfections. And God is called Almighty because He can do all things. God is called Creator of Heaven and Earth, because He made Heaven and Earth, and all things out of nothing, by His word. And there is only one God, and that one God had no beginning: He always was, is, and always will be. But though there is only one God, there are Three Persons in God, The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

These Three Divine Persons existed for ever and ever, and there never was a moment in all the ages of eternity when they did not exist: and in their adorable solitude, they enjoyed the companionship of one another in infinite happiness, infinite holiness, infinite perfection.

A moment came when these Three Divine Persons determined to create, or bring out of nothing, other beings who would give them praise every moment of their existence. And the first of these created beings were the holy Angels.

EXCELLENCE. They were pure spirits, not having a body like ourselves. They were living images of the perfections of God.

INTELLIGENCE. God gave them clear light to know Him and to know their own dignity, and also to know all other creatures He would create.

WILL. They were filled with innocence, and felt a natural inclination towards God, and their hearts were naturally moved to God, their supreme happiness.

DWELLING. Place was Heaven, where, however, they did not see God face to face, but where their occupation was to think of Him and to love Him.

DESTINY. God destined they should have a trial—and those who came through successfully should rest at the foot of His throne for ever, enjoying the happiness of seeing Him, loving Him and possessing Him with all the powers of their being.

NUMBER. Holy Scripture gives us to understand that myriads of these holy Angels were created by God, and that they were divided into nine choirs: Archangels and Angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, Thrones and Dominations, Principalities, Virtues and Powers.

The grandest of these magnificent Spirits were the Archangels who were the leaders of the Holy Hosts: and among these Archangels was one Spirit who surpassed all the rest in grandeur. His name was Lucifer. He was the Prince of the Heavenly Hierarchy. We are told that he was full of wisdom and perfection and beauty, and he revelled in the pleasures of the paradise of God. Every precious stone was his covering. His garments were of

gold set with jasper, onyx and sapphires. He was a pure spirit, and immortal. He had knowledge of all other creatures. He had also free will and command over his own actions. Besides this, he was eminently holy, being filled with grace. He lived in the Empyreal Heaven, throned on God's holy mountain, and walked unharmed in the midst of celestial fires.

Such was the grandeur of this mighty Archangel. But in a moment of trial, he forgot that he had received all his grandeur from God: and growing proud of the gifts with which he found himself adorned, he sinned against His Creator by elevating himself to the level of his God.

Knowing that the rest of the myriads of angels were under his control, he stirred up a rebellion amongst them and opposed himself to his Creator. One third of the heavenly host sided with him and arrayed themselves before the throne of God, and gave willing ear to the battle cry of Lucier: "Non serviam!" "I will not serve!" "I will ascend into Heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will be like the Most High."

Immediately the Archangel St. Michael called forth the faithful Angels who thrust themselves before the rebel host, while St. Michael gave forth his indignant cry: "Who is like to God?" The heavenly victory was given to the arms of St. Michael's faithful band, and in a moment the bolts of Heaven's gates were drawn, and Lucifer with his rebel army was cast headlong out of Heaven, and drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower Hell unto torments for ever and ever.

They were deprived of all their gifts of nature and grace, and were thrown into the fiery furnaces of Hell to expiate for all eternity the crime of one moment! What a terrible change! No thought now but of crime. No love but for

evil. No other palace but hell. No other occupation but to torment souls and ruin them, as they themselves are ruined for ever.

This, dear Brethren, is in brief the history of the Angels, and of that terrible being we call the devil and the beings we call the devils. They know the unspeakable delights they enjoyed in Heaven. They know the grandeur of the royal state they had in Heaven. They know we have been created by God to fill up the unsightly gaps they have made in the thrones of Heaven. And therefore, hating God, they hate us: and they are determined to leave no effort undone in order to make us forfeit by sin the glory God has prepared for us.

And thus it happens that in the world there appear to be two sides to everything: one side belongs to Jesus Christ, the other side is against Him and belongs to the devil.

There is not a public house, nor a theatre, nor a cinema, nor a shop, nor a fair, nor a market, nor a tramcar, nor a ship, nor a school, nor a church where the devils are not ever watching to draw souls from Jesus Christ and to draw them into sin.

What wonder then, that souls are lost. St. Teresa once had a vision of the destruction of souls wrought by the devil: and she saw souls of men, women, and children flocking through the doors of Hell, like showers of leaves blown from the trees in the autumn blasts.

From these considerations, let us remember how God punished the one sin of the fallen angels by an eternity of suffering: and therefore what reason have we to live in the holy fear of God, when we think not only of our one sin—but innumerable sins of thought, word, and deed.

Then, secondly, how good God is to us in giving us help in our warfare against the devil, by the powerful protection

of His holy angels, and especially the continual help through life of our Guardian Angel.

And lastly, what an everlastingly bitter misery it is to lose God for ever, and to exchange the blissful joys of heaven for an eternity of suffering in Hell.

Have recourse, dear Brethren, to the Blessed Mother of God, the Queen of the Angels, that she may lead you through life in such a way that Jesus in judgment may find you fit for Heaven; and that you may die a saintly death after spending a holy life, and that you may become the companion of Angels on one of those bright thrones left vacant by the evil spirits and enjoy the bliss of Heaven for ever.

ROSARY SUNDAY
(Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost)

DURING the past week we have entered the month of October—a month in which the Church leads us to petition the good God to send us blessings for soul and body through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary.

Two months of each calendar year are set aside for special devotion to Our Lady, the Month of May and the Month of October. But in these months we view Our Lady under different aspects. In May she appears before us as the mighty Queen of Heaven and Earth, the Queen of Angels and of men, and we are drawn to her as children to our Mother, or as subjects to our Queen.

In October, she is presented to us rather as the Comforter of the Afflicted, the Refuge of Sinners, and the Dispensatrix of God's favours to us : and we send up our supplications for God's merciful blessings upon us through her maternal hands.

The chief form of prayer we are encouraged to use during this month is that which we render to God and His Holy Mother by the devout use of the Rosary.

In the Lessons of the Roman Breviary we read that the Rosary is a certain form of prayer wherein we say fifteen decades or tens of Hail Marys with an Our Father at the beginning of each ten and " Glory be " at the end : while during each of these decades, we recall successively in pious meditation one of the mysteries of our Redemption. These

mysteries are divided into three sections, called the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries. The use of this admirable devotion has become common and universal chiefly through the fervent zeal of St. Dominic and the priests of the Order he founded, and also by the continual, repeated encouragement of successive Sovereign Pontiffs.

The object of the beads is to enable us readily to repeat the prayers the requisite number of times. It is obvious that when any prayer has to be repeated a large number of times, recourse is to be had to some mechanical contrivance to save counting on the fingers.

Strange to say, almost in all countries we meet with something in the nature of prayer counters or rosary beads. Among the Mahommedans, the bead string of 33, 66, or 99 beads is common, and has been for many centuries used for counting devotionally the name of Allah. A certain King of Malabar, a pagan, had a rosary of 104 precious stones whereon to count his prayers.

St. Francis Xavier and his companions found that rosaries were quite familiar to the Buddhists of Japan. Paul the Hermit, in the fourth century, had imposed on himself the task of repeating three hundred prayers according to a set form every day. To do this, he gathered up 300 pebbles, and threw one away as each was finished.

In the history of Christian communities we find the pious practice of repeating Kyrie eleison, or Psalms, in great number: and for the purpose of counting, small pebbles or berries or discs of bone were threaded on a string.

Such strings of beads were known in the Middle Ages as "Paternosters." In the thirteenth century, manufacturers of these articles were described as "Paternosterers," and they formed a recognized craft-guild of considerable importance. And it is interesting to recall

that " Paternoster Row " in London was in ancient times the street in which the English craft-fellows of this guild worked and congregated.

The obvious inference is that these beads were originally designed for counting " Our Fathers." But from the middle of the twelfth century the practice came into use of using the beads for reciting Hail Marys : and the devotion spread with great rapidity, and has been in vogue all the world over ever since.

Made up as it is of the best of all prayers—the Our Father or the Lord's Prayer—and the next best of all prayers—the Ave Maria or the Hail Mary, what wonder that the Rosary has become pre-eminently the prayer of the people, adapted as it is alike for the young and the old, rich and poor, the learned and the simple. For here we all meet on a common level, as creatures of God, poor weak mortals, conscious of our weaknesses and sins—with a life to live, a death to die, and eternity of happiness to win.

Wherever the Rosary of Our Lady has been practised with perseverance, God's blessings have been multiplied upon the devout clients of Mary. The Church has enriched it with abundant Indulgences because the prayer has been proved to be most acceptable to God by the favours He has granted through its recitation.

The word Rosary means a garland or a bouquet of roses —and as such we lay it at Our Lady's feet, and as such she graciously accepts it. In an early legend we read of Our Lady taking rosebuds from the lips of a young monk when he was reciting Hail Marys, and then weaving these buds into a garland which she placed upon his head.

It is a sorrow to think that the good old days are passed and gone when the Rosary was a daily event in family life, and the parents and children never retired to rest

without reciting the Rosary. But it is always a comfort to see the Rosary in use.

I was greatly edified by the practice of an Irish doctor I knew in the North of England, who went his rounds on his bicycle with his rosary over the handlebar and saying his beads, and never considering his day's work done till he had given Our Lady her five decades. I know also a surgeon—one of the most eminent in England—when attending serious cases of fatal disease, bringing comfort and often sleep and cessation of pain by putting a rosary around the neck of his patients, when all human remedies were of no avail. That is the spirit of faith we must all try to cultivate, an unbounded confidence in the maternal love, and the protection of God's most holy Mother.

Now let me exhort you, dear Brethren, to make use of the Rosary all through this month of October. Keep the Rosary about your person, and let your fingers be busy with the beads. Remember that all the world over, the children of God of every nation under the sun will be uniting in one great chorus, praising God and Our Lady with the Rosary. Promise Our Lady you will give her every day of this month a measure of praise and worship by saying daily what you can of her chaplet. If five decades is too much to promise, give her at least one : and I promise you that your prayer and homage will be rewarded by special blessings to yourselves and to those for whom you offer it.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

" But they neglected and went their ways."

THESE few words in the Gospel: " But they neglected and went their ways," should touch our consciences perhaps in a sore and tender part. The souls of every one of us are, to some extent, soiled with negligence. Many might object to own, and rightly too, that they lived in sin, but they would probably be bound to own up to a certain amount of negligence and indifference. You will have noticed in the Gospel that all those who neglected had excuses: but their excuses availed them nothing.

In reality, neglect is a dangerous evil—not perhaps so much from what it is as to what it leads. A cold on the chest may mean nothing extraordinary: but neglected, it may mean pneumonia and a premature death.

When we grow careless, whether it is about our prayers, not saying them or cutting them down, or saying them distractedly; or about our Holy Communion, no regularity, no earnestness; or about good example, or drifting into bad company; or when religion is in question, being afraid to make a bold stand for our Faith; do not let us think these things trifles.

For in reality—what are we neglecting? The call of the Great King, Our Father, Master, Redeemer, and God. He expects this life to be a preparation, earnest preparation, for the union with His Son in the Eternal Kingdom. He bids us to come, to make ready to come, to have the wedding

garment of grace prepared. And most of us neglect. We hear of the strenuous life business people live. Where is our earnestness in preparing for and hastening to the Kingdom of Heaven?

And for what are we neglecting to make sure of Heaven? Is it for pleasure? Surely living in neglect and in sin cannot be such a pleasure! A bad conscience is not a cheerful companion. And shame and remorse only make our laughter hollow and our joys a mockery.

Or are we neglecting it for profit or gain? All we get by neglecting God does us as much good as Judas got from the thirty pieces of silver for which he sold his Lord and Master. It is foolish for most of us to think of acquiring much in the way of profit. How few there are who can command riches in this world. It is only one, here and there, who makes a fortune—and only one in a million who is content with what he has.

But for most of us, when we neglect it is for some form of sensuality, or sloth, or some little dishonest gain, or to give vent to our temper, or indulge in desires that are evil. These are our idols, and we prefer them to God—and hence God says by the Prophet Isaias—"To whom have you likened Me and made Me equal and compared Me and made Me like?" (Is. xlvi, 5.)

Though most of us begin to neglect only little things, let us not deceive ourselves; we shall not stop at that. And why should we fall farther? Because God's grace is withdrawn from us, and the graces we have neglected are offered to others—just as in the Gospel, when the first made excuse, they were simply passed by and others were invited.

Then again we shall not stop at little things, because we get used to sin and think less of it. One moment's glance into our past lives shows us that. What would

have terrified us some years back are now perhaps the daily occurrences of a careless life.

These are the effects of indifference and neglect. We fall—and fall into what? Mortal sin. We are weakened by the withdrawal of grace, and without grace we are too irresolute to make an effort—and we fall into mortal sin. That neglected, soon becomes a habit of sin. That too is neglected, and we grow indefinite—we will put things right some time—next Easter—or next Mission. And it is possible even for these opportunities to be neglected too. And the end comes far sooner than we expected and we have not the time nor the will nor the grace: and we fall under the judgment of God—for we have neglected and gone our way.

Now, dear Brethren, do not say I am exaggerating. For I ask you, is there a Catholic who is now lost for ever who intended to be lost? Are there not many among the lost souls who once were better than we are this day? They were baptised and instructed, made their First Communion—and went regularly for years perhaps to their duties. And then what was it? A bad book or a bad companion, or merely laziness, or disliking the priest, or having to leave home for work? Whatever it was, it was only a little change at first. "But they neglected." But they never meant or intended to fall and neglect as they did.

If Our Guardian Angels had this day to give an account of us to Our Divine Master, would they have to say in the words of the Gospel: "Behold, we have invited them and called them, but they neglected!"?

If our Angel would be compelled to say this of us, let us examine what would have been the cause of our ruin.

Each of us has something which, if not watched and

restrained, will lead us into sin. Contrast this something with what we are neglecting for its sake.

A peaceful life here and the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter. And contrast it with whom we are neglecting for its sake—Our Heavenly Father, Who has loved us so much : Our Blessed Redeemer, Who died for us and left us Himself in the Blessed Sacrament, Whose Sacred Heart is now yearning to make friends with us and fill us with the fire of His Divine Love.

Dear Brethren, after all, shall we allow it to be said of us : " They had their chance, but they neglected—and went their way " ?

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Courage and Strength

" That you may be able to resist in the evil day."
(Eph. 6–13.)

Our spiritual life, from our coming to the use of reason till we leave this world in death, is a warfare! We are all engaged in the fight, and no one is exempt from it. Some fight bravely and perseveringly, and bear about them the consolation of many a victory.

Others—and there are many—offer the enemy less resistance and hence are easily overcome, and perhaps for a long time they are paralysed and crippled by the captivity into which they have been drawn. . . . Then comes the awakening; and with the help of Divine grace, they realize the ugliness of their wounds, the shame of their repeated defeats, and the humiliation of their slavery. . . . In all this there is danger of discouragement: and as nothing succeeds like success, so there is no surer stepping stone to failure than discouragement.

Therefore, dear Brethren, in spite of gaping wounds—in spite of repeated defeats—and in spite of the devil's bonds, it is above all things necessary that we do not lose heart and think our life nothing better than a forlorn hope.

Certainly if we trust to ourselves we may well lose heart. But what we must do is to look up to that Heavenly King Who bids us go forth to battle, and Who provides us

with the arms and strength wherewith to conquer. "Fear not, little flock, for well hath it pleased your Father to give you a Kingdom."

We need courage and strength indeed for we have to strive against the devil—we have to overcome ourselves—and the issue, good or bad, of the conflict is eternal.

These are the three things that cause us to fear.

Our own selves. We cannot be sure of our own selves. We will—and we will not. We begin, and we give up. As we are so weak, so full of faults, so easily discouraged, we must not, cannot trust our own selves. And yet we have to overcome our vices—govern our passions, and resist our desires and inclinations.

This would be work enough, but this poor self of ours is tempted, duped, misled, tyrannized over by an enemy whom we cannot see, but who is ever watching us. He is ever planning the evil day, lurking in ambush, ever ready to attack when he hopes we shall not be able to resist. And in this conflict, there is no truce—no hopes of terms of peace! It is a struggle and to death—and, if we fail, what a death!—the loss of God, our all in all, abandonment by Him, and everlasting slavery under the tyranny of the devil.

But all this, dear Brethren, instead of dismaying us, must urge us the more earnestly to seek the sources of our courage and strength. God has not cast us into the conflict for our ruin—but that we may emerge with victory.

(1) The remembrance of God's *mercy and goodness* is our first incitement to take courage that "we may be able to resist in the evil day."

"The Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." (Lament. iii, 25). And in Ecclesiastes ii, 11, "Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded. For who hath continued

in His commandments and hath been forsaken? Or who hath called upon Him, and He hath despised him? He is a protector to all that seek Him in truth."

(2) God became Man for our redemption: and the remembrance of *Christ's love for us*—that He became our brother—fills our hearts with comfort and courage. St. John says (iii, 16): "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" and St. Paul says (Rom. viii, 31): "If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, now hath He not also with Him given us all things?"

This is not our own reasoning and deductions from God's goodness and love: but we have in the Scriptures the Word of God promising help—the promises of God—the pledge of God—often-times repeated—"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

"In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in the day of salvation I have helped thee, and I have preserved thee . . . and all flesh shall know that I am the Lord that saved thee." (Is. 49.)

If our enemy is cleverer than we are, and hath schemes we cannot see or grapple with, how comforting it is for us to know that we are not all alone in the conflict—but that the wisdom and *the power* of God is with us. God knows and sees all things—our weakness and ignorance, the plots of the devil—all the eventualities of life—and He hath the power to arrange that with the *evil day* grace shall more abound, and to make from the temptation an issue of victory for us.

Now no one need fear that there will be a lacking on God's part. Abundance of help and strength will God

give to enable us to resist—if we only seek it and ask it of Him.

But there is always this one danger—we may trust to ourselves—and not have recourse to God. It is he who trusts in himself, and not in God, who falls.

We must then: (1) be humble and distrustful of our own powers and goodness. God specially watches over the humble, and before the prayer has left our lips He is with us, assisting us. (2) The holy fear of God will be our safeguard.

With these two dispositions in our hearts—humility and the holy fear of God—it is impossible not to pray, and not to pray fervently and constantly, and impossible also for these prayers not to be heard.

"I sought the Lord and He heard me: and He delivered me from all my troubles. The Angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear Him, and shall deliver them. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart: and He will save the humble of spirit." (Ps. 33.)

These then are the sources of our courage and our strength to resist the evil day—in humility and fear to invoke the help of the Lord—that Lord who is mercy and goodness itself,

> Who became our brother to prove His Love, Who has promised and pledged Himself to hear and defend us —and Who beyond all this is full of wisdom and power.

Let us therefore continue our fight with stout and complete reliance upon the good God, keeping our hearts filled with the spirit of the Psalmist: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Preparation for the Feast of the Kingship of Christ

"The Person of Jesus Christ"

The last Sunday of October this year there will be celebrated throughout the Catholic World for the first time the feast of the Kingship of Jesus Christ—a festival instituted by our Holy Father Pope Pius XI at the close of the Jubilee Year 1925.

In an Encyclical Letter, the Sovereign Pontiff has explained the meaning of Our Lord's Royalty, the importance of that truth at the present day, and the practical effect which he trusts will be produced by its annual commemoration.

By way of remote preparation for the feast, which occurs a fortnight hence, I will to-day direct your attention in general to the Person of Jesus Christ, Whose Kingship is to be specially honoured, praised, and glorified in the Church as never before.

On the night before His Passion Jesus prayed to His Father for His disciples, and among other things, He said to His Father: "Now, this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." (John xvii, 3.)

It is necessary in the first place to bring clearly before our minds the Person of Jesus Christ Whose Kingship we are about to commemorate. Let us for a moment become children again and recall what we memorized about Him

in our Catechism in the second article of the Creed. Who is Jesus Christ?

In these brief questions and answers we have the clear, straightforward, dogmatic statement of the Catholic Church concerning Our Lord.

He is no mathematical God—no mere idea or hazy theory of a deity—no mere series of phrases or form of words—but a living person with two natures, a human and a divine. This is *the Solid* of Catholic Faith and Catholic devotion. All else in the Church is from this—the Blessed Virgin Mary—the Real Presence—the liturgical seasons and feasts of the year.

The one grand object of the Church is to make the Person of Jesus Christ better known and better loved in a forgetful world. From the beginning of the Church until now, this has been her chief duty—to announce Jesus Christ where He is *not* known, and to make Him better known where He *is* known but not loved. This was the last command given by Christ to His Apostles: for what else does: "Go into the whole World and preach the Gospel to every creature" mean, but go and make Jesus Christ known everywhere.

And as the world persecuted Jesus Christ Himself, so we find the world resisting and persecuting the Church He founded. "You shall be hated by all men for My sake," —and what actually happened to the first preachers of Jesus Christ—the Apostles?

Obeying Christ's command they preached the Gospel first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. St. Peter established the Primatial See in Rome, where He governed the Church for twenty-five years, and then was crucified.

Meantime St. Paul journeyed through Asia, Macedonia and Greece, the chief Mediterranean islands, to Italy and

Rome and probably to Spain—and then sealed his faith by his blood, being beheaded on the day St. Peter was crucified.

St. Andrew—the brother of St. Peter—was also crucified. *St. James* stoned. *St. John* was plunged into boiling oil. *SS. Simon* and *Jude* martyred in Persia. *St. Bartholomew* was flayed alive and then beheaded in Armenia. *St. James the Less* was beheaded. *St. Barnabas* was martyred in Cyprus. *St. Philip* fixed to a cross and stoned to death. *St. Thomas* pierced to death by an arrow. *St. Matthew* in Ethiopia was slain at the altar saying Mass. So ended the first preachers of Jesus Christ.

For three hundred years every convert ran the risk of similar treatment—and instead of diminishing, Christianity only spread all the more rapidly—and the fact that it did so is a great historical proof of its divinity.

In the first three centuries the Church of Jesus Christ spread over Italy, Greece, Africa, Gaul, Spain, Germany and Britain. That the Person and the Faith was known and deeply rooted in this country is proved from the fact that the protomartyr of England died for Christ in the fourth century—and his hallowed remains still lie beneath his desecrated shrine at St. Albans.

We must leave these heroes of Christianity and return to ourselves. This making Christ known and loved in a certain measure presses upon every Catholic of every age, rank, and ability. We should all in our time do something to spread the faith at home or to help towards the conversion of the heathen world. How sad it is that a greater part of mankind still sits in the shadow of death. Let us at least pray to Our Lord—the Light of the Gentiles—to have mercy on them and to provide Priests to preach Him to them. Gratitude for the great grace of the Faith, compassion for our benighted brethren at home and the poor heathens

abroad, and zeal for the Kingdom of Christ—all require this effort on our part.

So much for our duty of making Him known. And now —our duty of making Him loved. Surely—to know Him is to love Him—for *what sort of person was He ?*

1. A babe, born an outcast in a stable—wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.
2. A child flying from his country across the desert into Egypt.
3. Sitting at the well of Jacob to convert the Samaritan woman.
4. Refusing to accuse the adulteress. " Hath no man condemned thee ? Neither will I condemn thee. Go now and sin no more."
5. Defending the Magdalen : " Dost thou see this woman I entered thy house. Thou gavest me no water for my feet : but she with tears hath washed my feet. And with her hair hath wiped them. . . ."
6. Praying in the garden to save Judas.
7. In agony of the cross when the world could do no more against him : " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
8. In His Risen Life—How does He speak to St. Peter of those who made Him the despised and rejected of men : " Feed my lambs. . . ." ?

Behold, dear Brethren, in brief outline the real character of Him Whom we adore and serve as our God and King. Nothing should astonish us more than that men do not love Him. His tenderness and mercy were wonderful when He walked the streets and lanes of Palestine : but they are no less wonderful this very day. He never changes, but is Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever. Look at what He has done for *you* in your past

life. We—as we grow old—weary of sin : He never wearies of pardoning.

Prepare then, dear Brethren, a royal entry into your heart. Turn out all that might displease Him, and enthrone Him on this coming festival more firmly, more honourably, and, above all, more lovingly than ever, as King over you, over all you are and all you have and all you can suffer for His sake.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

II. Kingship of Christ

In preparation for the feast of the Kingship of Christ which will be celebrated all over the world next Sunday, we considered last week the Person of Jesus Christ, Our King, and our duty of making Him known, loved and served so far as we may be able.

To-day I will direct your mind to some of the leading thoughts in the Holy Father's letter, and especially to those which refer to a personal allegiance to Christ, Our King, and the duty of nations to recognize His Kingship.

Holy Scripture attributes to Our Blessed Lord a threefold office—He is Prophet, Priest, and King. Each of these offices belong to Him as Man.

(1) As Man, he reveals to us God's Will—therefore Prophet.

(2) As Man, he offers the sacrifice which atones for our sins—therefore Priest.

(3) As Man, he is invested with royal authority over our race—therefore King.

Daniel tells us of the Vision in which he saw the Son of Man brought before the Eternal Father—the Ancient of Days: "And He gave Him power and glory and a Kingdom and all peoples and tribes, and tongues shall serve Him. His power is an everlasting power and shall not be taken away, and His Kingdom shall not be destroyed." (Dan. vii, 13.)

After His Resurrection, Our Lord sending His Apostles to convert the world, declared that that power was now His : " All power is given to Me in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations."

In the Apocalypse, St. John tells us how he saw Him in glory : " On His Head were many diadems. . . . And He hath on His garment and on His thigh written : ' King of Kings,' and ' Lord of Lords.' (Apoc, xix, 12, 16.)

This will be sufficient to establish from Holy Scripture the fact of the Kingship of Christ. It is not an acquired Kingship, gained by purchase or force or conferred by subjects : but innate, inherent, personal, Christ is a King because He is the God-Man. All power, all authority is from Him. He possesses the source and unction of all Kingship in Himself and in His being : and as He is eternal, so His Kingship must last for ever.

But how does this Kingship find its practical realization ? What is the bearing of Christ's Kingship on ourselves ? We may view it under two aspects : first, his relation to the individual, and, second, his relation to human society in general.

Christ's sovereignty is exercised in the individual :—

(1) When every faculty yields allegiance to His sway.
(2) When the mind accepts His teaching without question.
(3) When the will is prompt to obey His least command.
(4) When the heart holds aloof from all baser affections and loves Him above all things.

Thus we are loyal subjects of our King when all our faculties, our mind, our will, our heart, with its affections, are consecrated to Jesus Christ.

Only if we are aiming at this, can we say we are recognizing Christ's royalty in a practical manner. And one of the results which the Pope desires is that each of us may

diligently consider this truth, and may strive to fashion his life as befits a true member of Christ's Kingdom.

But the Holy Father's letter deals chiefly with Christ's Kingship over society, because the age in which we live has almost lost sight of this truth. His royal rights hold good over the state as a whole, not merely over the individuals who form the state. The prosperity and happiness of a country depends on those rights being acknowledged. Only when those who govern recognize that they are delegates of a Divine King—only if a country's rulers realize that their power is a trust from Christ, can subjects hope that that power will be employed justly.

On the other hand, unless subjects admit that those who govern them do so in virtue of a commission from Christ Himself, there is little hope of order or control. Man will yield obedience if convinced that those set over him—even though in themselves little worthy of respect—yet hold their authority from Christ and exercise power in His stead. When this conviction is wanting, men will not obey rulers for conscience' sake. Their sole motive will be fear of the policeman : and when force is no longer to be feared, they will fling to the winds the yoke of authority.

The Holy Father deplores how, throughout the last century, civilized nations have suppressed all public acknowledgment of the Christian Religion, and how the plague of secularism has been spreading its poison through the nations. And for this, Society has paid a heavy price. When Christ is rejected, grave evils soon invade the State. Class discussions arise : corruption spreads in the ruling class, discontent and sedition among the governed. Authority is weakened and the law ceases to command respect. The sanctities of family life are disregarded and the foundations of Society are undermined.

By instituting this Feast, the Holy Father desires to remind all of the obligation of maintaining the rights of Jesus Christ. We are constantly told that religion is a matter of purely private concern: that the State has no concern with it. The new Feast will remind us that this is a gross error. Since Christ is King over the whole race —the State cannot rightly treat Him as of no account. To violate His rights is treason against Him to Whom all States and all individuals owe allegiance. Laws of divorce and laws which hinder the religious education of the young are illustrations of this. No government has or can have the right to adopt such provision into its code. They are at variance with a higher authority than their own.

Finally, the Holy Father reminds us that Our Lord's Kingship is not without important bearing on family life. There are Catholic homes in which His reign is plain to see. But there are unfortunately some in which a guest would note little to differentiate the home from one in which there was no faith.

Most of us have little chance of taking part in public affairs: but home life is permanent; and all can exert themselves to secure that Christ shall reign in the home of which they are members, that all say their prayers, and all say their grace, and all go to the Sacraments at the proper time and that all Catholic practices are regularly observed: that the interest, amusements, the conversation shall be such as He would bless with His approval.

And lastly, the doctrine of His royalty is a reminder to prove ourselves His true subjects in our own private life. We shall be doing this, if we are careful to keep His laws loyally and if we make His service the great object of our lives.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

III.—Kingship of Christ

We have considered the Person of Jesus Christ whose Kingship the Church celebrates this day, and we have found Him to be a King of meekness, gentleness, forgiveness and love. We have seen that He founded a Church on this earth to defend His Kingship, to teach mankind to find happiness in time and eternity by rendering allegiance to His Sovereignty; to guide nations, as well as the individuals who form them, to safely attain to the happy destiny for which they were created.

It only remains for us now to consider our King in His glory, sitting at the right hand of His Father, where, equal to Him in all things as He is God, and nearest to Him in glory as He is Man, He possesses with full power the Kingdom of His Father, governs the world at his pleasure, and imparts Heaven to the Blessed—which is simply the revelation to them of the beautifulness of the outspread God.

To conceive justly of Heaven, and much less of the King Himself in His glory, we know is impossible. The splendour and profusion of His glory is beyond our thoughts: and we may make enormous sums of magnificent, beautiful, and refulgent joys, and then reject them as being less than a drop to the ocean compared with the joys of Heaven These things are beyond our reach. We cannot imagine the fragrance of a scent we have never smelled. We cannot

imagine the loveliness of a sound we have never heard. How then can we expect to form a conception of heavenly joys and glory for which we have neither name nor thought?

But, to enable our poor, weak minds to lift themselves to the contemplation of the things in a Better Land we hope for, the Sacred Scripture makes use of human imagery and terminology which is within our power of intelligence. And thus we find in the one solitary instance of His Life when Our Lord manifested His glory to His three disciples on Mount Thabor, He is described as having His face resplendent as the sun, and His garments were white as snow so as no fuller on earth can make white.

The prophet Isaias bids us look up on high and see the King in His beauty—and to look upon Sion—a rich habitation—a tabernacle that cannot be removed—neither shall the nails thereof be taken away for ever, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken: because only there Our Lord is magnificent. For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King: He will save us. (Is. xxxiii.)

In the Apocalypse, St. John tells us he saw a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and tribes, peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in the 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 thousands of thousands of Angels and the Ancients stood round about the throne, and they fell down before the throne upon their faces and adored God and made joyful acclamation to this Lamb of God, this King of Kings, saying: "Amen, Benediction and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving honour and power and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen."

This in briefest outline is a Scriptural description of our

Lord and King, of His attendants and the place where His glory dwelleth. And just as we asked ourselves last week, when speaking of His Kingship over this world of ours, how does this Kingship affect me, so with the thought of our King in glory before us we may again ask ourselves: "How does this Heavenly King affect me?"

He made me—created me. He made me—to save me. I live my life. How much of that life do I give to Him? I may give Him barely what will just help me to escape hell-fire for ever—or I may neglect Him utterly—and, by an immeasurable gift from His Merciful Hand, I receive the Last Sacraments—and I die and I appear with this miserable tribute of allegiance and service before my King.

And how does the King of Kings receive this tribute? He bursts forth all divinely into triumph, because a half-converted sinner has condescended to accept His grace. He bids those millions of Angels rejoice not because He has made a fresh creation, and cast upon it such an effulgence of beauty as throws all the rest of creation into the shade, but because one wretched, selfish, unworthy, offensive man has consented to take the first step at the last moment towards not being damned—because one outcast of human society, who has drunk his fill of every vice, has condescended for fear of hell to accept Heaven.

These are the triumphs of the King of Kings—these the ovations of His everlasting mercy. He can do nothing unworthy of Himself. And, therefore, this triumph, this joy in Heaven, this feast of angels over one sinner that does penance is altogether worthy of the adorable majesty of the eternally blessed God. And Heaven keeps feast for this. And the King of Kings takes almost with avidity the leavings of the world. There is not one word of reproachment nor one look of discontent—His arms are around that death-bed penitent. He is telling him the

Secrets of His Love. He is sealing for Him with a Father's Kiss the eternity of his beatitude.

That man will lie for ever bathed in the beautiful light of our God and King.

Thus, dear Brethren, just as in His Incarnation we found Him to be a King of tenderness, mercy, forgiveness, and love, so we find Him still in the full splendour and majesty of His Heavenly Kingship—Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day and the same for ever: "The Lord is our Judge, our Law-giver, our King"—Jesus Christ will save us—says the Prophet—if only we will do our part.

To-morrow's Feast of All Saints should fill our minds with gladness over the countless triumphs of Jesus in saving them. Heaven is for you and me as well as for them: but much depends upon ourselves. This great heaven, whose golden fruit hangs so nearly within our reach, seems to grow on the edge of a precipice, and the least breath of wind moves the bough over the abyss, and seems to take it out of reach. How near to us it hangs, and yet how easy it is to miss it—and if it is missed—we dare not think what then. It must not be missed. And it will not be missed if we persevere through life in loyal and unbroken fidelity to our God and King till He comes to reward our service by admitting us to heavenly citizenship in that land of glory where He reigns as Sovereign King for evermore.

FIRST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER

We have just entered the month of October, the second month of the year dedicated by the Church to the Blessed Virgin, the Holy and Immaculate Mother of God. In the month of May we honour Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth, and we praise the Blessed Trinity for having elevated one of our own race to the surpassing dignity of being Daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother to God the Son and Spouse of the Holy Ghost. It is impossible, of course, for Our Blessed Lady to divest herself of this triple dignity. These three unique relationships to the Blessed Trinity combined establish her in a majesty by which she ranks in Heaven next to God Himself: and her majesty and dignity must remain with her no matter what title we give her or under what aspect we contemplate her. The fact that she alone is clothed with the majesty proper to the mighty Queen of Heaven, and that her dignity elevates her above the brightest and mightiest of the angels, should only inspire us with greater astonishment at her love of us and greater confidence in her power.

She is set before us this month as a Refuge of Sinners, and the Church urges her children all the world over to gather day by day at the feet of this Blessed Mother, and pray then for all they need through the medium of the Most Holy Rosary.

We all have a great many wants—and there can be no doubt that many of our needs would diminish if we rightly appreciated spiritual things. And one of the most

important things is *the favour of Mary*. What is there that we should not be ready to sacrifice for this? and, except for the grace and love of God, what can come near to this? Yet, through want of perseverance in our childlike love and devotion to Mary, we do not appreciate her favour as we ought. Strong, persevering faith in her power would bring us perpetually recurring experiences of her goodness.

This month we are going to offer devotions to her—and the likeliest of all devotions to secure her favour for ourselves is the daily recitation of her rosary, particularly if we make an act of charity of it, and make the rosary an earnest prayer for others. I would suggest that in every rosary you say this month, you make the intention of offering it for those who are in sin.

Think of the world of sinners. How dreadful must their state be in the sight of the Holy Angels. And their multitude unfortunately is daily on the increase. Then there is their secrecy too—and evil often comes to light and it scares us to find it in such unlikely persons. These are sometimes persons who have resisted great graces—people who through the goodness of God in some shape or form have influence with others—and this gives them immense power for evil against God.

Yet, on the other hand—there is often much goodness and kindness amongst them. And this makes us pity them all the more. And often we see very much to extenuate. In some instances, too, we know there was a great deal of struggle, although the struggle did not last long enough—and so it was in the end insufficient and consequently inefficacious. What a glorious thing, therefore, is one real conversion and how many miracles it involves.

Now this world of sinners is Mary's world. It is given over to her in a special and official manner, and she took

it for her own when she stood broken-hearted by the side of her dying Son on Calvary. She knows, as no one else knows, how the Sacred Heart of Jesus yearns for sinners; and hence they have a claim upon her mercy who are so sadly in need of it.

Strange and conflicting though the notion may be she knows very well that there is much real love of her even in that dark multitude of sinners. Nevertheless she has to work in some measure through us—just as God condescends to depend upon us Himself.

You will find that the devotion of praying for sinners is one of the favourite devotion of the Saints. Some of them went through life praying for particular sinners, or certain classes of sinners, or for places where sinners live. And surely we could hardly occupy ourselves more charitably at our prayers, and draw down the favour of Mary upon ourselves, than by praying for sinners. You can never know but that the conversion of some soul may be quite dependent upon you.

You remember the miracle of the poor man afflicted with paralysis, who remained on the banks of the pond called Probatica, hoping he might some day get a cure as other afflicted people did.

A great multitude was there of sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the motion of the water. An angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond and the water was moved: and the first one that went into the pond after the motion of the water was cured of whatever infirmity he lay under.

The poor paralytic had been there awaiting his turn for eight and thirty years. He had no one to put him into the pond, and, whenever he tried, another always got in before him. His petition touched the tender Heart of Jesus and He cured him.

So let us pray for the soul which is close to conversion—the soul that has been waiting longest and has no one to put him in. Considering the vastness of the world and the multitude of men, surely it would not be out of the way to expect to convert one soul a day and give it to Mary to offer. We should not perhaps see our work: it might be a soul in China, or Africa or on the icy shores near the Pole—or in some great city—or in a quiet country place like this it might be one of your own kith and kin—or a stranger or a foreigner. It might be a prince or a peasant—a child at school sadly just drawn into the ways of sin—or an old man in his last agony.

But these souls we have helped to save will be among the delightful secrets we shall learn from Mary's lips when we get to Heaven.

PURGATORY

HEAVEN and earth are full of the glory of God. So also is that melancholy, fire-illuminated land called " Purgatory," where the prisoners of blessed hope are detained from the Beatific Vision by their Saviour's loving justice.

We all of us have our obligations to that land: and each of us can, by simple affection for the Dead, and the practices of sound Catholic doctrine, do great things for the glory of God, and the relief of the Holy Souls.

Let us recall the teaching of the Church on Purgatory. We are taught that " Purgatory is a place where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins." Thus Purgatory is a place—a definite land or spot, though on this head nothing is defined by the Church. It is a temporary place, and it will cease to exist at the Last Day. It is a place " where *souls* suffer "—not bodies. The bodies go to the grave and remain there till " the trumpet shall be heard on high and the dead shall live—and the living die " at the day of Resurrection—a place where those souls suffer: (1) who are defiled with venial sin not remitted in life—or (2) who have to undergo punishment still due to forgiven sin.

We speak of these souls as " the Holy Souls " because—

(1) They are sure of salvation in the Kingdom of Heaven.

(2) They can never more sin or be guilty of imperfection.

(3) They are absolutely and entirely resigned to the Holy Will of God.

The Holy Souls suffer first the Pain of Sense, or sensible

suffering, which is the same as that which we experience in our flesh—though when the soul is miraculously made to feel this—it becomes terrific. Its nature is not defined, but it is the common opinion of theologians that it consists of fire and other aspects of suffering. The fire of Purgatory is said to be the same fire as that of Hell. St. Gregory says: "The same fire torments the damned and purifies the elect." But though the fire is the same, the pain in Purgatory is less than the pain in Hell because of the Hope and the Charity (or love) of the Holy Souls. Still, the pain and the fire are there—our earthly fire is but painted fire compared to it—and the sufferings it causes are greater than any sufferings on this earth.

Secondly, the Holy Souls suffer the Pain of Loss, i.e., the loss of God and the privation of the Beatific Vision.

Their faith realizes the holiness of God, and their own guilt.

Their Hope makes them yearn to be with their Creator.

Their Charity intensifies their grief for sin and their thirst for Heaven.

The soul is changed since it left the body. It goes into purgatory with its eyes fascinated, and its spirit tranquillized by the Face of Jesus—its first sight of the Sacred Humanity at the Particular Judgment which it has undergone. It craves for Him and Him alone, with an impetuosity which no imagination can conceive. The very burning excess of its love becomes, through separation from Him, intolerable pain. The vision it has had of Jesus abides with it still, and beautifies the terrors of its prison house.

But the sufferings too abide, both of sense and loss. And they vary in intensity according to the number and guilt of their sins: and though they diminish as the suffrages of the faithful help them, they are always great, and hence the Church's zeal in their behalf.

The sufferings last for a time, that is, according to the number and guilt of the sins to be atoned for, and according to the penances and sufferings which others bear for them in life.

How long this time of purgation lasts we do not know. Revelations to the Saints suggest that they are probably very long, and we know the Church has not hesitated to sanction Masses in perpetuity for the departed. It is common for us to think that our friends who die piously reach Heaven very soon ; and, after the usual obsequies, our help towards them gradually ceases. We are apt to leave off too soon, imagining that they are free from Purgatory sooner than they really are. This is a point we must attend to.

But their sufferings, however long, are only for a time—while Hell will last for ever.

And they suffer in purgatory on account of their sins—that is, for their venial sins unforgiven in their lifetime, and any sins, mortal or venial, forgiven, but not atoned for.

From all this surely we have something to learn for ourselves. I suppose there are none of us who expect to be lost. We know and feel, with more or less alarm, the greatness of the risk we are running. But to expect to be lost would be the sin of despair.

Hell, frightful as it is, is only practical to us as a motive of greater diligence, greater strictness, greater circumspection, greater fear. But it is not so with Purgatory. I suppose we all expect to go there. Surely, if we reflect on God's sanctity, and what we read in books of devotion and the Lives of the Saints, we can hardly expect to escape Purgatory—nay, even it will be a stretch of divine mercy that will get us there. And if we really expect that our road to Heaven will be through the punishments of Purgatory—then it very much concerns us to take the means of

avoiding it entirely, or of shortening it when we actually go there.

These means are first the stern resolve, the firm determination to avoid those things that bring us to it—mortal sin and venial sin, tepidity, the love and indulgence of the senses, and the want of self-denial and penance generally.

Secondly, the practice in life of helping the Holy Souls all we can. As I said before, each and every one of us has obligations towards the dead, especially to our own dead. Have we lost a father, a mother, a sister, a brother, a relative of any degree, or a friend who did us good, a companion to whom we did good—or even evil?

What have we done, what are we doing for them now? If they are still in Purgatory, they depend upon help from earth; and surely they have a right to expect help from us. Their very state is one of the most forlorn helplessness. They cannot do penance, cannot merit, cannot gain indulgences. They have no Sacraments. They are a portion of the Church without either priesthood or altar at their own command. But all these things are ours, and it is in our power to hand them over as gifts to the Holy Souls to diminish the intensity of their sufferings, and to hasten their entrance to everlasting life.

Let me appeal to you, dear Brethren, on behalf of the faithful departed, and especially on behalf of your own treasures among the dead, to help them generously with your prayers and good works at all times, but more than ever during this month of November which is all their own. Do not leave the Church to-day, and go your ways, and forget all about them. But make a point, every day this month, of halting a moment, and calling to mind the mournful cry of the souls in Purgatory "Have pity on me"—"At least you my friends: for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"The Joy of Our Lord

We have been occupied the past few weeks in considering the eternal Kingship of Christ, the joy of the Saints who have attained to citizenship in His Heavenly Kingdom, and the sufferings of those who after death, prepare themselves in Purgatory, to see, live, and enjoy their King for evermore.

Let us now reflect upon what we ourselves are hastening to; and endeavour to fortify ourselves with the blessed hope that the glory of Heaven is quite within our reach, and that in spite of our fickleness and frailty, Our Blessed Lord, the tenderest of Masters, is willing to make endless allowances, and is more anxious to save us than we are to be saved.

Picture to yourselves a good Christian, after a long life, lying upon his deathbed. The priest has been, and the Sacraments are over, and he has received the Last Blessing and with it a plenary indulgence from the Treasury of the Church. He is filled with peace while his strength is ebbing away. He lies there with full consciousness, facing eternity.

All his good disappears. His sense of religion, together with his feeling of utter helplessness, makes him withdraw his attention from everything save the great mercy of God. He is too weak to suffer much—and almost imperceptibly—the end comes and they say: "He is gone."

He wakes—and with what a newness and freshness of awakening ! What a transition from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, from weakness to strength, from death to life. It is the first sensation of the living, imperishable soul freed from the captivity of the body. It is the vigour and the health and the alacrity of immortality.

Cardinal Newman represents the soul saying :—

" And hark ! I hear a singing : yet in sooth
I cannot of that music rightly say,
Whether I hear or touch or taste the tones.
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody !
It is a member of that family of wondrous beings,
Who, ere the worlds were made, millions of ages
Back, have stood around the throne of God."
(*Gerontius.*)

Then, with the suddenness of a lightning flash, follows the unveiling to the soul of the Face of Jesus, all lit with smiles : and the rapturous words for which the soul had laboured all through life : " Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of Heaven."

All this, dear Brethren, has happened to more than one since this Mass began.

And what are the feelings of the soul in the first moments of self-possession, realizing its salvation and its confirmation in saintliness for ever ?

First of all, it is seized with astonishment that it has inherited so vast a salvation for so trifling a service. It even ventures to argue with Our Lord against itself : " 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, filled with consolation at Our Lord's reply, the soul is next filled with jubilation at the first feeling of eternity—so new—so strange—so surpassing a thing.

After that come feelings of ecstasy, and the new raptures of love of God will fill the entire being.

Now what I have described is happening to three classes of souls daily, while the sun climbs and descends the sky, and we go through our ordinary actions of the day.

The first of these classes is made up of those good souls whom we find in every grade and condition of life, and without any pretence at being anything more than the poor, ordinary mortals, who, though with many faults, really love God, and have no time nor taste for anything that might displease Him, and who regard as their treasure His friendship and love.

The second class is made up of those who are less in love with God, but are conspicuous for their devotion to duty. They were taught in childhood to consecrate their actions every day to God, and they have continued to do so. Outwardly their lives are ordinary, though well-ordered lives. On the whole they correspond with grace, and they persevere in their regular reception of the Sacraments and in their spiritual exercises.

The third class consists of those who are perhaps most likely to grow hopeless and discouraged. They are the sufferers—those who have suffered much either in mind or in body : and though, under the pressure of their anguish they have uttered complaints, they have, nevertheless, been wonderfully patient and resigned to God's Will, and, to His stripping them of the joys of earth.

Those, therefore, who love Jesus for His own dear sake, those who live lives of strict duty for His sake, and those

who patiently suffer much for His sake are the most assured of the smile and the welcome of Jesus as soon as life is done.

Hard though life may be to such as all of these, their life is beautiful because it is the way to God. When life is spent in the exercise of divine love, or in the faithful discharge of duty for God's sake, or in the patient endurance of suffering, death has no terrors, but is rather full of sweetness because it is the gate of Heaven and the commencement of everlasting peace.

Surely, dear Brethren, it should be an encouraging thought to us that Our Blessed Lord is occupied so many times a day in saying to many faithful souls: "Well done, good and faithful servant." And why should we not welcome the thought that there is a thrill of love this moment in His Sacred Heart, thinking of the time when He will say also to us: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

But you may say, I am not like those people you describe. When suffering comes to me, I shirk it, I murmur and never seem to bear it well. Yet, dear Brethren, you *wish* to bear it well. Your honest wish will do. You will have the smile of Jesus and His welcome too.

Or, you may say, I am always in temptation and sometimes I seem overwhelmed. I hardly know if I have resisted. Never mind. You *mean* to resist. You are *trying* to resist. Be comforted. It is the effort Jesus wants, not the success.

Or, again, you may say, I have fallen, fallen back into sin! Never mind! Have faith! Are you not sorry? Do you not wish it were otherwise? And, humbly trusting in God's grace, are you not now firmly resolved not to sin again? Why the very Angels are singing in Heaven over your dispositions.

Dear Brethren, do your best to love God, do your best to serve God, do your best to suffer patiently for God, and you need not fear to die. You will find it very easy, very sweet, and the smile of Jesus is awaiting you and His welcome into everlasting bliss.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sins of Omission

We have been considering recently what I may call the easiness of salvation, chiefly on account of the merciful and forgiving nature of Our God, our King, our Judge. But we must never allow ourselves to relinquish any part of our duty towards Him because of this, nor live in any but a condition of holiest fear of God, remembering always that His Divine justice is as eminent as His Mercy.

It is because He is perfectly just, He *must* reward the good, and He *must* punish the wicked. If He extended the same retribution to all alike, He would not be a just God, nor would His creatures have any inducement to live lives of virtue and self-restraint, and the world would develop into a veritable pandemonium.

The Church, therefore, keeps us in mind of the justice of God by recounting, on the last Sunday of the Ecclesiastical year from Our Blessed Lord's own lips the Gospel story of the Last Judgment.

The Gospel is sufficiently impressive and needs no explanation nor expansion. But those who are trying to love God and to serve God by the faithful discharge of their duties, and to bear the trials and sufferings of life for the love of God, need have no fear of the terrors of the Judgment. The Particular Judgment will have settled their destiny in safety and bliss for ever. But while we

are on the way, we must ever live in humble dependence upon God, and not presume on our final safety, but work might and main to avoid evil and do good. And I must put you on your guard lest a spirit of presumption diminishes what we must all have—a wholesome fear of the judgment of God.

Some ordinary good Catholics are sometimes tempted to think that they can scarcely be included amongst those who need dread the Judgment Day. Great and notorious sinners may well dread the horror and dismay of the Judgment: but they themselves are tempted to think that actually they have no real cause to fear—and that to be afraid of the Judgment is hysterical emotion or pious exaggeration.

Now we must never forget that the Judgment will be a searching one. Things will be brought to light that will dismay many a self-satisfied soul—and in some cases there will be consternation at finding that God was offended—because they so leniently regarded many a thing that God reminded them of and required of them in their lifetime.

This surprise and consternation will chiefly be caused by one class of sin. Not drunkenness, impurity, nor wilful neglect of Mass. No! Those that do such things are "already judged." It is a class of sins we think little of and scarcely ever examine, and perhaps we have no idea of their number or their gravity. I refer to our sins of omission—the things we might have done and should have done for God.

But you may ask how are such things sinful if we have broken no commandment? If I have kept the commandments, if I have kept out of mortal sin, how can I be condemned? Dear Brethren, has anyone of us kept the first great commandment? Our Blessed Lord asked the

lawyer—how readest thou? And he repeated the Commandment from the Law of Moses: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy *whole* heart, thy whole soul, thy whole strength." And it goes on: "And these words that I command thee shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them, sleeping and rising. Take heed diligently, lest thou forget the Lord."

Which of us can claim Heaven for having observed all this? Rather should we humble ourselves and tremble at these words—"with thy *whole* heart, *whole* soul, *whole* strength. Take heed diligently lest thou forget the Lord."

How earnest and devout we might have been!

How careless and easy-going we have been!

What things we might have done for God if we had taken heed!

What things we have neglected because we have forgotten the Lord. Yet these very sins of omission are the very ones that figure so prominently in the Gospel account of the Judgment.

Take, for example, the Parable of the Talents—a man goes into a far country—calls his servants and delivers to them his goods. To one he gave five talents—to another two—to another one. The servants who had the five and the two talents traded with them and gained other five and two. But he that had received the one talent went his way and buried it in the earth and hid his Lord's money.

On the master's return, the first two servants were commended and rewarded. But he that had received the one came and said: "Lord I know that thou art a hard man, and being afraid I went and hid thy talent in the earth, and behold here thou hast that which is thine."

Now what harm had this man done? He did not run

off with the money and spend it uselessly. He was no thief. He had not broken the Seventh Commandment. And yet his Lord said to him: "Wicked and slothful servant. Thou oughtest to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with interest. Thou unprofitable servant, cast yourself out into the exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

What had that man done but altogether omitted to do good with his grace and opportunities?

And Our Blessed Lord continues: "When the Son of man shall come in His Majesty, and the Angels with Him, after blessing the just and bidding them come and possess His Kingdom, then He shall say to them that are on His left hand: 'Depart from Me.'"

Is it not a mistake? Listen to the agonized appeal of those poor souls! The Judge simply replies: "For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; a stranger, sick and in prison, and you did not visit me." Then they also shall answer Him: "Lord, when did we see Thee thus 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 my least brethren, neither did you do it to Me." And these shall go into everlasting punishment.

We see, therefore, dear Brethren, how we must dread these sins of omission. These are the surprises the devil has in store for the self-satisfied, the selfish and hard of heart, the habitually and grievously slothful and negligent, who are quite content if they avoid the pitfalls of sins against the express commandments of God.

Our only safeguard is to do all for the love of God, and with a loyalty and earnestness that will refuse nothing that God wishes and demands. We must never be content and think we have done enough. We cannot measure ourselves

by what we know of others. We have to be as good and holy as God would have us be. We have to take the grace that is given us, and trade with it to the best of our ability, lest we be cast out as unprofitable servants.

THE END