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- “ XVIII., XIX., XX., XXI. LETTERS.
- “ XXII. LETTERS AND GENERAL ALPHABETICAL INDEX.
- “ XXIII., XXIV. LIFE OF ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI.

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The Centenary Edition.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS  
OF  
SAINT ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI,

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH,

*Bishop of Saint Agatha, and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN.

EDITED BY

REV. EUGENE GRIMM,

*Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.*

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THE ASCETICAL WORKS.

Volume XVII.

MISCELLANY.

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# THE APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION.

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## RÑDE PATER:

Memoriam gloriosi Congregationis SS. Redemptoris Fundatoris, centesimo, ab ejus obitu, adventante anno, pio et admodum opportuno consilio recolere aggressus es, dum omnia ipsius opera anglice vertenda, et typis edenda curasti. Summus itaque Pontifex, cui tum S. Doctoris exaltatio, tum fidelium utilitas summopere cordi est libentissime excepit 9 volumina huc usque edita, quæ Ei offerre voluisti. Ac dum meritis Tibi laudes de hac perutili tua cura præbet, et gratias de filiali oblatione agit, Benedictionem, quam tuis obsequentissimis litteris petiisti, Emi quoque archiepiscopi Baltimorensis commendationi obsecundans, ex intimo corde impertiit.

Hæc ad Te deferens fausta cuncta ac felicia a Domino Tibi adprecor.

Paternitatis Tuæ,

Addictissimus,

**M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.**

ROMÆ, die 4 Junii, 1888.

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## TRANSLATION.

REVEREND FATHER :

As the centenary of the death of the illustrious Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer drew near, you conceived the pious and appropriate plan of shedding a new lustre on his memory by translating all his works into English and publishing them. The Holy Father, therefore, who has at heart the spiritual advancement of the faithful, as well as the exaltation of the holy Doctor, has most graciously accepted the nine volumes thus far published, which you wished to present to him. While bestowing upon you well-deserved praise for your useful labor, and thanking you for the gift inspired by your filial love, he gives you from his heart the blessing which you humbly asked for in your letter, complying also with the request of the Most Rev. Archbishop of Baltimore.

As the bearer of this, I wish you all happiness in the Lord.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

**M. CARD. RAMPOLLA.**

ROME, June 4, 1888.

The Centenary Edition.

# MISCELLANY.

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APPROBATION.

By virtue of the authority granted me by the Most Rev. Nicholas Mauron, Superior-General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby sanction the publication of the work entitled "Miscellany," which is Volume XVII. of the new and complete edition in English of the works of St. Alphonsus de Liguori, called "The Centenary Edition."

ELIAS FRED. SCHAUER,

*Sup. Prov. Baltimorensis.*

BALTIMORE, MD., March 5, 1890.

# CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
NOTICE, . . . . .	II
HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER, . . . . .	13
<b>RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS OF THE CONGRE- GATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.</b>	
THE END OF THE INSTITUTE, . . . . .	61
PART I. MISSIONS AND OTHER EXERCISES, . . . . .	64
I. Missions, . . . . .	64
II. Other exercises, . . . . .	66
PART II. THE PARTICULAR OBLIGATIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION, . . . . .	67
I. The vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and per- severance, . . . . .	67
II. The frequentation of the sacraments, prayers, and certain exercises of humility, . . . . .	71
III. Silence, recollection, mortification, and corporal penances, . . . . .	73
IV. The domestic meetings, . . . . .	75
PART III. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION, . . . . .	76
I. The Rector Major and his Consultors, . . . . .	76
II. The qualities requisite in those that are to be ad- mitted, . . . . .	83
<b>COUNSELS CONCERNING A RELIGIOUS VOCA- TION.</b>	
I. We ought to conform to the designs of God in the choice of a state of life, whatever it may be, . . . . .	88
II. The vocation to the religious state. How important it is to follow it promptly, . . . . .	89
III. Means to be employed for preserving a religious vocation in the world, . . . . .	96
IV. Dispositions required for entering religion, . . . . .	104
V. Trials that we must expect to have in the religious life, . . . . .	118
Conclusion, . . . . .	122



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR THOSE THAT ARE CALLED TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE.

	PAGE
I. How the salvation of the soul is secured by entering the religious state, . . . . .	124
II. The happy death of the religious, . . . . .	126
III. The account which he will have to render to Jesus Christ on the day of judgment who does not follow his vocation, . . . . .	130
IV. The torments which in hell will be the lot of him who is damned for having lost his vocation, . . . . .	132
V. The immense glory which religious enjoy in heaven, . . . . .	134
VI. The interior peace that God gives good religious to enjoy, . . . . .	137
VII. The damage done to religious by tepidity, . . . . .	140
VIII. How dear to God is a soul that gives itself entirely to him, . . . . .	143
IX. How necessary it is, in order to become a saint, to have a great desire for such a thing, . . . . .	146
X. The love we owe to Jesus Christ in consideration of the love he has shown to us, . . . . .	149
XI. The great happiness which religious enjoy in dwelling in the same house with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, . . . . .	152
XII. The life of religious resembles mostly the life of Jesus Christ, . . . . .	154
XIII. The zeal which religious ought to have for the salvation of souls, . . . . .	157
XIV. How necessary to religious are the virtues of meekness and humility, . . . . .	160
XV. How much religious ought to confide in the patronage of Mary, . . . . .	162

## EXHORTATION TO NOVICES TO PERSEVERE IN THEIR VOCATION.

I. Temptations to which novices are exposed, . . . . .	165
II. Means to preserve one's vocation, . . . . .	180
III. Important instructions to the novice that he preserve himself in fervor, . . . . .	185
Exhortation to religious to advance in the perfection of their state, . . . . .	187
Purity of intention, . . . . .	192
Religious poverty, . . . . .	197

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF THE REV. FATHER CA-  
FARO OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST  
HOLY REDEEMER.

	PAGE
I. His birth and infancy, . . . . .	205
II. His entrance into the seminary and his conduct while there, . . . . .	208
III. His conduct as priest and as pastor, . . . . .	210
IV. His resignation of the office of parish priest and his en- trance into the Congregation, . . . . .	215
V. His zeal for the missions, . . . . .	218
VI. His love for mental prayer and his interior trials, . . . . .	222
VII. His love of obedience, . . . . .	229
VIII. His humility, . . . . .	232
IX. His mortification, . . . . .	235
X. His spirit of poverty, . . . . .	238
XI. His detachment in regard to his relatives and his charity towards his neighbor, . . . . .	239
XII. His purity, . . . . .	241
XIII. His devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin, . . . . .	243
XIV. His constancy in his resolutions and his conformity to the good pleasure of God, . . . . .	243
XV. His death, . . . . .	246

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF FATHER JANUARIUS  
MARIA SARNELLI OF THE CONGREGATION OF  
THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

I. His birth, infancy, and youth, . . . . .	251
II. He embraces the profession of the law, then the ecclesi- astical state, . . . . .	252
III. He enters the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, . . . . .	254
IV. He is sent to Naples, . . . . .	255
V. His love of meditation, . . . . .	256
VI. His principal devotions, . . . . .	257
VII. His interior trials, . . . . .	259
VIII. His spirit of mortification and of humility, . . . . .	261
IX. His charity towards his neighbor, . . . . .	263
X. His zeal for the salvation of souls, . . . . .	264
XI. His enterprise in regard to prostitutes, . . . . .	268
XII. His writings, . . . . .	270
XIII. His last illness and death, . . . . .	272

NOTES ON THE LIFE OF VITIUS CURZIUS, LAY-  
BROTHER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE  
MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

	PAGE
I. His conduct in the world and his vocation, . . . . .	278
II. His entrance into the Congregation, . . . . .	280
III. His love of meditation, . . . . .	281
IV. His mortification and humility, . . . . .	282
V. His charity towards his neighbor, . . . . .	284
VI. His obedience and his death, . . . . .	285

VARIOUS SMALLER WORKS.

SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER ON THE ROSARY, . . . . .	288
1. How the Rosary should be recited in order that it may be meritorious, 289.	
2. What we must do in order that the Rosary may be profit- able to us, 292.	
SERMON ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST, . . . . .	298
1. First scene: The garden of Olives.   2. Second scene: The Pretorium.   3. Third scene: Calvary.	

NINE DISCOURSES FOR TIMES OF CALAMITIES.

I. God threatens to chastise us in order to deliver us from chastisement, . . . . .	321
II. Sinners will not believe in the divine threats until chastise- ment has come upon them, . . . . .	331
III. God is merciful for a season, and then chastises, . . . . .	342
IV. The four principal gates of hell, . . . . .	354
V. External devotions are useless if we do not cleanse our souls from sin, . . . . .	368
VI. God chastises us in this life for our good not for our destruction, . . . . .	376
VII. God chastises us in this life that he may show us mercy in the next, . . . . .	388
VIII. Prayers appease God, and avert from us the chastisement we deserve, provided we purpose to amend, . . . . .	401
IX. Most Holy Mary is the mediatrix of sinners, . . . . .	410
TEXTS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE AND FROM THE HOLY FATHERS REFERRING TO SOME PARTICULAR CALAMITIES, . . . . .	421

REFLECTIONS USEFUL FOR BISHOPS THAT THEY MAY GOVERN  
WELL THEIR CHURCHES.

	PAGE
Prologue, . . . . .	430
Chapter I. The principal cares of a bishop, . . . . .	433
1. The seminary. 2. Candidates for ordination. 3. Priests.	
4. Parish priests. 5. Vicars and servants. 6. Convents of nuns.	
Chapter II. The most efficacious means that the bishops should employ to direct their flocks, . . . . .	444
1. Prayer. 2. Good example. 3. Residence. 4. Visitations. 5. Missions. 6. The synod. 7. Counsel. 8. Audiences. 9. Correction.	
Conclusion, . . . . .	471
RULES FOR SEMINARIES, . . . . .	474
Introduction.—1. Duties of the bishop. 2. Duties of the Director. 3. Duties of the Prefects. 4. Rules that the seminarians must observe.	

FIDELITY OF SUBJECTS TO GOD RENDERS THEM FAITHFUL TO  
THE PRINCE, THEIR RULER.

Chapter I. If kings wish their subjects to be obedient to them, they must endeavor to make them obedient to God. Proof of this assertion, . . . . .	497
Chapter II. Means to induce subjects to be obedient to God, . . . . .	501
Chapter III. Examples of princes who by their zeal contributed much towards the spiritual welfare of the people, . . . . .	505
1. Emperor Constantine. 2. St. Louis, King of France.	
3. St. Stephen, King of Hungary. 4. St. Ethelbert, King of England. 5. St. Louis XIV., King of France. 6. Charles Emmanuel I., Duke of Savoy.	
CONCLUSION, . . . . .	516
INDEX, . . . . .	519



## NOTICE.

THIS volume is called *Miscellany*, containing *various little works* which, with the exception of the Letters to be published subsequently in five volumes, complete the collection of the ascetical works. Before giving these little works, we have thought it well to add briefly an historical sketch of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer as it now exists. This volume comprises all that which in the writings of St. Alphonsus has reference to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer which he founded, regarded principally as a religious Institute. It will be particularly useful to those in the world who feel themselves called to the religious state, and who are desirous to become fully acquainted with the Institute for the purpose of examining their vocation.

We at first give the CONSTITUTIONS AND RULES OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER. Then follow the COUNSELS CONCERNING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR PERSONS CALLED TO THE RELIGIOUS STATE; which the holy Founder addresses to aspirants, and to all those that wish to know and to follow the road on which divine Providence invites them to walk in order to sanctify themselves and to save their souls.

This part is followed by the EXHORTATIONS TO NOVICES, to fortify them in their holy resolutions, and to warn them against the snares of the enemy of salvation.

Then follow biographical sketches of two Fathers and a lay-brother, whose portraits the holy Founder delineates with his own hand, and whom, it seems, he wishes to hold up as models to all the rest.

Then comes a SERMON ON THE ROSARY, followed by a SERMON ON THE PASSION; NINE DISCOURSES FOR THE TIMES OF CALAMITIES; REFLECTIONS USEFUL TO BISHOPS TO GOVERN WELL THEIR CHURCHES; AND RULES FOR SEMINARIES.

ED.





# Historical Sketch

OF THE

## CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

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### I.

#### St. Alphonsus before Founding his Institute.

A. D. 1696—1731.

ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI was born, September 27, 1696, of noble and pious parents, Joseph de Liguori and Ann Catharine Cavalieri, at Marianella, the country-house of his family, near Naples. Soon great hopes were entertained in regard to him; for his parents having one day presented him to St. Francis Jerome, this man of God received him into his arms, affectionately blessed him, and then said: "This little one will not die before his ninetieth year; he will be a bishop, and do great things for Jesus Christ." The prophet and the subject of the prophecy were canonized on the same day.

Early one could remark in him those rare qualities with which nature and grace in emulation of each other had favored him. Frivolous amusements were repugnant to him; but he had above all great horror of what might offend God. He delighted in the frequentation of the sacraments and in the other practices of piety to which his mother had trained him. At the age of eleven his method of prayer was more than ordinary. One day, when he was in a country-house with some young companions for the sake of recreation, he withdrew quite alone into a thicket, while the rest were giving themselves up to play. In the evening search had to be made for him, and he was found in a solitary place, on his knees, absorbed in prayer be-

fore a small picture of the Blessed Virgin that he had fastened to a laurel tree.

Endowed with an active and penetrating mind, with a prompt and faithful memory, uniting with a perfect docility an ardent desire to acquire knowledge, sustained by an always increasing piety, Alphonsus made in a short time immense progress in *belles-lettres*, in the sciences and in the arts, the study of which was suitable to his rank, and corresponded to the lofty designs that his father had in regard to him. At the age of sixteen he was declared by acclamation doctor of civil and canon law. The young advocate soon exercised his profession with wonderful success before the tribunals of Naples, without, however, relaxing in the practice of virtue. When he was eighteen years old he conceived an ardent desire to attain sanctity; he joined pious congregations, of which as a member he distinguished himself by his regularity, his fervor, and his zeal for good works. It was his delight to kneel for hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. In order to strengthen and increase his fervor still more, he went every year to some religious house to make the spiritual exercises.

His father, who was anxious to establish him in the world, proposed to him several most brilliant matrimonial alliances; but Alphonsus felt only aversion for marriage: and God, who had other designs in regard to him, did not delay to make him entirely disgusted with the world, from which he had already become so detached as to wish to renounce his birthright. In 1723 he undertook a very important suit. After having examined with the greatest care the minutest details of the case, he believed that he would surely succeed. God, however, permitted him to overlook an essential point, which secured the victory to the adverse party; for on the day on which the case was tried, after pleading in so brilliant a manner that it appeared as if the suit would be decided in his favor, he was obliged to acknowledge that he had made a mistake. Then, full of confusion, but at the same time enlightened by an interior light, he felt a lively sense of the vanity of the things of the world, as well as of the dangers of his profession as lawyer, and gave up the bar forever.

This was not enough. On August 28 of the same year, after having, according to his custom, exercised his charity to the

sick poor in the hospital of the Incurables, he saw himself suddenly surrounded with resplendent light, and a heavenly voice repeated: "Forsake the world, and give thyself entirely to me." Recognizing the voice of God, who called him to a higher perfection, and strengthened interiorly by grace Alphonsus replied with tears of tenderness: "O Lord! here I am: do with me what Thou pleasest." He at once proceeded to the Church of our Lady of Mercy; there he prostrated himself before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and consecrated himself unreservedly to God's service, promising to enter the Congregation of the Oratorians; then unbuckling his sword, he laid it at the feet of Mary as a pledge of his irrevocable resolution.

His father, who was greatly afflicted at this change, tried every means to prevent him from taking such a step; but as Alphonsus remained unshaken in his pious design, he finally permitted him to embrace the ecclesiastical state, provided, however, he did not leave the paternal mansion. October 23, 1723, the young lawyer, at the age of twenty-seven, joyfully laid aside the livery of the world in order to clothe himself in the livery of Jesus Christ; and three years later, December 21, 1726, after having diligently applied all his noble faculties and all the ardor of his soul to acquire the science and the virtues that make up apostolic men, he was promoted to the priesthood.

He at once devoted himself to the exercise of his holy ministry with wonderful success. In 1725, when scarcely ordained subdeacon, he had associated himself with the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions, or of the Propaganda, established at Naples; and in 1729, leaving the paternal house, he withdrew to the house of the Holy Family of the Chinese mission, in order to be more free to consecrate himself to his labors and to the practice of the austerities that he wished to impose upon himself. He did an immense deal of good, first, at Naples among all classes of society, but above all among the poor workmen, of whom he was especially fond. He then went through the villages and hamlets, making war upon vice by holy missions, and reanimating everywhere faith, piety, and good morals. More than once the Mother of God was pleased to second his zeal in a striking manner.

## II.

**The Saint establishes his Congregation.**

A.D. 1731-1732.

In the month of May, 1731, Alphonsus, exhausted by great fatigue, was induced by several ecclesiastics, his friends and usual companions, to retire with them for some time into the country, to take a little rest in solitude and prayer; and upon an invitation that was given to them, they went to Saint Mary's of the Mount, a hermitage situated in the neighborhood of Scala.<sup>1</sup> When they had ornamented their chapel and placed therein the Blessed Sacrament in order to satisfy their piety, there came to them a crowd of shepherds from the surrounding country—poor people, who, deprived of all spiritual help, lived in such ignorance of the things of God, that they were not in a fit state to make their confession. Alphonsus felt his apostolic heart deeply moved when he saw this concourse of abandoned souls whom God was sending to him. With his companions he began to instruct and dispose them to receive the sacraments, so that the rest that he had come to seek in this place became a laborious mission, which produced marvellous fruits among all the people. He would then have wished to find some means to give assistance to so many lost sheep that were abandoned even in so Catholic a country!

The whole city of Scala was delighted to hear of the good that was done at St. Mary's. In order to respond to the desire that was expressed of hearing the holy missionary preach, the bishop invited Alphonsus to come at least once to preach a sermon in his cathedral; and the saint consented to do so. There was in this place a Community of fervent religious under the title of the Religious of the Holy Saviour; these manifested the same desire, and he gave them a conference. The people became so desirous of tasting the fruits of such apostolic preaching, that Alphonsus at his departure had to promise that he

<sup>1</sup> Scala is a small town with 1700 to 1800 inhabitants, a bishop's see, about one league or three miles north of Amalfi, two and a half leagues southwest of Nocera, three west of Salerno, two southeast of Castellammare, and seven or eight southeast of Naples.

would return in the month of September to preach a novena in the cathedral, and afterwards to give a retreat to the nuns. This was done to the entire satisfaction of every one.

It is thus that the Lord was gradually conducting his servant to the end that his Providence had in view. Among the religious of the Holy Saviour there was one that was very far advanced in spirituality. Her name was Mary Celestine Crostarosa, whom God favored with extraordinary graces. On the 3d of October she saw in spirit a new Congregation of missionaries who were evangelizing a multitude of poor country people deprived of all spiritual help; Alphonsus was at their head, and she heard a voice saying to her: "It is this soul whom I have chosen to be the instrument of my glory in this great work." In an interview that she afterwards had with the saint, she communicated to him her vision by assuring him that God required this of him. Alphonsus, troubled and confused by hearing such a revelation, refused to take the matter seriously, and said that such a thing was impossible; but the religious, while humbling herself, did not cease to persist that such was the will of God.

After this conversation, Alphonsus, having become 'a prey to terrible agitation, shut himself up in his room, where he began to shed a torrent of tears. He saw himself plunged into extreme perplexity. On the one hand, he considered that there was question of a good work; he had to admit that the vision of this humble religious could come from God; he recalled to mind the consolation that he felt at the hermitage of St. Mary's; he experienced more strongly than ever his interior attraction to a similar undertaking; and he feared to resist a divine vocation. On the other hand, he saw insurmountable difficulties: he found himself alone, without resources, and the idea of being a founder frightened his humility. A young and worthy priest, John Mazzini, his intimate friend, who accompanied him, perceived his painful state of mind, and asked him the cause of it. When he learned about what there had been question, he saw therein a work that was to be most pleasing to Jesus Christ; then fully convinced that if it were God's will he would furnish the necessary means, he generously placed himself at the disposal of the saint, as his first companion in the enterprise. This afforded great consolation to Alphonsus, and restored his serenity.

There was then at Scala Mgr. Falcoia, Bishop of Castellammare, a prelate of well-tried sanctity and skilled in spirituality. The two friends judged it proper to consult him as well as the Bishop of Scala about this matter. After a close examination the two prelates agreed that the inspiration came from God, and they urged Alphonsus to hasten the execution of the project. The saint, however, did not wish yet to decide. He did not omit to pray, and to have as many prayers said as possible; to these prayers he united the most rigorous austerities, in order to obtain the light and the protection of heaven.

On his return to Naples he rendered an account of all that had occurred to his spiritual director, Father Pagano of the Oratory. This prudent man, after having maturely considered the matter proposed, saw in it only the work of God; but not wishing to be the only judge in so grave an affair, he urged Alphonsus to ask the advice of Abbé Cutica, a Lazarist; of Father Manulio, a Jesuit; and above all of Father Fiorillo, a Dominican; for these were most competent authorities in such matters. All agreed that the finger of God was in this project, and that it should be encouraged. Fathers Fiorillo and Pagano then counselled the new founder to place himself entirely under the guidance of Mgr. Falcoia—a counsel that was supported by the Blessed Virgin herself. From this moment the saint had no longer any doubt, and his resolution was formed. He put himself unreservedly into the hands of the learned and pious Bishop of Castellammare by engaging himself by a formal vow to obey him in all things. It was thus that, full of confidence in Jesus Christ and in his divine Mother, he launched upon the boisterous waves in which his frail vessel was to be unceasingly agitated by storms.

As soon as our saint's determination became known at Naples, the news produced a revolution against him in most minds; as a general thing, he was spoken of only with contempt or indignation as a visionary who gave himself up to foolish undertakings. His relatives and his old friends, especially those of the Congregation of the Propaganda and of the Chinese College, became his enemies; he was abused in every possible manner. This was the beginning of his trials; but Heaven soon showed that he was not abandoned. This outcry against him spread, and penetrated even the convent of the Holy Saviour at Scala,



## *Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.* 19

in which one of the religious one day said, in the presence of Sister Mary Celestine, that she had serious doubts in regard to the work about which so much was spoken. Sister Celestine, however, answered her in ecstatic transport: "It is the work of God; you will recognize it as such by its effects." "Yes," replied the incredulous religious, "I will believe it when our Sister Magdalene is cured." Hardly were the words uttered when this poor Sister Magdalene, who had been deranged for many years, perfectly recovered her senses.

Very great was the regret felt at Naples on account of the intended departure of Alphonsus, on whom had been founded great hopes, and it was rightly feared that other most esteemed subjects would follow him; hence every means was tried to dissuade him from his purpose. His parents, on their part, were extremely afflicted; for his father one day seized him in his arms and held him close to his heart for three hours. But all was in vain; what should naturally have shaken his constancy, only confirmed him more and more in his resolution.

Finally, on November 8, 1732, freed from all obstacles, the holy founder modestly left the capital and set out for Scala, where the bishop, the clergy, and all the people received him with joy. Several of his companions, whom he expected, came to join him on the same day. The dwelling prepared for him was very simple, very small, and very poor, and was destitute even of what was most necessary. Jesus Christ, however, was with them, and filled them with consolation. The day after their arrival all assembled in the cathedral, and after a prolonged meditation, the Mass of the Holy Ghost was chanted in thanksgiving to God. Thus began the Congregation which they styled "*CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY SAVIOUR*,"<sup>1</sup> placing it under the protection of the chief of all missionaries.

<sup>1</sup> The 9th of November is the day of the Dedication of the Basilica of the Holy Saviour at Rome. We shall afterwards see that it was Benedict XIV. who gave to this Congregation the title of the Most Holy Redeemer.



## III.

**From the Foundation of the Institute till the Approbation of the Rules.**

A.D. 1732-1749.

The rising Community labored with great ardor to establish itself. Some new subjects increased the number of members; but two of them, John Mazzini and Januarius Sarnelli, on whom the holy founder mostly depended to help him in beginning his work, were not able to join him at once. All were animated with a good spirit, but this spirit was not the same in all; for when there was question of establishing the groundwork of the Institute, there were manifested among them irreconcilable differences of opinion. Alphonsus, faithful to his divine vocation, wished to apply himself only to the exercise of the apostolic ministry; but most of his companions desired that the education of youth should also be connected therewith. All the efforts that Alphonsus made could not conquer their obstinacy, and the dispute ended in the withdrawal of all except two of them. This was the situation of affairs after four months' stay at Scala.

When those that were opposed to the new Congregation heard of this unfortunate issue, they felt triumphant, being persuaded that it was all over with such an enterprise, which they had looked upon as foolish. The blow was indeed crushing; but Alphonsus, without allowing himself to be dejected, humbled himself profoundly before God, and fortified by grace, made a vow, binding under the penalty of grievous sin, to devote himself during his whole life, even though he might be left quite alone, to the salvation of the most abandoned souls. His director could not but admire his heroic act, and Heaven blessed it. This was another victory over hell; and it was a decisive victory. Little by little other subjects arrived who were truly stones chosen to constitute the foundations of the edifice; and Alphonsus could resume those so fertile apostolic labors, that needed but to be extended in order to produce everywhere more and more abundant fruits, in the midst of every kind of opposition that was constantly raised by the enemy of all good.

## *Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.* 21

In 1734, in the month of March, the Bishop of Caiazzo established in his diocese a house of the Congregation, in a place called Villa,<sup>1</sup> where there was a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

The following year, in April of 1735, saw the establishment of another foundation, which became more important and more solid than the first two. It was that of the Blessed Trinity at Ciorani,<sup>2</sup> due to the generosity of a worthy priest, Andrew Sarnelli, brother of Januarius. In 1737 a violent persecution arose against the house at Villa, and the holy founder resolved to abandon it. This was done June 10. The same thing took place later on at Scala; the Fathers relinquished it August 24, 1738.

The whole Congregation became thus reunited at Ciorani, its only establishment during four years. It was yet, so to speak, in its infancy, only forming a reunion of pious and zealous missionaries, without any formal engagement, under the guidance of a beloved and venerated chief, their father, their master, and their model, who, little by little, disposed them to constitute the religious family that he had in view in accordance with their vocation. In 1742 the holy founder believed that the moment had arrived when the Rule of the Congregation should be definitely established, and on July 22, the feast of St. Mary Magdalene, all the members of the Institute formally accepted this Rule by pronouncing the simple religious vows with the vow and oath of perseverance till death. The Congregation assumed then greater stability and made further progress.

In the same year, October 13, was opened the celebrated house of Nocera,<sup>3</sup> situated in the suburb, and called Pagani. The church that was afterwards built there in the midst of great opposition, was dedicated to the archangel St. Michael, who did not cease to protect it. The whole Congregation was not only persecuted without intermission, but each house had

<sup>1</sup> *Villa degli Schiavi* (of the slaves), a dependency of Formicola, about seven and a half miles northwest of Caiazzo, and as far north-northeast of Capua.

<sup>2</sup> Barony of the Sarnelli family, in the diocese of Salerno, nearly six miles northeast of Nocera, and seven southeast of Naples.

<sup>3</sup> *Nocera de' Pagani*, an episcopal city, of seven thousand inhabitants, eighteen miles southeast of Naples.

to submit to special trials, and at this time the attack was even carried as far as Rome; but it served only to make the holy founder and his work better known and esteemed.

In December, 1744, after a mission given at Illiceto,<sup>8</sup> there was offered him an old church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, under the title of Our Lady of Consolation, with an old convent situated about a league and a half from the city, that he might establish there a house of his Institute. The offer was accepted. At first the novices were sent to this new foundation; but the extreme poverty that reigned there was the reason why in February, 1747, they were withdrawn and sent back to Ciorani.

Another sanctuary of Mary, under the title of Mother of God, situated at Caposele, was also offered to St. Alphonsus for a foundation, which was accepted June 4, 1746.

The Congregation had at this time four houses, each of which had been established with the special sanction of the king; the Institute, however, had not yet been formally approved, and had no legal existence in the eyes of the government; and this was the reason of the incessant attacks made upon it by its enemies. Hence in the summer of 1747, and at the beginning of 1748, the holy founder set out for Naples in order to have his Congregation acknowledged and approved by sovereign authority. He did all in his power and spared no pains to attain his end; but the current of politics was at that time against Religious Orders: he was allowed the maintenance of what existed, with the promise of royal protection.

He was more successful at Rome, where he solicited with still greater interest the same favor from the Holy See; for it was above all important that his work should be invested with the solemn and authentic approbation of the Church. In November, 1748, Father Villani was sent to the Eternal City to urge on the successful issue of this most important matter. Everything having been maturely examined and discussed in the Congregation of the Council, the requisite decree was finally presented to Benedict XIV. The Sovereign Pontiff remarked that the title "of Holy Saviour" given to the new Institute was precisely that of the Chapter of Regulars existing at Venice, and

<sup>8</sup> A small town of Capitanata, in the diocese of Bovino, south of Troia and of Foggia.

he ordained that the name *Holy Saviour* be replaced by that of *Holy Redeemer*. Finally, by a brief dated February 25, 1749, he approved and confirmed by his apostolic authority the Constitutions and the Rules of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, raised by this act to the rank of the religious Institutes throughout the Church. One could not express how much this happy event rejoiced the heart of the holy founder and of his children, as well as of all those that were the friends of the good work.

IV.

**From the Approbation of the Rules till the Second General Chapter.**

A.D. 1749-1764.

The high approbation given by the Holy See reflected new glory upon the Congregation. Those that had not known it or had but little appreciated it up to that time, were desirous of learning more about it. It was eulogized, and its good reputation extended very far. God sent to it many subjects, among whom were found priests of great merit; and it could thus enlarge the circle of its good deeds.

But before resuming their apostolic labors the Fathers had to constitute themselves canonically by virtue of the approved Rule. Hence in the month of October of 1749 all the Fathers of the four houses assembled in General Chapter at Ciorani. First, those that were in office handed in their resignation; St. Alphonsus gave the first example, although the Pope had confirmed him in the office of perpetual Rector Major. The Rules were then read, and each one renewed his vows. Then after a retreat of three days they proceeded to the elections. It is needless to say that the holy founder was re-elected Superior-General, and confirmed unanimously in this office; the other elections followed in accordance with what is prescribed. Finally the statutes and the most necessary rules were drawn up in order to assure the execution and faithful application of the Rule in its main details.

At this time, thanks to the generosity of the inhabitants of Nocera, it was also a source of happiness to the Fathers to be able to transfer to this house the students hitherto kept jointly with the novices at Ciorani, when both had become more and more numerous.

The temporal existence of the Congregation was, however, continually threatened. The saint had still to proceed several times to Naples, in order to dissipate the new calumnies that had been raised against it. Not satisfied with having fully vindicated it and with making others appreciate the good that it was effecting, he again undertook by great and painful efforts to have it approved by the government ; but all that he obtained was a half measure, namely, a royal decision, dated November 9, 1752, that maintained its four houses, but did not recognize them as religious Communities.

About this time the services of the missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer were very much in demand in the State of Benevento, belonging to the Holy See. The Archbishop offered them a house at Sant' Angelo, and they were installed there, April 6, 1755. This was the first establishment outside of the territory of the Neapolitan Government.

The same desire manifested itself in many dioceses of the kingdom ; but the necessary permission could not be obtained. It was, however, obtained at last by the Bishop of Girgenti, in Sicily, where the Fathers arrived, December 10, 1761, to begin a new foundation.

Thus, in 1762, the Congregation, after thirty years of labor, of continual struggle, possessed six houses, each of which numbered twenty excellent missionaries. Moreover, a good number of young men, full of the happiest dispositions, were diligently applying themselves to their studies so as to prepare themselves for the priesthood. They were distributed among the different houses : in one house they devoted themselves to the study of the humanities, to which the holy founder attached great importance ; in another, they were taught philosophy and history ; in another, dogmatic theology ; and finally, in another, moral theology. This course comprised all the other sciences that usually complete the training of evangelical laborers. In every house regular observance flourished in a most edifying manner. The Fathers could not satisfy all the demands that were continually addressed to them for missions, novenas, and other apostolic labors. Their services were required chiefly in poor country places, yet also in cities in which special retreats were often given to ecclesiastics, to seminarians, to the candidates for ordination, to nuns, to religious, to Congregations, to the

nobility, to soldiers, etc. Heaven blessed all these works, which produced wonderful fruits.

The holy founder had reached old age, broken down much more by trials, by fatigue, and by infirmities than by his years. He had no other thought than how he might perfect his cherished work by putting the finishing touch to it in another General Chapter that was to complete the interior organization of the Institute. Such was his intention, which he wished to carry out before his death, when on March 9, 1762, he was as it were struck by a thunderbolt on hearing that Clément XIII. had appointed him Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths. He had before been chosen for the Archiepiscopal See of Palermo, and he was able to escape this dignity; but this time he was obliged to submit to the formal order of the Sovereign Pontiff, and he was consecrated June 20, at Rome. His children, however, succeeded in obtaining the permission for him to retain his title and office of Rector Major of the Congregation. This greatly consoled him; for in his humility he was convinced that God had removed him from his spiritual family on account of his sins. He named Father Andrew Villani his Vicar-General of the Institute, to take his place in regard to the supervision and dispatch of ordinary and pressing business; yet he did not himself cease to govern his dear family in Jesus Christ, as we may see in the collection of his letters.

In 1764, when the second General Chapter could be convened, the saint went to Nocera to begin it on September 3. He presided over this assembly, in which, under his inspiration and direction, there was canonically regulated, even to the smallest details, all that could be desired for the wise government of the Institute; and on October 15, the feast of St. Teresa, his venerated patroness, he closed the Chapter with thanksgiving to God. The important acts of this Chapter may in some way be regarded as the crowning of his work.

## V.

### From the Second General Chapter till the Death of St. Alphonsus.

A.D. 1764-1787.

After the year 1764, it seemed that the Congregation, having reached the stage of a perfect body, needed but to extend and



to multiply its fruits of salvation; and this it did in fact, but always in the midst of sufferings, in continual combats, and cruel and bitter sorrows. About this time two men of great influence, Francis Anthony Maffei at Iliceto, and Nicholas Sarnelli, Baron of Ciorani, the brother of Andrew and of Januarius Sarnelli, declared themselves the mortal enemies of the Congregation. Having conspired with each other, and sustained by impious and self-interested men in the kingdom, they did all in their power and used every means to put an end to the Congregation; through their machinations it was for twelve years kept between life and death.

In the month of July, 1767, the danger became so great that the holy bishop was himself obliged to proceed to Naples. He had no difficulty in dissipating the clouds of calumny that had gathered, and the enemies of the Institute were covered with confusion; but their discomfiture rendered them more furious, and they meditated new conspiracies.

In the month of February, 1769, the storm burst upon the house at Girgenti in Sicily, which had already been placed in a critical situation on account of the death of the bishop; for this event deprived them of the means of subsistence. The Congregation had, besides, to suffer from the cruel malady that afflicted the holy founder since the month of August, 1768. Towards the end of 1771 he decided to withdraw his missionaries from Sicily, to the great sorrow of the clergy and of the people—not, however, without the hope of seeing them return.

This bitterness was sweetened by the esteem and sympathy that the Congregation enjoyed among all good people, as well as by the blessings that Heaven shed upon its labors. In 1773 its missionaries were called to the Campagna of Rome, where they were so well liked that the people were anxious to retain them. St. Alphonsus accepted a house at Scifelli,<sup>1</sup> under the title of St. Cecilia, in the diocese of Veroli. The following year he accepted another at Frosinone, under the title of Our Lady of Grace, belonging to the same diocese; and there was question about several other new foundations, but for want of sufficient resources they could not be accepted. A house might have even been established at Rome, in accordance with the

<sup>1</sup> A village four miles from Veroli.



wish of Clement XIV., but the saint thought that the time marked by Providence had not yet arrived.

The houses established in the Pontifical States were a source of great consolation and encouragement to the Congregation; on them the holy founder rested his hopes for the future, because regular observance, free from the difficulties that impeded it elsewhere, could flourish in them in all its fulness. In the kingdom of Naples even the existence of his Institute was always menaced. The king, however, recognizing the justice of its cause, and yielding to the solicitations of the inhabitants of Girgenti, authorized the return of the Fathers to Sicily, and they re-entered it in the month of April, 1775.

Three months afterwards, July 27, St. Alphonsus having obtained from Pius VI. permission to resign his episcopal office, returned to his dear house at Nocera, there to pass the rest of his days in the midst of the severest trials. He had predicted that he would die in his Congregation, and that he would then be no more Superior;—a prediction that he renewed six months after his return to Nocera, at the moment when he was thought to be dying. “Do not fear,” he said to those around him, “I shall not yet die; for God wishes me to die under obedience, and not in the capacity of Rector Major.”

He did not long enjoy repose. On October 3 the government ordered that the suit against the Congregation should begin in all its forms. It was now thought that all was over with the Congregation. Its enemies triumphed; but the holy founder put his trust in God by having recourse to prayer with all his subjects, without however neglecting the ordinary means of defence.

During this long war God did not leave him without consolation. The Redemptorists were asked for by the inhabitants of Benevento, although the Fathers had an establishment at Sant’ Angelo. The saint disliked to settle his Fathers in the centre of so large a city; but he had to yield to the entreaties of the Cardinal Archbishop, which were strengthened by the approval of the Sovereign Pontiff. The Fathers were solemnly installed, June 6, 1777, on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Towards the end of the same year Pius VI. granted to the missionaries of the whole Congregation the same privileges that the Passionists enjoyed in their missions.

The enemies of the Congregation profited, on their part, by the months and the years during which the suit lasted in order to combine their plans, to win accomplices, and to draw up a list of base accusations for the purpose of defaming and destroying it; but divine Providence watched over it, powerful friends intervened in its favor, and the saintly bishop remembered that he had been a lawyer. In 1779 he presented to the king in justification a memorial that he had written himself. On August 21, after an impartial examination of the cause, Ferdinand IV. rendered a decision that authorized again, and in a more explicit manner, the four houses of the kingdom with their Superiors, as well as the house of studies and the novitiate. Moreover, on October 22, having obtained from Pius VI. the graces and the privileges of the jubilee, the king chose the children of St. Alphonsus to announce this favor to his people, with the promise to recompense them for their labors, "in consideration of their zeal to spread everywhere the principles of sound morality, that ought to regulate the life of the good Christian and the good citizen." This prince thereby gave them a striking proof of his esteem, of his confidence, and of his protection. This was not yet a formal approbation of the Institute; but it was enough to disconcert and discourage its enemies. It is needless to mention the joy and thankfulness with which the whole Congregation received this news.

The wise and saintly old man profited by the first moment of calm in order to reanimate the zeal for regular observance, asking only that his **work** might be left in a good state before he died; but this calm was soon followed by a new storm and a real disaster.

Circumstances were thought to be favorable to make a new attempt to obtain from the king the important favor that had been solicited for so many years, namely, the recognition of the Rule approved by Benedict XIV. Father Maione, Consultor-General, represented the Congregation at Naples, and all were satisfied with the manner in which everything had been hitherto done. He was charged with negotiating this delicate affair, by receiving all the necessary powers, being a man in whom all had full confidence. But through a motive of prudence, which was thought to be well founded, he asked and obtained that all the Consultors, as well as the Rector Major, should bind themselves under oath to keep his enterprise a profound secret.

Unfortunately, yielding on this occasion to wrong-headedness, Father Maione proved faithless. Having persuaded Father Cimino, also a Consultor-General who accompanied him, to enter into his views, he had the fatal temerity to take upon himself the modification of the Rule by introducing into it grave and arbitrary changes, without doubt to accommodate it to his own ideas and to those who took the lead in the government.

When everything had been thus arranged in the month of September, 1779, Father Maione boldly presented his scheme to St. Alphonsus; but it was so badly written that the poor old man, full of sufferings, could not decipher it, and was obliged to send it to Father Villani, his Vicar and confessor, that he might report his opinion to him. The Father was amazed at seeing the Rule altered in this way; but perceiving that great inconveniences would arise on both sides, and blinded to the consequences of his act, he had not the courage to make the truth known. He therefore answered that all was well; and the saint, relying upon the word of his Vicar, who was at the same time his confessor, gave his consent. Thereupon Father Maione easily obtained the royal approbation of this pretended copy of the Rule.

The new Rule, approved since the month of January, 1780, was not forwarded to Nocera till the 27th of February. St. Alphonsus was informed of it on the following day, and was struck with consternation at seeing the changes that had been made; and when the news of this sad affair spread among the houses of the Institute, it caused general confusion: every one was indignant at the conduct of the two Consultors, and even at the holy founder himself. For these evils the saint found no other remedy than what might bring on a still greater evil, namely, the convening of a General Chapter.

There was then at Frosinone a restless and turbulent yet able spirit named Leggio, who nourished a secret ill-feeling against the saint, his Superior. He knew how to profit by the confusion which then existed in order to wound the bosom of his mother and the heart of his father. Assuming the mask of zeal, he succeeded in forming a dominant party in the houses of the Pontifical States, and persuaded them to ask of Rome the permission to hold a special Chapter, and to choose a Superior to be independent of the authority of the holy founder, whose

character they did not fail to blacken as much as they could. They were, however, obliged to send their deputies to the General Chapter convoked at Nocera; and Leggio was of the number.

When this assembly was opened on May 12, one could see that trouble and discord would ensue. The six Consultors were deposed. St. Alphonsus was compelled to resign his office, and this he did with profound humility; but he was re-elected Rector Major, and as his Vicar was nominated Father Bartholomew Corrado, who accepted this charge only at the command of the saint.

On his return to Frosinone, Leggio, who was dissatisfied with the result, pursued his project of separation. He went to Rome, where he carried on his intrigue so well that he succeeded in obtaining a favorable hearing from the Cardinals and even from the Pope himself, and in throwing discredit upon St. Alphonsus, who, owing to a singular concourse of circumstances, was placed in the position of not being able to defend himself. Thus deceived, God having permitted this, Pius VI. rendered a decision, dated September .22, by which he declared that Father Francis de Paul was named President of the houses situated in the Pontifical States, with all the powers of Rector Major, and that the other houses, not belonging any more to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, were deprived of the favors of the Holy See. The holy founder thus saw himself excluded from his own Institute. His affliction was extreme; but he humbly resigned himself to the will of God, and hastened to write to Father Francis de Paul, to express his submission to him as to his Superior.

It was remarkable that during all these troubles the missionaries of the Congregation did not fail to labor with wonderful success in the kingdom of the two Sicilies, as well as in the Pontifical States. What above all afflicted the heart of the saint was the privation of the spiritual faculties that the missionaries had before enjoyed; for the faculties having been reduced to the simple powers given by the Bishops, they were not able to do so much good. He adopted various means to recover the good graces of the Holy See; the Cardinal Archbishop of Benevento and other prelates interceded in his favor; but so strong were the prejudices against him that all was use-

less. Father Leggio, who was always in high credit at Rome, paralyzed all his efforts.

But God permitted evil only in order that good might be drawn from it; and this alleviated the distress of mind into which the holy founder was plunged. The Congregation being divided in so unequal a manner, the favors that were enjoyed by the houses situated in the Pontifical States attracted thither many subjects from the kingdom of Naples, and this aided the extension of the Institute. Besides, in 1781, Pius VI., happy in being able to propagate it, bestowed upon it, even in Rome itself, the house and the church of St. Julian, near St. Mary Major; then he founded a house at Gubbio, another at Spello near Foligno; and there was also question of a foundation at Ravenna.

On the other hand, many Neapolitan Bishops seeing with regret what was going on, and reflecting on the injury that was being done to their dioceses, addressed to Rome respectful claims, in which they eulogized the missionaries and their venerated chief, and gave testimony of their perfect innocence. Moreover, the Nuncio of the Holy See at Naples, who had been charged to make an exact inquiry, at last sent in his report, which arrived October 17, 1782, and completely justified their conduct. Then the dark clouds were scattered; the Sovereign Pontiff acceded to the request made by St. Alphonsus in the month of March of the following year, and bestowed upon his missionaries the spiritual favors of which they had been deprived for two years and a half.

Peace was now established both on the part of Rome and on the part of Naples, where at this time the recent suit was brought to an end; but the Congregation remained still divided. During this same year, 1783, the Fathers of the kingdom of Naples elected for the Coadjutor of St. Alphonsus, with the right of succession, Father Villani. In 1785, on the 15th of October, those of the Pontifical States assembled by the authority of the Pope, and elected for their Rector Major Father Francis de Paul; then those of Girgenti imitated them by choosing Father Blasucci to be the Superior in Sicily. The saint one day said: "I have been wishing to see things arranged during my life; this I have asked, and am still asking the Blessed Virgin every day; but it is not the will of God.



Things will be arranged, but only after my death." He finished his glorious career August 1, 1787, after blessing all his children.

He left twelve houses well established; namely, four in the kingdom of Naples, that is, at Ciorani, at Nocera, at Iliceto, and at Caposele; one at Girgenti in Sicily; and seven in the Pontifical States, that is, at Sant' Angelo, at Benevento, at Scifelli, at Frosinone, at Rome, at Gubbio, and at Spello. These houses were poor, and divided in regard to their government, but were rich in good subjects, and were united by the same Rule, the same spirit, the same zeal as well as by the same love, and the same veneration for their glorious founder, who from heaven was going to watch over his Institute, and to direct it by his spirit till the end of the world, according to his prophecy and the promise that he made.

## VI.

### From the Death of St. Alphonsus till the Death of Blessed Father Clement Maria Hofbauer.

A.D. 1787-1820.

In order to establish itself outside of Italy the Congregation had still to pass through many vicissitudes. The life of Blessed Clement Hofbauer,<sup>1</sup> who in 1784 was called in a marvellous way to be a member of the Institute, resembled very much the life of St. Alphonsus, whose great work he was to continue and to propagate. At the end of 1787, with his friend Father Thaddeus Hübl, he departed from Frosinone for Warsaw, where the Apostolic Nuncio received them with joy, and the king had the Church of St. Benno assigned to them; hence they were called Bennonites. They were at once able to begin their labors, owing to the Germans who frequented this church, and whose language they spoke. Their work was so successful, that it appeared to be a continual mission, to which people of all nations were constantly flocking.

During this time the happy change predicted by the holy founder was accomplished in Italy. Ferdinand IV., by a decree of October 29, 1790, permitted the houses in his kingdom to

<sup>1</sup> He was declared *Venerable* by Pope Pius IX., May 14, 1876, and *beatified* by Leo XIII., January 29, 1888.

observe the Rule approved by Benedict XIV., and by another decree consented to their reunion with the Fathers of the Pontifical States. On his part, Pius VI., on August 5, 1791, authorized this reunion, and wished that in a General Chapter there should be elected by common consent the Rector Major; this was done, for Father Blasucci was chosen Rector Major of the whole Institute. But as he resided in the kingdom of Naples, it became too difficult for the Fathers of Warsaw to correspond directly with him; therefore in 1793 he appointed Blessed Clement Hofbauer his Vicar-General for the countries of the North, communicating to him with some exceptions all his powers.

At Warsaw there was very great suffering caused by extreme poverty; nevertheless the house became filled after a short time with excellent Polish, German, and French subjects. God blessed this work by manifest signs. About the year 1794, Blessed Clement Hofbauer was able to settle some of his missionaries at Mittau in Courland, where they had been in request for a long time. Soon after he formed two other establishments in Poland—at Lukow and Radomyn. But persecutions, as always, had to arise, and they had to be expected, especially at this time, when the governments were anything but disposed to favor religious Institutes. In 1798, the Russian Government, on which Courland depended, forbade all the religious to communicate with their confrères outside the empire.

On the other hand, the Prussian Government, which had become master of Warsaw, prohibited religious profession before the age of twenty-four; this compelled Blessed Clement Hofbauer to adopt measures to have a novitiate elsewhere. In 1803 Providence furnished him with a house at Iestetten in Switzerland, on the Rhine, in the neighborhood of Schaffhausen. To this place he sent as Superior Father Joseph Passerat. But during several years the Fathers did nothing but encamp, now in this place, now in that: for example, in 1805, at Triberg, a village of the Black Forest; then at Babenhausen, which soon after passed into the hands of Bavaria; in 1806, at the monastery of St. Lucius, near Coire; in 1807, at Viege, in the Valais. The wolves everywhere followed the flock that had been intrusted to Father Passerat, and gave it no rest.

While it was with difficulty that the Fathers could find in the



Valais the means of subsistence, desolation reigned elsewhere. At Warsaw, in 1808, the house was suppressed by violence; all the members of the Community were sent away by force, then dispersed. The other establishments also ceased to exist; that of Radomyn had already been abandoned; that of Lukow met with a fate like that of the mother-house; and that of Mittau was closed by the Russian Government. Blessed Clement retired to Vienna, where the Archbishop appointed him, in 1809, Rector of the Italian church.

This same year, 1809, the French having invaded the States of the Holy See, the houses that were there were soon suppressed, with the exception of the house of Scifelli, in which the Fathers by a special protection of God were able to live together and exercise their ministry. The Congregation saw itself almost at death's door, while the Sovereign Pontiff, stripped of all his possessions, was an exile and a captive.

At Vienna Blessed Clement exercised with apostolic zeal and with much fruit the office that had been confided to him by the Archbishop, but he did not abandon his own work; the government being ignorant that he was a religious, allowed him to correspond with his confrères, who had been dispersed. Father Passerat with his students supported himself as well as he could at Viege; but in 1810, the French Empire having taken possession of the Valais, he saw himself forced to remove, and withdrew in 1811 to the canton of Friburg, where in the following year an asylum was, to a certain extent, procured for him at Farvagnies.

In 1813, Blessed Clement Hofbauer became Director of the Ursuline Sisters at Vienna, and continued his apostolic ministry in their little church. The following year, after so many trials, the Institute began finally to revive; Pius VII., delivered by the hand of Providence, entered his States, and the Redemptorists partly recovered what belonged to them. In 1815 the Holy Father gave them at Rome the house of Our Lady of the Assumption *in Monterone* to replace that of St. Julian. At this time Blessed Clement Hofbauer sent some of his missionaries to Wallachia, where for six years they accomplished much good.

The year 1816 was a glorious year for the Congregation, which attracted to itself the attention of the whole world. September

15 its illustrious founder was declared *Blessed*, and judged worthy of public veneration. This event reanimated the joy and the hopes of all its children. But during the same year the Congregation lost its chief, Father Blasucci, who had been Rector Major for twenty-five years. He was replaced the following year by Father Nicholas Mansione.

A little while afterwards the Congregation was able to make some progress. In 1818 the cantonal government of Friburg formally recognized the Institute, and permitted Father Passerat to reunite his companions in the old Trappist convent of Valsanta.

At Vienna, the following year, divine Providence arranged a still more important success, which was brought about in an unexpected manner. The police discovered that Blessed Clement Hofbauer belonged to a religious Institute not recognized in the empire, and that he was a subject of a foreign Superior; this the laws of Joseph II. did not tolerate. Upon this accusation the order was given to him that he should either give up the Congregation or leave at once the empire. The Father did not hesitate to choose the latter; but when his friends, especially the old Archbishop, who loved him tenderly, heard of this, the sorrow became general. The worthy prelate went to the emperor, who, in ignorance of what had happened, suspended at first the order that had been given. After an examination of the facts he authorized Blessed Clement not only to remain at Vienna, but to found there a house of his Institute; and for this purpose he assigned to him for his use the beautiful church of Santa Maria della Scala.

But, like St. Alphonsus, Blessed Clement was not to see his work prospering entirely during his life; and this he knew, for he had several times said to his companions and to his disciples: "Have patience, and remain steadfast; my eyes will scarcely have closed in death when you will have houses and foundations that will abundantly satisfy you." The moment of death, which he had so ardently desired, at last arrived. March 15, 1820, laden with merits, he gave up his soul to God, at the age of sixty-five. At present the many Redemptorist convents in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Poland, Great Britain, Ireland, North and South America, the West Indies, all trace their descent from the House in

Vienna founded in that city shortly after Blessed Clement's death. With good reason, then, he may be called the St. Alphonsus of the North, or the second Father and Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

## VII.

### **From the Death of Blessed Clement Hofbauer till the Establishment of the Mother-house of the Institute at Rome.**

A.D. 1820-1855.

The death of Blessed Clement seemed at first to interfere with the project of founding a house at Vienna, the authorization of which was due to his personal merit; but the contrary happened, which made every one admit his power in heaven and his growing influence on earth. April 30, 1820, the emperor approved of the establishment of not only a house, but of the Institute itself, in all his States.

Father Joseph Passerat was named Vicar-General in place of Father Hofbauer, and he set out for Vienna, July 26, after having obtained possession of an old convent situated on a mountain called Bischenberg, in the diocese of Strasburg Thither he sent some of his companions, who were installed August 2; this was the first establishment of the Redemptorists in France. In the month of November he himself conducted his Community from Vienna to Santa Maria della Scala, where he fixed his residence. His position was not, however, without its difficulties.

In 1824, the Congregation lost its Rector Major, Father Mansioni, who was succeeded by Father Celestine Cocle.

In 1826, the King of Portugal called the Redemptorists into his kingdom, and gave them the house and church of St. John Nepomucene at Lisbon. The same year Pope Leo XII. established them at Spoleto, and intrusted to them the parochial church of St. Ansan.

The Fathers of Vienna founded a house in 1827 at Mautern in Styria, and another in 1828 at Innsbruck, the capital of Tyrol.

In 1830, the house at Bischenberg, which could hardly support itself, was suppressed by order of King Louis Philippe, and France was again closed to the Congregation; but at the same

time Belgium was opened to it by the revolution that occurred in it. The first house offered was at Tournai, in 1831, where the Fathers established themselves on November 1.

In 1832, Father Camillus Ripoli succeeded Father Cocle in the office of Rector Major.

The same year, at the instance of the Apostolical Nuncio at Vienna, Father Passerat consented to send some of his subjects to Philippopoli in Bulgaria, where during eight years they had to suffer much without being able to gain a footing among a population that was addicted to the Greek schism. It was, however, just at this time that the Congregation really began to spread; its progress became so rapid, and at so many different points, that we can scarcely enumerate the details of it.

In 1833, two new houses were founded in Belgium, at Liege and at St. Trond, and one in Austria, at Eggenburg. The same year, Father Passerat sent some missionaries to the United States of America; but they had to struggle for three years against many obstacles before they could plant the Congregation in this new soil. The same year, Don Pedro in Portugal, after having dethroned his brother, banished the Redemptorists from the country.

In 1834, the Fathers were established at Leoben in Styria; they had now five houses in the Austrian Empire.

In 1835, the Duke of Modena called them to his States, where they settled at Finale. The same year, they left Valsanta, and established themselves in the city of Friburg itself.

In 1836, they took possession of an old convent at Wittem in Limburg belonging to Holland, and they founded their first house in America,—at Rochester, in the State of New-York.

In 1838, France seemed to become more accessible, and the Community of Bischenberg could re-enter it.

May 26, 1839, was another day of triumph for the Congregation on account of the solemn canonization of its holy founder.—The same year, it formed a second establishment in America, namely, at Pittsburg in the State of Pennsylvania.

In 1841, called to Bavaria by the king himself, who offered them the celebrated pilgrimage of Alt-Ötting, the Fathers formed there a double establishment under the titles of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Alphonsus. Moreover, they founded a fourth house at Brussels in Belgium, also under the title of St.

Mary Magdalene, and a third in Baltimore, in America, under the title of St. Alphonsus.

This development of the Institute necessitated some changes in its organization. Hence Gregory XVI. by a decree dated July 2, 1841, divided the Congregation into six Provinces, namely, the Roman, the Neapolitan, the Sicilian, the Swiss, the Austrian, and the Belgian province. The Sovereign Pontiff then wished to fix at Rome the residence of the Rector Major; but grave difficulties raised by the pretensions of the Neapolitan Government caused the project to be deferred.

In 1842, a second house was founded at Landser in Strasburg, and a fourth in the United States, at New York, under the title of the Most Holy Redeemer.

In 1843, Father Passerat sent some missionaries to England, and the fifth house in America was established at Philadelphia.

In 1844, there arose at Liege, through the care of the Redemptorists, a pious institution that deserves special mention. It was the Archconfraternity of the Holy Family, a work that has produced happy fruits wherever it was established and maintained.

In 1845, the third house was established in France, namely, at St. Nicolas du Port, in the diocese of Nancy, and another house at Buffalo in America.

In 1846, another foundation was made in Bavaria, the third, at Vilsbiburg in the diocese of Ratisbon, and another at Detroit, the seventh, in America.

In 1847, three new houses were established: one in France, the fourth, at Teterchen in the diocese of Metz; one in Savoy, at Contamine-sur-Arve, in the diocese of Annecy; and one in America, the eighth, at New Orleans. But on November 15 of this same year the revolutionists entered Friburg and sacked the convent occupied by the Redemptorists, who had also to leave Switzerland. This was but a prelude of the ravages that were to follow.

In 1848, the revolution disturbed nearly the whole of Europe. On April 6, Father Passerat was expelled from Vienna with his whole Community; a decree was then issued for the suppression of the Institute in Austria and in the whole Germanic Confederation. The same kind of decree was issued in Sicily, where the Congregation had three establishments. Other houses in



Italy had likewise to suffer from this storm. Father Passerat withdrew to Belgium, to the house at Tournai.

These trials, however, were not without their consolation. Several of the Fathers expelled from their country went to Norway, and succeeded in building at Christiania a beautiful Catholic Church, the first in this country since the so-called reformation. Moreover, the same year, 1848, three new houses were founded: one in England, the first in this kingdom, at Clapham, near London; one in Belgium, the fifth, at Mons; and one in Bavaria, the fourth, at Fuchsmühl, in the diocese of Ratisbon.

May 14, 1849, Father Ripoli, the Rector Major, being in a state of health that rendered him incapable of fulfilling his duties, His Holiness Pius IX. associated with him Father Vincent Trapanese to be his Vicar-General for the whole Institute.

In the same year another house was added in Belgium, the sixth, that of St. Joseph at Brussels; one in Bavaria, the fifth, at Niederachdorf, also belonging to the diocese of Ratisbon; one in the United States, the ninth, at Cumberland in the diocese of Baltimore.

Father Ripoli, the Rector Major, died March 14, 1850; on account of the revolution that agitated Europe, and the difficulties that were made by the Neapolitan Government, the Sovereign Pontiff himself appointed his successor, not for life, but only for the time it would please the Holy See; this was Father Vincent Trapanese. Moreover, Father Passerat, worn out by age and very many trials, having resigned the office of Vicar-General, was replaced by Father Rudolph Smetana. June 29 of the same year, Pius IX. erected the American house into a special Province.

In 1850 two more houses were added in Europe, that of Bornhofen, in Rhenish Prussia, diocese of Limburg, and that of Amsterdam.

The following year, 1851, four houses were established: one in England at Bishop-Eton near Liverpool, one at Treves, one at Luxemburg, and one at Puchheim in Austria, diocese of Lintz.

In 1852, a fifth house was founded at Douai in France.

January 10, 1853, the Holy Father erected a Province of the

Institute in Germany, called *Germania Superior*, that is Bavaria. The same year a house was established at Limerick in Ireland, and one in America, the tenth, at Annapolis, in the diocese of Baltimore.

In 1854, a new house was founded in Holland, at Bois-le-Duc, and two in France, that of Dunkerque, and that of Châteauroux, which were the sixth and the seventh.

We have now arrived at one of the most remarkable periods in the history of the Congregation. In consequence of the obstacles that the Neapolitan Government did not cease to oppose to the proper organization of the Institute, the Sovereign Pontiff authorized the two Sicilies to choose for themselves a special Superior; then by a decree of October 8, 1853, he ordained that the Mother-house of the Congregation was to be established at Rome, and that a General Chapter should there elect a Rector Major, who was thenceforward to reside there. To carry out this order a suitable place was bought, known as *Villa Caserta*, in which the General Chapter was canonically opened, April 26, 1855. Father Nicholas Mauron was chosen Superior-General and Rector Major, and the Chapter only separated after providing for all that was necessary to secure exact and regular observance in all parts of the Institute, in accordance with the spirit of the holy founder. *Villa Caserta*, situated by the side of the old house of St. Julian, became the Mother-house of the Congregation, after having been dedicated to the Most Holy Redeemer and in honor of St. Alphonsus.

As the continuation of recital of the successive establishment of Redemptorist convents up to the present time 1890, would take too long and would prove monotonous, we would merely mention that in the year 1871 the children of St. Alphonsus had the happiness to see their holy founder raised to the summit of glory in the Church. By a decree of March 23, afterwards confirmed by an apostolic brief of July 7, the Sovereign Pontiff, yielding to the urgent prayers of a great number of illustrious prelates and of learned men, and following the unanimous advice of the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, after a mature examination of the cause, decreed to St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and Bishop of St. Agatha of the



Goths, the title and the honors of Doctor of the universal Church. This decree, commended in the whole Catholic world, appeared as the crowning of the memorable acts of the Vatican Council, and as a monument of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the glorious pontificate of Pius IX.

VIII.

**The Condition of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in the Year 1887, the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Death of St. Alphonsus.**

We quote from the "Catalogue of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer," published at the end of the year 1887 :

I.

PROVINCE OF ROME.

*Established, July 2, 1841.*

I. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer and in honor of St. Alphonsus, at Rome.

Residence of the Most Reverend Superior-General and Rector Major.

The house of the novitiate and of studies.

Founded, March 25, 1855.

II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of "Graces," at Frosinone.

Diœcesis Verulanæ (Veroli) in Ditione Pontificia.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, June 20, 1776.

III. Convent of the Blessed Mary under the title of "Good Counsel," at Scifelli.

Diœcesis Verulanæ (Veroli) in Ditione Pontificia.

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, July 5, 1773.

IV. Convent of St. Francis Seraphicus, at Buxilongi (Busso-lengo).

Diœcesis et Provinciæ Veronensis.

Another house of the novitiate.

Founded, August 2, 1855.

V. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the "Assumption," at Monterone de Urbe.

Founded, August 2, 1815.



- VI. Convent of the Holy Family, Pesinæ (Pesina) apud Caprinum.

Diœcesis et Provincia Veronensis.

Another house of studies and preparatory college.

Founded, October 1, 1883.

II.

PROVINCE OF NAPLES.

*Established, July 2, 1841.*

- I. Convent of St. Michael, archangel, Nuceriæ Paganorum (Pagani).

Diœcesis Nucerinæ Paganorum in Prov. Salernitana.

Residence of the Father Provincial, and house of studies.

Founded, October 13, 1742.

- II. Convent of the Most Blessed Trinity, in oppido Juranorum (Ciorani).

Archidiœcesis et Prov. Salernitanæ (Salerno).

Founded, September 12, 1735.

- III. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of "Mother of God."

Ad Caput Silari (Caposele).

Archidiœc. Campsanæ (Conza) in Prov. Abellinensi (Avellino).

Founded, November 2, 1746.

- IV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the "Assumption."

In S. Angelo a Cupolo.

Archidiœcesis et Prov. Beneventanæ.

Founded, April 6, 1755.

- V. Convent of St. Joseph, Summæ (Somma Vesuviano).

Diœcesis Nolanæ in Prov. Neapolitana.

Founded, March 19, 1816.

- VI. Convent of St. Anthony of Padua.

Naples (S. Antonio a Tarsia).

Archidiœcesis Neapolitanæ.

Founded, 1816.

- VII. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Angriæ (Angri).

Diœcesis Nucerinæ Pag. in Prov. Salernitana.

Founded, May 1, 1872.

VIII. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

In Marianella, near Naples.

Archidiœcesis Neapolitanæ.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, May 13, 1878.

IX. Convent of St. Antonine, abbot,

Licteris (Lettere).

Diœc. Castrimaris Stabiarum (Castellamare) in Prov.  
Neapolit.

Founded, December 15, 1878.

X. Convent of S. Reparatae V. M.

Theani (Teano).

Diœcesis Theanensis in Prov. Casertana.

Founded, 1880.

XI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of  
the "Seven Dolors."

Abellini (Avellino).

Diœcesis et Provinciæ Abellinensis.

Another house of studies.

Founded, September 12, 1881.

III.

PROVINCE OF SICILY.

*Established, July 2, 1841.*

Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of "Para-  
dise."

Mazariæ (Mazzara del Vallo).

Diœc. Mazariensis in Prov. Drepanensi (Trapani).

Founded, October 13, 1881.

IV.

PROVINCE GALlico-HELVETICA.

*Established, July, 1841.*

A.—In France, Switzerland, and Holland.

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

S. Nicolai a Portu (S. Nicolas-du-port).

Diœcesis Nanceiensis (Nancy) in France.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, May 23, 1845.

- II. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the "Patronage."  
 Contaminæ ad Arvam (Contamine-sur-Arve).  
 Diœcesis Anneciensis (Annecy) in France.  
 Founded, April 21, 1847.
- III. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the "Patronage."  
 Dunikercæ (Dunkerque).  
 Archidiœcesis Cameracensis (Cambrai) in France.  
 Founded, April 21, 1854.
- IV. Convent of St. Joseph.  
 Castri-Rudolphi (Chateauroux).  
 Archidiœcesis Bituricensis (Bourges) in France.  
 Founded, September 29, 1854.
- V. Convent of St. Alphonsus.  
 Bononiæ ad Mare (Boulogne-sur-Mer).  
 Diœcesis Atrebatensis (Arras) in France.  
 Founded, April 15, 1856.
- VI. Convent of St. Joseph.  
 Insulis (Lille).  
 Archidiœcesis Cameracensis (Cambrai) in France.  
 Founded, April 6, 1857.
- VII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Perpetual Help.  
 Argentomi (Argentan).  
 Diœcesis Sagiensis (Seez) in France.  
 Founded, December 8, 1867.
- VIII. Convent of St. Alphonsus.  
 Perusii (Perouse).  
 Archidiœcesis Vesontionensis (Besançon) in France.  
 Founded, May 29, 1873.
- IX. Convent of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.  
 In Houdemont.  
 Diœcesis Nanceiensis (Nancy) in France.
- X. Convent of St. Joseph.  
 Valentia (Valence).  
 Diœcesis Valentinensis in France.  
 Founded, October, 1873.
- XI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.  
 Lutetiæ Parisiorum (Paris).  
 Archidiœcesis Parisiensis in France.  
 Founded, August 2, 1874.

XII. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

In Gannat.

Diœcesis Molinensis (Moulins) in France.

Founded, May 10, 1875.

XIII. Convent of St. Joseph.

Antoniaci (Antony).

Archidiœceris Parisiensis in France.

Founded, January 21, 1886.

XIV. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the "Patronage."

Operariorum (Ouvrier).

Diœcesis Sedunensis (Sion) in Switzerland.

Founded, June 10, 1880.

XV. Domus Refugii ad S. Josephi under the title of the  
"Patronage."

In Dongen.

Diœcesis Bredanæ (Breda) in Holland.

The house of studies.

Founded, November 13, 1880.

XVI. Domus Refugii ad SS. Redemptoris.

Strati (Stratum).

Diœcesis Buscoducensis (Bois-le-Duc) in Holland.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, December 28, 1881.

**B.—In Spain and the Island of Porto Rico.**

I. Convent of St. Teresa.

Navæ Regis (Nava Del Rey).

Archidiœcesis Vallisolitanæ (Valladolid).

Residence of the Father Visitor.

Founded, May 15, 1879.

II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title "De Espino."

In Espino.

Archidiœcesis Burgensis (Burgos).

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, June 25, 1879.

III. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Asturicæ (Astorga).

Diœcesis Asturicensis.

The house of the novitiate and of studies.

Founded, November 1, 1883.

## IV. Convent of St. John the Evangelist.

Granatæ (Granada).

Archidiœcesis Granatensis.

Founded, July, 1879.

## V. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of "The Visitation."

Matriti (Madrid).

Diœcesis Matritensis (Madrid).

Founded, December, 1879.

## VI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Sancti-Germani (San German).

Diœc. S. Joannis Portoricensis (San Juan de Puerto Rico).

Island of Porto Rico.

Founded, November 28, 1886.

**C.—In South America.**

## I. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Limæ (Lima).

Archidiœcesis Limanæ in the Republic of Peru.

Residence of the Father Visitor.

Founded, January 23, 1884.

## II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Conchæ (Cuenca).

Diœcesis Conchensis in the Republic of Ecuador.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, July 22, 1870.

## III. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Bolivari (Rio-Bamba).

Diœcesis Bolivarensis in the Republic of Ecuador.

Founded, November, 1870.

## IV. Convent of St. Joseph.

S. Jacobi de Chile (Santiago).

Archidiœcesis S. Jacobi in the Republic of Chili.

Founded, March 19, 1876.

## V. Convent ad SS. Crucifixi.

Bugæ (Buga).

Diœcesis Popayanensis (Popayan) in the United States of Colombia.

Founded, June, 1884.

V.

PROVINCE OF AUSTRIA.

*Established, July 2, 1841.*

- I. Convent ad Scalas under the title of "Immaculate Conception."

Vindobonæ (Vienna).

Archidiœc. Vindobonensis in Austria Inferiore.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, 1820.

- II. Convent of St. Barbara.

In Mautern.

Diœc. Secoviensis in Styria Superiore.

The house of studies.

Founded, 1827.

- III. Convent of St. John Nepomucene.

Oenipotentè (Innsbruck).

Diœcesis Brixinensis in Tyrol.

Founded, 1828.

- IV. Convent of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

Eggenburgi.

Diœc. S. Hippolyti in Austria Inferior.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, 1833.

- V. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Leobii (Leoben).

Diœc. Secoviensis in Styria Superiore.

Founded, 1834.

- VI. Convent of St. George.

In Puchheim.

Diœcesis Linciensis in Austria Superiore.

Founded, 1851.

- VII. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

In Ketzelsdorf.

Diœc. Regina-Gradicensis (Koeniggraetz) in Bohemia.

Founded, 1857.

- VIII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help and of St. Cajetan.

Pragæ (Prag).

Archidiœcesis Pragensis in Bohemia.

Founded, 1857.

## IX. Convent of St. Ann.

In Katzelsdorf.

Archdiœc. Vindobonensis in Austria Inferiore.

Another house of the preparatory college.

Founded, 1857.

## X. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Littaviæ (Littau).

Archidiœcesis Olomucensis in Moravia.

Founded, 1860.

XI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Assumption."

In Sacro Monte (Heiligenberg).

Archidiœcesis Pragensis in Bohemia.

Founded, 1861.

XII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Assumption."

In Monte Matris Dei (Muttergottesberg) near Grulich.

Diœc. Regina-Gradicensis (Kœniggrætz) in Bohemia.

Founded, 1883.

XIII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Visitation."

In Dornbirn.

Diœcesis Brixinensis, Vicariatus Generalis Vorarlberg.

Founded, 1881.

## XIV. Convent of St. Catharine, Virgin and Martyr.

In Mosciska.

Diœcesis Premisliensis in Galicia.

Founded, 1883.

XV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of "Help  
of Christians."

In Philippsdorf.

Diœc. Litomericensis in Bohemia.

Founded, 1885.

XVI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Presentation."

Budvicii (Budweis).

Diœc. Budvicensis in Bohemia.

Founded, 1885.



VI.

PROVINCE OF BELGIUM.

*Established, July 2, 1841.*

A.—In Belgium.

I. Convent of St. Joseph.

Bruxellis (Bruxelles).

Archidiœcesis Mechliniensis (Malines).

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, June 24, 1849.

II. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the "Patronage."

Tornaci (Tournai).

Diœcesis Tornacensis.

Founded, November 1, 1831.

III. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Immaculate Conception."

Leodii (Liège).

Diœcesis Leodiensis.

Founded, March 24, 1833.

IV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of "Help."

Trudonopoli (St. Trond).

Diœcesis Leodiensis (Liège).

The house of the novitiate and of the study of the  
humanities.

Founded, May 24, 1833.

V. Convent of St. Mary Magdalen.

Bruxellis (Bruxelles).

Archidiœcesis Mechliniensis (Malines).

Founded, September 8, 1841.

VI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Immaculate Conception."

Montibus (Mons).

Diœcesis Tornacensis (Tournai).

Founded, September 20, 1848.

VII. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Antverpiæ (Anvers).

Archidiœcesis Mechliniensis (Malines).

Founded, June 16, 1857.

## VIII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Rollarii (Roulers).

Diœcesis Brugensis (Bruges).

Founded, October 30, 1868.

## IX. Convent of St. John the Evangelist.

In Pulchro Jugo (Beauplateau).

Diœcesis Namurcensis (Namur).

The house of studies of philosophy and theology.

Founded, August 2, 1882.

**B.—In Canada and the West Indies.**

## I. Convent of St. Ann.

Pulchriprati (Ste. Anne De Beaupré).

Archidiœc. Quebecensis (Quebec) in Canada East.

Founded by the American Province of Baltimore,

December 1, 1878.

Ascribed to the Belgian Province, August 20, 1879.

## II. Convent of St. Ann.

Marianopoli (Montréal).

Diœcesis Marionopolitanæ in Canada East.

Founded, September 4, 1884.

## III. Convent of Saints Peter and Paul.

In the Island of St. Thomas.

Diœcesis Rosensis (Roseau) in the West Indies.

Founded, 1858.

## VII.

## PROVINCE OF AMERICA—BALTIMORE.

*Established, June 29, 1850.*

## I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Baltimoræ.

Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, 1841.

## II. Convent of St. Philomena.

Pittsburgi.

Diœcesis Pittsburgensis in Statu Pennsylvania.

Founded, 1839.

## III. Convent of St. Joseph under the title of the "Patronage."

Roffæ (Rochester).

Diœcesis Roffensis in Statu New York.

Founded, 1841.

- IV. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.  
Neo-Eboraci (New York).  
Archidiœcesis Neo-Eboracensis in Statu New York.  
Founded, 1842.
- V. Convent of St. Peter, the Apostle.  
Philadelphîæ.  
Archidiœc. Philadelphiensis in Statu Pennsylvaniae.  
Founded, 1843.
- VI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Immaculate Conception."  
In Buffalo.  
Diœcesis Buffalensis in Statu New York.  
Founded, 1845.
- VII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Immaculate Conception."  
Annapoli.  
Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.  
The house of the novitiate.  
Founded, 1853.
- VIII. Convent of St. Michael the Archangel.  
Baltimoræ.  
Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.  
Founded, 1859.
- IX. Convent of St. Alphonsus.  
Neo-Eboraci (New York).  
Archidiœc. Neo-Eboracensis in Statu New York.  
Founded, November 9, 1866.
- X. Convent of St. James the Less, Apostle.  
Baltimoræ.  
Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.  
Founded, 1867.
- XI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.  
In Ilchester.  
Archidiœcesis Baltimorensis in Statu Maryland.  
The house of studies.  
Founded September 2, 1868.
- XII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.  
Bostoniæ (Boston).  
Archidiœcesis Bostoniensis in Statu Massachusetts.  
Founded, January 1, 1871.

## XIII. Convent of St. Patrick.

Quebeci (Quebec).

Archidiocesis Quebecensis in Canada.

Founded, October 1, 1874.

## XIV. Convent of St. Boniface.

Philadelphię.

Archidiocesis Philadelphiensis in Statu Pennsylvanię.

Founded, August 6, 1876.

## XV. Convent of St. Patrick.

In Toronto.

Archidiocesis Torontinensis in Canada.

Founded, January 15, 1881.

## XVI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

In North East.

Diocesis Eriensis (Erie) in Statu Pennsylvanię.

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, February 2, 1881.

## XVII. Convent of the Sacred Heart.

Baltimorę.

Archidioc. Baltimoreensis in Statu Maryland.

Founded, October 1, 1878.

## XVIII. Convent of St. Wenceslaus.

Baltimorę.

Archidioc. Baltimoreensis in Statu Maryland.

Founded, June 16, 1882.

## XIX. Convent of St. Peter the Apostle.

In Portland.

Dioc. S. Joannis (St. John), Prov. Neo-Brunswicen. in Canada.

Founded July 31, 1884.

## XX. Convent of St. Clement.

In Saratoga.

Dioc. Albanensis (Albany) in Statu New York.

Another house of the preparatory college.

Founded, February 22, 1886.

## XXI. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the "Immaculate Conception."

Archidioc. Neo-Eboracensis in Statu New York.

Founded, December 24, 1886.

XXII. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Neo-Eboraci (New York).

Archidiœcesis Neo-Eboracensis in Statu New York.

Founded, August 7, 1887.

VIII.

PROVINCE OF UPPER GERMANY.

*Established, January 10, 1853.*

I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Assumption."

Garsii ad Oenum (Gars am Inn).

Archidiœcesis Monaco-Frisingensis in Bavaria Superiore.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, February 6, 1858.

II. Convent of Saints Andrew and Nicholas.

In Niederachdorf.

Diœc. Ratisbonensis in Bavaria (Palatin. Super. et Ratisb.).

Founded, July 15, 1849.

III. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Immaculate Conception."

In Heldenstein.

Archidiœcesis Monaco: Frisingensis in Bavaria Superiore.

Founded, August 29, 1855.

IV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Nativity."

In Kirchenthal.

Archidiœcesis Salisburgensis in Austria.

Founded, August 15, 1879.

V. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of "Good  
Counsel."

In Dürnberg.

Archidiœcesis Salisburgensis in Austria.

Founded, September 25, 1884.

VI. Convent of St. Anthony of Padua.

In Hunsdorf.

Archidiœcesis Salisburgensis in Austria.

Founded, August 2, 1885.

## VII. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

In Dürnberg.

Archidiœcesis Salisburgensis in Austria.

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, September 29, 1886.

## IX.

## PROVINCE OF HOLLAND.

*Established, November 21, 1850.*

## I. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the "Most Pure Heart."

Amstelodami (Amsterdam.)

Diœc. Harlemensis (Harlem) in Prov. Hollandiæ Septentr.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, November 13, 1850.

## II. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Wittemii.

Diœcesis Ruremundensis in Prov. Limburgi holland.

The house of studies.

Founded, January 12, 1836.

## III. Convent of St. Joseph.

Buscoduci (Bois-le-duc).

Diœcesis Buscoducensis in Prov. Brabantiae Septentrion.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, January 1, 1854.

## IV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the "Assumption."

Ruremundæ (Roermond).

Diœcesis Ruremundensis in Prov. Limburgi holland.

Founded, June 14, 1863.

## V. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of the Perpetual Help.

Rosævalli (Rozendaal).

Diœc. Bredanæ (Breda) in Prov. Brabantiae Septentr.

Founded, October 24, 1868.

## VI. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Rotterodami (Rotterdam).

Diœcesis Harlemensis in Prov. Hollandiæ Meridion.

Founded, December 18, 1881.

**Stations of the Surinam Mission.**

- I. Convent of Saints Peter and Paul.  
In Paramaribo (Dutch Guiana, South America).  
Vicariatus Apost. Surinamensis in Indiis Occidentalibus.  
Founded, March 26, 1866.
- II. Station of St. Rose of Lima.  
In Paramaribo.  
Founded, April 30, 1883.
- III. Station of the Blessed Virgin of the Immaculate Conception.  
In Coronie.  
Founded, September 4, 1867.
- IV. Station of St. Roch.  
In Batavia.  
Founded, September 4, 1867.
- V. Station of St. Joseph.  
In Livorno.  
Founded, March 1, 1875.

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**PROVINCE OF LOWER GERMANY.**

*Established, March 19, 1859.*

- I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.  
Luxembergi (Luxemburg).  
Diöcesis et Magni Ducatus Luxemburgensis.  
Residence of the Father Provincial, and house of studies.  
Founded, December 7, 1851.
- II. Convent of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.  
Epternaci (Echternach).  
Diöcesis et Magni Ducatus Luxemburgensis.  
The house of the novitiate.  
Founded, July 3, 1873.
- III. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.  
In Vaals.  
Diöcesis Ruremondensis in Limburgo Hollandico.  
The house of the preparatory college.  
Founded, November 1, 1873.



## IV. Convent of St. Joseph.

In Glanerbrug.

Diœcesis Ultrajactensis (Utrecht) in Hollandia.

Founded, November 21, 1884.

In South America.

## V. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of "Victory."

Bonis Auris (Buenos Ayres).

Diœcesis Bonearensis in Republica Argentina (Argentine Republic).

Founded, November 26, 1883.

## XI.

## PROVINCE OF ENGLAND.

*Established, May 24, 1865.*

## I. Convent of Mary Immaculate of the Victories.

In Clapham, London.

Diœcesis Suthwarcensis in Anglia.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, August 2, 1848.

## II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the "Annunciation."

In Bishop-Eton, Liverpool.

Diœcesis Liverpoolitanæ in Anglia.

The house of the novitiate.

Founded, June 10, 1851.

## III. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Limerici (Limerick).

Diœcesis Limericensis in Hibernia (Ireland).

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, November 13, 1853.

## IV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

In Perth.

Diœcesis Dunkeldensis (Dunkeld) in Scotia (Scotland).

Founded, March 19, 1869.

## V. Convent of St. Joseph.

Tavæ (Teignmouth).

Diœcesis Plymutensis (Plymouth) in Anglia.

The house of studies.

Founded, November 3, 1870.

VI. Convent of St. Joseph.

Dundalchi (Dundalk).

Archidiœcesis Armacanæ (Armagh) in Hibernia  
(Ireland).

Founded, September 8, 1876.

In Australia.

Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Novicasterii (New Castle).

Diœcesis Maitlandiensis (Maitland) in New South Wales.

Founded, 1887.

XII.

PROVINCE OF AMERICA—ST. LOUIS.

*Established, November 9, 1875.*

I. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

S. Ludovici (St. Louis).

Archidiœcesis S. Ludovici in Statu Missouri.

Residence of the Father Provincial.

Founded, September 1, 1866.

II. Convent of the Blessed Virgin under the title of the  
"Assumption."

Novæ Aureliæ (New Orleans).

Archidiœcesis Novæ Aureliæ in Statu Louisianæ.

Founded, October 24, 1847.

III. Convent of St. Michael the Archangel.

Chicagiæ (Chicago).

Archidiœces. Chicagiensis in Statu Illinois.

Founded, May 25, 1861.

IV. Convent of the Blessed Virgin of Perpetual Help.

Kansanopoli (Kansas City).

Diœc. Kansanopolitanæ in Statu Missouri.

The house of the novitiate and of studies.

Founded, December 3, 1878.

V. Convent of the Most Holy Redeemer.

Detroiti (Detroit).

Diœces. Detroitensis in Statu Michigan.

Founded, September 1, 1880.

VI. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Chicagiæ (Chicago).

Archidiœcesis in Statu Illinois.

Founded, September 3, 1882.

# 58 *Table of Provinces, Houses, and Members.*

VII. Convent of St. Joseph.

Windsor Spring.

Archidiœcesis S. Ludovici in Statu Missouri.

The house of the preparatory college.

Founded, July 25, 1888.

VIII. Convent of St. Alphonsus.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Diœcesis Grand Rapids in Statu Mich.

Founded, 1888.

## General Table

OF THE

PROVINCES, HOUSES, AND MEMBERS

OF THE

Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer,

AT THE END OF THE YEAR 1887.

PROVINCES.	Houses.	Fathers.	Students.	Novices Cler.	Brothers Prof.	Brothers Nov.	Total Members.
I. Province of Rome.....	6	51	14	14	23	6	108
II. Province of Naples .....	11	126	11	8	38	16	199
III. Province of Sicily.....	1	21	1	—	5	—	27
IV. Province Gallico-Helveticæ..	27	220	91	29	112	55	507
V. Province of Austria.....	16	129	45	13	59	28	274
VI. Province of Belgium.....	12	144	63	19	62	24	312
VII. Prov. of America, Baltimore	22	135	53	23	90	30	331
VIII. Prov. of Upper Germany...	7	43	—	—	35	8	86
IX. Province of Holland.....	7	97	29	6	49	15	196
X. Prov. of Lower Germany...	5	63	24	—	44	3	134
XI. Province of England.....	7	59	22	9	34	15	139
XII. Prov. of America, St. Louis.	6	50	9	—	21	5	85
Total.....	127	1138	362	121	572	205	2398

DOMINUS NOS BENEDICAT ET AB OMNI MALO DEFENDAT ET AD VITAM PER-  
DUCAT AETERNAM. AMEN.—ED.

Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

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*RULES AND CONSTITUTIONS.*

THESE constitutive Rules of the Congregation were written in Italian, and Benedict XIV. approved them by a Brief dated February 25, 1749. As Parts I. and II. of these Rules already exist in an authorized translation, we only reproduce them together with a translation of Part III., adding to them some useful notes that we think necessary for the better understanding of the text.—ED.

## Rules and Constitutions

OF THE

CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.\*

THE END OF THE INSTITUTE.

As the end of the Institute of the Most Holy Redeemer is to unite secular priests<sup>1</sup> who are to live in

<sup>1</sup> "Secular priests," that is to say, those that are not Regulars properly so-called, who make solemn vows, whilst in the Congregation only simple vows are made. But before God simple vows are not of less binding force than solemn vows, as we may see in *Corp. Jur.*, *Rursus quidam (Qui cleric. vel vovent. 6): Quum simplex votum, apud Deum, non minus obliget quam solemne.* The only difference that is found between these two kinds of vows consists in a greater difficulty to break the bond contracted by solemn vows, this being a privilege established not by divine right, but by the Church, in accordance with the Bull of Gregory XIII., *Ascendente Domino*, promulgated May 26, 1854, in favor of the Society of Jesus, and striking with anathema whoever would dare to say: "That all those that have not been solemnly professed in the aforesaid Society cannot be true members of this body, nor be really and properly religious, but that they are simple seculars, subject to the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries, and that not the Society, nor the Superiors, nor We ourselves possess, or acquire, or have the power to confer upon the Superiors any right by virtue of such vows. Now those that hold this opinion do not consider that the solemnity of the vows is derived only from an ecclesiastical institution; that the three vows of this Society, though simple, have been recognized by the Holy See as substantial vows of religion; and that those that

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\* Only the Text of the Rule is here given, not the Constitutions.

Community and are earnestly to strive to imitate the virtues and examples of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, by consecrating themselves specially to the preaching of the Word of God to the poor, the members of this Congregation, with the permission of the Ordinaries, to whom they are always to be subject,<sup>1</sup> shall make it their special aim, by means of missions, catechetical instructions, and spiritual exercises, to assist the people who live scattered in the country and small villages, and who are for the most part abandoned, and destitute of the aids of religion. For this end shall their houses be founded as far as possible outside of the centres of population, and, moreover, at such distances from one another as shall seem fitting to the Ordinaries and to the Rector Major; so that the members of the Congregation, being less distracted and hindered, may endeavor to acquire the spirit that is so necessary to evan-

make them are truly engaged in the religious state, since by these vows they consecrate themselves, in fact, give themselves, to the Society, and devote themselves to God's service." The solemnity is, therefore, not essential to religious profession. The principal reason why St. Alphonsus wished to adhere to simple vows was because simple vows allow greater facility for the dismissal of subjects that do not persevere in the spirit of their vocation; for he preferred a small number of fervent subjects, faithful to regular observance—such as they should be in order to preserve perfect Community life, which is the essential basis of his Institute,—to a larger number, who might otherwise possess brilliant talents. Moreover, wishing on the other hand to strengthen the bond that was to attach the subjects to the Congregation, and to supply as much as possible the defect of the solemnity, the holy founder took care to add to the three ordinary vows of religion the vow and oath of perseverance till death. By virtue of this oath of fidelity, received and accepted by the Congregation, the profession that is made therein assumes the character of a contract, and consequently becomes an obligation of justice, which cannot be removed except by legitimate dispensation.

<sup>1</sup> "Subject," in all that has reference to apostolic labors. (See further on, page 70, n. I.)



gelical laborers, and may devote themselves to the spiritual relief of the most abandoned souls.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "To the spiritual relief of the most abandoned souls;" such is the special end of the Congregation: its place is wherever there are stray sheep to be gathered and saved. At the period when the Congregation was established there were in the cities, especially of the kingdom of Naples, a large number of priests and many religious Institutes; spiritual help of every kind usually abounded there, while in a multitude of hamlets and remote places a considerable population found themselves as it were abandoned, and almost deprived of the means of salvation. It is principally to such people that St. Alphonsus and his companions were called to exercise their zeal, and even to establish themselves among them "as far as possible," in order to be more within reach of coming to the assistance of the poor that required their care. However, the holy founder did not refuse to give missions or other spiritual exercises or to found houses also in cities, when he thought such a thing expedient; he would have had stronger reasons for doing so in other countries, above all at the present time, when, after many vicissitudes, abandoned souls are often found in larger numbers in cities than in country places.

It may be well to mention here what we read in the resolutions drawn up in the General Chapters, held under the presidency of the holy founder himself, in regard to the fitness the subjects should endeavor to acquire to correspond to the end of their vocation: "In order to attain more perfectly the end of the Institute, which consists in the sanctification of the people, the members of the Congregation shall unite the study of the sciences to a most virtuous life. They shall, therefore, strive with all diligence to attain proficiency in all the sciences, both human and divine, and should especially be learned in sacred literature, so that under all circumstances they may be able to render useful service to the Church. An illiterate workman, even though he may be a man of prayer, is like a soldier without weapons. They shall, therefore, do all in their power to make continual progress in science as well as in virtue, in order that they may be the instruments best adapted to perform the duties of the apostolic ministry."

## PART I.

*MISSIONS AND OTHER EXERCISES.*

## CHAPTER I.

## THE MISSIONS.

I. As the giving of missions is one of the principal ends of our Institute, all shall make them their special study. The missions shall be given at the expense of the Congregation, and it is forbidden ever to ask the payment of these expenses either from communities or from individuals; all that is permitted is to receive such support from individuals, so long as the houses of the Congregation have not sufficient revenues.

II. The local Rectors shall appoint the subjects for the missions, to be given by their houses, unless the Rector Major, whose duty it is to govern the whole Congregation, has otherwise decided. Several subjects, at least two, shall always go together on missions, and they shall always travel, where it is possible, on foot, or at most on horseback; the use of carriages is permitted only when necessary.

III. After four or five months at most, they shall return to the places where our Congregation has given missions, to preach another course of sermons. But these exercises shall not last so long as the missions, shall be conducted by fewer Fathers than were at the mission, and shall have for their aim to consolidate the fruits of the mission which was given before.

IV. The custom of giving these Renewals, which have

proved so useful and profitable to the good of souls, shall always be maintained in our Institute; and it is on this account especially that all our houses should be situated rather in the centre of dioceses, and not very far from the places to the spiritual welfare of which our subjects are in the habit of devoting themselves.

V. In order that this exercise of the missions may not be neglected, and that the subjects may never lose sight of their vocation, which is to devote themselves to the spiritual help of the most abandoned souls, they shall not occupy themselves with distracting duties, they shall not take part in processions or public ceremonies; they shall not undertake the direction of seminaries, nor the direction of nuns, whether of entire communities or of individuals, living in cloistered convents, or in conservatories; nor shall they give them retreats, as this is allowed only on occasion of missions or other exercises, which are given in the places in which, or near which, such monasteries are situated.<sup>1</sup> For the same reason it is forbidden to the subjects to have curacies, or to preach courses of Lenten sermons.

VI. The members of this Institute shall especially take the greatest care not to give even the shadow of bad example; and they shall behave in such a manner as always to merit the esteem and the veneration of the people. They shall not allow themselves to be induced through a motive of charity to meddle with marriage affairs, contracts, or wills; nor shall they become sponsors, nor occupy themselves with those things from which arise contempt for evangelical laborers and party-strife. The Superiors have the special and grave obligation to watch over the observance of this rule, as it is of the utmost importance.

<sup>1</sup> The General Chapter, over which the holy founder presided in 1764, permitted the giving of retreats outside of the time of giving missions, if retreats are asked for by the bishops.

## CHAPTER II.

## OTHER EXERCISES.

IN order not to leave entirely abandoned the souls of the people among whom the houses of our Institute are established, the subjects should also assume the spiritual care of those souls. Hence, in their churches they shall preach every Sunday, and on every Saturday there shall be a sermon on the Blessed Virgin. Moreover in their houses they shall give, especially at the time of ordinations, the spiritual exercises to the ecclesiastics and seculars who may come there, provided in the places of their foundations there is no house of the missionary priests of Saint Vincent de Paul, who devote themselves specially to this kind of work. If, however, the houses of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer have already been established, and are in possession of the right to give the spiritual exercises when new foundations of the above-mentioned Fathers are begun, they shall remain in the possession of their right.

## PART II.

### *THE PARTICULAR OBLIGATIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.*

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE VOWS OF POVERTY, CHASTITY, OBEDIENCE, AND PER- SEVERANCE.

###### I. The Vow of Poverty.

I. THE members of the Congregation shall lead a perfect community life, and be uniform in all things. Hence every house shall provide them with all things necessary. As poor men they must be content with frugal fare, in regard to which no distinction shall be made on account of their qualities or offices; and while they are nourishing the body, they shall also nourish the mind by the reading of a spiritual book.

II. The clothing of the members of the Congregation shall likewise be poor, but suitable for respectable priests. Hence the use of silk, half-silk, as well as of everything that savors of vanity and levity, is forbidden. Except in the churches, the use of articles of gold or silver is also forbidden, either in common or in private. Their habit, cloak, and stockings shall be of ordinary wool; however, the use of under-stockings of linen or cotton is allowed; and the shoes shall be simple.

III. The rooms shall be small, and the furniture of the rooms shall be poor, but uniform in all things; namely, a small table with a drawer without a lock;

three chairs; four paper pictures; a crucifix of simple wood; two or three spiritual books besides the Holy Scriptures. Other books which any one may need can be taken from the common library with the permission of the Superior; a similar permission is required for any other little convenience which may be necessary.

IV. Although every member of the Congregation must be promoted to Holy Orders under the title of his patrimony, yet the use of this patrimony is forbidden to all. This prohibition also extends to the life-annuities which the subjects may have, and to every other kind of property that they may possess. Hence, all the revenues that the subjects derive from whatever belongs to them, under whatever title, shall be administered and expended by the Superiors.

V. Of the little things that are allowed them for their convenience, they shall make only that use for which they were granted by the Superiors. Without the permission of the Superior it is even forbidden to give to others anything that they have, or to receive from others anything as a gift or as a loan for their own use.

VI. Conformably to this vow, they shall bind themselves not to aspire, either directly or indirectly, to any dignities, benefices, and offices outside of the Congregation; and even should these be offered them they must refuse and renounce them, unless the Sovereign Pontiff or the Rector Major obliges them by a formal command of obedience to accept them. All this must be observed with the most scrupulous exactness under the gravest penalties; those who transgress in this point can even be expelled from the Congregation. Any Superior, even the Rector Major himself, who should be clearly convicted of having through weakness allowed any innovation to the injury of poverty, can be deposed from office and be deprived of the right of voting and of being voted for.

VII. It shall never be allowed them to beg, no matter how great their distress may be; they must expect to receive help from divine Providence. Only in a case of grave necessity is it permitted to apply to one of their benefactors.

VIII. As every member of the Congregation always retains the ownership of his property, he can dispose of it in favor of his relatives. If he does not dispose of it in their favor, he is obliged to do so in favor of the Congregation. But the Congregation shall never accept legacies or gifts from subjects who have poor relatives; and in case of doubt as to the poverty of such relatives, the matter must be referred to the Ordinary of the member of the Congregation.

IX. The income of each house shall not exceed the sum of fifteen hundred ducats,<sup>1</sup> as this income is sufficient for the maintenance of the Church, of the building, of twelve priests, and of seven lay-brothers: this is the largest number that shall live in one house. An exception, however, is made in favor of the houses of students, of the novitiates, and of the house in which the Rector Major lives, as these houses have a larger number of subjects, and may therefore have an income of two thousand ducats.

## 2. The Vow of Chastity.

As this virtue is so very dear to the Son of God, and so necessary to the evangelical laborer, the subjects of this Congregation shall be very careful to preserve it inviolate. Hence they shall use the greatest caution while treating with persons of the other sex. They shall not go to the houses of their penitents or of other seculars without an urgent reason, without the express

<sup>1</sup> The silver ducat is generally of the value of four shillings and sixpence sterling, about equal to the American dollar, and the gold ducat of twice the value.



permission of the Superior, and without a companion who has to be assigned to them by the Superior.

### 3. The Vow of Obedience.

I. To the Ordinaries of the place where they are, the subjects of this Congregation shall render entire obedience in everything that appertains to their apostolic labors, and is not forbidden by the Constitutions.

II. They shall, besides, render exact obedience, in the first place, to their Rules and Constitutions, of which they ought to be most faithful observers; then to all the orders and regulations of their Superiors, so that it may be said of them that they have no will of their own, but that their will is in the hands of those who govern them. They shall show all respect to their Superiors; they shall not excuse or defend themselves in their presence, and shall receive their admonitions with humility.

III. Without the express permission of the Superiors, it is not allowed them to write letters to any one except to the Rector Major or his Consultors; and, without the same permission, to receive letters from any one, except from those just mentioned. In like manner, they shall not eat or drink out of meal-time, nor go into the garden or to the porches (*logge*), nor enter the refectory, kitchen, or the room of another.

IV. It is, above all, forbidden to the members of the Congregation to bring strangers into the house, and much more, to their own rooms. When necessary, they must converse with strangers in those places that are set apart for this purpose.

### 4. The Vow of Perseverance.

To the vows above-mentioned the members of the Congregation shall add the vow<sup>1</sup> of perseverance, by

<sup>1</sup> And the oath. (See the end of the first note, page 62, and of Art. III., last chapter, page 84.)

which they oblige themselves to live in the Community till death, and not to ask for a dispensation from their vows except from the Sovereign Pontiff or from the Rector Major. But the Rector Major is always free to send away those subjects whose conduct is not edifying, although in this matter he should before God seriously weigh his motives, and proceed conscientiously and without passion.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE FREQUENTATION OF THE SACRAMENTS, PRAYER, AND CERTAIN EXERCISES OF HUMILITY.

#### I. The Frequentation of the Sacraments.

I. THE priests shall strive to give all possible edification, and to live in such a manner that they may be able daily to celebrate worthily the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. They ought, therefore, to go to confession at least once a week; and the Rector of the house with his Consultors shall appoint for this purpose two confessors.

II. Those who are not priests shall receive Holy Communion on all feasts of obligation, and on Wednesdays and Fridays of every week, and shall go to confession twice a week. For the greater progress of the Brothers, there shall also be appointed in every house a spiritual Prefect, who shall instruct them in the elements of the faith and in regular observance.

III. The Rector shall take very great care that the last Sacraments of Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, be administered to the sick at the right time; and that, should any one be in danger of death, he be never left without a priest to console and assist him.

**2. Prayer and Exercises of Humility.**

I. In every house, where it can be conveniently done, the Canonical Hours shall be recited together in choir with recollection of mind and without chant or modulation of voice.

II. They shall devote themselves to mental prayer three times a day, namely, in the morning and in the evening in common; in the afternoon every one shall make a meditation privately in his room; and every time the meditation is to last half an hour. These meditations shall be made chiefly on the theological virtues, on the life and the virtues of Jesus Christ, of which they should make themselves living images; and every month they shall direct particular attention to one of these virtues, in order that they may the better exercise themselves in it and practise it more in detail, by making their particular examination and giving spiritual conferences on it. In the afternoon, every one shall also make in private a half-hour's spiritual reading, and a visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, for whom all should entertain a special devotion and a tender affection, and should, therefore, recite every day the third part of the Rosary. Twice a day they shall make in common the examination of conscience, namely, in the morning, before dinner, and in the evening before going to bed; and after the examination of conscience in the evening, they shall recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and ask the Superior's blessing.

III. Every year, every member of the Congregation shall make the spiritual exercises during ten days, in total retirement and in strict silence; and every month, every one shall make a similar day of recollection.

IV. Every member of the Institute should, above all, deem it the highest honor to perform even the lowliest

work of the house, in order to acquire the virtue of holy humility. Hence even the priests shall by turns serve at table and wash the dishes. To set an example to the rest, the Rector may serve at table on one day of the week, and on one day the Minister shall serve at table, and on another day shall wash the dishes. Moreover, among the members of the Congregation there should never be any contention as regards precedence, since every one should desire to occupy the lowest place.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### SILENCE, RECOLLECTION, MORTIFICATION, AND CORPORAL PENANCES.

##### I. Silence and Recollection.

THE life of the members of the Congregation should be a life of continual recollection; in order to acquire it, they shall bestow great care on the exercise of the presence of God by frequently exciting themselves to short but fervent ejaculatory prayers. They shall also be very fond of retirement; they shall not leave their rooms without necessity, and shall above all observe silence, which is so praiseworthy in all Institutes. In the evening after the ringing of the *Angelus*,<sup>1</sup> till the following morning after meditation, it is positively forbidden, except during the hour of recreation after suppers, to speak or to send messages to one another without the express permission of the Superior. Moreover, they shall observe silence for three consecutive hours after the afternoon recreation. In the church, the choir, the sacristy, the kitchen, the refectory, and the dormitories, they shall speak only when necessary, in a few words,

<sup>1</sup> That is, about half an hour after sunset.

and in a low tone of voice. The Superiors shall rigidly exact from their subjects the observance of this rule.

## 2. Mortification and Corporal Penances.

The evangelical laborers should also have much at heart Christian mortification, in order that they may reap abundant fruit from their apostolic labors. Hence the members of this Institute shall especially devote themselves to interior mortification, to the conquering of their passions and to the abnegation of self-will, seeking like the Apostle to find pleasure in the sorrows, in the contempt, and in the humiliations of Jesus Christ.

II. With regard to corporal penances, they shall fast on all the vigils of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin; they shall abstain from flesh-meat during Advent and the Novena of the Holy Ghost; but the refectioin in the evening shall be more abundant than on the fasting days of the Church. On two days of every week—on Wednesdays and Fridays—all shall take the discipline in common. They shall sleep on straw; woollen pillows and sheets of ordinary linen are, however, allowed, The beds, as a rule, shall be seven palms<sup>1</sup> in length by three and a half in breadth.

III. In order that the evangelical laborers may not be too indiscreet in mortifying their bodies, they shall take part in all the prescribed recreations, which usually consist in an hour after dinner and an hour after supper, when all shall assemble in one and the same place. There shall also be one day's recreation every week. Moreover, it is not allowed them, without the permission of the Superior and their spiritual directors, to perform any corporal penance or to burden themselves with too much labor.

IV. It is forbidden them to use any kind of vain per-

<sup>1</sup> The Neapolitan palm is a measure of length equal to ten or eleven inches.

fume, to go hunting, to play at any game whatsoever, and especially to go to the house of their parents. This is only allowed, with the express permission of the Superiors, in the case of the serious illness of the father or the mother, or on account of some other urgent necessity. The Superiors shall most zealously watch that this rule be observed.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DOMESTIC MEETINGS.

I. ON the Ember Days of each year every Rector shall assemble his subjects, and after the reading in common of these Constitutions, he shall direct attention to the faults that have been committed against them, and shall give paternal advice in regard to what he thinks expedient for the observance of them. Furthermore, these Constitutions must be read every Saturday at supper, and every member of the Congregation must have a copy of them, must frequently meditate on them, and must render himself familiar with them.

II. Moreover, the Rector shall give every week a spiritual conference to all his subjects, and every one shall accuse himself of the faults which he has committed against the Rule. The Rector shall also call together every week the priests and the students of the house, in order to confer with them on the right manner of giving missions, about the faults to be avoided in giving them, and about the means successfully to attain this most holy end of our Institute. Lastly, in every house there shall be held every week a conference about cases of conscience or about dogmatic theology; to these conferences all the priests shall come well prepared to answer the questions proposed.

## PART III.

*GOVERNMENT OF THE CONGREGATION.*

## CHAPTER I.

## THE RECTOR MAJOR AND OTHER OFFICIALS.

## I.

## 1. The Rector Major and his Consultors.

I. THE Congregation shall be governed by a Superior General, who shall be perpetual, and shall bear the title of RECTOR MAJOR. He shall be elected by the General Chapter, and must obtain for his election two thirds of the votes. To be elected Rector Major one must have lived ten years an edifying life in the Congregation, have completed one's thirty-fifth year, and, besides laboring in the mission, one must have filled the office of local Rector or Consultor.

II. The Rector Major may choose for his residence any house that may appear most suitable to him.<sup>1</sup> He shall have absolute authority over all the houses and all the subjects of the Congregation in regard to the interior or domestic government, since in regard to the exterior they are to be always subject to the jurisdic-

<sup>1</sup> In 1841, Gregory XVI. fixed the residence of the Rector Major at Rome; but this order was not put in execution till 1855, by virtue of the decree of His Holiness Pius IX., dated October 8, 1853.



tion of the bishops; and if subjects are to be promoted to Holy Orders, they shall always be promoted by those bishops that would promote them if they did not live in the Congregation.

III. It shall be incumbent on the Rector Major to appoint all the Rectors of the houses, the Admonitors, the two Consultors of every local Rector, the Masters of Novices, the Prefects of the Students, the Visitors, and the Lectors.<sup>1</sup> He may remove these at will, provided he has sufficient cause for doing so; ordinarily, however, he shall not change them before the expiration of three years.<sup>2</sup>

IV. It shall also be his duty to accept new foundations and to determine their location. He shall also be charged with the office of admitting or dismissing subjects. If the subjects that ask to be admitted are subdeacons they may be received by the Rector Major without the vote of his Consultors; if they are not subdeacons, there will be necessary for their admission a majority of the votes of the Consultors, whose vote in this case shall be decisive. Never, however, shall be admitted young men that have not yet completed their eighteenth year.

V. The principal duty of the Rector Major shall be, to watch with the greatest care over the observance of the Rules and Constitutions of the Institute, and to give the example himself by being the first to observe them. He shall, therefore, severely punish transgressors, above all if they are Superiors, without any regard to persons; and for this purpose he shall make, either himself or

<sup>1</sup> "Lectors," or those that are charged with the duty of teaching the sciences to the students.

<sup>2</sup> By a decree, dated July 2, 1841, Gregory XVI. divided the Congregation into several Provinces. It concerns the Rector Major to erect new ones with the approbation of the Holy See, and he appoints the Provincials with their two Consultors every three years.

through the Visitors whom he shall appoint, the visitation of all the houses.

VI. It shall not be permitted to the Rector Major to resign his office without a very grave reason, and without the acceptance of his resignation by the General Chapter.

VII. The Rector Major shall have six Consultors, who shall be given to him by the Chapter; he shall every month deliberate with them on the most important affairs of the Congregation, especially when there is question of appointing the local Rectors, the Visitors, the Masters of Novices, of founding new houses or of abandoning one already founded, of dismissing from the Institute subjects already received, and the like. He shall not be obliged to follow the advice of the Consultors, since their votes are only consultive; but it will be expedient that he should usually conform to the major or sounder part of them.

VIII. During life, the Rector Major shall secretly designate in writing and appoint his Vicar-General, who shall be charged with governing the Congregation after his death; but this must be done under an inviolable secret. The government of the Vicar shall last till the election of a new Rector Major, and the election shall be held by the General Chapter. If this designation is found not to have been made, the Consultors of the deceased Rector Major shall at once proceed to the election of a Vicar.

IX. Hence, after the death of the Rector Major, the Vicar named by him, or elected by the Consultors, shall assemble the General Chapter within the space of six months at the farthest. At this chapter shall be present the Procurator-General, the Consultors of the deceased Rector Major, and the local Rectors, each one of the latter with a companion delegated for this purpose by the Chapter of each house, which shall be composed

of all the professed priests of the Community.<sup>1</sup> All the members of the Chapter shall have the right to vote, and each one may propose what he thinks to be useful for the maintenance of the observance and for the greater good of the Institute.

X. While the General Chapter lasts, six Consultors of the Rector Major shall be elected; they shall remain in office as long as the Rector Major holds his; among them should necessarily be the Admonitor of the Rector Major and the Secretary of the Chapter, who shall be elected by the same Chapter.

XI. If any one of the Consultors be wanting, in every case one shall be provided by the Rector Major and his other Consultors with a majority of votes, the Rector Major of himself not being allowed to provide for one.

XII. To obviate the abuses that usually arise in Communities and unceasingly to renew more and more the strict observance of these Rules, the General Chapter should assemble every nine years in the place that the Rector Major shall designate; and then shall also be examined the state of each house. The Chapter shall have the power to form new statutes concerning the common good of the Congregation, but always conformably, and by no means contrary, to the Constitutions and the Rules. It may, however, for reasonable motives annul and change the ordinances of the Rector Major and of other Chapters.

XIII. If the conduct of the Rector Major becomes such as to make him appear worthy of being deposed, his six Consultors shall have the right to assemble for

<sup>1</sup> Since the erection of Provinces, the Rectors and the Deputies of each house form the Provincial Chapter, with the Superior, the two Consultors, and the Procurator of the Province; the General Chapter is composed of the Procurator and of the General Consultors, of the Provincial Superiors, and of two Deputies elected in each Provincial Chapter.

this purpose the General Chapter, which may depose the Rector Major, provided two thirds of the votes are in favor of the deposition. If ever one of the Consultors summons the others for this purpose, all are obliged to come together; and if they unanimously decide that the Chapter should be assembled, they shall be free to assemble it.

## II.

### **The Admonitor of the Rector Major.**

The General Chapter shall assign to the Rector Major an Admonitor, who shall be *Consultor natus* of the same Rector, and shall watch over his conduct. If he finds that his conduct is not conformable to the Rules and Constitutions of the Institute in matters, however that are important, whence grave injury might result for the Congregation; especially if through his weakness relaxation should creep into any regular observance,—he shall admonish the Rector Major with great humility and charity. If the Rector Major, however, does not amend, and if the disorder is grave, the Admonitor shall be obliged to inform the other Consultors, so that they may proceed to the adoption of those remedies that they judge to be most suitable; and they may even proceed to the assembling of the Chapter.

## III.

### **The Procurator-General.**

In the Chapter in which the Rector Major is elected, there shall also be elected a Procurator-General for the whole Congregation; he as well as the Consultors shall remain in office as long as the Rector Major holds office. It shall be his duty to transact all the affairs of the Congregation that are intrusted to him by the Rector Major or by the Chapter. He shall take care of the income

left to the entire body of the Congregation that he may use it according to the intention of the benefactors, or if their intention was not specified, that he may use it in the manner that the Rector Major and his Consultors may judge to be expedient. Every six months he shall render to the Rector Major and his Consultors an account of his administration of the income. If the Procurator-General dies, he shall be replaced by an election similar to that of a Consultor who is wanting.

IV.

**The Visitors.**

I. As it is the duty of the Rector Major to make every year the visitation of all the houses of the Congregation, he may if he is prevented depute for this purpose other Visitors of the same Institute, but they must be men of mature age and of an exemplary life.

II. The Visitors shall have the powers that are given them by the Rector Major; they shall, therefore, leave in every house that they visit suitable ordinances for the good government of the Community and for the greater stability of regular observance; and then they shall render an account of all to the Rector Major.

V.

**The Local Rector and other Officials.<sup>1</sup>**

I. The local Rectors shall take care of their respective houses. The Rector Major shall assign to them an

<sup>1</sup> The Rector Major for the government of each Province appoints a Provincial Superior and two Consultors, the first of whom is the Admonitor, and the second is the Secretary. The Provincial and his Consultors appoint a Procurator of the Province, admit or dismiss novices, make or permit certain expenses, etc. The Provincial has jurisdiction over the subjects and the local Rectors of his Province; he visits the houses every year, and renders an account to the Rector Major.

Admonitor, who is to watch over their conduct. If the Admonitor perceives that the Rector fails in his duty, that he cares very little about exacting regular observance, he shall at first admonish him fraternally and humbly, and if the latter does not amend, the Admonitor shall inform the Rector Major about the matter. The Rector Major shall also assign to the Rectors two Consultors with whom they shall deliberate once a month about the affairs of the house, and examine the accounts and the book of Masses.

II. The Rector shall not expend any money exceeding the sum of ten scudi<sup>1</sup> without the consent of the Admonitor and Consultors; and if the sum exceeds a hundred scudi, they must have the permission of the Rector Major.

III. In regard to business transactions, agreements, acceptance of legacies, or the pledging in any way of the property of the house, especially the taking of money on which interest is to be paid, the Rectors or their Procurators, besides the consent of the Holy See or of the Ordinary, must have in writing the consent of the Rector Major.

IV. The local Rector shall choose an assistant, who shall bear the name Minister. The Minister shall assist the Rector in taking care of the house, and shall govern it in his absence, during which he shall conform in everything to the ordinances and the practice of the Rector.

V. In every house or Community, besides the Rector, there shall not be more than eleven Fathers and seven lay-brothers. There can, however, be a larger number in the houses of the novitiate and in the houses of

<sup>1</sup> A scudo, equal to five francs seven centimes, is a silver coin varying in value from a little more than four shillings sterling, or about ninety-six cents, to a little less than this.

studies, as well as in the house in which the Rector Major lives.

VI. Every month the local Rector shall exact an account of conscience from all his subjects, and shall visit the rooms of each.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE QUALITIES REQUISITE IN THOSE THAT ARE TO BE ADMITTED.

I. THE admission of subjects, clerics, or others into the body of the Congregation shall rest with the Rector Major, as has been said. Hence he himself, or another named by him, shall gather exact information in regard to the capacity and the character of those that ask to be admitted, and especially as to the motive of their vocation; he shall inquire whether they have poor sisters or relatives; whether they have contracted debts or have committed any misdemeanors; whether they are of legitimate birth; for those should never be admitted that might bring any reproach or dishonor upon the sacred ministry. The Consultors shall seek the same information for the admission of young men that are not subdeacons, their vote, as has been said, being necessary in this case.

II. The Secretary of the Congregation shall distinctly note down in a book the day, the month, and the year of the admission of subjects.

III. Having been thus received, the young men shall be put on trial for some time while wearing their own secular dress; then, after having made a retreat of fifteen days, they shall be admitted into the novitiate, in which the clerics during an entire year, the lay-brothers during two years, and the priests of a mature age at least



during six months, if the Rector thinks fit, shall devote themselves under the direction of a Master of Novices to the acquisition of the virtues proper to their vocation. If they have behaved well during this year of trial, they shall with the permission of the Rector Major again make a more rigorous retreat of fifteen days; then they shall be admitted to profession by making the simple vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience with the vow and the oath of perseverance in favor of the Congregation that accepts them. This vow and oath cannot be relaxed nor be dispensed from except by the Sovereign Pontiff or the Rector Major; and it is always on this condition that they are made.

IV. After the profession, the subjects shall apply themselves to study, but shall, nevertheless, be under the care of a spiritual Prefect till they are ordained. For the ordinations the permission of the Rector Major shall always be required. Usually, the subjects shall not go out to labor before their thirtieth year; but in the mean while the Rector of the house may employ them in case of necessity, with the consent of the Rector Major.

V. Although the transgression of these Rules and Constitutions superinduces no sin, yet the Superiors shall most zealously do all that they can to see that they be observed. They shall not easily grant dispensations: these shall be granted only in case of necessity, which should be inquired into by the local Superiors and their Consultors whenever this necessity has reference to any individual subject. As for the dispensations that regard the whole Congregation, recourse must be had to the Rector Major, who, after having advised with his Consultors, may grant them, but not in perpetuity, inasmuch as only the General Chapter has the power for very grave reasons to give general and perpetual dispensations.

**Counsels Concerning a Religious Vocation.**

ST. ALPHONSUS published in 1750 COUNSELS CONCERNING A RELIGIOUS VOCATION, followed by CONSIDERATIONS ON THE RELIGIOUS STATE. In the first edition he had in view only those young men that might present themselves to enter his Congregation; but afterwards in a new edition he modified the last two paragraphs (IV. and V.) of the Counsels, and adapted them to all religious Institutes in which regular observance is maintained.

Although this little work is found in Volume III. for the generality of readers, we thought it necessary to reproduce it in this volume, to which it chiefly belongs, but with some changes in the notes that we have added.  
—ED.

## Connells Concerning a Religious Vocation.

### I.

We ought to conform to the Designs of God in the Choice of a State of Life, whatever it may be.

It is evident that our eternal salvation depends principally upon the choice of our state of life. Father Granada calls this choice the chief wheel of our whole life. Hence, as when in a clock the chief wheel is deranged, the whole clock is also deranged, so in the order of our salvation, if we make a mistake as to the state to which we are called, our whole life, as St. Gregory Nazianzen says, will be an error.

If, then, in the choice of a state of life, we wish to secure our eternal salvation, we must embrace that to which God calls us, in which only God prepares for us the efficacious means necessary to our salvation. For, as St. Cyprian says: "The grace of the Holy Spirit is given according to the order of God, and not according to our own will;"<sup>1</sup> and therefore St. Paul writes, *Every one hath his proper gift from God.*<sup>2</sup> That is, as Cornelius à Lapide explains it, God gives to every one his vocation, and chooses the state in which he wills him to be saved. And this is the order of predestination described by the same apostle: *Whom He predestined, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified, . . . and them He also glorified.*<sup>3</sup>\*

<sup>1</sup> "Ordine suo, non arbitrio nostro, virtus Spiritus Sancti ministratur."—*De Sing. cler.*

<sup>2</sup> "Unusquisque proprium donum habet a Deo."—1 Cor. vii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Quos prædestinavit, hos et vocavit; et quos vocavit, hos et justificavit; quos autem justificavit, illos et glorificavit."—*Rom. viii. 30.*

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\* In another work (Volume XII.) the holy author expresses himself in these words: "God wills that all men should be saved, but not

## 88 *Counsels Concerning a Religious Vocation.*

We must remark that in the world this doctrine of the vocation is not much studied by some persons. They think it to be all the same, whether they live in the state to which God calls them, or in that which they choose of their own inclination, and therefore so many live a bad life and damn themselves.

But it is certain that this is the principal point with regard to the acquisition of eternal life. He who disturbs this order and breaks this chain of salvation will not be saved. With all his labors and with all the good he may do, St. Augustine will tell him, "Thou runnest well, but out of the way,"<sup>1</sup> that is, out of the way in which God has called you to walk for attaining to salvation. The Lord does not accept the sacrifices offered up to him from our own inclination, *But to Cain and his offerings he had no respect.*<sup>2</sup> Rather he threatens with great chastisement those who, when he calls them, turn their backs on him in order to follow the whims of their own caprice. *Woe to you apostate children*, he says through Isaias, *that you would take counsel and not from Me, and would begin a web and not by My Spirit.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Bene curris, sed extra viam."

<sup>2</sup> "Ad Cain et ad munera ejus non respexit."—*Gen.* iv. 5.

<sup>3</sup> "Væ, filii desertores, dicit Dominus, ut faceretis consilium, et non ex me; et ordiremini telam, et non per spiritum meum."—*Isa.* xxx. 1.

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in the same way. As in heaven he has distinguished different degrees of glory, so on earth he has established different states of life, as so many different ways of gaining heaven" (Ch. II. § 2). The choice is not arbitrary: "To enter into any state of life, a divine vocation is necessary; for without such a vocation it is, if not impossible, at least most difficult to fulfil the obligations of our state, and obtain salvation. The reason of this is evident; for it is God who in the order of his Providence assigns to each one of us his state of life and afterwards provides us with the graces and the help suitable to the state to which he calls us" (Ch. X.). We ought to be persuaded and ought never to forget that from all eternity God thinks with love of each one of us, just as a good father thinks of his only son.—ED.

II.

**The Vocation to the Religious State. How Important it is to follow it promptly.**

I. MISERY TO WHICH ONE EXPOSES ONE'S SELF BY NOT CORRESPONDING TO IT.

The divine call to a more perfect life is undoubtedly a special grace, and a very great one, which God does not give to all; hence he has much reason to be indignant against those who despise it. How greatly would not a prince think himself offended if he should call one of his vassals to serve him near his person, and this vassal should refuse to obey the call! And should God not resent such conduct? Oh, he resents it but too much, and threatens such persons by saying, *Woe to him that gainsayeth his Maker.*<sup>1</sup> The word *Woe* in Scripture signifies eternal damnation. The chastisement of the disobedient will begin even in this life, in which he will always be unquiet, for, says Job, *Who hath resisted Him and hath had peace?*<sup>2</sup> Therefore he will be deprived of those abundant and efficacious helps necessary to lead a good life. For which reason Habert, a divine, writes: "He will with great difficulty be able to work out his salvation."<sup>3</sup> He will with great difficulty save himself; for, being like a member out of his proper place, he will with great difficulty be able to live well. "In the body of the Church," adds the learned author, "he will be like a limb of the human body out of its place, which may be able to perform its functions, but only with difficulty and in an awkward manner." Whence he concludes: "And though, absolutely speaking, he may be saved, he

<sup>1</sup> "Væ qui contradicit Fictori suo!"—*Isa.* xlv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Quis resistit ei, et pacem habuit?"—*Job*, ix. 4.

<sup>3</sup> "Non sine magnis difficultatibus poterit salutis sue consulere."—*De Ord.* p. 3, c. 1, § 2.

will with difficulty enter upon and advance in the road, and use the means of salvation.”<sup>1</sup> The same thing is taught by St. Bernard<sup>2</sup> and St. Leo.<sup>3</sup> St. Gregory,<sup>4</sup> writing to the Emperor Maurice, who by an edict had forbidden soldiers to become religious, says that this was an unjust law, which shut the gates of paradise to many, because many would save themselves in religion who would otherwise perish in the world.

Remarkable is the case related by F. Lancicius. There was in the Roman college a youth of great talents. Whilst he was making the spiritual exercises, he asked his confessor whether it was a sin not to correspond with the vocation to the religious life. The confessor replied that in itself it was no grievous sin, because this is a thing of counsel and not of precept, but that one would expose one's salvation to great danger, as it had happened to many, who for this reason were finally damned. He did not obey the call. He went to study in Macerata, where he soon began to omit prayer and holy Communion, and finally gave himself up to a bad life. Soon after, coming one night from the house of a wicked woman, he was mortally wounded by a rival; certain priests ran to his assistance, but he expired before they arrived, and, moreover, in front of the college. By this circumstance God wished to show that this chastisement came upon him for having neglected his vocation.

Remarkable also is the vision had by a novice, who, as F. Pinamonti relates in his treatise of the victorious

<sup>1</sup> “Manebitque in corpore Ecclesiæ, velut membrum in corpore humano suis sedibus motum, quod servire potest, sed ægre, et cum deformitate. Licet, absolute loquendo, salvari possit, difficile tamen ingrediatur viam humilitatis et pœnitentiæ, qua sola ipsi patet ingressus ad vitam”—*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *De Vit. Cler.* c. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Epist.* 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Epist.* l. 2, c. 100.



## II. How Important to Follow it Promptly. 91

vocation, had resolved on leaving his Order. He saw Christ on a throne in wrath, ordering his name to be blotted out of the book of life; by this vision he was so terrified that he persevered in his vocation.

How many other similar examples are there, not to be found in books! And how many unhappy youths shall we not see damned on the day of judgment for not having followed their vocation! Such are rebels to the divine light, as the Holy Ghost says: *They have been rebellious to the light, they have not known His ways,*<sup>1</sup> and they will be justly punished by losing the light; and because they would not walk in the way shown them by the Lord, they shall walk without light in that chosen by their own caprice, and perish. *Behold, I will utter My Spirit to you.*<sup>2</sup> Behold the vocation, but because they fail to follow it, God adds: *Because I called and you refused; . . . you have despised all My counsel. . . . I also will laugh in your destruction, and I will mock when that shall come upon you which you feared.*<sup>3</sup> *Then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear: they shall rise in the morning, and shall not find Me. Because they have hated instruction and received not the fear of the Lord. Nor consented to My counsel, but despised all My reproof.*<sup>4</sup> \* And this signifies that God will not hear the prayers of him who has neglected to

<sup>1</sup> "Ipsi fuerunt rebelles lumini; nescierunt vias ejus."—*Tob*, xxiv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> "En, proferam vobis spiritum meum."—*Prov*. i. 23.

<sup>3</sup> "Quia vocavi, et renuistis . . . despexistis omne consilium meum. . . . Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo, cum vobis id, quod timebatis, advenerit."—*Ibid*. i. 24-26.

<sup>4</sup> "Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam; mane consurgent, et non invenient me. Eo quod exosam habuerint disciplinam, . . . nec acquieverint consilio meo, et detraxerint universæ correptioni meæ."—*Ibid*. i. 28-30.

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\* With these last words, God reprimands those who set but little value on vocation, and who pretend that one can save one's soul indifferently in every state of life. (*Theol. mor.* l. 4, n. 78.)

## 92 *Counsels Concerning a Religious Vocation.*

obey his voice. St. Augustine says, "They who have despised the will of God which invited them, shall feel the will of God when it becomes its own avenger."<sup>1</sup>

### 2. WE MUST OBEY THE VOICE OF GOD WITHOUT DELAY.

Whenever God calls to a more perfect state, he who does not wish to expose his eternal salvation to great danger must then obey, and obey promptly. Otherwise he will hear from Jesus Christ the reproach he made to that young man who, when invited to follow him, said, *I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house.*<sup>2</sup> And Jesus replied to him that he was not fit for paradise: *No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.*<sup>3</sup>

The lights which God gives are transient, not permanent, gifts. Whence St. Thomas says that the vocation of God to a more perfect life ought to be followed as promptly as possible.<sup>4</sup> He proposes in his summary<sup>5</sup> the question whether it be praiseworthy to enter religion without having asked the counsel of many, and without long deliberation? He answers in the affirmative, saying that counsel and deliberation are necessary in doubtful things, but not in this matter, which is certainly good; because Jesus Christ has counselled it in the Gospel, since the religious state comprehends most of the counsels of Jesus Christ. How singular a thing it is, when there is question of entering religion to lead a life more perfect and more free from the dangers of the world, the men of the world say that it is necessary

<sup>1</sup> "Qui spreverunt voluntatem Dei invitantem, voluntatem Dei sentient vindicantem."—*R. ad obj. Vinc.* 16.

<sup>2</sup> "Sequar te, Domine; sed permitte mihi primum renuntiare his quæ domi sunt."—*Luke*, ix. 61.

<sup>3</sup> "Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei."—*Ibid.* 62.

<sup>4</sup> "Quanto citius."

<sup>5</sup> 2. 2. q. 189, a. 10.

## II. How Important to Follow it Promptly. 93

to deliberate a long time before putting such resolutions in execution, in order to ascertain whether the vocation comes from God or from the devil! But they do not talk thus when one is to accept of a place in the magistracy, of a bishopric, etc., where there are so many dangers of losing the soul. Then they do not say that many proofs are required whether there be a true vocation from God.

The saints, however, do not talk thus. St. Thomas says that if the vocation to religion should even come from the devil, we should nevertheless follow it, as a good counsel, though coming from an enemy. St. John Chrysostom, as quoted by the same St. Thomas, says that God, when he gives such vocations, wills that we should not defer even a moment to follow them. Christ requires from us such an obedience that we should not delay an instant.<sup>1</sup> And why this? Because as much as God is pleased to see in a soul promptitude in obeying him, so much he opens his hand and fills it with his blessings. On the contrary, tardiness in obeying him displeases him, and then he shuts his hand and withdraws his lights, so that in consequence a soul will follow its vocation with difficulty and abandon it again easily. Therefore, St. John Chrysostom says that when the devil cannot bring one to give up his resolution of consecrating himself to God, he at least seeks to make him defer the execution of it, and esteems it a great gain if he can obtain the delay of one day only, or even of an hour.<sup>2</sup> Because, after that day or that hour, other occasions presenting themselves, it will be less difficult for him to obtain greater delay, until the individual who has been thus called, finding himself more feeble and less assisted by grace, gives way alto-

<sup>1</sup> "Talem obedientiam Christus quærit a nobis, ut neque instanti temporis moremur."—*In Matth. hom.* 14.

<sup>2</sup> "Si vel levem arripuerit prorogationem."—*Ad pop. Aut. hom.* 56,

gether and loses his vocation. Therefore St. Jerome gives to those who are called to quit the world this advice: "Make haste, I beseech you, and rather cut than loosen the cable by which your bark is bound fast to the land."<sup>1</sup> The saint wishes to say that as a man who should find himself in a boat on the point of sinking, would seek to cut the rope, rather than to loosen it, so he who finds himself in the midst of the world ought to seek to get out of it as promptly as possible, in order to free himself from the danger, which is so great in the world, of losing his own soul.\*

Let us also hear what St. Francis de Sales writes in his works, on religious vocation, because the whole of it

<sup>1</sup> "Festina, quæso te, et hærentis in salo naviculæ funem magis præcide, quam solve."—*Ad Paulin. de St. Scr.*

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\* We must here call to mind what the Author says in the *Christian Rule of Life*, chap. i.: "You should choose your director; consult him on all more important matters; and obey him in everything. He who obeys his confessor need not fear to go astray: *He that heareth you, heareth Me* (Luke, x. 16). The voice of the confessor is the voice of God." We should, therefore, consult at least the confessor, who may delay giving an opinion when he thinks fit to do so on account of the importance of the decision he has to render.

The following are, according to St. Alphonsus, the three principal signs of a true vocation to the religious state: "1. We should have a good end in view, such as to remove from the dangers of the world, the better to assure ourselves of salvation, and to become more closely united with God. 2. We should not be subject to any positive impediment, such as the want of health, or of talent, or parents who are necessitous ('in necessitate gravi'—*Theol. mor.* l. 4, n. 66)—matters that should be submitted to the judgment of the Superiors, towards whom we should be frank in telling the truth. 3. We should be admitted by the Superiors of the Institute. (Counsels to Novices.)"

Moreover, in the Church there are different religious Institutes, different kinds of perfection. It is not enough to know that one is called to the religious state; one must also examine for what Institute, for what Community the Lord has destined us, and one must follow in every point the impulse of grace. (*See Homo apost. tr. ult.* n. 39.)

ED.

## *II. How Important to Follow it Promptly.* 95

will go to confirm what has already been said, and what will be said hereafter: "To have a sign of a true vocation, it is not necessary that our constancy be sensible, it suffices if it be in the superior part of our soul. And therefore we must not judge that a vocation is not a true one, if the individual thus called, before putting it in execution, does not feel any longer those sensible movements which he felt in the beginning,—even should he feel a repugnance and coldness, which sometimes bring him to waver, and make it appear to him that all is lost. It is enough that the will remains constant in not abandoning the divine call, and also that there remains some affection for this call. To know whether God will have one become a religious, one ought not to expect that God himself should speak or send to one an angel from heaven to signify his will. And as little necessary is it that ten or twelve Doctors should examine whether the vocation is to be followed or not. But it is necessary to correspond with the first movement of the inspiration, and to cultivate it, and then not to grow weary if disgust or coldness should come on; for if one acts thus, God will not fail to make all succeed to his glory. Nor ought we to care much from what quarter the first movement comes. The Lord has many means to call his servants. Sometimes he makes use of a sermon, at other times of the reading of good books. Some, as St. Anthony and St. Francis, have been called by hearing the words of the Gospel; others by means of afflictions and troubles that came upon them in the world, and which suggested to them the motive for leaving it. These persons, although they come to God only because they are disgusted with the world or out of favor with it, nevertheless, failing not to give themselves to him with their whole will, become sometimes greater saints than those who entered religion with a more apparent vocation. Father Platus relates that a

## 96 *Counsels Concerning a Religious Vocation.*

nobleman, riding one day on a fine horse, and striving to make a great display in order to please some ladies whom he saw, was thrown from the horse into the mire, from which he rose besmeared and covered with mud. He was so full of confusion at this accident that at the same moment he resolved to become a religious, saying, 'Traacherous world, thou hast mocked me, but I will mock thee. Thou hast played me a game, I will play thee another; for I will have no more peace with thee, and from this hour I resolve to forsake thee and to become a friar.' And, in fact, he became a religious, and lived in religion a holy life."<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### Means to be Employed for Preserving a Religious Vocation in the world.

He, then, who wishes to be faithful to the divine call ought not only to resolve to follow it, but to follow it promptly, if he does not wish to expose himself to the evident danger of losing his vocation; and in case he should by necessity be forced to wait, he ought to use all diligence to preserve it, as the most precious jewel he could have.

The means to preserve vocation are three in number: secrecy, prayer, and recollection.

#### I. SECRECY.

First, generally speaking, he must keep his vocation secret from everybody except his spiritual Father, because commonly the men of the world scruple not to say to young men, who are called to the religious state, that one may serve God everywhere, and therefore in the world also. And it is wonderful that such proposi-

<sup>1</sup> *Entret.* 17.



### III. Means for Preserving it in the World. 97

tions come sometimes out of the mouth of priests, and even of religious; but of such religious only as have either become so without vocation, or do not know what vocation is. Yes, without doubt, he who is not called to the religious state may serve God in every place, but not he who is called to it, and then from his own inclination wishes to remain in the world; such a one, as I have said above, can with difficulty serve God and lead a good life.

It is especially necessary to keep the vocation secret from parents.

It was, indeed, the opinion of Luther, as Bellarmine relates,<sup>1</sup> that children entering religion without the consent of their parents commit a sin. For, said he, children are bound to obey their parents in all things. But this opinion has generally been rejected by Councils and the holy Fathers. The tenth Council of Toledo expressly says: "It is lawful for children to become religious without the consent of their parents, provided they have attained the age of puberty;" these are the words: "It shall not be lawful for parents to put their children in a religious order after they have attained their fourteenth year. After this age, it shall be lawful for children to take upon themselves the yoke of religious observance, whether it be with the consent of their parents, or only the wish of their own hearts."<sup>2</sup> The same is prescribed in the Council of Tribur,<sup>3</sup> and is taught by St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, and others, with St. John Chrysostom, who

<sup>1</sup> *De Mon.* l. 2, c. 36.

<sup>2</sup> "Parentibus filios religioni contradere non amplius quam usque ad decimum quartum eorum ætatis annum licentia poterit esse; postea vero, an cum voluntate parentum, an suæ devotionis sit solitarium votum, erit filiis licitum religionis assumere cultum."—*Cap.* 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Can.* 24.



writes in general: "When parents stand in the way in spiritual things, they ought not even to be recognized."<sup>1</sup>

Some Doctors then say that when a child called by God to the religious state could easily and securely obtain the consent of his parents, without any danger on their part of hindering him from following his vocation, it is becoming that he should seek to obtain their blessing. This doctrine could be held speculatively, but not so in practice, because in practice such a danger always exists. It will be well to discuss this point fully, in order to do away with certain pharisaical scruples which some entertain.

It is certain that in the choice of a state of life children are not bound to obey parents. Thus the Doctors, with common accord, teach with St. Thomas, who says: "Servants are not bound to obey their masters, nor children their parents, with regard to contracting matrimony, preserving virginity, and such like things."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, with regard to the state of marriage, F. Pinamonti, in his treatise on religious vocation, is justly of the opinion of Sanchez, Comminchio, and others, who hold that a child is bound to take counsel of his parents, because in such matters they may have more experience than the young. But speaking then of religious vocation, the above-mentioned Pinamonti wisely adds that a child is not bound at all to take counsel of his parents, because in this matter they have not any experience, and through interest are commonly changed into enemies, as St. Thomas also remarks, when speaking of religious vocation. "Frequently," he says, "our friends according to the flesh are opposed to our spiritual

<sup>1</sup> "Cum spiritualia impediunt parentes, nec agnoscendi quidem sunt."—*In Jo. hom.* 84.

<sup>2</sup> "Non tenentur, nec servi dominis, nec filii parentibus, obedire de matrimonio contrahendo, vel virginitate servanda, vel aliquo alio hujusmodi."—2. 2. q. 104. a. 5.

good.”<sup>1</sup> For fathers often prefer that their children should be damned with themselves, rather than be saved away from them. Whence St. Bernard exclaims, “O hard father, O cruel mother, whose consolation is the death of their son, who wish rather that we perish with them than reign without them!”<sup>2</sup>

God, says a grave author, Porrecta, when he calls one to a perfect life, wishes one to forget one’s father, saying, *Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; and forget thy people and thy father’s house.*<sup>3</sup> “By this, then,” he adds, “the Lord certainly admonishes us that he who is called ought by no means to allow the counsel of parents to intervene.” “If God will have a soul, who is called by him, forget its father and its father’s house, without doubt he suggests by this, that he who is called to the religious state ought not, before he follows the call, to interpose the counsel of the carnal friends of his household.”<sup>4</sup>

St. Cyril, explaining what Jesus Christ said to the youth mentioned above, *No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God,*<sup>5</sup> comments on it, and says that he who asks for time to confer with his parents in reference to his vocation is exactly the one who is declared by our Lord to be unfit for

<sup>1</sup> “Frequenter amici carnales adversantur profectui spirituali.”—2. 2. q. 189, a. 10.

<sup>2</sup> “O durum patrem, o sævam matrem, quorum consolatio mors filii est; qui me malunt nos perire cum eis, quam regnare sine eis!”—*Ep.* 111.

<sup>3</sup> “Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam; et obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui.”—*Ps.* xlv. 11.

<sup>4</sup> “Si Dominus vult animam ad se vocatam oblivisci patrem, domum que patris ejus, suggerit utique per hoc, quod vocatus ab ipso ad religionem non debet suorum carnalium amicorumque domesticorum consilium interponere talis vocationis executioni.”—*In* 2. 2. q. 189, a. 10.

<sup>5</sup> “Nemo mittens manum ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.”—*Luke*, ix. 61.

heaven. "In order to confer with his parents, he looks back who seeks for delay."<sup>1</sup> Whence St. Thomas absolutely advises those who are called to religion, to abstain from deliberating on their vocation with their relatives: "From this deliberation, the relatives of the flesh are before all to be excluded; for it is said, *Treat thy cause with thy friend* (Prov. xxv. 9); but the relatives of the flesh are in this affair not our friends, but our enemies, according to the saying of our Lord: *A man's enemies are those of his household.*"<sup>2</sup>

If, then, for following one's vocation it would be a great error to ask the counsel of parents, it would be a greater one still to ask their permission, and to wait for it, for such a demand cannot be made without an evident danger of losing the vocation, as often as there is a probable fear that parents would exert themselves to prevent it. And, in fact, the saints, when they were called to leave the world, left their homes without giving their parents so much as an intimation of it. Thus acted St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis Xavier, St. Philip Neri, St. Louis Bertrand. And we know that the Lord has even by miracles approved of these glorious flights.

St. Peter of Alcantara, when he went to the monastery to become a religious, and was fleeing from the house of his mother, under whose obedience he had lived since the death of his father, found himself prevented by a wide river from advancing any farther. He recommended himself to God, and at the same instant saw himself transported to the other side.

Likewise, when St. Stanislaus Kostka fled from home,

<sup>1</sup> "Respicit retro, qui dilationem quærit, cum propinquis occasione conferendi."—*Ap. S. Thom. loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> "Ab hoc consilio, primo quidem, amovendi sunt carnis propinqui; dicitur enim: 'Causam tuam tracta cum amico tuo.' Propinqui autem carnis, in hoc negotio, amici non sunt, sed inimici, juxta sententiam Domini: 'Inimici hominis, domestici ejus.'"—*Matth. x. 36.*

without the permission of his father, his brother set out after him in great haste in a carriage, but having almost overtaken him, the horses, in spite of all the violence used against them, would not advance a step farther, till turning towards the city, they began to run at full speed.

In like manner the Blessed Oringa of Waldrano, in Tuscany, being promised in marriage to a young man, fled from the house of her parents in order to consecrate herself to God; but the river Arno opposing itself to her course, after a short prayer she saw it divide and form, as it were, two walls of crystal, to let her pass through with dry feet.

Therefore, my very beloved brother, if you are called by God to leave the world, be very careful not to make your resolution known to your parents, and, content to be thus blessed by God, seek to execute it as promptly as you can, and without their knowledge, if you would not expose yourself to the great danger of losing your vocation. For, generally speaking, relatives, as has been said above, especially fathers and mothers, oppose the execution of such resolutions; and although they may be endowed with piety, interest and passion nevertheless render them so blind that under various pretexts they scruple not to thwart with all their might the vocation of their children.

We read in the life of Father Paul Segneri the younger, that his mother, though a matron much given to prayer, left nevertheless no means untried to prevent her son from entering the religious state to which he was called. We also read in the life of Mgr. Cavalieri, Bishop of Troja, that his father, although a man of great piety, used every means to prevent his son from entering the Congregation of Pious Workmen (which, notwithstanding, he afterwards did), and even went so far as to bring against him a lawsuit in the ecclesiastical

court. And how many other fathers, notwithstanding they were men of piety and prayer, have not in such cases been seen to change, and to become possessed, as it were, of the devil! For under no other circumstance does hell seem to employ more formidable arms than when there is question of preventing those who are called to the religious state from executing their resolution.

For this reason be also very careful not to communicate your design to your friends, who will not scruple to dissuade you from it, or at least to divulge the secret, so that the knowledge of it will easily come to the ears of your parents.

## 2. PRAYER.

In the second place, it is necessary to know that these vocations are only preserved by prayer; he who gives up prayer will certainly give up his vocation. It is necessary to pray, and to pray much; and therefore let him who feels himself called, not omit to make every morning after rising an hour of mental prayer, or at least half an hour, in his own room, if he can do so there without molestation, and if not, in the church, and likewise half an hour in the evening.

Let him not neglect also to make every day, without fail, a visit to the Most Holy Sacrament, as also to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in order to obtain the grace of perseverance in his vocation. Let him likewise not omit to receive Holy Communion thrice, or at least twice, a week.

His meditations ought almost always to be on this point of the vocation, considering how great a favor from God he has received in being thus called by him; how much more easily he will secure his eternal salvation, if he be faithful to God in following his vocation; and, on the contrary, to how great a danger of being damned

he exposes himself if he be unfaithful. Let him then especially place before his eyes the hour of death, and consider the contentment that he will then feel if he shall have obeyed God, and the pains and the remorse he would experience if he should die in the world. To this end I shall add at the end of this some considerations on which he may make his mental prayer.

It is, moreover, necessary that all his prayers to Jesus and Mary, and especially those after Communion and in the visits, be directed to obtain perseverance. In all his prayers and Communions let him always renew the offering of himself to God, by saying, "Behold, O Lord! I am no more mine, I am Thine. Already have I given myself to Thee, and now I renew this my offering of my whole self. Accept of me, and give me strength to be faithful to Thee and to retire as quickly as possible into Thy house."

3. RECÓLECTION.

In the third place, it is necessary that he be recollected, which will not be possible for him unless he withdraws from worldly conversations and amusements. What, in short, as long as we are in the world, is enough to cause the loss of vocation? A mere nothing. One day of amusement, a word from a friend, a passion we do not mortify, a little attachment, a thought of fear, a resentment we do not overcome, suffices to bring to nought all our resolutions of retiring from the world, or of giving ourselves entirely to God. Wherefore we ought to keep perfectly recollected, detaching ourselves from everything of this world. We ought during this time to think of nothing but prayer and frequenting the sacraments, and to be nowhere but at home and in church. Let him who will not do so, but distracts himself by pastimes, be persuaded that he will without doubt lose his vocation. He will remain with the re-



morse of not having followed it, but he certainly will not follow it. Oh, how many by neglecting these precautions have lost, first their vocation, and afterwards their souls!

## IV.

## Disposition required for entering Religion.

He who feels himself to be called by God to a religious Institute in which reigns exact observance\* ought to know that the end of every regular observance is, to follow as exactly as possible the footsteps and examples of the most holy life of Jesus Christ, who led a life entirely detached and mortified, full of suffering and contempt. He, then, who resolves to enter such a holy state must at the same time resolve to enter it for the sake of suffering and denying himself in all things, as Jesus Christ himself has declared to those who wish perfectly to follow him: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*<sup>1</sup> He, then, who wishes to enter religion must firmly establish within himself this resolution to go to suffer, and to suffer much, so that afterwards he may not give way to temptations, when, having entered, he feels depressed under the hardships and privations of the poor and mortified life which is there led.

Many, on entering Communities of exact observance, take not the proper means of finding peace therein, and

<sup>1</sup> "Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me."—*Matth.* xvi. 24.

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\* "I say 'in which reigns exact observance;' for it would be, perhaps, better to remain in the world than to enter a religious Institute in which relaxation has been introduced." We see that this remark is made by the author himself; he also says elsewhere, "Si institutum relaxatum est, melius erit alicui ordinarie loquendi, quod in sæculo remaneat." (*Hom. apost. tr. ult.* n. 39.)



of becoming saints, because they only place before their eyes the advantages of the Community life, such as the solitude, the quiet, the freedom from the troubles caused by relatives, from strife and other disagreeable matters, and from the cares consequent on being obliged to think of one's lodging, food, and clothing.

There is no doubt that every religious is only too much indebted to his Order, which delivers him from so many troubles, and thus procures for him so great a facility to serve God perfectly in peace, continually furnishing him with so many means for the welfare of his soul, so many good examples from his companions, so much good advice from his Superiors who watch for his benefit, so many exercises conducive to eternal salvation. All this is true; but with all this he must also, in order not to be deprived of so blessed a lot, resolve to embrace all the sufferings he may, on the other hand, meet with in the Order; for if he does not embrace them with love, he will never obtain that full peace which God gives to those who overcome themselves: *To him that overcomes I will give the hidden manna.*<sup>1</sup> For the peace which God gives his faithful servants to taste is hidden; nor is it known by the men of the world, who, seeing their mortified life, know not how to envy them, but pity them and call them the unhappy ones of this earth. But "they see the cross, the unction they do not see,"<sup>2</sup> says St. Bernard; they see their mortification, but they do not see the contentment that God gives them to enjoy.

It is true that in the spiritual life one has to suffer but, says St. Teresa, when one resolves to suffer, the pain is gone. Nay, the pains themselves turn into joy. "My daughter," so the Lord said one day to St. Bridget, "the treasure of my graces seems to be surrounded with thorns; but for him who overcomes the first stings,

<sup>1</sup> "Vincenti dabo manna absconditum."—*Apoc.* ii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> "Crucem vident, unctionem non vident."—*In Dedic.* s. 1.

all is changed into sweetness." And then those delights which God gives to his beloved souls to enjoy in their prayers, in their Communions, in their solitude; those lights, those holy ardors and embraces, that quiet of conscience, that blessed hope of eternal life, who can ever understand them, if he does not experience them? "One drop of the consolations of God," said St. Teresa, "is worth more than all the consolations and the pleasures of the world." Our most gracious God knows well how to give to him who suffers something for his sake, even in this valley of tears, the experience of the foretaste of the glory of the blessed; for in this is properly verified that which David says: *Thou who framest labor in commandment.*<sup>1</sup> In the spiritual life, God, announcing pains, tediousness, death seems to frame labor, but, in fact, afterwards it is not so; for spiritual life brings to them who entirely give themselves to God that peace which, as St. Paul says, *Surpasseth all understanding.*<sup>2</sup> It surpasses all the pleasures of the world and of worldlings. Whence we see a religious more content in a poor cell than all the monarchs in their royal palaces. *O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet.*<sup>3</sup>

But, on the other hand, he must be persuaded that he who does not resolve to suffer and to overcome himself in the things contrary to his inclinations, will never be able to enjoy this true peace, though he should have already entered religion. *To him that overcomes, I will give the hidden manna.*<sup>4</sup> It is, then, necessary that he who wishes to be admitted into an Order of exact observance should enter with a mind determined to overcome himself in everything, by expelling from his heart every inclination and desire that is not from God, nor for God,

<sup>1</sup> "Qui fingis laborem in præcepto."—*Ps.* xciii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Exsuperat omnem sensum."—*Phil.* iv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus."—*Ps.* xxxiii. 9.

<sup>4</sup> "Vincenti dabo manna absconditum."—*Apoc.* ii. 17.

so that he must detach himself from all things, and especially from the four following: 1. From his comforts. 2. From his parents. 3. From self-esteem. 4. From his own will.

I. DETACHMENT FROM HIS COMFORTS.

In religion, after the year of novitiate, one makes, besides the vows of chastity and obedience, also the vow of poverty, in consequence of which one can never possess anything as one's individual property, not even a pin, no income, no money or other things.\* The Community will provide him with all that he needs. But the vow of poverty does not suffice to make one a true follower of Jesus Christ if one does not afterwards embrace with joy of spirit all the inconveniences of poverty. "Not poverty, but the love of poverty, is a virtue,"<sup>1</sup> says St. Bernard; and he means to say that for one to become a saint it is not enough to be poor only, if one does not love also the inconveniences of poverty. "Oh how many would wish to be poor and similar to Jesus Christ!" says Thomas à Kempis; "they wish to be poor, but without any want,"<sup>2</sup> but so that they be in want of nothing. In a word, they would wish the honor and the reward of poverty, but not the inconveniences of poverty.

It is easy to understand that in religion no one will seek for things that are superfluous,—cloths of silk, costly food, furniture of value, and the like; but he may desire to have all things that are necessary, and these

<sup>1</sup> "Non paupertas, sed amor paupertatis virtus est."—*Epist.* 100.

<sup>2</sup> "Volunt esse pauperes, sed sine defectu."

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\* In the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer the vow of poverty comprises the renunciation of every dignity and every benefice or employment. Moreover, to the three vows are added the vow and oath of perseverance.

he may be unable to get. For then it is he gives proof that he truly loves poverty, when things that are needful—such as his necessary clothing, bed-covering or food—happen to be wanting, and yet he remains content and is not troubled. And what kind of poverty would that be to suffer if he were never in want of anything necessary? F. Balthasar Alvarez says that in order truly to love poverty we must also love the effects of poverty; that is, as he enumerates them, cold, hunger, thirst, and contempt.<sup>1</sup>

In religion, every one ought not only to be content with that which is given to him, without ever asking for anything of which, through the neglect of the stewards, he should be in want, which would be a great defect, but he ought also to prepare himself sometimes to bear the want even of those simple things that the Rule allows. For it may happen that sometimes he is in want of clothes, coverings, linen, or such-like things, and then he has to be satisfied with that little which has been given him, without complaining or being disquieted at seeing himself in want even of what is necessary. He who has not this spirit, let him not think of entering religion, because this is a sign that he is not called thereto or that he has not the will to embrace the spirit of the Institute. He who goes to serve God in his house, says St. Teresa, ought to consider that he is going not to be well treated for God, but to suffer for God.

## 2. DETACHMENT FROM HIS PARENTS.

He who wishes to enter religion must detach himself from his parents and forget them altogether. For, in religious houses of exact observance, detachment from parents is put in practice in the highest degree, in order perfectly to follow the doctrine of Jesus Christ, who said, *I came not to send peace, but the sword; I came to set*

<sup>1</sup> “Frigus, famem, sitim, et contemptum.”

a man at variance with his father, etc.;<sup>1</sup> and then added the reason: *A man's enemies shall be they of his own household.*<sup>2</sup> And this is especially the case, as has been remarked above, in this point of religious vocation. When one's leaving the world is in question, there are no worse enemies than parents, who, either through interest or passion, prefer to become enemies of God, by turning their children away from their vocation, rather than to give their consent to it. Oh! how many parents shall we see in the valley of Josaphat damned for having made their children or nephews lose their vocation! and how many youths shall we see damned who, in order to please their parents, and by not detaching themselves from them, have lost their vocation and afterwards their souls! Whence Jesus declares to us, *If any man hate not his father, etc., he cannot be My disciple.*<sup>3</sup> Let him, then, who wishes to enter a religious Order of perfect observance, and to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ, resolve to forget his parents altogether.

When any one has already entered religion, let him remember that he must practise then the same detachment from parents. Let him know that he cannot go to visit his parents in their own house, except in the case of some dangerous illness of his father or mother, or of some other urgent necessity, though always with the permission of the Superior. Otherwise to go to the house of one's parents without the most express permission would be considered in religion as a most notable and scandalous fault. In religion it is also considered a great defect even to ask permission or to show a desire of seeing parents or of speaking with them.

<sup>1</sup> "Non veni pacem mittere sed gladium; veni enim separare hominem adversus patrem suum et filiam adversus matrem suam."—*Matth.* x. 34.

<sup>2</sup> "Inimici hominis, domestici ejus"—*Ib.* 36.

<sup>3</sup> "Qui non odit patrem suum, et matrem, . . . etc., non potest esse meus discipulus."—*Luke*, xiv. 26.

St. Charles Borromeo said that when he visited the house of his parents he always, after his return, found himself less fervent in spirit. And thus, let him who goes to the house of his parents by his own will and not through a positive obedience to his Superiors, be persuaded that he will leave it either under temptation or be cold and lukewarm.

St. Vincent of Paul could only be induced once to visit his country and his parents, and this out of pure necessity; and he said that the love of home and country was a great impediment to his spiritual progress. He said also that many, on account of having visited their country, had become so tender towards their relatives that they were like flies, which being once entangled in a cobweb, cannot extricate themselves from it. He added, "For that one time that I went, though it was for a short time only, and though I took care to prevent in my relatives every hope of help from me, notwithstanding, I felt at leaving them such a pain that I ceased not to weep all along the road, and was for three months harassed by the thought of succoring them. Finally, God in his mercy took that temptation from me."

Let him know, moreover, that no one may write to his parents without permission, and without showing the letter to the Superior. Otherwise, he would be guilty of a most grievous fault that is not to be tolerated in religion, and should be punished with severity; for from this might come a thousand disorders tending to destroy the religious spirit. Let especially the newcomer know that during the novitiate this is observed with the greatest rigor; for novices during their year of novitiate do not easily obtain permission to talk to their parents, or to write to them.

Finally, let him know that in case a subject should become sick, it would be a notable defect to ask or to



show an inclination to go to his own house for his restoration to health, under the plea of being better taken care of, or of enjoying the benefit of his native air. The air of his own country becomes almost always, or rather always, hurtful, and pestilential to the spirit of the subject. And if he should ever say that he wishes to be cured at home in order not to subject the Order to expenses for remedies, let him know that the Order has charity enough to take sufficient care of the sick. As to the change of air, the Superiors will think of that; and if that of one house is not beneficial to him, they will send him to another. And as for remedies, they will even sell the books, if need be, to provide for the sick. And so let him be sure that divine Providence will not fail him. And if the Lord should decree against his recovery, he ought to conform to the will of God, without even mentioning the word "home." The greatest grace that he who enters an Order can desire is to die, when God wills it, in the house of God, assisted by the brethren of his Order, and not in a secular house in the midst of his relatives.

3. DETACHMENT FROM SELF-ESTEEM.

He must also be altogether detached from all self-esteem. Many leave their country, their comforts, and parents, but carry with them a certain esteem for themselves; but this is the most hurtful attachment of all. The greatest sacrifice that we can make to God is to give to him not only goods, pleasures, and home, but ourselves also, by leaving ourselves. This is that denying of one's self which Jesus Christ recommends above all to his followers. And in order to deny one's self, one must first place under foot all self-esteem, by desiring and embracing every imaginable contempt that he may meet with in religion; as, for instance, to see others, whom perhaps he thinks less deserving, pre-



ferred to himself, or to be considered unfit to be employed, or only employed in lower and more laborious occupations. He ought to know that in the house of God those charges are the highest and the most honorable that are imposed by obedience. God forbid that any one should seek for or aspire to any office or charge of pre-eminence. This would be a strange thing in religion, and he would be noted as proud and ambitious, and as such should be put in penance, and should especially be mortified in this point. Better would it be, perhaps, that a religious Order should be destroyed than that there should enter into it that accursed pest of ambition which, when it enters, disfigures the most exemplary Communities, and the most beautiful works of God.\*

But he ought to feel even consoled in spirit when he sees himself mocked and despised by his companions. I say consoled in spirit, for as to the flesh this will be impossible, nor need a subject be uneasy when he sees that he resents it; it is enough that the spirit embraces it, and that he rejoices at it in the superior part of the soul. Thus also seeing himself continually reprimanded and mortified by all, not only by Superiors, but also by equals and inferiors, he ought heartily, and with a tranquil mind, to thank those who thus reprimand him, and have the charity to admonish him, answering that he will be more attentive not to fall into that fault again.

One of the greatest desires of the saints in this world was to be contemned for the love of Jesus Christ. It was this that St. John of the Cross asked for, when Jesus Christ appeared to him with a cross on his shoul-

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\* We here read in the first edition: "By the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we do not see in this our little Congregation the scandal of a subject seeking for some employment that might give him a name, such as that of Superior, preacher, or confessor, and the like."

der, and said, "John, ask from me what thou wishest," and St. John answered, "O Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Thee."<sup>1</sup> The Doctors teach, with St. Francis de Sales, that the highest degree of humility we can have is to be pleased with abjections and humiliations. And in this consists also one of the greatest merits we can have with God. One contempt suffered in peace for the love of God is of greater value in his sight than a thousand disciplines and a thousand fasts.

It is necessary to know that to suffer contempt either from Superiors or from companions is a thing unavoidable even in the most holy Communities. Read the lives of the saints, and you will see how many mortifications were encountered by St. Francis Regis, St. Francis of Jerome, Father Torres, and others. The Lord sometimes permits that even among saints there should exist, though without their fault, certain natural antipathies, or at least a certain diversity of character among subjects of the greatest piety, which will cause them to suffer many contradictions. At other times false reports will be spread and believed. God himself will permit this, in order that the subjects may have occasion to exercise themselves in patience and humility.

In short, he will gain little in religion and lose much who cannot quietly put up with contempt and contradiction; and, therefore, he who enters religion to give himself entirely to God ought to be ashamed not to know how to bear contempt when he appears before Jesus Christ, who was "filled with opprobriums"<sup>2</sup> for love of us. Let every one be attentive to this, and resolve to be pleased in religion with all abjections, and to prepare himself to suffer many of them, for without the least doubt he will have many to bear. Otherwise,

<sup>1</sup> "Joannes, pete a me, quid vis. . . . Domine, pati et contemni pro te."

<sup>2</sup> "Saturatus opprobriis."

## 114 *Counsels Concerning a Religious Vocation.*

the disquiet caused by contradictions, and contempt badly borne with, might trouble him so much as to make him lose his vocation, and chase him out of religion. Oh, how many have lost their vocation on account of such impatience in humiliations! But of what service to the Order or to God can he be who does not know how to bear contempt for his sake? And how can one ever be said to be dead according to that promise which he made to Jesus Christ, on entering religion, to die to himself if he remained alive to resentment and disquiet, when he sees himself humbled? Out of the Order with such subjects, so attached to their own esteem! out with them! It is well for them to go as soon as possible, that they may not infect the rest also with their pride. In religion every one ought to be dead, and especially to his own self-esteem, otherwise it is better for him not to enter, or to depart again if he has already entered.

### 4. DETACHMENT FROM HIS OWN WILL.

He who enters religion must altogether renounce his own will, consecrating it entirely to holy obedience. Of all things, this is the most necessary. What does it avail to leave comforts, parents, and honors, if we still carry into religion our own will? In this principally consists the denial of ourselves, the spiritual death, and the entire surrender of ourselves to Jesus Christ. The gift of the heart—that is, of the will—is what pleases him most, and what he wishes from the children of religion. Otherwise, if we do not entirely detach ourselves from our own will and renounce it in all, all mortifications, all meditations and prayers, and all other sacrifices, will be of little avail.

It is, then, evident that this is the greatest merit we can have before God, and this is the only and sure way of pleasing God in all things, so that then we can, each

one of us, say what Jesus our Saviour said: *I do always the things that please Him.*<sup>1</sup> Certainly, he who in religion lives without self-will may say and hope that in all that he does he pleases God, whether he studies or prays, or hears confessions, whether he goes to the refectory or to recreation, or to rest; for in religion not a step is made, not a breath drawn, but in obedience to the Rule, or to Superiors.

The world does not know, and even certain persons given to spirituality have little idea of, the great value of a Community life under obedience. It is true that outside of religious Communities there are to be found many persons who do much, and, may be, more than those who live under obedience; they preach, do penance, pray and fast, but in all this they consult more or less their own will. God grant that at the day of judgment they may not have to lament as those mentioned in Scripture: *Why have we fasted and Thou hast not regarded, have we humbled ourselves, and Thou hast not taken notice? Behold, in the day of your fast, your own will is found.*<sup>2</sup> On which passage St. Bernard remarks: "Self-will is a great evil, for through it that which is good in itself may be for you no good at all."<sup>3</sup> This to be understood when in all these exercises we seek not God, but ourselves. On the contrary, he who does all by obedience is sure that in all he pleases God. The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus said that she prized so much her vocation to religion principally for two reasons: the first was that in the monastery she enjoyed always the presence and company of Jesus in the Blessed

<sup>1</sup> "Ego, quæ placita sunt ei, facio semper." *John*, viii. 29.

<sup>2</sup> "Quare jejunavimus, et non aspexisti? humiliavimus animas nostras, et nescisti? Ecce in die jejunii vestri invenitur voluntas vestra." — *Isa.* lviii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Grande malum, propria voluntas, qua fit, ut bona tua tibi bona non sint." — *In Cant.* s. 71.

Sacrament, and the other was that there by obedience she entirely belonged to God, sacrificing to him her own will.

It is related by Father Rodriguez that after the death of Dositheus, the disciple of St. Dorotheus, the Lord revealed that in those five years he had lived under obedience, though by reason of his infirmities he could not practise the austerities of the other monks, yet by the virtue of obedience he had merited the reward of St. Paul the Hermit and of St. Anthony the Abbot.

He, then, who wishes to enter religion must resolve to renounce altogether his own will, and to will only what holy obedience wills. God preserve any religious from ever letting escape from his mouth the words, I will or I will not. But in all things, even when asked by Superiors what he desires, he should only answer, I wish that which holy obedience wills. And, provided there is no evident sin, he ought in every command imposed on him to obey blindly and without examination, because the duty of examining and deciding the doubts belongs not to him, but to his Superiors. Otherwise, if in obeying he does not submit his own judgment to that of the Superior, his obedience is imperfect. St. Ignatius of Loyola said that prudence in things of obedience is not required in subjects, but in Superiors; and if there is prudence in obeying, it is to obey without prudence. St. Bernard says, "Perfect obedience is indiscreet,"<sup>1</sup> and in another place he says, "For a prudent novice to remain in the Congregation is an impossible thing;" and, adding the reason for it, he says, "To judge belongs to the Superior; and to obey, to the subject."<sup>2</sup>

But to make progress in this virtue of obedience, on which all depends, he must always keep his mind ready

<sup>1</sup> "Perfecta obedientia es indiscreta."—*De vita solit.* c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Novitium prudentem in congregatione durare impossibile est . . . Discernere superioris est, subditi obedire."—*Ibid.*

to do all that for which he feels the greatest repugnance, and, on the contrary, he must be prepared to bear it quietly when he sees that all he seeks or desires is refused to him. It will happen that when he wishes to be in solitude, to apply himself to prayer or study, he will be the most employed in exterior occupations. For though it is true that in religion one leads as much as possible a solitary life when at home, and that for this end there are many hours of silence,—the retreat each year of ten days in perfect silence, and of one day each month, besides the fifteen days before the receiving of the habit, and one of fifteen before the profession when the vows are made,—nevertheless, if it is an Order of priests called to work and to be employed for the salvation of souls, the subject, if he is continually employed in this by obedience, ought to be content with the prayers and exercises of the Community. He must be prepared sometimes to go even without these when obedience will have it so, without either excusing himself or being disquieted, being well persuaded of that of which St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was so confident when she said that “all the things which are done through obedience are but so many prayers.”\*

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\* In the first edition the saint added: “On the other hand, it will happen that the more a subject desires to be employed in the salvation of souls, in missions, in preaching, in hearing confessions, or in studying, and the like, the less he will be so employed. He will be forbidden to study; he will be left alone in the house when all the others go out on missions, etc. In such cases he must understand that in practising obedience he gives the greatest pleasure to God; so that he ought to accept this obedience with the same gladness and peace of mind as if he were employed on missions. God grant that no subject of the Congregation should ever ask, or make known his desire, to preach or to go on missions, and so forth. By the grace of God, this fault, which would be a grievous one, is not found among the members of the Congregation. Nevertheless, each one should be well persuaded that the more he shows such a desire, the more he will be contradicted



## V.

**Trials that we must expect to have in the Religious Life.**

When, then, any one has thus entered religion, however truly he may be called, and though he may have conquered all his passions and his earthly affections, let him not imagine that he will be exempt from other temptations and trials, which God himself will send him, such as tediousness, darkness, various fears, in order to establish him more firmly in his vocation. We must remember that even the saints, who have loved their vocation the most, have sometimes suffered great darkness with regard to it, and that it seemed to them as if they were deceived, and would not be able to save themselves in that state. So it happened with St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, the Venerable Mother Frances de Chantal. But by recommending themselves to God, that darkness was dissipated, and they recovered their peace of mind. Thus the Lord tries his most beloved children, as it was said to Tobias: *Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was*

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and mortified in it. The subjects should have but one desire,—the desire to do that which obedience demands of them. And, indeed, what merit would all these labors have in the eyes of God if the Superiors assigned them, not as God had inspired them to do, but simply to satisfy the natural inclinations of the subjects? Besides, God would not lend his aid to works of this kind, and the subjects themselves would derive from them little fruit. Let him, therefore, who would enter the Congregation principally in order to give missions, to preach, and so on, not think of entering, because this is not the spirit of the Institute. *He only has the spirit of the Institute who enters it with the desire of practising obedience, and of submitting peacefully to be put away into some corner without having any employment, happy that the good is done by others while he himself will do only that which is directly imposed upon him by obedience, without having asked for it."*



*necessary that temptation should prove ihee.*<sup>1</sup> And in the book of Deuteronomy, *The Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him or not.*<sup>2</sup> Let each one therefore prepare himself to suffer in religion this obscurity. It will sometimes appear to him that he cannot bear the observance of the Order, that he will have no more peace of mind, or will not even be able to save himself. But, most of all, every one must be on his guard when the temptation presents specious scruples or pretexts of greater spiritual good, in order to make him abandon his vocation.

The principal remedies in such temptations are two in number.

FIRST REMEDY: TO HAVE RECOURSE TO GOD.

The first is prayer: *Go ye to Him and be enlightened.*<sup>3</sup> For as it will not be possible for temptation to overcome him who has recourse to prayer, so he who does not recommend himself to God will surely be overcome by it. And let it be remarked that sometimes it will not suffice to have recourse to God once, or for a few days, to become victorious. Perhaps the Lord will permit the temptation to continue, even after we have prayed for several weeks, months, and even years; but let us be assured that he who ceases not to recommend himself to God will certainly be enlightened and victorious; and thereafter he will have more peace and be more firm in his vocation.

Until we have gone through that storm, which for the most part comes over all, let none of us think himself secure. Let us be persuaded, however, that in this

<sup>1</sup> "Quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te."—*Tob.* xii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Tentat vos Dominus Deus vester, ut palam fiat, utrum diligatis eum, an non."—*Deut.* xiii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini."—*Ps.* xxxiii. 6.

time of temptation we ought not to expect a fervor and a clearness of reason sufficient to tranquillize ourselves; for in the midst of this darkness we see nothing but confusion. We have nothing then to do but to say to the Lord, O Lord, help me! O Lord, help me! and also to have frequently recourse to Most Holy Mary, who is the mother of perseverance, confiding in that divine promise, *Ask and you shall receive.*<sup>1</sup> And it is certain that he who, with the help of divine grace, is victorious in such a combat finds afterwards a double calm and peace in his vocation.

SECOND REMEDY: TO HAVE RECOURSE TO THE SUPERIORS.

The second remedy, and a principal and necessary one in such temptations, is to communicate to the Superiors, or to the spiritual Father of the Community, the temptation which afflicts you, and this at once, before the temptation becomes strong. St. Philip Neri said that when a temptation is thus manifested it is half vanquished. On the contrary, there is in such a case no greater evil than to conceal the temptation from Superiors; for then, on the one hand, God withdraws his light because of the little fidelity shown by the subject in not disclosing it, and, on the other, whilst the mine is not sprung, the temptation gains strength. Whence it may be held for certain that he will surely lose his vocation who, when he is tempted against it, does not disclose his temptations.

And let it be understood that in religion the most dangerous temptations that hell can bring against a subject are those against vocation, in which, if it should succeed and conquer, by that one stroke it will have gained many victories; for when a subject has lost his vocation and left religion, what good will he any more be able to do in the service of God? Though the enemy

<sup>1</sup> "Petite et accipietis."—*John*, xvi. 24.

may make him believe that out of religion he will have more peace and be able to do more good, nevertheless let him hold for certain that as soon as he is out of it he will feel such a remorse in his heart that he will nevermore have peace. And God grant that such a remorse may not torment him afterwards through all eternity in hell, into which, as has already been said, he who through his own fault loses his vocation falls so very easily. He will be so lukewarm and discouraged in doing good that he will not even have the courage to raise his eyes to heaven. It will be an easy thing for him to give up prayer altogether, because as often as he begins it he will feel a hell of remorse, hearing his conscience reproach him, and saying, "What hast thou done? Thou hast abandoned God; thou hast lost thy vocation; and for what? To follow thine own caprice, to please thy parents." Let him be certain that he will have to hear this reproach through his whole life, and still more shall he hear it made to him at the hour of his death, when, in sight of eternity, instead of dying in the house of God, and in the midst of good brethren in religion, he will have to die outside of the Community, perhaps in his own house, in the midst of his relatives, to please whom he has displeased God. Let religious always beseech God to let them die rather than to permit that greatest of disgraces, the greatness of which they will better understand at the point of death and to their greater torment, because then there will be no more any remedy for their error. For him, then, who is tempted against his vocation, this is the best meditation he can make in the time of the temptation,—namely, to reflect what torment the remorse of having lost his vocation, and of having to die outside of religion, through his own caprice, through his own fault, will cause him at the hour of death.

## CONCLUSION.

Finally, let him who wishes to enter religion not forget to resolve to become a saint, and to suffer every exterior and interior pain, in order to be faithful to God, and not to lose his vocation. And if he be not resolved to this, I exhort him not to deceive the Superiors and himself, and not to enter at all, for this is a sign that he is not called, or, which is a still greater evil, that he wishes not to correspond, as he ought, with the grace of his vocation. Hence, with so bad a disposition it is better to remain without, in order to acquire a better disposition, to resolve to give himself entirely to God, and to suffer all for God. Otherwise he will do an injury both to himself and to the Order; for he will easily go back to the world, and then, being disgraced before the world as well as before God, he will be guilty of a still further infidelity to his vocation, and will lose the confidence in the power of taking another step in the way of God. God only knows into what other misfortunes and sins he may afterwards fall.

On the other hand, a beautiful sight it is to see in religion souls wholly given to God, who live in the world as if out of the world, without any other thought than that of pleasing God.

In religion each one has to live only for eternal life. What happiness for us, if we spend these few days of our life for God! And to this he is most especially obliged who has perhaps already spent much of his life in the service of the world. Let us set eternity before our eyes, and then we shall suffer all with peace and joyfulness.

Let us thank God, who gives us so much light and so many means to serve him perfectly, since he has chosen us, from among so many, to serve him in religion, hav-

ing bestowed on us the gift of his holy love. Let us make haste to please him in the practice of virtue, reflecting that, as St. Teresa said to her daughters, we have already by his grace done the principal thing necessary to become saints, by turning our backs on the world and all its goods, the least yet remains to be done, and we shall be saints. I hold it for certain that for those who die in religion, Jesus Christ has prepared a prominent place in paradise. On this earth we shall be poor, despised, and treated as fools, as imprudent men, but in the other life our lot will be changed.

Let us always recommend ourselves to our Redeemer hidden in the Sacrament, and to Most Holy Mary, because in religion all subjects must profess a most special love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and for the Immaculate Virgin Mary; and let us have great confidence. Jesus Christ has chosen us to be princes of his court, as we may confidently conclude from the protection he extends to all religious Orders, and to each member of them. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*<sup>1</sup>

O Lord! finish Thy work, and, for Thy glory, grant us to be all Thine, so that all the members of Thy Orders may until the day of judgment be pleasing to Thee, and gain over to Thee an immense number of souls. Amen. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> "Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo?"—Ps. xxvi. 1.

## Considerations for those who are Called to the Religious State.

### CONSIDERATION I.

#### How the Salvation of the Soul is secured by entering the Religious State.

To know how important is the eternal salvation of our soul, it suffices to have faith, and to consider that we have but one soul, and when that is lost, all is lost. *What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?*<sup>1</sup> This great maxim of the Gospel has induced many youths either to shut themselves up in cloisters or to live in deserts, or by martyrdom to give up their lives for Jesus Christ. For, said they, what does it profit us to possess the whole world, and all the goods of this world, in this present life, which must soon finish, and then be damned and be miserable in that life to come, which will never end? All those rich men, all those princes and emperors, who are now in hell, what have they now of all they enjoyed in this life, but a greater torment and a greater despair? Miserable beings, they lament now and say, *All those things are passed like shadows.*<sup>2</sup> For them all is passed like a shadow, like a dream, and that lamentation which is their lot has lasted already many years, and shall last throughout all eternity. *The fashion of this world passeth away.*<sup>3</sup> This world is a scene which lasts but a short time; happy he who plays on this scene that part which will afterwards make him

<sup>1</sup> "Quid enim prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur?"—*Matth.* xvi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> "Transierunt omnia illa tanquam umbra."—*Wisd.* v. 9.

<sup>3</sup> "Præterit figura hujus mundi."—*1 Cor.* vii. 51.

happy in the life which will never end. When he shall then be contented, honored, and a prince in paradise, so long as God shall be God, little will he care for having been in this world poor, despised, and in tribulation. For this end alone has God placed us on this earth, and keeps us here in life, not to acquire transitory but eternal goods: *The end is life everlasting.*<sup>1</sup>

This is the sole end, which all men who live in the world ought to have in view. But the misfortune is, that in the world one thinks little or nothing of everlasting life. In the midst of the darkness of this Egypt, the greatest number of men bestow all their care on acquiring honor and pleasures; and this is the reason why so many perish. *With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in his heart.*<sup>2</sup> How few are they who reflect on death, by which for us the scene is closed; on the eternity which awaits us; on what God has done for our sake! And thence it comes that these miserable beings live in blindness and at random, far from God, having their eyes, like the beasts, intent only on earthly things, without remembering God, without desiring his love, and without a thought of eternity. Therefore they die afterwards an unhappy death, which will be the beginning of an eternal death and an endless misery. Having arrived there, they will open their eyes; but it will be only to lament for their own foolishness.

This is the great means of salvation which is found in religion, to wit: the continual meditation on the eternal truths. *Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.*<sup>3</sup> In all well-regulated religious houses this is done every

<sup>1</sup> "Finem vero, vitam æternam."—*Rom.* vi. 22.

<sup>2</sup> "Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet corde."—*Jer.* xii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> "Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis."—*Ecclus.* vii. 40.



day, and even several times a day. And therefore in this light of divine things, which there shines continually, it is morally impossible to live, at least for a long time, far from God, and without keeping one's account ready for eternity.

*Prayer.*

O my God! how have I ever deserved this great mercy, that, having left so many others to live in the midst of the world, Thou hast willed to call me, who have offended Thee more than others, and deserved, more than they, to be deprived of Thy divine light, to enjoy the honor of living as a friend in Thy own house! O Lord! grant that I may understand this exceeding grace which Thou hast bestowed on me, that I may always thank Thee for it, as I purpose and hope to do always during my life and throughout eternity, and do not permit me to be ungrateful for it. Since Thou hast been so liberal towards me, and hast in Thy love preferred me to others, it is but just that more than others I should serve and love Thee. O my Jesus! Thou wouldst have me to be wholly Thine, and to Thee I give myself wholly. Accept me, and henceforward keep me as Thy own, since I am no more mine. Finish Thou the work which Thou hast begun. Thou hast called me to Thy house, because Thou wilt have me become a saint. Make me then what Thou wilt have me. Do it, O eternal Father! for the love of Jesus Christ, in whom is all my confidence. I love Thee, my sovereign good, I love Thee. O infinite goodness! I love Thee alone, and will love Thee forever. O Mary, my hope, come to my assistance, and obtain for me to be always faithful and thankful to my Lord.

CONSIDERATION II.

**The Happy Death of the Religious.**

*Happy are the dead who die in the Lord.*<sup>1</sup> And who are those blessed dead who die in the Lord, but the religious, who at the end of their lives are found already dead to the world, having already detached themselves by their holy vows from the world and all its goods?

<sup>1</sup> "Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur."—*Apoc.* xiv. 13.

Consider, my brother, how content you will feel if, following your vocation, it will be your good fortune to die in the house of God. The devil will certainly represent to you that if you retire into the house of God, you may perhaps afterwards repent of having left your own house and your own country, and deprived your parents of that succor which they might have expected from you. But say to yourself: Shall I, at the point of death, repent of having put my resolution in execution, or shall I be content? I beseech you, therefore, to imagine yourself now already at the point of death, about to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Reflect what then, reduced to that state, you would wish to have done. Perhaps to have contented your parents, to have worked for your own family and your country, and then to die surrounded by brothers, and nephews, and relatives, after having lived in your own house with the title of pastor, of canon, of bishop, of a member of the cabinet, and after having done your own will? or rather, to die in the house of God, assisted by your good brethren in religion, who encourage you on the great passage to eternity, after having lived many years in religion, humbled, mortified, poor, far from parents, deprived of your own will, and under obedience, and detached from everything in the world,—all these things render death sweet and agreeable? “He who has been accustomed to deprive himself of the delights of the world,” says St. Bernard, “will not regret having done so when he has to leave it.”<sup>1</sup> Pope Honorius II., when dying, wished that he had remained in his monastery, occupied in washing the plates, and had not been Pope. Philip II. wished at his death that he had been a lay-brother in some religious Order, intent on serving God, and had not been a king. Philip III., also King of

<sup>1</sup> “Qui consuevit se delectationibus mundi privare, mundum deserere non sentiet.”

Spain, said when he was dying, "Oh that I had been in a desert, there to serve God, and that I had never been a monarch! for had such been the case, I should now appear with more confidence before the tribunal of Jesus Christ."

When, then, hell tempts you about your vocation, think of the hour of death, and set before your eyes that all-important moment "upon which eternity depends."<sup>1</sup> Thus you will overcome all temptations; you will be faithful to God; and certainly you will not repent of it at the point of death, but will give thanks to the Lord, and die contented. Gerard, brother of St. Bernard, died singing, at the very thought of dying in the house of God.

Father Suarez, of the Company of Jesus, felt at his death so great consolation and sweetness at dying in religion that he said, "I never thought it was so sweet to die."<sup>2</sup>

Another good religious, of the same society, when at the point of death, laughed; and being asked why he laughed, answered: "And why should I not laugh? Has not Jesus Christ himself promised paradise to him who leaves everything for his sake? Was it not he who said, *Every one that has left house, or brethren, or father, etc., shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting?*"<sup>3</sup> I have left all for God; God is faithful, he cannot fail to fulfil his promises; and so," he said, "why should I not rejoice and laugh, seeing myself assured of paradise?"

A certain lay-brother, who died some years ago, was asked, at his death, in which house he would rather be. He answered, "I desire nothing but to die and to be united with God."

<sup>1</sup> "A quo pendet æternitas."

<sup>2</sup> "Non putabam tam dulce esse mori."

<sup>3</sup> "Qui reliquerit domum vel fratres, aut patrem, etc., centuplum accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit."—*Matth.* xix. 29.

Father Januarius Sarnelli, a short time before his death, when conversing with God, uttered the following words: "O Lord, Thou knowest that all I have done, all I have thought, has been for Thy glory; now I wish to go to see Thee face to face, if it please Thee so;" then he said, "Come, I will begin a sweet agony;" and began to converse affectionately with God, and shortly after placidly expired, preserving the smile on his lips, and the body began to give forth a sweet odor, which, as they attested, was perceived for several days in the room in which he had died.

St. Bernard, then, speaking of the happy state of religious, had good reason to exclaim: "O secure life, in which death is expected without fear,—ay, sweetly desired and devoutly accepted!"<sup>1</sup>

*Prayer.*

O my Lord Jesus Christ! who, in order to obtain a happy death for me, hast chosen so bitter a death for Thyself; since Thou hast loved me to such an extent as to have chosen me to follow more closely Thy holy life, to have me thus more intimately united with Thy loving heart, bind me, I beseech Thee, wholly to Thee with the sweet cords of Thy love, that I may no more separate myself from Thee. O my beloved Redeemer! I wish to be grateful to Thee, and to correspond with Thy grace, but I fear my weakness may render me unfaithful; O my Jesus! do not permit this. Let me die rather than abandon Thee, or forget the peculiar affection Thou hast shown me.

I love Thee, O my dear Saviour! Thou art and shalt always be the only Lord of my heart and of my soul. I leave all and choose Thee alone for my treasure, O most pure Lamb of God, O my most ardent lover! *My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands.*<sup>2</sup> Begone, ye creatures, my only good

<sup>1</sup> "O vita segura, ubi absque formidine mors expectatur, immo et exoptatur cum dulcedine, et excipitur cum devotione."—*Ad Mil. T. c. i.*

<sup>2</sup> "Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus, electus ex millibus."—*Cant. v. 10.*

is my God, he is my love, my all. I love Thee, O my Jesus! and in loving Thee I will spend the remainder of my life, be it short, or be it long. I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my heart, and I wish to die united with Thee. I wish nothing else. Make me live always burning with Thy love, and when I shall have arrived at the end of my life, make me expire in an ardent act of love towards Thee.

Immaculate Virgin Mary, obtain thou this grace for me; I hope it from thee.

### CONSIDERATION III.

**The Account which he will have to render to Jesus Christ, on the Day of Judgment, who does not follow his Vocation.**

The grace of vocation to the religious state is not an ordinary grace; it is a very rare one, which God grants only to a few. *He hath not done so to every nation.*<sup>1</sup> Oh, how much greater is this grace, to be called to a perfect life and to become one of the household of God, than if one were called to be the king of any kingdom on this earth! for what comparison can there be between a temporal kingdom of this earth and the eternal kingdom of heaven?

But the greater the grace is, the greater will be the indignation of the Lord against him who has not corresponded with it, and the more rigorous will be his judgment at the day of account. If a king were to call a poor shepherd to his royal palace, to serve him among the noblemen of his court, what would not be the indignation of this king were he to refuse such a favor, through unwillingness to leave his miserable stable and his little flock? God knows well the value of his graces, and therefore he chastises with severity those who despise them. He is the Lord; when he calls, he wishes to be obeyed, and obeyed promptly. When, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> "Non fecit taliter omni nationi."—Ps. cxlvii. 20.

by his inspiration, he calls a soul to a perfect life, if it does not correspond, he deprives it of his light, and abandons it to its own darkness. Oh, how many poor souls shall we see among the reprobate on the day of judgment for this very reason, that they were called and would not correspond!

Give thanks, then, to the Lord, who has invited you to follow him; but if you do not correspond, fear. Since God calls you to serve him nearer to his person, it is a sign that he wishes to save you. But he will have you to be saved in that path only which he indicates to you and has chosen for you. If you wish to save yourself on a road of your own choosing, there is great danger that you will not be saved at all; for if you remain in the world, when God wishes you to be a religious, he will not give you those efficacious helps prepared for you had you lived in his house, and without these you will not save yourself. *My sheep hear My voice.*<sup>1</sup> He who will not obey the voice of God shows that he is not, and will not be, one of his sheep, but in the valley of Josaphat he will be condemned with the goats.

*Prayer.*

O Lord, Thou hast shown me such an excess of bounty as to choose me from among so many others, to serve Thee in Thy own house with Thy most beloved servants. I know how great is that grace, and how unworthy of it I have been. Behold, I am willing to correspond to so great a love. I will obey Thee. Since Thou hast been towards me so liberal as to call me when I did not seek Thee, and when I was so ungrateful, permit it not that I should offer to Thee that greater excess of ingratitude, to embrace again my enemy, the world, in which heretofore I have so oftentimes forfeited Thy grace and my eternal salvation, and thus to forsake Thee, who hast shed Thy blood and given Thy life for my sake. Since Thou hast called me,

“Oves meæ vocem meam audiunt.”—*John*, x. 27.



give me also the strength to correspond to the call. Already have I promised to obey Thee. I promise it again, but without the grace of perseverance I cannot be faithful to Thee. This perseverance I ask from Thee, and through Thy own merits it is that I wish it and hope to obtain it. Give me the courage to vanquish the passions of the flesh, through which the devil seeks to induce me to betray Thee. I love Thee, O my Jesus! to Thee I consecrate myself entirely. I am already Thine, I will be always Thine. O Mary, my mother and my hope, thou art the mother of perseverance. This grace is only dispensed through thy hands; do thou obtain it for me. In thee do I confide.

#### CONSIDERATION IV.

**The Torment which in Hell will be the Lot of him who is damned for having lost his Vocation.**

The pain of having through one's own fault lost some great good, or of having brought upon one's self voluntarily some great evil, is a pain so great that even in this life it causes an insupportable torment. But what torment will that youth, called by the singular favor of God to the religious state, feel in hell when he then perceives that if he had obeyed God he would have attained a high place in paradise, and sees himself nevertheless confined in that prison of torments, without hope of remedy for this his eternal ruin! *Their worm dieth not.*<sup>1</sup>

This will be that worm, which, living always, will always gnaw his heart by a continual remorse. He will say then, What a fool I was! I might have become a great saint. And if I had obeyed, I would certainly have become so; and now I am damned without remedy.

Miserable being! Then for his greater torment, on the day of judgment he will see and recognize at the right hand, and crowned as saints, those who have followed their vocation, and, leaving the world, have re-

<sup>1</sup> "Vermis eorum non moritur."—*Mark*, ix. 43.



tired to the house of God, to which he also had been once called. And then will he see himself separated from the company of the blessed, and placed in the midst of that innumerable and miserable crew of the damned, for his disobedience to the voice of God.

We know well, as we have considered above, that to this most unhappy lot he exposes himself who, in order to follow his own caprice, turns a deaf ear to the call of God. Therefore, my brother, you who have already been called to become a saint in the house of God, consider that you will expose yourself to a great danger should you lose your vocation through your own fault. Consider that this very vocation which God in his sovereign bounty has given you, in order, as it were, to take you out from among the populace and place you among the chosen princes of his paradise, will, through your own fault, should you be unfaithful to it, become an especial hell for you. Make your choice then, for God leaves it in your own hands, either to be a great king in paradise, or a reprobate in hell, more despairing than the rest.

*Prayer.*

No, my God, permit me not to disobey Thee and to be unfaithful. I see Thy goodness, and thank Thee for that instead of casting me away from Thy face, and banishing me into hell, as I have so often deserved, Thou callest me to become a saint, and preparest for me a high place in paradise. I see that I should deserve a double torment, should I not correspond with this grace, which is not given to all. I will obey Thee. Behold, I am Thine, and always will be Thine. I embrace with joy all the pains and discomforts of the religious life, to which Thou invitest me. And what are these pains in comparison with the eternal pains, which I have deserved? I was entirely lost through my sins; now I give myself entirely to Thee. Dispose of me and my life as Thou pleasest. Accept, O Lord! of one already condemned to hell, as I have been, to serve Thee and love Thee in this life and in the next. I will love Thee as much

as I have deserved to be doomed to hate Thee in hell, O God, worthy of an infinite love! O my Jesus! Thou hast broken those chains by which the world held me bound; Thou hast delivered me from the servitude of my enemies. I will love Thee much, then, O my love! and for the love I bear Thee, I will always love Thee and obey Thee. Always will I thank Thee, O Mary, my advocate, who hast obtained this mercy for me. Help me, and suffer me not to be ungrateful to that God who has loved me so much. Obtain for me that I may die rather than be unfaithful to so great a grace. Thus I hope.

#### CONSIDERATION V.

The Immense Glory which Religious enjoy in Heaven.

Consider, in the first place, that which St. Bernard says, that it is difficult for religious who die in the religious state to be damned. "From the cell to heaven the way is easy; one scarcely ever descends from his cell into hell." And the reason which the saint adduces is, "because one scarcely ever perseveres in it until death, unless he be predestinated."<sup>1</sup> For a religious with difficulty perseveres until his death, if he be not of the number of the elect of paradise. Therefore, St. Laurence Justinian called the religious state the gate of paradise. "Of that heavenly city this is the gate."<sup>2</sup> And he said that "therefore the religious have a great sign of their predestination."<sup>3</sup>

Consider, moreover, that the reward of heaven, as the Apostle says, is "a crown of justice;"<sup>4</sup> wherefore God, though he rewards us for our works more abundantly than we deserve, rewards us nevertheless in proportion

<sup>1</sup> "Facilis via de cella ad cœlum. . . . Vix unquam aliquis a cella in infernum descendit: quia vix unquam, nisi cœlo prædestinatus, in ea usque ad mortem persistit."—*De Vit. Sol.* c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Illius cœlestis civitatis, iste est introitus."

<sup>3</sup> "Magnum quippe prædestinationis indicium est."—*De Disc. mon.*

c. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "Corona justitiæ."—2 *Tim.* iv. 8.

to the works we have done. *He will render to every one according to his works.*<sup>1</sup> From this consider how exceedingly great will be the reward which God will give in heaven to good religious, in consideration of the great merits they daily acquire.

The religious gives to God all his goods of this earth, and is content to be entirely poor, without possessing anything. The religious renounces all attachment to his parents, friends, and country, in order to unite himself more closely to God. The religious continually mortifies himself in many things which he would enjoy in the world. The religious, finally, gives to God his whole self, by giving him his will through the vow of obedience.

But the dearest thing that we have is our own will, and what God, of all other things, requires of us most is our heart; that is to say, our will. *My son, give Me thy heart.*<sup>2</sup> He who serves God in the world will give him his possessions, but not himself; he will give him a part and not the whole, for he will give him indeed his goods by alms-deeds, his food by fasting, his blood by disciplines, etc.; but he will always reserve for himself his own will, fasting when he pleases, praying when he likes. But the religious, giving him his own will, gives himself and gives all, gives not only the fruits of the tree, but the whole tree itself. Whence he may then truly say to him, O Lord! having given Thee my will, I have nothing more to give to Thee:

And, therefore, in all that he does through obedience he is sure to do the will of God perfectly, and merits by all, not only when he prays, when he hears confessions, when he preaches, or fasts, or practises other mortifications, but also when he takes his food, when he sweeps his room, when he makes his bed, when he takes his

<sup>1</sup> "Reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus."—*Matth.* xvi. 27.

<sup>2</sup> "Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi."—*Prov.* xxiii. 26.

rest, when he recreates himself; for, doing all this through obedience, in all he does the will of God. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi said that all that is done through obedience is a prayer. Hence, St. Anselm, speaking of those who love obedience, asserted that all that religious do is meritorious for them. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that in religion one sails, as it were, in a vessel, in which he even advances who does not row.

Oh, how much more will a religious gain in one month by observing his Rule than a secular, with all his penance and prayers, in a year! Of that disciple of Dorotheus called Dositheus, it was revealed that for the five years he had lived under obedience there was given to him in heaven the glory of St. Paul the Hermit and of St. Anthony the Abbot, both of whom had for so many years lived in the desert. Religious, it is true, have to suffer the inconveniences of regular observance: *Going, they went and wept*. But when they are called to the other life, they will go to heaven, but, *coming, they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves*.<sup>1</sup> Whence they shall then sing, *The lines are fallen unto me in goodly places, for my inheritance is goodly to me*.<sup>2</sup> These bonds which have bound me to the Lord have become for me exceedingly precious, and the glory they have acquired for me is exceedingly great.

#### *Prayer.*

Is it possible, O my God and my true lover! that Thou desirest so much my good, and to be loved by me, and that I, miserable that I am, desire so little to love and to please Thee? For what end hast Thou favored me with so many graces, and taken me out of the world? O my Jesus! I understand Thee. Thou lovest me much, Thou wilt have me love Thee much

<sup>1</sup> "Euntes ibant et flebant. . . . Venientes autem venient cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos,"—*Ps.* cxxv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris, etenim hereditas mea præclara est mihi."—*Ps.* xv. 6.

also, and be all Thine, in this life and in the next. Thou wishest that my love should not be divided with creatures, but wilt have it to be wholly for Thyself, the only good, the only lovely one, and worthy of infinite love. Ah! my Lord, my treasure, my love, my all, yet I pant and truly desire to love Thee, and to love no other but Thee. I thank Thee for this desire Thou hast given me; preserve it in me, always increase it in me, and grant that I may please Thee, and love Thee on this earth as Thou desirest, so that I may come hereafter to love Thee face to face, with all my strength in paradise. Behold, this is all that I ask from Thee. Thee will I love, O my God! I will love Thee, and for Thy love I offer myself to suffer every pain. I will become a saint, not that I may enjoy great delight in heaven, but to please Thee much, O my beloved Lord! and to love Thee much forever. Graciously hear me, O eternal Father! for the love of Jesus Christ.

My Mother Mary, for the love of this thy Son, help thou me. Thou art my hope; from thee I hope every good.

#### CONSIDERATION VI.

**The Interior Peace that God gives Good Religious to Enjoy.**

The promises of God cannot fail. God has said, *Every one that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, . . . or lands for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.*<sup>1</sup> That is, the hundredfold on this earth, and life everlasting in heaven.

The peace of the soul is a good which is of greater value than all the kingdoms of the world. And what avails it to have the dominions of the whole world without interior peace? Better is it to be the poorest villager, and to be content, than to be the lord of the whole world, and to live a discontented life. But who can give this peace? The unquiet world? Oh no, peace is a good that is obtained only from God. "O God!" prays the

<sup>1</sup> "Omnis qui reliquerit domum, vel fratres aut sorores, aut patrem aut matrem, . . . aut agros, propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet et vitam æternam possidebit."—*Matth.* xix. 29.

Church, "give to Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give."<sup>1</sup> Therefore he is called the God of all consolation. But if God be the sole giver of peace, to whom shall we suppose will he give that peace but to those who leave all, and detach themselves from all creatures, in order to give themselves entirely to their Creator? And therefore is it seen that good religious shut up in their cells, though mortified, despised, and poor, live a more contented life than the great ones of the world, with all the riches, the pomps, and diversions they enjoy.

St. Scholastica said that if men knew the peace that good religious enjoy, the whole world would become a monastery; and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said that all, if they knew it, would scale the walls of the monasteries, in order to get into them. The human heart having been created for an infinite good, all creatures cannot content it, they being finite, imperfect, and few; God alone, who is an infinite good, can render it content. *Delight in the Lord and He will give thee the request of thy heart.*<sup>2</sup> Oh no; a good religious united with God envies none of the princes of the world who possess kingdoms, riches, and honors. "Let the rich," he will say with St. Paulinus, "have their riches, the kings have their kingdoms: to me Christ is my kingdom and my glory."<sup>3</sup> He will see those of the world foolishly glory in their displays and vanities; but he, seeking always to detach himself more from earthly things, always to unite himself more closely to his God, will live contented in this life, and will say, *Some trust in chariots, and some in*

<sup>1</sup> "Deus, . . . da servis tuis illam, quam mundus dare non potest, pacem."

<sup>2</sup> "Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui."—*Ps.* xxxvi. 4.

<sup>3</sup> "Sibi divitias suas habeant divites, sibi regna sua reges; nobis Christus regnum et gloria est."—*Ep. ad Aprum.*



horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord, our God.<sup>1</sup>

St. Teresa said that one drop of heavenly consolation is of greater value than all the pleasures of the world. Father Charles of Lorraine, having become a religious, said that God, by one moment of the happiness that he gave him to feel in religion, superabundantly paid him for all he had left for God. Hence his joyfulness was sometimes so great that, when alone in his cell, he could not help beginning to leap. The Blessed Seraphino of Ascoli, a Capuchin lay-brother, said that he would not exchange a foot length of his cord for all the kingdoms of the world.

Oh, what contentment does he find who, having left all for God, is able to say with St. Francis, "My God and my all!"<sup>2</sup> and with that to see himself freed from the servitude of the world, from the thralldom of worldly fashion, and from all earthly affections. This is the liberty that is enjoyed by the children of God, such as good religious are. It is true that in the beginning, the deprivation of the conversations and pastimes of the world, the observances of the Community, and the rules, seem to be thorns; but these thorns, as our Lord said to St. Bridget, will all become flowers and delights to him who courageously bears their first sting, and he will taste on this earth that peace which, as St. Paul says, surpasseth all the gratifications of the senses, and all the enjoyments of feasts, of banquets, and of the pleasures of the world: *The peace of God which surpasseth all understanding.*<sup>3</sup> And what greater peace can there be than to know that one pleases God?

<sup>1</sup> "Hi in curribus, et hi in equis; nos autem in nomine Domini Dei nostri invocabimus."—*Ps.* xix. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Deus meus et omnia."

<sup>3</sup> "Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum."—*Phil.* iv. 7.



*Prayer.*

O my Lord and my God, my all! I know that Thou alone canst make me contented in this and in the next life. But I will not love Thee for my own contentment, I will love Thee only to content Thy heart. I wish this to be my peace, my only satisfaction during my whole life, to unite my will to Thy holy will, even should I have to suffer every pain in order to do this. Thou art my God, I am Thy creature. And what can I hope for greater than to please Thee, my Lord, my God, who hast been so partial in Thy love towards me? Thou, O my Jesus! hast left heaven to live, for the love of me, a poor and mortified life. I leave all to live only for the love of Thee, my most blessed Redeemer. I love Thee with my whole heart; if only Thou wilt give me the grace to love Thee, treat me as Thou pleasest.

O Mary, Mother of my God! protect me and render me like to thee, not in thy glory, which I do not deserve, as thou dost, but in pleasing God, and obeying his holy will, as thou didst.

## CONSIDERATION VII.

**The Damage done to Religious by Tepidity.**

Consider the misery of that religious who, after having left his home, his parents, and the world with all its pleasures, and after having given himself to Jesus Christ, consecrating to him his will and his liberty, exposes himself at last to the danger of being damned, by falling into a lukewarm and negligent life, and continuing in it. Oh, no; not far from perdition is a lukewarm religious, who has been called into the house of God to become a saint. God threatens to reject such, and to abandon them if they do not amend. *But because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth.*<sup>1</sup>

St. Ignatius of Loyola, seeing a lay-brother of his Order become lukewarm in the service of God, called

<sup>1</sup> "Sed quia tepidus es, . . . incipiam te evomere ex ore meo."—*Apoc.* iii. 16.

him one day and said to him, Tell me, my brother, what did you come in religion to do? He answered, To serve God. O my brother! replied the saint, what have you said? If you had answered that you came to serve a cardinal, or a prince of this earth, you would be more excusable; but you say that you came to serve God, and do you serve him thus?

Father Nieremberg says that some are called by God to be saved only as saints, so that if they should not take care to live as saints, thinking to be saved as imperfect Christians, they will not be saved at all. And St. Augustine says that such are in most cases abandoned by God: "Negligent souls God is accustomed to abandon."<sup>1</sup> And how does he abandon them? By permitting them from lighter faults, which they see and do not mind, to fall into grievous ones, and to lose divine grace and their vocation. St. Teresa of Jesus saw the place prepared for her in hell had she not detached herself from an earthly, though not a grievously culpable, affection. *He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little.*<sup>2</sup>

Many wish to follow Jesus Christ, but from afar, as St. Peter did, who, when his Master was arrested in the garden, says St. Matthew, *followed Him afar off.*<sup>3</sup> But by doing so that will easily happen to them which happened to St. Peter; namely, that, when the occasion came, he denied Jesus Christ. A lukewarm religious will be contented with what little he does for God; but God, who called him to a perfect life, will not be contented, and, in punishment for his ingratitude, will not only deprive him of his special favors, but will sometimes permit his fall. "When you said, It is enough, then you per-

<sup>1</sup> "Deus negligentes deserere consuevit."—*In Ps.* 118, s. 10.

<sup>2</sup> "Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet."—*Ecclus.* xix. 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Sequebatur eum a longe."—*Matth.* xxvi. 58.

ished,"<sup>1</sup> says St. Augustine. The fig-tree of the Gospel was cast into the fire, only because it brought forth no fruit.

Father Louis de Ponte said, "I have committed many faults, but I have never made peace with them." Miserable is that religious who, being called to perfection, makes peace with his defects. As long as we detest our imperfections, there is hope that we may still become saints; but when we commit faults and make little of them, then, says St. Bernard, the hope of becoming saints is lost. *He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly.*<sup>2</sup> Common graces do not suffice to make one a saint; extraordinary ones are necessary. But how shall God be liberal with his favors towards that one who acts sparingly and with reserve in his love towards him?

Moreover, to become a saint, one must have courage and strength to overcome all repugnances; and let no one ever believe, says St. Bernard, that he will be able to attain to perfection if he does not render himself singular among others in the practice of virtue. "What is perfect cannot but be singular."<sup>3</sup> Reflect, my brother, for what have you left the world and all? To become a saint. But that lukewarm and imperfect life which you lead, is that the way of becoming a saint? St. Teresa animated her daughters by saying to them, "My sisters, you have done the principal thing necessary to become saints; the least remains yet to be done." The same I say to you; you have, perhaps, done the chief part already; you have left your country, your home, your parents, your goods, and your amusements; the least remains yet to be done, to become a saint; do it.

<sup>1</sup> "Si dixeris: Sufficit; periisti."—*Serm.* 169, *E. B.*

<sup>2</sup> "Qui parce seminat, parce et metet."—2 *Cor.* ix. 6.

<sup>3</sup> "Perfectum non potest esse, nisi singulare."

*Prayer.*

O my God! reject me not, as I deserve, for I will amend. I know well that so negligent a life as mine cannot satisfy Thee. I know that I have myself, by my lukewarmness, shut the door against the graces which Thou didst desire to bestow upon me. O Lord! do not yet abandon me, continue to be merciful towards me; I will rise from this miserable state. I will for the future be more careful to overcome my passions, to follow Thy inspirations, and never will I through slothfulness omit my duties, but I will fulfil them with greater diligence. In short, I will, from this time forward, do all I can to please Thee, and I will neglect nothing which I may know to be pleasing to Thee. Since thou, O my Jesus! hast been so liberal with Thy graces towards me, and hast deigned to give Thy blood and Thy life for me, there is no reason I should act with such reserve towards Thee. Thou art worthy of all honor, all love, and to please Thee one ought gladly to undergo every labor, every pain. But, O my Redeemer! Thou knowest my weakness, help me with Thy powerful grace; in Thee I confide. O immaculate Virgin Mary! thou who hast helped me to leave the world, help me to overcome myself and to become a saint.

## CONSIDERATION VIII.

**How Dear to God is a Soul that gives itself entirely to Him.**

God loves all those who love him: *I love them that love Me.*<sup>1</sup> Many, however, gives themselves to God, but preserve still in their hearts some attachment to creatures, which prevents them from belonging entirely to God. How, then, shall God give himself entirely to that one who, besides his God, loves creatures still? It is just that he should act with reserve towards those who act with reserve towards him. On the contrary, he gives himself entirely to those souls, who, driving from their hearts everything that is not God, and does not lead them to his love, and giving themselves to him without reserve, truly say to him: *My God and my all.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Ego diligentes me diligo."—*Prov.* viii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> "Deus meus, et omnia."

St. Teresa, as long as she entertained an inordinate affection, though not an impure one, could not hear from Jesus Christ what afterwards she heard, when, freeing herself from every attachment, she gave herself entirely to the divine love; namely, the Lord saying to her, "Now, because thou art all mine, I am all thine."

Consider that the Son of God has already given himself entirely to us: *A child is born to us, and a son is given to us.*<sup>1</sup> He has given himself to us through the love he bears to us. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*<sup>2</sup> It is, then, just, says St. John Chrysostom, that when a God has given himself to you, without reserve—"he has given thee all, nothing has he left to himself,"<sup>3</sup>—you also should give yourself to God, without reserve; and that always henceforth, burning with divine love, you should sing to him:

Thine wholly always will I be;  
Thou hast bestowed Thyself on me,  
Wholly I give myself to Thee.

St. Teresa revealed to one of her nuns, appearing to her after her death, that God loves a soul that, as a spouse, give itself entirely to him, more than a thousand tepid and imperfect ones. From these generous souls, given entirely to God, is the choir of Seraphim completed. The Lord himself says that he loves a soul that attends to its perfection, so much that he seems not to love any other. *One is My dove, My perfect one is but one.*<sup>4</sup> Hence Blessed Giles exhorts us, "One for one,"<sup>5</sup> by which he wishes to say that this one soul we have we ought to give wholly, not divided, to that One who alone deserves all love, on whom depends all

<sup>1</sup> "Parvulus natus est nobis, filius datus est nobis."—*Isa.* ix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis."—*Eph.* v. 2.

<sup>3</sup> "Totum tibi dedit, nihil sibi reliquit."

<sup>4</sup> "Una est columba mea, perfecta mea."—*Cant.* vi. 8.

<sup>5</sup> "Una uni."

our good, and who loves us more than *all*. "Leave all and you shall find all,"<sup>1</sup> says Thomas à Kempis. Leave all for God, and in God you will find all. "O soul!" concludes St. Bernard, "be alone, that you may keep yourself for him alone."<sup>2</sup> Keep yourself alone, give no part of your affections to creatures, that you may belong alone to Him who alone deserves an infinite love, and whom alone you ought to love.

*Prayer.*

*My beloved to Me and I to him.*<sup>3</sup> As then, O my God! Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, I should be too ungrateful if I should not give myself entirely to Thee; since Thou wouldst have me belong wholly to Thee, behold, O my Lord! I give myself entirely to Thee. Accept me through Thy mercy, disdain me not. Grant that this my heart, which once loved creatures, may turn now wholly to Thy infinite goodness. "Let me henceforth die," said St. Teresa, "let another than myself live in me. Let God live in me, and give me life. Let him reign, and let me be his slave, for my soul wishes no other liberty." This my heart is too small, O God most worthy of love, and it is too little able to love Thee, who art deserving of an infinite love. I should then commit against Thee too great an injustice, should I still divide it by loving anything besides Thee. I love Thee, my God, above everything. I love only Thee; I renounce all creatures, and give myself entirely to Thee, my Jesus, my Saviour, my love, my all. I say, and always will say, *What have I in heaven, and besides Thee, what do I desire on earth? . . . Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.*<sup>4</sup> I desire nothing, either in this life or in the next, but to possess the treasure of Thy love. I am unwilling that creatures should have any more a place in my heart; Thou alone must be its master. To Thee only shall it belong for the future. Thou only shalt be my God, my repose,

<sup>1</sup> "Dimitte omnia, et invenies omnia."—*Imit.* book 3, c. 32.

<sup>2</sup> "O anima! sola esto, ut soli te serves."—*In Cant.* s. 40.

<sup>3</sup> "Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi."—*Cant.* ii. 16.

<sup>4</sup> "Quid mihi est in cœlo? et a te quid volui super terram? Deus cordis mei, et pars mea Deus in æternum."—*Ps.* lxxii. 25.



my desire, all my love. "Give me only Thy love and Thy grace, and I am rich enough."<sup>1</sup> O most holy Virgin Mary! obtain for me this, that I may be faithful to God, and never recall the donation which I have made of myself to him.

#### CONSIDERATION IX.

**How Necessary it is, in order to become a Saint, to have a Great Desire for such a Thing.**

No saint has ever attained to sanctity without a great desire. As wings are necessary to birds in order to fly, so holy desires are necessary to the soul in order to advance in the road of perfection. To become a saint, we must detach ourselves from creatures, conquer our passions, overcome ourselves, and love crosses. But to do all this, much strength is required, and we must suffer much. But what is the effect of holy desire? St. Laurence Justinian answers us: "It supplies strength, and makes the pain easier to be borne."<sup>2</sup> Hence the same saint adds, that he has already vanquished who has a great desire of vanquishing. "A great part of the victory is the desire of vanquishing."<sup>3</sup> He who wishes to reach the top of a high mountain will never reach it if he has not a great desire to do so. This will give him courage and strength to undergo the fatigue of ascending, otherwise he will stop at the foot, wearied and discouraged.

St. Bernard asserts that we acquire perfection in proportion to the desire for it which we preserve in our heart. St. Teresa said that God loves generous souls that have great desires; for which reason the saint exhorted all in this way, "Let our thoughts be high, . . .

<sup>1</sup> "Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis."

<sup>2</sup> "Vires subministrat, pœnam exhibet leviolem."—*De Disc. mon.* c. 6.

<sup>3</sup> "Magna victoriæ pars est vincendi desiderium."—*De Casto Conn.* c. 3.



for thence will come our good. We must not have low and little desires, but have that confidence in God that, if we make the proper efforts, we shall by little and little attain to that perfection which, with his grace, the saints have reached." In this way, the saints attained, in a short time, a great degree of perfection, and were able to do great things for God. *Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time.*<sup>1</sup> Thus St. Aloysius Gonzaga attained in a few years (he lived not over twenty-three years) such a degree of sanctity that St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, in an ecstasy seeing him in heaven, said it seemed to her, in a certain way, that there was no saint in heaven who enjoyed a greater glory than Aloysius. She understood at the same time that he had arrived at so high a degree by the great desire he had cherished of being able to love God as much as he deserved, and that, seeing this beyond his reach, the holy youth had suffered on earth a martyrdom of love.

St. Bernard, being in religion, in order to excite his fervor, used to say to himself, "Bernard, for what did you come here?"<sup>2</sup> I say the same to you: What have you come to do in the house of God? To become a saint? And what are you doing? Why do you lose the time? Tell me, do you desire to become a saint? If you do not, it is sure that you will never become one. If, then, you have not this desire, ask Jesus Christ for it; ask Mary for it; and if you have it, take courage, says St. Bernard, for many do not become saints, because they do not take courage. And so I repeat, let us take courage, and great courage. What do we fear? What inspires this diffidence in us? That Lord, who has given us strength to leave the world, will also give us the grace to embrace the life of a saint. Everything comes to an end.

<sup>1</sup> "Consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa."—*Wis.* iv, 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Bernarde, ad quid venisti?"

Our life, be it a contented or a discontented one, will also come to an end, but eternity will never terminate. Only that little we have done for God will console us in death and throughout eternity. The fatigue will be short, eternal shall be the crown, which is already, so to speak, before our eyes. How satisfied are the saints now with all they have suffered for God! If a sorrow could enter paradise, the Blessed would be sorry only for this, that they have neglected to do for God what they might have done more, but which now they are unable to do. Take courage, then, and be prompt, for there is no time to lose; what can be done to-day we may not be able to do to-morrow. St. Bernardine of Sienna said that one moment of time is of as great a value as God himself, for at every moment we may gain God, his divine grace, and higher degrees of merits.

*Prayer.*

Behold, O my God! here I am. *My heart is ready, O my God! my heart is ready.*<sup>1</sup> See, I am prepared to do all that Thou shalt require from me. *O Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*<sup>2</sup> Tell me, O Lord, what Thou desirest of me. I will obey Thee in all. I am sorry for having lost so much time in which I might have pleased Thee, and yet have not done so. I thank Thee that still Thou givest me time to do it. Oh, no, I will not lose any more time. I will and desire to become a saint, not to obtain from Thee a greater glory and more delights. I will become a saint, that I may love Thee more, and to please Thee in this life and in the next. Make me, O Lord! to love and please Thee as much as Thou desirest. Behold, this is all I ask from Thee, O my God! I will love Thee, I will love Thee; and, in order to love Thee, I offer myself to undergo every fatigue, and to suffer every pain. O my Lord! increase in me always this desire, and give me the grace to execute it. Of myself I can do nothing, but assisted by Thee I can do all. Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, graciously hear me.

<sup>1</sup> "Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum."—*Ps.* lvi. 8,

<sup>2</sup> "Domine, quid me vis facere?"—*Acts*, ix. 6,

My Jesus, though the merits of Thy Passion, come to my succor. O Mary, my hope! for the love of Jesus Christ, protect me.

# CONSIDERATION X.

The Love we owe to Jesus Christ in consideration of the Love he has shown to us.

In order to understand the love which the Son of God has borne to us, it is enough to consider what St. Paul says of Jesus Christ: *He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even to the death of the cross.*<sup>1</sup> "He emptied himself." O God! what admiration has it caused, and will it, through all eternity cause, to the angels to see a God who became man for the love of man, and submitted himself to all the weaknesses and sufferings of man! *And the Word was made flesh.*<sup>2</sup> What a cause of astonishment would it not be to see a king become a worm for the sake of worms! But an infinitely greater wonder it is to see a God made man, and after this to see him humbled unto the painful and infamous death of the cross, on which he finished his most holy life.

Moses and Elias, on Mount Thabor, speaking of his death, as it is related in the Gospel, called it an excess: *They spoke of His decease* (the Latin word is "excessus," which also means "excess") *that He should accomplish in Jerusalem.*<sup>3</sup> Yea, says Bonaventure, it is with reason the death of Jesus Christ was called an excess, for it was an excess of suffering and of love, so much so that it would be impossible to believe it, if it had not already happened.<sup>4</sup> It was truly an excess of love, adds St.

<sup>1</sup> "Exinanivit semetipsum, formam servi accipiens. . . . Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis."—*Phil.* ii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Et Verbum caro factum est."—*John*, i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> "Dicebant excessum, quem completurus erat in Jerusalem."—*Luke*, ix. 31.

<sup>4</sup> "Excessus doloris, excessus amoris."

Augustine, for to this end the Son of God wishes to come on earth, to live a life so laborious and to die a death so bitter, namely, that he might make known to man how much he loved him. "Therefore Christ came, that man should know how much God loved him."<sup>1</sup>

The Lord revealed to his servant Armella Nicolas that the love he bore to man was the cause of all his sufferings and of his death. If Jesus Christ had not been God, but only man and our friend, what greater love could he have shown us than to die for us? *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*<sup>2</sup> Ah, how, at the thought of the love shown us by Jesus Christ, the saints esteemed it little to give their life and their all for so loving a God! How many youths, how many noblemen, are there not, who have left their house, their country, their riches, their parents, and all, to retire into cloisters, to live only for the love of Jesus Christ! How many young virgins, renouncing their nuptials with princes and the great ones of the world, have gone with joyfulness to death, to render thus some compensation for the love of a God who had been executed on an infamous gibbet, and died for their sake!

This appeared to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi to be foolishness; hence she called her Jesus a fool of love. In exactly the same manner the Gentiles, as St. Paul attests, hearing the death of Jesus Christ preached to them, thought it foolishness not possible to be believed. *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness.*<sup>3</sup> How is it pos-

<sup>1</sup> "Propterea Christus advenit, ut cognosceret homo quantum eum diligat Deus."—*De catech. rud.* c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Majorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis."—*John*, xv. 13.

<sup>3</sup> "Prædicamus Christum crucifixum, Judæis quidem scandalum, Gentibus autem stultitiam."—*1 Cor.* i. 23.

sible, they said, that a God, most happy in himself, who is in want of nothing, should die for the sake of man, his servant? This would be as much as to believe that God became a fool for the love of men. Nevertheless, it is of faith that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, did, for love of us, deliver himself up to death. *He hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us.*<sup>1</sup> The same Mary Magdalene had reason then to exclaim, lamenting the ingratitude of men towards so loving a God, "O love not known! O love not loved!" Indeed, Jesus Christ is not loved by men, because they live in forgetfulness of his love.

And, in fact, a soul that considers a God who died for its sake, cannot live without loving him. *The charity of Christ presseth us.*<sup>2</sup> The soul will feel itself inflamed, and as if constrained to love a God who has loved it so much. Jesus Christ could have saved us, says F. Nieremberg, with only one drop of his blood; but it was his will to shed all his blood, and to give his divine life, that at the sight of so many sufferings and of his death we might not content ourselves with an ordinary love, but be sweetly constrained to love with all our strength a God so full of love towards us. *That they also who live may not live any more for themselves, but unto Him who died for them.*<sup>3</sup>

Prayer.

Indeed, O my Jesus, my Lord, and my Redeemer! only too much hast Thou obliged me to love Thee; too much my love has cost Thee. I should be too ungrateful if I should content myself to love with reserve a God who has given me his blood, his life, and his entire self. Oh, Thou hast died for me, Thy poor servant; it is but just that I should die for Thee, my God,

<sup>1</sup> "Dilexit nos, et tradidit semetipsum pro nobis."—*Eph.* v. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Charitas enim Christi urget nos."—*2 Cor.* v. 14.

<sup>3</sup> "Ut et qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est."—*Ibid.* v. 15.

and my all. Yes, O my Jesus! I detach myself from all, to give myself to Thee. I put away from me the love of all creatures, in order to consecrate myself entirely to Thy love. *My beloved is chosen from among thousands.*<sup>1</sup> I choose Thee alone out of all things for my good, my treasure, and my only love. I love Thee, O my love! I love Thee. Thou art not satisfied that I should love Thee a little only. Thou art not willing to have me love anything besides Thee. Thee I will please in all things, Thee will I love much; and Thou shalt be my only love. My God, my God, help me, that I may fully please Thee.

Mary, my queen, do thou also help me to love my God much. Amen. So I hope; so may it be.

#### CONSIDERATION XI.

**The Great Happiness which Religious enjoy in dwelling in the same House with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.**

The Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, foundress of a convent in Toulouse, said that she esteemed very much her lot as a religious, for two principal reasons. The first was, that religious, through the vow of obedience, belong entirely to God; and the second, that they have the privilege of dwelling always with Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. And in truth, if people of the world deem it so great a favor to be invited by kings to dwell in their palaces, how much more favored should we esteem ourselves who are admitted to dwell continually with the King of Heaven in his own house?

In houses of the religious, Jesus Christ dwells for their sake in the church, so that they can find him at all hours. Persons of the world can scarcely go to visit him during the day, and in many places only in the morning. But the religious finds him in the tabernacle, as often as he wishes, in the morning, in the afternoon, and during the night. There he may continually entertain himself with his Lord, and there Jesus Christ rejoices to converse familiarly with his beloved servants,

<sup>1</sup> "Dilectus meus . . . electus ex millibus."—*Cant.* v. 10.



whom, for this end, he has called out of Egypt, that he may be their companion during this life, hidden under the veil of the Most Holy Sacrament, and in the next unveiled in paradise. "O solitude," it may be said of every religious house, "in which God familiarly speaks and converses with his friends!"<sup>1</sup> The souls that love Jesus Christ much do not know how to wish for any other paradise on this earth than to be in the presence of their Lord, who dwells in this sacrament for the love of those who seek and visit him.

*His conversation hath no bitterness, nor His company any tediousness.*<sup>2</sup> He finds tediousness in the company of Jesus Christ, who does not love him. But those who on this earth have given all their love to Jesus Christ find in the sacrament all their pleasure, their rest, their paradise; and therefore they keep their hearts always mindful to visit, as often as they can, their God in the sacrament, to pay their court to him, giving vent to their affections at the foot of the altar, offering him their afflictions, their desires of loving him, of seeing him face to face, and, in the mean time, of pleasing him in all things.

*Prayer.*

Behold me in Thy presence, O my Jesus! hidden in the sacrament: Thou art the self-same Jesus who for me didst sacrifice Thyself on the cross. Thou art he who lovest me so much, and who hast therefore confined Thyself in this prison of love. Amongst so many who have offended Thee less than I, and who have loved Thee better than I, Thou hast chosen me, in Thy goodness, to keep Thee company in this house, where, having drawn me from the midst of the world, Thou hast destined me always to live united with Thee, and afterwards to have me nigh Thee to praise and to love Thee in Thy eternal kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> "O solitudo, in qua Deus cum suis familiariter loquitur et conversatur!"

<sup>2</sup> "Non habet amaritudinem conversatio ejus; nec tædium convictus illius, sed lætitiā et gaudium."—*Sap.* viii. 16.



O Lord! I thank Thee. How have I deserved this happy lot? *I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than dwell in the tabernacles of sinners.*<sup>1</sup> Happy indeed am I, O my Jesus! to have left the world; and it is my great desire to perform the vilest office in Thy house rather than dwell in the proudest royal palaces of men. Receive me, then, O Lord! to stay with Thee all my life long; do not chase me away, as I deserve. Be pleased to allow that, among the many good brothers who serve Thee in this house, I, though I am a miserable sinner, may serve Thee also. Many years already have I lived far from Thee. But now that Thou hast enlightened me to know the vanity of the world, and my own foolishness, I will not depart any more from Thy feet, O my Jesus! Thy presence shall animate me to fight when I am tempted. The nearness of Thy abode shall remind me of the obligation I am under to love Thee, and always to have recourse to Thee in my combats against hell. I will always keep near to Thee, that I may unite myself to Thee, and attach myself closer to Thee. I love Thee, O my God! hidden in this sacrament. Thou, for the love of me, remainest always on this altar. I, for the love of Thee, will always remain in Thy presence as much as I shall be able. There enclosed Thou always lovest me, and here enclosed I will always love Thee. Always, then, O my Jesus, my love, my all! shall we remain together,—in time in this house, and during eternity in paradise. This is my hope; so may it be. Most holy Mary, obtain for me a greater love for the Most Holy Sacrament.

#### CONSIDERATION XII.

**The Life of Religious resembles mostly the Life of Jesus Christ.**

The Apostle says that the eternal Father predestines to the kingdom of heaven those only who live conformably to the life of the incarnate Word. *Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.*<sup>2</sup> How happy, then, and secure of

<sup>1</sup> "Elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei mei, magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum."—*Ps.* lxxxiii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> "Quos præscivit, et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui."—*Rom.* viii. 29.

## XII. *Life of Religious resembles that of J. Ch.* 155

paradise should not religious be, seeing that God has called them to a state of life which of all other states is the most conformed to the life of Jesus Christ.

Jesus, on this earth, wished to live poor as the son and helpmate of a mechanic, in a poor dwelling, with poor clothing and poor food: *Being rich, He became poor for your sake, that through His poverty you might become rich.*<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he chose a life the most entirely mortified, far from the delights of the world, and always full of pain and sorrow, from his birth to his death; hence by the prophet he was called *The man of sorrows.*<sup>2</sup> By this he wished to give his servants to understand what ought to be the life of those who wish to follow him: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.*<sup>3</sup> According to this example and to this invitation of Jesus Christ, the saints have endeavored to dispossess themselves of all earthly goods, and to load themselves with pains and crosses, in order thus to follow Christ, their beloved Lord.

Thus acted St. Benedict, who, being the son of the lord of Norcia, and a relative of the Emperor Justinian, and born amidst the riches and the pleasures of the world, while yet a youth of only fourteen years went to live in a cavern on Mount Sublaco, where he received no other sustenance but a piece of bread brought him every day as an alms by the hermit Romanus.

So acted St. Francis of Assisi, who renounced in favor of his father the whole lawful portion of his inheritance, even to the shirt he had on his back, and thus, poor and mortified, consecrated himself to Jesus Christ. Thus St. Francis Borgia, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, the one being

<sup>1</sup> "Propter vos egenus factus est, cum esset dives, ut illius inopia vos divites essetis."—2 Cor. viii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Vir dolorum."—Isa. liii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me."—Matth. xvi. 24.

Duke of Candia, the other of Castiglione, left all their riches, their estates, their vassals, their country, their house, their parents, and went to live a poor life in religion.

So have done so many other noblemen and princes, even of royal blood. Blessed Zedmerra, daughter of the King of Ethiopia, renounced the kingdom to become a Dominican nun. Blessed Johanna of Portugal renounced the kingdom of France and England, to become a nun. In the Benedictine Order alone, there are found twenty-five emperors, and seventy-five kings and queens, who left the world to live poor, mortified, and forgotten by the world, in a poor cloister. Ah! indeed, these and not the grandees of the world, are the truly fortunate ones.

At present, worldlings think these to be fools, but in the valley of Josaphat they shall know that they themselves have been the fools; and when they see the saints on their thrones crowned by God, they shall say, lamenting and in despair, *These are they whom we had sometime in derision; . . . we fools esteemed their life madness, but now they are numbered among the children of God, as their lot is among the saints.*<sup>1</sup>

*Prayer.*

Ah! my Master, and my Redeemer, Jesus, I am then of the number of those fortunate ones whom Thou hast called to follow Thee. O my Lord! I thank Thee for this. I leave all; would that I had more to leave, that I might draw near to Thee, my King and my God, who for the love of me, and to give me courage by Thy example, hast chosen for Thyself a life so poor and so painful. Walk on, O Lord, I will follow Thee. Choose Thou for me what cross Thou wilt, and help me. I will always carry it with constancy and love. I regret that for the past I have abandoned Thee, to follow my lusts and the vanities of the

<sup>1</sup> "Hi sunt quos habuimus aliquando in derisum. . . . Nos insensati vitam illorum æstimabamus insaniam. Ecce quomodo inter filios Dei computati sunt, et inter Sanctos sors illorum est."—*Wisd.* v. 3 et seq.

world; but now I will leave Thee no more. Bind me to Thy cross, and if through weakness I sometimes resist, draw me by the sweet bonds of Thy love. Suffer it not that I should ever leave Thee again. Yes, my Jesus, I renounce all the satisfactions of the world; my only satisfaction shall be to continue to love Thee, and to suffer all that pleases Thee. I hope thus to come myself one day in Thy kingdom, to be united with Thee by that bond of eternal love, where, loving Thee in Thy revealed glory, I need no more fear to be loosed and separated from Thee. I love Thee, O my God, my all! and will always love Thee. Behold my hope, O Most Holy Mary! thou who, because the most conformed to Jesus, art now the most powerful to obtain this grace. Be thou my protectress!

#### CONSIDERATION XIII.

**The Zeal which Religious ought to have for the Salvation of Souls.**

He who is called to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer will never be a true follower of Jesus Christ, and will never become a saint, if he fulfils not the end of his vocation, and has not the spirit of the Institute, which is the salvation of souls, and of those souls that are the most destitute of spiritual succor, such as the poor people in the country.

This was truly the end for which our Redeemer came down from heaven, who protests, *The Spirit of the Lord . . . hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.*<sup>1</sup> He sought no other of Peter's love for him but this, that he should procure the salvation of souls: *Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? . . . Feed My sheep.*<sup>2</sup> He did not impose upon him, says St. John Chrysostom, penance, prayers, or other things, but only that he should endeavor to save his sheep: "Christ said not to him,

<sup>1</sup> "Spiritus Domini . . . unxit me, evangelizare pauperibus."—*Luke*, iv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> "Simon Joannis, diligis me? . . . Pasce oves meas."—*John*, xxi. 17.

throw your money away, practise fasting, fatigue your body with hard work, but he said, Feed My sheep."<sup>1</sup> And he declares that he would look upon every benefit conferred on the least of our neighbors as conferred on himself. *Amen, I say to you, since you have done it unto one of these My least brethren, you have done it unto Me.*<sup>2</sup>

Every religious ought, therefore, with the utmost care, to entertain within himself this zeal, and this spirit of helping souls. To this end every one ought to direct his studies, and when he shall afterwards have been assigned to his work by his Superiors, he ought to give to it all his thoughts, and his whole attention. He could not call himself a true brother of this Congregation, who, through the desire of attending only to himself and of leading a retired and solitary life, would not accept with all affection such an employment, when imposed on him by obedience.

What greater glory can a man have than to be, as St. Paul says, a co-operator with God in this great work of the salvation of souls? He who loves the Lord ardently is not content to be alone in loving him; he would draw all to his love, saying with David, *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us extol His name together.*<sup>3</sup> Hence St. Augustine exhorts all those who love God, "If you love God, draw all men to his love."<sup>4</sup>

A good ground to hope for his own salvation has he who with true zeal labors for the salvation of souls. "Have you saved a soul," says St. Augustine, "then

<sup>1</sup> "Non dixit Christus: Abjice pecunias, jejuniu exerce, macera te laboribus; sed dixit: Pasce oves meas."

<sup>2</sup> "Amen dico vobis: quamdiu fecistis uni ex his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis."—*Matth.* xxv. 40.

<sup>3</sup> "Magnificate Dominum mecum, et exaltemus nomen ejus."—*Ps.* xxxiii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> "Si Deum amatis, omnes ad ejus amorem rapite."—*In Ps.* xxxiii. *en.* 2.

you have predestinated your own."<sup>1</sup> The Holy Ghost promises us, *When thou shalt have labored for the welfare of a poor man, and by thy labor shalt have filled him (with divine grace), the Lord will fill thee with light and peace.*<sup>2</sup> In this—namely, in procuring the salvation of others—St. Paul placed his hope of eternal salvation, when he said to his disciples of Thessalonica, *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory? Are not you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*<sup>3</sup>

*Prayer.*

O my Lord Jesus Christ! how can I thank Thee enough, since Thou hast called me to the same work that Thou didst Thyself on earth; namely, to go with my poor exertions and help souls to their salvation? How have I deserved this honor and this reward, after having offended Thee so grievously, and been the cause to others also of offending Thee? Yes, O my Lord! Thou callest me to help Thee in this great undertaking. I will serve Thee with all my strength. Behold, I offer Thee all my labor, and even my blood, in order to obey Thee. Nor do I by this aspire to satisfy my own inclination, or to gain applause and esteem from men; I desire nothing but to see Thee loved by all as Thou deservest. I prize my happy lot, and call myself fortunate, that Thou hast chosen me for this great work, in which I protest that I will renounce all praises of men and all self-satisfaction, and will only seek Thy glory. To Thee be all the honor and satisfaction, and to me only the discomforts, the blame, and the reproaches. Accept, O Lord! this offering, which I, a miserable sinner, who wish to love Thee and to see Thee loved by others, make of myself to Thee, and give me strength to execute it.

Most Holy Mary, my advocate, who lovest souls so much, help me.

<sup>1</sup> "Animam salvasti, animam tuam prædestinasti."

<sup>2</sup> "Cum effuderis esurienti animam tuam, et animam afflictam releveris, requiem tibi dabit Dominus, et implebit splendoribus animam tuam."—*Isa. lviii. 10, 11.*

<sup>3</sup> "Quæ est enim nostra spes, aut gaudium, et corona gloriæ? Nonne vos ante Dominum Jesum Christum estis in adventu ejus?"—*1 Thess. ii. 19.*



## CONSIDERATION XIV.

**How Necessary to Religious are the Virtues of Meekness and Humility.**

Our most lovely Redeemer Jesus willed to be called a lamb, for the very reason that he might show us how meek and humble he was himself. These were the virtues which he principally wished his followers should learn from him: *Learn from Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*<sup>1</sup> And these virtues he principally requires of religious who profess to imitate his most holy life.

He who lives as a solitary in a desert has not so much need of these virtues; but for him who lives in a Community, it is impossible not to meet, now and then, with a reprimand from his Superiors, or something disagreeable from his companions. In such cases, a religious who loves not meekness will commit a thousand faults every day, and live an unquiet life. He must be all sweetness with everybody,—with strangers, with companions, and also with inferiors if he should ever become Superior; and if he be an inferior, he must consider that one act of meekness in bearing contempt and reproach is of greater value to him than a thousand fasts and a thousand disciplines.

St. Francis said that many make their perfection consist in exterior mortifications, and, after all, are not able to bear one injurious word. “Not understanding,” he added, “how much greater gain is made by patiently bearing injuries.”<sup>2</sup> How many persons, as St. Bernard remarks, are all sweetness when nothing is said or done contrary to their inclination, but show their want of meekness when anything crosses them! And if any one should ever be Superior, let him believe that one reprimand

<sup>1</sup> “Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde.”—*Matth.* xi. 29.

<sup>2</sup> “Non intelligentes quanto majus sit lucrum in tolerantia injuriarum.”



mand made with meekness will profit his subjects more than a thousand made with severity. *The meek are useful to themselves and to others,*<sup>1</sup> as St. John Chrysostom teaches. In short, as the same saint said, the greatest sign of a virtuous soul is to see it meek on occasions of contradiction. A meek heart is the pleasure of the heart of God. *That which is agreeable to him is faith and meekness.*<sup>2</sup> It would be well for a religious to represent to himself, in his meditations, all the contrarieties that may happen to him, and thus arm himself against them; and then, when the occasion happens, he ought to do violence to himself, that he may not be excited and break out in impatience. Therefore, he should refrain from speaking when his mind is disturbed, till he is certain that he has become calm again.

But to bear injuries quietly, it is above all necessary to have a great fund of humility. He who is truly humble is not only unmoved when he sees himself despised, but is even pleased, and rejoices at it in his spirit, however the flesh may resent it; for he sees himself treated as he deserves, and made conformable to Jesus Christ, who, worthy as he was of every honor, chose, for the love of us, to be satiated with contempt and injuries. Brother Juniper, a disciple of St. Francis, when an injury was done to him, held up his cowl, as if he expected to receive pearls falling from heaven. The saints have been more desirous of injuries than worldlings are covetous of applause and honor. And of what use is a religious who does not know how to bear contempt for God's sake? He is always proud, and only humble in name and a hypocrite, whom divine grace will repulse, as the Holy Ghost says: *God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Mansuetus utilis sibi et aliis."—*In Act. hom.* 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Beneplicitum est illi fides et mansuetudo."—*Ecclus.* i. 34.

<sup>3</sup> "Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam."—*1 Peter*,

*Prayer.*

O my most humble Jesus, who, for the love of me, didst humble Thyself, and become obedient unto the death of the cross, how have I the courage to appear before Thee, and call myself Thy follower? for I see myself to be such a sinner and so proud that I cannot bear a single injury without resenting it. Whence can come such pride in me, who for my sins have so many times deserved to be cast forever into hell with the devils? Ah, my despised Jesus, help me and make me conformable to Thee. I will change my life. Thou, for love of me, hast borne so much contempt; I, for love of Thee, will bear every injury. Thou, O my Redeemer! hast rendered contempt too honorable and desirable, since Thou hast embraced it with so much love, during Thy own life. *Far be it from me to glory but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*<sup>1</sup> O my most humble mistress Mary, mother of God! Thou who wast in all, and especially in suffering, the most conformed to thy Son, obtain for me the grace to bear in peace all injuries which henceforward shall be offered to me. Amen.

## CONSIDERATION XV.

**How much Religious ought to confide in the Patronage of Mary.**

If it is true, and most true it is, that, according to the saying of St. Peter Damian, the divine mother, the most holy Mary, loves all men with such an affection that after God there is not, nor can there be, any one who surpasses or equals her in her love,—“She loves us with an invincible love,”<sup>2</sup>—how much must we think this great queen loves religious, who have consecrated their liberty, their life, and their all to the love of Jesus Christ? She sees well enough that the life of such as these is more conformable to her own life, and to that of her divine Son; she sees them often occupied in

<sup>1</sup> “Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.”—*Gal.* vi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> “Amat nos amore invincibili.”—*In Nat. B. V.* s. 1.

## *XV. Confidence in the Patronage of Mary.* 163

praising her, and continually attentive to honor her by their novenas, visits, rosaries, fasts, etc. She beholds them often at her feet, intent on invoking her aid, asking graces of her, and graces all conformed to her holy desires; that is, the grace of perseverance in the divine service, of strength in their temptations, of detachment from this world, and of love towards God. Ah, how can we doubt that she employs all her power and her mercy for the benefit of religious, and especially of those who belong to this holy Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, in which, as it is well known, we make special profession of honoring the Virgin Mother by visits, by fasting on Saturdays, by special mortifications during her novenas, etc., and by everywhere promoting devotion to her by sermons and novenas in her honor!

She, the great mistress, is grateful. *I love those who love Me.*<sup>1</sup> Yes, she is so grateful that, as St. Andrew of Crete says, "To him who does her the least service she is accustomed to return great favors."<sup>2</sup> She promises liberally those who love her, and who promote her honor among others, to deliver them from sin: "Those that work by me shall not sin."<sup>3</sup> She also promises to them paradise: "Those that explain me shall have life everlasting."<sup>4</sup>

For which reason we especially ought to thank God for having called us to this Congregation, where, by the usages of the Community and the example of our companions, we are often reminded, and in some way constrained, to have recourse to Mary, and continually to honor this our most loving mother, who is called, and is, the joy, the hope, the life, and the salvation of those who invoke and honor her.

<sup>1</sup> "Ego diligentes me diligo."—*Prov.* viii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> "Solet maxima pro minimis reddere."—*In Dorm. B. V.* s. 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Qui operantur in me, non peccabunt."—*Off. of the Blessed Virg.*

<sup>4</sup> "Qui elucidunt me, vitam æternam habebunt."—*Ib.*

*Prayer.*

My most beloved, most lovely, and most loving queen, I always thank my Lord and thee, who hast not only drawn me out of the world, but also called me to live in this Congregation, where a special devotion is practised to thee. Accept of me then, my mother, to serve thee. Among so many of thy beloved sons, do not scorn to let me serve thee also, miserable though I am. Thou after God shalt always be my hope and my love. In all my wants, in all my tribulations and temptations, I will always have recourse to thee; thou shalt be my refuge, my consolation. I am unwilling that any one except God and thee should comfort me in my combats, in the sadness and the tediousness of this life. For thy service I renounce all the kingdoms of the whole world. My kingdom on this earth shall be to serve, bless, and love thee, O my most lovely mistress! "whom to serve is to reign,"<sup>1</sup> as St. Anselm says. Thou art the mother of perseverance; obtain for me to be faithful to thee until death. By so doing I hope, and firmly hope, one day to come where thou reignest, to praise and bless thee forever, to depart no more from thy holy feet. Jesus and Mary, I protest, with your loving servant Alphonsus Rodriguez, "my most sweet loves, let me suffer for you, let me die for you, let me be all yours, and not at all my own."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Cui servire regnare est."

<sup>2</sup> "Jesu et Maria, amores mei dulcissimi! pro vobis patiar, pro vobis moriar; sim totus vester, sim nihil meus."

## Exhortation to Novices to Persevere in their Vocation.\*

THE grace of vocation, and the grace of perseverance in the vocation, are two distinct graces. Many have received from God vocation, but through their own fault have rendered themselves unworthy to receive the grace of perseverance. *No one shall be crowned, except he strive lawfully.*<sup>1</sup> No one, then, shall receive the grace of perseverance and the crown prepared by God for those that persevere, but he who on his own part does what he ought in order to combat and vanquish the enemy. *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*<sup>2</sup> My dear young friend, you who, by a special favor, have been called by the Lord to follow him, hear how he himself exhorts and encourages you; be attentive, my son, to preserve the grace thou hast received from me, and fear lest thou lose it, and another have the crown prepared for thee.

### I.

#### Temptations to which Novices are Exposed.

Whoever enters the novitiate, enters the service of the King of heaven, who is accustomed to try the fidelity of those he accepts as his servants, by crosses and temptations, with which he allows hell to assail them. Thus it was said to Tobias: *And because thou wast agreeable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.*<sup>3</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> "Non coronabitur, nisi qui legitime perseveraverit."—2 *Tim.* ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Tene quod habes, ut nemo accipiat coronam tuam."—*Apoc.* iii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> "Et quia acceptus eras Deo, necesse fuit ut tentatio probaret te."  
—*Tob.* xii. 13.

the Holy Ghost says to each one who leaves the world to give himself to God: *Son, when thou comest to the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation.*<sup>1</sup> So then the novice, on entering the house of God, ought to prepare himself not for consolations, but for temptations and combats, with which hell assails those who give themselves to God. It is well to know that the devil is particularly on the watch to make a novice lose his vocation, and, to accomplish this one thing, tempts him more than he does a thousand seculars, especially if he has entered an Order of religious engaged in the work of salvation of souls. For such a novice, if he persevere and be faithful to God, will snatch from him thousands of sinners, who will be saved by his means. And therefore the enemy seeks by all means to gain him, and arrays against him all his arts and cunning in order to seduce him.

The temptations by which the devil is most accustomed to tempt novices to abandon their vocation are the following:

#### I. TENDERNESS FOR PARENTS.

First, he tempts them through their tenderness for their parents. To resist this temptation, one ought to reflect that Jesus Christ has declared that he who loves his parents more than him, is not worthy of his friendship. *He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me.*<sup>2</sup> He himself protests, that he came not to bring peace, but division between parents and children. *I came not to send peace, but the sword; for I came to set a man at variance against his father, and a*

<sup>1</sup> "Fili accedens ad servitutem Dei, præpara animam tuam ad temptationem."—*Ecclus.* ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus."—*Matth.* x. 37.

## *I. Temptations to which they are Exposed.* 167

*daughter against her mother.*<sup>1</sup> And why so great a desire to separate relatives from one another? Because our Saviour knew the great damage one causes to the other, and that with regard to eternal salvation, as Jesus Christ himself adds after the words quoted above: *And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household.*<sup>2</sup>

Oh, how many poor youths, through affection for their parents, have lost first their vocation, and then, as it easily happens, their souls also. Many such unhappy instances are on record. I will relate some of them.

Father Jerome Piatti relates that a certain novice was visited by one of his relatives, who spoke to him thus: "Listen to me: I speak to you because I love you. Reflect that you have not a constitution strong enough to bear the fatigues and hard studies of the Order; in the world you can please God more, especially by giving to the poor a great part of the riches the Lord has given you. If you persist in your design, you will repent of it; and when finally you are made porter or cook, because you have little talent and weak health, you will nevertheless be obliged to quit the Order, to your own shame. Whence it is better to go out to-day than to-morrow." Being thus perverted, he left. Not many days passed, when the unhappy youth, who had already given himself up to every kind of vice, had a fight with some of his rivals, in which he and that self-same relative of his were wounded and shortly after died, both on the same day. What is worse, moreover,—the miserable novice died without confession, of which he stood in so great need.

Father Casalicchio relates further that a certain cavalier being one night on the point of going to the house

<sup>1</sup> "Non veni pacem mittere sed gladium: veni enim separare hominem adversus patrem suum, et filiam adversus matrem suam."—*Matth.* x. 34.

<sup>2</sup> "Et inimici hominis domestici ejus."



of a bad woman, heard the bell of the Capuchins who were just going to chant the office. Then he said: "How shall I go to offend God, at the very time these servants of his are going to praise him?" Thus called by God he entered their Order. But his mother did and said so much, that she induced him to come home again. And what happened then? After a few months he was killed by his enemies, and brought to his mother on a board.

Dionysius the Carthusian relates, that two novices of his Order were perverted by their fathers; but a few days after, both sons and fathers died, and what is worse, as the author asserts, they died a bad death.

Father Mancinelli relates of a certain young nobleman, that, although he had with great fortitude entered religion, overcoming the insidious dissuasions of his mother, who did all she could to turn him away from his design, yet when afterwards she pressed and insisted very much, the miserable man finally went out. After this, in order to keep him cheerful in the world, his mother made him take lessons in fencing. But one day, while he was engaged in this exercise with one of his friends, he received a wound in the eye, which was so deadly that the unhappy youth expired on the spot, without being able to make his confession.

The same Father Casalicchio relates that, while giving the mission in a place near Cosenza, he learned there that a young man having retired among the Capuchins, his father went and raised a great disturbance in the monastery, to oblige the religious to give back his son, and afterwards sent his brother there, who with other armed men, and among the rest a relative of the young man, took him out by force. But what happened? A month after, the father died miserably on a journey during a violent storm at sea. At the end of sixty

days, the relative died also away from home, and the unhappy novice, who knew not how to be faithful to his vocation, was covered all over with ulcers, so that the matter pozed out from head to foot, and he died thus in the greatest pains, and God only knows the disposition of his soul.

It is moreover related in the life of St. Camillus of Lellis, that a youth, who had entered his Order at Naples, was persecuted by his father. At first he resisted with fortitude, but having come to Rome, and having had again a conversation with his father, he gave way to the temptation. When he took his leave, the saint predicted that he would come to a bad end, and die at the hands of public justice. And so it happened, for the young man having returned home, afterwards, through jealousy, killed his wife and two servants, and being apprehended for this crime, though the father expended all his fortune in order to save his life, he was beheaded in the public market-place of Naples, nine years after leaving the Order.

It is related in the same life, that another novice was desirous of returning to the world; St. Camillus predicted to him also the chastisements of God, and in fact, having returned to Messina, he died six months after, suddenly, and without the sacraments.

Be therefore on your guard, my brother, if the devil seeks in this way to make you lose your vocation. That Lord who by such a particular grace has called you to leave the world and to consecrate yourself to his love, wills that you should not only leave, but also forget, your home and your parents. *Hearken, O daughter, and sec, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house.*<sup>1</sup> Hear, then, what God says to you, and understand, that if you abandon him for the sake of your par-

<sup>1</sup> "Audi, filia, et vide, et inclina aurem tuam, et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui."—*Ps.* xlv. 11.

ents, very great will be your pain and your remorse, when, about to die in the midst of your brothers and your nephews, you will remember the house of God which you left. Then, at the very time when you are in so much need of spiritual succor, they will stand around you to torment and trouble you about leaving them your possessions, and not one of them will so much as suggest to you one word about God; nay, even endeavoring to deceive you, in order not to increase your fear of death, they will flatter you with vain hopes, that you may die without preparation.

On the contrary, consider what contentment and peace you will feel at your death, if, having been faithful to God, it shall be your happy lot to end your life in the midst of the brethren of your Order. They will help you by their prayers, and with the hope of paradise, but without flattery, animate you to die with joy.

Consider, moreover, that if your parents have loved you for many years, and with some tenderness, God loved you long before, and with a much greater tenderness. Your parents have not loved you for more than twenty or thirty years, but God has loved you from eternity. *I have loved Thee with an everlasting love.*<sup>1</sup> Your parents have also put themselves to some expense for you, and have suffered some inconveniences for your sake; but Jesus Christ has expended for you all his blood and his life. If, then, you feel some tenderness for your parents, and if it seems to you that gratitude obliges you not to displease them, reflect, that you ought to be more grateful towards God, who more than all has done you good, and loved you, and say within yourself: Parents, if I leave you, I leave you for God, who deserves my love more than you, and who has loved me more than you; and saying thus, you will overcome that horrible temptation of tenderness for

<sup>1</sup> "In caritate perpetua dilexi te."—*Jer.* xxxi. 3.

parents, which has been the ruin of many in this life and the next.

2. FEAR RESPECTING HEALTH.

Another temptation by which the devil is accustomed to assail the novice, is in reference to the care of his health, and this is the way he speaks: Do you not see that by this mode of life you will lose your health, and then you will neither be good for the world nor for God?

From this temptation the novice ought to disengage himself by the hope that the Lord, who has given him his vocation, will also give him health sufficient to fulfil its duties. If he has come, as must be supposed, to the house of God only to please him, he ought to reason thus within himself: I have not concealed, and do not conceal, the state of my health from my Superiors. They have accepted me—they do not dismiss me: it is then God's good pleasure that I should continue to stay, and if it be the will of God, although I should suffer and die, what matters it? How many anchorites have gone to suffer in caverns and forests! How many martyrs have gone to give their life for Jesus Christ! If it be his will that I should lose health and life for the love of him, enough,—I am satisfied. I desire nothing else, nor could I desire anything better. Such should be the language of the fervent novice who wishes to become a saint. If one has no fervor during the time of the novitiate, let him be persuaded that he will have none during his whole life.

3. THE INCONVENIENCES OF COMMUNITY LIFE.

The next temptation is, that he will be unable to bear the hardships of the Community life, the scanty and ill-prepared food, the hard bed, the short sleep, not to be

free to go out, the strict silence, and, above all, to be deprived of doing his own will.

When the novice sees himself assailed by this temptation, he ought to say to himself that which St. Bernard said: "Bernard, for what camest thou here?"<sup>1</sup> Let him remember that he did not come to the house of God to live a comfortable life, but to become a saint? And how is he to become a saint? By comforts and delights? No, but by suffering and dying to all the inclinations of sensuality. St. Teresa said: "To think that God admits to his intimacy persons loving their comforts, is foolishness."<sup>2</sup> And in another place: "Souls that truly love God, cannot seek for rest."<sup>3</sup> So then if one is not resolved to suffer everything for God, he will never become a saint, and will never have peace.

What peace of soul is to be found in enjoying the goods of the world, and in gratifying the senses? Perhaps the great of this world, who have goods and pleasures in such abundance, find peace? These are the most unhappy of all, for they feed on gall and poison. *Vanity of vanities and affliction of the spirit.*<sup>4</sup> Thus earthly goods were styled by Solomon, who enjoyed them in abundance. The heart of man, when in the midst of these goods, however much it possesses, always seeks for more, and always remains unquiet. But when it places its joy in God, it finds in him all its peace: *Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart.*<sup>5</sup> Father Charles of Lorraine, brother to the Duke of Lorraine, when, having entered a religious Order, he found himself in his poor cell, felt such

<sup>1</sup> "Bernarde, ad quid venisti?"

<sup>2</sup> *Way of Perf.*, ch. xix.

<sup>3</sup> *Found*, ch. v.

<sup>4</sup> "Vanitas vanitatum et afflictio spiritus."—*Eccles.* i. 14.

<sup>5</sup> "Delectare in Domino, et dabit tibi petitiones cordis tui."—*Ps.*

an interior joy that he began to dance for delight. Blessed Seraphin, a Capuchin, said that he would not exchange a palm's length of his cord for all the riches and honors of the earth; and St. Teresa encouraged all by saying, "When a soul is resolved to suffer, the pain is at an end."

4. DISCOURAGEMENT IN ARIDITIES.

But here comes another illusion with which hell tempts the novice, when he finds himself in desolation of spirit. Do you not see, it says to him, that here you find no peace? You have lost devotion, everything fills you with tediousness, mental prayer, reading, Communion, and even recreation. This is a sign that God does not wish you to be here.

Oh, what a terrible and dangerous temptation this is for a young novice, without experience! To overcome this temptation one ought, first of all, to consider well in what consists the peace of a soul on this earth, which is a place of merit, and therefore a place of pain. It does not consist, as we have seen, in enjoying the goods of this world, and moreover, not even in the enjoyment of spiritual delights, because these of themselves do not increase our merit, nor render us more dear to God. The true peace of the soul consists only in our conformity to the will of God. Hence the quiet we should desire most is that which makes us unite ourselves with the will of God, even when he is pleased to keep us in darkness and desolation. Oh, how dear to God is a faithful soul, which, when deprived of consolation, still prays, reads, receives Communion, and does all only to please God. Oh, of what great merit are holy works done without present reward. The Venerable Father Anthony Torres writes to a soul in desolation: "To carry the cross with Jesus, without consolation, makes the soul run, yea, even fly to perfection." So, therefore, if the novice finds himself in darkness, he ought to say to God:



Lord, since Thou wilt keep me thus desolate and deprived of every relief, thus I wish to remain, and as long as it shall please Thee. I will not leave Thee; behold I am ready to suffer this pain during my whole life, and during all eternity, if so it please Thee. Enough for me to know that such is Thy holy will.

Such should be the language of the novice who truly wishes to love God. But let him, on the other hand, be persuaded that it will not be so. The devil wishes to make him lose confidence by representing to him that this condition will last always, and thus at last make him despair at being unable to bear it any longer. These terrible tempests, in the midst of spiritual darkness, are raised by the devil in the mind of the desolate. But it will not be so. *To those who overcome I will give a hidden manna.*<sup>1</sup> Those who shall have borne with patience the tempest of aridity, and shall have overcome the temptations which in the meanwhile hell has brought against them, to make them turn their backs upon him, these the Lord will certainly console by giving them to taste the hidden manna, that is, that interior peace which, as St. Paul says, surpasses all the pleasures of the senses. *The peace of God which passeth all understanding.*<sup>2</sup> This one word, now I do the will of God, I please God, affords a satisfaction that surpasses all the contentment that the world can give, with all its pastimes, feasts, theatres, banquets, honors, and greatness. Indeed, that promise cannot fail which God has made to those who leave all for love of him. *And every one that has left house, or brethren, or father, etc., for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting.*<sup>3</sup> To such, then, heaven is promised in the

<sup>1</sup> "Vincentibus dabo manna absconditum."—*Apoc.* ii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> "Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum."—*Phil.* iv. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Qui reliquerit domum, vel fratres aut patrem, etc., propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam æternam possidebit."—*Matth.* xix. 29.



next world, and a hundred-fold in this. What is this hundred-fold? It is precisely that testimony of a good conscience which immensely surpasses all the delights of this earth.

5. DOUBT ABOUT VOCATION.

But we have not done yet. We must speak of temptations still more dangerous. Those of which we have spoken hitherto are carnal and worldly temptations, which show of themselves that they come from the devil, and thus, by the help of God, they are more easily known and overcome. The most terrible temptations are those which wear the mask of a good spirit and of a greater good, for they are more hidden, and therefore lead more easily into error.

The first temptation of this kind is generally the doubt about vocation, which the devil puts into the mind of the novice, telling him: But who knows whether your vocation has been true or only a caprice? and if you are not truly called by God, you will not have the grace to persevere, and it may come to pass, that after having made the vows, you will be sorry, and become an apostate; so that, whilst you would have saved yourself in the world, here you will damn yourself.

In order to overcome this temptation, he ought to consider how and when one can be sure of his vocation. It is a true vocation whenever the following three conditions concur: First, a good intention, namely, to escape from the dangers of the world, the better to insure your eternal salvation, and to unite yourself more closely to God. Secondly: When there is no positive impediment for want of health, talents, or some necessity on the part of one's parents, in regard to which matters the subject ought to quiet himself by leaving all to the judgment of Superiors, after having exposed the truth with sincerity. Thirdly: That the Superiors admit him. Now,

whenever these three things truly concur, the novice ought not to doubt that his vocation is a true one.

6. THE THOUGHT THAT ONE WOULD LIVE MORE DEVOUTLY IF ONE  
WERE FREE.

The other temptation is that which the devil may bring against a young man who in the world has already led a spiritual life. In the world, he shall tell him, you made more mental prayer, practised more mortification, more silence, more retirement, and gave more alms, etc. Now you cannot do all these good works, and much less will you be able to do them afterwards when you leave the novitiate. For then the Superiors will make you apply to your studies, and employ you in the occupations of the Order and other distracting things.

Ah, what an illusion is this! He who gives ear to such suggestions shows that he knows not the merit of obedience without mentioning that St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi said that all is prayer that is done in a Community. He that gives to God his prayers, his alms, his fasts, his penances, gives him a part only of what belongs to him, but not the whole, or to say better, he gives him what he has, but not himself. On the contrary, he who by the vow of obedience renounces his own will, gives himself to God, so that he can say to him: O Lord! having consecrated to Thee my whole will, I have nothing more to give Thee. That thing of which a man has the greatest difficulty to deprive himself is his own will. But it is the most agreeable gift that we can give to God, and that God demands of us most. *My son, give Me thy heart,*<sup>1</sup> that is, thy will; whence the Lord says that he is more pleased by our obedience than by all other sacrifices that we can offer to him. *Obedience is better than sacrifice.*<sup>2</sup> So then he who gives him-

<sup>1</sup> "Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum mihi."—*Prov.* xxxii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> "Melior est obedientia, quam victimæ."—*1 Kings*, xv. 22.

self by obedience, obtains not one, but all possible victories over the senses, honors, riches, worldly amusements, and everything else. *An obedient man shall speak of victories.*<sup>1</sup>

In the world one merits, no doubt, by fasting, taking the discipline, etc. But, doing all this by his own will, he has much less merit than a religious who does all through obedience. Hence the religious merits much more and merits always, for all that is done in a Community is done through obedience. In this way the religious merits, not only when he prays, when he fasts, when he takes the discipline, but also when he studies, when he goes out, when he is at table or in recreation, or when he goes to rest. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said, that in the vessel of religion even that one advances who does not ply the oar. And hence we know of so many spiritual persons, who, although they led a holy life, have yet sought to place themselves under obedience by entering some religious Community, knowing that the merit of good works done according to one's own will is not the same as of those done out of pure obedience.

7. THE IDEA THAT ONE COULD BE MORE USEFUL TO ONE'S  
NEIGHBOR.

Against another the devil makes use of a similar and even stronger temptation by representing to him that he would be in the world of more service to his neighbor. You have entered this Order, he says, where there are so many others who labor and help souls, but you could do more good out of it by succoring your own country, which is so much in need and destitute of workmen. One tempted in this way ought to reflect first, that the greatest good we can do to our neighbor is that which God wills us to do. God is in need of no

<sup>1</sup> "Vir obediens loquetur victorias."—*Prov.* xxi. 25.

man; if it be his desire to give more succor to your country, can he not do so by means of others? So then, my brother, since the Lord has called you to his house, this is the good he will have from you, namely, that you should be attentive to obey all the rules and your Superiors; and if obedience wills you to be useless in a particular place, or even employed in sweeping the house and in washing the dishes, this is the greatest good you can do.

And then, what good can one do in his own country? Jesus Christ himself being exhorted to preach and do good in his birthplace, answered: *No prophet is accepted in his own country.*<sup>1</sup> With regard to confessions, it is a common saying, that the confessors belonging to a place are confessors for venial sins, and this is the truth. For people feel repugnance to tell their grievous sins to a priest who is either a relative of theirs, or of the same place, so that they have him always before their eyes, and therefore they go to strangers to confess. With regard to sermons, it is also well known that the sermons of a priest of the place profit little, either because he is born in the place, or because people are accustomed to his voice. Were the preacher a St. Paul in the beginning, agreeable as you like, after he has been heard for six months, or at most for a year, he scarcely pleases, or profits any longer. The missionaries produce great fruit in the places to which they go, for this very reason, that they are strangers and their voices new. It is certain that a priest of an active Order, and especially of missionaries, will save more souls in one month, and in one single mission, than if he were to work for ten years in his own country. Besides, there he will help the souls of his countrymen only, but by giving missions he will save souls in a hundred and a thousand places. Moreover, he who is in the world, will often be in doubt

<sup>1</sup> "Nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua."—*Luke*, iv. 24.

and confused, not knowing whether God wishes of him this or that good work, but he who lives in religion, by obeying his Superiors, knows with certainty that all that he does is according to the will of God. For religious only are those happy ones, who can say: *We are happy, O Israel, because the things that are pleasing to God are made known to us.*<sup>1</sup>

In fine, there is another temptation which the devil brings against some one who is perhaps favored by God with sensible spiritual consolations, tears, and transports of love. Do you not see, he says, that you are not called to an active life, but to a contemplative one, to solitude and union with God? You must go then to an Order of contemplatives, or at least to a hermitage. That is your vocation. If the devil should ever tempt me in this way, I would answer him thus: Since thou speakest of vocation, I ought then to follow my vocation, and not my caprice or thy suggestion. God having already called me to this Order of evangelical laborers, who can assure me that to leave them is an inspiration, and not a temptation?

And the same I say to you, my brother: there is no doubt that God calls some to an active and some to a contemplative life; but God having called you to an Order of evangelical laborers, you ought to believe that the other vocation comes not from God, but rather from hell, which seeks by this to make you lose your vocation. St. Philip Neri said, that one ought not to lose a good state of life for a better one, without being certain of the divine will. Thus, in order not to err, you should be more than morally certain that it is the will of God to have you pass to another state; but when does this certainty exist, above all, if your Superiors, and your spiritual Father tell you that it is a temptation?

<sup>1</sup> "Beati sumus, Israel; quia quæ Deo placent, manifesta sunt nobis."  
—*Bar.* iv. 4.

Besides, you ought to consider that, as St. Thomas teaches, although the contemplative life, taken in itself, is more perfect than the active, nevertheless, the mixed life, that is, that which is devoted alternately to prayer and to action, is the most perfect, because this was the life of Jesus Christ. And this is precisely the life of all well-regulated Communities of evangelical laborers, where each day there are several hours of prayer and several hours of silence. Wherefore such religious can say, that when out of their houses they are laborers; but when at home, they are hermits.

Do not, then, allow yourself, my brother, to be seduced by those specious pretexts of the enemy. Be certain that if you leave the Order you will repent of it, as it has happened in other like cases, and you will perceive the error when you are unable to remedy it, for he who has once left an Order will with difficulty be received into it again.

## II.

### The Means to Preserve One's Vocation.

1. The first means is, to avoid the faults that are committed with open eyes. And let every one know, that the devil tempts novices to commit faults, not so much to injure them by the faults themselves, as to make them lose their vocation thereby. For, by the commission of deliberate faults, they will begin to lose fervor in their prayers, Communions, and all their other exercises of devotion. The Lord, on the other hand, with regard to his graces, justly shuts his hand, according to the general rule of St. Paul, *He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly.*<sup>1</sup> Especially if they are faults of pride, for God resists the proud, and against them the devil gains more strength, and thus on one side the novice in-

<sup>1</sup> "Qui parce seminat, parce et metet."—2 Cor. ix. 6.



creasing in tepidity, and on the other divine light failing, it will not be difficult for hell to gain its end, namely, to make him lose his vocation.

2. The second means is, to spring the mines, that is, to discover the temptation to his Superiors. St. Philip Neri said: A temptation when manifested is half overcome. On the contrary, as the abscess, when it is not opened, spreads like a cancer, so temptation, when concealed, brings on ruin. And in fact, experience has often shown that those that have already been shaken by temptation, and brought to that point where the road divides, that is, where one doubts, deliberates which way to go, whether to the left or to the right, and yet keeps it secret, almost all such have lost their vocation. One must, then, offer violence to one's self and discover the temptation to the Superiors, for God will be so much pleased with this act of humility and the violence that the novice does to himself, that by his divine light he will suddenly dispel all confusion and darkness.

3. The third means is prayer, that is, to have recourse to God, that he may give him holy perseverance, which, as St. Augustine says,<sup>1</sup> is only obtained by praying for it. But the novice who has already received of God his vocation, and is tempted to abandon it, ought not to pray to God, saying, O Lord! give me light to know what I ought to do; because this light God has already given him, by calling him: for if he should ask only for this light, the devil may transform himself into an angel of light, and easily deceive him, making him believe that the thought of departing is a divine light. He ought rather to say, O Lord! since Thou hast given me the vocation, give me also the strength to persevere in it.

A certain young man had been called by God to the religious state, and his vocation had, after many trials,

<sup>1</sup> *De Dono pers. c. xvi.*



already been approved of by his director, and he retired into the Order to which he had been called. His parents made such effort as to force him to go to a third place, the better to examine his vocation. But instead of returning thence to the place from which he had come, he went to his own house, thus pleasing his parents and displeasing God. Being there asked how he had come to commit such an error, he said that he had prayed to God to give him light, by saying: *Speak, O Lord, because thy servant heareth*; <sup>1</sup> and that having done this he resolved to go home. I then said to him: O my son! you have made a mistake in your prayer; your vocation was certain, even confirmed by so many signs; you should not have said, *Speak, O Lord*, because God had already spoken to you, but *Confirm, O God, what Thou hast worked in me*; <sup>2</sup> O Lord, give me strength to accomplish Thy will, which Thou hast already made known to me. You have failed to make this prayer, and therefore you have lost your vocation. Let the misfortune of this one be a warning to others.

Let the novice, moreover, remark, that the time of temptation is a time of darkness and confusion; he must therefore not look then for clearness of reason to quiet himself. Let him then be careful only to offer himself to God anew, and to beseech him, saying, O my God! I have given myself to Thee, I will not abandon Thee, help me, permit me not to be unfaithful to Thee. And saying so, and repeating this the oftener as the temptation increases, and discovering it at the same time to the Superiors, as we have said, he will certainly triumph over it. Let him also recommend himself in a special manner to most holy Mary, who is the mother of perseverance. A certain novice, overcome by temptation, was already on the point of leaving his monastery,

<sup>1</sup> "Loquere Domine, quia audit servus tuus."—1 *Kings*, iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Confirma hoc Deus, quod operatus es in me."

but he stopped first to kneel down and say an *Ave Maria* before an image of the divine mother, and suddenly felt himself, as it were, nailed to the floor, so that he could not rise any more; coming then to himself, he made a vow to persevere, after which he rose without difficulty, asked pardon of the Master of novices, and persevered.<sup>1</sup>

4. To conclude, I beseech you, my brother, when you are tempted in any way regarding your vocation, I beseech you, I say, to reflect principally on two things:

The first is, that the grace of vocation, which God has given to you, he has not given to so many others of your companions, perhaps less unworthy than you. *He hath not done in like manner to every nation.*<sup>2</sup> Be afraid, then, of showing ingratitude by turning your back on him, because by doing so you expose yourself to a great danger of being damned. And be certain you will have no more peace in this life, and will always be tormented until death, by remorse for your infidelity.

The second is, that when the temptation comes, and perhaps tells you, that, if you do not quit, you will lead a life of despair, that you will repent of it, that perhaps you will even have to account for it to God, and such similar suggestions as we have mentioned above; then set before your eyes the hour of your death, and reflect, that, if you were now about to die, you would not repent of having followed your vocation, but you would feel the greatest contentment and peace; and, on the contrary, you would feel great distress and pain to have abandoned it. Think of this, and you will not lose it, but will receive during this life, and at the hour of your death, the peace and the crown that God prepares for his faithful servants in this life and in the next.

<sup>1</sup> *Auriemma, Aff. scamb.* p. 2, c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Non fecit taliter omni nationi."—*Ps.* cxlvii. 20.

OFFERING AND PRAYER THAT THE NOVICE SHOULD RECITE IN ORDER  
TO OBTAIN THE GRACE TO PERSEVERE IN HIS VOCATION.

O my God! how shall I ever be able to thank Thee enough for having called me with so much love to Thine own household, and how have I deserved this favor after so many offences that I have committed against Thee! How many of my companions are in the world, in the midst of so many occasions and dangers of losing their souls! and I have been admitted to live in this Thy house, in the company of so many of Thy dear servants, and with so many helps to become a saint. I hope, O my Lord! to thank Thee for it better in heaven throughout eternity, and there forever to sing the mercy that Thou hast shown me. In the meanwhile, I am Thine, and always will be Thine. I have already given myself to Thee. I repeat the offering now. I will be faithful to Thee; I will not abandon Thee, even should I lose my life and a thousand lives. Behold, I offer myself entirely to accomplish Thy will without reserve. Do with me what Thou pleassest; make me live as Thou wilt, desolate, infirm, despised; treat me as is pleasing to Thee. Enough for me to obey Thee and please Thee. I ask nothing of Thee but the grace to love Thee with my whole heart, and to be faithful to Thee until death.

O most holy Mary, my dear mother! thou hast already obtained for me the many graces that I have received from God, the pardon of my sins, my vocation, and the strength to follow it; thou must finish the work by obtaining for me perseverance until death. This is my hope: thus may it be!

## III.

**Important Instructions to the Novice that he may Preserve Himself in Fervor.**

1. When he is reprimanded, or accused, let him not excuse himself, and let him love before God with an especial affection him who accuses or reprimands him.

2. Let him love to be despised in all things, with regard to occupations, clothing, room, food, etc.

3. Let him not be forward to utter his opinion, unless he is asked for it.

4. Let him mortify himself in all things according to the rules of prudence and obedience, in eating, sleeping, sight, smell, etc.

5. Let him observe the rules of modesty, when he is alone as well as with others.

6. Let him never touch others with his hands, or look fixedly at them, but let him always keep his eyes cast down, especially in church, at table, during recreation, and in the streets.

7. Let him keep silence, except when it is necessary to speak either for the glory of God, or for his own and his neighbor's good. And in speaking, especially in recreation, let him never raise his voice too much. Let him avoid every dispute or contention about birth, talents, or riches, and all vain discourse about eating, hunting, about play or battles, about the acquiring of honors, fortune, or the like things of the world. But let him seek always to introduce pious discourses on the vanity of the world, the love towards Jesus and Mary, happy lot of the saints, and the manner of advancing in perfection.

7. After each fault let him promptly humble himself, repent of it, and be quiet.

8. Let him desire nothing but that which God wills. Let him not ask for consolations. In the time of dryness of spirit let him humble and resign himself, saying: O Lord! I do not desire consolations; I am content to remain thus during my whole life.

9. Let him often raise his heart to God by ejaculatory prayers; he can make use of the following:

O my God! I desire nothing but Thee.

Tell me what Thou wilt have of me, and I will do all.

Do with me what Thou wilt.

All that which Thou wilt is my will also.

Make me love Thee, and send me where Thou wilt.

My Jesus, I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee.

Make Thyself known to all, and loved by all.

I renounce all: Thou alone art sufficient for me.

My God and my all.

Live Jesus and Mary, our hope!

O good Jesus! be Thou always praised, my life was the cause of Thy death, and Thy death was my life.

## Exhortation to Religious

TO ADVANCE IN THE PERFECTION OF THEIR STATE.

THE religious are the portion that God has particularly selected from among men upon earth to extend his glory, and to have himself loved by them with a love more special and more pure than that with which he is loved by men that live in the midst of the world who are absorbed in secular cares. To this end the Lord by a particular vocation has drawn them from the darkness of Egypt and has freed them from the love of this world, and they afterwards, aided by the grace of God, have consecrated themselves to him by the vows of religion, renouncing all the goods that the world promises and obtains for its followers. Hence every Community of religious on earth should consider itself as a reunion of persons who, disengaged from every earthly thought, apply themselves to nothing else than to a life devoted to God, so that the Lord may be glorified by them, and may say: These persons belong entirely to me; they are my delight.

But I ask, Can the Lord say at the present day of all religious that they are his delight? Alas! the Church grieves to see among the religious a general relaxation united with a coldness in the service of God. It is not denied that among them there are found good religious who live like true religious detached from worldly affections, and who endeavor to sanctify themselves and to gain souls for God. I say that these are the judges that will one day judge their companions in the valley of Josaphat. But how many of these good religious are

there? Ah! there are very few, as we may now see; and this the Church deplores, with all those that love the glory of God.

It is improper from my "littleness" to speak here censoriously, and to note the faults into which religious commonly fall at the present time, and which are a subject of surprise and scandal to those that should be edified by their example. Some one may say: Tell us then, Mr. Reformer, which are these common faults, and teach us what we have to do in order to be good religious. Oh no! I do not pretend to reform the world; therefore I will not dare to point out in detail the particular faults that have become common at the present day. I only say to you who has put the foregoing question to me that you well know what one must do in order to be a good religious. In the novitiate you have been carefully instructed on the virtues that you have to practise in religion, namely, obedience, detachment from earthly affections, the love of poverty, self-abnegation, desire for humiliations, and all that is necessary in order to live as a good religious. But at the present time, since lukewarmness and relaxation have become a general evil, and since religious think but little of the obligations of the religious state, they scarcely think of correcting the faults that they commit.

Ah! would to God that religious would preserve at least one half of the good life that they began in the novitiate! Ordinarily, novices that persevere as far as to make the vows, live with fervor and give edification; but the evil is, that after having made the vows, while applying themselves to their studies, they begin at once to grow cold, to neglect to preserve the fervor acquired and to practise the good resolutions formed in the novitiate. Hence instead of making progress in the exercise of virtue, they go on declining from day to day, and become more and more imperfect. After this,



when they are appointed to teach others, relaxation increases; for then one thinks no more of working for the glory of God, but more for one's own interests, striving to reach the higher offices, and thus to succeed in leading a life less under subjection and more comfortable.

There have been good reasons for establishing degrees through which religious should pass in order to render themselves more useful to the good of souls by instructing the ignorant and exciting the zeal of the lukewarm. But unfortunately in many religious the means become the end; for in the course of time it happens that one seeks less the good of religion and of souls than one's own temporal advantages. I protest again that I do not pretend to be a reformer; but I consider that such distinctions in religious Communities foment every kind of ambition, and consequently every kind of relaxation. Thence I conclude that it would be much better for the teachers after having finished the course of teaching to remain in the humble state in which they were when they came forth from the novitiate; then each of them would apply himself to his duties, not in order to attain particular ends, but only in order to do the divine will and to obey his Superiors. As, on the contrary, teaching procures for them certain privileges, conveniences of lodging, liberties, preferments, it is for this reason that there are few that advance in the spiritual life and in the edification that they should give to others. Hence it happens that all good people grieve to see in religious Orders the general relaxation that they see on every side. Where is to-day among religious, generally speaking, the spirit of obedience, of poverty, of mortification, of interior abnegation? Where is the love for solitude, for the hidden life, the desire for contempt, such as animated the saints? These kinds of virtues

have become strange things; it seems that all that remains of them is the name.

But what remedy should be applied to an evil so great and so general? What answer should be given to this question? The remedy should come from heaven; hence we should pray to the Lord to remedy it by his power and mercy, for just as the good spirit of the religious is communicated to seculars, so the seculars share in the relaxation of the religious.

In my opinion this spiritual coolness of the religious Orders arises for the most part from the neglect of prayer, and this neglect proceeds from the want of retirement and recollection. Experience abundantly proves that the more we entertain ourselves with creatures, the less we desire to entertain ourselves with God; and the greater our relations are to the world, the more will God withdraw himself. "There are many souls to which I should willingly speak," said our Lord one day to St. Teresa, "but the world makes so much noise in their hearts that my voice cannot be heard by them." Thus many religious, plunged into earthly affairs, think little of God. They would like to emerge from the mire of their lukewarmness, and to become disengaged from the earthly attachments that bind them; but the passions that they do not strive to overcome, always draw them downward, and cause them to lose the spirit of prayer.

The religious of ancient times gave themselves up much to prayer; they thus attained sanctity, and by their edifying life also sanctified others. But at the present time everything is wanting, because the spirit of prayer has been lost; this is the cause why humility is wanting, why we are not detached from the world, why we have so little love for God. The love for God being wanting, all the virtues are wanting.

Let us, therefore, pray to Jesus Christ, who alone can

remedy so great an evil. Let us pray to him to inspire the religious with his holy love and with the desire to sanctify themselves; for at the present time it seems that the religious have even lost the desire to sanctify themselves. Every one feels the necessity of a general reform among the religious, the priests, and the seculars, when he sees the corruption of morals extending everywhere. Hence we should every day repeat the prayer of David, which is very appropriate to the circumstances of the present time: *Turn again, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and see, and visit this vineyard: and perfect the same which Thy right hand hath planted, and upon the Son of man, whom Thou hast confirmed for Thyself.*<sup>1</sup> O Lord! Thy Church, this vineyard that Thy divine Son has planted and watered with his blood, is ravaged in all parts; come, visit and renew it, Thou who alone canst renew it.

<sup>1</sup> "Deus virtutum, convertere; respice de cœlo, et vide, et visita vineam istam, et perice eam quam plantavit dextera tua; et super Filium hominis, quem confirmasti tibi."—*Ps.* lxxix. 15.

## Purity of Intention.

INSTRUCTION ADDRESSED TO THE FATHERS OF THE CONGREGATION.\*

EVERY one knows that the work of what we do is in accordance with the end that we propose to ourselves. *If the root be holy, so are the branches,*<sup>1</sup> says the Apostles.

My dear Fathers, a priest, in order to sanctify himself, should be above all attentive to have always a right and a pure intention in all his actions; for it is certain that a priest, and especially a missionary, has necessarily to perform every day many works of God; the main thing is to see whether he performs them only for God, only in order to please God.

Ah! how often do we lose all the merit of what we do, because we have not the right intention as when we listen to human respect, to our own taste, and especially to some vain desire of being praised or esteemed by men, and appropriating the glory of the good that is done,—the glory that belongs only to God.

Vainglory is so secret a robber, says a master of the spiritual life, that sometimes before allowing itself to be perceived it has already captured all. Thus it often succeeds in stripping us of the best part of the fruit of our labors.

It must not be believed that vainglory is a temptation of beginners; no, it is a temptation with which the devil assails those that are more advanced in spirituality. St. Gregory avows that while writing his books, although

<sup>1</sup> “Si radix sancta, et rami.”—*Rom.* xi. 16.

\* This was written by St. Alphonsus, but remained unpublished till 1868.—ED.

he wished to work only for God, he nevertheless perceived sometimes that a vain complacency was creeping into his mind. How often does it not happen that those that preach and hear confessions only for God, afterwards conceive the vain desire to be praised or to be seen!

St. Cyprian observes that the devil after having tried against Jesus Christ various temptations, concluded by tempting him to vainglory, because he had often succeeded in conquering by this temptation those that had resisted all other temptations.

Hence the ancient Fathers instructed the novices to perform penances, abstinences, mortifications, while to the more advanced they recommended them to guard against vainglory; for those that have performed many acts of virtue, and especially the missionaries that obtain applause and please the people, are very much exposed to conceive a high idea of themselves, and thus to suffer shipwreck in port. One of the chastisements, perhaps the most ordinary, that God sends to punish this kind of fault is to permit that we fall over some great precipice; this is what we have to fear. Oh, how many servants of God, much more perfect than we, have experienced this chastisement!

Let us then take care always to place before our eyes the sole pleasure of God; let it be the only mark of all our actions, of all our thoughts, of all our affections, as the Lord has ordained: *Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm.*<sup>1</sup> Then God will say that he has been wounded with love for us: *Thou hast wounded My heart, My sister, My spouse,*<sup>2</sup> on account of the only end that we have proposed to ourselves to please him re-

<sup>1</sup> "Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum."—*Cant.* viii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea sponsa."—*Cant.* iv. 9

gardless of everything else: *Thou hast wounded My heart with one of thy eyes.*<sup>1</sup>

In order always to keep before our minds the only end of pleasing God, we must act in the following manner:

I. At first we must take care not to concern ourselves about success, but only about the end for which the work is done; here are a few examples:

1. We labor, we preach, we hear confessions, and then we remain quiet if we see no concourse, no emotion, if we do not see any fruit in our penitents, if we do not hear ourselves praised by others; why? Because we have labored only for God; if we had only God in view we should not be disturbed, well knowing that we can plant, but that the production and the glory of the fruit belong only to God.

2. The two servants—one of them bringing back ten talents, the other only four—were received with equal love, says St. Jerome, because both had done their duty.

3. A true servant of God rejoices at the fruit that is produced, because it is the glory of God; and he rejoices as much when he sees the fruit produced by another as when it is produced by himself. It is thus that the Venerable John d'Avila was happy to see that St. Ignatius by instituting the Society of Jesus had done what he himself desired to do. On the other hand, a true servant of God is not disturbed when he does not derive the fruit that he expected; for having labored only for God, he has already attained his end, which is to please God.

II. Moreover, we should be careful to abstain from saying without necessity things that may be turned to our own praise. How many are there not that pass for spiritual persons, and that commit this fault! Ah! it is the *ego* (I), this cursed *ego*, that is always putting itself forward. We sometimes give a long discourse that de-

<sup>1</sup> "Vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum."—*Ibid.* iv, 9.

mands all the attention of those that hear it, and the whole discourse may be reduced to a discourse in praise of ourselves. We may speak of ourselves when we do so through necessity, in order to be useful to our neighbor and to glorify God; but this is rarely done through necessity, it is oftenest done through vanity. An apostolic laborer returns from a mission or from preaching Lenten sermons; he will only speak of the great crowds that attended, of the fruit that his sermons produced, of the time that he spent in the confessional; he will do this for what purpose? In order to be praised. What can you derive from all that if not motives of vain complacency, that will make you lose all that you have gained?

When St. Hilarion saw himself esteemed or praised he began to weep, saying: "It seems to me that God is rewarding me in this life." We should do the same when we are praised; we should then interrupt the conversation, and refer all the glory to God, to God alone.

III. Moreover, we should be ashamed, either in the Congregation or on the missions to lay claim to the most honorable employments: the employments that we should prefer are those that obedience imposes.

IV. Finally, we should especially take care always to refer actually, as much as possible, all our actions to God. We should not content ourselves with the general intention that we make in the morning: we should endeavor to direct actually every action with a view to please God, as was done by an ancient Father, who, before each of his actions, stopped a moment and said: "I am aiming at a mark so as to send this action directly to God."

Even in the middle of our actions, let us try as much as possible to renew our intention to perform them in order to please God; let us renew it at each confession that we make; while reciting the divine Office at each



psalm. Let us do the same when preaching and in all other actions, especially in those that are more according to our taste.

If vainglory then presents itself to our mind, the best thing that we can do according to St. Bernard is to despise it. Let us say to it, as we are advised by the Venerable John d'Avila: You come too late, for I have already given this work to God.

Oh! how well do we work, my dear Fathers, when we work only for God! and who does not see that to act thus continually for God is to love God continually, and to love him with a true love; with a pure disinterested love, only to please him?

True love, says St. Bernard, asks for nothing but itself: "True love is content with itself; it is its own reward; besides itself, it needs no cause, no fruit. I love because I love; I love to be loved."<sup>1</sup> Love desires no other recompense than to be loved by God, says St. John Chrysostom; for the more disinterested we are in our love towards God, the more liberal he will be towards us.

<sup>1</sup> "Verus amor seipso contentus est, ipse premium sibi est; præter se, non requirit causam, non fructum: amo, quia amo; amo, ut amem."

## Religious Poverty.

WHETHER IT IS PERMITTED TO RELIGIOUS TO POSSESS THINGS IN COMMON, AND WHETHER IT THIS AN IMPERFECTION.\*

OUR Lord ordained for the apostles, when he sent them out to preach the Gospel, to possess nothing: *Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff.*<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, Ludolph of Saxony answers that Jesus Christ only wished thereby to deliver them from all solicitude and all inordinate affection for temporal things, teaching them to be content with what is necessary, which should be furnished them by those whom they would evangelize: "Jesus Christ frees them from all solicitude, saying: *Take nothing for your journey*, etc. And because he had sent them forth as it were stripped of everything, he tempered the severity of the precept, saying: *The workman is worthy of his meat*, that is, of the necessities of life; as if he said: Receive as much as is necessary for food and clothing. Hence the Apostle also says: *But having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content*. Wherefore he commanded that they should carry nothing with them, since all was due them for their labor. It is according to natural law, those that serve the community in spiritual things should be provided by the community with the necessities in

<sup>1</sup> "Nolite possidere aurum, neque argentum, neque pecuniam in zonis vestris, non peram in via, neque duas tunicas, neque calceamenta, neque virgam."—*Matth.* x. 9.

\* A dissertation found among the manuscripts of St. Alphonsus, that remain unpublished till 1868.—ED.

temporal things. He therefore did not prohibit them to carry with them things necessary for sustaining this life, but he showed them that these things were due to them by those to whom they preached. He commanded these things rather for the purpose of recalling their affection from the inordinate love of temporal things, that they might not seek what was superfluous, and that what was necessary should be sufficient for them.”<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, it is answered that it is clear that this was a particular precept for this mission, which concerned only the Jews, whom the apostles were to persuade, by their contempt for earthly things, that they were the messengers of the true Messiah; this is seen in the same Gospel in which the divine Master tells them not to address themselves to others: *Go ye not in the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*<sup>2</sup> Hence before his death he recalled to their minds this precept in order to abrogate it: *When I sent you without purse and*

<sup>1</sup> “Ab omni eos liberat sollicitudine, dicens: ‘Nihil tuleritis in via, etc.’ (Luke, ix. 3). Et quia quodammodo nudos miserat, severitatem præcepti temperavit, dicens: ‘Dignus enim est operarius cibo suo.’—(Matth. x. 10); id est, necessariis ad vitam; quasi eis dicat: Tantum accipite, quantum in vectu et vestitu vobis necessarium est.—Unde et Apostolus replicat: ‘Habentes autem alimenta, et quibus tegamur, his contenti simus’ (1 Tim. vi. 8). Ecce quare præcepit eis nihil ferre, quia omnia debentur eis pro labore. De jure naturali est, ut, illis qui serviunt communitati in spiritualibus, provideantur a communitate in temporalibus necessaria. Non ergo prohibuit eis ferre necessaria ad sustentationem hujus vitæ, sed ut demonstraret hæc eis deberi ab illis quibus prædicarent. Nec omnino præcepit eis illa, sed magis ad revocandum eorum affectum ab inordinato amore temporalium, ut non quærerent superflua, sed eis sufficerent necessaria.”—*Vita J. Chr. p. I, c. 51.*

<sup>2</sup> “In viam Gentium ne abieritis, et in civitatem Samaritanorum ne intraveritis; sed potius ite ad oves quæ perierunt domus Israel.”—*Matth. x. 5.*

*scrip and shoes, did you want anything? But they said: Nothing. Then said He unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise,*<sup>1</sup> etc. Such is the explanation that is given by Cornelius à Lapide,<sup>2</sup> in citing St. John Chrysostom, St. Anselm, and other authors, with St. Thomas,<sup>3</sup> who expressly says that by these last words Jesus Christ abrogated the particular precepts that he had given to the apostles when he sent them to preach to the Jews. Cornelius adds that this had to be so; for the apostles would have to provide themselves with things necessary when going to preach to the Gentiles, who as enemies of the Gospel would have at first opposed them.

As to the possession of temporal goods, Cornelius says that although Jesus Christ possessed nothing in private, he yet possessed things in common with the college of the apostles. It is thus that we see in the Gospel of St. John that Judas carried the money received as alms: *And having the purse, carried the things that were put therein*; and that the disciples had gone to buy the necessary food: *His disciples were gone into the city to buy meats.*<sup>4</sup>

From this example of our divine Master, Cornelius concludes that it is by no means contrary to perfection to have goods in common, as is generally the case with religious Orders, and is thus defined by John XXII.: "From this example of Christ it follows that it is not derogatory to Christian perfection to have goods in common, as is usually had by religious Orders according to what is defined by John XXII."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Quando misi vos sine sacculo, et pera, et calceamentis, numquid aliquid defuit vobis? At illi dixerunt: Nihil. Dixit ergo eis: Sed nunc, qui habet sacculum, tollat," etc.—*Luke*, xxii. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *In Matth.* x. 9.

<sup>3</sup> I. 2, q. 108, a. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Loculos habens, ea quæ mittebantur, portabat."—*John*, xii. 6; iv. 8.

<sup>5</sup> "Ex hoc Christi exemplo sequitur, perfectioni nihil derogare,

I have, moreover, found in another place that the same Pope declares him a heretic who would say that Jesus Christ and the apostles possessed nothing either in private or in common.<sup>1</sup>

On the word *asserit* (asserts) in the note below—the gloss points out the passages of Scripture in which we see that Jesus Christ and the apostles possessed things. We there read that the Magi offered gold to the Saviour; that St. Peter had a house, and so had St. Matthew.<sup>2</sup> Father Suarez, cited by Dom Calmet, assures us that it is a probable and a sound opinion, that St. Peter even after the vow of poverty was still in possession of his house when Jesus entered there and healed his mother-in-law.<sup>3</sup> We also know, says Calmet, that the apostles, before and after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, made use of their boats although they had said that they had left all. *Behold, we have left all things.*<sup>4</sup> The perfection of their poverty, says Calmet, consisted in that they had abandoned their goods by detaching their hearts.

However this may be, St. Thomas<sup>5</sup> puts the question whether it is against religious perfection to possess anything in common,<sup>6</sup> and he answers in the negative with St. Prosper, who says that perfection permits not private possession, but common possession: “It is shown habere bona in communi ut habent passim Ordines religiosi, uti definit Joannes XXII.”—*Extrav. ad Conditorem*, tit. 14. *De verb. signif.* c. 3.

<sup>1</sup> “Redemptorem ejusque Apostolos in speciali non habuisse aliqua, nec in communi, hæreticum est censendum, . . . cum Scripturæ sacræ, quæ in plerisque locis ipsos nonnulla habuisse asserit, contradicat expresse.”—*Extrav. Cum inter nonnullos*, tit. 14. *De verb. signif.* c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Matth.* ii. 11; viii. 14; ix. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Matth.* viii. 14; *Mark*, i. 29.

<sup>4</sup> *Matth.* xix. 27.

<sup>5</sup> 2. 2, q. 188, a. 7.

<sup>6</sup> “Utrum habere aliquid in communi diminuât perfectionem religionis.”

sufficiently that private possessions should be condemned on account of perfection, and that common goods are possessed without detriment to perfection.”<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas afterwards observes that perfection does not consist in poverty, but in the imitation of Jesus Christ. Poverty, he says, is only a means to arrive at perfection; it delivers man from the solicitude that is attached to riches. But when we possess only what is necessary to nourish ourselves, and should feel in regard to this some solicitude that disturbs us but little, this would not be against the perfection of the Christian life; for the Lord forbids not every kind of solicitude, but only excessive solicitude, which is injurious to the service of God.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, continues the Doctor, the solicitude that one has for particular goods is different from that which one has for common goods; for the first belongs to private love, while the second belongs to charity.<sup>3</sup>

Hence we see, so he concludes, that the possession of superabundant riches in common is an obstacle to perfection, though it does not exclude it entirely; but the possession in common of what is necessary for simple subsistence does not hinder religious perfection.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Satis ostenditur et propria debere propter perfectionem contemni, et sine impedimento perfectionis posse facultates communes possideri.”

<sup>2</sup> “Non enim omnis sollicitudo a Domino interdicitur, sed superflua et nociva. Unde, super illud Matthæi VI., ‘Ne solliciti sitis;’ dicit Augustinus: ‘Non hoc dicit ut ista non procurentur, quantum necessitatis est, sed ut non ista intueantur, et propter ista faciant quidquid in Evangelii prædicatione facere jubentur.’”

<sup>3</sup> “Nam sollicitudo quæ circa proprias divitias adhibetur, pertinet ad amorem privatum, quo quis se temporaliter amat; sed sollicitudo quæ adhibetur circa res communes, pertinet ad amorem charitatis, quæ non quærit quæ sua sunt, sed communibus intendit. Et quia religio ad perfectionem charitatis ordinatur, quam perficit amor Dei usque ad contemptum sui, habere aliquid proprium repugnat perfectioni religionis, sed sollicitudo quæ adhibetur circa bona communia, pertinere potest ad charitatem.”

<sup>4</sup> “Ex quo patet quod habere superabundantes divitias in communi

St. Thomas speaks thus, in general, for all the religious; but afterwards considering the question in relation to the special ends of religious Orders, he says that an Order is so much the more perfect in respect to poverty, as it has a poverty proportioned to its end.<sup>1</sup>

In speaking of an Order established for the good of souls, he says that this Order requires poverty to give it the least solicitude.<sup>2</sup> Now he adds what gives the least solicitude is the preservation of necessary things after one has procured them at a suitable time.<sup>3</sup> Note these last words, "After a suitable time."

Finally, citing the passage of St. John, *To buy meats*,<sup>4</sup> the angelic Doctor concludes therefrom that it is evidently conformable to the perfection taught by the example of Jesus Christ, to keep money or all other common things, in order to support the religious.<sup>5</sup> Note words, *All other things*; this refers to things movable or immovable, spoken of above; note also the words, *Perfection taught by Christ*.

Hence, says Cornelius à Lapide,<sup>6</sup> after having cited

est impedimentum perfectionis, licet non totaliter excludat eam; habere autem de rebus exterioribus in communi, sive mobilibus, sive immobilibus, quantum sufficit ad simplicem victum, perfectionem religionis non impedit.

<sup>1</sup> "Si autem (paupertas) consideratur per comparisonem ad speciales fines religionum, tanto erit unaquæque religio secundum paupertatem perfectior, quanto habet paupertatem magis proportionatam suo fini."

<sup>2</sup> "Talem religionem decet paupertas talis quæ minimam sollicitudinem ingerat."

<sup>3</sup> "Manifestum est autem quod minimam sollicitudinem ingerit conservare res usui hominum necessarias, tempore congruo procuratas."

<sup>4</sup> *John*, iv. 8.

<sup>5</sup> "Ex quo patet quod conservare pecuniam, aut quascumque alias res communes, ad sustentationem religiosorum . . . est perfectioni conforme quam Christus docuit suo exemplo."

<sup>6</sup> "Quocirca veteres fundatores sanxerunt ut religiosi haberent bona in communi, ut sine cura vacarent orationi, studio, prædicationi, sicut



the example of Jesus Christ and shown that it is not repugnant to perfection to possess things in common, the old founders (who certainly have had before their eyes only the example of Jesus Christ in order to attain a perfect life) have established that the religious should have goods in common, in order to give themselves up freely to prayer, to study, to preaching, as appears from the Constitutions of Sts. Basil, Augustine, Bernard, Dominic. Thus, Cornelius continues, with the exception of the Order of the Franciscans, the end of which is the greatest poverty, as to the other Orders that have the foregoing ends, it is more perfect to possess goods in common.<sup>1</sup> By this means the solitaries can better guard their solitude, and those that devote themselves to preaching, compensate for austerity by charity.<sup>2</sup>

I add, that St. Cajetan, who alone established as a rule self-abandonment to Providence, did not propose to himself simply the life of Jesus Christ; he had especially in view the glorification of the divine attribute of Providence, as is indicated by the Gospel<sup>3</sup> that the Church makes us read on his feast.<sup>4</sup> The saint also wished to confound thereby the impiety of Luther, who denied Providence; therefore, in the Church of Our Lady of Victories at Chiaia, above the little door, St. Cajetan is represented holding under him Luther, who says: *Non est providentia Dei* (There is no Providence of God).

#### LIVE JESUS AND MARY!

patet ex Constitutionibus Sancti Basilii, Sancti Augustini, Sancti Bernardi, Sancti Dominici."—*In Jo.* xi. 6.

<sup>1</sup> "Convenientius est habere bona in communi; quare hoc in iis congruentius et perfectius est."

<sup>2</sup> "Austeritatem vitæ charitate in proximum compensant."

<sup>3</sup> *Matth.* vi. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *August* 7.



Notes on the Life of the Rev. Father Paul Cafaro,

OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

WE do not precisely know when these Notes were written and published; we only know that in 1767 they were printed at the end of the volume entitled *Way of Salvation*. We think, however, that they must have appeared sooner, Father Cafaro having died in 1753. We here give some details that the author has omitted.

Father Cafaro was received as a novice by St. Alphonsus, at Barra, October 25, 1741; he was then thirty-four years of age, and he lived nearly twelve years in the Congregation. The saint soon gave a signal proof of the esteem and confidence that he reposed in his new subject. In 1743, he chose him for his spiritual director, and made a vow to obey him in all things. At the General Chapter of 1749, Father Cafaro was appointed one of the Consultors-General. St. Alphonsus regarded him as one of the principal supports of his Congregation, and never deviated from his counsels; in Cafaro's last illness the saint did all he could to save his life; and in order to console himself for his loss, it was while adoring the decrees of Providence that he composed his beautiful hymn on the Conformity to the will of God. (*Villecourt*, l. 2, ch. 12, 17, 31, and 39.)—ED.

**Notes on the Life of the Rev. Father Paul Cafaro,**  
OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

I.

**His Birth and Infancy.**

FATHER PAUL CAFARO was born on the 5th of July, 1707, in the diocese of Cava, and in a place called after the Cafari. His father was called John Nicholas Cafaro, and his mother Cecily also bore the name of Cafaro. Cecily was a woman of great piety, and her husband led a most exemplary life although only a secular. He belonged to a Congregation, the obligations of which he never neglected. He was much given to mental prayer, and he also taught his family how to practise it; his children daily received instruction in the Christian doctrine from him; and he was scrupulously obedient to his spiritual Father; in fact, when he died his director did not hesitate to say to his wife, "You have now a saint in Paradise." These virtuous parents had six children, four girls and two boys, of whom Paul was the second.

His temper was so sweet and gentle even in his very cradle that his mother used to be obliged to awaken him when she wanted to suckle him. His childhood was quite different from that of other children, and quite free from those acts of levity that usually accompany it. He had a very serious illness when he was ten years of age, which he bore without a murmur, and with such patience that the doctor that attended him was quite delighted with him, and made his virtues generally known. When he began to study, he was always

modest and attentive to his duties; he never deserved any reproof or punishment from his masters, but, on the contrary, he excited their admiration and that of his companions, as well as that of all that conversed with him.

As soon as he was old enough, he began to frequent the sacraments and to meditate chiefly before the Blessed Sacrament; and he did so with such devotion that it afforded matter of edification to all that beheld him. On account of his great piety and regularity his mother intrusted the care of his sisters to him; he watched over them most sedulously, and was very careful in seeing that they did not leave the house while she was out. If any one of them happened to transgress on this point, he punished her by shutting her up in a room, in which he obliged her to remain for some time, which varied according to the length of her stay and the distance to which she had gone.

## II.

### **His Entrance into the Seminary and his Conduct while there.**

He became a cleric at the age of thirteen, and led so edifying a life in the seminary that he entered, that the president, Don Dante della Monica, used to say, "The sight of this child leads me to God and makes me recollected." He therefore made him *zelator* over all the seminarians; and as he never failed to accuse those that transgressed the rules through the dictates of human respect, they revenged themselves on him by ill-treating him one day when they found him by himself. Paul, however, did not, therefore, in the least slacken in his zealous vigilance, and thus corresponded to the confidence reposed in him by his Superior, who had intrusted the superintendence of the whole seminary to him, notwithstanding his extreme youth. When the seminarians asked leave to go to any feast, or place of

amusement, the president used to say, "I will consent if Paul goes with you." One day the seminarians were invited to be present at the Office in the church of the convent of Preato, and as it was late, the nuns wished them to stay to dinner. They sent to ask permission for them to do so from the president, Don Simon Sambiasi. He sent the following line in reply: "Let Paul decide; if he remains with them, I consent." Such was the confidence that all the Superiors had in the wisdom and prudence of our Paul, although he was still but a mere boy.

At this early period, and although he was scarcely initiated into the office of cleric, he began to manifest his zeal for the spiritual advancement of his neighbor. He went from village to village on all feast days, teaching the Christian doctrine to the children and to the most ignorant and abandoned people; he even stirred up the other clerical students that were his companions, to imitate his example, and he was most solicitous in aiding them to become holy and learned priests, capable of leading souls in the way of salvation. For this purpose, he used to instruct them and teach them how to meditate. He was thus occupied for seven consecutive years, and we know that his labors were crowned with success, for these clerics became good priests and excellent laborers.

Paul was so mortified, and such a lover of the interior life from his earliest youth, that he used often to retire into a secluded chamber, in order to hide his mortifications and abstinences from observation, and take his meals alone there, that he might be able secretly to let them down out of the window to the poor that were stationed below ready to receive them. He used to reserve only a morsel of bread or some such nourishment for himself, and with it he was in the habit of mingling bitter herbs. He used to fast at least twice a week on



bread and water. Sometimes he would confine himself to soup without bread, and throughout his youth he constantly abstained from meat and fruits, which was a great mortification for one so young. Besides this, he used to mortify his body by hair-cloth and the discipline in the privacy of his cell. When he was only thirteen he wore an iron chain with points so sharp that the very sight of it was enough to appal any one; and when his mother discovered it she took it from him by force. From that time he used to sleep on boards, or oftener still on the bare ground, with his head resting on a bench.

He then began to reflect that a good priest ought to be well informed; so he began to study Greek and Latin, under the direction of Don Ignatius della Calce, with the greatest ardor; after that he studied philosophy, and above all, theology. This science appeared of such importance to him, that he founded an academy at Cava, which he directed himself for several years, and of which he was both the head and the support. He was lecturer in dogmatic and in scholastic theology in our Congregation, and he treated on the different branches of both in some learned papers that we still preserve with veneration; we have attached still more value to them since it has become the custom in the Congregation for the young men only to study from books. Experience has taught us that they make much more progress by this method, that a great deal of time is thus saved; they are thereby freed from the inconveniences of writing, which is very prejudicial to the health.

### III.

#### **His Conduct as Priest and as Pastor.**

After he had become a priest, in obedience to his director, Father Paul strove to unite himself still more

closely to God than before, and to devote himself to the exercises of a holy life. According to the rule laid down for him by his spiritual Father, he daily meditated for four hours, two of which he passed before the Blessed Sacrament, and two others were subtracted from his sleep. Besides this, he used often to put in practice the counsel of St. Augustine: "Go, young men, go, ye gray-haired, and visit the sepulchres of your fathers." For he used often to go to the parish cemetery and pass several hours among the bones, occupied in meditation on death; and sometimes he even spent the whole night and slept there. At times he would grasp the skeleton of his deceased father, who was interred in this place, and say, "O my father, how light death hath made thee!" At this same period he used also to retire for some days into a very solitary hermitage, where he spent all his time in prayer and macerations of the flesh.

He was appointed confessor and almoner of the ecclesiastical prison soon after his ordination. He had also at this time the consolation of converting by his gentleness and by his instructions, or rather by his prayers and penances, two Calvinists of noble birth, who came to Cava at this time.

After he had been in the priesthood for a year, his bishop insisted on his filling the post of parish priest in the church of St. Peter, and he accepted this office out of pure obedience, and after much resistance, in 1755, when he was in the twenty-eighth year of his age.

From the time he became a parish priest he devoted himself entirely to the service of the souls in his parish. I will here cite what was said of him by a priest who had witnessed his good works and his zeal. "Whilst Father Paul was parish priest," said he, "he never shrunk from any fatigue that could procure the spiritual advantage of his parishioners. In order to be always

ready to fly to the assistance of the sick, as soon as he was sent for, he used to go to bed quite dressed, so that if he were awakened in the middle of the night he could set out directly. More than once, to the great astonishment of those that came to fetch him, they met him at the door of his house, as if he had foreseen the message, for he would say directly he saw them, 'Here I am. Let us go.' During the month when he was on duty in the parish (for it was served by several priests) he spent the night in the church, as he promised that those that wished to apply to him should always find him there, and he remained seated in the confessional even during the short interval he allotted to repose. He was so full of zeal, and so anxious to attend to the parishioners that had recourse to him without delay, that when the sacristan came in the morning to open the church doors, he found that he had been kneeling there since two or three o'clock, and he never once arrived there before him.

He not only preached in the parish church as often as possible, but he went about from chapel to chapel, giving spiritual assistance to the poor who were unable to repair to the church, by preaching to them, by giving them instructions, or by hearing their confessions. He went through the neighboring villages, with his crucifix in his hand, after twelve o'clock on feast days, and he made a special point of visiting all places of the greatest resort and of a suspicious character, in order to prevent sin from being committed against God. He used to return thither again between eight and nine o'clock at night, even in the cold of winter, and give short instructions on the truths of eternity, setting the chastisement of heaven before sinners, and inspiring terror into those that were living at enmity with God. One evening when he was preaching before the house of a gentleman, who was probably in a state of alienation from

God, he was accosted by him in the most offensive and insulting manner, he even treated him as if he were mad; to which Father Paul only replied, "No, sir, they who perform their duty are not madmen, and I am only doing my duty in taking care of the souls intrusted to my care."

One amongst the good fruits of his labors was that of withdrawing several women from a life of sin by either placing them out of the reach of temptation, or by supplying their necessities out of his own pocket; and when his purse was empty, he went about begging for them from house to house. He took particular pains for one woman whom he extricated from a criminal connection by causing her to change her abode, and supporting her there by the alms he collected until she at last married the accomplice of her guilt. He often went about begging for bread for the poor, and when he obtained any, he used to distribute it amongst them himself. One day his brother found him engaged in this charitable work, and being ashamed to see him acting the part of a beggar he loaded him with invectives in the public street, and reproached him for thus dishonoring his family and himself. Reproaches such as these, however, produced no effect upon him, and did not therefore in the least slacken his zeal in the exercise of those labors of love, by which he led a great many women of bad character to live in the fear and love of God. He had much to suffer from his activity in putting a stop to scandals. He was several times even threatened with death in consequence.

He introduced the practice of monthly confession and general Communion for the children, as well as the frequentation of the sacraments by the adults not only of his parish, but of those of nearly the whole diocese. He also established the exercise of mental prayer in common in the church, and of visits to the Blessed Sacra-

ment. He took infinite pains in preparing everything for the erection of a Community of twelve priests, who were to be specially intrusted with the care of destitute souls in the diocese, namely, those of prisoners, sailors, children, and the poor; for this reason it was to have been called the Congregation of the Destitute. The rules were drawn up under his direction, and approved by the bishop, and several priests offered to join it, but an obstacle was put to the completion of the undertaking, from the impossibility of finding a suitable place where the Congregation might assemble.

Another happy result of his zeal was that the priests of Cava were thereby led to give the spiritual exercises in all the numerous villages of this country, or at least in those in which they were mostly required. By his means these exercises were given every year in the chapel of St. Roch-au-Bourg, as they were much needed by the inhabitants of this place; they chiefly consisted of carters, tavern-keepers, butchers, and the like persons, who are generally very indifferent to all that regards the concerns of the soul. Whilst these exercises lasted, he went, about every evening in all directions, collecting together all the persons he could, after which he used to conduct them to the chapel, and either instruct and preach to them himself, or assist others that were doing so. He spent the rest of the time in the church or in the sacristy, and generally without eating, saying that he did not require anything, owing to the robustness of his constitution. In fact, although but one individual, he took upon himself the care of every soul within his reach, so that Mgr. de Liguori,\* the bishop of Cava, called him "the watchful guardian of all the churches."<sup>1</sup> Hence it happened that when

<sup>1</sup> "Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum."—2 Cor. xi. 28.

\* Uncle of St. Alphonsus.

Father Paul retired into our Congregation, the inhabitants of Cava began to blame us, and said to us, "Oh, what have you done? You have deprived us of a saint and an apostle!" Paul was so highly thought of in his own country, which is far from being a common occurrence, that once after a report was spread that he had died in a place where he had been giving a mission, a multitude of people from Cava and Salerno came out to meet him on his return, to testify their joy at seeing him.

## IV.

**His Resignation of the Office of Parish Priest and his Entrance into the Congregation.**

Although Paul performed his duties of priest in so holy a manner, he was tormented by scruples from the fear of not fulfilling his obligations properly; he was, therefore, continually urging his confessor to allow him to resign his post, but the confessor always refused, being convinced that his fears were quite unfounded, since in reality he did even more than his duty; so whenever he renewed his demand, he told him to banish such an idea from his mind. But Paul still continued to be a prey to the deepest sorrow. One day when he was at home, his parents heard him break forth into tears and sobs; they were quite alarmed, and inquired what misfortune could possibly have befallen him. Paul continued to weep, and replied, "For charity's sake, assist me to obtain the favor of resigning my parish; my confessor refuses to give me leave to do so, and I am dying with terror in consequence." Some days afterwards his parents found him shut up in a chapel in which he was giving vent to his sorrow by continuing in tears. Although they had opposed him at first, they were now touched with pity, and resolved themselves to strive to have his resignation accepted; this was carried into effect in the year 1740, to his own great satisfaction, but



to the great regret of his parishioners. He, however, labored for the salvation of their souls with as much zeal as he had done before.

It was by a special disposition of Providence that he gave up this office; for God called him to another state of life, and wished to withdraw him entirely from the world. No sooner had he resigned it than he inspired him with the thought of quitting all earthly things, and of entering into our Congregation to lead a life of obedience by causing him to feel that the most agreeable sacrifice we can make to God is to strip ourselves of our own will. He wrote to me about this inspiration, for I was at that time his director. In order to be sure that this was truly his vocation, I told him to reject the thought as often as it arose in his mind, for I well knew that if it really came from God, he would himself strengthen it. He endeavored to obey me, but as God wished to draw him wholly to himself, the more he strove to banish the thought, the more ardent did his desire to retire into our Congregation become. At last, after much reflection and discussion, our Paul determined to go through the spiritual exercises alone (ere taking his final resolution), in the hermitage of the Cross, situated in Cava, on the summit of a mountain. When he was there he determined to abandon the world entirely in order to give himself wholly to God; although when in it he had never loved it or been of it. He thus expressed himself on the subject when writing to a nun just before he quitted it: "I do not wish to have anything more to do with earthly things," said he, "I wish to belong wholly to God, and to forget myself, and for this reason I wish to place myself in the hands of others, so that I may have nothing to think of but eternity."

He entered the Congregation and left home without telling any one of his resolution, and joined me at



Barra, which is a suburb of Naples, where I was then living with several of my brethren, in a house provided for us by Cardinal Spinelli, the Archbishop of Naples, who had sent for some of the Fathers of our Congregation to give missions in his diocese. It was here then that Father Paul came to aid me. Soon afterwards his brother heard that he had resolved to abandon his family, and came to see him; he was transported with indignation, and did not cease to address him by the most offensive names for two whole hours; but Paul prudently remained silent, not offering a single word in reply. I say he did so through prudence, because the most logical reasoning and the most eloquent language are unable to convince a passionate man; indeed the more forcible and clear they are, the more they harden and embitter him. When his bishop, Mgr. de Liguori, heard of his retirement from the world, he too was filled with great displeasure, and made loud complaints against him. He met him one day during his journey to join us, when he stopped his carriage, and tried to persuade him to return to Cava; but on finding that Paul remained unshaken in his resolution, he ended by saying, "Well, since this is your decision, do not let me see you again, and do not re-enter my diocese."

After this, Paul began his novitiate, during which he gave the greatest edification, especially by his exercise of the virtue of obedience, which is a most painful and difficult thing for one that enters a Community after having reached a certain age, and after having been long accustomed to do his own will, even although he may have been always engaged in the most holy actions. Paul increased his penances, and especially his meditations, during this period, which latter he extended to seven or eight hours a day. During his novitiate and throughout the remainder of his life, including the last six years, when God tried him by excessive desolation

of mind, as we shall relate hereafter, he never had the least temptation to abandon his vocation. When it was time for him to make an oblation to God, that is to say, when he had to pronounce the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and perseverance, according to the rules of our Institute, he did so with such love and compunction that tears choked his utterance, and prevented him from repeating the words of the formula that is usually pronounced at profession.

## V.

### His Zeal for the Missions.

At the termination of the novitiate, his Superiors at once employed him in the work of the missions. Let us here pause a little and admire some of the virtues that this excellent priest practised during his holy life. First, let us speak of his zeal for the salvation of souls.

He was singularly devoted to the work of the missions. Indeed, he had been ardently attached to them from the time he became a priest. When he was a parish priest he used to go on missions with his companions, the missionaries of Cava, as often as he could do so without neglecting the duties of his charge; and they attest that he was indefatigable in these exercises, that he never spared himself for a single moment, and that he did not even shrink from what might endanger his life. While he was at Cava, it once happened that he had to go to a part of the country near the territory of Eboli, called Piesti, where the air was dangerously unhealthy at that time. All the rest declined to go there but Paul, who offered to go of his own accord. He cheerfully set out; notwithstanding the danger he was running, he remained alone there for a week, during which he was constantly employed in preaching and in

hearing the confessions of the inhabitants, and by God's mercy he left it full of joy and in perfect health.

His love for missions was so great, that when he had resigned his parish, and before he had decided to enter the Congregation, he made a plan to go about through the kingdom in disguise, begging his bread, and giving missions in those places that were the most destitute of spiritual assistance; he even wrote to this effect to a bishop of Calabria, who as he did not know anything about him, did not accept his offer. He also at the same time wrote to the bishop of Capaccio offering to exercise his ministry in his extensive diocese; but this proposition was equally unsuccessful.

When he was in our Congregation he made a private vow never to manifest any repugnance for any mission to which his Superiors might send him. He also made a vow to go as a missionary among the unbelievers, should such be the will of his Superiors. It will be well here to quote the letter that he wrote on this subject to Father Mazzini, his director:

"My Father, I know not whether it is through the Spirit of God or through that of pride that I feel impelled to write to your Reverence, to lay before you the desire that I have always had of offering myself to the Rector for the missions among the heathen. From the time of my novitiate I have vowed to obey the Superior *pro tempore* by undertaking any office, even that of a foreign missionary; and I made this vow with the strong desire and lively hope of realizing it some day or other. This desire is less fervent than it was, it is true; but I am still perfectly ready and willing to carry it into effect, and what is more, this desire has never left me since my novitiate. I know that I am full of faults, but yet I feel a holy envy for those that are more perfect. If I compare what I was with what I am, I find that I have changed for the worse, and this makes me long still

more to go and labor among the heathen; for if I were once embarked in an enterprise like that, I should be, as it were, compelled wholly to renounce myself and my own ease and comfort. My favorite maxim is that of St. Augustine, who says, 'O happy necessity that forces us to amend!' Now as I know that if I were sent on a mission among the heathen I should be almost forced to do good, to suffer, nay, perhaps even to die for Jesus Christ; I feel the greatest desire for it. It is true that I suffer much from sea-sickness, and that I might perhaps die on the voyage; but I should not therefore hesitate to set out, let the consequences be what they may. My Father, I resign myself to you," etc.

He succeeded in obtaining permission from his director to make this request, and he afterwards most earnestly besought me to grant his petition, imploring it as the greatest favor I could possibly grant him.

Father Paul was a truly indefatigable missionary, and spared no pains, especially in the laborious office of hearing confessions. Yet it must not be imagined that this was an easy duty to him; on the contrary, it caused him the greatest anxiety, as he was always afraid of having been guilty of some negligence regarding it. Hence it arose that this employment was a positive martyrdom to him, and the state of excessive weakness into which he sometimes fell during its administration was a plain proof of what he then endured. This, however, only enhances our admiration for the immense zeal and ardor of Father Paul. In the morning he was the first to enter the church, and in the evening he was the last to leave it, as he spent the whole day in hearing confessions, generally those of men, which are usually the most embarrassing and tedious. When he returned home in the evening after the sermon, he entered the confessional again without allowing himself a single interval of rest, and when he had attended to the peni-

tents around him, he left his room to see whether there was any one else that would like to go to him, although every confession was a source of torture to him. Once when he went on a mission without an alarm-clock Paul used to keep awake for several hours every night in order to be able to awaken his companions at the appointed time; during which he would arise from time to time without shoes or stockings to go to see what o'clock it was. On another mission he preached and heard confessions, although suffering from an attack of fever.

In fact, his labors in the work of the missions during winter and spring were quite incessant. While he was at home, he spent the day in giving the spiritual exercises to the ecclesiastics and seculars that asked for them; indeed, he never shrunk from any fatigue or inconvenience that he met with in the service of souls. One day when he was at the house at Nocera, he heard that a man had just been mortally wounded; he immediately flew to his assistance, without waiting to put on his cloak, hat, or shoes; and in order that he might go still quicker, he even took off his slippers, and carried them in his hand till he reached the sick man.

When he was in the pulpit he preached with admirable zeal and energy. Every one owned that his sermons produced an extraordinary effect, quite different from that which followed those of other preachers. Even in the conferences that he delivered to us in Chapter, which takes place once a week among us, his words seemed like burning arrows that pierced our inmost souls, for he uttered them with an energy so penetrating, that we felt that they sprang from the depths of his own heart, and above all, when he spoke of eternity he caused all that heard him to tremble.

This burning zeal, as that of Paul may be aptly designated, caused him to write the ardent Letters that he

sent to divers subjects whose skill in gaining souls for God was well known to him; in them he urged these persons to redouble their pains and labor in this holy work. One of the fruits of his zeal was manifested in the abundance of prayers that he addressed to God when a bishopric became vacant, and in the active measures that he took in order to cause the election to fall on a good prelate. It was only to his zealous efforts that the elevation of one worthy prelate to the episcopate must be attributed, who is still alive, and who governs his church with a solicitude that is most advantageous to the souls of his people.

## VI.

### **His Love of Mental Prayer and his Interior Trials.**

While Father Paul was thus laboring for the good of souls, he devoted as much time as possible to the exercise of mental prayer. The love of meditation indeed was his strongest passion, or rather it was his greatest delight.

From his earliest years, and especially after he had become a cleric, he set apart several hours a day for this purpose; in the afternoon, he always spent two hours in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament; sometimes he was kneeling, sometimes he was seated, but he always preserved an air of so great devotion, that the faithful used to say to one another, "Let us go and see the saint." He also made frequent visits to the cemetery, where he used to stay for a long time meditating on death and eternity.

After he entered our Congregation he used to make two meditations in church before the Blessed Sacrament, besides that of an hour and a half, which is prescribed by the rule, and he also made another one of half an hour in his own room before going to bed. He would



have liked to prolong this exercise through the night but the Superiors would not permit him to do so. Besides this, we used often to find him kneeling in his room engaged in meditation through the day; and it was also noticed that when he went out to walk in the wood, as he sometimes did, he retreated behind a tree and knelt down in prayer. He spent every spare moment, when he was on missions, before the Blessed Sacrament, or else he used to recollect himself wherever he might be, saying, "God is everywhere."

He made his preparation for his sermons on his knees; thus this time was also to him a time of prayer, and it was for this reason that his sermons made such an impression as they did, for they were the fruit of his own meditations. I also think that the reason why his discourses so often turned on death and eternity was because they were the ordinary topics on which he himself meditated. I have already mentioned how much he liked to visit the burying-ground. One day when he was speaking on this subject to a nun who admired his firmness in remaining in such a place, he said, "I should like to spend all the days of my life there." When he was a parish priest, every evening after his studies were over he made an hour's meditation on death, in concert with a worthy priest who lived with him, during which they used each to place themselves in a corner of the room in the attitude of corpses. "O death! O eternity!" were words which were continually on the lips of this servant of God, whether he were alone or with others. When he was engaged in conversation he would often say to one of his companions, "Tell me how you would feel were death at hand?" He often spoke of death and eternity in his letters to his penitents and friends. In one he said, "Earthly things will soon be at an end, and will avail nothing for all eternity." In another, "Let us think of eternity, for time



is short." In a third, "We must arm ourselves with the buckler of faith, which is the thought of eternity. Let us reflect that all here below will soon be at an end, but that eternity will never end. Let us remember that it is better for us to be one of God's meanest servants, than to possess the most exalted worldly dignity. Think of what on your death-bed you would wish to have done during life." His most powerful discourses were those in which he spoke of death and eternity, and they were his favorite topics. When he was a parish priest, he used to conduct the faithful to the cemetery from time to time, when he would take the bones of the dead in his hand whilst he was preaching, thus striving to impress them with the fear of death, that he might the better instil into them a contempt for the world and the thought of eternity. Indeed, almost every one of his public discourses contained some reflections on death and eternity.

But we must now return to the subject of his meditations. Except while he was very young, when Paul experienced nothing but sweetness in prayer, he exercised it without any sensible consolation, although he received great lights in it during his after years, especially with regard to the majesty of God, on which he once composed a sermon that filled all that heard it with astonishment. During meditation he spent nearly all the time in saying prayers that he counted on his rosary, repeating almost always these words, "Lord, deliver me from sin, and make me holy," or else, "My God, come to my assistance, come quickly: '*Deus in adjutorium meum intende,*'" etc. He used also to recommend this method of praying to others: "Without prayer and humility," he wrote to one of his penitents, "man cannot preserve either favor or grace. Humility! humility! Prayer, prayer without ceasing! let these be our watchwords. He that prays obtains. We must therefore pray with-

out ceasing. Ask continually for alms at the gate of divine mercy; let at least an hour a day be consecrated to asking spiritual favors from God." On another occasion, when writing to the same individual, he said, "Meditation is necessary, and without it we shall never be where we desire to be, and where we should be with meditation. I entreat you to pray unceasingly. It is the first, the second, the third, and the last method of vanquishing our enemies."

He often felt such interior desolation, that he felt as if he were so sinful that God had abandoned him, and began to weep; and when he recalled to mind his former transports of love towards God, he would tearfully and sorrowfully exclaim, "Lord, there was once a time when I loved Thee, but now I love Thee not!" One of us once asked whether he had ever felt joy in contemplation. "I once enjoyed it," he replied, "but I have lost all pleasure in it now." Yet it often happened that when any one wished to speak to him while he was engaged in meditation, it was necessary to shake him several times in order to arouse him enough to make him hear what was said to him. But from the time of his youth, as we have already said, God treated him as a strong soul, and reduced him to a state of entire suffering, so that the whole course of his life from that period was an uninterrupted succession of aridities, temptations, and terrors.

However, he rejoiced in the superior part of his nature, and desired that God would always deal with him thus, as he well knew that the love of God does not consist in sweetnesses, but in the accomplishment of the divine will amidst tribulations, as St. Teresa said, and as he himself was constantly repeating to his penitents. To one of them, amongst others, he wrote as follows: "Only souls that are enlightened by special grace can comprehend the value of a cross that is borne for God;

but in the next world all will clearly see that this grace is preferable to the possession of the whole world. Let us then pray God to give us strength to suffer, for otherwise our weak nature will sink by the way; meanwhile let us maintain a lively faith in eternal life." He wrote to the same person on another occasion: "Saints are formed by crosses, and not by meditations. We see a great many people that practise meditation without becoming saints, because they have nothing to suffer, whilst others that are in the midst of tribulations become so although they can meditate but little. The chief benefit of meditation is, that it gives us strength to suffer, and thus to please God. Patience then is the way to heaven, and we obtain it by meditation." He also said, in writing to a Father of our Congregation. "Your letter tells me of your pains as well as of your consolations; both of your trials and of your consolations. I wish your Reverence loved tribulation more than pleasure; crosses are indeed precious treasures, for they were sanctified by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross; we should, therefore, desire that our crosses may be multiplied every day until we at last die nailed to the cross with our Blessed Redeemer."

Thus highly, then, did our Father Paul esteem and love the cross; and he wished others to do the same, but he could not be insensible to the thorns with which his path was thickly strewed, nor to the terrors that tormented him without cessation. In his latter years especially he had to endure the most cruel temptations that can be inflicted on the soul that knows and loves God. The secrecy by which I am bound forbids my disclosing its nature; were I able to reveal it, it would fill the hardest heart with tenderness. I have no hesitation in saying that his sufferings during these latter years were as intense as any that were ever endured by any martyr of Jesus Christ. He was in such a state

of desolation and terror, that he was afraid that God had abandoned him, and he used to sigh and exclaim in the bitterness of his heart, "Alas! I have lost the right way, and I do not know what will become of me!" In writing to one of our Fathers, who was so ill as to be given over by the physicians, and who had asked him to pray to God to grant him a happy death, he said, "Would that I had as well-grounded a hope as that of your Reverence! the great work of my salvation is in a most hazardous position, and for this reason I entreat you to intercede for me when you are in the presence of God." In writing to another Father, he said, "I entreat you to recommend me to Jesus Christ, for I labor in uncertainty (*laboro quasi in incertum*), and none but God can know the state of my conscience." In another letter to the same Father, he said, "If your Reverence had to endure my sorrows, it would assuredly banish all joy from your heart, but may you continue to possess happiness, and leave me to groan under my misery. Yet have pity on me, at least you who are my friends, for the hand of God has afflicted me,—*Miseremini mei, saltem vos amici mei, manus Domini tetigit me*. Now you will ask in what manner God has struck me, and I will tell you. He has afflicted me by withdrawing his mercy and support from me, as a punishment for my infidelities. You will say, Oh! what humility! but I reply that it is an incontestable truth; therefore, pray to God for me."

His love for meditation also caused him to love silence and solitude, which are its inseparable preservatives and companions. Even whilst he was a parish priest, and whilst he was really absorbed by the anxiety and pains that he endured for the salvation of souls, he used to retire into remote and lonely places from time to time, to hold converse with God in meditation and in penitential exercises. It was this that caused Father Paul to have such a predilection for our house at Illiceto,

which is situated on one of the mountains of la Pouille. He used often to retire into a little grotto below the monastery, called the Grotto of the Blessed Felix, to meditate, or else he would plunge into an adjacent wood, where he felt as if he had met with a solitude like that of the first hermits. He thus expressed himself regarding it in a letter to a priest who was his great friend: "When I am in our new house of our Lady of Consolation at Illiceto," said he, "I feel as if I were enjoying the solitude possessed by the solitaries of Egypt. We retire here after the missions that we give in winter and spring, and enjoy so great tranquillity and solitude, and are so removed from the tumult of the world, that we never hear anything about what takes place in it. We live apart from all converse with men in the midst of a wood, where the air is pure and the view agreeable, so that it may really rival the rocky cave of St. Peter of Alcantara. Blessed be God for having brought me hither! yet I have to mourn over my ingratitude in working out my sanctification so tardily. But I still hope by God's grace to effect it some day." This love of solitude caused him to take delight in studying the lives of the hermit saints. Later on he went with us to Nocera, and as we were only then building the monastery, our Fathers were obliged to lodge in a private house. As it was very small, and a great many people came on business, it was difficult ever to be alone there. To obviate this, after the exercises in common were at an end, he used to retire into a loft full of straw, where the heat was insupportable, for it was summer; yet this servant of God went there at noon, although that is the hottest part of the day, to seek for a little solitude amid this hot straw, to be able to converse without interruption with God,

## VII.

**His Love of Obedience.**

Father Paul was no less attached to the virtue of obedience, both with reference to the Rule and also in regard to the orders of the Superiors. He gave the most perfect example of implicit obedience even to the most unimportant rules, and during the whole period of his sojourn in the Congregation, no one ever detected him guilty of the slightest infringement of them. One day when he arrived at the monastery of the Blessed Trinity, in the territory of Ciorani, thoroughly wet, he was recommended to go to dry himself in the kitchen; he replied, "No, that would be contrary to the Rule, as it is now silence-time." Our deceased Father Cæsar Sportelli, who was also a great observer of the Rule, said one day when speaking of Father Paul, "I always knew that Father Paul was a most mortified man; but I now perceive that he is also a rigid observer of the Rule." He not only loved regularity himself, but he was equally desirous to see it loved by all our brethren. He could not bear to see any one break the Rule in any respect, and so the strict observance of every regulation was always to be found wherever he was the Superior.

Father Paul was equally attentive in obeying the least sign from his Superiors. He manifested perfect submission to his parents from his very infancy, and his mother asserted that he had never offended or distressed her in any respect. He made a vow of entire obedience to his confessor in his youth, and it was in order to be able to resign his own will to that of others that he entered our Congregation. He said to a nun, on taking leave of a convent of which he had been the confessor, "God calls me to live under obedience." For this reason



he used to say that the holiness practised in the Congregation was worth more than that in the world. He expressed this sentiment when writing to Father Francis Margotta the priest, who was then thinking of joining us; this he afterwards did: "I write to your Reverence on bended knees, on account of the respect with which your holy resolution of retiring into our Congregation has inspired me. I cannot tell you what pleasure it has afforded me. Blessed forever be Jesus Christ, who has given your Reverence the courage to bid a last adieu to the world to give yourself wholly to God. Until now Father Francis Margotta has appeared to me to be a saint, but he has been so in his own way. At present, however, I see that he wishes to become a true saint, according to the will of Jesus Christ. We are all expecting you: make haste and come to us."

His esteem and love for obedience were so great, that when he received a letter from the Rector Major, he read it on his knees and answered it in the same manner. He also used to carry about with him the circulars that the Superior sent to the houses every year, and that contained several minute regulations for the good government of the Congregation, and he often read these letters over in order that he might punctually observe all that they enjoined. Thus when any question arose amongst his companions as to what should be done in certain cases, he cleared up their difficulties by reminding them of some decision given by the Superior under similar circumstances.

One year, one of the Superiors ordered him not to assist at the meditation that we make in common in the evening, and to employ the time in preparing the theological treatises that he was to explain to our students. Notwithstanding his love for meditation, Father Paul obeyed without objection or uneasiness. On another occasion the Superior ordered him to give all his instru-



ments of penance to one of our lay-brothers; this obedience cost him much, but he instantly obeyed, and without a word of complaint.

I will now relate another instance of obedience, and one that was still more painful to him, on account of the wound it inflicted on his humility. When he was at Nocera, we had a large picture painted, which is now to be seen at the entrance of this house, representing our Father Mgr. Falcoia, who was the bishop of Castellamare, and the first director of our Congregation, in the act of giving our Fathers the rules that he had drawn up. The Rector of Nocera wished Father Paul to be included amongst the personages therein represented, and ordered the painter skilfully to portray his features whilst he was looking on; he then sent for him, and in order that his humility might not be pained, he merely told him to stand there for some time, whilst the painting was being done, that he might be able to suggest any requisite alterations. Father Paul assented; but he probably suspected the real object in view, for he kept changing from one position to another, and turning his head about, first on one side and then on another, so that the painter declared that he could do nothing. Upon this the Superior openly said to Father Paul, "Go and sit down and remain motionless, for we wish to have your picture taken, and do so without objecting." As the poor Father was thus bound down by obedience he sat perfectly still on his chair, but his heated countenance plainly showed the torture that his modesty had to endure during the process. When the portrait was done, he exclaimed, addressing the Superior, "Ah! God has justly punished me! Some days ago I gave a sharp rebuke to a priest that had had his likeness taken, and now God has so ordered matters that I have been obliged to have it done myself."

He was no less obedient to his spiritual Father, and

he never did anything without his permission, as we shall see when we begin to speak of his interior mortification. One day while he was suffering great interior desolation, he went to his confessor and took out of his pocket a paper on which he had written down his sins preparatory to making a general confession; but no sooner did his confessor tell him to leave it alone, than he tore the memorandum and became tranquil.

### VIII.

#### His Humility.

We must now speak of the profound humility which Father Paul preserved throughout his life. This virtue was, as it were, the very apple of his eye; it was the ordinary subject of his meditations, and he constantly offered up this prayer to God, *Humilem fieri, igne flagrari, in sanctum cito converti pati, et contemni pro te* (O Lord, make me humble, give me grace to burn with the fire of divine love, to become soon a saint, to suffer and to be despised for Thee). And he used to repeat the words, *pati et contemni pro te* (to suffer and to be despised for Thee), over and over again with all possible fervor. He often conversed with his brethren on humility, and when he spoke on this subject his words were so full of ardor that he seemed to be carried out of himself.

See what he said about this virtue when writing to one of his disciples: "You may rest assured that you are in a state of grace. As to the consolations you experience, *nec laudo, nec vitupero* (I neither praise nor blame them); and as to the desire for martyrdom, it may be good if it does not proceed from the devil, who often seeks to make us entertain some secret complacency and vainglory by his suggestions. Your sensitiveness when neglected seems to me to proceed from self-love, which is not entirely dead within you."

In a letter to another of his friends, he said, "Without humility, man cannot continue to preserve the grace of God in his soul; I therefore earnestly recommend you to cultivate this virtue. I wish you to picture to yourself your place in hell, if you feel that you have ever done anything to merit it, and the abyss of the misery of your sins, if you have committed any. Let us strive to become saints rather than philosophers; let us determine to conquer or die."

He also wrote as follows to one of our Fathers: "The meditation of a soul under desolation should consist in patience, resignation, and prayer. If she cannot be recollected in God, let her at least be so in herself, that is to say, in her own misery, which is always an incentive to recollection of mind."

As for himself, he believed that he was the most unworthy of all, and after his death a number of self-accusations were found among his spiritual memoranda. He used often to accuse himself of his faults in public when he was Superior, and he placed some of the other Fathers under obedience to accuse him of all the faults that they might see him commit, and to humble him without scruple. Once when he was minister in a house, he begged the *zelator* publicly to accuse him of his faults in the middle of the refectory, and after he had done so, he thanked him for it with much gratitude.

But while Father Paul spoke and acted thus, he did not resemble those that loudly proclaim that they deserve the contempt of the whole world, and yet shrink from the least offensive word, or the slightest instance of neglect. He not only did not complain when he was despised, but he rejoiced interiorly. I will now give a beautiful instance of his humility. We have already said that his discourses were generally sought after, for he spoke with so much zeal that he filled the hardest hearts with compunction. Once, however, when his

Superior sent him to a place in the territory of la Pouille, his first sermon was so much disliked by the inhabitants that they sent him away again; yet he returned full of peace and even satisfaction at having received so palpable an affront. On another occasion (in my presence), a religious, who is now dead, was conversing with him upon some theological question. The religious not only differed with Father Paul in opinion, but treated him as one quite ignorant of what he was saying, so that when he came to himself, he went and asked his pardon; but Father Paul did nothing but admire the humility of this Father, and said, "What humility! the idea of coming to beg my pardon for a hasty word!"

His favorite book was the *Hidden Life*, and he said that he did not think it could be surpassed by any spiritual book. During one of his illnesses, although his strength was quite prostrated by fever, he read it over five times. His love for the hidden life made him say, "If I had ever been unjustly accused of the greatest crimes, and afterwards degraded and publicly punished with ignominy, I might then be able to do something for God." Thus would Father Paul reveal the secret desires of his heart, although he did so unconsciously. Nothing pained him so much as to hear himself praised. One day some one said to him, "My Father, you are a saint." But his face became glowing as a burning coal, and he replied with much agitation, "What sort of a saint, what sort of a saint!" He was always seeking to mortify himself at his meals, but when he was discovered he hastened to conceal his mortification. Once when he was preaching at Cava before Mgr. de Liguori, the bishop, who had been, and indeed still was, an excellent preacher himself, he received high eulogiums from him; but in another sermon that he delivered before the same prelate he spoke incoherently and confusedly, in order to lessen the reputation he had gained

by the first; he even went so far as to pretend to be quite perplexed or to have lost his memory, and stopped short in the middle of the sermon, but every one saw that he had done it on purpose to efface the memory of the praises he had before received.

Before his death, that is to say, during his last sickness, which continued for thirteen days, this servant of God spoke so little that his words might have been counted, and we imagine that he acted thus through a humble fear that his last words might be treasured up as is usual in regard to great servants of God.

## IX.

### **His Mortification.**

He was also always most careful to practise interior and exterior mortification.

His efforts to overcome all his inclinations were incessant, and formed one of his chief resolutions during the spiritual exercises, as we find by reference to his notes, but as these acts were interior, we know little of their nature or extent. They are fully known only to God, and we trust that he is now enjoying their reward in heaven.

As for exterior mortification, we have already said that he began to practise it in the most rigorous manner from his very childhood; he even made a vow to abstain from meat. In order to mortify himself still further he confined himself to one meal a day, and it was so slight that he sometimes felt his strength quite prostrated in consequence; when he was with us he used to speak of such acts as instances of the indiscretion and folly of a thoughtless young man.

When he was a parish priest his meal often consisted only of a morsel of bread and a glass of water, which he used to take in a corner of the church. His sleep

never exceeded four or five hours at this period, and he went to rest in his clothes.

When he entered the Congregation, he used indeed to take two meals a day, in order not to offend against obedience and to avoid singularity; but he might be said even then to keep a continual fast, for he took only a few ounces of nourishment in the evening, and ate so little in the middle of the day, that he generally arose from the table half famished with hunger; so that his Superiors at last ordered him to take more at a time. He used also often to mingle bitter herbs, and sometimes even the peel of decayed oranges, with what he did take. In order to mortify his thirst during dinner, for he never drank anything at other times, he only took small quantities at once.

He always carefully abstained from all amusements while he was in the world, indeed he was never known to enter into the least earthly gratification. He never went to plays, games, public walks, or field sports. At Cava, his birth-place, his family possess the shooting ground for ring-doves, and this sport is carried on every year there, and is a great amusement for the children; but Father Paul never took part in it. One year when he was the Superior of our house of St. Mary of Consolation at Iliceto, which is an extremely cold place, he took care that all the Fathers should be provided with warm clothing in winter, but said nothing about himself, so that the tailor forgot to make any for him, and he went through all this rigorous season with nothing but his cassock and shirt without the least complaint. When he was travelling it often happened that night came on while he was at a distance from any of our houses; and as he was always careful to lose no opportunity of mortification, he used to avoid going to our friends on such occasions, for fear of the hospitable reception they would give him; he used therefore to go



to inns instead, where he was often obliged to lie down either on straw or even on the bare ground.

He made a vow of obedience to his confessor while he was in the world, and as he was fond of exterior mortification, Father Paul readily induced him to consent to all that his fervor inspired him to ask; and all that his director permitted regarding mortification and meditation, he executed most punctually as a rigorous obligation to which he was bound by vow. Disciplines to blood were common with him, and for this purpose he used sometimes to use bunches of thorns, which he had gathered in the fields, but he generally scourged himself with a thick cane filled with lead and covered with large long iron spikes, which not only pierced the flesh but penetrated far deeper. He also afflicted his body by binding his arms and legs with large chains armed with points, and he used to wear them even while he was preaching and hearing confessions; but his Superior once perceived them during a mission, and took them away from him, and gave them into the charge of a lay-brother. It was also noticed that when he went to walk in the woods of Illiceto during recreation, he used to strike his hands on the thorns every now and then in order to mortify himself.

To sum up, Father Paul never had any amusement or relief whatsoever; his whole life and constant study were spent in crucifying his inclinations, in refusing himself every pleasure, and in afflicting himself by every possible penance. He was often heard to repeat, "We must fight in order to become saints; we must be always fighting, always striving to mortify ourselves in everything, in eating and drinking, in sleep, in our method of sitting, and in short, we must be mortified in all things." This is a beautiful, for it is a saintly maxim; but how rarely is it put in practice, unless indeed by those that have entirely consecrated themselves to God.



## X.

**His Spirit of Poverty.**

Father Paul was also a great lover of poverty. Even while he was in the world he made a vow to his confessor, by which he bound himself never to have more than five carlins in his possession at once, and those he only kept that he might be able to bestow them on the poor, whose wants it was his duty to relieve, as he was a parish priest at the time. His clothes were so shabby, that once when his brother met him looking as ragged as any beggar, he treated him as a madman, and loaded him with reproaches in the public street.

After he had entered our Congregation, in which the vow of poverty is one of those we take, he always observed it most zealously. When he was Superior he was very rigorous on this subject, and never forgave any member of the Congregation that was guilty of the least offence against religious poverty. He even carried its observance to excess, which was contrary to true economy, for he would not allow of any store of provisions, saying, "Poor people never lay in stores;" and he was the first to set an example of this rigorous poverty, by always putting it in practice himself. In his note-book he had written, "I should be much more afraid of being rich than of being poor; I wish to love poverty more than men of the world love riches." And in order to carry this resolution into effect, he never even made use of scissors, needles, thread, ink, paper, or of any other such little necessities, without the permission of the Superiors.

When he was Superior on the missions, he always chose the worst horse, the worst bed, and the most inconvenient confessional for himself. It is the custom in our Congregation for even the priests to take it in turn

to wash the dishes on certain days in the week, as an exercise of humility. The other Fathers used to make use of soap or bran afterwards, in order to clean their hands, but he only employed cinders, saying that it would be contrary to holy poverty to use anything else. Our Fathers are allowed to carry some book of piety about with them, such as the New Testament, the Imitation, the Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and others of the same kind, with the consent of the Superior; they also keep some devotional pictures in their breviary or on their table. But Father Paul would have nothing of the kind, and when our Fathers told him that there was no offence against poverty in so doing, he replied that his motto was, "Nothing, nothing, nothing." During his last illness, and when he had lost his speech, he perceived that a silver watch was hanging in his room, and as he could not speak, he made a sign to have it taken away, as a thing contrary to poverty, but the Father Minister told him that it served to regulate the administration of his remedies, which set his mind at rest.

## XI.

### **His Detachment in regard to his Relatives and his Charity towards his Neighbor.**

He was as detached from his relatives as he was from the goods of this world. When he was at our house of the Holy Trinity, in the territory of Ciorani, his mother asked him to obtain permission for her to go to see him, for she had not done so for many years; but he sent her a message by a priest, telling her to let the matter alone, for her wishes only proceeded from earthly affection. The mother renewed her entreaties, protesting that she wished to have the consolation of visiting him before she died, both for the sake of seeing him and also that

she might be able to give him her last blessing. Father Paul again replied that it was unnecessary, and that she could give him her blessing where she was, as it would be as valuable at a distance as near at hand. On another occasion, when he heard that his sister was seriously ill and in great suffering, he positively refused to go to see her, and contented himself with replying, "I wish that her pains may become still greater, that she may thus be more conformed to the suffering life of Jesus Christ."

Although Father Paul was so austere with regard to himself and to his relatives, he was as charitable and considerate as possible towards all others. He strove to comfort and relieve those that were oppressed by temptations or other trials; and although his natural disposition was severe, charity rendered him mild and affable to all, especially to those that came to confess their sins to him. He was in the habit of visiting the prisons at Cava and at Salerno before he entered the Congregation; he began by preaching to the poor prisoners; he then heard their confessions; after which he distributed a basket full of bread amongst them, and gave them each a carlin. There was a nun that experienced great distress of conscience, who applied to Father Paul while he was a parish priest. He attended to her with the most painstaking diligence for eight days consecutively; this happened during the octave of Corpus Christi, and as the nights are very short at this season, and as the servant of God wished to arrive at his church in time to attend to his parish and people, he went to this religious before daybreak. This fact has become known through the testimony of the religious herself.

When he was Superior amongst us he was always trying to relieve the wants of others, and specially of those that were ill; and not satisfied with recommending them to the care of the infirmarians, he often waited

on them himself. One day when he saw that one of those that were sick had rather an uncomfortable bed, he immediately gave him his own. During the hours of rest he used to walk about the corridors of the monastery on his toes, to avoid disturbing those that were in their rooms.

## XII.

### **His Purity.**

As for the virtue of purity, he preserved it with the utmost vigilance, and watched over all concerning it with the most scrupulous attention, and as far as we can tell, Father Paul never sullied his saintly soul by the foul stain of impurity throughout his life. He had a horror of this vice from his earliest youth, and could not even bear to hear it spoken of. Once when he was very young, he was going to school with another child that was related to him; but upon his uttering an indecent expression, Paul blushed, and ran off, leaving him behind. On another occasion when this same companion repeated the same word in his presence, he could not help giving him a blow, and from that time he resolved never to be in company with this relative again, nor with any other boy that might resemble him, and he carefully carried his purpose into effect.

With still greater reason was he always most reserved in his intercourse with women. He never looked at them, and he never spoke to the oldest woman without casting his eyes down; but as he was afraid that his eyes might some day betray him into evil, he prayed to God to weaken his sight, and God granted his petition. He was so careful on this point even with regard to his mother and sisters, that they complained that he had never even once looked at them.

When this servant of God was on missions, he gener-

ally began by hearing the confessions of men, and it was only when he had heard them all that he made up his mind to listen to those of women, in order not to remain idle. When he was obliged to converse with them on any indispensable business, he rigorously followed the advice of St. Augustine: *Cum feminis sermo brevis et rigidus* (With women let conversation be short and rigid), and he sent them away as quickly as he could, and with all possible gravity. If he had to give the spiritual exercises in a convent, he remained in the confessional in the morning and afternoon; but he never revisited them when the retreat was over, unless in cases of absolute necessity, however pressingly he might be asked to do so by the religious, for fear of contracting any attachment to them.

To purity of body he also united that of soul. He owned to the parish priest that succeeded him that he was not certain of ever having committed a mortal sin during his whole life, adding that he only feared that he might have done so; but fears such as these are the scruples of saints who are afraid even when there is no cause for apprehension. Father Balthasar Alvarez said that mortal sin is so horrible a monster, that it cannot enter a soul that loves God, without making itself clearly known; hence theologians are unanimous in concluding that when a timorous person is only in doubt, and is not sure of having lost the grace of God, it is certain that he has not done so. As for our Father Paul, although he affirmed that he had doubts on the subject, the priest who heard his last general confession on his death-bed affirmed without hesitation that the servant of God had passed into another life without having lost baptismal innocence.

## XIII.

**His Devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ and to the Blessed Virgin.**

Father Paul had also great devotion towards the Passion of Jesus Christ. One day when he was preaching on that subject, his countenance became so inflamed and radiant, that it seemed as if a seraph were in the pulpit. Another time, in the territory of Oliveto, when he was preaching on the love of Jesus Christ, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, he remained silent and motionless in an ecstasy for a long time in the sight of all his hearers; this affected them more than the finest discourse could have done.

He was no less devout towards the Blessed Virgin. He had cherished a tender affection for this divine Mother from his infancy, and this tenderness used to be plainly manifested in all his sermons, and to those that went to confession to him. His great delight when he was dying consisted in fixing his eyes on a picture of Blessed Mary that was placed beside him. His last illness took place during the Novena of the Assumption. While he was ill, Father Paul one day said, "If I do not die before the 15th of August, I shall not die now." He spoke thus because he had a confident hope that if he were to die, our Blessed Lady would grant that his death might happen during this novena, and he was not disappointed of this expectation.

## XIV.

**His Constancy in his Resolutions and his Conformity to the Good Pleasure of God.**

But amongst all the admirable virtues of Father Paul, the most striking was his perseverance in goodness. He

used also to strive to inculcate it on all with whom he held any intercourse. "Constancy in good resolutions," said he. Constancy was indeed, as it were, his watchword, and the firm and unwearied energy with which he carried out his resolution of always aiming at the greatest perfection, and of doing what was most pleasing to God, was truly wonderful.

During the whole time this good Father lived with us no one ever perceived the least voluntary fault in him, or the slightest appearance of tepidity. What rendered this most remarkable was, that he preserved this constancy during the severe aridity of mind with which he was tried for the last six years of his life, when no spiritual relief, no ray of consolation, was afforded him to soften the pain of this grievous martyrdom. There are some men in the present day that boast of having very strong minds, because they despise the truths and maxims of the faith, which they call the prejudices of the feeble-minded. With far greater justice may we say that Father Paul was a man of a strong mind, for he courageously persevered in his good resolutions, and unceasingly did he advance in the love of God; he never slackened in his fervor, for he was always striving to attain the greatest sanctity that it is possible for a man to acquire.

One of our Fathers, who was a man of great virtue and discernment, said that if he had to depict Father Paul, he would represent him on a marble pillar with this inscription: *Semper idem* (Always the same). His fervor was always the same, he was always equally solicitous in seeking God and his greater glory; he was ever constant in advancing in the practice of virtue without ever making a retrograde step; and he was at all times careful to overcome and mortify himself without ever indulging in the least bodily relaxation whatsoever. For him there were no theatres, feasts, concerts,



sports, games, parties, nor any other worldly amusement. In a word, he was always the same, and his actions were always uniform, full of fervor and heroism. For this reason his countenance was always serene, both in prosperity and adversity, because his only passion was that the good pleasure of God might be done. These words were therefore constantly on his lips, and he wrote on a paper that he kept before him on his table that it might always be in his sight, "The adorable will of God." This was his favorite and accustomed topic in preaching, and that by which he most inflamed the hearts of his hearers.

He even declared that he did not wish to become more holy than God willed, but he did not therefore cease always to aim at the highest possible degree of holiness. One day when he was conversing with a religious, the latter said to him that he did not wish to do anything more than was necessary just to secure his salvation; at these words Father Paul stood up, and said with emotion, "O my Father, what do you say? We who are religious ought to be saved as saints and men of perfection." He then brought forward a great many proofs in support of what he had advanced, so that at last the religious said, "Well, I admit that is true, my Father, and I will try to do better in future."

When the servant of God read the Lives of the saints that gave themselves up wholly to God, he shed tears of joy. Nor could Father Paul restrain his tears when a member of our Congregation made his oblation after the year's novitiate by pronouncing the accustomed vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, of renouncement of every dignity or ecclesiastical benefice, and of perseverance in our mode of life. When he met with any one inclined to lead a pious life, he did all he could to induce him to give himself up wholly to God, and to lead him to entire conformity to the divine will. His

letters contain admirable passages to this effect. To one of his sisters, who experienced many tribulations, he wrote, "Think of nothing but of offering yourself unreservedly to God; abandon yourself entirely to his divine will, beg him to dispose of you as he pleases, and be assured that the best devotion of all consists in doing the will of God." In writing to one of his penitents, he said, "We must suffer much if we would please God. He asks us for courage, not for tenderness." And when he was conversing with us, it seemed as if he could only speak of striving to please God, and of seeking in all things to do what is most agreeable to him.

#### XV.

#### His Death.

Such was the life of Father Paul, of which we have here given a slight sketch, and his holy death perfectly corresponded to so virtuous a life. He was Superior of the house of St. Mary Mater Domini, in the territory of Caposele, at the time it took place, and while he was there he often predicted his death even before he became ill. He spoke of nothing but of eternity and Paradise for some months before he died; and he often said to his brothers, "Tell me, what do they do in Paradise?" On one occasion he positively said, "I shall die this year." And the event verified these words. On the 5th of August, 1753, when he was still in good health, he spoke still more definitely about his death, and said, "I shall die this month. The fever will come on to-day." And that very day, after dinner, fever attacked him, and the symptoms were so bad that the doctors despaired of his life on the third day. His illness lasted for eleven days, during which he filled all that approached him with admiration, so great was his calmness, patience, and obedience towards the infirmarian

when he administered the prescribed remedies to him. He received all without complaint, and asked for nothing.

We cannot relate anything regarding his sentiments in this last illness; for he said very little during the whole time. We have no doubt that he acted thus through humility. He knew that the last words of those that are looked upon as great servants of God are carefully treasured up; he therefore remained in a state of constant and silent recollection, keeping his eyes constantly fixed on the image of Jesus crucified and of the Blessed Virgin. When his brethren begged him to say some words of edification to them, he did not answer, and he even manifested some displeasure at the request, fearing that even the last words that he had uttered during life might be treasured up after his death. One of our Fathers begged him to order the Community, as their Superior, to pray to God to restore his health, for the welfare of the Congregation. He then spoke, and said, "No, it is expedient for me to die." When I heard that he was so dangerously ill, I sent him an obedience by virtue of my authority as his Rector-Major and Superior, to get well, should such be the good pleasure of God. But when he heard of this command, he raised his hand in silence, thus signifying that his recovery was not the will of God.

He was somewhat tormented by his habitual fears at the beginning of his illness; but after his director had ordered him to have confidence, he became quite calm, and with celestial peace, with eyes fixed on the crucifix, and amidst his weeping brethren, he gave up his pure soul to God at about one o'clock on the 13th of August, 1753, being only forty-seven years of age. We confidently trust that he is now united with his God, whom he strove so much to please, and whom only he sought through his whole life.

When the tolling of the bell announced his death, there was general lamentation among his brethren as well as amongst the strangers that were then in the house. One of his veins was opened before he was buried, and immediately the blood gushed forth. Since his death a great number of the faithful have obtained prodigious favors by means of his relics. These miracles have been carefully registered, and will be published in due time, should it ever please God to cause him to be honored on his altars.

Notes on the Life of Father Januarius Maria Sarnelli,  
*OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY  
REDEEMER.*

ST. ALPHONSUS wrote this Life in 1752. There is every indication that it was destined to be placed at the head of the works of Father Sarnelli, where it is found in the editions with which we are acquainted. The saint was desirous of keeping it anonymous, but it can easily be recognized from what he omits to say, and from the notes that we append. We shall find more than one trait of resemblance between the life of Father Sarnelli and that of St. Alphonsus himself. Father Tannoia moreover informs us that they were united from their youth by a close friendship, and that before they had entirely left the world they gave themselves up together to pious exercises. It is astonishing how Father Sarnelli, who died at the age of forty-two, could have done so much in a life so short and so full of sufferings; but such is the life of the saints. Cardinal Villecourt also assures us, in 1862, that there was question of introducing the cause of his Beatification. (*Vie de S. Alph.* l. 2, ch. 15.)—ED.

## Notes

ON THE

### LIFE OF FATHER JANUARIUS MARIA SARNELLI, OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

#### I.

##### His Birth, Infancy, and Youth.

FATHER JANUARIUS MARIA SARNELLI was born at Naples, on the 12th of September, 1702. His parents were D. Angelus Sarnelli, baron of Ciorani, and D. Catharine Scoppa. They had eight children, of whom six were boys and two were girls. D. Januarius was their fourth son. D. Andrew, who was the next to him in age, is the secular priest that set on foot at his own expense a house of missionaries<sup>1</sup> in the territory of Ciorani, who were instituted that they might go about in the diocese of Salerno, and in the neighborhood, laboring for the salvation of the destitute souls in the country.

Father Januarius manifested most pious dispositions from his very infancy; and he was even then remarkable for his angelic modesty, which caused him always to keep his eyes cast down in presence of women, even in that of his sisters and mother. His obedience and submission to his parents were equally exemplary, and when he perceived that he had at all annoyed them, he used instantly to beg for forgiveness, and would kiss their hand or even throw himself at their feet in order to appease them. He evinced the greatest love of mortification from his earliest youth, and even then

<sup>1</sup> Of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.



always abstained from fresh fruit from a spirit of penance. When his parents gave any entertainment, he used at once to leave the house and go to the church of St. Francis Xavier, which was just opposite the house in which they lived. In a word, from all we know regarding his childhood and the whole course of his life, it is easy to infer that he never lost his baptismal innocence.

When he was fourteen, he earnestly begged his father to allow him to leave the world and to enter the Society of Jesus, but as he was so young he would not permit him to do so. From this time, however, Januarius redoubled his fervor in the service of God; he increased the number of his meditations, and led a still more retired life than before. He never conversed with those of his own age, but after he had gone through his studies, his love of solitude caused him to retire into the church, to pray to God before the Blessed Sacrament to enlighten him as to his vocation. After that he would return home, where his conduct towards his parents was a source of great edification to the whole household.

## II.

### **He Embraces the Profession of the Law, then the Ecclesiastical State.**

At an after period, he embraced the profession of the law in obedience to his father, and he succeeded in it in a wonderful manner. Although he was still very young, the management of the revenues and of the rents of the Duke of Cirifalco were soon intrusted to him. But amid these different occupations he never omitted to attend Mass every day, or to make his visit to the Blessed Sacrament and his daily meditation. He had such affection for this exercise, that when he was at

liberty he used always to go to the church of St. Francis Xavier, where he would remain in prayer for so long a time, that when any one came to speak to him and he was not at home, the servants, who knew his custom, used generally to reply, "You will be sure to find him if you go to the church of St. Francis Xavier." When he went to his father's estate, the only recreation he took was that of shutting himself up in the parish church, where he would spend half the day in meditation. This was asserted by the priest of the place.

He used also to visit the sick in the hospital of the incurables several times a week, and he said that he received so great lights from God when he was there, that these visits gave him constant food for meditation, and he came away full of consolation, and replenished with the Spirit of God. It was also in this place that God made known to him that he was called by him to leave the world. After consulting with his director on the subject, he immediately resolved to do so, quitting the bar and becoming a priest. As soon as he was ordained he gave up all earthly possessions; he distributed all the money that he had laid by amongst the poor, as well as the clothes that he had worn in the world. He gave himself up unreservedly to God from this time, and spent all his time in prayer, study, and the assistance of his neighbor.

In order to live in still greater solitude, and to give up all connection with the world, he retired into the Congregation of the Holy Family,<sup>1</sup> or, in other words, into the Chinese College, which is established at Naples. During all the time he stayed among these exemplary priests, his constant occupation was either meditation

<sup>1</sup> This Institution, founded in 1729, had for its aim the forming and the raising to the priesthood of young men brought from China, who afterwards would return home to maintain and propagate religion. St. Alphonsus also entered that college.

and study, or else going about the neighborhood teaching the Christian doctrine; he also went several times a week to the hospital, where he would spend as many as six hours consecutively, in teaching, consoling, and attending the poor patients.

About this time he became a member of the Congregation of apostolical Missions,<sup>1</sup> which was set on foot in the archbishopric of Naples for missionary purposes, in which he labored in a most exemplary and efficacious manner from the moment he entered the priesthood.

### III.

#### **He Enters the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.**

Some years afterwards he heard that a Congregation of missionary priests had been recently formed in the town of Scala, under the direction of Mgr. Falcoia, the bishop of Castellamare,<sup>2</sup> and that they were to devote their time to the service of the destitute country-poor, by means of missions and other spiritual exercises; and as he heard that regular observance of rule was strictly attended to among them, and that besides the simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, a fourth vow and oath of perseverance was taken by its members, he felt a great desire to enter it.

In order, therefore, to satisfy his desire to lead a life of greater perfection, and one in which he would be entirely consecrated to God, and animated by the counsels of Father Manulius, of the Society of Jesus, who

<sup>1</sup> St. Alphonsus was also a member of this Congregation, which counted among its members the flower of the clergy.

<sup>2</sup> The holy founder here avoids mentioning himself by attributing all to his spiritual director, who only approved his work and aided him with his counsel. Father Sarnelli, his friend, was to have been one of his first companions; but he was able to join him only towards the end of 1733, a year after the foundation of his Institute.

died some years ago with a high renown for sanctity, he resolved to enter the new Congregation, and quitted Naples for Scala. He did not, however, lose sight of the Congregation of Apostolical Missions, of which we have already spoken, but continued to support it as far as possible whenever it called upon him for help. He spent the rest of his days in the rising Congregation, in which he edified all his brethren by the constant practice of every virtue, above all, by his mortification, obedience, and charity towards others. It was specially noticed that he was so exact in obeying the sound of the bell, that if he were writing, he arose immediately, and would even leave a letter unfinished. Such was his mode of life while he lived in our house at Scala.

## IV.

**He is sent to Naples.**

His Superiors afterwards sent him to Naples, both because the air of Scala did not suit his infirm health, and to enable him to continue the great undertakings he had already begun in the capital, especially that of delivering it from women of bad character, as we shall relate more at length hereafter, and it was here that his life terminated.

Although he labored with the most indefatigable zeal in the duties of his own Institute, he did not neglect to assist the brethren of the Congregation of missions from time to time. Although engaged in the laborious enterprise of expelling all abandoned women from Naples, he yet found time to devote himself to the salvation of souls, with such ardor that when Cardinal Spinelli, the present Archbishop of Naples (1752), sent for Father Alphonso de Liguori, the Rector-Major of the said Congregation, to come with his companions, and give missions in the villages of his diocese at his

expense, he wished that Father Januarius might be one of the missionaries; and he gave them a permanent abode near the village of St. Iorio, to enable them to go about in the neighborhood more easily. When Father Alphonso was obliged to leave the city on business connected with the affairs of his Congregation, the Cardinal left the whole charge of the missions in the hands of Father Januarius, who thus continued the good work that had been begun by that excellent missionary, Don Matthew Testa, who is at present a most worthy Canon in the capital. Our Father continued to labor in these missions with the utmost success until his blessed death, which took place some years afterwards. This loss not only grieved the very zealous pastor of the town of Naples, but also his own faithful flock; indeed, Januarius was generally regretted, as a great laborer in God's vineyard, and it was everywhere said, and it is still declared, that he alone was worth ten other missionaries.

## V.

### **His Love of Meditation.**

But before relating his precious death, it will be well to give some brief details regarding his virtues.

He was so fond of meditation, that even when he was a secular, he used to steal time from business to go to pray in some church, but from the time he became a priest, he gave himself up unreservedly to this holy exercise. He used daily to repair to the church of the Cross, for this purpose, where he would shut himself in a little cell behind the sacristy, and remain in prayer from dinner-time until the evening; until he entered the Chinese College, this was his daily practice, except when he went to the hospital.

He received so much celestial light, and felt so holy

ardor in meditation, and had such a gift of tears, that he himself owned that he had nearly lost his sight in consequence. The Gospel was the book whence he derived all his light and consolation. "Scarcely had I read a few verses," said he, "ere I was so enlightened by the divine goodness, that I melted into tears, and the world then appeared to me as nothing but smoke."

He was several times seen going up and down the cloisters of the church of the Cross and that of the Holy Ghost, with his arms extended, his eyes raised to heaven, and giving vent to such passionate sighs that several persons that saw him thought he was beside himself. When once told that such actions caused him to be taken for a madman, he replied, "That is very true, for he that does not love God is mad, and I do not love him." On another occasion, when a priest asked him why he did such things, the color mounted to his cheeks, and he confessed to his friend that he did so unconsciously.

From this time he would only speak of God, and listen to conversation about him and the salvation of souls, as I can myself testify; and when he heard people talking on indifferent subjects, it pained him so much that he always strove to turn the conversation on spiritual things, or else tried to steal away if he could do so without giving offence.

## VI.

### **His Principal Devotions.**

Our Father Januarius Maria had also a great devotion to the Blessed Trinity, in whose honor he celebrated Mass as often as he could, and tried to inspire every one with a devotion to this mystery. He also published a very pious book to propagate this devotion.

He was also specially devout towards the Passion of

Jesus Christ. His room was full of crosses and pictures to remind him of the sufferings of the Incarnate God, and he caused a great many to be made, which he distributed, that they might be placed in the different houses and streets. His devotion was no less great towards the holy sacrifice of the Mass, as we can see by his works, and he never omitted to celebrate it for a single day to the end of his days, although he was several times on the point of fainting at the altar through his infirmities. Once he really did so, yet even then he persisted in finishing it as soon as he recovered, although it cost him a great effort, as he declared that all his hopes were centred in this august mystery. He had so deep a conviction of the love which we owe to our Blessed Saviour, that he said that we should be always preaching to souls in these words, "Love Jesus Christ! love Jesus Christ!"

He had also the greatest devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, and especially towards her Immaculate Conception. In order to spread this devotion, he gave away a great quantity of pictures of her as well as scapulars and rosaries, and his great delight during the recreation established in our Congregation after dinner and supper consisted in making rosaries, images, or scapulars. He had also a special love for the holy name of Mary. Once when he was present at a sermon on the Blessed Sacrament, which was delivered by a most zealous preacher, he was quite satisfied with the discourse, yet it grieved him to think that he had not once pronounced the sweet name of Mary. He therefore humbly entreated him never to omit the name of the Blessed Virgin in his sermons for the future, assuring him that it would add greatly to the benefit they already produced. He was really proud of being called by the names Januarius Maria, and could not help mildly showing some dissatisfaction when he was only addressed by



the name of Januarius, without the addition of that of Maria. He begged his friends to unite with him in praising the divine Mother in the month of September, as he said she always granted him all the favors that he asked for during this month. Before he went to bed, he was in the habit of winding his rosary round his arm to remind him of his divine Mother during the night, and he told one of his confidential friends, that in his greatest trials and combats with the powers of darkness he was always quite fortified when he held his rosary in his hands. He preached on the glories of Mary wherever he went; he recommended devotion to her in all his sermons, and made every exertion to have novenas celebrated in her honor. He even composed a very devotional little book in honor of the Mother of God, entitled *The Grandeurs of Mary*, which is to be found amongst his spiritual treatises. He had but one cause of regret at the hour of death, namely, that he had been unable to finish his large work on the glories of Mary, of which he had already collected all the materials.

## VII.

### His Interior Trials.

We will here mention that after the great consolations with which God favored him for so many years, he ordained that on a certain feast-day, for which he had prepared with much fervor, his soul should fall into a state of frightful aridity and profound desolation, which lasted throughout the remainder of his life. At his last moments indeed God restored the sense of his grace and presence to his soul, and gave him the favor of dying inflamed with an ardent desire of seeing God.

With the exception of these happy moments, his heart always remained dry and cold, both during meditation

and also in his labors for the salvation of souls. It seemed to him as if God had abandoned him, and he felt no consolation in any of his spiritual exercises. He also endured the most horrible temptations, especially to infidelity, gluttony, and despair, which caused him to say that he had become quite incapable of occupying himself in the service of God, and that it seemed to him as if these words of the Psalmist were constantly resounding in his ears: *Many say to my soul: There is no salvation for him in his God.*<sup>1</sup> At times he could scarcely breathe, but even then he would sigh, and say these two words, "My God! my God!"

This took place even during his apostolical labors for the salvation of his neighbor, by which he certainly shortened his life; for notwithstanding his great zeal for the glory of God, all that he did was performed by a great effort, being destitute of consolation and accompanied with extreme repugnance. He was indeed a man of great strength of mind, and full of ardor to spread the glory of God and to do his holy will. The words which were always on his lips, in his heart, and on his pen, were, "The glory of God and the will of God." All that he did was done for God only, and if he sometimes felt tempted to vainglory on seeing the success of the works that he undertook for the glory of God, he used earnestly to pray, and get others to pray, that he might be delivered from this secret satisfaction.

During this bitter privation of all celestial consolation, he always maintained a firm confidence in God, and placed all his trust in the efficacy of prayer. He said that amid the torture that he suffered from temptation and desolation his only strength was in these words of Jesus Christ, *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He*

<sup>1</sup> "Multi dicunt animæ meæ: Non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus."—Ps. iii. 3.

*will give it you.*<sup>1</sup> He declared that if God had given him no other grace than that of prayer, he should be abundantly satisfied. as there are so many great promises attached to that holy exercise. In fact, this confidence in meditation purchased for him all the favors with which God endowed him. By it he triumphed over the many difficulties that he had to contend with in his immense labors for the glory of God; for he had recourse to his own prayers and to those of others on all such occasions, and he was wont to say that he had a secret by which he could be certain of obtaining even more from God than he asked for.

#### VIII.

##### His Spirit of Mortification and of Humility.

To meditation he united mortification of the senses. When he was ordained priest he fasted three days in the week on bread and water; his failing health afterwards compelled him to give up this practice; but even then he always abstained from taking fruit except when his Superiors made him do so through obedience. His mother related to one of his confessors, that when there was any delicacy at dinner he never touched it even when a mere child, and he limited himself to such sparing quantities that what he took hardly sufficed for the support of nature.

Although his health was much impaired, he never omitted to use the discipline. Yet he could only have struck on bones, for his penances, sufferings, and labors had reduced him to a mere skeleton. When he could not do anything else, he bore the stings of insects without endeavoring to escape from them, and they often cause greater pain than hair-cloth and disciplines.

<sup>1</sup> "Si quid petieritis patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—*John*, xvi. 23.

He also had so great a wish to be despised for the love of Jesus Christ, that he made a firm resolution never to justify himself before any one when he might be accused of a fault. He prayed for the love of humiliation in all his Masses; and for this end he said the Collect *ad petendam humilitatem* (for asking humility), as often as he could. He confided to a member of the Congregation that God answered this prayer soon after he began to say it, by sending him a great many opportunities of practising humility, and that he not only granted him grace to bear humiliation with patience, but also with interior gladness. Whenever he received any slight, he thanked God for it, and he confided to the same Father that he was so far from dreading reproach and shame, that he felt an ardent desire to be dragged through the mud in the streets of Naples.

In order to look contemptible, he always wore old and ragged clothes, such as are hawked through the streets by Jews, declaring that he wished to have nothing in common with the world; and when his parents reproached him for thus dishonoring his family by his shabby appearance, he told them not to distress themselves about this, for that if any one asked his name, he would never say that he was the son of the Baron of Sarnelli, but would call himself Father Januarius Maria, as if the former were his Christian name, and the latter his surname.

One day when he entered the church of our Lady of Good Help at Naples to say Mass, the cleric on duty on seeing his ragged attire sent him away most unceremoniously, and would not permit him to celebrate. The Father was afterwards revenged on him, but it was only with the revenge that saints are wont to take on those that injure them; for by his assistance the uncourteous cleric was afterwards enabled to become a priest.

In a word, he lived and died in such poverty, that the

priest that assisted at his death procured new clothes in which to bury him, as all his own were worn-out and in rags.

## IX.

**His Charity toward his Neighbor.**

Our Father Januarius Maria possessed charity towards his neighbor in a heroic degree.

When he was absent from our houses he lived as scantily as he could, ate little, and wore the most wretched clothes, not only to draw down contempt on himself, but also to enable him to have more at his disposal for the poor. He would sometimes even take off his clothes, go without shoes, and deprive himself of the food that was served up to him, that he might bestow them on the indigent. He would often go about Naples collecting the poor together, after which he would conduct them to his own house, where he washed their feet, waited on them, and supplied their wants. To enable him to do this he selected a room midway on the stairs, which was so very dark and out of repair, that one of his friends even saw the mice jumping up and down on his bed. Here, however, he received all the poor that came to him; for had he attempted to do so anywhere else the servants would have sent them away. He did not receive women there, but when any of them wished to speak to him, he went to some church to hear them.

After he entered the Congregation, his greatest happiness consisted in obtaining leave from his Superior to bestow alms on the poor.

He had an incredible affection for the sick in the hospital, and bore any amount of fatigue to assist them in spiritual or temporal necessities. When he was only a secular he went about begging for provisions from his relatives. He collected together as much as he could,

after which he arranged it all in baskets with his own hands, and sent it to the hospital. Whenever he went to visit these poor sufferers after he became a priest, he would carry some little luxury in the shape of fruit or sweetmeats or such like, which he concealed under his cloak, and which he had either procured expressly for them, or of which he had deprived himself in order to bestow it on them. He even went the length of having long earthenware vessels constructed to hold roast meat; and he carried them to the sick by hanging one on each side. He used also to make up and distribute a number of little packets of tobacco among them. He would make their beds for them, and wash their feet; in fact, he never omitted any office of charity that could contribute to their relief.

## X.

### His Zeal for the Salvation of Souls.

In all works of spiritual mercy and zeal for the salvation of souls, Father Januarius Maria Sarnelli attained to the most heroic degree of perfection. From the time he left the world to devote himself to God in the ecclesiastical state, he was always studying how he could be most usefully engaged for the salvation of souls; and all his thoughts and words were directed to this one point, even during his familiar conversations during recreation. While others were then seeking for relaxation, he looked preoccupied and sad; and if any one asked him what he was thinking about, he replied, "I am thinking what had better be done to assist the souls whom God died to save." When he spoke of how much the poor require spiritual assistance and priestly instruction, his countenance glowed with zeal, and sometimes even tears of pity would flow from his eyes. He often said that he felt that he had a special call to assist the

poor and destitute, and applied these words of the prophet Isaias to himself, *He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.*<sup>1</sup> He added, that he believed he should be damned if he did not devote all his energies to this purpose, and that it seemed to him as if these words of St. Paul were addressed to himself, *Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.*<sup>2</sup>

While he was at Naples, before he entered the Congregation, he determined to join two other priests in giving missions in the provinces of Calabria and Abruzzi, as he thought these places the most destitute of spiritual aid. The patron saint who was most dear to him was St. John Francis Regis on account of his love for the poor. It was this same predilection that caused him to enter the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, for he knew that it was chiefly instituted for the assistance of the destitute country poor.

He was unceasingly engaged in preaching and hearing confessions whenever his health permitted. After he had been nearly worn out by laboring in church the whole morning during missions, he would take only a bit of bread or a few raisins, which he ate in the sacristy and spent the rest of the day in preaching and in the confessional. Once when he was in the territory of Bracigliano, he bore the fatigues of a mission for two months consecutively without having even a Father to aid him; yet he was in the confessional by daybreak. His only refreshment consisted in a cup of chocolate, which he took very late in the day, then he immediately began to preach and hear confessions, so that he alone heard the confessions of about two thousand people. On another mission, which was given at Villa, in the diocese of Cajazzo, where we had then a house, he labored for five weeks, during which he heard confes-

<sup>1</sup> "Evangelizare pauperibus misit me."—*Luke*, iv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> "Væ mihi si non evangelizavero!"—*I Cor.* ix. 16.



sions until four o'clock in the afternoon, when he took a little refreshment; he then returned to the pulpit, and after he had done preaching he re-entered the confessional, where he remained until ten at night. His zeal carried him even farther than this: it was several times observed that he passed two days without tasting food when he was particularly occupied about the salvation of certain souls.

Yet he was almost always in bad health. When he was advised to try to become well before undergoing such fatigue, he replied, "If I were only to labor when I am well, I should have done little or nothing, for I see that it is God's will that I should always be in suffering;" and when some one rejoined that if this were the case his life would not last much longer, "Well," said he, "and can there be anything more glorious than to wear out one's life for God?" It was therefore by a sort of constant miracle that he was able to labor for the salvation of souls without taking any rest, notwithstanding his infirmities and weakness. When he was composing his admirable works on spiritual subjects, he often wrote until midnight, and only ceased writing when overcome by fatigue. Thus, a lay-brother who waited on him at this time used to reply to those that asked what he was doing, "If he is not writing, he must be ill." He said himself that when he had to go through any special undertaking for the good of souls, he almost always felt more suffering and weakness than usual beforehand; but that his strength increased when the time for action arrived. He often began to preach when he was much fitter for his bed; but he felt much better after the sermon than he had felt before.

He preached with so much zeal, and his sermons produced so much effect, that they often led sinners to give public signs of sorrow, and loudly to ask for a confessor. All that attended his missions said, "Let us go

and hear the saint. It is a saint that preaches." When he was at Naples, he often went to the church of St. Januarius, beyond the city walls, in spite of the great distance, that he might preach to the old men there; and he used afterwards to say to his brethren at Scala that he was quite distressed to have to abandon this work of charity.

He was also very fond of ministering to the wants of poor children, and used to say that nothing would please him more than to have to teach them the Christian doctrine on all the missions. When he was at Naples he sought out with holy diligence the little children suffering from the ring-worm in order to instruct them, to exhort them to go to confession, and to give them some little treat, and he used to do this with so much charity that they were in the habit of calling him their father. He also went about the public squares of Naples seeking for the little street porters, who are generally very ignorant of their faith. He would then conduct them to his own house, where he taught them the Christian doctrine, prepared them for the sacrament of penance, and gave them something to eat. In order to spare all trouble to the servants, he himself prepared their food, and after he had dismissed the poor little creatures, he went to the kitchen and washed what they had used with his own hands.

We may truly say that our Father Januarius Maria was really fond of the sick in the hospital, for he was almost always there. If he arrived in the morning he did not leave it until noon, or if he reached it after dinner he stayed there until it was nearly eight o'clock, and then he only quitted it with regret and a wish to be able to remain longer. I cannot express the charity he exercised towards them, or how tenderly he exhorted them to bear their sufferings with patience, instructed them in the things appertaining to God, and in the

proper manner of making a good confession, and before he was himself a priest, he procured good priests to hear their confessions. One day he formed a plan of living in the hospital of the incurables that he might be able to assist these poor creatures with more facility, especially at the hour of death; he even obtained a room for this purpose; but an unexpected difficulty arose that prevented him from carrying out his project. His zeal once nearly caused him to lose his life in the hospital of the galleys, where he used also to administer the comforts of religion to the poor criminals.

## XI.

**His Enterprise in regard to Prostitutes.**

It is well known what this same zeal caused him to undertake at Naples, in order to rescue prostitute women from sin. He went to preach in the parish church of St. Matthew on all feast days, in order to convert these unfortunate beings, and it was through his suggestions that the Congregation of the archdiocese undertook to give the spiritual exercises in this parish every year for the same purpose.

In order to relieve the wants of these poor creatures, he gave them all that he received from home, and even did without necessities himself to have the more to distribute among them; and he gave a great many of them enough for their livelihood in the shape of a monthly allowance, in order to prevent them from selling their honor and their soul; and not satisfied with relieving those that asked for his aid, he sought for them throughout the town. He placed sixteen of them in asylums, and enabled a great many others to get married. We know that he provided for the subsistence of two of these women for two years, and that he afterwards furnished them with means to enable them to keep house.

As his own income was not sufficient for all this, for he spent from five to six hundred ducats a year in such ways, he went about Naples begging alms for these unfortunate people, and that not only in pious establishments, but in private houses; this he nevertheless did with so much repugnance, that he said he sometimes felt as if he would die of shame, for he had not only to bear the great annoyance of having to pay repeated visits, but he had also to endure reproaches and even insults. He confided to a friend that several persons that had formerly esteemed him highly, and welcomed him courteously, changed so completely when he came to them on this errand, that they then quite shunned him, and sent him away with roughness and incivility.

In striving to realize the plan he had formed of compelling all the women of bad character to leave the town, and take up their abode in some remote quarter, he had to endure inexpressible fatigue and persecution. As he saw that these unhappy creatures did immense harm by being scattered about in all parts of the town, he was convinced that the only method of remedying so great an evil would be to compel them to go to live together out of Naples. The whole town, and God above all, know what labors and expense this project occasioned him, for the furtherance of which he composed several books entitled *The Abuses of Prostitution*. This undertaking also drew down on him the opposition and reproaches of his friends; for as they looked upon the thing as impossible, they were always striving to make him abandon it, and ridiculing it with bitterness. But his confidence in God was strong and unshaken, although he was alone and devoid of the help of man, and he managed so well with the first ministers of the king, our protector, that he at last had the satisfaction of seeing his desires fulfilled. A decree of nine articles was sent to the Duke of Giovenazzo, the president of

the first chamber of the ministry, on the 4th of May, 1758, by virtue of which sentence of banishment was pronounced against all prostitutes, who were thenceforward to live without the town, in places that were allotted to them. This royal mandate was executed with such rigor, that justice seized on the effects of those that would not quit their houses, and all their furniture was thrown out of the window. From thirty to forty prostitutes were thus expelled from Naples; some of them married, others retired into asylums, and the rest either went to the places assigned for them, or fled elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

As for our Father Januarius Maria, he several times ran the risk of being assassinated on account of the share he had in their expulsion, and for this reason his parents did all in their power to prevent him from going on with this good work, as they were afraid some fatal accident might be the result both to himself and to all his family; but he declared that he was ready to suffer all, and that he should even think it a great privilege to die in an undertaking that was so glorious to God.

## XII.

### His Writings.

It was this same zeal for the salvation of souls that supported him in all the labors that he went through in preparing all his works, in which the choice of subjects and the manner in which he treated them clearly prove how much he would have liked to sanctify the whole world, had that been in his power.

<sup>1</sup> St. Alphonsus abstains from speaking of the share that he had in this success. We read in his Life that though he was not able personally to aid Father Sarnelli, he yet lent him his assistance in an efficacious manner by the help of his counsels, and by securing in his favor the protection of eminent persons.—*Tannoia and Villecourt*, l. 2, ch. 16.

Besides the book of which we have already spoken, on the special abuses that the prostitutes of Naples caused to that town, he published another for all the towns and villages of the kingdom, in which he proves that women of bad character are not tolerated in any one of them or in any of the smaller towns, and he sent a copy of this work to all the bishops in the kingdom.

After this he published a book called *The World Sanctified*. In some respects we may say that this work really has sanctified the world, for it has been the means of extensive good; it has been in almost every one's hands, and spread through several kingdoms as well as that of Naples.

He also put forth a whole work against blasphemy, as he was eager to extirpate this accursed vice from the kingdom, where it is so deeply rooted.

He published, in a work called *The World Reformed*, a treatise on the respect due to churches, in which the inhabitants of the kingdom are also most wanting.

I will now give a list of several other works which he published to the great profit of souls: a treatise on the obligation of parents to bring up their children properly; another to serve as a guide to souls in the paths of spirituality, entitled *Discernment of Spirits*; *The Ecclesiastic Sanctified*, which was written for priests; *An Easy Method for all the Exercises of the Missions*, which is most useful for missionaries.

*The Enlightened Christian* cost him the greatest labor, as he himself owned, for he composed it amid all the sufferings of the malady of which he died. To this must be added *The Desolate Soul*, for the comfort of souls in desolation of spirit; and *The Enlightened Soul*, which contains some most devotional meditations.

He also published several other little works which are not mentioned here. Death prevented him from finishing several others, which he had already begun to have



printed, such as a treatise to excite compassion for the souls in purgatory; another on the methods of appeasing God's anger in public calamities; a selection of pious reflections for every day in the year; a collection of sermons on the Blessed Virgin for every Saturday throughout the year and for all novenas;<sup>1</sup> and a book of instructions on faith and morals.

Thus all his works were destined to promote the salvation of souls, whom he desired, as he said, to assist even after his death. When he was on the point of death, he said to Canon Sersale, "Canon, I wish to go on preaching until the judgment-day."<sup>2</sup>

### XIII.

#### His Last Illness and Death.

We must now give an account of his last illness and of his happy end. Januarius Maria labored for many years, as we have already seen, although he was always ill and oppressed with fever. His last mission was given at Posilipo, during which his sufferings were very great, as he was quite worn out by fatigue and pain. Thence he retired to St. Agnello, where his maladies increased so much that he was obliged to give up all his labors, and was no longer able even to say Mass; this was viewed by all as a sign that his death was at hand, for he had never before abstained from celebrating it. One day he made the most surprising efforts to say it, but he could not succeed, and fainted in the attempt. As the malady grew worse and worse, he went to his brother's house at Naples, where he was ill for a month.

<sup>1</sup> The reader is here reminded of what has been said above, page 259, of the great work on the glories of Mary.

<sup>2</sup> This good Father continues in fact to preach by his writings that are still being reprinted; two editions of 1836 and 1848 we have now before us.



Although his sufferings and weakness continued daily to increase, he never abandoned meditation, and as his interior trials were as great as ever, he tried to obtain consolation by conversing with the servants of God that came to visit him. The doctors advised him to try the air called the *saving* air, but he was too weak to be moved.

About a fortnight before his death he took to his bed, whence he never rose again. From this time, however, God freed him from the heavy cross of spiritual desolation, and he began to enjoy the greatest peace; every disquieting thought was banished from his mind, and he felt nothing but an ardent desire to be united to God in the mansions of the blessed. Once, when a servant of his father's said that he hoped God would restore his health, he replied, "Oh, if I could exclaim aloud now, my sole cry would be that my only consolation is to think that I am going to die, and you speak to me of recovery!"

He also showed now the extent of his patience and charity, for amid the almost insupportable pains he endured, which caused him to stand in need of constant attendance, he felt the greatest compassion for those that waited on him; and when he required anything he said to the brother whom the Superior of the Congregation had sent to assist him, "Brother, have patience with me for the love of Jesus Christ, for I shall not live much longer."

At this time he made his last will, and as he wished all he had to be employed in alms and other good works, he disposed of all his possessions in favor of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. The sweetmeats that were given for his use he sent to the hospital, to be distributed among the sick. He had also a little tobacco left, and he wished that it should be put up in small packages, to be given to these poor people.

Before dying he gave many alms. It was known that his brother had given a certain sum for his funeral and for the celebration of Masses after his death, and as the confessor of the conservatory at Castellamare called to see him, he gave him, to help his establishment, twenty ducats of the aforesaid sum, saying that the rest was sufficient to pay the expenses of his interment.

One day he said to his eldest brother, who did a great deal for him during his life and at his death, "Brother, the time is at hand when I hope I shall be able to make you a fitting return for all that you have done for me."

At this same period the devil appeared to him under the form of an abbé, and tempted him to vainglory, saying, "Don Januarius, your illness has caused general lamentation throughout Naples, on account of the loss that would be sustained by the death of so great a man." Upon this the dying man instantly pronounced the names of Jesus and Mary, and the evil spirit disappeared and returned no more.

One day when Canon Sersale came to visit him, he said that he hoped he might get well. "Dear Canon," he replied, "I was tormented by scruples for a long time, but thanks be to God, I am now free from them. I shall therefore die tranquilly and without any disquiet. All that I have done has been done from a pure intention of pleasing God. The sacrifice is now complete; do not then speak to me any more of living, for I wish for no other life than the possession of my God."

During his last days he was always repeating devout aspirations; sometimes they were addressed to the Blessed Trinity, when he would say, *Benedicta sit sancta Trinitas et individua unitas; confitebimur ei, quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam*; sometimes either to our Blessed Saviour or his adorable Mother, and he would kiss and embrace their images from time to time. Just before his death he addressed the following affecting words to

God, which were carefully noted down by the lay-brother who attended him: "Father, behold the time has come for me to depart hence and to go to my Creator and my Father. O Lord, I sigh for the moment when I shall see Thee face to face, should such be Thy good pleasure; for I wish neither for death nor for life. I wish only for what Thou willest. Thou knowest that all my actions and all my thoughts have been only for Thy greater glory." Words such as these in the mouth of a dying man, on the point of appearing before God, are sufficient to manifest what must have been the innocence of his life.

On the morning of the day he died, he said to the brother that waited on him, "Brother, go and get out my oldest clothes and bury me in them, for I do not wish anything to be wasted."

The doctor came to see him at about eight o'clock in the morning of the same day; and when he was going away, he said that he would see him again in the course of the day. "I shall gently enter into my agony to-day," he answered. He told the brother not to forget to make him say the rosary, "For," said he, "I wish to die whilst I am reciting it." And so it was, for when he had reached the third decade that same day he became very weak, and the damp perspiration of death began to flow. "I feel the chill of death," said he to the brother; upon which he instantly called for a priest, who began to suggest pious affections to him; but the dying man interrupted him, and asked him to allow him to speak himself; and he then began to speak to God in the most tender manner; but it was almost impossible to hear what he said, for his speech was well-nigh gone. Just as he entered into his agony, the two brothers of the Congregation who assisted him at this last hour asked for his blessing; and he gently raised his hand and blessed them. His agony was peaceful, and lasted little more than half

an hour; his rosary was around his arm all along, and he clasped the crucifix in his hands, kissing it from time to time. The priest gave him absolution during this interval, after which he calmly expired, at ten o'clock on Thursday morning, June 30th, 1744, aged forty-two. His happy death took place the day before the eve of the feast of the Visitation; thus the wish he had often expressed of dying during a novena to the Blessed Virgin was gratified.

As soon as he was dead his countenance suddenly became most pleasing and beautiful, and a smile overspread his lips; his body exhaled so sweet an odor, that it scented the room where he died for a long time, and it was not only perceived by those that assisted at his death, but also by the strangers that came to see his corpse. His brother, D. Dominic Sarnelli, said that he could not bear to leave the room, as he experienced the greatest spiritual consolation when in it. His body was conveyed to the Church of our Lady of Good Help, accompanied by the brothers of the Congregation of Apostolical Missions in the archdiocese of Naples, who all followed him to the church, being filled with the greatest sorrow for his death. When the body arrived there, a great number of people crowded round it, weeping, and exclaiming, "Alas, for the saint is dead!" and this cry was repeated throughout the neighborhood. They then began to tear up his clothes, and every one tried to carry away as much of them as possible; he would soon have been stripped of everything, had not some restraint been put upon this pious eagerness.

His body was exposed for forty-eight hours, after which a great many priests and other persons testify that it remained quite flexible, and did not emit the least unpleasant odor, and that bright blood flowed from incisions that were then made in his arm and head. His relics were sought for in all directions, and the re-

noun of his sanctity spread far and wide. Persons came to visit the house where he died through devotion, and exclaimed with many tears, "O the well-beloved saint of Jesus Christ! he is not prized sufficiently!"

In consequence of this reputation for sanctity, several persons recommended themselves to God through the merits of Father Januarius Maria, and received signal graces thereby, which I must however pass over in silence, that I may not exceed the narrow limits allotted to me. I trust, however, that the time will come when these interesting facts may be collected by others, and that a more detailed Life of this great servant of God may one day be given to the world.

**Notes**

ON THE

**LIFE OF VITUS CURZIUS,**LAY-BROTHER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY  
REDEEMER.

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I.**His Conduct in the World and his Vocation.**

WE add here to the life of Father Januarius Maria Sarnelli, a short biographical notice of Brother Vitus Curzius, who lived in the Congregation and was for a long time his companion.\* He was born at Aquaviva, in the diocese of Bari, of most respectable parents, in the year 1706. One of his brothers was a medical man, and the other was a Canon in the college of his native town.

In order to show the extent of God's goodness to this young man, we must mention that he was exceedingly passionate until he was twenty-six years of age. He was so alive to the least injury that he fought several duels, in which he nearly lost his life. On one occasion, amongst others, he felt so offended at a doctor that he shot him. Another time he had the boldness to fire at a military officer; but God did not permit him to have the misfortune of hitting his mark.

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\* The beginning and the end of this sketch show that it was composed in order that it might follow the preceding Life of Father Sarnelli —ED.

After he left Procida, where he had been the treasurer of the Marquis of Vasto, he went to Naples and worked in the house of D. Cæsar Sportelli, who was the Marquis's agent and his own intimate friend. Don Cæsar had at this time resolved to leave the world; this he soon afterwards did by entering the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, where he died in the odor of sanctity in 1749.<sup>1</sup> His tomb was opened four months after his death, when it was found that his body was quite flexible, and blood issued from an incision that was made in his foot.

Now one day when he was conversing with Vitus Curzius, he began to speak to him about the new Congregation, which had been begun at Scala under the title of that of the Most Holy Redeemer, through the pious exertions of Mgr. Falcoia,<sup>2</sup> who was Father Cæsar's director. Vitus had scarcely heard the particulars of it before he entreated to be admitted into it as a lay-brother, as he felt sure that God called him thither. He had gained this certainty regarding his vocation to the new Institute in the following manner: "In a dream," said he, "I saw a number of priests ascending a high mountain; I tried to follow them, but all my efforts were in vain; I fell backwards after each step, or if I succeeded in getting over a little ground, I soon lost all that I had gained. Stupefied and discouraged at these repeated failures, I remained at the foot of the mountain in sorrow, when one of these priests came up to me, and held out his hand to me. By this assistance I was enabled to reach the summit as easily as the others had done." One day when he was out walking with Father Sportelli, after this dream had occurred, he met one of the Fathers of the Congregation, and although he had never seen him before, he pointed him out to his companion, Father

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Villecourt, l. 2, ch. 33, says that he died April 19, 1750.

<sup>2</sup> The same remark holds good as on page 254.



Sportelli, saying, "There is the priest who held out his hand to me." \*

## II.

**His Entrance into the Congregation.**

He presented himself for approval and was accepted, but he was told to stay at Naples until the Superior at Scala should send for him. He had indeed some time to wait, and this delay as to his definite reception among us pained him greatly, and he longed and sighed for the hour of deliverance from this evil world. One day, however, he went to Father Sportelli in a transport of joy, for, said he, "I have heard a voice that said, 'Get ready to go, for you must soon set out.'" Indeed, the Congregation had only been established eight days, when he was sent for to Scala.

The first day on which he arrived he was ordered to serve at dinner. As his greatest failing was a horror of humiliation, the devil represented to him that such an office was absurd and ignominious. "What," whispered the evil one, "are you to serve at dinner just as if you were a mere servant?" This temptation beset him so much that he felt inclined to be revenged on him that had ventured to give him such an office. However, as he saw that a man of rank who also aspired to be received among us had the office of server, his good angel suggested to him, "Can you not do what he can do?" He thus conquered his repugnance, and began to serve quite calmly.

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\* This Father was Alphonsus himself. Sportelli introduced him to his friend, and it is then that he spoke to him about the new Institute. Curzius thus understood the mystery of the providential dream that he had had: he clearly saw his heavenly vocation, and immediately resolved to follow it by rendering thanks to God for such a favor.—*Tan-noia and Villecourt*, l. 1, at the end.

## III.

**His Love of Meditation.**

From this time he became a special child of grace, and celestial consolations abounded in his heart. He was so enlightened during meditation, especially on the mysteries of the birth and Passion of Christ, and his feelings were so sensibly affected that he could not help bursting into tears, and sobbing to such a degree that it seemed as if the violence of his love for God would really suffocate him. This took place in a special manner when he received holy Communion; and this he did almost every day. I often witnessed it myself, and had to wait some time before he could receive the sacred Host. His tears and sighs also lasted for a good while after he had communicated. This plenitude of divine grace lasted for nearly a year.

As he had then made great progress in virtue, God deprived him of this sensible fervor that he might attain a more perfect kind of meditation, and imperceptibly brought him to a state of contemplation. He however himself began to fear that God had abandoned him. "What has come over me?" said he; "I cannot meditate. It is very true that I wish to be united to God, but if I had to give an account of what I have been thinking about I could not do so, and I should not even be able to tell how the time had been spent." Enlightened, however, by the graces conveyed in this the sublimest kind of prayer, he realized the vanity of laboring for any temporal possession, since all on earth is as smoke, which passeth away. He ceased to think of his home and of the friends of his youth, and only thought of how he might become closely united to his God. He always kept his eyes cast down to the ground, and his very appearance showed the recollectedness of his soul.

## IV.

**His Mortification and Humility.**

He became indeed a model of humility and mortification, and he that had formerly been so susceptible and proud, and that had such an aversion to every menial office, did not now disdain publicly to carry the manure to the garden, or to draw water for the Community. This last office was by no means an easy one, for the well was at a distance from the house, and every time he went there he had to go up the steep mount of Scala with a heavy pitcher in his hand; yet when he arrived at our house he used to kneel down before the large crucifix at the entrance before he had deposited his burden that he might offer up the fatigue it cost him to God.

He always went thither with his head bare, in winter as well as in summer, through reverence for the presence of God, unless he was expressly forbidden to do so. He never went near a fire in winter. He was also for some time in the habit of taking off his shoes and stockings when he went to dig in the garden, and he used to stand working there with his feet buried in the clay; but when the Superiors heard of this they forbade him to do so again.

One day the bishop of Scala told him to empty out all the water in a large cistern near his palace. As there was a great quantity of water, his nature revolted at such a laborious undertaking, but he courageously pursued it to the end. He was heard repeating to himself, "You have made a great fuss, and you may be as tired as you please, but you must do it all the same, Brother Vitus."

Another time he was ordered to help to saw some boards. As he had never done anything of the kind

before, he was quite exhausted with this laborious office. After he had borne the greatest fatigue for two hours, the workman that was sawing with him said in a tone of extreme compassion, "Do rest a little, Brother Vitus." "No, no," he courageously replied; "we must finish what obedience has put before us."

Another time, when he was cleaning out the dirtiest part of the house, a priest said in passing, "Bah! what an offensive smell there is here, Brother Vitus!" "O how much worse it smells in hell!" he replied.

It so happened that once for nearly a whole winter it was forgotten to give him any warm clothing, and he went about in his summer things without saying a word, although our house at Ciorani is so cold. All the time he was at Illiceto, where there is another of our houses, he slept on a board, with nothing but a trunk for a pillow. In order to mortify himself still more, he wanted to suck the sore of an old man, but he was forbidden to do so.

He wore a sharp-pointed iron girdle about two palms in length. He also took the discipline to blood with such frequency and violence, that he thereby wounded a nerve in his leg, from which he suffered for the rest of his life.

His dinner often consisted in nothing but a little soup and bread, for he divided the different portions, and that was all he set aside for himself. As he was at first very inexperienced in all culinary matters, he one day made some unleavened bread, which soon became as hard as lead, and which it was impossible to set before the Community. However, he had the patience to go on eating it day by day until it was all eaten. He fasted on bread and water on Saturdays, in honor of our Blessed Mother Mary, and he did this even during mission time, although our lay-brothers have then to go through immense fatigue.

He never made excuses when reproved. One day our Father Minister told him not to put so much fruit on the table, as he thought it superfluous. As Vitus had acted in obedience to the Rector, he went on putting the same quantity. The Minister was annoyed at this, and scolded him and gave him several mortifications for his disobedience; but he never said a word in extenuation of what he had done. At last the Father Minister heard of the Superior's wishes; and while he ceased to reprove him, he admired his patience in bearing reprimands that he had never merited.

Another time when the Superior could not find an important manuscript that one of our Fathers had accidentally burnt, he asked Brother Vitus if he knew what had become of it, and he vaguely replied that it must have been burnt. As this answer gave cause to suspect that he was guilty of its destruction, he received a severe reproof, which he bore in patient silence, to shelter the Father who really had destroyed it.

## V.

### **His Charity toward his Neighbor.**

His love for his neighbor was truly admirable. As soon as he resolved to join us, he distributed all that he had among the poor.

His charity also towards the sick was inexpressibly great, and he not only exercised it towards the members of the Congregation, but even towards strangers. The attention that Brother Vitus paid to a secular priest who was taken ill in our house at Ciorani, proves the extent of his charity. This priest was suffering from a most offensive and troublesome malady, and it lasted for twenty days; yet Brother Vitus never left him night or day, and

as he was too weak to move, Vitus had to lift him about and do everything he required. Holy Week occurred at this time, yet he cheerfully denied himself the gratification of being present at the devotions of Holy Thursday, that he might not leave his dear invalid.

When he was at Scala he sometimes had to go to Amalfi to buy provisions for the use of the Community. When he returned he was at liberty to get the porters to carry them up the mountain, for it is very steep; but if he saw that they were overcome by the weight of their burden and by the difficulty of the ascent, he would say, "Now you must rest, and I will help you." And he would take their loads from them, and carry them up the mountain himself, although they often weighed more than two hundred pounds. One day when one of the Fathers of the Congregation went to Scala, he heard of this extraordinary act of charity from two porters whom he met, who began to inquire of him about Brother Vitus. When he told them that he was no more, they sorrowfully exclaimed, "Oh what a saint Brother Vitus was! When he gave us goods to carry, he paid us for doing it, and then carried them himself."

When he was at Scala, he felt such compassion for the sufferings of Father Sarnelli, who was ill at the time, that he took his own mattress and added it to his, to try and make him more comfortable, although he was in consequence obliged to lie on the boards himself.

## VI.

### **His Obedience and his Death.**

His favorite virtue was that of obedience, and in it consists the essence of religious life. He used to say that a lay-brother should resemble the bell that is fastened

round the neck of a cow, which never rings unless it moves. "So a brother," he would add, "ought never to stir to do anything unless prompted to do so by holy obedience."

Indeed he was, as it were, a martyr to this virtue; for while he was at our house at Iliceto, the Superior sent him to a distant village to pass the night. The holy brother asked for admittance in a monastery in this neighborhood, but they refused to receive him. He was therefore obliged to sleep in the open air, and that is a most unhealthy place, and as the weather was also very unfavorable at the time, it brought on the illness of which he died. It came on so suddenly, and with such violence, that he was unable to return to St. Mary's, and had to go to bed at the house of a charitable priest at the very entrance of Iliceto.

He bore the sufferings of a tedious illness with admirable patience, and never complained of anything. He never objected to any remedy, and punctually obeyed the doctor's orders. When he was near death, his confessor asked him whether he would rather live or die. "I only wish what God wishes," he replied; "but if I might make a choice, I should prefer to die, that I might be free from all danger of offending God, and that I might see him and be with him in heaven, if, as I trust, he in his mercy has vouchsafed me the grace of salvation." Before the holy Viaticum was administered to him he was asked if he would like to go to confession, but he answered that by God's grace he had nothing more to mention, and he died in a state of heavenly peace. After his death the inhabitants of the place said to one another, "A saint is dead," and they were eager to have relics of him. The crowd that followed his corpse to our church showed the veneration of the faithful towards him.



There are many more wonderful things that might be related of this holy brother, but I have not space to mention them.\*

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\* Father Tannoia also praises the obedience of this first brother of the Congregation. At Scala, being charged with the duty of ringing the bell for the exercises of the Community, he never failed to do so even when he was alone at the house. His last illness lasted forty-nine days, at the house of an ecclesiastic who had the charity to receive him. He died on Saturday, September 18, 1745. The corpse was solemnly carried to the church of the Redemptorists, and St. Alphonsus, who was then at Illiceto, offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for him, being so affected with grief at the loss of the holy brother that he burst into tears, which several times during the obsequies prevented him from singing the prayers. People struggled with one another for the possession of the things that had been used by Vitus as if they were holy relics. Mgr. Amato, bishop of Lacedogna, had entertained so high an esteem for the deceased, that after the lapse of a few years he obtained permission to keep the skull of the saintly brother, and he placed it on the desk before which he usually made his daily meditation. After twenty years—when the bishop was dead—this venerable relic was restored to the house of the Redemptorists at Illiceto. (*Tannoia and Villecourt*, l. 2, ch. 20.)

## VARIOUS SMALLER WORKS.

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### Sermon on the Rosary.

ADDITION TO THE ABRIDGED SERMONS FOR SUNDAYS.

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THE pious custom of reciting the Rosary has long been introduced into all cities and country-places; the faithful love to gain the treasure of the innumerable indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiff to persons who are associated with the confraternity of the Rosary, and who recite it with devotion. Hence the parish priests have expressed the desire to have, besides the sermon proper to the Sunday of the year, a sermon on the holy Rosary for the first Sunday of October, the day on which the Church celebrates the feast. Wishing to acquiesce in so pious a desire, we have judged it advisable to add to the present work the following sermon.<sup>1</sup>

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### Sermon for the First Sunday of October, ON THE ROSARY.

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IN the thirteenth century of our salvation, St. Dominic was greatly afflicted, seeing the deplorable state in which the Christian religion was on account of the vices

<sup>1</sup> This little notice and the sermon that follows are found immediately after the last of the *Abridged Sermons for Sundays* in a Neapolitan edition which appeared in 1774. For the indulgence attached to the devotion of the Rosary, see Volume VIII., page 148, and for the consideration of the mysteries, Volume XV., page 133.—ED.

and heresies which filled Germany and France, and which, passing through Italy, had penetrated as far as Rome itself. Desirous of opposing a barrier to such a flood of errors and sins, he had recourse to the august Mother of God, who approved of his zealous intentions, and suggested to him as a remedy for so great an evil the devotion of the Rosary. The saint at once began to preach this devotion, and he did so with so much fruit that large numbers of people, even entire cities, were seen thoroughly to reform. Conversions were so astonishing and so universal, that, as the Journal of the Dominicans attests, when the people heard of the members of any family leading bad lives, they usually said that they either did not recite the Rosary or they recited it badly.

Now in order that we may profit by this devotion and know how to recite the Rosary, the present sermon will be divided into two parts. In the first part, we shall see how the Rosary should be recited in order that it may be meritorious; in the second, what we must do in order that it may be profitable to us.

**1. How the Rosary should be Recited in Order that it may be Meritorious.**

The Rosary is a prayer. Prayer is defined by St. John Damascene: "An elevation of the mind to God."<sup>1</sup> A raising or elevation of the mind to God, without which there is no true prayer. It is divided into mental prayer and vocal prayer: mental prayer consists wholly in the interior exercise of the mind; vocal prayer consists in praising God and praying to him with the tongue and the mind. If one speaks to God only with the tongue, this would be a prayer without fruit and without merit, like that of a parrot which articulates words without knowing what it says, ac-

<sup>1</sup> "Ascensio mentis ad Deum."

cording to the explanation given by St. Bonaventure: "Whoever prays only with the voice, without any application of the mind, without knowing what he says, who does not see that he is like a parrot?"<sup>1</sup>

The elevation of the mind required in the recitation of the Rosary should be a pious meditation on the joyous, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries; hence, while we are reciting with the voice the "Our Fathers" and the "Hail Marys" which compose the Rosary, we should consider with our thoughts the mystery that belongs to each decade.

It is true that a vocal prayer, like the Rosary, may be meritorious without the application of the mind to the consideration of the designated mysteries; it is sufficient that one reflects either on the presence of God, his omnipotence, his mercy, or some of his other perfections; either on the temporal or eternal chastisements which one merits, or on other subjects that refer to God; but if one recites the Rosary with such thoughts, and not while considering its mysteries, one does not gain the indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiff, as Benedict XIII. has expressly declared.

We mistake, then, if we think that we have some merit when in reciting the Rosary we permit ourselves to listen to those that speak, to look at what is done, to interrupt ourselves often, in order to speak of what we see or to give answers to questions put to us. We should then deserve the reproach of the Lord: *This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*<sup>2</sup> And would to God that we gave ourselves up merely to distractions without going so far as to meditate revenge, harbor feelings of hatred, or occupy our-

<sup>1</sup> "Qui sola voce precatur, sine mentis applicatione, nesciens quid dicat, quis non videt hunc psitaco similem esse."

<sup>2</sup> "Populus hic labiis me honorat; cor autem eorum longe est a me."—*Matt.* xv. 8.

selves with wicked thoughts; for then, very far from acquiring merit, we should make ourselves worthy of eternal chastisements!

If therefore we wish to find in the devotion of the Rosary a sure support in the hope that we have of saving our souls by the means of it, it should produce in us true amendment, a true reform of our lives, according to what the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, expects of us. But we shall never obtain this fruit, if in the recitation of the Rosary there is not united to our voice a pious meditation on these mysteries, which place before our eyes the loving inventions, the labors, the humiliations, and the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

There are some that deceive themselves still more: they are those that imagine that in carrying with them the Rosary they find themselves fortified with a formidable arm against the devil, and thus promise themselves a good death; they rely on the recital of antiquated examples of sinners, who, after a life full of crimes, because they recited and carried with them the Rosary, obtained through the intercession of Mary the grace of dying repentant. But these examples, if true, are miraculous; and I do not think that any one among you loves his soul so little that he wishes to save it only by a miracle. What is certain is that one often sees sinners die without the sacraments and without any sign of contrition, although they had carried about with them the Rosary and recited it as you do. Should not these examples, which are so frequent, fill you with terror? and as to the miraculous examples, which are very rare, do they take from you all fear of dying a bad death, and give you the assurance that you will die well? If I must say to you what I think, I should say: As for those Christians that live without the fear of God, and that rest their hope of salvation on the Rosary, which they recite through habit and without the least

devotion, I very much fear that at their death the devil may frighten them with this very Rosary by representing to them the little devotion that they have had in the manner of reciting it, and the life that they have led,—a life altogether contrary to the mysteries that they should have honored and to the end for which the Rosary was established by the Blessed Virgin.

Ah! my dear brethren, if you wish to be saved through the protection of Mary, it is fitting that you should make a better use of the devotions instituted in her honor; for we know that by the devotions badly performed and undertaken in order to live without the fear of the justice of God, far from obtaining the protection of the Blessed Virgin, we only provoke her dislike.

2. What we must do in Order that the Rosary may be Profitable to Us.

It is not sufficient for him who recites the Rosary to have a pure heart or a good intention: he must also have a pure tongue. The devotion of the Rosary flourished in all the houses; but which is the house in which it flourished with the good odor with which the holy king David desired his prayer to be embalmed so that it might be agreeable to God? Lord, he said, may my prayer rise as incense in Thy presence: *Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight.*<sup>1</sup> I fear that your Rosaries are like the flowers of Egypt, of which Pliny says that they are without odor: as a flower without odor is hardly agreeable or even disagreeable, so also the roses—I mean the Rosaries that you offer to Mary—are hardly agreeable and even disagreeable to Mary, because they are odorless.

The sad cause of this misfortune may be traced to the unbecoming words that so often come forth from your mouth: they take away the good odor of your

<sup>1</sup> “Dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo.”—Ps. cxi. 2.

prayers, because they cannot please the Mother of God. Thus there are some that cannot speak ten words without interlarding them with some indecent expression; others when they become angry utter very gross language; many can hardly bring forward some pleasantry without saying an immodest word. This detestable habit, besides the evil that it inflicts directly upon souls, does great injury to the exercises of piety, and especially to the Rosary; for the Blessed Virgin could not accept these Rosaries which are presented to her with tongues that are in so bad a state.

It must not be understood that I here speak of those filthy words that spread a pestilential odor of lasciviousness, and that the devil makes us regard as permissible in order to enliven the company,—words that are a cause of scandal by exciting in the mind and heart bad thoughts and impure affections: I mean those that contain injurious reproaches, express rude, indecent, and shameful things. How many times do we not see people who, irritated on account of vain or unreasonable things, vomit forth a torrent of injuries and intemperate discourses! How many times, incensed against their children, their workmen, their servants, do they wish them a thousand evils, and threaten them in coarse and outrageous terms! It often happens that others who hear this begin to speak in the same way. How can one believe that the Rosary, when we recite it with a tongue thus sullied, can be agreeable to the Mother of purity? If one offered a lady flowers or fruits deposited in an unclean basket or vessel, instead of being pleased with such a present, she would be offended by it; how then can one imagine that the Blessed Virgin wishes to accept the prayers and the Rosaries that are offered to her on a tongue accustomed to utter unclean and shameful words?

Nicephorus, in his history of the Church, relates that



there came forth from the body of St. Glyceria a liquid which, gathered in a vessel of bronze, produced marvellous effects, especially for the healing of the sick. The bishop then thought it fit, out of respect, to substitute a vessel of silver for the vessel of bronze; but at that very moment the precious liquid ceased to flow. After many penances and prayers it was learnt by revelation that this change was due to the fact that the vessel of silver had been before used for profane uses, that rendered it unfit; the vessel was then removed and the miracle continued its course.

St. Jerome says that lips employed in praising, praying, and blessing the Lord should never be sullied by any sin: "It is wrong that those lips with which you confess, ask, and bless the Lord should be polluted by the stain of any sin."<sup>1</sup> Now if it is such an indignity to sully one's tongue for a bad purpose, what great evil will it not be to sully it at every moment by so many indecent, shameful, and immodest words! And could one still maintain that the Blessed Virgin would regard as agreeable the Rosary recited by such a tongue?

There are people who say that they make no scruple of using indecent words, that these words are after all not blasphemies, which deserve to be earnestly condemned, but that they are venial faults, which of themselves do not take away the merit of prayer. However, we answer that they are the flies which the Holy Ghost says spoil the perfume of delicious ointment: *Dying flies spoil the sweetness of the ointment.*<sup>2</sup> Those venial sins are the cause why the fervor of charity and consequently devotion are lost: so that the Rosary has not the merit which renders it dear to Mary, nor so efficacious as to procure the graces which he always obtains who recites

<sup>1</sup> "Nefas est ut labia illa, quibus Dominum confiteris, rogas, benedicis, alicujus polluantur sorde peccati."

<sup>2</sup> "Muscæ morientes perdunt suavitatem unguenti."—*Eccles. x. 1.*

it devoutly. Although immodest words are not blasphemies, yet they are very grave venial faults that cause the soul very great injury. Hence St. John Chrysostom exhorts all the faithful to refrain from them, and says that he cannot conceive how a defiled tongue can offer prayer to God: "Do not suffer the tongue to be defiled; for in what manner will it pray for thee?"

Venial sin diminishes the fervor of charity. Charity, says St. Paul, makes us do great things with promptness and perfection; it renders us patient, and makes us bear every pain; it makes us rejoice at the good, and that we never rejoice at the evil that befalls others; it prevents us from acting wrongly; it makes us detest pride and all ambition, that we do not cling to self-interest, that we do not judge ill of any one, that we love the truth, that we treat every one with meekness and humility: *Charity is patient, is kind: Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up. Is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*<sup>1</sup> All those that are in the state of grace possess charity; but venial sin is particularly that which is voluntary, frequent, habitual, as are immodest words which we utter every day; they are, therefore, the cause why prayers are recited without merit, because the want of fervor in charity always renders them poorer in virtue, more imperfect, colder, and consequently less agreeable in the sight of God and the Blessed Virgin. Hence St. James rightly says that he who does not wish to control his tongue has not true devotion, but a vain

<sup>1</sup> "Charitas patiens est, benigna est; charitas non æmulator, non agit perperam, non inflatur, non est ambitiosa, non quærit quæ sua sunt, non irritatur, non cogitat malum; non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati; omnia suffert, omnia credit, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet."—1 Cor. xiii. 4.

devotion, only the appearance of it: *And if any man think himself to be a religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*<sup>1</sup>

If then you wish that the recitation of the Rosary should be meritorious and profitable to your souls, besides the possession of purity of heart, it will be necessary for you to employ a pure tongue and always to consider the great evil which is caused by the contrary vice; for scandal, bad example, given to your children and to others by your immodest or unbecoming words, induce them to contract from their tender youth the habit of always using such words, according to what the Holy Ghost says: *Their children also and grandchildren, as their fathers did, so do they unto this day.*<sup>2</sup> Consequently, you will have to render an account before the tribunal of God, and you will be justly punished.

We must, therefore, abstain from this vice in order to avoid scandal and to render the recitation of the Rosary meritorious. Consider, moreover, that the merit and profit will yet be greater if we recite the Rosary with devotion in the company of members of the family or of other persons, and this because of the good example that results therefrom, and because the Lord is pleased to find himself in the midst of those that unite to glorify his name, as he has himself declared: *For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them.*<sup>3</sup>

Let us add, that the Rosary may be profitable, not only to our souls, but also to the souls of the dead, to whom, says the Blessed Alanus, God sends his mercy

<sup>1</sup> "Si quis autem putat se religiosum esse, non refrenans linguam suam, sed seducens cor suum, hujus vana est religio."—*James*, i. 26.

<sup>2</sup> "Filii eorum et nepotes, sicut fecerunt patres sui, ita faciunt usque in præsentem diem."—*4 Kings*, xvii. 41.

<sup>3</sup> "Ubi enim sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum."—*Matt.* xviii. 20.

through this means: "The Blessed Trinity sends to the dead mercy through the psalter of Mary, the Mother of mercy."<sup>1</sup> It is most pleasing to God if we procure relief to these suffering souls; it is a holy and salutary act: *It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead.*<sup>2</sup> And the Queen of heaven has declared herself their affectionate Mother, as she has revealed to St. Bridgett: "I am the Mother of all that are in purgatory."<sup>3</sup> They are even under her authority, says St. Bernardine of Sienna: "The Blessed Virgin has dominion in the kingdom of purgatory."<sup>4</sup>

We should, therefore, not neglect so pious an exercise as is the recitation of the Rosary; we should try to recite it with a pure heart and a pure tongue in the company of the family and of other persons. If we thus recite it with a true devotion, it will be of very great profit for the salvation of our souls and for the solace of the souls of the dead.

<sup>1</sup> "Misericordiam mortuis mittit Trinitas per psalterium Mariæ, Matris misericordiæ."

<sup>2</sup> "Sanctæ ergo et salubris est cogitatio, pro defunctis exorare."—  
2 *Mach.* xii. 46.

<sup>3</sup> "Ego sum Mater omnium qui sunt in purgatorio."

<sup>4</sup> "Beata Virgo in regno purgatorii dominium habet."

**Sermon on the Passion of Jesus Christ.\***

ALAS, what melancholy signs strike me in this temple! I see the dark appearance, I notice the despoiled altars; I hear the melancholy chant! Ah! I understand: these are signs of the grief that the Church feels, lamenting the death of Jesus her Spouse. It is therefore just that on this day we unite our tears to those of the Church, who is our Mother, and that we devote ourselves to the consideration of the death of our God, who after a life of pain wished to die for us on an infamous gibbet, in an abyss of shame and suffering.

Come, O holy cross! come and show thyself to this people; thou art the fortunate Ark in which one can find salvation in the midst of the shipwreck of this world; thou art the wonderful Rod that gives to men the strength to be able to become from monsters of iniquity flourishing rods of holy virtues; thou art the brazen Serpent at the sight of which sinners, poisoned by sin, may recover health; thou art the predestined and resplendent Tree chosen among thousands to sustain the members of the Redeemer; and thou art, finally, the sorrowful Altar on which the Saviour of the world wished to be immolated for our salvation. Give me the strength and all the help that I need to represent to these faithful souls the ignominies, the sufferings, and the anguish which Jesus Christ endured when upon thee he left this world.

The whole life of Jesus Christ was full of sufferings and ignominies; but there are especially three sad scenes of his pains in which he gave us the greatest marks of

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\* It is not known at what time St. Alphonsus composed this sermon; we think it belongs to the first period of his sacerdotal life. Nearly all that it contains is found in Volume V.—ED.

his love for us: the first is the GARDEN OF OLIVES; the second, the PRETORIUM; the third, CALVARY.

The first of these scenes in which the Passion of our Redeemer began was hidden from the eyes of men, but not from the eyes of God and of the angels.

First Scene : The Garden of Olives.

Having on Thursday evening washed the feet of his disciples after giving himself to us in the sacrament of the altar as a pledge of his tender love for us, our amiable Saviour arrived at the garden about midnight, and prostrating himself on the ground, he began to pray. Then he was assailed by great fear, great repugnance, and great sadness.

He began then to feel great fear of the death and of the pains which he was to suffer: *He began to fear.*<sup>1</sup> But how? did he not offer himself voluntarily to undergo these torments? *He was offered because it was His own will.*<sup>2</sup> Did he not ardently desire this time of his Passion according to what he had said to his disciples a little while before: *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.*<sup>3</sup> How, after this, was he seized with so great a fear of death that he went so far as to ask his Father to be delivered from it: *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me?*<sup>4</sup> Ah! certainly our good Lord wished to die for us, and thus to show us the love that he bore us; but in order that the men might understand what cruel anguish and what deluge of evils he was going to undergo in his Passion, he allowed so horrible a fear to come over him: *He began to fear.*

<sup>1</sup> "Cœpit pavere."—*Mark*, xiv. 33.

<sup>2</sup> "Oblatus est, quia ipse voluit."—*Is.* liii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum, antequam patiar."—*Luke*, xxii. 15.

<sup>4</sup> "Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste."—*Matt.* xxvi. 39.



*And to be heavy :* He also began to feel great repugnance at the sight of the pains that had been prepared for him. When one feels repugnance, even delightful things become painful. Hence with such a repugnance what punishment for the heart of Jesus, what horrible sight then presented itself to his mind of all the interior and exterior torments which were to deprive him of life by afflicting so cruelly his body and his blessed soul ! He distinctly saw all the sufferings that awaited him, the mockeries, the outrages, the injuries, the buffets, the thorns, the cross, and above all that ignominious and desolate death which he was to suffer on an infamous gibbet, abandoned by every one, by men and by God, in an abyss of sorrows and opprobrium. This is what caused him so bitter a repugnance that he was obliged to ask his eternal Father for strength: *He began to fear and to be heavy.*

With this fear and repugnance Jesus felt at the same time great sadness and great affliction of mind: *he began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*<sup>1</sup>—But, O Lord! is it not Thou that hast given to Thy martyrs such a force in sufferings that they went so far as to despise torments and death and to submit to them with joy? How then does it happen that for Thyself, O Jesus! Thou hast reserved Thyself to suffer by dying in so great sadness?—Ah! I know the reason; for at this moment there were presented to his mind all the sins of the world, the blasphemies, the sacrileges, the impurities, and all the other sins that men were going to commit after his death. Each one of these sins came then as a cruel monster to tear his heart by its own malice. It seems that then in his agony our afflicted Saviour was obliged to say: O men! is it thus that you respond to the immense love that I have borne towards you? Alas! after so many sufferings endured for you, to see so many sins ! after so many

<sup>1</sup> “Cœpit contristari et mœstus esse.”—*Matt.* xxvi. 37.



proofs of my lov<sup>h</sup>, to see so much ingratitude! It is that which afflicts me, makes me sad even unto death, and makes me sweat blood: *And his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground.*<sup>1</sup>

O my tender Jesus! I do not notice in this garden scourges, thorns, nails, which wound Thee; yet I see Thee bathed in blood from head to foot. My sins therefore were the cruel pressure which, by the violence of the affliction and of sadness, forced so much blood from Thy heart. I have myself been one of Thy most cruel executioners.

But should we stop here in conversing with Jesus when he is already hurrying to meet his Passion which he so much desires? In fact, there is Judas, who is accompanied by a troop of Jews and soldiers, and who is coming to seize Jesus in the garden. Jesus sees him coming, and what does he do? Yet bathed in blood, with his heart all inflamed with love of us, he rises, and says to the three disciples who were with him: *Rise up, let us go. Behold, he that will betray me is at hand.*<sup>2</sup> Come let us meet the enemies who are coming to arrest me.

When Jesus was in their presence, Judas advanced, extended his arms and gave him a kiss. This kiss was the sign of treason: on this account Jesus addressed this word of reproach to the traitor: *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*<sup>3</sup> O Judas! is it by a kiss that thou betrayest the Son of man? He afterwards asked the Jews whom they were seeking: *Whom do you seek?*<sup>4</sup> They answered: Jesus of Nazareth. After this they brutally seized him, and bound him like a criminal: *They*

<sup>1</sup> "Et factus est sudor ejus, sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram."—*Luke*, xxii. 44.

<sup>2</sup> "Surgite, eamus: ecce, qui me tradet, prope est."—*Mark*, xiv.

<sup>3</sup> "Juda, osculo Filium hominis tradis?"—*Luke*, xxiv. 48.

<sup>4</sup> "Quem quæritis?"—*John*, xviii. 4.

took Jesus and bound him.<sup>1</sup> Alas! a God bound like a criminal! "O King of kings!" cries out St. Bernard, weeping, "what hast Thou to do with chains?"<sup>2</sup> Chains are for malefactors, and not for Thee who are innocent, the Saint of saints. "Look, O man!" says St. Bonaventure, "at these dogs dragging him along."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus then bound, in the midst of this vile soldiery, is pushed out of the garden, and led to Jerusalem before the Prince of priests. And where are his disciples? do not at least they accompany their Master in order to defend him? No, all left him: *Then his disciples, leaving him, all fled away.*<sup>4</sup>

He then enters Jerusalem during the night. At the noise that so many people make in their march, those that are in the houses awaken and, approaching the windows, ask what prisoner they are leading away. They answer that it is Jesus of Nazareth, who has been found out to be an impostor, a seducer.

He is presented to Caiphas, who was expecting him; this proud high-priest is sitting, and Jesus is standing before him, having his hands tied like a criminal, holding his eyes cast down, all humility and meekness. The high-priest interrogates him on the doctrine that he taught; Jesus answered that he had spoken publicly before every one, and that the witnesses present who had heard him knew what he had said: *I have spoken to the world; . . . Behold, they know what things I have said.*<sup>5</sup> After an answer so just and so moderate, an executioner advances and gives him a severe blow on the cheek, say-

<sup>1</sup> "Comprehenderunt Jesum, et ligaverunt eum."—*John*, xviii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "O Rex regum! quid tibi et vinculis?"—*De Pass.* c. 4.

<sup>3</sup> "Intuere, homo, canes istos trahentes eum."—*Med. vit. Chr.* c. 75.

<sup>4</sup> "Tunc discipuli ejus relinquentes eum, omnes fugerunt."—*Mark*, xiv. 50.

<sup>5</sup> "Ego palam locutus sum mundo; . . . ecce hi sciunt quæ dixerim ego."—*John*, xviii. 20.

ing in his fury: *Answerest thou the high-priest so?*<sup>1</sup> How could an answer so humble merit so gross an insult in the presence of this assembly? The high-priest, however, instead of rebuking his insolent servant, remains silent, and by his silence approves of his conduct. But then Jesus said to the servant: *If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?*<sup>2</sup>

Then Caiphas commanded Jesus in the name of God to say whether he was the Son of God: *I adjure Thee, by the living God, that thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God.*<sup>3</sup> Our Lord then, asked in the name of God, confessed the truth, saying: *I am;*<sup>4</sup> and one day you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the Father, and coming on the clouds of heaven to judge the world. At these words, Caiphas, instead of falling prostrate on his face to adore the Son of God, rends his garments and exclaims: *He hath blasphemed!*<sup>5</sup> Then addressing the other priests, he asked their counsel and said: *Now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you?* And all answered: *He is guilty of death.*<sup>6</sup> Yes, my Jesus, Thou deservest death, since Thou hast wished to make satisfaction for the sins of men.

Then the executioners seized him, and treating him as a man already condemned to death, they began to spit in his face and to buffet him: *Then did they spit in his face, and others struck his face with the palms of their hands.*<sup>7</sup> Then having bandaged his eyes, and mocking him as a

<sup>1</sup> "Sic respondes Pontifici?"—*Ibid.* 22.

<sup>2</sup> "Si male locutus sum, testimonium perhibe de malo; si autem bene, quid me cædis?"—*Ibid.* 23.

<sup>3</sup> "Adjuro te per Deum vivum, ut dicas nobis, si tu es Christus, Filius Dei."—*Matt.* xxvi. 63.

<sup>4</sup> "Ego sum." . . . <sup>5</sup> "Blasphemavit!" . . . <sup>6</sup> "Reus est mortis."

<sup>7</sup> "Tunc expuerunt in faciem ejus, et colaphis eum ceciderunt; alii autem palmas in faciem ejus dederunt."—*Matt.* xxvi. 67.

false prophet, they said: *Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee.*<sup>1</sup>

When the morning was come, they conducted Jesus to Pilate in order to have him condemned to death. Pilate, finding no reason to condemn him, declared him innocent: *I find no fault in him.*<sup>2</sup> However, as the Jews insisted, he sent him to Herod to be judged by him. Herod was delighted to see Jesus in his court, because he hoped that our Lord would perform some miracles about which he had heard others speak. He then proposed many questions to him, but Jesus remained silent. Then this proud tyrant ordered him to be clothed with a white garment as if he were a fool, and he sent him back to Pilate after having exposed him to the mockery and contempt of his entire court: *And Herod, with his army, set Him at nought; and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate.*<sup>3</sup> O Son of God! O Eternal Wisdom! Thou wouldst submit even to the ignominy of being treated as a fool!

Pilate, in order to avoid condemning an innocent man, seeing that he was not successful in sending Jesus to Herod, devised another means. As the people had a right of asking the Roman governor for the liberation of a prisoner at the Paschal solemnity, Pilate proposed to them to choose between Jesus Christ and Barabbas, who was a wicked man, a homicide; but the people, instigated by the hatred of the priests, who wished the death of Jesus Christ, began to cry out that they preferred Barabbas: *Not this man, but Barabbas.*<sup>4</sup> This is what he does that commits a mortal sin: it is then pro-

<sup>1</sup> "Prophetiza nobis, Christe, quis est, qui te percussit."—*Matt.* xxvi. 68.

<sup>2</sup> "Ego nullam invenio in eo causam."—*Luke*, xxiii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> "Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et illudit induit veste alba; et remisit ad Pilatum."—*Luke*, xxiii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> "Non hunc, sed Barabbam."

posed to him to choose between Jesus Christ and the sin that he wishes to commit, as the sin of revenge, of a certain pleasure, etc.: when he gives his consent, it is as if he said: *Not this man, but Barabbas*; I prefer Barabbas to Jesus Christ.

After having proposed Jesus Christ and Barabbas to the choice of the people, and seeing that this means was unsuccessful, Pilate thought of having him scourged and then set at liberty: *I will chastise Him, therefore, and release Him.*<sup>1</sup> Here we are then at the second scene of the sufferings of Jesus Christ: *Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*<sup>2</sup> O how much less would he have suffered if Pilate had had less compassion for him, and if he had without delay condemned him to the death of the cross! All this served but to increase the sufferings and humiliations of our Saviour.

#### Second Scene: The Pretorium.

Having arrived at the pretorium, our loving Jesus, obedient to the executioners, strips himself of his garments, embraces the column, and then lays on it his hands to have them bound.—My God, already is begun the cruel torture! O angels of heaven! come and look on this sorrowful spectacle, and if it be not permitted you to deliver your king from this barbarous slaughter which men have prepared for him, at least come and weep for compassion.—And ye, Christian souls, imagine yourselves to be present at this horrible tearing of the flesh of your beloved Redeemer; look on him how he stands,—your afflicted Jesus—with his head bowed, looking on the ground, blushing all over for shame, he awaits this great torture. Behold these barbarians, like so many ravenous dogs, are already with the scourges attacking this innocent Lamb. See how one

<sup>1</sup> “Emendatum ergo illum dimittam.”—*Luke*, xxiii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> “Tunc ergo apprehendit Pilatus Jesum, et flagellavit.”—*John*, xix. 1.

beats him on the breast, another strikes his shoulders, another smites his loins and his legs; even his sacred head and beautiful countenance cannot escape the blows. Ah me! already flows that divine blood from every part; already with that blood are saturated the scourges, the hands of the executioners, the column and the ground. "He is wounded," mourns St. Laurence Justinian, "over his whole body, torn with the scourges; now they twine round his shoulders, now round his legs—streaks upon streaks, wounds added to fresh wounds."<sup>1</sup>

Ah, cruel men, with whom are you dealing thus? Stay—stay; know that you are making a mistake. This man whom you are torturing is innocent and holy; it is we who are the culprits; to us, to us, who have sinned, are these stripes and torments due. O eternal Father! how canst Thou behold Thy beloved Son suffering thus, and not interfere in his behalf? What is the crime that he has ever committed, to deserve so shameful and so severe a punishment?—*For the wickedness of My people have I struck Him.*<sup>2</sup> I well know, says the eternal Father, that this my Son is innocent; but inasmuch as he has offered himself as a satisfaction to my justice for all the sins of mankind, it is fitting that I should abandon him to the rage of his most cruel enemies.

Ye barbarians, are you not yet satisfied? No; they are not yet satisfied. After having thus scourged him, these executioners wish to treat him as a mock king. What do they do? They make him sit upon a stone, put upon his shoulders a scarlet cloak in imitation of the purple, and into his hand a reed for a sceptre, and upon his head for a crown a bundle of thorns which covers it entirely from the forehead to the neck; and in

<sup>1</sup> "Cæditur, totoque flagris corpore dissipatur; nunc scapulas, nunc crura cingunt; vulnera vulneribus et plagas plagis recentibus addunt."  
—*De Tr. Chr. Ag.* c. 11.

<sup>2</sup> "Propter scelus populi mei percussi eum."—*Matt.* xxvii. 30.



order that the thorns might sufficiently enter the head, they took a reed and beat with all their might the cruel crown into the head of Jesus: *They took the reed and struck His head.*<sup>1</sup>

It is not yet enough: bending the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: We salute thee, O king of the Jews! Then rising, they laugh at him, mock him, and buffet him: *And bowing the knee before Him, they derided Him, saying, Hail King of the Jews;*<sup>2</sup> *and they gave Him blows.*<sup>3</sup>

Approach, devout souls, and acknowledge him as your Saviour, while his enemies are maltreating and mocking him. Yes, he is a king; but at this moment he is the king of sorrows: he is, however, a king of love, since for the love of you he suffers all these pains.

After having thus scourged him and crowned him with thorns, they seized him as he was, all covered with wounds and blood, and led him to Pilate. The latter, seeing him reduced to a state so worthy of compassion, thought it would be sufficient, in order to pacify the Jews, to show them such as he was. He therefore led him forth before them, and exhibiting him to the people, said to them: Behold the man. *Pilate went forth again to them, . . . and saith unto them, Behold the man;*<sup>4</sup> as though he would have said: Behold the man whom you feared wished to make himself your king; see him reduced to such a state that he cannot live any longer. Let him go and die in his own house; he has but a short time to live; see him reduced to such a state that he has scarcely the appearance of a man. Permit him,

<sup>1</sup> "Acceperunt arundinem, et percutiebant caput ejus."—*Matt.* xxvii. 30.

<sup>2</sup> "Et genu flexo ante eum, illudebant ei, dicentes: Ave Rex Judæorum!"—*Matt.* xxvii. 29.

<sup>3</sup> "Et dabant ei alapas."—*John*, xix. 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Exivit ergo iterum Pilatus foras, . . . et dicit eis: Ecce Homo."



therefore, to be set at liberty, your anger against him being sufficiently appeased. If, notwithstanding, you ask that I should condemn him to death, I declare to you that I cannot do so, because I find no reason to condemn him: *I find no fault in Him.*<sup>1</sup>

As Pilate from the balcony showed Jesus to the people, so at the time the same eternal Father from heaven showed us his well-beloved Son, by saying, *Behold the man*: Behold this man, who is my only begotten Son, whom I love with the same love wherewith I love myself! *This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.*<sup>2</sup> Behold the Man, your Saviour, him whom I have promised, and for whom you were anxiously waiting. He has become a man of sorrows. Behold him, and see to what a pitiable condition he has reduced himself through the love that he has borne towards you. Oh, look at him, and love him! and if his divine qualities move you not, at least let these sorrows and ignominies which he suffers for you move you to love him.

But did the words of Pilate satisfy the cruelty of the enemies of Jesus Christ? On the contrary, the chief priests raised their voices, and cried out: *Away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him!*<sup>3</sup> Pilate, however, still resisted, and refused to condemn Jesus. Then they threatened to accuse him as an enemy of Cæsar if he refused to pronounce sentence: *If thou lettest this Man go, thou art no friend of Cæsar's.*<sup>4</sup> They thus succeeded in obtaining the desired condemnation; but before pronouncing it, Pilate washed his hands, declaring himself innocent of the death of this just man: *I am innocent of*

<sup>1</sup> "Ego enim non invenio in eo causam."—*John*, xix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui."—*Matt.* xvii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> "Tolle, tolle; crucifige eum."—*John*, xix. 11.

<sup>4</sup> "Si hunc dimittis, non es amicus Cæsaris."—*Ibid.* 12.

*the blood of this just Man; look you to it.*<sup>1</sup> O injustice unheard of in this world: the judge declares the accused to be innocent, and at the same time he condemns him to death!

Unhappy Jews, you then said: *His blood be upon us, and upon our children.*<sup>2</sup> You have prayed for the chastisement; it has already come; your children bear to the end of the world the punishment due to the shedding of that innocent blood.

The unjust sentence is read: Jesus accepts it in expiation of our sins: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*<sup>3</sup>

After the publication of the sentence Jesus is again clothed in his garments that he might be recognized, disfigured as he is by such bad treatment. The cross is presented to him; Jesus embraces it, it is placed upon his shoulders, and he begins to walk towards Calvary: *And bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary.*<sup>4</sup> The condemned criminals now come forth from Pilate's residence, and in the midst of them there goes also our condemned Lord, carrying himself the wood upon which he is to die. O heavens! this Messiah, who a few days before, on Palm Sunday, was received with the acclamations and benedictions of the people: *Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord!*<sup>5</sup> See him now in the same streets, bound, execrated by all, moving along to die the death of a criminal. What a spectacle to see a God led to execution! The appear-

<sup>1</sup> "Innocens ego sum a sanguine justī hujus; vos videritis."—*Matt.* xxvii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> "Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros."

<sup>3</sup> "Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis."—*John*, xix. 15.

<sup>4</sup> "Et bajulans sibi crucem, exivit in eum, qui dicitur Calvariæ, locum."—*Matt.* xxi. 9.

<sup>5</sup> "Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini!"—*John*, xix. 17.

ance of Jesus in this journey was so pitiable that it made all those shed tears that saw him: *And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him.*<sup>1</sup> Ah! look at him also, you who love Jesus Christ; see his torn flesh, his dripping blood, the crown of thorns upon his head, the heavy cross upon his shoulders; and while one of the executioners drags him violently along by a rope, see how painful is his walk, see his body bent double, his trembling knees, so that it seems as if he would expire at every step.

O divine Lamb! hast Thou not yet Thy fill of sufferings? How dear did it cost Thee to make me comprehend the love which Thou hast for me! Oh, grant me those aids to love Thee which Thou hast merited for me by so many sufferings! Bestow upon me that sacred fire which Thou didst come to enkindle upon earth by dying for us. Be ever reminding me of Thy death that I may never forget to love Thee.

Isaias predicted that our Lord would carry the cross upon his shoulders as a mark of his reign: *His government was upon His shoulder.*<sup>2</sup> The cross, says Tertullian, was precisely the noble instrument whereby Jesus Christ made acquisition of so many souls; since by dying thereon he paid the penalty due to our sins, and thus rescued us from hell, and made us his own: *Who His own Self bore our sins in His body upon the tree.*<sup>3</sup>

Thus, O my Jesus! if the eternal Father burdened Thee with all the sins of men,—*The Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all,*<sup>4</sup>—I with my own sins added to the weight of the cross that Thou didst bear to Calvary.

<sup>1</sup> “Sequebatur autem illum multa turba populi et mulierum, quæ plangebant et lamentabantur eum.”—*Luke*, xxiii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> “Factus est principatus super humerum ejus.”—*Is.* ix. 6.

<sup>3</sup> “Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum.”—*1 Pet.* ii. 24.

<sup>4</sup> “Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum.”—*Is.* liii. 6.

O my sweetest Saviour, Thou didst even then foresee all the wrongs that I should do to Thee; yet, notwithstanding, Thou didst not cease to love me, or to prepare for me all the merits that Thou hast since employed towards me. If then to Thee I have been dear, most vile and ungrateful sinner as I am, who have so much offended Thee, good reason is there why Thou shouldst be dear to me. Ah, would that I had never displeased Thee! Now, my Jesus, do I know the wrong that I have done Thee.—O ye accursed sins of mine, what have you done? You have caused me to sadden the loving heart of my Redeemer, that heart which has loved me so much.—O my Jesus! forgive me, repenting, as I do, of having done despite unto Thee. Henceforth it is Thou who art to be the only object of my love. I love Thee, O infinite loveliness, with all my heart; and I resolve to love none else but Thee. O Lord! pardon me; I say unto Thee with St. Ignatius: “Give me Thy love only together with Thy grace, and I am rich enough.”<sup>1</sup>

**Third Scene: Calvary.**

Here we are at the third and last scene of the tortures—that of Calvary, which brought death to Jesus Christ. They immediately tear off his garments, sticking to his wounded flesh, and throw him down upon the cross. The divine Lamb reaches forth to the executioners his hands and his feet to be nailed, and offers up to his eternal Father the great sacrifice of his life for the salvation of men. After the nailing of one of his hands, the nerves shrink so that they had need of main force and ropes to draw the other hand and feet up to the places where they were to be nailed; and this occasioned so great a tension of the nerves and veins, that they broke asunder with a violent convulsion, as

<sup>1</sup> “Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis.”

was revealed to St. Bridget: "They drew my hands and feet with a rope to the places of the nails, so that the nerves and veins were stretched out to the full and broke asunder;"<sup>1</sup> insomuch that all his bones might have been numbered, as David had already predicted: *They pierced My hands and My feet, they numbered all My bones.*<sup>2</sup>

St. Augustine says that there is no death more bitter than that of the cross: "Among all the different kinds of death, there was none worse."<sup>3</sup> Because, as St. Thomas<sup>4</sup> observes, those who are crucified have their hands and their feet pierced through, parts which being entirely composed of nerves, muscles, and veins, are the most sensitive to pain, and the very weight of the body itself, which is suspended from them, causes the pain to be continuous and ever increasing in its intensity up to the moment of death.

But the pains of Jesus were far beyond all other pains; for, as the Angelic Doctor says, the body of Jesus Christ, being perfectly constituted, was more quick and sensitive to pain—that body which was fashioned for him by the Holy Spirit, expressly with a view to his suffering, as he had foretold, as the Apostle testifies: *A body Thou hast fitted to Me.*<sup>5</sup> Moreover, St. Thomas says that Jesus Christ took upon himself an amount of suffering so great as to be sufficient to satisfy for the temporal punishment merited by the sins of all mankind.

O my soul, behold thy Lord, behold thy life hanging upon that tree: *And thy life shall be, as it were, hanging be-*

<sup>1</sup> "Manus et pedes cum fune trahebant ad loca clavorum, ita ut nervi et venæ extenderentur et rumperentur."—*Rev.* l. i, c. 10.

<sup>2</sup> "Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos, dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea."—*Ps.* xxi. 17.

<sup>3</sup> "Pejus nihil fuit inter omnia genera mortium."—*In Jo.* tr. 36.

<sup>4</sup> P. 3. q. 46. a. 6.

<sup>5</sup> "Corpus autem aptasti mihi."—*Heb.* x. 5.

fore thee.<sup>1</sup> Behold how on that gibbet of pain, fastened by those cruel nails, he finds no place of rest. Now he leans his weight upon his hands, now upon his feet; but on what part soever he leans, the anguish increases. He turns his afflicted head now on one side, now on the other; if he lets it fall towards his breast, the hands, by the additional weight, are rent the more; if he lowers it towards his shoulders, the shoulders are pierced with thorns; if he leans it back upon the cross, the thorns enter the more deeply into his head.

Ah, my Jesus, what a death of bitterness is this that Thou art enduring! O my crucified Redeemer, I adore Thee on this throne of ignominy and pain. Upon this cross I read it written that Thou art a King: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.*<sup>2</sup> But apart from this title of scorn, what is the evidence that Thou dost give of being a king? Ah, these hands transfixed with nails, this head pierced with thorns, this throne of sorrow, this lacerated flesh, make me well know that Thou art a king, but a king of love. With humility, then, and tenderness do I draw near to kiss Thy sacred feet, transfixed for love of me. I clasp in my arms this cross, on which Thou, being made a victim of love, wast willing to offer Thyself in sacrifice for me to the divine justice: *being made obedient unto death, the death of the cross.*<sup>3</sup> O blessed obedience, that obtained for us the pardon of our sins! And what would have become of me, O my Saviour, hadst Thou not paid the penalty for me?

Contemplating one day the love of Jesus in dying for us, St. Francis of Paula, rapt in ecstasy and raised in the air, exclaimed three times in a loud voice: "O God, charity! O God, charity! O God, charity!" You

<sup>1</sup> "Et erit vita tua quasi pendens ante te."—*Deut.* xxviii. 66.

<sup>2</sup> "Jesu Nazarenus, Rex Judæorum."—*John*, xix. 19.

<sup>3</sup> "Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis."—*Phil.* ii. 8.



also, devout souls, look on your divine Saviour on this painful cross; see how he remains fastened by those three nails, so that the pierced hands and feet had to sustain the weight of the entire body; on whichever side he wishes to rest his pains are increased. Alas! our afflicted Saviour finds no place of rest.

Behold the King of heaven, who, hanging on that gibbet, is now on the point of giving up the ghost. Let us, too, ask of him with the prophet: *What are those wounds in the middle of Thy hands?*<sup>1</sup> Tell me, O my Jesus, what are these wounds in the middle of Thy hands? The Abbot Rupert makes answer for Jesus: "They are the memorials of charity, the price of redemption."<sup>2</sup> They are tokens, says the Redeemer, of the great love which I bear toward you; they are the payment by which I set you free from the hands of your enemies, and from eternal death.

Do you, then, O faithful souls, love your God, who has had such love for you; and if you do at any time feel doubtful of his love, turn your eyes, says St. Thomas of Villanova, to behold that cross, those pains, and that bitter death which he has suffered for you; for such proofs will assuredly make you know how much your Saviour loves you: "The cross testifies, the pains testify, the bitter death that he had endured for you testifies this."<sup>3</sup> And St. Bernard adds that the cross cries out, every wound of Jesus cries out, that he loves us with a true love: "The cross proclaims, the wounds proclaim, that he truly loves."<sup>4</sup>

While hanging on the cross Jesus looked in vain for some one to console him: *I looked for one that would grieve*

<sup>1</sup> "Quid sunt plagæ istæ in medio manuum tuarum?"

<sup>2</sup> "Sunt monumenta charitatis, pretia redemptionis."

<sup>3</sup> "Testis crux, testes dolores, testis amara mors, quam pro te sustinuit."—*Dom. 17. p. Pent. conc. 3.*

<sup>4</sup> "Clamat crux, clamat vulnus, quod ipse vere dilexit."



together with me, but there was none.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, he heard those around him uttering blasphemies: *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*<sup>2</sup> *Vah! thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy own self.*<sup>3</sup> *He saved others, himself he cannot save.*<sup>4</sup> Why should they care to afflict by insults and derision one that is already expiring on the gibbet?

And Jesus, while these are outraging him, what is he doing upon the cross? Is he perhaps praying to the eternal Father to punish them? No, he is praying to him to pardon them: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*<sup>5</sup> Yes, says St. Thomas; to show forth the immense love which he had for men, the Redeemer asked pardon of God for his crucifiers: "To show forth the abundance of his charity, he asked pardon for his persecutors."<sup>6</sup> He asked it, and obtained it; for, when they had seen him die they repented of their sin: *They returned smiting their breasts.*<sup>7</sup>

Ah, my dear Saviour, behold me at Thy feet; I have been one of the most ungrateful of Thy persecutors; do Thou pray likewise for me to Thy Father to pardon me. True it is that the Jews and the executioners knew not what they were doing when they crucified Thee; but I well knew that in sinning I was offending a God who had been crucified, and had died for me. But Thy blood and Thy death have merited even for

<sup>1</sup> "Et sustinui . . . qui consolaretur, et non inveni."—*Ps.* lxxviii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> "Si Filius Dei es, descende de cruce."

<sup>3</sup> "Vale, qui destruis templum Dei, et in triduo reædificas; salva te-  
met ipsum."

<sup>4</sup> "Alios salvos fecit, seipsum non potest salvum facere."—*Matt.*  
xxvii. 40-42.

<sup>5</sup> "Pater! dimitte illis; non enim sciunt quid faciunt."—*Luke*, xxiii.  
34.

<sup>6</sup> "Ad ostendendam charitatis suæ, veniam pro persecutoribus postu-  
lavit."—*P.* 3. q. 47. a. 4.

<sup>7</sup> "Percutientes pectora sua, revertebantur."—*Luke*, xxiii. 48.

me the divine mercy. I cannot feel doubtful of being pardoned after seeing Thee die to obtain pardon for me.

The sorrowful Mother stood at the foot of the cross with some pious women: *There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother. . . .*<sup>1</sup> O God! who would not pity a mother standing beside the gibbet on which a son dies before her eyes? Consider Mary, standing beneath the cross, contemplating the pains in the midst of which her well-beloved Son was expiring: She desired to give him some alleviation, and she saw, on the other hand, that her presence increased the grief of this same Son, who was full of compassion for his tender Mother. This was a terrible affliction for Mary, a torture that made her the Queen of Martyrs.

Seeing himself, then, abandoned by every one, all men trying to make his death more painful, Jesus raised his eyes to his eternal Father to obtain some consolation. But seeing him laden with all our sins, for which he wished to satisfy the divine justice, his Father also abandoned him. Then it was that our Saviour, crying out with a loud voice, said: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*<sup>2</sup>

But our Saviour, so full of love, is on the point of expiring. Christians, look at the cross. Behold those dying eyes, that face so pale, the sacred body which is abandoned to death. Before expiring, Jesus uttered these words: *It is consummated.*<sup>3</sup> It is as if he had said: O men, love me; I have done all that I can do in order to save your souls and gain your love. See the painful life that I have led during thirty-three years for love of you. I wished then on your account to be scourged, to

<sup>1</sup> "Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus. . . ."—*John*, xix. 25.

<sup>2</sup> "Deus meus! Deus meus! ut quid dereliquisti me?"—*Matth.* xxvii. 46.

<sup>3</sup> "Consummatum est."—*John*, xix. 30.

be crowned with thorns, to be buffeted, to be covered with wounds from head to foot. What more was needed? Should I die for love of you? Well, then! I wish to die. Come, O death! I permit thee to come; take away my life, in order that my sheep may live. *And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*<sup>1</sup> My Father, he then said, I die for Thy glory and for the salvation of men; I commend my soul into Thy hands.—Behold, then, Jesus dies. O angels of heaven, come, come to be present at the death of your God. And thou, O sorrowful Mother! approach nearer to the cross; look at him more steadfastly, for he is about to expire.

And ye Christians, behold him in his agony; see him amid the last respirations of life. Behold his dying eyes, that face so pale, that feebly palpitating heart, that body already wrapped in the arms of death, and that beautiful soul now on the point of leaving that wounded body.

The sky shrouds itself in darkness; the earth quakes; the graves open. Alas, what portentous signs are these! They are signs that the Maker of the world is now dying.

Behold, in the last place, how our Lord, after having commended his blessed soul to his eternal Father, first breathing forth from his afflicted heart a deep sigh, and then bowing down his head in token of his obedience, and offering up his death for the salvation of men, at last through the violence of the pain expires, and delivers up his spirit into the hands of his beloved Father: *And crying out with a loud voice, He said Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and saying this He gave up the ghost.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Et clamans voce magna, Jesus ait : Pater! in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.”—*Luke*, xxiii. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Et hæc dicens, exspiravit.”—*Ibid.*

All those that were present looking at him with attention see him expire, and observing that he is motionless, they exclaim, He is dead—he is dead!—Mary hears this from all the bystanders, and she also says, Ah, my Son, Thou art dead! He is dead!—Ah, who is dead? It is the King of heaven; the Creator of the world, a God, who wished to die for us poor sinners.

**Act of Contrition while showing the Crucifix.\***

Come sinners; here is Jesus Christ who has stretched forth his arms to embrace you. Can you fear that he will not pardon you, when he gave himself up to death in order to pardon you?

Do you perhaps fear that you will not obtain pardon because you find yourselves unable to perform the penance that your sins deserve? Console yourselves; for you here see the penance that Jesus Christ has himself performed for you on the cross; it is sufficient if you sincerely repeat of having offended him.

Look at him; see where you can find any one that has loved you more than Jesus Christ has loved you. Love him then, since he died in order to be loved by you. Say to him: Ah, my sweet Saviour! whom should I love if I do not love a God who has died for me?

O sorrowful Mother! through the sorrow that thou didst experience in seeing thy divine Son expire, obtain for me holy perseverance and a true love of my divine Redeemer.

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\* See Volume XV., page 223.

Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities.

It should be remarked that these discourses are here not entirely developed; we find in them only those passages that are pertinent to the subjects the thoughts upon which are hardly expressed, in order that the preachers may extend and amplify them as they wish, by adding the moral application against vice wherever this may be found useful.\*

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\* The holy author expresses more at length his thought on this point in the preceding volume, page 10. He published these discourses, with the PREPARATION FOR DEATH, in 1758.—ED.

## Nine Discourses for Times of Calamities.

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### FIRST DISCOURSE.

**God Threatens to Chastise us in order to deliver us from Chastisement.**

“Heu ! consolabor super hostibus meis, et vindicabor de inimicis meis.”

“Ah, I will comfort Myself over My adversaries: and I will be revenged of My enemies.”—*Isa. i. 24.*

SUCH is the language of God, when speaking of punishment and vengeance: He says that he is constrained by his justice to take vengeance on his enemies. But, mark you, he begins with the word *Heu*, “Ah:” this word is an exclamation of grief by which he would give us to understand, that if he were capable of weeping when about to punish, he should weep bitterly at being compelled to afflict us his creatures, whom he has loved so dearly as to give up his life through love for us. “‘Alas!’” says Cornelius à Lapide, “is uttered by one who is lamenting and not insulting; God signifies by this word that he is grieving, and that he is unwilling to punish sinners.”<sup>1</sup> No, this God, who is the Father of mercies, and so much loves us, is not of a disposition to punish and afflict, but rather to pardon and console us. *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of affliction.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “‘Heu!’” dolentis est, non insultantis; significat Deus hac voce se dolentem et invitum punire peccatores.”

<sup>2</sup> “‘Ego enim scio cogitationes quas ego cogito super vos, ait Dominus, cogitationes pacis, et non afflictionis.’”—*Jer. xxix. 11.*



But some one will say, since such is his character, why does he now punish us? or, at least, appear as if he meant to punish us? Why so? Because he wishes to be merciful towards us: this anger which he now displays is all mercy and patience.

Let us then, my brethren, understand how the Lord at present appears in wrath, not with a view to our punishment, but in order that we may cleanse ourselves of our sins, and thus enable him to pardon us. Such is the subject of our discourse: GOD THREATENS TO CHASTISE IN ORDER TO DELIVER US FROM CHASTISEMENT.

The threats of men ordinarily proceed from their pride and impotence; whence, if they have it in their power to take vengeance on an object, they threaten nothing, lest they should thereby give their enemies an opportunity of escape. It is only when they want the power to wreak their vengeance that they betake themselves to threats, in order to gratify their passion, by awakening at least the fears of their enemies. Not so the threats of which God makes use; on the contrary, their nature is quite different. His threats do not arise from his inability to chastise, because he can be avenged when he wills; but he bears with us in order to see us penitent, and thus exempt from punishment. *Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men for the sake of repentance.*<sup>1</sup> Neither does he threaten from hatred, in order to torment us with fear; God threatens from love, in order that we may be converted to him, and thereby escape chastisement: he threatens, because he does not wish to see us lost: he threatens, in fine, because he loves our souls. *But Thou sparest all, because they are thine, O Lord, who lovest souls.*<sup>2</sup> He threatens; but notwith-

<sup>1</sup> "Misereris omnium, quia omnia potes, et dissimulas peccata hominum propter poenitentiam."—*Wisd.* xi. 24.

<sup>2</sup> "Parcis autem omnibus, quoniam tua sunt, Domine, qui amas animas"—*Ibid.* 27.

standing bears with us and delays the infliction, because he wishes to see us converted, not lost. *He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*<sup>1</sup> Thus the threats of God are all acts of tenderness, and amorous calls of his goodness, by which he means to save us from the punishment which we deserve.

*Yet forty days, exclaimed Jonas, and Nineve shall be destroyed.*<sup>2</sup> Wretched Ninevites, he cries, the day of your chastisement is come; I announce it to you on the part of God: Know that within forty days Nineve shall be destroyed, and cease to exist. But how comes it that Nineve did penance and was not destroyed? *And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way; and God had mercy.*<sup>3</sup> Whereat Jonas was afflicted, and making lamentation before the Lord, said to him: *Therefore, I went before Thee into Tarsis, for I knew that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil.*<sup>4</sup> He then left Nineve, and was screened from the rays of the burning sun by an ivy which God caused to overshadow his head. But how did the Lord next act? He withered the ivy, whereat Jonas was so much afflicted that he wished for death. God then said to him, *Thou hast grieved for the ivy for which Thou hast not labored, nor made it to grow; . . . and shall not I spare Nineve?*<sup>5</sup> Thou grieveest for the ivy which thou hast not created, and

<sup>1</sup> "Patienter agit propter vos, nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad poenitentiam reverti."—2 *Pet.* iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Adhuc quadraginta dies, et Ninive subvertetur."—*Jonas*, iii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> "Vidit Deus opera eorum, quia conversi sunt de via sua mala, et misertus est."—*Ibid.* 10.

<sup>4</sup> "Propter hoc præoccupavi ut fugerem in Tharsis: scio enim quia tu Deus clemens et misericors es, patiens et multæ miserationis et ignoscens super malitia."—*Jonas*, iv. 2.

<sup>5</sup> "Tu doles super hederam, in qua non laborasti, neque fecisti ut cresceret; . . . et ego non parcam Ninive?"—*Ibid.* 10.

shall not I pardon the men who are the work of my hands?

The destruction which the Lord caused to be held out against Nineve was, according to the explanation of St. Basil, not an actual prophecy, but a simple threat, by which he meant to bring about the conversion of that city. The saint says, that God often appears in wrath because he wishes to deal mercifully with us; and threatens, not with the intention of chastising but of delivering us from chastisement.<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine adds, that when any one cries out to you "take care," it is a sign he does not mean to injure you.<sup>2</sup> And thus exactly does God act in our regard: he threatens us with chastisement, says St. Jerome, not that he means to inflict it, but to spare us if we profit by the warning.<sup>3</sup> Thou, O Lord, says St. Augustine, art severe, but then most so when Thou wishest to save us; Thou threatenst, but in so threatening Thou hast no other object than to bring us to repentance.<sup>4</sup> The Lord could chastise sinners without warning by a sudden death, which should not leave them time for repentance; but no, he displays his wrath, he brandishes his scourge, in order that he may see them reformed, not punished.

The Lord said to Jeremias: thou shalt say to them—*If so be, they will hearken and be converted every one from his evil way: that I may repent Me of the evil which I think to do unto them.*<sup>5</sup> Go, he says, and tell the sinners if they wish to hear you, that if they cease from their sins,

<sup>1</sup> "Indignans miseretur, et minitans salvare desiderat."

<sup>2</sup> "Nemo, volens ferire, dicit: Observa!"—*Serm. 22, E. B.*

<sup>3</sup> "In hoc clementia Dei ostenditur; qui enim prædicit pœnam non vult punire."

<sup>4</sup> "Sævis, et salvas; terres, et vocas."—*In Ps. 55.*

<sup>5</sup> "Loquaris ad eos, . . . si forte audiant, et convertantur unusquisque a via sua mala, et pœniteat me mali quod cogito facere eis."—*Jer. xxvi. 2.*

I shall spare them the chastisements which I intended to have inflicted on them. And now, my brethren, mark me. The Lord addresses you in a similar way out of my mouth. If you amend, he will revoke the sentence of punishment. St. Jerome says: "God is wroth, not with us, but with our sins;"<sup>1</sup> and St. John Chrysostom adds, that if we remember our sins God will forget them.<sup>2</sup> He desires that we being humbled should reform, and crave pardon of him. *Because they are humbled I will not destroy them.*<sup>3</sup>

But, in order to amend, we must be led to it by fear of punishment, otherwise, we never should be brought to change our lives. True it is, God protects him who places hope in his mercy. *He is the protector of all who trust in Him.*<sup>4</sup> But he who hopes in the mercy of the Lord is always the man who fears his justice. *They that fear the Lord have hoped in the Lord: He is their protector and their helper.*<sup>5</sup> The Lord often speaks of the rigor of his judgments, and of hell, and of the great number who go thither. *Be not afraid of them who kill the body: . . . fear ye Him who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.*<sup>6</sup> *Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who enter thereat.*<sup>7</sup> And why does the Lord so often speak thus? In order that fear may keep us from vice, and from the passions, and from occasions; and that thus we may reasonably hope for salvation,

<sup>1</sup> "Neque Deus hominibus, sed vitiis irascitur."—*In Dan.* c. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Si nos peccatorum meminerimus, Deus obliviscetur."—*Ad pop. ant. hom.* 41.

<sup>3</sup> "Quia humiliati sunt, non disperdam eos."—2 *Par.* xii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "Protector est omnium sperantium in se."—*Ps.* xvii. 31.

<sup>5</sup> "Qui timent Dominum, speraverunt in Domino; adjutor eorum et protector eorum est."—*Ps.* xiii. 11.

<sup>6</sup> "Timete eum qui . . . habet potestatem mittere in gehennam."—*Luke*, xii. 5.

<sup>7</sup> "Spatiosa via est, quæ ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt, qui intrant per eam."—*Matth.* vii. 13.

which is only for the innocent, or the penitent, who hope and fear.

Oh, what strength has not the fear of hell to rein us in from sin! To that end has God created hell. He has created us, and redeemed us by his death, that we might be happy with him; he has imposed upon us the obligation of hoping for eternal life, and on that account encourages us, by saying that all those who hope in him shall be saved. *For none of them that wait on Thee shall be confounded.*<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it is his wish and command that we should be in fear of eternal damnation. Some heretics hold, that all who are not in sin should consider themselves as assuredly just and predestined; but these have with reason been condemned by the Council of Trent,<sup>2</sup> because such a presumption is as perilous to salvation as fear is conducive to it. *And let Him be your dread, and He shall be a sanctification unto you.*<sup>3</sup> The holy fear of God makes man holy. Wherefore David begged of God the grace of fear, in order that fear might destroy in him the inclinations of the flesh. *Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear.*<sup>4</sup>

We should then fear on account of our sins, but this fear ought not to deject us: it should rather excite us to confidence in the divine mercy, as was the case with the prophet himself. *For Thy name's sake, O Lord, Thou wilt pardon my sin, for it is great.*<sup>5</sup> How is that? Pardon me because my sin is great? Yes, because the divine mercy is most conspicuous in the case of greatest misery; and he who has been the greatest sinner is he who glorifies

<sup>1</sup> "Universi qui sustinent te, non confundentur."—*Ps.* xxiv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Sess.* vi. *can.* xiv., xv.

<sup>3</sup> "Ipse (Deus) terror vester, et erit vobis in sanctificationem."—*Is.* viii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> "Confige timore tuo carnes meas."—*Ps.* cxviii. 120.

<sup>5</sup> "Propter nomen tuum, Domine, propitiaberis peccato meo; multum est enim."—*Ps.* xxiv. 11.

most the divine mercy, by hoping in God, who has promised to save all those who hope in him. *He will save them, because they have hoped in him.*<sup>1</sup> For this reason it is, Ecclesiasticus says, that the fear of the Lord bringeth not pain, but joy and gladness: *The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart, and shall give joy and gladness.*<sup>2</sup> Thus this very fear leads to the acquisition of a firm hope in God, which makes the soul happy: *He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing, and shall not be afraid, for He is his hope. The soul of him that feareth the Lord is blessed.*<sup>3</sup> Yes, blessed, because fear draws man away from sin. *The fear of the Lord driveth out sin,*<sup>4</sup> and at the same time infuses into him a great desire of observing the commandments: *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in His commandments.*<sup>5</sup>

We must, then, persuade ourselves that chastisement is not what the nature of God inclines him to. God, because by his nature he is infinite goodness,<sup>6</sup> says St. Leo, has no other desire than to bless us, and to see us happy. When he punishes, he is obliged to do so in order to satisfy his justice, not to gratify his inclination. Isaias says, that punishment is a work contrary to the heart of God. *The Lord shall be angry....that He may do His work, His strange work;...His work is strange to Him.*<sup>7</sup> And therefore does the Lord say, that he sometimes almost feigns

<sup>1</sup> "Salvabit eos, quia speraverunt in eo."—*Ps.* xxxvi. 40.

<sup>2</sup> "Timor Domini delectabit cor, et dabit lætitiā et gaudium."—*Ecclus.* i. 12.

<sup>3</sup> "Qui timet Dominum, nihil trepidabit, et non pavebit; quoniam ipse est spes ejus. Timentis Dominum beata est anima ejus."—*Ecclus.* xxxiv. 17.

<sup>4</sup> "Timor Domini expellit peccatum."—*Ecclus.* i. 27.

<sup>5</sup> "Beatus vir qui timet Dominum; in mandatis ejus volet nimis."—*Ps.* cxi. 1.

<sup>6</sup> "Deus cujus natura, bonitas."—*In Nat. D.* s. 2.

<sup>7</sup> "Irascetur, et faciat opus suum, alienum opus ejus; . . . peregrinum est opus ejus ab eo."—*Is.* xxviii. 21.



the intention of punishing us.<sup>1</sup> But why does he do so? For this reason: *Let every man of you return from his evil way.*<sup>2</sup> He does so in order to our reformation, and consequently our exemption from the chastisement deserved by us. The Apostle writes, that God *hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth.*<sup>3</sup> With regard to which passage, St. Bernard says, that God of himself wishes to love us, but that we force him to condemn us.<sup>4</sup> He calls himself the Father of mercies, not of vengeance. Whence it comes that his tenderness all springs from himself, and his severity from us.

And who has ever been able to comprehend the greatness of the divine mercies? David says, that God, even while yet angry, feels compassion for us: *Thou hast been angry, and hast had mercy on us.*<sup>5</sup> "O merciful wrath, which art enkindled but to succor, and threatenest but to pardon,"<sup>6</sup> exclaims the abbot Beroncosius. "Thou hast shown," continues David, "*thou hast shown Thy people hard things, Thou hast made us drunk with the wine of sorrow.*"<sup>7</sup> God discovers himself to us armed with a scourge, but he does so in order to see us penitent and contrite for the offences which we are committing against him: *Thou hast given a warning to them that fear Thee: that they may flee before the bow: that Thy beloved may be delivered.*<sup>8</sup> He appears with the bow already bent, upon the point of sending off the arrow, but he does not send it off, because he wishes that our terror should bring about

<sup>1</sup> "Ego fingo contra vos malum."

<sup>2</sup> "Revertatur unusquisque a via sua mala."—*Jer.* xviii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> "Cujus vult miseretur, et quem vult indurat."—*Rom.* ix. 18.

<sup>4</sup> "Quod miseretur, proprium illi est; nam, quod condemnat, nos eum cogimus."—*In Nat. D.* s. 5, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> "Deus, . . . iratus es, et misertus es nobis."—*Ps.* lix. 3.

<sup>6</sup> "O ira misericors: quæ sic irascitur, ut subveniat; sic minatur, ut parcat!"—*Serm. in Nat. Mart.*

<sup>7</sup> "Ostendisti populo tuo dura, potasti nos vino compunctionis."

<sup>8</sup> "Dedisti metuentibus te significationem, ut fugiant a facie arcus, ut liberentur dilecti tui."



amendment, and that thus we should escape the chastisement. *That Thy beloved may be delivered.*<sup>1</sup> I wish to terrify them, says God, in order that struck by fear they may rise from the bed of sin and return to me. *In their affliction they will rise early to Me.*<sup>2</sup> Yes, the Lord, although he sees us so ungrateful and worthy of punishment, is eager to free us from it, because how ungrateful soever we be, he loves us and wishes us well. *Give us help from trouble.*<sup>3</sup> Thus, in fine, prayed David; and thus ought we to pray. Grant, O Lord, that this scourge which now afflicts us, may open our eyes, so that we depart from sin; because if we do not here have done with it, sin will lead us to eternal damnation, which is a scourge enduring forever.

What shall we then do, my brethren? Do you not see that God is angered? He can no longer bear with us. *The Lord is angry.* Do you not behold the scourges of God increasing every day? Our sins increase, says St. John Chrysostom, and our scourges increase likewise.<sup>4</sup> God, my brethren, is wroth: but with all his anger he has commanded me to say, what he formerly commanded to be said by the prophet Zachary: *And thou shalt say to them, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Turn ye to Me saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you saith the Lord of Hosts.*<sup>5</sup> Sinners, saith the Lord, you have turned your backs upon me, and therefore have constrained me to deprive you of my grace. Do not oblige me to drive you forever from my face, and punish you in hell without hope of pardon. Have done with it: abandon sin, be converted to me, and I promise to pardon you all your offences, and once more to embrace you as my

<sup>1</sup> "Ut liberentur dilecti tui."

<sup>2</sup> "In tribulatione sua mane consurgent ad me."—*Osee*, vi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Da nobis auxilium de tribulatione."

<sup>4</sup> "Crescit malitia, crescit inopia rerum."—*De Helia*, s. 2.

<sup>5</sup> "Dices ad eos: Hæc dicit Dominus exercituum: Convertimini ad me, . . . et convertar ad vos."—*Zach.* i. 3.

children. *Turn ye to Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn to you.*<sup>1</sup> Why do you wish to perish? (mark how tenderly the Lord speaks.) *And why will you die, O house of Israel.*<sup>2</sup> Why will you fling yourselves into that burning furnace? *Return ye and live.*<sup>3</sup> Return to me, I await you with open arms, ready to receive and pardon you.

Doubt not of this, O sinner, continues the Lord. *Learn to do well. . . And then come and accuse Me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow.*<sup>4</sup> Take courage, saith the Lord, change your life, come to me, and if I do not pardon you, *accuse me.* As if he were to say, Accuse me of lying and bad faith; but, no, I shall not be unfaithful: your conscience now so black, shall by my grace become as white as snow. No; I will not chastise you if you reform, says the Lord, because I am God, not man. *I will not execute the fierceness of My wrath, . . . because I am God, and not man.*<sup>5</sup> He says besides, that men never forget an injury, but that when he sees a sinner penitent, he forgets all his offences. *I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done.*<sup>6</sup> Let us then at once return to God, but let it be at once. We have offended him enough already, let us not tempt his anger any further. Behold him, he calls us, and is ready to pardon us if we repent of our evil deeds, and promise him to change our lives.\*

Here, and at the close of each succeeding Sermon, may be introduced Acts of Faith, Hope, and Sorrow, etc., with a Petition to the Mother of God for her intercession.

<sup>1</sup> "Convertimini ad me, et convertar ad vos."

<sup>2</sup> "Et quare moriemini, domus Israel?"

<sup>3</sup> "Revertimini, et vivite."—*Ezech.* xviii. 31, 32.

<sup>4</sup> "Discite benefacere, . . . et venite, et arguite me, . . . si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum, quasi nix dealbabuntur."—*Is.* i. 17.

<sup>5</sup> "Non faciam furorem iræ meæ, . . . quoniam Deus ego, et non homo."—*Osee*, vi. 9.

<sup>6</sup> "Omnium iniquitatum ejus, quas operatus est, non recordabor."—*Ezech.* xviii. 2.

\* See at the end of the Sermon on the Passion, page 317.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

Sinners will not Believe in the Divine Threats until the Chastisement has come upon Them.

“ Si pœnitentiam non egeritis omnes similiter peribitis.”

“ Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.”—*Luke*, xiii. 5.

AFTER our Lord had commanded our first parents not to eat of the forbidden fruit, unhappy Eve approached the tree and was addressed from it by the serpent, who said to her: Why has God forbidden you to eat of this delightful fruit? *Why hath God commanded you?* Eve replies: *God hath commanded us that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die.*<sup>1</sup> Behold the weakness of Eve! The Lord had absolutely threatened them with death, and she now begins to speak of it as doubtful: *Lest perhaps we die.* If I eat of it, she said, I shall perhaps die. But the devil, seeing that Eve was little in fear of the divine threat, proceeded to encourage her by saying: *No, you shall not die the death;*<sup>2</sup> and thus he deceived her, and caused her to prevaricate and eat the apple. Thus, even now, does the enemy continue to deceive so many poor sinners. God threatens: Stop, sinners, and do penance, because if not you shall damn yourselves, as so many others have done: “Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.” The devil says to them: “No, you shall not die the death.” Fear nothing, sin on, continue to enjoy yourselves, because God is merciful; he will pardon you by and by, and you shall be saved. “God,” says St. Pro-

<sup>1</sup> “ Præcepit nobis Deus ne comederemus et ne tangeremus illud, ne forte moriamur.”—*Gen.* iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> “ Nequaquam morte moriemini.”—*Ibid.* 4.

copius, "inspires one with fear, the devil takes it away."<sup>1</sup> God only desires to terrify them by his threats, in order that they may depart from sin, and thus be saved. The devil wishes to destroy that fear, in order that they may persevere in sin, and thus be lost. Many are the wretches who believe the devil in preference to God, and are thus miserably damned. At present, behold the Lord displays his anger and threatens us with chastisement. Who knows how many there may be in this country who have no thought of changing their lives, in the hope that God will be appeased, and that it will be nothing. Hence the subject of the present discourse: SINNERS WILL NOT BELIEVE IN THE DIVINE THREATS, UNTIL THE CHASTISEMENT SHALL HAVE COME UPON THEM. My brethren, if we do not amend, the chastisement will come; if we do not put an end to our crimes, God will.

When Lot was warned by the Lord that he was about to destroy Sodom, Lot at once informed his sons-in-law: *Arise! get you out of this place, because the Lord will destroy this city.*<sup>2</sup> But they would not believe him: *And He seemed to them to speak as it were in jest.*<sup>3</sup> They imagined that he wished to sport with their fears, by terrifying them with such a threat. But the punishment overtook them, and they remained to be the sport of the flames. My brethren, what do we expect? God warns us that chastisement hangs over us; let us put a period to our sins, or shall we wait for God to do it? Hear, O sinner! what St. Paul says to you: *See, then, the severity and goodness of God—towards them, indeed, that are fallen, the severity; but towards thee the goodness of God, if thou abide in goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*<sup>4</sup> Consider,

<sup>1</sup> "Deus timorem incutit, diabolus adimit."

<sup>2</sup> "Surgite, egredimini de loco isto; quia delebit Dominus civitatem hanc."—*Gen.* xix. 14.

<sup>3</sup> "Et visus est eis quasi ludens loqui."

<sup>4</sup> "Vide ergo bonitatem et severitatem Dei: in eos quidem qui ceciderunt, severitatem; in te autem bonitatem Dei, si permanseris in bonitate; alioquin et tu excideris."—*Rom.* xi. 22.

says the Apostle, the justice which the Lord has exercised towards so many whom he has punished, and condemned to hell; *towards them, indeed, that are fallen, the severity.* Consider the mercy with which he has treated you; *but towards thee the goodness of God.* You must abandon sin; if you change your ways, avoid the occasions of sin, frequent the sacraments, and continue to lead a Christian life, the Lord will remit your punishment, *if you abide in goodness*; if not, you shall perish, *otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.* God has already borne with you too long, he can bear with you no longer. God is merciful, but he is just withal; he deals mercifully with those who fear him; he cannot act thus towards the obstinate.

Such a person laments when he sees himself punished, and says, why has God deprived me of my health? why has he taken from me this child, or this parent? *Ah, sinner! what have you said,* exclaims Jeremias, *your sins have withholden good things from you.*<sup>1</sup> It was not the desire of God to deprive you of any blessing, of any gain, of your son, or your parent; it would have been the wish of God to make you happy in all things, but your sins have not allowed him. In the book of Job we read these words: *Is it a great matter that God should comfort thee? but thy wicked words hinder this.*<sup>2</sup> The Lord would fain console you, but your blasphemy, your murmuring, your obscene words, spoken to the scandal of so many, have prevented him. It is not God, but accursed sin, that renders us miserable and unhappy. *Sin maketh nations miserable.*<sup>3</sup> We are wrong, says Salvian, in complaining of God when he deals hardly with us. Oh! how much more hardly do we deal with him, repaying

<sup>1</sup> "Peccata vestra prohibuerunt bonum a vobis."—*Jer.* v. 25.

<sup>2</sup> "Numquid grande est, ut consoletur te Deus? Sed verba tua prava prohibent."—*Job*, xv. 11.

<sup>3</sup> "Miseros autem facit populos peccatum."—*Prov.* xiv. 34.

with ingratitude the favors which he has bestowed on us!<sup>1</sup>

Sinners imagine that sin procures them happiness; but it is sin which makes them miserable, and afflicted in every respect. *Because thou didst not serve the Lord thy God, saith the Lord, in joy and gladness of heart, . . . thou shalt serve thy enemy, whom the Lord will send upon thee, in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things, . . . till He consume thee.*<sup>2</sup> Because thou hast not wished to serve thy God in the peace which all those taste who serve him, thou shalt serve thy enemy in poverty and affliction, until he shall have finished by making thee lose both soul and body. David says that the sinner by his crimes digs himself the pit into which he falls. *He is fallen into the hole he made.*<sup>3</sup> Recollect the prodigal son: he, in order to live without restraint, and banquet as he pleased, left his father; but then, for having left his father, he is reduced to tend swine; reduced to such a degree of misery, that of the vile food with which the swine are filled, he has not wherewithal to fill himself: *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.*<sup>4</sup> St. Bernardine of Sienna,<sup>5</sup> relates that a certain impious son dragged his father along the ground. What happened to him afterwards? One day he was himself dragged by his own son in like manner, when, arriving at a certain place, he exclaimed, "No more—stop here, no more—thus far did I drag my own father—stop." Baronius<sup>6</sup> mentions a

<sup>1</sup> "Quid querimur quod dure agat nobiscum Deus? Multo nos cum Deo durius agimus."—*De Gub. D.* l. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Eo quod non servieris Domino Deo tuo in gaudio, . . . servies inimico tuo . . . in fame, et siti, et nuditate, et omni penuria, . . . donec te conterat."—*Deut.* xxviii. 47.

<sup>3</sup> "Incidit in foveam quam fecit."—*Ps.* vii. 16.

<sup>4</sup> "Cupiebat implere ventrem suum de siliquis quas porci manducabant, et nemo illi dabat."—*Luke*, xv. 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Seraph. quadr.* s. 12, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ann.* 33, n. 6.



circumstance of a like nature, concerning the daughter of Herodias, who caused John the Baptist to be beheaded. He tells of her, that one day as she was crossing a frozen river, the ice broke under her, and she remained with her head only above the aperture. By dint of her struggles to save herself from death, she had her head severed from her body, and thus died. Oh, how just is not God, when the time of vengeance arrives! he causes the sinner to be caught, and strangled in the net which his own hands have made. *The Lord shall be known when He executeth judgments, the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands.*<sup>1</sup>

Let us tremble, my brethren, when we see others punished, knowing as we do, that we ourselves have deserved the same punishments. When the tower of Siloe fell upon eighteen persons and killed them, the Lord said to many who were present: *Think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwelt in Jerusalem.*<sup>2</sup> Do you think that these wretches alone were in debt to God's justice on account of their sins? You are yet debtors to it; and if you do not penance, you shall be punished as well as they: *Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.*<sup>3</sup> O, how many unfortunate men damn themselves by false hope in the divine mercy? Yes, God is merciful, and therefore assists and protects them who hope in his mercy: *He is the protector of all that trust in Him.*<sup>4</sup> But he assists and protects those only who hope in him, with the intention of changing their lives, not those whose hope is accompanied by a perverse intention of continuing to offend him. The hope of the

<sup>1</sup> "Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens: in operibus manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator."—*Ps.* ix. 17.

<sup>2</sup> "Putatis quia et ipsi debitores fuerint præter omnes homines habitantes in Jerusalem?"—*Luke*, xiii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> "Si pœnitentiam non egeritis, omnes similiter peribitis."

<sup>4</sup> "Protector est omnium sperantium in se."—*Ps.* xvii. 31.



latter is not acceptable to God, he abominates and punishes it: *Their hope the abomination of the soul.*<sup>1</sup> Poor sinners, their greatest misery is, that they are lost, and do not know their state. They jest, and they laugh, and they despise the threats of God, as if God had assured them that he should not punish them. "Whence," exclaims St. Bernard, "this accursed security?"<sup>2</sup> Whence, O blind that you are, whence this accursed security? accursed, because it is this security which brings you to hell. *I will come to them that are at rest, and dwell securely.*<sup>3</sup> The Lord is patient, but when the hour of chastisement arrives, then will he justly condemn to hell those wretches who continue in sin, and live in peace, as if there were no hell for them.

Let sin be no more for us, my brethren; let us be converted if we wish to escape the scourge which hangs over us. If we do not cease from sin, God will be obliged to punish us: *For evil-doers shall be cut off.*<sup>4</sup> The obstinate are not only finally shut out from Paradise, but hurried off the earth, lest their example should draw others into hell. And let us reflect that these temporal scourges are nothing in comparison with those eternal chastisements, hope of relief from which there is none. Give ear, O sinner! my brother, give ear! *For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.*<sup>5</sup> The author of the *Imperfect Work*, in his comment upon this passage, says: "It is said that the axe is laid, not to the branches, but to the root, so that it will be irreparably exterminated."<sup>6</sup> He says that when the branches are lopped, the tree

<sup>1</sup> "Spes illorum abominatio."—*Job*, xi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "Et unde hæc securitas maledicta?"—*De Divers.* s. 28.

<sup>3</sup> "Veniam ad quiescentes, habitantesque secure."—*Ezech.* xxviii. 11.

<sup>4</sup> "Qui malignantur, exterminabuntur."—*Psa.* xxvi. 9.

<sup>5</sup> "Jam enim securis ad radicem arborum posita est."—*Luke*, iii. 9.

<sup>6</sup> "Non ad ramos posita dicitur, sed ad radicem, ut irreparabiliter exterminetur."—*Homil.* 3.

continues still to live; but when the tree is felled from the root, it then dies, and is cast into the fire. The Lord stands with the scourge in his hand, and you still continue in disgrace with him. *The axe is laid to the root.* Tremble lest God should make you die in your sins, for if you die thus, you shall be cast into the fire of hell, where your ruin shall be hopeless for eternity.

But, you will say, I have committed many sins during the past, and the Lord has borne with me. I may, therefore, hope that he will deal mercifully with me for the future. God says, do not speak so: *Say not I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder.*<sup>1</sup> Do not say so, for God bears with you now, but he will not always bear with you. He endures to a certain extent, and then pays off all. *Now, therefore, stand up, that I may plead in judgment against you concerning all the kindness of the Lord,*<sup>2</sup> said Samuel to the Hebrews. Oh how powerfully does not the abuse of the divine mercies assist in procuring the damnation of the ungrateful! *Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.*<sup>3</sup> In the end the herd of those who will not be converted shall be victims of divine justice, and the Lord will condemn them to eternal death, on *the day of slaughter*, when the day of his vengeance shall have arrived (and we have reason always to be in dread, as long as we are not resolved to abandon sin, lest that day should be already near). *God is not mocked; for what things a man shall sow, these also shall he reap.*<sup>4</sup> Sinners expect to mock God by con-

<sup>1</sup> "Ne dixeris: Peccavi, et quid mihi accidit triste? Altissimus enim est patiens redditor."—*Eccles.* v. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Judicio contendam adversum vos coram Domino, de omnibus misericordiis Domini."—*1 Kings*, xii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Congrega eos quasi gregem ad victimam, et sanctifica eos in die occisionis!"—*Jer.* xii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Deus non irridetur, quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet."—*Gal.* vi. 7.

fessing at Easter, or two or three times a year, and then returning to their vomit, and hoping after that to obtain salvation. "He is a mocker, not a penitent," says St. Isidor, "who continues to do that for which he is penitent;" but *God is not mocked.*

What salvation?—what salvation do you expect? *For what things a man shall sow, them also shall he reap.*<sup>1</sup> What things do you sow? blasphemy, revenge, theft, impurity: what then do you hope for? He who sows in sin can hope to reap nothing but chastisements and hell. *For he that soweth in his flesh, continues the same apostle, of his flesh also shall reap corruption.*<sup>2</sup> Continue, impure wretch! continue to live sunk in the mire of your impurity, your impurities will be converted into pitch within your bowels. "A day shall come," says St. Peter Damian, "a day shall come, or rather a night, when your lust shall be turned into pitch to feed an eternal flame within your bowels."<sup>3</sup>

St. John Chrysostom says that some pretend not to see;<sup>4</sup> they see the chastisements, and pretend not to see them. And then others, St. Ambrose says, have no fear of punishment until they see it has overtaken them.<sup>5</sup> To all these it will happen as it did to mankind at the time of the deluge. The patriarch Noah foretold and announced to them the punishments which God had prepared for their sins; but the sinners would not believe him, and notwithstanding that the ark was building before their eyes, they did not change their lives, but went on sinning until the punishment was upon them, until they were smothered in the deluge.

<sup>1</sup> "Quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet."

<sup>2</sup> "Qui seminat in carne sua, de carne et metet corruptionem."

<sup>3</sup> "Veniet dies, imo nox, quando libido tua vertetur in picem, qua se perpetuus ignis in tuis visceribus nutriat!"—*De Celib. sac.* c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Fingunt non videre."

<sup>5</sup> "Nihil timent, quia nihil vident."

## II. Sinners will not Believe in Threats. 339

*And they knew not till the flood came and took them all away.*<sup>1</sup> The same happened to the great Babylon, in the Apocalypse, who said: *I sit a queen, and I shall not see grief.*<sup>2</sup> She persevered in her impurity in the hope of not being punished, but the chastisement at length came as had been predicted! *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine, and she shall be burnt with fire.*<sup>3</sup>

Brother, who knows whether this is not the last call which God may give you? Our Lord says that a certain owner of a vineyard, finding a fig-tree for the third year without fruit, said: *Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none; cut it down therefore, why cumbereth it the ground?*<sup>4</sup> Then the dresser of the vine replied: *Lord, let it alone this year also . . . and if happily it bear fruit—but if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down.*<sup>5</sup> Let us enter into ourselves, my brethren; for years has God been visiting our souls, and has found no other fruit therein than thorns and thistles, that is to say, sins. Hear how the divine justice exclaims, *Cut it down therefore, why cumbereth it the earth?* but mercy pleads, *Let it alone this year also.* Have courage, let us give it one trial more; let us see whether it will not be converted at this other call. But tremble lest the same mercy may not have granted to justice that if you do not now amend, your life shall be cut off, and your soul condemned to hell. Tremble, brother, and take measures that the mouth of the pit do not

<sup>1</sup> "Et non cognoverunt, donec venit diluvium, et tulit omnes."—*Matt.* xxiv. 39.

<sup>2</sup> "Sedeo regina, . . . et luctum non videbo."—*Apoc.* xviii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Ideo in una die venient plagæ ejus, . . . et igne comburetur."

<sup>4</sup> "Ecce anni tres sunt, ex quo venio quærens fructum in filcunea hac, et non invenio; succide ergo illam: ut quid etiam terram occupat?"—*Luke*, xiii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> "Dimitte illam et hoc anno, . . . siquidem fecerit fructum; sin autem, in futurum succides eam."

close over you. Such was the prayer of David: *Let not the deep swallow me up; and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*<sup>1</sup> It is that which sin effects, causing the mouth of the pit, that is, the state of damnation into which the sinner has fallen, to close over him by degrees. As long as that pit is not entirely closed, there is some hope of escape; but if it once shut, what further hope remains for you? By the closing of the pit, I mean the sinner's being shut out from every glimmer of grace, and stopping at nothing; that being the accomplishment of what the wise man has said: *The wicked man, when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth.*<sup>2</sup> He despises the laws of God, admonitions, sermons, excommunications, threats—he despises hell itself; so that persons have been known to say, numbers go to hell, and I amongst the rest. Can the man who speaks so be saved? He can be saved, but it is morally impossible he should. Brother, what do you say? Perhaps you have yourself come to the contempt of the chastisements of God. What do you say? Well, and if you had, what should you do? Should you despair? No; you know what you have to do. Have recourse to the Mother of God. Although you should be in despair, and abandoned by God, Blossius says, that Mary is the hope of the despairing, and the aid of the abandoned.<sup>3</sup> St. Bernard says the same thing when he exclaims, The despairing man who hopes in thee ceases to be desperate.<sup>4</sup> But if God wishes that I should be lost, what hope can there be for me? But, says God, no, my son, I do not wish to see you lost: *I desire not the death of the wicked.*<sup>5</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> “Neque absorbeat me profundum, neque urgeat super me puteus os suum.”—*Ps.* lxxviii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> “Impius, cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit.”—*Prov.* xviii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> “Spes desperantium, Adjutrix destitutorum.”

<sup>4</sup> “In te speret, qui desperat.”—*Med. in Salve Reg.*

<sup>5</sup> “Nolo mortem impii.”—*Ezech.* xxxiii. 11.

## II. Sinners will not Believe in Threats. 341

what then do you desire, O Lord? I wish him to be converted, and recover the life of my grace: *But that the wicked turn from his way and live.*<sup>1</sup> Haste then, brother, fling yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ; behold him! see how he stands with his arms open to embrace you, etc. (Here an act of contrition is made.)

•                   <sup>1</sup> “Sed ut convertatur, . . . et vivat.” —*Ibid.*

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## THIRD DISCOURSE.

God is Merciful for a Season, and then Chastises.

“Indulsisti genti, Domine, indulsisti genti; numquid glorificatus es?”

“Thou hast been favorable to the nation, O Lord, thou hast been favorable to the nation; hast thou been glorified?”—*Isa.* xxvi. 15.

LORD, Thou hast often pardoned this people; Thou hast threatened it with destruction by earthquake, by pestilence, in neighboring countries; by the infirmities and death of its own citizens; but Thou hast afterwards taken pity on them: *Thou hast been favorable to the nation, O Lord, Thou hast been favorable to the nation; hast Thou been glorified?*<sup>1</sup> Thou hast pardoned us, Thou hast dealt mercifully with us; what hast Thou received in return? Have Thy people abandoned their sins? have they changed their lives? No, they have gone on from bad to worse; that momentary fear passed, they have begun afresh to offend Thee and provoke Thy wrath.—But, my brethren, perhaps you imagine that God will always wait, always pardon, and never punish? No; GOD IS MERCIFUL FOR A SEASON; THEN HE PUNISHES; this is the subject of this day's discourse.

We must persuade ourselves that God cannot do otherwise than hate sin; he is holiness itself, and therefore cannot but hate that monster, his enemy, whose malice is altogether opposed to the perfection of God. And if God hate sin, he must necessarily hate the sinner who makes league with sin. *But to God the wicked*

<sup>1</sup> “Indulsisti genti, Domine, indulsisti genti; numquid glorificatus es?”



and his wickedness are hateful alike.<sup>1</sup> O God, with what an expression of grief and with what reason do you not complain of those who despise you, to take part with your enemy. *Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken; I have brought up children, and exalted them; but they have despised Me.*<sup>2</sup> Hear, O ye heavens, he says, and give ear, O earth, witness the ingratitude with which I am treated by men. I have brought them up, and exalted them as my children, and they have repaid me with contempt and outrage. *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known Me, . . . they are gone away backwards.*<sup>3</sup> The beast of the field, the ox and the ass, continues the Lord, know their master, and are grateful to him, but my children have not known me, and have turned their back upon me. But how is this? "Services are remembered even by beasts,"<sup>4</sup> says Seneca. The very brutes are grateful to their benefactors; see that dog how he serves and obeys, and is faithful to his master, who feeds him; even the wild beasts, the tiger and the lion are grateful to those who feed them. And God, my brethren, who till now has provided us with everything, who has given us food and raiment: What more? who has kept us in existence up to the moment when we offended him,—how have we treated him?

How do we purpose to act in future? Do we not think to live on as we have been living? Do we not perhaps think that there is no punishment, no hell for us? But hearken and know that as the Lord cannot

<sup>1</sup> "Similiter autem odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus."—*Wisd.* xiv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Audi, cœli, et auribus percipe, terra. . . Filios enutrivisti; ipsi autem spreverunt me."—*Is.* i. 2.

<sup>3</sup> "Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus præsepe domini sui; Israel autem me non cognovit. . . Abalienati sunt retrorsum."—*Ibid.* 3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> "Officia etiam feræ sentiunt."—*De Benef.* l. 1, c. 3.

but hate sin, because he is holy, so he cannot but chastise it when the sinner is obstinate, because he is just.

When he does chastise, it is not to please himself, but because we drive him to it. The wise man says that God did not create hell, through a desire of condemning man thereto, and that he does not rejoice in their damnation, because he does not wish to see his creatures perish: *For God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living; for He created all things that they might be.*<sup>1</sup> No gardener plants a tree in order to cut it down and burn it. It was not God's desire to see us miserable and in torment; and therefore, says St. John Chrysostom, he waits so long before he takes vengeance of the sinner.<sup>2</sup> He waits for our conversion, that he may then be able to use his mercy in our regard. *Therefore the Lord waiteth, that He may have mercy on you.*<sup>3</sup> Our God, says the same St. John Chrysostom, is in haste to save, and slow to condemn.<sup>4</sup> When there is question of pardon, no sooner has the sinner repented than he is forgiven by God. Scarcely had David said *Peccavi, Domine*, when he was informed by the prophet that his pardon was already granted: *The Lord also hath taken away thy sin.*<sup>5</sup> Yes, because "we do not desire pardon so anxiously as he desires to pardon us," says the same holy Doctor.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, when there is question of punishment, he waits, he admonishes, he sends us warning of it beforehand: *For the Lord God doth*

<sup>1</sup> "Deus mortem non fecit, nec lætatur in perditione vivorum; creavit enim ut essent omnia."—*Wisd.* i. 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Ad repescendam de peccantibus ultionem, consuevit Deus moras nectere."

<sup>3</sup> "Propterea expectat Dominus, ut misereatur vestri."—*Is.* xxx. 18.

<sup>4</sup> "Ad salutem velox, tardus ad demolitionem."—*De Penit. hom.* 5.

<sup>5</sup> "Dominus quoque transtulit peccatum tuum."—*2 Kings*, xii. 13.

<sup>6</sup> "Non ita tua condonari peccata cupis, quam tibi remissa esse expetit."

nothing without revealing His secret to His servants, the prophets.<sup>1</sup>

But when, at length, God sees that we are willing to yield neither to benefits, nor threats, nor admonitions, and that we will not amend, then he is forced by our own selves to punish us, and while punishing us, he will place before our eyes the great mercies he before extended to us: *Thou thoughtest unjustly that I shall be like to thee ; but I will reprove thee, and set before thy face.*<sup>2</sup> He will then say to the sinner, think you, O sinner, that I had forgotten, as you had done, the outrages you put upon me, and the graces I dispensed to you? St. Augustine says that God does not hate but loves us, and that he only hates our sins.<sup>3</sup> He is not wroth with men, says St. Jerome, but with their sins.<sup>4</sup> The saint says, that by his nature God is inclined to benefit us, and that it is we ourselves who oblige him to chastise us, and assume the appearance of severity, which he has not of himself.<sup>5</sup> It is this which David means to express, when he says that the Lord in chastising is like a drunken man who strikes in his sleep: *And the Lord was awaked as one out of sleep, and He smote His enemies.*<sup>6</sup> Theodoret adds that, as drunkenness is not natural to man, so chastisement does not naturally belong to God; it is we who force him into that wrath which is not his by nature.<sup>7</sup> St. Jerome, reflecting on those words which

<sup>1</sup> "Non facit Dominus Deus verbum, nisi revelaverit secretum suum." — *Amos*. iii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Existimasti, inique, quod ero tui similis; arguam te, et statuum contra faciem tuam." — *Ps.* xlix. 20.

<sup>3</sup> "Odit Deus, et amat; odit tua, amat te." — *Serm.* 142, *E. B.*

<sup>4</sup> "Neque Deus hominibus, sed vitiis irascitur." — *In Dom.* c. 4.

<sup>5</sup> "Deus, qui natura benignus est, vestris peccatis cogetur personam, quam non habet, crudelitatis assumere."

<sup>6</sup> "Excitatus est . . . tamquam potens crapulatus a vino, et percussit inimicos suos." — *Ps.* lxxvii. 65.

<sup>7</sup> "Thesaurizas tibi iram, quam Deus naturaliter non habet." — *In Ezech.* c. 16.

Jesus Christ on the day of general judgment will address to the reprobate, *Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels*,<sup>1</sup> inquires, who has prepared this fire for sinners? God perhaps. No, because God never created souls for heil, as the impious Luther taught: this fire has been kindled for sinners by their own sins.<sup>2</sup> He who sows in sin, shall reap chastisement. He that soweth iniquity, shall reap evil.<sup>3</sup> When the soul commits sin, it voluntarily obliges itself to pay the penalty thereof, and thus condemns itself to the pains of hell. *For you have said, we have entered into a league with death, and we have made a covenant with hell*.<sup>4</sup> Hence St. Ambrose well says, that God has not condemned any one, but that each one is the author of his own chastisement.<sup>5</sup> And the Holy Ghost says, that the sinner shall be consumed by the hatred which he bears himself; *with the rod of his anger he shall be consumed*.<sup>6</sup> He, says Salvian, who offends God has no more cruel enemy than himself, since he himself has caused the torments which he suffers.<sup>7</sup> God, he continues, does not wish to see us in affliction, but it is we who draw down sufferings upon ourselves, and by our sins enkindle the flames in which we are to burn.<sup>8</sup> God punishes us, because we oblige him to punish us.

<sup>1</sup> "Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem æternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus."—*Matth.* xv. 41.

<sup>2</sup> "Comparaverunt delictis suis."

<sup>3</sup> "Qui seminat iniquitatem, metet mala."—*Prov.* xxii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> "Dixistis enim: Percussimus fœdus cum morte, et cum inferno fecimus pactum."—*Is.* xxviii. 15.

<sup>5</sup> "Nullum prius ipse condemnat, sed unusquisque sibi auctor est pœnæ."—*In Luc.* c. 8.

<sup>6</sup> "Et virga iræ suæ consummabitur."—*Prov.* xxii. 8.

<sup>7</sup> "Ipse sibi parat peccator, quod patitur; nihil itaque est in nos crudelius nobis."

<sup>8</sup> "Nos nos, etiam Deo nolente, cruciamus; nos cœlestis iræ ignem accendimus, et excitamus incendia quibus ardeamus."—*De Gub. Dei*, l. 8.

### III. God, at first Merciful, Chastises. 347

But I know, you say, the mercies of God are great: no matter how manifold my sins, I have in view a change of life by and by, and God will have mercy upon me. But no, God desires you not to speak thus. *And say not the mercy of the Lord is great, He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins.*<sup>1</sup> And why has the Lord forbidden you to say so? The reason is this, *for mercy and wrath quickly come from Him.*<sup>2</sup> Yes, it is true, God has patience, God waits for some sinners; I say some, for there are some whom God does not wait for at all: how many has he not sent to hell immediately after the first transgression? Others he does wait for, but he will not always wait for them; he spares them for a certain time and then punishes. *The Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgment shall come, He may punish them in the fulness of their sins.*<sup>3</sup> Mark well, *when the day of judgment shall come*: when the day of vengeance shall arrive, *in the fulness of their sins*. When the measure of sins which God has determined to pardon is filled up, he will punish. Then the Lord will have no mercy, and will chastise unremittingly.

The city of Jericho did not fall during the first circuit made by the Ark, it did not fall at the fifth, or at the sixth, but it fell at last at the seventh.<sup>4</sup> And thus it will happen with thee, says St. Augustine, "at the seventh circuit made by the Ark the city of vanity will fall."<sup>5</sup> God has pardoned you your first sin, your tenth, your seventieth, perhaps your thousandth; he has often called you, now calls you again; tremble lest this should be

<sup>1</sup> "Ne dicas: Miseratio Domini magna est; multitudinis peccatorum meorum miserebitur."—*Ecclus.* v. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Misericordia enim et ira ab illo cito proximant."—*Ibid.* 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Dominus patienter expectat, ut . . . cum judicii dies advenerit, in plenitudine peccatorum puniat."—*2 Mach.* vi. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Jos.* vi. 20.

<sup>5</sup> "Veniet septimus arcæ circuitus, et civitas vanitatis corruet."

the last circuit taken by the ark, that is, the last call, after which, if you do not change your life, it will be over with you. *For the earth, says the Apostle, that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it . . . and bringeth forth thorns and briars is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burned.*<sup>1</sup> That soul, he says, which has often received the waters of divine light and grace, and instead of bearing fruit produces nought but the thorns of sin, is nigh unto a curse, and its end will be to burn eternally in hell fire. In a word, when the period comes, God punishes.

And let us know, that when God wishes to punish, he is able and knows how to do it. *The daughter of Sion shall be left . . . as a city that is laid waste.*<sup>2</sup> How many cities do we not know to have been destroyed and levelled with the ground, by reason of the sins of the inhabitants, whom God could no longer bear with! One day, Jesus Christ being within sight of the city of Jerusalem, gazed upon it, and thinking of the ruin which her crimes were to draw down upon her, our Redeemer, who is so full of compassion for our miseries, began to weep: *Seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.*<sup>3</sup> Poor city, there shall not be left in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not been willing to know the grace which I gave thee in visiting thee with so many benefits, and bestowing upon thee so many tokens of my love; whilst thou hast ungratefully despised me, and driven me away. *Jerusalem,*

<sup>1</sup> "Terra enim sæpe venientem super se bibens imbrem, . . . proferens autem spinas ac tribulos, reprobata est, et maledicto proxima; cujus consummatio in combustionem."—*Heb.* vi. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Derelinquetur filia Sion . . . sicut civitas quæ vastatur."—*Is.* i. 8.

<sup>3</sup> "Videns civitatem, flevit super illam, dicens: . . . Non relinquent in te lapidem super lapidem, eo quod non cognoveris tempus visitationis tuæ."—*Luke,* xix. 41.



*Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children . . . and thou wouldst not, behold your house shall be left to you desolate.*<sup>1</sup> Sinful brother, who knows whether God does not at this moment look upon your soul and weep? Perhaps he sees that you will not turn to account this visit which he now pays you, this summons which he gives you to change your life. *How often would I . . . and thou wouldst not.* How often, says the Lord, have I wished to draw you to me by the lights which I have given you? How often have I called you and you would not hear me? You have been deaf to me and fled from me. *Behold your house shall be left to you desolate.* Behold I am already on the point of abandoning you, and if I abandon you, your ruin will be inevitable, irreparable.

*We would have cured Babylon, but she is not humbled; let us forsake her.*<sup>2</sup> The physician when he sees that the patient will not adopt his remedies, which he himself carries to him with so much kindness, and which the other flings out of the window—what does he do at length? He turns his back upon him and abandons him. My brethren, by how many remedies, by how many inspirations, by how many calls, has not God endeavored to avert damnation from you? What more can he do? If you damn yourself, can you complain of God who has called you in so many different ways? God calls you by the voice of his minister, he calls you by the voice that is within you, he calls you by his favors, he calls you lastly by temporal punishments; in order that you may learn to dread those which are eternal. St. Bernardine of Sienna says that for certain sins, more especially those which are scandalous, there is no more effectual method of doing away with them than by

<sup>1</sup> "Quoties volui congregare filios tuos, . . . et noluisti! Ecce relinquetur vobis domus vestra deserta."—*Luke*, xiii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> "Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata; derelinquamus eam."  
—*Jer.* li. 9.



temporal punishments.<sup>1</sup> But when the Lord sees that his favors serve only to make the sinner more insolent in his evil life, when he sees that his threats are disregarded, when he perceives, in a word, that he speaks and is not heard; then he abandons the sinner, and chastises him with eternal death. Therefore does he say, *Because I called and you refused . . . and have neglected my reprehensions, I will also laugh in your destruction and will mock when that shall come which you feared.*<sup>2</sup> You, says God, have laughed at my words, my threats, and my chastisements, your last chastisement shall come, and then I will laugh at ye. *And it (the rod) was turned into a serpent.*<sup>3</sup> St. Bruno, in his commentary upon this passage, says, “the rod is turned into a serpent when they will not amend.”<sup>4</sup> The eternal will succeed the temporal punishment.

Oh how well does not God know how to chastise, and so to order it that from the instruments and motives of sin should be drawn the chastisement! *That they might know that by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented.*<sup>5</sup> The Jews put Jesus Christ to death for fear the Romans should seize on their possessions. *If we let Him alone, said they, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation.*<sup>6</sup> But the same sin of putting Jesus Christ to death was the cause of their being shortly after despoiled of everything by the Romans. “They feared they should lose temporal possessions,” says St. Augustine, “and thought not of

<sup>1</sup> “Pro talibus admonendis, nullum reperitur remedium nisi Dei flagellum.”—T. II., s. 18, a. 2, c. 2.

<sup>2</sup> “Quia vocavi, et renuistis, . . . et increpationes meas neglexistis, ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo.”—*Prov.* i. 24.

<sup>3</sup> “Virga . . . versa est in colubrum.”—*Exod.* iv. 3.

<sup>4</sup> “Virga illis vertitur in draconem, qui sæpius correcti, se emendare volunt.”

<sup>5</sup> “Per quæ peccat quis, per hæc et torquetur.”—*Wisd.* xi. 17.

<sup>6</sup> “Venient Romani, et tollent nostrum locum.”—*John*, xi. 48.

eternal life, and so lost both.”<sup>1</sup> In trying to save their possessions, they lost their souls; the punishment came, and they lost both. Thus it falls out with many; they lose their souls for the things of earth; but God often condemns them to beggary in this world, and reprobation in the next.

My brethren, provoke no longer the anger of your God, know that in proportion to the multitude of his mercies towards you, in proportion to the length of time he has borne with you, your punishment will be greater if you do not amend. “The Lord makes up for the slowness of his chastisement,” says St. Gregory, “by its grievousness when it does come.”<sup>2</sup> *Woe to thee, Corozain*, thus does the Lord speak to a soul that has abused his favors, *Woe to thee Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty things which have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*<sup>3</sup> Yes, my brethren, if the graces which have been given to you had been given to a Turk or an Indian, *if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works which have been wrought in you*, he would have now been a saint, or at least have done great penance for his sins; and have you become a saint? have you at least done penance for your many mortal sins, for your many evil thoughts, words, and scandals? see you not how God is angry with you? how he stands with his scourge in his hand? Do you see not death hanging over you.

And what are we to do? you inquire: are we to despair? No, God does not wish us to despair. *Let us*

<sup>1</sup> “Temporalia perdere timuerunt, et vitam æternam non cogitarunt; ac sic utrumque amiserunt.”—*In Jo.* tr. 49, n. 26.

<sup>2</sup> “Tardam vindictam compensat Dominus gravitate pœnarum.”

<sup>3</sup> “Væ tibi, Corozain! væ tibi, Bethsaida! quia, si in Tyro et Sidone factæ fuissent virtutes quæ factæ sunt in vobis, olim in cilicio et cinere sedentes pœniterent.”—*Luke*, x. 13.

go with confidence to the throne of grace: that is what we are to do, as St. Paul exhorts us, in order *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.*<sup>1</sup> Let us at once go to the throne of grace that we may receive the pardon of our sins, and the remission of the punishment which overhangs us. By *seasonable aid* the Apostle means to convey that the aid which God may be willing to lend us to-day he may deny to-morrow. At once, then, to the throne of grace.

But what is the throne of grace? 'Jesus Christ, my brethren, is the throne of grace. *And He is the propitiation for our sins.*'<sup>2</sup> Jesus it is who by the merit of his blood can obtain pardon for us, but we must apply immediately. The Redeemer, during his preaching in Juda, cured the sick, and dispensed other favors as he went along; whoever was on the spot to ask a favor of him, obtained it; but whoever was negligent, and allowed him to pass without a request, remained as he was. *Who went about doing good.*<sup>3</sup> It was this caused St. Augustine to say: "I fear Jesus passing by;"<sup>4</sup> by which he meant to express that when the Lord offers us his grace, we must immediately correspond, doing our utmost to obtain it, that otherwise he will pass on and leave us without it. *To-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.*<sup>5</sup> To-day God calls you; give yourself to God to-day; if you wait for to-morrow, intending to give yourself to him then, perhaps he will have ceased to call, and you will remain deserted.

Mary, the Queen and the mother of mercies, is also a

<sup>1</sup> "Adeamus ergo cum fiducia ad thronum gratiæ, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno."—*Heb.* iv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> "Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris."—*1 John*, ii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> "Pertransiit benefaciendo."—*Acts*, x. 38.

<sup>4</sup> "Timeo Jesum transeuntem."—*Serm.* 88, *E. B.*

<sup>5</sup> "Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra."—*Ps.* xciv. 8.

throne of grace, as St. Antoninus says. Hence, if you see that God is angry with you, St. Bonaventure exhorts you to have recourse to the hope of sinners.<sup>1</sup> "Go, have recourse to the hope of sinners: Mary is the hope of sinners, Mary who is called *the mother of holy hope*.<sup>2</sup> But we must take notice that holy hope is the hope of that sinner who repents him of his evil ways, and determines upon a change of life; but if any one pursues an evil course in the hope that Mary will succor and save him, such a hope is false, such a hope is bad and rash. Let us then repent of our sins, resolve to amend, and then have recourse to Mary with a confidence that she will assist and save us. (Act of contrition.)

<sup>1</sup> "Si contra te Dominum videris indignatum, ad spem peccatorum confugias."—*Stim. div. am.* p. 3, c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Mater . . . sanctæ spei."—*Eccclus.* xxiv. 24.

## FOURTH DISCOURSE.

## The Four Principal Gates of Hell.

“Defixæ sunt in terra portæ ejus.”

“Her gates are sunk into the ground.”—*Lam.* ii. 9.

*Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat.*<sup>1</sup> Hell has then different gates, but these gates stand on our earth. *Her gates are sunk into the ground.*<sup>2</sup> These are the vices by which men offend God, and draw down upon themselves chastisements and eternal death. Amongst the other vices, there are four which send most souls to hell, and on this earth bring upon men the scourges of God; and these four are, HATRED, BLASPHEMY, THEFT, and IMPURITY. Behold, the four gates by which the greater number of souls enter hell; and it is of these four that I mean to speak to-day, in order that you may amend and cure yourselves of these four vices, otherwise God will cure you of them, but by your own destruction.

## I. HATRED.

The first gate of hell is hatred. As paradise is the kingdom of love, so hell is the kingdom of hatred. Father, says such a person, I am grateful to and love my friends, but I cannot endure him who does me an injury. Now, brother, you must know that the barbarians, the Turks and Indians say and do all this: *Do not also the heathens this?*<sup>3</sup> says the Lord. To wish

<sup>1</sup> “Spatiosa via est quæ ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt qui intrans per eam.”—*Matth.* vii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> “Defixæ sunt in terra portæ ejus.”

<sup>3</sup> “Nonne et ethnici hoc faciunt?”—*Matth.* v. 47.

well to him who serves you is a natural thing; it is done not only by the infidel, but even by the brutes and wild beasts. *But I say to you.*<sup>1</sup> Hear what I say to you says Jesus Christ; hear my law, which is a law of love: *Love your enemies.*<sup>2</sup> I wish, that you, my disciples, should love even your enemies. *Do good to them that hate you;*<sup>3</sup> you must do good to them that wish you ill, *and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you;*<sup>4</sup> if you can do nothing else, you must pray for them who persecute you, and then you shall be the children of God your father: *that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.*<sup>5</sup> St. Augustine then is right in saying that it is by love alone a child of God is known from a child of the devil.<sup>6</sup> Thus have the saints always done; they have loved their enemies. A certain woman had traduced the honor of St. Catharine of Sienna, and the saint attended this same woman in her sickness, and ministered to her as a servant. St. Acaius sold his garment to succor one who had taken away his character. St. Ambrose gave to an assassin, who had attempted his life, a daily allowance, in order that he might have wherewithal to live. Such may indeed be called the children of God. Is it a great matter, says St. Thomas of Villanova, that often when we have received an injury from any one we forgive it at the suit of a friend who pleads for him? And shall we not do the same when God commands it?

Oh, how well grounded a hope of pardon has not he who pardons the man who has offended him. He has

<sup>1</sup> "Ego autem dico vobis."

<sup>2</sup> "Diligite inimicos vestros."

<sup>3</sup> "Benefacite his qui oderunt vos."

<sup>4</sup> "Et orate pro persecutoribus et calumniantibus vos."

<sup>5</sup> "Ut sitis filii Patris vestri qui in cœlis est."—*Matth.* v. 44, 45.

<sup>6</sup> "Dilectio sola discernit inter filios Dei et filios diaboli."—*In 1 Jo.*

the promise of God himself, who says, *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven.*<sup>1</sup> “By forgiving others,” says St. John Chrysostom, “you earn pardon for yourself.”<sup>2</sup> But he, on the contrary, who will have vengeance, how can he hope for pardon for his sins? Such a person, in saying the “Our Father,” condemns himself when he says: “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”<sup>3</sup> Then, when such a person wishes to take vengeance, he says to God: Lord, do not pardon me, because I will not pardon my enemies. You give judgment in your own cause, says St. John Chrysostom.<sup>4</sup> But, be assured, that you shall be judged without mercy if you show not mercy to your neighbor. *For judgment without mercy to him that hath not done judgment.*<sup>5</sup> But how, says St. Augustine, how can he who will not forgive his enemy, according to the command of God, have the face to ask pardon from God for his offences.<sup>6</sup>

If then, my brethren, you wish to have revenge, bid adieu to paradise: *Without are dogs.*<sup>7</sup> Dogs, on account of their natural fury, are taken to represent the revengeful. These dogs are shut out from paradise; they have a hell in this life; and they shall have hell in the next. “He who is at enmity with any one,” says St. John Chrysostom, “never enjoys peace: he is in everlasting trouble.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Dimittite, et dimittemini.”—*Luke*, vi. 37.

<sup>2</sup> “Remittendo aliis, veniam tibi dedisti.”

<sup>3</sup> “Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.”

<sup>4</sup> “Tu in tua causa fers sententiam.”—*In Jo. hom.* 38.

<sup>5</sup> “Judicium autem sine misericordia illi qui non fecit misericordiam.”—*James*, ii. 13.

<sup>6</sup> “Nescio qua fronte indulgentiam peccatorum obtinere poterit, qui, Deo præcipiente, inimicis suis veniam dare non acquiescit.”—*Serm.* 273, *E. B.*

<sup>7</sup> “Foris canes.”—*Apoc.* xxii. 15.

<sup>8</sup> “Qui inimicum habet, nunquam fruitur pace; perpetuo æstuat.”



But, Father, such a one has taken away my good name, which I will renounce for no one.<sup>1</sup> Such is, forsooth, the proverb, ever in the mouths of those hell-hounds who seek for revenge. He has taken away my honor, I must take his life. And is the life of a man at your disposal? God alone is master of life. *For it is Thou, O Lord, that hast the power of life and death.*<sup>2</sup> Do you wish to take vengeance of your enemy? God wishes to take vengeance of thee. Vengeance belongs to God alone. *Revenge is Mine, and I will repay them in due time.*<sup>3</sup>

But how else, you say, can my honor be repaired? Well, and in order to repair your honor, you must trample under foot the honor of God. Do you not know, says St. Paul, that when you transgress the law you dishonor God? *Thou by transgression of the law dishonorest God.*<sup>4</sup> And what honor is this of yours that you wish to repair? It is the same as the honor of a Turk, of an idolater: a Christian's honor is to obey God, and observe his law.

But other men will look down upon me; and so, for fear you should be looked down upon, you must condemn yourself to hell. But if you forgive, the good will praise you; wherefore it is, that St. John Chrysostom says: If you wish to be revenged, do good to your enemy, because then others will condemn your enemy,<sup>5</sup> and speak well of you. It is not true that he loses his honor, who, when he has been injured or insulted, says: I am a Christian, I neither can nor will be revenged. Such a person gains instead of losing honor,

<sup>1</sup> "Honorem meum nemini dabo."

<sup>2</sup> "Tu es enim, Domine, qui vitæ et mortis habes potestatem."—*Wisd.* xvi. 13.

<sup>3</sup> "Mea est ultio, et ego retribuam in tempore."—*Deut.* xxxiii. 35.

<sup>4</sup> "Per prævaricationem legis Deum inhonoras."—*Rom.* ii. 23.

<sup>5</sup> "Beneficiis eum affice, et ultus es."

and, besides, saves his soul. On the contrary, he who takes revenge will be punished by God, not only in the other life, but in this also. He is obliged to flee from the justice of men, after having taken that vengeance which will render his life henceforward miserable. What an unhappiness to live a fugitive; to be always in dread of justice; always in dread of the kindred of his victim; tormented with remorse of conscience, and condemned to hell?

And let us further know, my brethren, that revenge and the desire of revenge are alike enormous, are the same sin. Should we at any time receive an offence, what are we to do? When our passion begins to rise, we must have recourse to God, and to the most holy Mary, who will help us, and obtain strength for us to forgive. We should then endeavor to say: Lord, for the love of Thee I forgive the injury that has been done me, and do Thou in Thy mercy forgive me all the injuries I have done Thee.

## 2. BLASPHEMY.\*

Let us pass on to the second gate of hell, which is blasphemy. Some, when things go wrong with them, do not attack man, but endeavor to wreak their vengeance upon God himself by blasphemy. Know, my brethren, what manner of sin blasphemy is. A certain author says: "Every sin, compared with blasphemy, is light;"<sup>1</sup> and first of all, St. John Chrysostom says, there is nothing worse than blasphemy.<sup>2</sup> Other sins, says St. Bernard, are committed through frailty, but this only

<sup>1</sup> "Omne peccatum, comparatum blasphemix, levius est."—*In Is.* c. 18.

<sup>2</sup> "Blasphemia pejus nihil."—*In 1 Cor. hom.* 13.

through malice.<sup>1</sup> With reason, then, does St. Bernardine of Sienna call blasphemy a diabolical sin, because the blasphemer, like a demon, attacks God himself. He is worse than those who crucified Jesus Christ, because they did not know him to be God; but he who blasphemes knows him to be God, and insults him face to face. He is worse than the dogs, because dogs do not bite their masters, who feed them, but the blasphemer outrages God, who is at that very moment bestowing favors on him. What punishment, says St. Augustine, will suffice to chastise so horrid a crime?<sup>2</sup> We should not wonder, says Julius III., that the scourges of God do not cease while such a crime exists among us.<sup>3</sup>

Lorino<sup>4</sup> cites the following fact: We read in the preface to the Pragmatic Sanction in France, that King Robert, when praying for the peace of the kingdom, was answered by the crucifix that the kingdom never should have had peace if he had not eradicated blasphemy. The Lord threatens to destroy the kingdom in which this accursed vice reigns. *They have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel; . . . your land is desolate, . . . it shall be desolate.*<sup>5</sup>

Oh, if there were always found some one to do what St. John Chrysostom advises: "Strike his mouth, and sanctify thereby thy hand."<sup>6</sup> The mouth of the accursed blasphemer should be struck, and he should then be

<sup>1</sup> "Alia peccata videntur procedere partim ex fragilitate, partim ex ignorantia; sed peccatum blasphemie procedit ex propria malitia."—*Seraph. quadr.* s. 33, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Quæ supplicia sufficiunt, cum Deo fit ista tam nefaria injuria?"

<sup>3</sup> "Minime mirandum, si flagella non amoveantur."—*Bulla.* 23

<sup>4</sup> *In Levit.* xxiv. 14.

<sup>5</sup> "Blasphemaverunt Sanctum Israel; . . . terra vestra . . . desolabitur."—*Is.* i. 4.

<sup>6</sup> "Contere os ejus, percussione manum tuam sanctifica."—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 1.

stoned, as the old law commanded: *And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die: all the multitude shall stone him.*<sup>1</sup> But it would be better if that were done which St. Louis, King of France, put in force: he commanded by edict that every blasphemer should be branded on the mouth with an iron. A certain nobleman having blasphemed, many persons besought the king not to inflict that punishment upon him; but St. Louis insisted upon its infliction in every instance; and some taxing him with excessive cruelty on that account, he replied that he would suffer his own mouth to be burned sooner than allow such an outrage to be put upon God in his kingdom.

Tell me, blasphemer, of what country are you? Allow me to tell you, you belong to hell. St. Peter was known in the house of Caiphas for a Galilean by his speech. *Surely thou also art one of them*, it was said to him, *for even thy speech doth discover thee.*<sup>2</sup> What is the language of the damned?—blasphemy. *And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and wounds.*<sup>3</sup> What do you gain, my brethren, by these your blasphemies? you gain no honor by them. Blasphemers are abhorred even by their blasphemous companions. Do you gain any temporal advantage? Do you not see that this accursed vice keeps us forever in beggary? *Sin maketh nations miserable.*<sup>4</sup> Do you derive pleasure from it? What pleasure do you derive from blaspheming God? The pleasure of the damned; and that moment of madness past, what pain and bitterness does it not leave in your heart? Resolve to rid yourself of this

<sup>1</sup> "Qui blasphemaverit nomen Domini, morte moriatur: lapidibus opprimet eum omnis multitudo."—*Levit.* xxiv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> "Vere et tu ex illis es; nam et loquela tua manifestum te facit."—*Matth.* xxvi. 73.

<sup>3</sup> "Et blasphemaverunt Deum cœli, præ doloribus et vulneribus suis."—*Apoc.* xvi. 11.

<sup>4</sup> "Miseros facit populos peccatum."—*Prov.* xiv. 34.

vice in any event. Take care, if you do not abandon it now, that you will not carry it with you to death, as has happened to so many who have died with blasphemy in their mouths. But, Father, what can I do when the madness comes upon me? Good God! and are there no other means of working it off than by blasphemy? Say, cursed be my sins. Mother of God, assist me, give me patience; your passion, your anger, will pass off quickly, and you will find yourself in the grace of God after the trial. If you do not act thus, you will find yourself more afflicted and more lost than before.

## 2. THEFT.\*

Let us now pass on to the consideration of the third great gate of hell by which so large a portion of the damned enter; I mean theft. Some, so to speak, adore money as their God, and look upon it as the object of all their desires. *The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold.*<sup>1</sup> But the sentence of condemnation has already been pronounced against such: *Nor thieves . . . nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God.*<sup>2</sup> It is true that theft is not the most enormous of sins, but St. Antoninus says that it very much endangers salvation. The reason is because for the remission of other sins true repentance only is required; but repentance is not enough for the remission of theft: there must be restitution, and this is made with difficulty. A certain hermit had once the following vision: he saw Lucifer seated on a throne, and inquiring of one of his demons why he had been so long about returning. The latter replied that he had been detained by his endeavors to tempt a thief not to restore what he had stolen. Let

<sup>1</sup> "Simulacra gentium, argentum et aurum."—*Ps.* ciii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Neque fures . . . neque rapaces regnum Dei possidebunt."—*1 Cor.* vi. 10.

this fool be severely punished, said Lucifer. To what purpose have you spent this time? do you not know that he who has taken the property of another never restores it? And, in truth, so it is: the property of another becomes to him who takes it like his own blood; and the pain of suffering one's blood to be drawn for another is very difficult to endure. We learn it every day from experience: innumerable thefts take place; how much restitution do you see?

My brethren, see that you take not the property of your neighbor, and if during the past you have ever failed in this respect, make restitution as soon as possible. If you cannot at once make full restitution, do it by degrees. Know that the property of another in your possession will not only be the means of bringing you to hell, but will make you miserable even in this life. Thou hast despoiled others, says the prophet, and others shall despoil thee. *Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all that shall be left of the people shall spoil thee.*<sup>1</sup> The property of another brings with it a curse which will fall upon the entire house of the thief. *This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the earth, . . . and it shall come to the house of the thief;*<sup>2</sup> that is to say (as St. Gregory Nazianzen explains it), that the thief shall lose not only the stolen property, but his own<sup>3</sup> The goods of another are as fire and smoke to consume everything that comes in their way.

Remember well, mothers and wives, when children or husbands bring home the property of their neighbor, remember well to chide and reprove them; not to applaud their action, or even consent to it by silence.

<sup>1</sup> "Quia tu spoliasti gentes multas, spoliabunt te omnes."—*Habac.* ii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Hæc est maledictio quæ egreditur super faciem omnis terræ; . . . et veniet ad domum furis."—*Zach.* v. 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Qui opes inique possidet, etiam opes suas amittet."

Tobias hearing a lamb bleat in his house, *Take heed, said he, lest perhaps it be stolen; restore ye it to its owners.*<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine says that Tobias, because he loved God, did not wish to hear the sound of theft in his house.<sup>2</sup> Some persons take the property of their neighbor, and then are fain to quiet their consciences by alms-deeds. Christ, says St. John Chrysostom, will not be fed with the plunder of others.<sup>3</sup> The sins of this kind, committed by the great, are acts of injustice, the injuries that they inflict upon others, the taking from the poor of what is their due. These are descriptions of theft which require perfect restitution, and a restitution most difficult of all to make, and most likely to be the cause of one's damnation.

## 4. IMPURITY.

We have now, lastly, to speak of the fourth gate of hell, which is impurity, and it is by this gate that the greater number of the damned enter. Some will say that it is a trifling sin. Is it a trifling sin? It is a mortal sin. St. Antoninus writes, that such is the nauseousness of this sin; that the devils themselves cannot endure it. Moreover, the Doctors of the Church say that certain demons, who have been superior to the rest, remembering their ancient dignity, disdain tempting to so loathsome a sin. Consider then how disgusting he must be to God, who, like a dog, is ever returning to his vomit, or wallowing like a pig in the stinking mire of this accursed vice. *The dog is returned to his vomit; and the sow that was washed, to her rolling in the mire.*<sup>4</sup>

The impure say, moreover, God has compassion on

<sup>1</sup> "Videte ne forte furtivus sit; reddite eum."—*Tob.* ii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> "Nolebat sonum furti audire in domo."—*Serm.* 88, *E. B.*

<sup>3</sup> "Non vult Christus rapina nutriri."

<sup>4</sup> "Canis reversus ad suum vomitum, et sus lota in volutabro luti."  
—2 *Peter*, ii. 22.



us who are subject to this vice, because he knows that we are flesh. What do you say? God has compassion on this vice. But you must know that the most horrible chastisements with which God has ever visited the earth have been drawn down by this vice. St. Jerome says that this is the only sin of which we read that it caused God to repent him of having made man. *It repented Him that had made man; . . . for all flesh had corrupted its way.*<sup>1</sup> Wherefore it is, St. Jerome says,<sup>2</sup> that there is no sin which God punishes so rigorously, even upon earth, as this. He once sent fire from heaven upon five cities, and consumed all their inhabitants for this sin. Principally on account of this sin did God destroy mankind, with the exception of eight persons, by the deluge. It is a sin which God punishes, not only in the other life, but in this also. In confirmation of this, you have only to enter the hospitals, and see there the many poor young men, who were once strong and robust, but are now weak, squalid, full of pains, tormented with lancets and caustic, and ulcers, all through this accursed vice. *Because thou hast forgotten Me and cast Me off behind thy back, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornications.*<sup>3</sup> Because, says God, you have forgotten me and turned your back upon me, for a miserable pleasure of the flesh, I am resolved that even in this life you shall pay the forfeit of your wickedness.

You say, God has compassion upon men subject to this sin. But it is this sin that sends most men to hell. St. Remigius says, that the greater number of the damned are in hell through this vice. Father Segneri

<sup>1</sup> "Pœnituit eum quod hominem fecisset. . . . Omnis quippe caro corruerat viam suam."—*Gen.* vi. 6-12.

<sup>2</sup> "Pro nullo alio reatu, tam manifestam justitiam exercuit Deus, quam pro isto."—*Epist. Euseb. ad Dam.*

<sup>3</sup> "Quia oblita es mei, et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationes tuas."—*Ezech.* xxiii. 35.

writes, that as this vice fills the world with sinners, so it fills hell with damned souls; and before him St. Bernardine of Sienna wrote: "This sin draws the whole world, as it were, into sin."<sup>1</sup> And before him St. Bernard, St. Isidore, said, that "the human race is brought under the power of the devil more by lust than by all the other vices."<sup>2</sup> The reason is, because this vice proceeds from the natural inclination of the flesh. Hence the angelic Doctor says, that the devil does not take such complacency in securing the commission of any other sin as of this, because the person who is plunged in this infernal mire remains fast therein, and almost wholly unable to free himself more. "No one is so obstinate in sin as the impure,"<sup>3</sup> says St. Thomas of Villanova. Moreover, this vice deprives one of all light, for the impure man becomes so blind as almost wholly to forget God, says St. Laurence Justinian;<sup>4</sup> which is in accordance with what is said by the prophet Osee: *They will not set their thoughts to return to their God; for the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known God.*<sup>5</sup> The impure man knows not God; he obeys neither God nor reason, as St. Jerome says; he obeys only the sensual appetite which causes him to act the beast.<sup>6</sup>

This sin, because it flatters, makes us fall at once into

<sup>1</sup> "Hoc peccatum quasi totum mundum trahit ad supplicium."—*Serm. Extraord.* 12, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Magis per luxuriam humanum genus subditur diabolo, quam per cætera vitia."—*Sent.* l. 2, c. 39.

<sup>3</sup> "Nullus in peccato tenacior, quam libidinosus."—*De S. Ildeph.* c. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Voluptates (impudicæ) oblivionem Dei inducunt."—*Lign. vit. de Contin.* c. 4.

<sup>5</sup> "Non dabunt cogitationes suas ut revertantur ad Deum suum, quia spiritus fornicationum in medio eorum, et Dominum non cognoverunt."—*Osee*, v. 4.

<sup>6</sup> "Nec paret rationi, qui impetu ducitur."

the habit of it, a habit which some carry with them even to death. You see husbands, and decrepit old men, indulge in the same thoughts and committing the same sins that they committed in their youth. And because sins of this kind are so easily committed, they become multiplied without number. Ask of the sinner how many impure thoughts he has consented to: he will tell you he cannot remember. But, brother, if you cannot tell the number, God can; and you know that a single immodest thought is enough to send you to hell. How many immodest words have you spoken, in which you took delight yourself, and by which you scandalized your neighbor? From thoughts and words you proceed to acts, and to those innumerable impurities which those wretches roll and wallow in like swine,<sup>1</sup> without ever being satisfied, for this vice is never satisfied.

But, Father, you will say, how can I hold out against the innumerable temptations which assail me? I am weak, I am flesh. And since you are weak, why not recommend yourself to God, and to most holy Mary, who is the mother of purity? Since you are flesh, why do you throw yourself in the way of sin? Why do you not mortify your eyes? Why do you gaze upon those objects whence temptations flow? St. Aloysius never raised his eyes to look even upon his mother.

It is to be remarked, moreover, that this sin brings with it innumerable others: enmities, thefts, and, more especially, sacrilegious confessions and Communions, by reason of the shame which will not allow these impurities to be disclosed in confession. And let us remark here in passing, that it is sacrilege above all things, that brings upon us sickness and death; for, says the Apostle, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord*; and then he adds: *therefore are many infirm and*

<sup>1</sup> "Sus in volutabro luti."

*weak among you.*<sup>1</sup> And St. John Chrysostom, in explanation of that passage, says that St. Paul speaks of persons who were chastised with bodily infirmities, because they received the sacrament with a guilty conscience.<sup>2</sup>

My brethren, should you ever have been sunk in this vice, I do not bid you be disheartened, but arise at once from this foul and infernal pit; beg of God forthwith to give you light, and stretch out his hand to you. The first thing that you have to do is to break with the occasion of sin: without that, preaching and tears and resolutions and confessions, all are lost. Remove the occasions, and then constantly recommend yourself to God, and to Mary the mother of purity. No matter how grievously you may be tempted, do not be discouraged by the temptation; at once call to your aid Jesus and Mary, pronouncing their sacred names. These blessed names have the virtue of making the devil fly, and stifling that hellish flame within you. If the devil persist in tempting you, persevere in calling upon Jesus and Mary, and certainly you shall not fall. In order to rid yourself of your evil habits, undertake some special devotion to our Lady; begin to fast in her honor upon Saturdays; contrive to visit her image every day, and beg of her to obtain for you deliverance from that vice. Every morning immediately after rising, never omit saying three "Hail Marys" in honor of her purity and do the same when going to bed; and above all things, as I have said, when the temptation is most troublesome, call quickly upon Jesus and Mary. Beware, brother, if you do not be converted now, you may never be converted. (Act of contrition.)

<sup>1</sup> "Qui enim manducat et bibit indigne, judicium sibi manducat et bibit, non dijudicans corpus Domini."—I *Cor.* xi. 29.

<sup>2</sup> "Quandoquidem peccabant, quod participes fierent Mysteriorum, non expurgata conscientia."—*In Isaiam*, c. 3.

## FIFTH DISCOURSE.

**External Devotions are Useless if we do not Cleanse our Souls from Sin.**

“Et nunc nolite illudere ut forte constringantur vincula tua.”

“And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait.”—*Isa.* xxvii. 22.

GOD commands Jonas to go and preach to Ninive. Jonas, instead of obeying God, flies by sea towards Tharsis. But, behold! a great tempest threatens to sink the ship; and Jonas knowing that the tempest was raised in punishment of his disobedience, said to the crew of the vessel: *Take me up and cast me into the sea, and the sea shall be calm to you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.*<sup>1</sup> And they actually did cast him into the sea, and the tempest ceased thereupon. *And the sea ceased from raging.*<sup>2</sup> Then if Jonas had not been thrown into the sea the tempest should not have ceased. Consider well, my brethren, what we are to learn from this. It is, that if we do not cast sin out of our souls, the tempest, that is, the scourge of God, will not cease. The tempest is excited by our sins; the tempest which is hurrying us to destruction. *Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*<sup>3</sup> Behold, we have penitential exercises, novenas, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; but to what purpose are those if we be not converted, if we do not rid our souls of sin? The subject of our discourse is: **EXTERNAL DE-**

<sup>1</sup> “Tollite me, et mittite in mare, et cessabit mare a vobis; scio enim ego quoniam propter me tempestas hæc grandis venit.”—*Jon.* i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> “Et stetit mare a fervore suo.”—*Ibid.* 15.

<sup>3</sup> “Iniquitates nostræ quasi ventus abstulerunt nos.”—*Is.* lxiv. 6.

## V. Our Souls Must be Cleansed from Sin. 369

VOTIONS ARE USELESS, IF WE DO NOT ABANDON OUR SINS; because otherwise we cannot please God.

It is said that the pain is not removed before the thorn has been plucked out. St. Jerome writes that God is never angered, since anger is passion, and passion is incompatible with God. He is always tranquil; and even in the act of punishing, his tranquillity is not in the least disturbed. *But Thou being master of power, judgest with tranquillity.*<sup>1</sup> But the malice of mortal sin is so great, that if God were capable of wrath and affliction, it would enrage and afflict him. It is this that sinners do as far as in them lies, according to that of Isaias: *But they provoked to wrath, and afflicted the spirit of His holy one.*<sup>2</sup> Moses writes, that when God was about to send the deluge, he declared himself to be so much afflicted by the sins of men as to be obliged to exterminate them from the earth. *And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth.*<sup>3</sup>

St. John Chrysostom says that sin is the only cause of all our sufferings and chastisements.<sup>4</sup> Commenting upon these words in Genesis which the Lord spoke after the deluge, *I will place My bow in the clouds,*<sup>5</sup> St. Ambrose<sup>6</sup> remarks that God does not say I will place my arrow, but my *bow*, in the clouds; giving us thereby to understand that it is always the sinner who fixes the arrow in the bow of God by provoking him to chastisement.

If we wish to be pleasing to the Lord, we must

<sup>1</sup> "Tu autem, Dominator virtutis, cum tranquillitate judicas."—*Wisd.* xii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> "Ipsi autem ad iracundiam provocaverunt et affligerunt spiritum Sancti ejus."—*Is.* lxiii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> "Tactus dolore cordis intrinsecus, Delebo, inquit, hominem quem creavi."—*Gen.* vi. 6.

<sup>4</sup> "Ubi est fons peccati, illic est plaga supplicii."—*In Ps.* 3.

<sup>5</sup> "Arcum meum ponam in nubibus."—*Gen.* ix. 13.

<sup>6</sup> *De Noe*, c. 27.



remove the cause of his anger, which is sin. The man sick of the palsy besought Jesus Christ to restore the health of his body; but, before granting his request, our Lord first restored his soul's health by giving him sorrow for his sins, and then saying to him: *Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee.*<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas says that the Redeemer first removed the cause of his infirmity, namely, his sins, and then freed him from the infirmity itself. "He asked for the health of the body, and the Lord gave him the health of the soul; because, like a good physician, he wished to take away the root of the evil."<sup>2</sup> Sin is the root of every evil, as we find in St. Bernardine of Sienna.<sup>3</sup> Hence the Lord after having healed him, warned him against sin in these words: *Go thy way, and sin no more, lest something worse befall thee.*<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiasticus said the same before our Lord: *My son, in thy sickness . . . cleanse thy heart from sin, . . . and then give place to the physician.*<sup>5</sup> You must first apply to the physician of the soul in order that he may free you from your sins, and then to the physician of the body that he may cure you of your disease.

In a word, the cause of all our chastisements is sin; and still more than sin, our obstinacy in it, as St. Basil says.<sup>6</sup> We have offended God, and are, notwithstanding, unwilling to do penance. When God calls by the voice of his punishment, he desires that he should be

<sup>1</sup> "Confide, fili, remittuntur tibi peccata tua."—*Matth.* ix. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Iste petebat sanitatem corporis, et Dominus dat sanitatem animæ. Fecit sicut bonus medicus, qui curat causam."—*In Matth.* 9.

<sup>3</sup> "Causa infirmitatum sæpius sunt peccata."—*Quadrag. de Christ. Rel.* s. 13. a. 3. c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Ecce sanus factus es; jam noli peccare, ne deterius tibi aliquid contingat."—*John*, v. 14.

<sup>5</sup> "Fili, in tua infirmitate, . . . ab omni delicto munda cor tuum, . . . et da locum medico."—*Ecclus.* xxxviii. 9.

<sup>6</sup> "Nostri causa hæc invehuntur, qui retinemus cor impœnitens."—*Enarr. in Is.* 9.



heard; if he be not, he shall be compelled by ourselves to curse us: *But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God . . . all these curses shall come upon thee; . . . cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed in the field.*<sup>1</sup> . . . When we offend God, we provoke all creatures to punish us. St. Anselm says that in the same manner as a servant, when he offends his master, draws down upon him the wrath, not only of his master, but of the whole family; so we, when we offend God, excite against us the anger of all creatures.<sup>2</sup> And St. Gregory says that we have more especially irritated against us those creatures which we have made use of against our Creator.<sup>3</sup> God's mercy holds in those creatures that they may not afflict us, but when he sees that we make no account of his threats, and continue to live on in our former way, he will then make use of those creatures to take vengeance on us for the injuries we have done him: *He will arm the creature for the revenge of His enemies. And the whole world shall fight with Him against the unwise.*<sup>4</sup> "There is no creature," says St. John Chrysostom, "which will not feel anger when it sees its Lord in anger."<sup>5</sup>

If then, my brethren, we do not appease God by our conversion, we never shall be free from chastisement. What folly, says St. Gregory, could be more extreme than to imagine that God should cease to chastise before

<sup>1</sup> "Si audire nolueris vocem Domini, . . . venient super te omnes maledictiones istæ, et apprehendent te: maledictus eris in civitate, maledictus in agro. . . ."—*Deut.* xxviii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> "Non solum iram Dei promeruimus, sed totam creaturam adversum nos excitavimus."—*De Similit.* c. 102.

<sup>3</sup> "Cuncta quæ ad usum pravitatis infleximus, ad usum nobis vertuntur ultionis."—*In Evang. hom.* 35.

<sup>4</sup> "Armabit creaturam ad ultionem, . . . et pugnabit cum illo orbis terrarum contra insensatos."—*Wisd.* v. 18.

<sup>5</sup> "Non est ulla creatura quæ mota non fuerit, cum ipsum Dominum senserit moveri."—*Homil. in Absol.*

we should have ceased to offend?<sup>1</sup> Many now come to the church, and hear the sermon, but go away without confession, or change of life. If we do not remove the cause of the scourge, how can we expect to be delivered from the scourge itself.<sup>2</sup> Such is the reflection of St. Jerome. We continue to irritate God, and then wonder that God should continue to chastise us. "Impure as we are," says Salvian, "we wonder why we should be so miserable."<sup>3</sup> Do we think that God is appeased by the mere circumstance of our appearing at church without repenting of our sins, without restoring the property or character of our neighbor, without avoiding those occasions of sin which keep us at a distance from God? Ah, let us not mock the Lord! *And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tied strait.*<sup>4</sup> Do not mock God, says the prophet, lest those bonds which are securing you for hell be tied strait. Cornelius à Lapide, in commenting on the above passage of Isaias, says that when the fox is caught in the snare, its efforts to disengage itself only serve to entangle it the more. "So also will it happen to sinners who, while mocking at God's threats and punishments, become more and more involved in them."<sup>5</sup> My brethren, let us have done; let us no more irritate God, the chastisement is near at hand: *For I have heard of the Lord the God of Hosts, continues the prophet, a consumption, and a cutting short upon all the earth.*<sup>6</sup> I am not the prophet

<sup>1</sup> "Est primum genus dementiæ, nolle a malis suis quiescere, et Deum a sua velle ultione cessare."—*Lib. 8, ep. 41.*

<sup>2</sup> "Nec amputamus causa morbi, ut morbus auferatur."—*Ad Heliod. de Morte Nep.*

<sup>3</sup> "Miramur si miseri, qui tam impuri sumus?"—*De Gub. Dei, l. 7.*

<sup>4</sup> "Et nunc nolite illudere, ne forte constringantur vincula vestra."—*Is. xxviii. 22.*

<sup>5</sup> "Impii illusores, irridendo Dei minas et pœnas, magis iisdem se adstringunt."

<sup>6</sup> "Consummationem enim et abbreviationem audiavi a Domino Deo exercituum super universam terram."

Isaias, but I can say that I see the scourge which is hanging over us if we do not be converted.

Hear how the Lord says to you: *Who requires these things at your hands?*<sup>1</sup> Who required your perpetual exercises and your visits of devotion to the church? I will have nothing from you unless you abandon sin: *Offer sacrifice no more in vain.*<sup>2</sup> Of what use are your devotions if you do not amend your lives. *My soul hateth . . . your solemnities.*<sup>3</sup> Know, says the Lord, that your homage and external devotions are hateful to my soul whilst you think by these to avert your chastisement without removing your offences: *With burnt offerings Thou wilt not be delighted; a sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit.*<sup>4</sup> No devotions, or alms, or penitential works are accepted by God from a soul in the state of sin, and without repentance. God accepts the acts of him alone who is contrite for his sin, and resolved upon a change of life.

Oh, surely God is not to be mocked!<sup>5</sup> I never commanded you, he says, to perform those devotions and acts of penance: *For I spoke not to your fathers . . . concerning the matter of burnt offering and sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, saying: Hearken to My voice, and I will be your God.*<sup>6</sup> What I wish of you, says God, is, that you hear my voice and change your life, and make a good confession, with real sorrow, for you must know yourselves, that your other confessions, followed by so many relapses, have been worth nothing. I wish that

<sup>1</sup> "Quis quæsit hęc de manibus vestris?"—*Is.* i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Ne offeratis ultra sacrificium frustra."

<sup>3</sup> "Solemnitates vestras odit anima mea."

<sup>4</sup> "Holocaustis non delectaberis. Sacrificium Deo, spiritus contritus."—*Ps.* l. 18.

<sup>5</sup> "Deus non irridetur."—*Gal.* vi. 7.

<sup>6</sup> "Non sum locutus . . . de verbo . . . victimarum. Sed hoc verbum præcepi: . . . Audite vocem meam, et ero vobis Deus."—*Jer.* vii. 22.

you should do violence to yourselves in breaking with that connection, with that company. I wish that you should endeavor to restore that property, to make good to your neighbor such a loss. *Hearken to My voice, obey My command, and I will be your God.* I will then be to you the God of mercy, such as you would have me to be. Cardinal Hugo, in his comment upon these words of our Lord, in the Gospel according to St. Matthew: *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,*<sup>1</sup> says: "Some have ears, but ears which do not serve them for hearing."<sup>2</sup> How many attend sermons and receive admonitions from the confessor, in which they are told all that they must do in order to please God; but they leave the church only to live worse than before. How can God be appeased by such? or how can such be delivered from the divine chastisement? *Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord,*<sup>3</sup> says David. Honor God not in appearance, but by works. It is that which is meant by "the sacrifice of justice;" honor him by bewailing your sins, by the frequentation of the sacraments, by a change of life and then hope in the Lord; but to hope while you continue the state of sin, is not hope—it is rashness, it is a deceit of the enemy, and renders you more odious in the sight of God, and more deserving of punishment.

My brethren, you see that the Lord is in wrath, that he already has his hand lifted to strike with the scourge which threatens us; how do you think to escape? *Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come?*<sup>4</sup> *Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of penance,*<sup>5</sup> says St. John the Baptist, preaching to the Jews of his day. You must do penance, but penance deserving of his pardon; that

<sup>1</sup> "Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat."—*Matth.* xi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> "Alii habent aures, sed non habent aures audiendi."

<sup>3</sup> "Sacrificate sacrificium justitiæ, et sperate in Domino."—*Ps.* iv. 6.

<sup>4</sup> "Quis demonstravit vobis fugere a ventura ira?"—*Matth.* iii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> "Facite ergo fructum dignum pœnitentiæ."

is, it must be true and resolute. Your anger must be changed into meekness, by the forgiveness of those who offend you; your intemperance must become abstinence, by observing the fasts *commanded*, at least, by the Church; and by abstaining from the immoderate use of intoxicating drinks, which change man into a beast: therefore you must avoid the public house; impurity must give way in you to chastity, by not returning to that filthy vomit, by resisting evil thoughts, by not using bad words, by fleeing from bad companions and dangerous conversation. *You must bring forth fruit worthy of penance*, and the bringing forth of such fruit implies also that we attend to the service of God, and endeavor to serve him more than we offended him; *For, as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, . . . so now yield your members to love justice.*<sup>1</sup> Thus have done a St. Mary Magdalen, a St. Augustine, a St. Mary of Egypt, a St. Margaret of Cortona, who by their works of penance and sanctification rendered themselves more dear to God than others who had been less sinful, but more tepid. St. Gregory says: "For the most part, a fervent life after sin is the more pleasing to God than a life which, though innocent, is tepid."<sup>2</sup> And thus does the saint explain the following passage of the Gospel: *There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.*<sup>3</sup> This is understood of the sinner who, after having arisen from sin, sets about serving God with more fervor than others who have long been just.

This is to bring forth fruit worthy of penance, not

<sup>1</sup> "Sicut enim exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditiæ . . . ita nunc exhibete . . . servire justitiæ."—*Rom.* vi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> "Fit plerumque Deo gratior amore ardens vita post culpam, quam securitate torpens innocentia."—*Past.* p. 3, *adm.* 29.

<sup>3</sup> "Gaudium erit in cœlo super uno peccatore pœnitentiam agente, quam super nonaginta novem justis."—*Luke*, xv. 7.

content one's self with hearing sermons and visiting the church, without abandoning sin, or avoiding the occasion of it. To act thus, is rather a mockery of God, and calculated to excite him to greater wrath. *And, think not*, pursues St. John the Baptist, *think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father.*<sup>1</sup> It will not do to say, we have the Mother of God to assist us, we have our patron saint to procure us deliverance; because if we do not abandon our sins the saints cannot help us. The saints are the friends of God; hence they not only have no inclination, but they would even feel ashamed, to succor the obstinate. Let us tremble, because the Lord has already published the sentence: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down and cast into the fire.*<sup>2</sup> Brother, how many years have you been in the world? Tell me what fruit of good works have you hitherto borne, what honor have you rendered to God by your life? Sin, outrage, contempt, such are the fruit you have borne, the honor you have rendered to God.—God now in his mercy gives you time for penance, in order that you may bewail the injuries you have done him, and love him the remainder of your days. What do you intend to do? What have you resolved upon? Resolve at once to give yourself to God. What do you expect? unless that if you do not at once turn to God, you shall be cut down and cast into the fire of hell.

But let us now bring our instruction to a conclusion; the Lord has sent me to preach here to-day, and has inspired you to come and listen to me, because he wishes to spare you the punishment which threatens you, if you do really turn to him: *Leave not out one word, if so*

<sup>1</sup> "Et ne velitis dicere intra vos: Patrem habemus Abraham."—*Matth.* iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Omnis arbor quæ non facit fructum bonum, excidetur, et in ignem mittetur."—*Matth.* vii. 19.



be they will hearken and be converted, every one from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them.<sup>1</sup> The Lord has desired me to tell you on his part that he is willing to relent, and withdraw the scourge which he meant to inflict upon you: *That I may repent me of the evil which I think to do unto them*; but on this condition, *if so be they will hearken and be converted every one from his evil way*, if they truly reform, otherwise he will put his threat in execution.—Tremble then if you be not yet resolved to change your life.

But, on the other hand, be joyful if you mean to turn in good earnest to God. *Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord*,<sup>2</sup> because God is all tenderness and love to those that seek him. *The Lord is good . . . to the soul that seeketh Him*.<sup>3</sup> Neither does the Lord know how to reject a heart humble and contrite for its offences. *A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise*.<sup>4</sup> Let us be joyful, then, if we have the good intention of changing our lives, and if, on seeing ourselves guilty of so many sins before the Lord, we stand very much in fear of the divine judgments, let us have recourse to the Mother of mercies, the most holy Mary, who defends and secures from the divine vengeance all those who take refuge under her mantle.—“I am the citadel of all those who fly to me;”<sup>5</sup> thus is she made to speak by St. John Damascene. (Act of contrition.)

<sup>1</sup> “Noli, subtrahere verbum, si forte audiant, et convertantur . . . et pœniteat me mali quod cogito facere eis.”—*Jer.* xxvi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> “Lætetur cor quærentium Dominum.”—*Ps.* civ. 3.

<sup>3</sup> “Bonus est Dominus . . . animæ quærenti illum.”—*Lam.* iii. 25.

<sup>4</sup> “Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.”—*Ps.* l. 19.

<sup>5</sup> “Ego civitas refugii omnium ad me confugientium.”



## SIXTH DISCOURSE.

God Chastises us in this Life for our Good, not for our Destruction.

“Non enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris.”

“For thou art not delighted in our being lost.”—*Job*, iii. 22.

LET us feel persuaded, my brethren, that there is no one who loves us more than God. St. Teresa says that God loves us more than we love ourselves. He has loved us from eternity. *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*<sup>1</sup> It is the love he has borne us which has drawn us from nothing, and given us being. *Therefore have I drawn Thee, taking pity on Thee.*<sup>2</sup> Hence, when God chastises us upon the earth, it is not because he wishes to injure us, but because he wishes us well, and loves us. *But of this every one is sure that worshippeth Thee, that his life, if it be under trial, shall be crowned: and if it be under tribulation, shall be delivered.*<sup>3</sup> So spoke Sara the wife of Tobias: Lord, he who serves thee is sure that after the trial shall have passed he shall be crowned, and that after tribulation he shall be spared the punishment which he deserved: *For Thou art not delighted in our being lost: because after a storm Thou makest a calm, and after tears and weeping Thou pourest in joyfulness.*<sup>4</sup> After the tempest of chastisement

<sup>1</sup> “In charitate perpetua dilexi te.”—*Jer.* xxxi. 3.

<sup>2</sup> “Ideo attraxi te miserans.”—*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> “Hoc autem pro certo habet omnis qui te colit, quod vita ejus, si in probatione fuerit, coronabitur; si autem in tribulatione fuerit, liberabitur.”

<sup>4</sup> “Non enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris; post tempestatem, tranquillum facis; et post . . . fletum exultationem infundis.”

he gives us peace, and after mourning, joy and gladness.

My brethren, let us convince ourselves of what I have undertaken to show you to-day, namely, that God does not afflict us in this life for our injury but for our good, in order that we may cease from sin, and by recovering his grace escape eternal punishment.

*And I will give My fear in their heart, that they may not revolt from Me.*<sup>1</sup> The Lord says that he infuses his fear into our hearts, in order that he may enable us to triumph over our passion for earthly pleasures, for which, ungrateful that we are, we have left him. And when sinners have left him, how does he make them look into themselves, and recover his grace? By putting on the appearance of anger, and chastising them in this life: *In Thy anger Thou shalt break the people in pieces.*<sup>2</sup> Another version, according to St. Augustine, has: "In thy wrath thou shalt conduct the people." The saint inquiring, What is the meaning of his conducting the people in his wrath? he then replies: "Thou, O Lord, fillest us with tribulations, in order that, being thus afflicted, we may abandon our sins and return to Thee."<sup>3</sup>

When the mother wishes to wean her infant how does she proceed? She puts gall upon her breast. Thus the Lord endeavors to draw our souls to himself, and wean them from the pleasures of this earth, which make them live in forgetfulness of their eternal salvation; he fills with bitterness all their pleasures, pomps, and possessions, in order that, not finding peace in those things, they may turn to God, who alone can satisfy them.

<sup>1</sup> "Timorem meum dabo in corde eorum, ut non recedant a me."—*Jer.* xxxii. 40

<sup>2</sup> "In ira populos confringes."—*Ps.* lv. 8.

<sup>3</sup> "Quid enim 'In ira populos deduces'? Implet tribulationibus omnia, ut, in tribulationibus positi, homines recurrant ad te."—*In Ps.* 55, n. 13.

*In their affliction they will rise early to Me.*<sup>1</sup> God says within himself, If I allow those sinners to enjoy their pleasures undisturbed, they will remain in the sleep of sin: they must be afflicted, in order that, recovering from their lethargy, they may return to me. When they shall be in tribulation they will say: *Come, let us return to the Lord, for He hath taken us, and He will heal us; He will strike and He will cure us.*<sup>2</sup> What shall become of us, say those sinners, as they enter into themselves, if we do not turn from our evil courses? God will not be appeased, and will with justice continue to punish us: come on, let us retrace our steps; for he will cure us, and if he has afflicted us just now, he will upon our return think of consoling us with his mercy.

*In the day of my trouble I sought God, . . . and I was not deceived,*<sup>3</sup> because he raised me up. For this reason does the prophet thank the Lord that he hath humbled him after his sin; because he was thus taught to observe the divine laws: *It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications.*<sup>4</sup> Tribulation is for the sinner at once a punishment and a grace, says St. Augustine.<sup>5</sup> It is a punishment inasmuch as it has been drawn down upon him by his sins; but it is a grace, and an important grace, inasmuch as it may ward eternal destruction from him, and is an assurance that God means to deal mercifully with him if he look into himself, and receive with thankfulness that tribulation which has opened his eyes to his miserable condition, and invites him to return to God. Let us then be con-

<sup>1</sup> "In tribulatione sua mane consurgent ad me."—*Osee*, vi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Venite, et revertamur ad Dominum; quia cepit, et sanabit nos; percutiet, et curabit nos."

<sup>3</sup> "In die tribulatione meæ, Deum exquisivi, . . . et non sum deceptus."—*Ps.* lxxvi. 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificaciones tuas."—*Ps.* cxviii. 71.

<sup>5</sup> "Pœna est, et gratia est."—*In Ps.* 38.

verted, my brethren, and we shall escape from our several chastisements: "Why should he who accepts chastisement as a grace be afraid after receiving it?"<sup>1</sup> says St. Augustine. He who turns to God, smarting from the scourge, has no longer anything to fear, because God scourges only in order that we may return to him; and this end once obtained, the Lord will scourge us no more.

St. Bernard says that it is impossible to pass from the pleasures of the earth to those of Paradise: "It is difficult, even impossible, for any one to enjoy present and future goods, to pass from delights to delights."<sup>2</sup> Therefore does the Lord say, *Envy not the man who prospereth in his way, the man who doth unjust things.*<sup>3</sup> "Does he prosper?" says St. Augustine; "ay, but 'in his own way.' And do you suffer? You do, but it is in the way of God."<sup>4</sup> You who walk before God are in tribulation, but he, evil as is his way, prospers. Mark now what the saint says in conclusion: "He has prosperity in this life, he shall be miserable in the next; you have tribulation in this life, you shall be happy in the next."<sup>5</sup> Be glad, therefore, O sinners! and thank God when he punishes you in this life, and takes vengeance of your sins; because you may know thereby that he means to treat you with mercy in the next. *Thou wast a merciful God to them, and taking vengeance on their inventions.*<sup>6</sup> The Lord when he chastises us has not chastisement so much in view

<sup>1</sup> "Quid servat post pœnam, qui per gratiam exhibet pœnam?"

<sup>2</sup> "Difficile est, imo impossibile, ut præsentibus quis fruatur bonis, et futuris; ut de deliciis transeat ad delicias."—*De Inter. Domo*, c. 25.

<sup>3</sup> "Noli æmulari in eo qui prosperatur in via sua, in homine faciente injustitias."—*Ps.* xxxvi. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "Prosperatur, sed in via sua; laboras, sed in via Dei."

<sup>5</sup> "Illi prosperitas in via est, in perventione infelicitas; tibi labor in via, in perventione felicitas."—*In Ps.* 36, *Serm.* 1, n. 9

<sup>6</sup> "Deus, tu propitius fuisti eis, et ulciscens in omnes adventiones eorum."—*Ps.* xcvi. 8.

as our conversion. God said to Nabuchodonozor: *Thou shalt eat grass like an ox, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.*<sup>1</sup> For seven years, Nabuchodonozor, shalt thou be compelled to feed upon grass like a beast in order that thou mayest know I am the Lord; that it is I who give kingdoms, and take them away; and that thou mayest thus be cured of thy pride. And in fact this judgment did cause the haughty king to enter into himself and change; so that, after having been restored to his former condition, he said: *Therefore I, Nabuchodonozor, do now praise and magnify the King of heaven.*<sup>2</sup> And God gave him back his kingdom. "He willingly changed his sentence," says St. Jerome, "because he saw his works changed."<sup>3</sup>

Unhappy we, says the same saint, when God does not punish us in this life! It is a sign that he means us for eternal chastisements.<sup>4</sup> What do we conclude, he continues, when the surgeon sees the flesh about to mortify, and does not cut it away? we conclude that he abandons the patient to death? God spares the sinner in this life, says St. Gregory, only to chastise him in the next.<sup>5</sup> Woe to those sinners to whom God has ceased to speak, and appears not to be in anger. *I will cease and be angry no more.*<sup>6</sup> The Lord then goes on to say: *But thou hast provoked Me in all these things: . . . and thou shalt know*

<sup>1</sup> "Fenum quasi bos comedes, et septem tempora mutabuntur super te, donec scias quod dominetur Excelsus in regno hominum."—*Dan.* iv. 29.

<sup>2</sup> "Nunc . . . laudo, et magnifico, et glorifico Regem cœli."—*Ibid.* 34.

<sup>3</sup> "Libenter mutavit sententiam, quia vidit opera commutata."—*In Jon.* iii. 10.

<sup>4</sup> "Magna est ira Dei, quando non nobis irascitur: reservat nos sicut vitulum in occisione."

<sup>5</sup> "Parcit, ut in perpetuum feriat."—*Mor.* l. 7, c. 8.

<sup>6</sup> "Quiescam, nec irascar amplius."

that I am the Lord, . . . that thou mayest remember, and be confounded.<sup>1</sup> A day will come, he says, ungrateful sinner, when you shall know what I am; then shall you remember the graces I have given you, and see with confusion your black ingratitude.

Woe to the sinner who goes on in his evil life, and whom God in his vengeance suffers to accomplish his perverse desires, according to what is said by the prophet: *Israel hearkened not to Me, so I let them go according to the desires of their heart.*<sup>2</sup> It is a sign that the Lord wishes to reward them on this earth for whatever little good they may have done, and reserves the chastisement of their sins for eternity. Speaking of the sinner whom he treats thus in this life, the Lord says: *Let us have pity on the wicked, but he will not learn justice, . . . and he shall not see the glory of the Lord.*<sup>3</sup> Thus does the poor sinner hasten on to his ruin, because seeing himself prosperous, he deceives himself into the expectation that as God is dealing mercifully with him now, he will continue to do the same; and by this delusion he will be led to live on in his sins. But will the Lord be always thus merciful to him? No, the day of punishment will come at length, when he shall be excluded from paradise, and flung into the dungeon of the rebels: *And he shall not see the glory of the Lord.* "Let us have pity on the wicked; far from me be this mercy,"<sup>4</sup> says St. Jerome. Lord, he says, extend not to me this dreadful pity; if I have offended Thee, let me be chastised for it in this life; because if Thou dost not chastise me here in this life, I shall have to be chastised in the other

<sup>1</sup> "Provocasti me in omnibus his. . . Scies quia ego Dominus, ut recorderis et confundaris."—*Ezech.* xvi. 42, 43, 62.

<sup>2</sup> "Israel non intendit mihi, et dimisi eos secundum desideria cordis eorum."—*Ps.* lxxx. 12.

<sup>3</sup> "Misereamur impio, et non discet justitiam; . . . et non videbit gloriam Domini."—*Is.* xxvi. 10.

<sup>4</sup> "Misereamur impio; longe a me misericordia tam rigorosa."

world for all eternity. For this reason did St. Augustine say: "Lord, here cut, here burn, that you may spare during eternity."<sup>1</sup> Chastise me here, O God, and do not spare me now, in order that I may be spared the punishment of hell. When the surgeon cuts the imposthume of the patient, it is a sign that he means to have him healed. St. Augustine says: "It is most merciful of the Lord not to suffer iniquity to pass unpunished."<sup>2</sup> The Lord deals very mercifully with the sinner when by chastisement he makes him enter into himself in this life. Hence Job besought the Lord so earnestly to afflict him. *And that this may be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow He spare not.*<sup>3</sup>

Jonas slept in the ship when he was flying from the Lord; but God seeing that the wretched man was on the brink of temporal and eternal death, caused him to be warned of the tempest: *Why art thou fast asleep; rise up, call upon thy God.*<sup>4</sup> God, my brethren, now warns ye in like manner. You have been in the state of sin, deprived of sanctifying grace, the chastisement has come, and that chastisement is the voice of God, saying to you, "Why are you fast asleep? rise and call upon your God." Awake, sinner! do not live on forgetful of your soul and of God. Open your eyes, and see how you stand upon the verge of hell, where so many wretches are now bewailing sins less grievous than yours, and are you asleep? have you no thought of confession? no thought of rescuing yourself from eternal death? *Rise, call upon your God.* Up from that infernal pit into

<sup>1</sup> "Domine, hic seca, hic non parcas, ut in æternum parcas."

<sup>2</sup> "Magnæ misericordiæ est nequitiam impunitam non relinquere."—*Serm.* 171, *E. B.*

<sup>3</sup> "Hæc mihi sit consolatio, ut, affligens me dolore, non parcat."—*Job*, vi. 10.

<sup>4</sup> "Quid tu sopore deprimeris? Surge, invoca Deum tuum."—*Jon* i. 6.



which you have fallen; pray to God to pardon you, beg of him this at least, if you are not at once resolved to change your life, that he will give you light, and make you see the wretched state in which you stand. Learn how to profit by the warning which the Lord vouchsafes you. Jeremias first sees a rod. *I see a rod watching*; he next sees a boiling caldron: *I see a boiling caldron*.<sup>1</sup> St. Ambrose, in speaking of this passage, explains it thus: He who is not corrected by the rod, shall be thrown into the caldron, there to burn.<sup>2</sup> He whom the temporal chastisement fails to convert, shall be sent to burn eternally in hell-fire. Sinful brother, listen to God, who addresses himself to your heart, by this chastisement, and calls on you to do penance. Tell me what answer do you make him?

The prodigal son, after having left his father, thought no more upon him, whilst he continued to live amid delights; but when he saw himself reduced to that state of misery described in the Gospel, poor, deserted, obliged to tend swine, and not allowed to fill himself with the food wherewith the swine were filled, then he came to himself, and said: *How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger*.<sup>3</sup> *I will arise and go to my father*.<sup>4</sup> And so he did, and was lovingly received by his father. Brother, you have to do in like manner. You see the unhappy life you have hitherto led, by living away from God; a life full of thorns and bitterness; a life which could not be otherwise, as being without God, who alone can give content. You see how many servants of God who

<sup>1</sup> "Virgam vigilantem ego video. Ollam succensam ego video."—*Jer.* i. 11–13.

<sup>2</sup> "Qui virga non corrigitur, in ollam mittitur, ut ardeat."—*In Ps.* xxxviii.

<sup>3</sup> "Quanti mercenarii in domo patris mei abundant panibus, ego autem hic fame pereor!"—*Luke*, xv. 17.

<sup>4</sup> "Surgam, et ibo ad patrem meum,"—*Ibid.* 18.

love him lead a happy life, and enjoy continual peace, the peace of God, which, as the Apostle says, surpasses all the pleasures of the senses. *The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding.*<sup>1</sup> And what are you doing? Do you not feel that you suffer a hell in this life? do you not know that you shall suffer one in the next? Take courage, say with the prodigal: *I will arise and go to my father.* I will arise from this sleep of death—this state of damnation, and return to God. It is true that I have sufficiently outraged him by leaving him so much against his desire, but he is still my Father. *I will arise and go to my father.* And when you shall go to that Father, what shall you say to him? Say what the prodigal said to his father: *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son.*<sup>2</sup> Father, I acknowledge my error, I have done ill to leave Thee, who have so much loved me; I see now that I am no longer worthy<sup>3</sup> to be called Thy son; receive me at least as Thy servant; restore me at least to Thy grace, and then chastise me as Thou pleasest.

Oh, happy you, if you say and do thus! the same will happen you which befel the prodigal son. The father, when he saw his son retracing his steps, and perceived that he had humbled himself for his fault, not only did not drive him off—not only received him into his house, but embraced and kissed him as his son. *And running to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him.*<sup>3</sup> He then clothed him with a precious garment, which represents the robe of grace: *Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him.*<sup>4</sup> And he, moreover, makes a great feast in the house, to commemorate the recovery of his son, whom

<sup>1</sup> “Pax Dei, quæ exsuperat omnem sensum.”—*Phil.* iv. 7.

<sup>2</sup> “Pater, peccavi in cælum et coram te; jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus.”

<sup>3</sup> “Accurrens cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est eum.”

<sup>4</sup> “Proferte stolam primam, et induite illum.”

he looked upon as lost and dead: *Let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found.*<sup>1</sup>

Let us then be joyful, my brethrep; it is true that God appears to be in wrath, but he is still our Father; let us retrace our steps in penance, and he will be appeased and spare us. Behold Mary our Mother praying for us on the one hand, and on the other turned towards us, saying, *In me is all hope of life and of virtue; . . . come over to me all.*<sup>2</sup> My children, that Mother of Mercy says to us, My poor afflicted children, have recourse to me, and in me you shall find all hope; my Son denies me nothing.<sup>3</sup> You were dead by sin; come to me, find me, and you shall find life—the life of divine grace, which I shall recover for you by my intercession. (Act of contrition.)

<sup>1</sup> “Epulemur, quia hic filius meus mortuus erat, et revixit; perierat, et inventus est.”

<sup>2</sup> “In me omnis spes vitæ et virtutis; transite ad me omnes.”—*Ecclus.* xxiv. 25.

<sup>3</sup> “Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam.”—*Prov.* viii. 35.

## SEVENTH DISCOURSE.

God Chastises us in this Life, only that He may show us  
Mercy in the Next.

“Ego quos amo arguo et castigo.”

“Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise.”—*Apoc.* iii. 19.

WHEN the Lord had raised that great tempest which threatened to sink the ship in which Jonas was sailing, in punishment of his disobedience to the divine command, that he should preach to the Ninevites, every one in the vessel was watching and in great fear, praying each to his God, with the exception of Jonas, who was asleep within the vessel: *He fell into a deep sleep.*<sup>1</sup> But, knowing that he was the cause of the tempest, he caused himself to be thrown into the sea, and was there swallowed by the whale. When Jonas found himself in the body of that fish, and in such extreme danger of death, he addressed himself to God in prayer, and God delivered him: *I cried out of my affliction to the Lord, and the Lord heard me.*<sup>2</sup> “Behold,” says St. Zeno, “how Jonas, who slumbered in the ship, is awake in the whale.”<sup>3</sup> While in the ship, he slumbered in his sin; but when suffering chastisement, and upon the point of death, he opened his eyes and remembered God; hence he had recourse to the divine mercy which delivered him, causing the fish to leave him safe and sound upon the shore. Many persons, before seeing the divine chastisements, sleep in their sins, forgetful of God; but the Lord, because he does not desire their destruction,

<sup>1</sup> “Dormiebat sopore gravi.”—*Jon.* i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> “Clamavi de tribulatione mea ad Dominum, et exaudivit me.”—*Jon.* ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> “Vigilat in ceto, qui stertebat in navi”—*Serm. de Jon.*

sends them afflictions, so that, roused from their lethargy, they return to him, and thus he is enabled to avoid punishing them during all eternity. The following is, then, the subject of this discourse: GOD PUNISHES US IN THIS LIFE, IN ORDER TO SPARE US IN THE NEXT.

We have not been created for this earth; we have been created for the blessed kingdom of Paradise. For this reason it is, says St. Augustine, that God mingles so much bitterness with the delights of the world in order that we may not forget him and eternal life.<sup>1</sup> If, living as we do amid so many thorns in this life, we are strongly attached to it, and long so little after Paradise, how little should we not value Paradise if God were not to embitter continually the pleasures of this earth?

If we have offended God, we must needs be punished for it either in this world or in the next. St. Ambrose says that God is merciful as well when he punishes as when he does not.<sup>2</sup> The chastisements of God are the effect of his love; they are, to be sure, punishments, but punishments which ward off from us eternal punishment, and bring us to everlasting happiness. *But whilst we are judged, we are chastised by the Lord, that we be not condemned with this world.*<sup>3</sup> And Judith reminded the Hebrews of the same truth when they were under the scourge of the Lord: *Let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which like servants we are chastised, have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction.*<sup>4</sup> Sara, the wife of Tobias, says the same: *But of this every one is sure that worshippeth Thee: . . . if his life be under correction, it*

<sup>1</sup> "Si cessaret Deus, et non misceret amaritudines felicitatibus sæculi, oblivisceremur eum."—*In Ps. xciii.*

<sup>2</sup> "Quam clemens Dominus, quam pius in utroque, cum aut misereatur aut vindicat!"—*In Luc. c. 13.*

<sup>3</sup> "Dum judicamur autem, a Domino corripimur, ut non cum hoc mundo damnemur."—*I Cor. xi. 32.*

<sup>4</sup> "Flagella Domini quibus quasi servi corripimur, ad emendationem, et non ad perditionem nostram, evenisse credamus."—*Judith, viii. 27.*

*shall be allowed to come to Thy mercy, for Thou art not delighted in our being lost.*<sup>1</sup> Lord, she said, Thou chastisest us here in order that Thou mayest spare us in the other life, for Thou dost not desire our destruction.

We have it from God himself that those whom he loves in this life he chastises in order that they may be converted: *Those whom I love I rebuke and chastise.*<sup>2</sup> Where God loves, says St. Basil of Seleucia, severity is usually the pledge of his graces.<sup>3</sup> Unhappy are the sinners who living in the state of sin prosper in this life; it is a sign that God reserves them for everlasting punishment. *The sinner hath provoked the Lord; according to the multitude of His wrath, He will not seek him.* Behold! says St. Augustine, speaking of the passage quoted, behold the most grievous chastisement! When he does not appear to take notice of the sinner, and leaves him unpunished, it is a sign that he is very wroth.<sup>4</sup> I call you, says God to him whom he chastises, and will you be deaf to my voice? Son, be converted, otherwise you shall confirm my anger, since I shall cease to regard your salvation, and allow you to live on in your sins without punishment, but only that I may punish you in the life to come. *And My indignation shall rest in thee; and My jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will cease and be angry no more.*<sup>5</sup> The Apostle warns you, my brethren, not to be deaf to the voice of God, for that on the day of judgment your obstinacy shall be rewarded with a

<sup>1</sup> "Omnis qui te colit, . . . si in correptione fuerit, ad misericordiam tuam venire licebit; non enim delectaris in perditionibus nostris."—*Tob.* iii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> "Ego, quos amo, arguo et castigo."—*Apoc.* iii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> "Ubi amor est, severitas solet esse pignus gratiarum."

<sup>4</sup> "Exacerbavit Dominum peccator; secundum multitudinem iræ suæ non quæret."—*Ps.* ix. 25.

<sup>5</sup> "Non exquiret; multum irascitur, dum non exquirat."

<sup>6</sup> "Et requiescet indignatio mea in te; et auferetur zelus meus a te; et quiescam, nec irascar amplius."—*Ezech.* xvi. 42.

dreadful chastisement, and that chastisement eternal. *But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the just judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works.*<sup>1</sup>

So that, St. Jerome says, that there cannot be a greater punishment for a sinner than that he should not be punished in this life.<sup>2</sup> And St. Isidore of Pelusium says that sinners who are punished in this life do not deserve pity, but those only who die without having been punished.<sup>3</sup> It is not so bad, continues the saint, to be simply sick as to have no one to cure you.<sup>4</sup> St. Augustine says, in another part, that when God does not chastise the sinner in this world, he chastises him most severely; whence he concludes that there is no greater misfortune than impunity for a sinner.<sup>5</sup> After England had rebelled against the Church, God did not visit her with temporal scourges: her riches have been increasing from that time; but her chastisement is all the greater on that account, as she is left to perish in her sin. The absence of punishment is the greatest punishment, says the same holy Doctor. The not receiving chastisement in this life for sin is a great chastisement, and prosperity in sin a still greater.

*Why then, Job inquires, do the wicked live, are they advanced and strengthened with riches?*<sup>6</sup> How comes it, O Lord,

<sup>1</sup> "Secundum autem duritiam tuam et impœnitens cor, thesaurizas tibi iram in die iræ, et revelationis justi judicii Dei, qui reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus."—*Rom.* ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Magna ira est, quando peccantibus non irascitur Deus."—*Ep. ad Castrut.*

<sup>3</sup> "Delinquentes in hac vita castigati deplorandi non sunt, sed qui impuniti abeunt."—*Lib.* 5, *ep.* 269.

<sup>4</sup> "Non tam molestum ægrotare, quam morbo medelam non afferri."

<sup>5</sup> "Si impunita dimittit, tunc punit infestius; quoniam nihil est infelicius felicitate peccantium."—*Epist.* 138, n. 14, *E. B.*

<sup>6</sup> "Quare ergo impii vivunt, sublevati sunt, confortatique divitiis?"



that sinners, instead of being taken out of this life in poverty and tribulation, enjoy health, and honors, and riches? The holy man answers, *They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell.*<sup>1</sup> Wretched men! they enjoy their riches for a few days, and when the hour of chastisement comes, when they least expect it, they are condemned to burn forever in that place of torments. Jeremiah makes the self-same inquiry: *Why doth the way of the wicked prosper?*<sup>2</sup> and then adds, *Gather them together as sheep for a sacrifice.*<sup>3</sup> Animals destined for sacrifice are kept from all labor, and fattened up for slaughter. Thus does God act towards the obstinate: he abandons them, and suffers them to fatten on the pleasures of this life in order to sacrifice them in the other to his eternal justice; for these, says Minutius Felix, are fed like victims for the slaughter.<sup>4</sup>

These wretched men, says David, shall not be punished in this life, they shall enjoy their fleeting pleasures; by and by their dream shall have ceased: *Neither shall they be scourged like other men; . . . they have suddenly ceased to be; as the dream of them that awake, O Lord, so in Thy city Thou shalt bring their image to nothing.*<sup>5</sup> How painful is not the case of a poor man, who dreams that he has grown rich or great, and upon awaking finds himself the miserable and sick creature he is? *And the enemies of the Lord shall . . . vanish like smoke.*<sup>6</sup> The happiness of sinners is as suddenly dissipated as is smoke by a breath of air. "Smoke," observes St. Gregory, in his comment upon this passage, "vanishes in

<sup>1</sup> "Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt."—*Job*, xxi. 7, 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Quare via impiorum prosperatur?"

<sup>3</sup> "Congrega eos quasi gregem ad victimam."—*Jer.* xii. 1-3.

<sup>4</sup> "Hi enim ut victimæ ad supplicium saginantur."—*Octav.* c. 10.

<sup>5</sup> "Cum hominibus non flagellabuntur; . . . verumtamen . . . subito defecerunt . . . velut somnium surgentium."—*Ps.* lii. 5-18.

<sup>6</sup> "Quemadmodum fumus deficient."—*Ps.* xxxvi. 20.

its ascent."<sup>1</sup> And the same is the case with sinners: *I have seen the wicked highly exalted, . . . and I passed by, and lo! he was not.*<sup>2</sup> Minutius Felix says, in his comment upon the place cited, the unhappy men are exalted the higher, that their fall may be the greater.<sup>3</sup> The Lord allows the sinner to be exalted for his greater punishment, in order that his fall may be the more grievous, as is said by David. *When they were lifted up Thou hast cast them down.*<sup>4</sup> If the sick man, says St. John Chrysostom, suffer hunger or thirst by order of his physician, it is a sign that the physician has hopes of him; but if the doctor allow him to eat what he pleases, and drink as much as he likes, what are we to conclude from that? It is plain that the physician has given him over. And thus, says St. Gregory, it is a manifest sign that God abandons the sinner to perdition, when he never thwarts his evil purposes:<sup>5</sup> and in the Book of Proverbs we read that *the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.*<sup>6</sup> As lightning precedes thunder, says St. Bernard, so is prosperity the forerunner of damnation for the sinner.<sup>7</sup>

The greatest punishment inflicted by God is, when he allows the sinner to sleep on in sin, without rousing him from that sleep of death in which he is buried. *I will make them drunk, that they may sleep an everlasting sleep, and awake no more, saith the Lord.*<sup>8</sup> Cain, after the crime of murdering his brother, was afraid that he should be

<sup>1</sup> "Fumus ascendendo deficit."—*Lib.* 1, ep. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Vidi impium superexaltatum; . . . et transivi, et ecce non erat."—*Ps.* xxxvi. 35.

<sup>3</sup> "Miseri, in hoc altius tolluntur, ut decidunt altius."—*Octav.* c. 10.

<sup>4</sup> "Dejecisti eos, dum allevarentur."—*Ps.* lxxii. 18.

<sup>5</sup> "Manifestum perditionis indicium est, quando nulla contrarietas impedit quod mens perversa concepit."—*Mor.* l. 26, c. 16.

<sup>6</sup> "Prosperitas stultorum perdet illos."—*Prov.* i. 32.

<sup>7</sup> "Sicut fulgur tonitrum portat, ita prosperitas supplicia sempiterna."

<sup>8</sup> "Inebriabo eos, ut sopiantur, et dormiant somnum sempiternum, et non consurgant, dicit Dominus."—*Jer.* li. 39.

killed by the first person he should meet: *Every one therefore that findeth me shall kill me.*<sup>1</sup> But the Lord assured him that he should live, and that no one should kill him; which assurance of a long life, according to St. Ambrose, was Cain's greatest punishment.<sup>2</sup> The saint says, that God treats the obstinate sinner mercifully, when he gives him an early death, because he thus saves him from as many hells as he should have committed sins during a longer life. Let sinners, then, live according to the desires of their hearts, let them enjoy their pleasures in peace; there will at length come a time when they shall be caught as fish upon the hook. *As fishes are taken with the hook, . . . so men are taken in the evil time.*<sup>3</sup> Whence St. Augustine says, "Do not rejoice like the fish who is delighted with the bait, for the fisherman has not yet pulled the hook."<sup>4</sup> If you were to see a condemned man making merry at a banquet with the halter round his neck, and every moment awaiting the order for execution, would you envy or pity him? Neither should you envy the sinner who is happy in his vices. That wretched sinner is already on the hook, he is already in the infernal net; when the time of chastisement shall have arrived, then the wretch will know and deplore his damnation, but all to no purpose.

On the contrary, it is a good sign when a sinner is chastised and suffers tribulation in this life: it is a sign that God has still merciful views upon him, and that he wishes to substitute a temporal for an eternal punishment in his regard. God, says St. John Chrysostom, when he

<sup>1</sup> "Omnis igitur qui invenerit me, occidet me."—*Gen.* iv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> "Longæva vita vindicta est; favor enim impiorum est, si subito moriantur."

<sup>3</sup> "Sicut pisces capiuntur hamo, . . . sic capiuntur homines in tempore malo."—*Eccles.* ix. 12.

<sup>4</sup> "Noli gaudere ad piscem qui in esca sua exultat; nondum traxit hamum piscator."—*In Ps.* 91, n. 8.

punishes us on this earth, does not do so out of hatred to us, but that he may draw us to himself.<sup>1</sup> He chastises for a little while, that he may have you with him for eternity.<sup>2</sup> When the physician uses the knife, he does so to cure, says St. Augustine.<sup>3</sup> And God, the saint continues, does the same in our regard. "God seems to be cruel; but do not fear; for he is a father who is never cruel, and does not wish to destroy us."<sup>4</sup> But, does not God say the same himself? *Those whom I love, I rebuke and chastise; be zealous therefore, and do penance.*<sup>5</sup> Son, says God, I love you, and therefore I chastise you; "be zealous;" see how good I am to you; endeavor you to act in like manner towards me; do penance for your sins, if you wish that I should spare you the chastisement which you deserve: at least, accept with patience and turn to advantage the tribulation which I send you. In this cross which now afflicts you hear you my voice calling upon you to turn to me, and fly from hell, which is close upon you. *Behold! I stand at the gate and knock;*<sup>6</sup> I am knocking at the door of your heart; open then to me, and know that when the sinner who has driven me from his heart shall open the door again to me, I will enter, and keep him company forever. *If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.*<sup>7</sup> I shall remain united to him forever on

<sup>1</sup> "Cum irascitur, non odio hoc facit; sed ut ad se attrahat quos non vult perire."

<sup>2</sup> "Adversatur ad tempus, ut te secum habeat in æternum."—*In Matt. hom.* 14.

<sup>3</sup> "Medici percutiunt, et sanant."

<sup>4</sup> "Sævire videtur Deus; cum ista facit, ne metuas; quoniam pater est, nunquam sic sævit, ut perdat."—*In Ps.* 65, n. 16.

<sup>5</sup> "Ego, quos amo, arguo et castigo."—*Apoc.* iii. 19.

<sup>6</sup> "Ecce sto ad ostium, et pulso."

<sup>7</sup> "Si quis . . . aperuerit mihi januam, intrabo ad illum, et cœnabo cum illo, et ipse mecum."—*Apoc.* iii. 20.

this earth; and if he remain faithful, I shall seat him beside me, on the throne of my eternal kingdom. *To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne.*<sup>1</sup>

What! must we look upon God as a tyrant, who should take pleasure in our sufferings? He does take pleasure in punishing us, but exactly the same pleasure as a father takes in correcting his son: he does not take pleasure in the pain which he inflicts, but in the amendment it will work. *My son, reject not the correction of the Lord; and do not faint when thou art chastised by Him, for whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and as a father in the son, He pleaseth Himself.*<sup>2</sup> He chastises you because he loves you; it is not that he wishes to see you afflicted, but converted; and if he takes pleasure in your suffering, he does so inasmuch as it is an instrument of conversion—just as a father who chastises his son derives pleasure, not from the affliction of his son, but from the amendment which he hopes to see in him, and which will prevent him from working his own ruin. Chastisement makes us return to God, says St. John Chrysostom;<sup>3</sup> and it is to this end God inflicts it, in order that we may not stay away from him.

Why then, my brethren, do you complain of God when in tribulation? You ought to thank him prostrate on the earth; tell me now, if a man condemned to die were to have his sentence changed by the prince from death into one hour's imprisonment, and if he were to complain of that one hour, would his complaint be justifiable? Oh, would he not rather deserve that the prince should reverse the last sentence, and con-

<sup>1</sup> "Qui vicerit, dabo ei sedere mecum in throno meo."—*Apoc.* iii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> "Disciplinam Domini, fili mi, ne abjicias; nec deficias, cum ab eo corripieris. Quem enim diligit Dominus, corripit; et quasi pater in filio complacet sibi."—*Prov.* iii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> "Pœnæ nos ad Deum perducunt."—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 6.

demn him a second time to death? You have long and often deserved hell by your sins. And do you know all that the word *hell* conveys? Know that it is more dreadful to suffer for one moment in hell than to suffer for a hundred years the most frightful torments which the martyrs have suffered on earth; and in this hell you should have had to suffer during all eternity. And yet you complain if God send you some tribulation, some infirmity, some loss. Thank God, and say: Lord, this chastisement is trifling compared with my sins. I ought to have been in hell burning, deserted by all, and in despair: I thank you for having called me to yourself by this tribulation which you have sent me. God, says Oleaster, often calls sinners to repentance by temporal chastisements.<sup>1</sup> By earthly chastisements the Lord shows us the immense punishment which our sins deserve; and therefore afflicts us on this earth, that we may be converted and escape eternal flames.

Wretched, then, as we have been, wretched indeed is that sinner who is left unpunished in this life, but still more wretched he who, admonished by affliction, does not amend, says St. Basil.<sup>2</sup> It is not a grievous thing to be afflicted by God on this earth after one has sinned; but it is very grievous not to be converted by the affliction sent, and to be like those of whom David speaks, who, although visited by the divine chastisement, still sleep on in their sins. *At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, they have all slumbered.*<sup>3</sup> As if the sound of the scourges and the thunders of God, instead of rousing them from their lethargy, served only to make them sleep more soundly. *I struck you, yet you returned not to Me.*<sup>4</sup> I have scourged you, says God, in order that you might return

<sup>1</sup> "Poena est modus loquendi Dei, quo culpam ostendit."

<sup>2</sup> "Non est grave plaga affici, sed plaga non meliorem effici."

<sup>3</sup> "Ab increpatione tua, Deus Jacob, dormitaverunt."—*Ps.* lxxv. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "Percussi vos, . . . et non redistis ad me."—*Amos*, iv. 9.



to me; but ye, ungrateful that you are, have been deaf to my calls. Unhappy the sinner who acts like him of whom the Lord says, *He shall send lightnings against him; . . . his heart shall be as hard as a stone, and as firm as a smith's anvil.*<sup>1</sup> God visits him with chastisement, and he, instead of being softened and returning to the Lord by penance, shall be *as firm as a smith's anvil*; he shall grow more hardened under the blows of God, as the anvil grows continually harder under the hammer of the smith; and shall become like the impious Achaz, of whom the scripture says, *In the time of his distress he increased contempt against the Lord.*<sup>2</sup> Unhappy man, instead of humbling himself, he the more despised the Lord.

Do you know what more happens to these rash beings? They begin to suffer hell even in this life. *He shall rain snares upon the sinners; fire and brimstone and storms of wind shall be the portion of their cup.*<sup>3</sup> The Lord shall rain upon them his chastisement, sickness, misery, and every bitterness; but this is not the entire, it is only a portion of their cup, that is, of their chastisement. "The Lord says, 'the portion' only of their cup," observes St. Gregory; "because their suffering begins here indeed, but shall be continued throughout eternity."<sup>4</sup> He deserves all this who, being afflicted by the Lord for his conversion, continues to earn chastisement, and provoke the Lord to greater wrath, says St. Augustine.<sup>5</sup> What can I do, O sinner! to work your con-

<sup>1</sup> "Mittet contra eum fulmina; . . . cor ejus indurabitur tamquam lapis, et stringetur quasi malleatoris incus."—*Job*. xli. 14

<sup>2</sup> "Tempore angustię suę, auxit contemptum in Dominum."—2 *Par*. xxviii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> "Pluet supra peccatores laqueos; ignis et sulphur, et spiritus procellarum, pars calicis eorum."—*Ps*. x. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "Partem calicis dixit, quia eorum passio hic per dolores incipitur, sed in ultione perpetua consummatur."—*Mor*. l. 15. c. 21.

<sup>5</sup> "In flagellis positum flagellis digna committere, est sævientem acrius ad iracundiam concitare."



version? will the Lord then say. I have called you by sermons and inspirations, and you have despised them; I have called you by favors, and you have grown more insolent; I have called you by scourges, and you continue to offend me. *For what shall I strike you any more, you that increase transgression; . . . and the daughter of Sion shall be left as a city that is laid waste.*<sup>1</sup> Do you not wish to hearken even to my chastisements? Do you wish that I should abandon you? I shall be obliged to do it if you do not amend.

My brethren, let us no longer abuse the mercy which God uses towards us. Let us not be like the nettle, which stings him who strikes it. God afflicts us, because he loves us, and wishes to see us reformed, says Oleaster.<sup>2</sup> When we feel the chastisement, we should bethink us of our sins, and say with the brethren of Joseph, *We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother.*<sup>3</sup> Lord, Thou punishest us justly, because we have offended Thee, our Father and God. *Thou art just, O God! and Thy judgment is right.*<sup>4</sup> *Everything Thou hast done to us, Thou hast done in true judgment.*<sup>5</sup> Lord, Thou art just, and dost with justice punish us; we accept this tribulation which Thou sendest us; give us strength to suffer it with patience.

Here we should do well to remember what God once said to a nun: "You have sinned, you must do penance, you must pray." Some sinners are satisfied with recommending themselves to the servants of God, but they must moreover pray and do penance. Let us do so, because when the Lord shall see our resignation he

<sup>1</sup> "Super quo percutiam vos ultra, addentes prævaricationem? Et derelinquetur filia Sion . . . sicut civitas quæ vastatur."—*Is.* i. 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> "Optima consideratio, cum senseris pœnam, culpæ meminisse."

<sup>3</sup> "Merito hæc patimur, quia peccavimus."—*Gen.* xlii. 21.

<sup>4</sup> "Justus es, Domine, et rectum judicium tuum."—*Ps.* cxviii. 137.

<sup>5</sup> "Quæ fecisti nobis, in vero judicio fecisti."—*Dan.* iii. 31.

will not only forgive our sins, but even remit the chastisement; and if God continues to afflict us, let us have recourse to that Lady, who is called the consolatrix of the afflicted. All the saints compassionate us in our sufferings, but there is not of them, as St. Antoninus says, who feels so much for us as this divine Mother Mary.<sup>1</sup> And Richard of St. Victor adds, that this Mother of mercy cannot behold unhappy sufferers without succoring them.<sup>2</sup> (Act of contrition.)

<sup>1</sup> "Non reperitur aliquem Sanctorum ita compati in infirmitatibus, sicut Mulier hæc, Beata Virgo Maria."—*P.* 4, tit. 15, c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "(Non potest) misérias scire, et non subvenire."

# EIGHTH DISCOURSE.

**Prayers Appease God, and Avert from us the Chastisement we Deserve, provided we purpose to Amend.**

“Petite et accipietis, quærite et invenietis.”

“Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find.”—*John*, xvi. 24

HE who has a good heart cannot but feel compassion for the afflicted, and wish to see all men happy. But who has a heart as good as the Lord's? He by his nature is infinite goodness, whence it is that God by his nature has an extreme desire to deliver us from every evil, and render us happy in all things, nay, even partakers of his own happiness. He wishes, therefore, that for our greater good we beg of him the graces which we stand in need of, that we may be spared the chastisement which we deserve, and arrive at life everlasting. Hence he has promised to hear the prayers of him who prays to him with hope in his goodness. *Ask and you shall receive.*

But to come at once to the subject of our discourse: GOD IS APPEASED BY PRAYERS, AND LED TO WITHDRAW THE CHASTISEMENT WHICH WE DESERVE, PROVIDED WE PURPOSE TO AMEND.

Hence in order to be delivered from the present scourge, and still more from the eternal scourge, WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE. This is to be the first point.—But it is not sufficient to pray and to hope: WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE AS WE OUGHT. This is to be the second point.

## I. WE MUST PRAY AND HOPE.

God wishes that we should all be saved, as the Apostle assures us: God, *Who will have all men to be saved.*<sup>1</sup> And although he sees so many sinners who deserve hell, he does not wish that any of them should be lost, but that they should be restored to his grace by penance, and be saved. *Not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.*<sup>2</sup> But before delivering us from the punishment we have deserved, and dispensing his graces, he wishes to be sought in prayer. "By prayer," says St. Laurence Justinian, "the wrath of God is suspended, his vengeance is delayed, and pardon finally procured."<sup>3</sup> Oh how great are the promises which God makes to him who prays! *Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.*<sup>4</sup> *Cry to Me, and I will hear thee.*<sup>5</sup> *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.*<sup>6</sup> Theodoret says that prayer is one only instrument, but that it can effect all things.<sup>7</sup> And let us bear in mind, my brethren, that when we pray and ask things conducive to salvation, not even our sins can prevent our receiving the graces which we beg.—*For every one that asketh receiveth.*<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ here says that whoever asks, be he just or in sin, shall receive. Wherefore did David say, *For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that*

<sup>1</sup> "Omnes homines vult salvos fieri."—1 *Tim.* ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Nolens aliquos perire, sed omnes ad poenitentiam reverti."—2 *Petr.* iii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> "Per orationem, ira Dei suspenditur, vindicta differtur, venia procuratur."—*Lign. Vit. de Orat.* c. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Invoca me; . . . eruam te."—*Psa.* xlix. 15.

<sup>5</sup> "Clama ad me, et exaudiam te."—*Jer.* xxxiii. 3.

<sup>6</sup> "Quodcumque volueritis, petetis, et fiet vobis."—*John*, xv. 7.

<sup>7</sup> "Oratio, cum sit una, omnia potest."—*Apud Rodr.* p. 1, tr. 5, c. 14.—*Wisd.* vii. 27.

<sup>8</sup> "Omnis enim qui petit, accipit."—*Matth.* vii. 8.

*call upon Thee.*<sup>1</sup> Hence the Apostle St. James, in order to excite us to prayer, tells us: *But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not.*<sup>2</sup> When God is solicited, he gives more than is asked of him, he *giveth to all men abundantly*. When one man asks a favor of another whom he may have formerly injured, the latter usually reproaches him with the injury that had been done him; but not so God—he never *upbraideth*. When we beg of him some grace for the good of our souls, he never reproaches us with the offences which we have committed against him; but he hears us, and consoles us as though we had always served him faithfully. *Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name*, said the Lord one day to his disciples, and to-day he says the same thing to us: *Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.*<sup>3</sup> As if he were to say, Why do you complain of me? You have only yourselves to blame—you have not asked graces of me, and therefore you have not received them. Ask of me, henceforward, what you please, and it shall be granted you; and if you have not merit sufficient to obtain it, ask it of my Father in my name, that is, through my merits, and whatever it be, I promise you that you shall obtain it. *Amen, amen, I say to you; if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*<sup>4</sup> The princes of the earth, says St. John Chrysostom, give audience only to a few, and that seldom; but access can always be had to God by every one, at all times, and with certainty of a favorable hearing.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Tu, Domine, suavis et mitis, et multæ misericordiæ omnibus invocantibus te."—*Ps.* lxxxv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Si quis autem vestrum indiget sapientia, postulât a Deo, qui dat omnibus affluenter, nec impropere."—*James*, i. 5.

<sup>3</sup> "Usque modo non petistis quidquam in nomine meo; petite, et accipietis, ut gaudium vestrum sit plenum."—*John*, xvi. 24.

<sup>4</sup> "Amen, amen, dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—*John*, xvi. 23.

<sup>5</sup> "Aures principis paucis patent, Deo vero omnibus volentibus."

Rely, then, upon these great promises, so often repeated by the Lord in the Scriptures; and let us ever be attentive to beg of him those graces which are necessary for salvation, namely, the pardon of our sins, perseverance in his grace, his holy love, resignation to his divine will, a happy death, and Paradise. By prayer we shall attain all; without prayer we shall have nothing. What the holy Fathers and theologians commonly say, namely, that prayer is necessary to adults, as a means of salvation, comes to this, that it is impossible for any one to be saved without prayer. Lessius wisely says, that it ought to be of faith; that without prayer salvation is impossible to adults.<sup>1</sup> And this is clearly to be drawn from the Scriptures, which say: *Ask, and you shall receive:*<sup>2</sup> for as he who seeks obtains, says St. Theresa, he who does not seek does not obtain. *Pray that ye enter not into temptation.*<sup>3</sup> *We ought always to pray.*<sup>4</sup> The words "seek," and "pray," and "we ought," accordings to the opinions of most theologians, along with St. Thomas,<sup>5</sup> imply a precept binding under pain of mortal sin.

Let us pray, then, and pray with great confidence. Confidence in what? In that divine promise by which, says St. Augustine, God has made himself our debtor.<sup>6</sup> He has promised; he cannot be wanting to his promise; let us seek and hope, and we must be saved. *No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.*<sup>7</sup> There never has been and never will be found any one to hope

<sup>1</sup> "Fide tenendum est, orationem adultis esse necessariam."—*De Inst.* l. 2, c. 37, d. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Petite et accipietis."—*John*, xvi. 24.

<sup>3</sup> "Orate, ut non intretis in tentationem."—*Matth.* xxvi. 41.

<sup>4</sup> "Oportet semper orare."—*Luke*, xviii. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 2. 2, q. 83, a. 3.

<sup>6</sup> "Promittendo, debitorem se Deus fecit."—*Serm.* 110, E. B.

<sup>7</sup> "Nullus speravit in Domino, et confusus est."—*Ecclus.* ii. 11.

in the Lord and be lost, as the prophet assures us: *He is the protector of all that trust in Him.*<sup>1</sup>

But how comes it, then, that some persons ask graces and do not obtain them? St. James answers that it is because they ask ill. *You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss.*<sup>2</sup> You must not only ask and hope, but ask and hope as you ought. This brings us to the second point.

## 2. WE MUST HOPE AND PRAY AS WE OUGHT.

God has all the desire to deliver us from every evil, and to share his blessings with us, as I said in the beginning, but he wishes to be sought in prayer, and prayed to as he should, in order that we should be heard. How can God think of hearing that sinner who prays to him that he may be freed from his afflictions, whilst he is unwilling to abandon sin, which is the cause of his afflictions? When the impious Jeroboam stretched out his hand against the prophet, who reproached him with his wretchedness, the Lord caused his hand to wither up, so that he could not draw it back. *And his hand which he stretched forth against him withered, and he was not able to draw it back again to him.*<sup>3</sup> Then the king turned to the man of God, and besought him to beg of the Lord to restore his hand to him. Theodoret says, with regard to this circumstance: "Fool that he was to have asked the prophet's prayers for the restoration of his hand, and not for pardon of his sins."<sup>4</sup> Thus do many act; they beg of God to deliver them from their afflictions; they beg of the servants of God to avert by their prayers the threatened chastisements, but they do

<sup>1</sup> "Protector est omnium sperantium in se."—*Ps.* xvii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> "Petitis, et non accipitis, eo quod male petatis."—*James*, iv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Et exaruit manus ejus quam extenderat contra eum, nec valuit retrahere eam ad se."—3 *Kings*, xiii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> "Valde stultus supplex rogavit Prophetam, ut sibi peteret, non sceleris remissionem, sed manus curationem."



not seek to obtain the grace of abandoning their sins and changing their lives. And how can such persons hope to be freed from the chastisement when they will not remove its cause? What arms the hand of the Lord with thunders to chastise and afflict us? Oh, it is accursed sin! "Punishment is the fine that is to be paid for sin,"<sup>1</sup> says Tertullian. The afflictions we suffer are a fine which must be paid by him whom sin has subjected to the penalty. St. Basil in like manner says that sin is a note of hand which we give against ourselves.<sup>2</sup> Since we sin, we voluntarily go in debt to God's justice. It is not God, then, who makes us miserable; it is sin.<sup>3</sup> Sin it is which obliges God to create chastisements: *Famine, and affliction, and scourges, all things are created for the wicked.*<sup>4</sup>

Jeremias, addressing the divine vengeance, says, *O thou sword of the Lord, how long wilt thou not be quiet? Go into thy scabbard, rest and be still.*<sup>5</sup> But then, he goes on to say, *How shall it be quiet when the Lord hath given it a charge against Ascalon?*<sup>6</sup> How can the sword of the Lord ever be quiet if sinners do not choose to abandon their sin, notwithstanding that the Lord has given a charge to his sword to execute vengeance as long as sinners shall continue to deserve it? But some will say, we make novenas, we fast, we give alms, we pray to God: why are we not heard? To them the Lord replies, *When they fast, I will not hear their prayers, and when they offer holocausts and victims, I will not receive them; for I*

<sup>1</sup> "Census peccati, pœna."

<sup>2</sup> "Est chirographum quoddam contra nos."

<sup>3</sup> "Miseros autem facit populos peccatum."—*Prov.* xiv. 34.

<sup>4</sup> "Fames, et contritio, et flagella; super iniquos creata sunt hæc omnia."—*Ecclus.* xl. 9.

<sup>5</sup> "O mucro Domini! usquequo non quiesces? Ingredere in vaginam tuam, refrigerare, et sile."—*Jer.* xlvii. 6.

<sup>6</sup> "Quomodo quiescet, cum Dominus præceperit ei adversus Ascalonem?"

*will consume them by the sword, and by famine, and by pestilence.*<sup>1</sup> How, exclaims the Lord! how can I hear the prayers of those who beg to be freed from their afflictions, and not from their sins, because they do not wish to reform. What care I for their fasts, and their sacrifices, and their alms, when they will not change their lives. *I will consume them by the sword.* With all their prayers, and devotions, and penitential exercises, I shall be obliged by my justice to punish them.

Let us not, then, my brethren, trust to prayers or other devotions, unaccompanied by a resolution to amend. You pray, you smite your breast, and call for mercy; but that is not enough. The impious Antiochus prayed, but the Scriptures say that his prayers failed to obtain mercy from God. *Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy.*<sup>2</sup> The unhappy man, finding himself devoured by worms, and near his end, prayed for life, but without having sorrow for his sins.

Nor let us trust in our holy protectors, if we do not purpose to amend. Some say we have our patron or some other saint who will defend us; we have our Mother Mary to procure our deliverance. *Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance. Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? . . . and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father.*<sup>3</sup> How can we think to escape punishment if we do not abandon sin? How can the saints think of assisting us if we persist in exasperating the Lord? St. John Chrysostom says, of what use was Jeremias to the Jews?<sup>4</sup> The Jews had

<sup>1</sup> "Cum jejunaverint, non exaudiam preces eorum; et si obtulerint holocaustomata et victimas, non suscipiam ea; quoniam gladio, et fame, et peste, consumam eos."—*Jer.* xiv. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Orabat autem hic scelestus Dominum, a quo non esset misericordiam consecuturus."—2 *Mach.* ix. 13.

<sup>3</sup> "Facite ergo fructum dignum pœnitentiæ. Et ne velitis dicere intra vos: Patrem habemus Abraham."—*Matt.* iii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> "Quid profuit Jeremias Judæis?"—*Ad pop. Ant. hom.* 79.

Jeremias to pray for them, but, notwithstanding all the prayers of that holy prophet, they received the chastisement, because they did not wish to give up their sins. Beyond doubt, says the holy Doctor, the prayers of the saints contribute much to obtain the divine mercy for us, but when?—when we do penance.<sup>1</sup> They are useful, but only when we do ourselves violence to abandon sin, to fly occasions, and return to God's favor.

The emperor Phocas, in order to defend himself from his enemies, raised walls and multiplied fortifications, but he heard a voice saying to him from heaven: "You build walls, but when the enemy is within, the city is easily taken."<sup>2</sup> We must then expel this enemy, which is sin, from our souls, otherwise God cannot exempt us from chastisement, because he is just, and cannot leave sin unpunished. Another time the citizens of Antioch prayed to Mary to avert from them a scourge which overhung them; and whilst they were praying, St. Bertoldus heard the divine Mother replying from heaven, "Abandon your sins, and I shall be propitious to you."<sup>3</sup>

Let us then beg of the Lord to use mercy towards us, but let us pray as David prayed: *Lord, incline unto my aid.*<sup>4</sup> God wishes to aid us, but he wishes that we should aid ourselves, by doing all that depends upon us. "He who desires to be assisted," says Hilaretus,<sup>5</sup> "must do all that he can to assist himself." God wishes to save us, but we must not imagine that God will do all without our doing anything. St. Augustine says: "He who created you without your help, will not save you without your help."<sup>6</sup> What do you expect, sinful

<sup>1</sup> "Prosunt, et plurimum, sed quando nos quoque aliquid agimus."

<sup>2</sup> "Erigis muros; intus cum sit malum, urbs captu facilis est."

<sup>3</sup> "Abusum projicite, et ero vobis propitia."

<sup>4</sup> "Deus, in adjutorium meum intende."—*Ps.* lxi. 2.

<sup>5</sup> "Qui se juvari efflagitat, etiam, quod in se est, faciat."

<sup>6</sup> "Qui creavit te sine te, non salvabit te sine te."

brother? That God will bring you to Paradise with all your sins upon you? Do you continue to draw down upon you the divine scourges, and yet hope to be delivered from them? Must God save you while you persist in damning yourself?

If we purpose truly to turn to God, then let us pray to him and rejoice; even though the sins of the entire world were ours, we should be heard, as I said to you in the beginning. Every one who prays with a purpose of amendment, obtains mercy.<sup>1</sup> Let our prayers be in the name of Jesus Christ, who has promised that the eternal Father will grant us everything we ask in his name, that is, through his merits. *If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*<sup>2</sup> Let us pray, and never cease from prayer; thus we shall obtain every grace, and save ourselves. It is to this we are exhorted by St. Bernard, who tells us to pray to God through the intercession of Mary: "Let us seek grace, and seek it through Mary; because he who seeks through her, obtains his request, and cannot be disappointed."<sup>3</sup> Mary, when we pray to her, certainly pleads for us with her Son; and when Mary prays for us, she obtains what she demands, and her prayer cannot be refused by a son who loves her so much. (Act of contrition.)

<sup>1</sup> "Omnis enim qui petit, accipit."—*Matt.* vii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis."—*John*, xvi. 23.

<sup>3</sup> "Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam quæramus; quia, quod quærit, invenit, et frustrari non potest."—*De Aquæd.*

## NINTH DISCOURSE.

## Most Holy Mary is the Mediatrix of Sinners.

"Ego murus et ubera mea sicut turris; ex quo factus sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens."

"I am a wall, and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in his presence as one finding peace."—*Cant.* viii. 10.

DIVINE grace is an infinite treasure, because it makes us friends of God. *For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God.*<sup>1</sup> Hence it follows, that if there cannot be a greater happiness than to enjoy the grace of God, there cannot be a greater misery than to incur his displeasure by sin, which makes us his enemies. *But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.*<sup>2</sup> But if, my brethren, any of you have had the misfortune to forfeit this divine grace by sin, do not despair, but console yourselves with the reflection, that you have in Jesus Christ himself a mediator, who can obtain pardon for you, and restore you the grace you have lost. *And He is the propitiation for our sins.*<sup>3</sup>

What have you to fear, says St. Bernard, when you can have recourse to so great a mediator? He can do all things with his eternal Father.<sup>4</sup> He has satisfied the divine justice for you, continues the holy abbot, and has

<sup>1</sup> "Infinitus enim thesaurus est hominibus: quo qui usi sunt, participes facti sunt amicitiae Dei."—*Wisd.* vii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> "Odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus."—*Wisd.* xiv. 9.

<sup>3</sup> "Ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris."—I *John*, ii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Jesum tibi dedit mediatorem: quid non apud Patrem Filius talis obtineat?"—*De Aqued.*

nailed your sins to the cross, having taken them away from your soul.<sup>1</sup> But if, notwithstanding all this, you fear to approach Jesus Christ on account of his divine majesty, God has given you another advocate with his Son, and that advocate is Mary.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Mary has been given to the world as a mediatrix between God and sinners. Hear the words which the Holy Ghost makes her speak in the divine canticles: *I am a wall, and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in His presence as one finding peace.*<sup>3</sup> I am, she says, the refuge of those who fly to me; my breasts, that is, my mercy, are like a tower of defence to every one who has recourse to me; and he who is the enemy of God, let him know that I am the mediatrix of peace between God and sinners. "She finds peace for enemies, salvation for the lost, mercy for those who are in despair,"<sup>4</sup> says Cardinal Hugo. For this reason is Mary called *beautiful . . . as the curtains of Solomon.*<sup>5</sup> In the tents of David naught was to be heard of but war; in the tents of Solomon naught is spoken of but peace. By this we are to understand that Mary has no other ministry in heaven than that of peace and pardon. Hence St. Andrew Avellino calls her the pleader of Paradise; but what are those occupations in which Mary is engaged? "Mary," says Venerable Bede, "stands in the presence of her Son, praying unceasingly for sinners."<sup>6</sup> And

<sup>1</sup> "Quid timetis, modicæ fidei? Affixit peccata cruci cum suis manibus."—*In Cant.* s. 38.

<sup>2</sup> "Sed forsitan et in ipso majestatem vereare divinam? Advocatum habere vis ad ipsum? Ad Mariam recurre."—*De Aquæd.*

<sup>3</sup> "Ego murus, et ubera mea sicut turris, ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens."—*Cant.* viii. 10.

<sup>4</sup> "Ipsa reperit pacem inimicis, salutem perditis, misericordiam desperatis."—*In Cant.* viii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> "Formosa . . . sicut pelles Salomonis."—*Cant.* i. 4.

<sup>6</sup> "Stat Maria in conspectu Filii sui, non cessans pro peccatoribus exorare."



Blessed Amadeus says that "Mary, all-powerful by her prayers, stands before the face of God, continually interceding for us."<sup>1</sup> Thus Mary never ceases to implore of God by her all-powerful prayers all graces for us, if we do not refuse them. And are there any found to refuse the graces solicited for them by this divine Mother? Yes, there are found such—yes, those who will not abandon sin, who will not give up this friendship, this occasion; who will not restore their neighbor's property—those are they who will not receive the graces begged for them by Mary, because Mary wishes to obtain for them the grace of breaking off this connection; of flying this occasion of weakness; and they will not do it. And such as will not do it, positively refuse the grace sought for them by Mary. From heaven she sees well all our miseries and dangers; and oh, how deeply is she touched with compassion for us! With what motherly affection is she always endeavoring to assist us! "For she sees our dangers," continues the Blessed Amadeus, "and as our merciful Sovereign compassionates us with maternal affection."<sup>2</sup>

One day St. Bridget heard Jesus Christ saying to Mary: "Mother, ask of me what you will." And Mary answered him: "I ask mercy for the unfortunate."<sup>3</sup> As if she were to say to him, Son, since Thou hast made me the Mother of mercy, and Advocate of Sinners, can I ask aught else of Thee than mercy for the unhappy? In a word, St. Augustine says, that amongst all the saints, we have not one who is so solicitous for our salvation as Mary.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Adstat Beatissima Virgo vultui Conditoris, prece potentissima semper interpellans pro nobis."

<sup>2</sup> "Videt enim nostra discrimina, nostrique clemens Domina materno affectu miseretur."

<sup>3</sup> "Pete, Mater, quid vis a me. . . . Misericordiam peto pro miseris."

<sup>4</sup> "Te solam, O Maria, pro Sancta Ecclesia sollicitam præ omnibus Sanctis scimus."—*Apuđ S. Bonav. spec. B. M. V. lect. 6.*



Isaias complains in his day as follows: *Behold, Thou art angry; . . . there is none who riseth up and taketh hold of Thee.*<sup>1</sup> Lord, said the prophet, Thou art justly angry with us for our sins, and there is no one to appease Thee, or draw Thee from chastising us. St. Bonaventure says that the prophet had reason to speak thus, since there was no Mary then.<sup>2</sup> But at present, if Jesus Christ wishes to chastise a sinner, and the sinner recommends himself to Mary, she by her prayers for him restrains her Son, and averts the chastisement from him.<sup>3</sup> There is no one, he says, so well able to hold back the sword of the Lord.<sup>4</sup> Justly, then, did St. Andrew call Mary the peace of the Lord with men.<sup>5</sup> And St. Justin called her the "Arbitress," saying, "The Word uses the Virgin as arbitress."<sup>6</sup> *Sequestra* signifies an arbitress, to whose decision disputants binds themselves to yield. By which St. Justin means to say, that Jesus lays before Mary all his reasons for punishing such a sinner, that she may negotiate a peace; and the sinner, on the other side, places himself in her hands. Thus Mary on the one side obtains for the sinner the grace of amendment, and penance on the other; she obtains pardon for him of her Son, and thus it is concluded. Such is the ministry in the exercise of which Mary is continually occupied.

When Noe judged that the deluge ought to have ceased, he dismissed the dove from the ark. It returned with a branch of olive, significant of the peace which God had concluded with the world. This dove was a

<sup>1</sup> "Ecce tu iratus es, et peccavimus; . . . non est . . . qui consurgat, et teneat te."—*Is.* lxiv. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> "Ante Mariam, non fuit qui sic detinere Dominum auderet."

<sup>3</sup> "Detinet Filium, ne peccatores percutiat."

<sup>4</sup> "Nemo tam idoneus, qui gladio Domini manum objiciat."—*Spec. B. M. V.* lect. 7-14.

<sup>5</sup> "Salve, divina cum hominibus Reconciliatio!"

<sup>6</sup> "Verbum usum est Virgine Sequestra."—*Exposit. fid. de Trin.*

figure of Mary. "Thou art," says St. Bonaventure, "that most faithful dove of Noe which became the most faithful mediatrix between God and the world submerged by a spiritual deluge."<sup>1</sup> Thou, O Mary! art the dove all faithful to him who invokes Thee—Thou art the dove that, interceding with God, hast obtained for us peace and salvation, says St. Epiphanius.<sup>2</sup> Pelbart inquires how it happens that in the Old Law, the Lord was so vigorous in his chastisements, of universal deluge, of fire from heaven, of fiery serpents, and such like punishments; whereas he now deals so mercifully with us, who have sinned more grievously than those of old?<sup>3</sup> And he answers, he does it all through love of Mary, who intercedes for us.<sup>4</sup> "Oh how long since should heaven and earth have been destroyed," says St. Fulgentius, "if Mary had not interposed."<sup>5</sup>

Wherefore the Church wishes that we should call this divine Mother our hope.<sup>6</sup> The impious Luther could not endure that the Church should teach us to call Mary our hope. He said that our hope ought to rest only in God—not in the creature; and that God curses him who places his confidence in creatures: *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.*<sup>7</sup> True; but that is understood of those who trust in creatures, in contempt of God, or independently of him. But we hope in Mary, as our medi-

<sup>1</sup> "Tu es illa fidelissima columba Noe, quæ inter Deum et mundum, diluvio spirituali submersum, Mediatrix fidelissima extitisti."—*Spec. B. M. V.* lect. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Per te pax cœlestis donata est."

<sup>3</sup> "Quare parcit nunc mundo ipse Deus, qui olim etiam multo his minora peccata acrius punivit?"

<sup>4</sup> "Totum hoc facit propter Beatam Virginem."—*Stell. B. V.* l. 11, p. 2, c. 2.

<sup>5</sup> "Cœlum et terra jamdudum ruisent, si Maria suis precibus non sustentasset!"

<sup>6</sup> "Spes nostra, salve."

<sup>7</sup> "Maledictus homo qui confidit in homine."—*Jer.* xvii. 5.

atrix with the Lord. In the same manner as Jesus is our mediator of right with his eternal Father, because by the merits of his Passion he obtains pardon for penitent sinners, so Mary is mediatrix by divine favor with her Son, and is such a mediatrix that her Son grants her every request; nay, that he wishes that every grace should pass through her hands. "The Lord," says St. Bernard, "has placed in Mary the plenitude of all good; so that if aught of hope or grace or salvation, is in us, we know that we derive it from Mary."<sup>1</sup> The Lord has confided to Mary the treasure of mercies which he wishes to have dealt out to us, and therefore wishes that we should acknowledge every grace as coming through her. Whence the saint calls her his chief confidence, and the principal ground of his hope.<sup>2</sup> For which reason he exhorts us to look for grace always through the intercession of Mary.<sup>3</sup> And for the same reason the Church, in despite of Luther, calls Mary our hope.<sup>4</sup>

Hence also do the saints call Mary the ladder, the moon, and the city of refuge. She is called by St. Bernard the ladder of sinners.<sup>5</sup> It is sin which separates us from God. *But your iniquities have divided between you and your God.*<sup>6</sup> A soul in the state of grace is in union with God, and God in union with it. *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.*<sup>7</sup> But when the soul turns its back upon God, then is it separated from

<sup>1</sup> "Totius boni plenitudinem posuit in Maria, ut proinde, si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiæ, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare."—*De Aquæd.*

<sup>2</sup> "Hæc mea maxima fiducia est, hæc tota ratio spei meæ."

<sup>3</sup> "Quæramus gratiam, et per Mariam gratiam."

<sup>4</sup> "Spes nostra, salve."

<sup>5</sup> "Hæc peccatorum Scala."—*De Aquæd.*

<sup>6</sup> "Iniquitates vestræ diviserunt inter vos et Deum vestrum."—*Is.* lix. 2.

<sup>7</sup> "Qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo."—*I John*, iv. 16.

him—plunged into an abyss of misery, and as far removed from him as sin itself. But when shall this wretched soul find a ladder by which to mount once more to God, and be again united to him? Mary is that ladder, to whom, if the sinner has recourse, no matter what his misery, or how great the filth of sins, he can come out of the pit of perdition. “Thou,” says St. Bernard, “dost not abhor the sinner, however loathsome he be; if he once sigh to thee, thou reachest him thy hand to draw him out of the gulf of despair.”<sup>1</sup> For the same reason is she called the moon: *Fair as the moon.*<sup>2</sup> “As the moon,” says St. Bernard, “is placed between the sun and earth, so is Mary stationed between God and us, to pour out his graces continually upon us.”<sup>3</sup> Hence, also, she is called the city of refuge, as she is made to call herself by St. John Damascene. “I am the city of all those that have recourse to me.”<sup>4</sup> In the ancient law there were five cities of sanctuary; to which, if any one fled, he was secure of not being pursued by justice, no matter what his crime. At present we have not so many cities of sanctuary—we have only Mary, to whom if any one shall have fled he may rest secure of not being pursued by the divine justice. In the cities of the old law every delinquent was in danger, nor could all his crimes escape unpunished; but Mary is a city of refuge which receives every criminal. “There is no one so much cast off by God,” said this blessed Mother to St. Bridget, “who, if he have recourse to me, shall not return to God, and receive pardon.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Tu peccatorem quantumlibet foetidum non horres; si ad te suspiraverit, tu illum a desperationis barathro pia manu retrahis.”—*De pr. ad glor. V.*

<sup>2</sup> “Pulchra ut luna.”—*Cant. vi. 9.*

<sup>3</sup> “Sicut luna est media inter solem et terram, sic et Virgo regia inter nos et Deum est media, et gratiam nobis refundit.”

<sup>4</sup> “Ego civitas omnium ad me confugientium.”

<sup>5</sup> “Nullus est ita abjectus a Deo, qui, si me invocaverit, non revertatur ad Deum, et habiturus sit misericordiam.”

Mary, so far from disdaining to assist sinners, prides herself upon the function of advocate of sinners, so that she is related to have said to the venerable sister Mary Villanin, "Next to my dignity of Mother of God, there is nothing which I so much value as my office of advocate of sinners." "To this end," says Idiota, who takes it from St. John Chrysostom, "hast thou been chosen from eternity to be the Mother of God, that those whose sins should exclude them from participation in the merits of thy Son might be made partakers of them by thy intercession."<sup>1</sup> This was the principal office for the fulfilment of which God created her, and placed her in the world: *Feed thy kids.*<sup>2</sup> By kids he means sinners, and those kids are given in care to Mary, in order that they who on the day of judgment should by their sins have deserved to stand upon the left, may by her intercession stand upon the right. "Feed thy kids," says William of Paris, "whom thou shalt convert into sheep, that they who should have been placed to the left may through thy intercession take their stand upon the right."<sup>3</sup> But we must not forget to notice what has been said upon this passage by William of England: "Feed thy kids." Who are the kids of Mary? "These sinners," he says, "who pay her no devotion, who do not beg of her to obtain their conversion, are not the kids of Mary, and shall be placed on the left."<sup>4</sup>

St. Bridget one day heard Jesus Christ saying to his mother, "Thou givest assistance to every one endeavor-

<sup>1</sup> "Ideo Mater Dei præelecta es ab æterno, ut, quos justitia Filii salvare non potest, tu per tuam salves pietatem."

<sup>2</sup> "Pasce hœdos tuos."—*Cant.* i. 7.

<sup>3</sup> "Pasce hœdos tuos, quos convertis in oves, ut, qui a sinistris in judicio erant collocandi, tua intercessione collocentur a dextris."

<sup>4</sup> "Qui nec Beatam Virginem obsequio prosequuntur, nec preces fundunt ut aliquando resipiscant, hœdi non sunt Mariæ, sed ad sinistram sistendi."

ing to rise to God.”<sup>1</sup> Mary assists every one who does himself violence to leave his evil life and turn to God, or at least prays to her that he may receive strength to do so; if he have not that desire, the divine mother herself cannot assist him. Mary then assists only those sinners who honor her by some special devotion, and who, if they yet remain in disgrace with God, have recourse to her that she may obtain pardon for them, and work their deliverance from their present infernal condition. The sinner who acts thus from his heart is secure, because Mary, as we have said before, has been therefore created that she might have charge of sinners, and lead them to God. The Lord revealed this to St. Catherine of Sienna: “She is chosen by me as a most delicious food, so as to capture men, especially sinners.”<sup>2</sup> And the blessed Mother herself said to St. Bridget, that as the magnet attracts iron, so she draws the hard hearts of men to herself and to God.<sup>3</sup> But we must always bear in mind that these hearts, notwithstanding their hardness, must desire liberation from their unhappy state.

Ah, if all had recourse to Mary with at least this desire, she would procure salvation for all. “What fear of damnation should that man feel,” says the Abbot Adam, “to whom Mary offers herself for a mother and an advocate?”<sup>4</sup> He inquires again, “Could it be possible that you, the mother of mercy, should not intercede with the Redeemer for the soul he has

<sup>1</sup> “Conanti surgere ad Deum tribuis auxilium.”

<sup>2</sup> “Ipsa est a me velut esca dulcissima electa pro capiendis hominibus, et animabus præcipue peccatorum.”—*Dial.* tr. 4, c. 139.

<sup>3</sup> “Sicut magnes attrahit ferrum, sic ego attraho Deo dura corda.”—*Rev.* l. 3, c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> “Timerene debet et pereat, cui Maria se Matrem exhibet et Advocatam?”



redeemed?"<sup>1</sup> He lastly makes answer: "Ah, Thou must intercede, because God, who has placed his Son mediator between man and heaven, has placed Thee mediatrix between his Son and guilty man."<sup>2</sup>

Then, sinner, says St. Bernard, give thanks to him who has provided you with such a mediatrix.<sup>3</sup> Thank your God, who, in order to manifest his mercy towards you, has given you not only his Son for a mediator in his own right, but that you might have more confidence, has given you Mary as a mediatrix with that Son. Therefore it is St. Augustine calls her the only hope of sinners.<sup>4</sup> And St. Bonaventure: "If by reason of your iniquities you see the Lord in anger, and fear to approach him, have recourse to the hope of sinners, who is Mary."<sup>5</sup> She will not reject you because you are too wretched; "it is her office to assist the wretched."<sup>6</sup> And William of Paris says exactly the same: "It is thy office to place thyself between God and man."<sup>7</sup> Hence, when we have recourse to Mary, let every one say to her with St. Thomas of Villanova: "Ah, therefore, thou our advocate fulfil thy office."<sup>8</sup> Since thou art Mother of God, and advocate of the wretched, assist

<sup>1</sup> "Tu, misericordiæ Mater, non rogabis pro redempto Redemptorem?"

<sup>2</sup> "Rogabis plane; quia, qui Filium tuum inter Deum et homines posuit Mediatorem, te quoque inter reum et Judicem, posuit Mediatricem."—*Marial.* s. 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Age gratias ei qui talem tibi Mediatricem providit."—*In Sign. Magn.*

<sup>4</sup> "Spes unica peccatorum."

<sup>5</sup> "Si propter tuas nequitias Dominum videris indignatum, ad spem peccatorum confugas."

<sup>6</sup> "Sibi pro miseris satisfacere ex officio est commissum."—*Stim. div. am.* p. 3, c. 12.

<sup>7</sup> "Officium tuum est mediam te interponere inter Deum et homines."—*De Rhet. div.* c. 18.

<sup>8</sup> "Eia ergo, Advocata nostra, officium tuum imple."—*De Nat. V. M.* conc. 3.



me who am so wretched; if thou dost not assist me, I am lost; and let us proceed to address her in the words of St. Bernard: "Remember, O most pious virgin, that from the beginning, etc., etc."<sup>1</sup> I do not wish to be the first unhappy man who shall have had recourse to thee, and yet be abandoned by thee. (Act of contrition.)

<sup>1</sup> "Memorare, piissima Maria, a sæculo non esse auditum, quemquam ad tua præsidia confugientem esse derelictum."

## Texts from Holy Scripture and from the Holy Fathers

### REFERRING TO SOME PARTICULAR CALAMITIES.

#### 1. Earthquakes.

“COMMOTA est et contremuit terra, fundamenta montium conturbata sunt et commota sunt, quoniam iratus est eis.—The earth shook and trembled: the foundations of the mountains were troubled and were moved, because He was angry with them.”—*Ps.* xvii. 8.

“Movebitur terra de loco suo, propter indignationem Domini.—The earth shall be moved out of her place for the indignation of the Lord.”—*Is.* xiii. 13.

“Agitatione agitabitur terra, sicut ebrius.—With shaking shall the earth be shaken as a drunken man.”—*Is.* xxiv. 20. On these words Cardinal Hugo makes the following comment: “Evomet enim terra peccatores.—The earth shall eject sinners.”

St. John Chrysostom says: “Causa enim terræmotus est ira Dei; porro causa divinæ iræ nostra sunt peccata; noli autem supplicium timere, sed supplicii parentem, peccatum.—The cause of the earthquake is God’s anger; but the cause of the divine anger is our sins. But do not fear the punishment, but fear sin, which is the cause of the punishment.”—*De Lazaro*, conc. 6. “Dominus terrarum orbem concutit, non ut evertat, sed ut eos, qui insolenter se gerunt, ad salutem convertat.—The Lord shook the earth not to overthrow it, but to convert unto salvation those that lead wicked lives.”—*Serm. de S. Basso Mart.* “Concutitur civitas, mens vero tua non conquatur.—The city is shaken, but your mind remains unmoved.”—*De Laz.* conc. 6. “Præcessit tam-

quam præco terræmotus, iram Dei denuntians, ut supplicium inferendum repellamus.—The earthquake has preceded like a herald announcing God's anger that we may escape by penance the punishment that we have merited."—*Ibid.* "Ecce venit terræmotus; quid profuerunt opes? Periit una cum possessione possessor. Omnium commune sepulcrum facta est civitas, non ab artificum manibus, sed a calamitate fabricatum.—Behold, there came an earthquake; what have riches profited thee? The possessor has perished along with the possession. The city has become for all a common sepulchre, which has been built, not by the hand of the artificer, but by calamity."—*Ibid.* "Prius corda hominum, et postea elementa turbantur.—The hearts of men are first disturbed, then the elements."—*Ibid.*

## 2. Drought.

"Si in præceptis meis ambulaveritis, . . . dabo vobis pluvias temporibus suis.—Quod si non audieritis me, . . . dabo vobis cælum sicut ferrum, et terram æneam. Consumetur incassum, labor vester; non proferet terra germen, nec arbores poma præbebunt.—If you walk in My precepts, . . . I will give you rain in due seasons.—But if you will not hear Me, . . . I will make to you the heaven above as iron, and the earth as brass. Your labor shall be spent in vain, the ground shall not bring forth her increase, nor the trees yield their fruit."—*Levit.* xxvi. 3, 14, 19.

"Usquequo lugebit terra, et herba omnis regionis siccabitur, propter malitiam habitantium in ea? Consumptum est animal. . . . How long shall the land mourn, and the herb of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? The beasts are consumed."—*Jer.* xii. 4.

"Sementem multam jacies in terram, et modicum congregabis.—Thou shalt cast much seed into the ground,

and gather little.”—*Deut.* xxviii. 38. Commentaries: “Ob hoc campi steriles, quia charitas friguit.—Therefore the fields are sterile, because charity has grown cold.”

“Polluisti terram in fornicationibus tuis et in malitiis tuis; quamobrem prohibitæ sunt stillæ pluviarum.—Thou hast polluted the land with thy fornications and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers were withholden.”—*Jer.* iii. 2.

“Non estis reversi ad me, dicit Dominus; ego quoque prohibui a vobis imbrem, cum adhuc tres menses superessent usque ad messem.—You have not returned to Me, saith the Lord. I also have withholden the rain from you when there were yet three months to the harvest.”—*Amos*, iv. 6. St. Basil: “Discamus quod ob aversionem nostram calamitates infligit Deus.—Let us learn that because we have turned our backs upon God He has inflicted upon us calamities.”—*Hom. in fame et siccit.*

“Radices ejus siccentur, . . . atteratur messis ejus.—Let his roots be dried up, . . . and his harvest destroyed.”—*Job*, xviii. 16.

Solomon, when dedicating the Temple to God, thus spoke to God in prayer: “Si clausum fuerit cælum, et non pluerit, propter peccata eorum, et orantes in loco isto pœnitentiam egerint, . . . exaudi eos in cælo.—If heaven shall be shut up, and there shall be no rain because of their sins, and they praying in this place shall do penance, . . . hear Thou them in heaven.”—3 *Kings*, viii. 35.

The Lord says: “Nubibus mandabo, ne pluant.—I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it.”—*Is.* v. 6. “Quia domus mea deserta est, . . . propter hoc super vos prohibiti sunt cæli, ne darent rorem, . . . et vocavi siccitatem super terram.—Because My house is desolate, . . . therefore the heavens over you were

stayed from giving dew, . . . and I called for a drought upon the land.”—*Agg.* i. 9.

St. Augustine: “Perseverant flagella, quia perseverant et delicta.—Punishments continue, because sins continue.”—*Serm.* 46, *E. B. app.*

St. Basil: “Cælum vidimus solidum, serenitate sua nos contristans. Terra jam exsiccata est, horrida, et ob siccitatem scissa; fontes nos deseruerunt.—We see the heavens closed, and are saddened by their serenity. The earth is already dried up, is horrible, and on account of the dryness is full of fissures; the water fountains have left us.”—*Hom. in fame et siccit.*

### 3. Scarcity and Sterility.

“Posuit . . . terram fructiferam in salsuginem, a malitia inhabitantium in ea.—He hath turned . . . a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.”—*Ps.* cvi. 33. Cardinal Hugo: “What does sin do? It turns fruitful land into sterile land.”

“Maledicta terra . . . spinas et tribulos germinabit.—Cursed is the earth . . . thorns and thistles shall it bring forth.”—*Gen.* iii. 17.

“Maledictio vorabit terram, et peccabunt habitatores ejus.—A curse shall devour the earth, and the inhabitants thereof shall sin.”—*Is.* xxiv. 6.

“Revelabunt cœli iniquitatem ejus, et terra consurget adversus eum.—The heavens shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him.”—*Job,* xx. 27.

“Ego dedi ei frumentum et vinum, . . . quæ fecerunt Baal; idcirco convertar, et sumam frumentum meum.—I gave her corn and wine, . . . which they have used in the service of Baal; therefore I will return, and take away My corn.”—*Osee,* ii. 8. There are some that abuse the goods that God has given to them; they make idols of them, that is, objects of sin. St. Augustine says: “Cur

famem pateris? Cur inopiam sentis? Quia quotidie crescit et culpa. Ad Deum convertere, relinque idolum."—Why are you suffering hunger? Why do you experience want? Because your guilt also increases daily. Be ye converted to God, and leave your idol."—*Serm.* 46, *E. B. app.*

"Honora Dominum de tua substantia, . . . et implebuntur horrea tua.—Egestas a Domino in domo impii; habitacula autem justorum benedicentur.—Honor the Lord with thy substance, . . . and thy barn shall be filled.—Want is from the Lord in the house of the wicked; but the habitations of the just shall be blessed."—*Prov.* iii. 9, 33.

#### 4. Hail and Lightning.

"Ignis, grando, fames, et mors, omnia hæc ad vindictam creata sunt.—Fire, hail, famine, and death, all these were created for vengeance."—*Ecclus.* xxxix. 35.

"Illuxerunt fulgura ejus orbi terræ; vidit, et commota est terra; . . . annuntiaverunt cœli justitiam ejus; . . . confundantur omnes, qui adorant sculptilia.—His lightnings have shone forth to the world; the earth saw and trembled; . . . the heavens declared His justice; . . . let them all be confounded that adore graven things."—*Ps.* xcvi. 4. Alphonsus Tostatus says: "Cum tonitrua audierimus, sciamus Deum nos voce sua velle admonere, ut a malo recedamus.—When we hear the thunder, we should remember that God wishes to admonish us to cease committing sin."

#### 5. Hurtful Animals.

"Immittam in vos famem et bestias pessimas usque ad internecionem.—And I will send in upon you famine and evil beasts unto utter destruction."—*Ezech.* v. 17. On this point St. Jerome remarks: "Famem, et pesti-

lentiam, et bestias pessimas, propter nostra venire peccata manifestum est.—It is manifest that hunger, pestilence, and wild beasts are sent on account of our sins.”

“Addam plagas vestras in septuplum propter peccata vestra, immittamque in vos bestias agri, quæ consumant vos et pecora vestra, et ad paucitatem cuncta rēdīgant, desertæque fiant viæ vestræ.—I will bring seven times more plagues upon you for your sins; and I will send in upon you the beasts of the field to destroy you and your cattle, and make you few in number, and that your highways may be desolate.”—*Levit.* xxvi. 21.

“Sementem multam jacies in terram, et modicum congregabis, quia locustæ devorabunt omnia.—Thou shalt cast much seed in the ground, and gather little: because the locusts shall consume all.”—*Deut.* xxviii. 38.

Dauraltius says: “Nullum adeo exiguum animal est, quod non possit contra peccantem esse potentissimus hostis.—There is no animal so small that it cannot be a most powerful enemy of the sinner.”—*Flores Exempl.* c. 6, tit. 2, n. 9.

And St. John Chrysostom: “Quamdiu Adam purum servavit vultum, ei bestię parebant; quando autem fœdavit inobedientia, odio habebant.—So long as Adam preserved his countenance pure, the animals obeyed him; but when he defiled it by disobedience, they hated him.”—*In Ps.* 3.

## 6. Sickness.

“Extendens manum, percutiam te et populum tuum peste.—I will stretch out My hand to strike thee and thy people with pestilence.”—*Exod.* ix. 15. “Qui delinquit in conspectu ejus qui fecit eum, incidet in manus medici.—He that sinneth before his Maker, shall fall into the hands of the physician.”—*Ecclus.* xxxviii. 15.



7. Calamities in General.

“Terra infecta est ab habitatoribus suis; . . . propter hoc maledictio vorabit terram, . . . et relinquentur homines pauci.—And the earth is infected by the inhabitants thereof, . . . and few men shall be left.”—*Is.* xxiv. 5.

“Qui malignantur, exterminabuntur. — Evil-doers shall be cut off.”—*Ps.* xxxvi. 9.

“Armabit creaturam ad ultionem inimicorum.—He will arm the creature for the revenge of his enemies.”—*Wisd.* v. 18.

“Vidi eos qui operantur iniquitatem, et seminant dolores et metunt eos.—I have seen them that work iniquity, and that sow sorrows, and reap them.”—*Job*, iv. 8. He that sows sins shall reap sorrows and pains.

“Quia oblita es mei, et projecisti me post corpus tuum, tu quoque porta scelus tuum et fornicationem tuam.—Because thou hast forgotten Me and hast cast Me off behind thy body, bear thou also thy wickedness and thy fornications.”—*Ezech.* xxiii. 35.

St. Cyprian says: “Miraris iram Dei crescere, cum crescat quotidie quod puniatur?—Why should you wonder that God’s anger is growing when what is punishable is every day growing?”—*Ad Demetrianum*.

St. Basil: “Nemo se torqueat in inquirendis causis, cur siccitas, fulmina, grandines; nostri causa hæc invehuntur, qui retinemus cor impænitens.—No one troubles himself about inquiring why drought, lightning, hail, are sent down upon us; they are sent us on account of our sins, and because we preserve an impenitent heart.”—*In cap. 9 Isaie*.

St. John Chrysostom: “Peccatum, fontem malorum, reprimamus.—We must repress sin, the fountain of evils.”—*In Ps.* 3.

St. Gregory: "Jure nos omnia feriunt, quæ vitiis nostris serviebant.—Rightly is everything hostile to us that has gratified our passions."—*In Evang. hom.* 35.

St. Anselm: "Ex offensione, non solum iram Dei promeruimus, sed totam creaturam adversum non excitavimus.—By offending God we not only excite his anger, but the anger of all creation."—*De Simil.* c. 102.

Salvian: "Quid miraris, si castigamur? Miseriæ, infirmitates, testimonia sunt mali servi. Deum ad puniendos nos trahimus invitum.—Why wonder that we are chastised? Miseries, infirmities, are signs of evil. We force God to punish us."—*De Gubern. Dei*, l. 4.

Cardinal Hugo: "Omnis creatura conqueritur de ipsis qui abusi sunt ea.—Every creature complains of those that abuse it."

**Reflections useful for Bishops that they may govern well  
their churches ;**

TAKEN FROM THE EXAMPLES OF ZEALOUS BISHOPS AND CONFIRMED BY  
EXPERIENCE.

FATHER TANNOIA (Book II. ch. xxvi.) and Cardinal Villecourt (l. vi. ch. 3) inform us that these REFLECTIONS are among the first writings of St. Alphonsus. He published them in 1745, and sent them to all the Italian bishops, who expressed to him their heartfelt thanks. Mgr. Salerno, Bishop of Molfetta, wrote to him as follows: "I have read your REFLECTIONS USEFUL FOR BISHOPS, and I am much edified. I see that it is great zeal, aided by much wisdom and profound science, which has led you to write this little treatise. Your Reverence has rendered a great service to the Episcopate, but with such kindness on your part a feeling of compassion can hardly be suppressed, since your experience has made you see that practice is much more difficult than theory, especially in these unhappy times."

The holy author having afterwards himself been made a bishop, knew how to join practice to theory, with zeal and admirable success, under the weight of his advanced age and his grave infirmities, and in the midst of multiplied difficulties. We may form an idea of this by reading the collection of the acts of his episcopate, which are published in a subsequent volume.

We think that these Reflections are USEFUL, not only for bishops, but also for all the clergy, especially those that have charge of souls.—ED.

**Praised be Forever Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament,**

**AND MARY A VIRGIN ALWAYS IMMACULATE!**

“ATTENDITE vobis et universo gregi, in quo vos Spiritus Sancti posuit episcopos regere Ecclesiam Dei.—Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God.”—*Acts*, xx. 28.

It is certain that God has intrusted to the bishops the government of his Church, and that on them depends the sanctification of the people. Hence it was with reason that St. Charles Borromeo said that the shepherds are the cause of the bad life of the sheep; and indeed we know by experience that holy bishops sanctify their dioceses. St. Charles, who in fact was a model of good bishops, and who consequently will often be proposed as such in this little work, reformed so well his subjects that their virtues having spread among the neighboring people, made better Christians.

There already exist many books treating at length of the duties of bishops in regard to the government of their churches. Nevertheless an experience of twenty years, spent in giving missions, has taught me that many things do not come to the knowledge of the bishops; for this reason, through the sole desire of promoting the glory of Jesus Christ, I have wished to write briefly in these few pages some reflections of greater importance which may be very useful to direct them in the exercise of their duties, either in regard to the principal cares with which they are charged, or in regard to the

most efficacious means that they should employ in directing their flocks. This has been my only aim. These CARES and these MEANS will be treated in two short chapters. I hope with the divine goodness that this poor little treatise, which in view of its author hardly deserves to be looked at, may be read with some profit, at least for its brevity.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE PRINCIPAL CARES OF A BISHOP.

WE should be convinced of what St. Athanasius<sup>1</sup> says, that the bishop before his consecration may live for himself, but that after his consecration he is obliged to live for his flock, of the salvation of whom he must certainly render an account, as the Lord has informed us through the mouth of Ezechiel: *Woe to the shepherds; of Israel, that feed themselves: . . . Behold I Myself come upon the shepherds, I will require My flock at their hand.*<sup>2</sup> Hence St. Gregory<sup>3</sup> says that at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, where every one will be obliged to render an account of his soul, the bishop will have to render an account of as many souls as he has subjects. The Bishop of Sardis led an innocent life; still, because he did not attend, as he should have attended, to the care of his flock, God addressed to him through St. John this terrible reproach: *Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead.*<sup>4</sup> Whence it follows that the bishop, however holy he may be by the works of his life, if he is negligent in regard to the salvation of his flock, will be reproved at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, to whom he will have to render a rigorous account, not only of his omissions, but also of all the evils that have resulted therefrom.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. ad Dracont.*

<sup>2</sup> "Vae pastoribus Israel, qui pascebant semetipsos: . . . Ecce ego ipse super pastores requiram gregem meum de manu eorum."—*Ezech.* xxxi. 2–10.

<sup>3</sup> *Moral.* l. 24, c. 30.

<sup>4</sup> "Nomen habes quod vivas, et mortuus es."—*Apoc.* iii. 1.



Hence to come to the practical part, we shall speak of the principal cares which a good bishop should keep before his mind in governing his church, and which are seven in number, namely: 1. The seminary; 2. The candidates for ordination; 3. The priests; 4. The parish priests; 5. The Vicar and ministers or servants; 6. The convents of nuns.

### 1. The Seminary.

There is no doubt that the seminaries are of the greatest benefit to the dioceses; it suffices to know how much they are approved and recommended to the bishops by the holy Council of Trent. Indeed, it is by the seminaries that good clergy are formed, and it is on the clergy that afterwards depends the common good of the people. But we should also consider that if the seminary is well directed, the diocese will be sanctified; otherwise it will be ruined. Young men when entering the seminary do not bring with them the spirit that they should have; they enter in order to acquire it, coming from their families either filled with vice or very much inclined at this age to become addicted to every vice. How many are there who enter the seminaries as angels, and who in a short time become demons! If then the seminaries have not sufficient revenues, either for the support of the pupils (without which the seminaries cannot be well governed), or for maintaining good servants and good masters, it would be better that no seminaries existed. We should be convinced that, ordinarily speaking, in seminaries there are more disorders and scandals than is known by the bishops, who are often least instructed about them.

In the first place, it is necessary that there should be a good Director who has a true zeal for God, and who has experience, with enough sagacity to be able to discover the malice that is in young men, for he should be

distrustful of every one and of every action; otherwise if he conducts himself with simplicity he will easily be deceived. We therefore see that it is very difficult to find a Director who is really capable of governing seminaries.

Secondly, there should be a sufficient number of Prefects,<sup>1</sup> and these should be priests advanced in years, pious, and of a character firm enough to correct and not to overlook faults. They should above all see that the pupils do not touch one another even in play; that there be no familiarity among them; that one does not remain alone with the other for the purpose of talking; and that they do not speak to those belonging to another division. When the Prefects cannot themselves remedy the evil, they should at least, in more important cases, inform the Director, and when necessary, also the bishop.

Besides the Prefects, it is good, and it is even a very useful measure, to choose in each section two or three pupils who are the most pious and faithful, and to charge them without the knowledge of their companions secretly to observe what is going on. Every week, and whenever it is convenient, the Director or the bishop receives from them notice of the faults that have been committed.

Thirdly, it is also necessary that the bishop should make, two or three times a year, a particular examination of the conduct of every seminarian by endeavoring to find out the truth by means of those who, he knows, are more pious. He should then dismiss with firmness those that are incorrigible and that give scandal, of whom one alone is sufficient to spoil all the rest. It is, moreover, very useful that the bishop should often visit the seminary to excite the zeal of the pupils in the practice of piety, and also in their studies even, by attending

<sup>1</sup> "Prefects," or "Overseers," see RULES farther on.

their theses and their literary exercises. This will conduce in a wonderful way to sustaining their application and emulation.

But in a special manner should the bishop be watchful over all that regards piety in the seminary:

1. He should ordain that there should be in common a meditation of half an hour in the morning, and of at least a quarter of an hour in the evening; and that for the most part the meditation should be made on the eternal maxims, which are very useful for young men to consider, in order that they may live far away from vice.

2. He should have them make every year the spiritual exercises during eight days; during this time they are not to speak to one another, nor apply themselves to study.

3. Moreover, he should have a familiar sermon preached to them every fifteen days, or at least every month, by a virtuous priest who does not live at the seminary; the subject of the sermon should also be the eternal truths, and nearly always should the enormity of sacrilege be touched upon, as it is this to which young men are easily subject through false shame.

4. He should see that they go to confession every week or every two weeks by giving them the best confessors of the place where the seminary is situated, or at least two confessors each time in order that the pupils may have more liberty in their confessions. He should, moreover, send them four times a year extraordinary confessors on account of the great danger of sacrilege to which young men are exposed if they always confess to priests that know them.

5. It is good to forbid them to take the discipline in common, in the dark; for this may easily be the cause of scandal.

6. He should positively forbid them to keep profane books, which are usually very injurious to young men.

7. He should ordain that silence should be kept, and that there should be reading at table of the Lives of the saints, or of books that treat of terrible examples, and that the Director should always be present when they take their meals.

As for study, it will before all be well to make the pupils apply to the study of the Latin language, the knowledge of which is so necessary for all other sciences. They should afterwards devote themselves to the regular and thorough study of philosophy and theology; and it will also be well to make them study Moral Theology at the seminary in order that they may become capable confessors, and may be of use to the bishop.

## 2. Candidates for Ordination.

Oh, what a severe account will every bishop have to render to God of the obligation he has to exclude from the altar unworthy subjects and to admit those that are worthy! St. Francis de Sales trembled when he thought of this terrible account. This is the reason why he admitted to holy Orders only those who he had reason to hope would turn out well. In this matter he disregarded recommendations, nobility, and even the talents of the subject if these were not joined to a good life; because knowledge united with a bad life does usually more harm by appearing to add a certain respectability to vice. Hence it followed that he ordained few subjects, as is usually done by all good bishops, because in reality there are few that embrace the ecclesiastical state in order to correspond to the true vocation which they have, and in order to sanctify themselves; the consequence is, that there are few who become virtuous priests, and make themselves useful for the benefit of souls. The same saint said that the Church needs not many priests, but good priests.

As to the candidates for ordination, as soon as the

bishop has established a seminary complete according to the form described above, he should make it a rule, and let all know, that no one will be admitted to holy Orders unless he has spent at least three years at the seminary, and has the intention to remain there until he is raised to the priesthood.

Then, in order to admit the seminarians to Orders, the bishop should examine them in regard to their piety and their studies.

I. As regards their morals, we should understand that it is not sufficient if they bring with them certificates from their parish priests, who at times are too easily swayed by human respect. Nor should we be merely satisfied with the negative goodness of the candidates; we should have in regard to them such recommendations as give sufficient indications of a true ecclesiastical spirit. An excellent practice to advise is that of zealous bishops, namely, never to resolve upon the admission of a candidate for ordination without having made in regard to him secret inquiries of several of the faithful who live in the same place, and who know him. This should be regarded as a very efficacious and very necessary means to quiet the bishop's conscience before ordination. As for these inquiries, we should try to find out not only whether the candidate does not give scandal by being addicted to gaming, insolent behavior, evil conversations, but also whether he really leads a spiritual life by visiting the churches, by meditating, and by receiving the sacraments; whether he leads a retired life, whether he associates only with good companions, whether he applies to study, whether he dresses modestly, and the like. If we have ever come to the knowledge of some positive scandal committed by a candidate for ordination, it will not suffice to require ordinary proof of his good behavior: he should be subjected to a trial of several years; for then we may have

reason to suspect that all that he does is done through dissimulation, so as to be ordained priest.

For this purpose the bishop would do well to establish several Congregations in various places of the diocese expressly and solely for clerics. They should assemble once every week in order to be instructed by a good spiritual Father on the practice of virtues, as also on the manner of making mental prayer, of approaching the sacraments with profit, of making visits to the Blessed Sacrament and of the Blessed Virgin; in a word, on all that regards the spiritual life. Moreover, this Father should be charged with the duty of requiring each one of them to render to him an account of his life, of making inquiries about them of others, and then of going to confer with the bishop several times a year, especially before the ordinations. This would, moreover, serve the bishop as an occasion to reprove from time to time the negligent, and to animate the good to holy perseverance.

II. As regards studies, it is certain that ignorance in ecclesiastics causes much injury both to themselves and to others. The worst is, that this is an evil without a remedy, as St. Francis de Sales has said. The bishop should therefore see to it most conscientiously that his clerics always apply to study. Without this application they would not only be of no use to the Church, but they would necessarily be an injury to her, since idleness is the mother of all vices. Hence the bishop should not content himself with a single examination, which is usually made in regard to what is required to receive Orders, or in regard to other elementary questions that can be easily learnt out of a little book, leaving the candidates as ignorant as they were before. We must no longer hope that they will study after ordination; for it is a fact too well known by experience, that many secular priests, not to say all, after having received the



priesthood never more open a book, and forget even the little that they knew. Hence it follows that if we do not make them complete their studies before ordination, there will be but little hope that they will do so afterwards.

For this purpose Cardinal Spinelli, Archbishop of Naples, who so well administers his church to the admiration of all, at the time of the ordinations has all the clerics examined at length on the treatises of dogmatic theology, and, besides, each one according to his capacity on other treatises,—of moral theology, of civil law, of philosophy, of canon law,—by obliging them to present themselves in his archiepiscopal palace before the professors appointed by him and remunerated *proprio aere*.

As for small dioceses, I think it to be very useful to practise what was usually done in his own diocese by the very zealous Monsigneur Fabrizio di Capua of happy memory, who was Archbishop of Salerno. In his ordinations, especially for the priesthood, he had the candidates examined on the whole of moral theology, which is, in fact, the science that is most necessary for aiding people to save their souls.

However, I find that to be still more useful which another good bishop was accustomed to practise. He also had his clerics examined in moral theology, but he designated for each Order that they were going to receive such and such treatises of the *Summa* of Busembaum (we may use another author if the latter does not please us), and obliged the examiners to put the questions according to the matter and order of this book. In this way on reaching the priesthood every one finds himself sufficiently instructed in the whole of moral theology, and can render service to the diocese as soon as the bishop calls him. If besides moral theology we should wish to require an examination in the first vol-



ume of Abelly, who so well gives the rudiments of scholasticism, this would be better for small dioceses.

MAXIMS WHICH A BISHOP SHOULD HOLD IN REGARD TO THE  
ORDAINING OF HIS CLERICS.

1. It is not and never has been the spirit of the Church to ordain ministers who are not capable and disposed to serve the Church and to co-operate in the salvation of souls. This is particularly expressed in the Council of Trent: "Whereas no one ought to be ordained who, in the judgment of his own bishop, is not useful or necessary for his churches. . . . The word *Utilis*—useful—can certainly not be understood of the Mass only; for we know that all priests say Mass: the judgment of the bishop required by the Council would not then have been any longer necessary. Hence when we can expect from a subject only the celebration of Mass, he should not be ordained except in a case of necessity, namely, when in a place there would not be a priest to celebrate Mass for the people. Moreover, we should admit only those that appear to have talent enough, with the intention of being useful to souls, and that give signs of a true ecclesiastical spirit.

2. To give these signs of an ecclesiastical spirit, it is not sufficient that the candidate for ordination shows no marks of positive vices; he must, besides, show true piety by giving indications of modesty, of love of retirement, and of other virtues proper to an ecclesiastic. It is especially necessary that he should practise mental prayer; for he who usually does not make meditation can with difficulty be a virtuous man. This is the reason why St. Charles Borromeo wished that all the candidates for ordination should be particularly examined upon mental prayer, to find out whether they knew how to make it and whether they really made it.

3. External faults, as vanity in dress, visiting seculars,

the habit of going about, and the like, are marks of a worldly and dissipated mind, which does not trouble itself about acquiring true piety. When a candidate is addicted to these faults, it will be expedient to draw his attention to them, to defer at the same time his ordination, and to make more minute inquiries into his morals; for it has sometimes happened that such subjects in consequence of greater care bestowed upon an examination of their lives have been found positively wicked. Little application to study is also a reason for deferring ordination and for making inquiries into the morals of the candidate, as it is a sign of a dissipated mind. The same thing may be said about those that give themselves up to the chase; for attachment to the pleasures of the chase draws one away from study and from devotion, and induces one to frequent the society of seculars. It is the same, and with stronger reason, in regard to those that are given to the playing of cards.

4. And when we discover in a candidate an inclination to the vice of impurity, or when we have a sufficient motive for suspecting it, if he has received only Minor Orders, it will be expedient to make him wait, even by showing him that we are little disposed to promote him, in order that of his own accord he may lay aside the clerical dress and may choose another state of life; for experience proves that there is here question of an evil which it is too difficult to remedy, and if any one is tainted with this vice, it will be too difficult to assure one's self of his true amendment. In case such a cleric has had the misfortune to find himself already in higher Orders, it will be necessary to defer his ordination from year to year until he has given certain signs of a change of life. But an amendment of short duration will not suffice; for in order to destroy the bad habits contracted for a long time, a long continuation of contrary acts is

required, in order that we may rely on the perseverance of the candidate, and this with the assurance required for conferring the higher Orders according to what we read in the Roman Pontifical: "Cum magno quippe timore ad tantum gradum ascendendum est, ac providendum ad cœlestis sapientia, probi mores, ac diuturnæ justitiæ observatio ad id electos commendent." <sup>1</sup> And St. Gregory says: "Ne unquam ii, qui ordinati sunt, pereant, prius aspiciatur si vita eorum continens ab annis plurimis fuit." <sup>2</sup> See what has been written on this point in the work entitled: *Selva di materie predicabili*, or *Dignity and Duties of the Priest*. <sup>3</sup> Moreover we should exact more signs of piety from candidates who have been addicted to vice than from those who have lived in innocence; for the guilty one should compensate for the disorders of his life by more fervor, in order to make himself worthy of receiving the higher Orders. As long as one has not obtained from them these signs of true piety, they should not be promoted; it is a less evil that they should be bad clerics than that they should be bad priests.

5. Relatively to those young men that ask for permission to wear the clerical dress, we should admit only those that are capable of discerning the state that they wish to embrace; they should then be at least fourteen or fifteen years of age; they should, moreover, be able to explain sufficiently well Latin books; and, finally, what is more important, should appear to have a notable inclination to piety.

6. The following are the rules that clerics should observe: (1) they should approach the sacraments at least twice a month; (2) teach children catechism every Sunday; (3) serve Mass on every festival; (4) pursue their

<sup>1</sup> *De Ordinatione presbyt.*

<sup>2</sup> *Lib. 3, ep. 26.*

<sup>3</sup> Volume XII., page 194.

studies; (5) attend the Congregation established for them, or that of the priests.

### 3. Priests.

Good priests are the arms of the bishop; without them he would never be able to see the vineyard of his Church well cultivated. For this reason it is of great importance that the bishop should exhibit the greatest kindness to good priests, especially to laborers, provided they are true workmen; he should, therefore, reward them according to their merit by bestowing upon them offices and benefices. The abuse of conferring parishes and other benefices through worldly considerations was called by St. Francis de Sales the abomination of desolation in the holy place, and the common origin of all the disorders in the Church of God. On this subject this maxim of the saint should be noted, that for the care of souls we should prefer priests sufficiently instructed to those that have more science and less virtue. But if the bishop is to encourage good priests, he should also show to the negligent his dissatisfaction, in order that they may amend themselves.

In order to keep the priests diligently employed, so that they may be of service in the work of saving souls, besides the Congregations of cases of conscience, which are usual in many dioceses, after the manner of that of Father Pavone at Naples held every week, the bishop would do well to establish conferences for cases of moral theology in every place that is sufficiently large by prescribing for priests, especially those that are young, that they should attend these conferences two or three times a week. We know by experience how useful these conferences are in order to acquire a knowledge of a science so vast and so necessary; for through these conferences the cases are better elucidated, and the various principles are more deeply impressed upon the mind. For

this purpose the bishop should strongly recommend them to the Vicars Forane, and charge them to have one of the best instructed and most respected priests of the place to preside at them; he should be present, and afterwards transmit to him the solution of the cases that have been discussed. Moreover, no priest should be allowed to appear for examination for hearing confessions if he does not bring proof that he has frequented at least for two years the aforesaid conferences. It will also be very useful if the bishop were himself if possible to be present at these exercises several times a year, so as to see how things are going on, and to encourage the members of the conferences.

It is certain that the bishop should use the greatest care in the admission of confessors, on whom depends the good direction of the consciences of the people. Ignorant confessors, or those of bad morals, can cause the ruin of the whole flock; it is therefore preferable to have a few of them who are good.

Then, before a priest begins to assume the office of hearing confessions, it would be well for him to make the spiritual exercises by retiring to a house of a religious Community, in order that he may begin with more light and zeal this ministry which is so difficult and of so great importance.

It should also be made a rule that all ecclesiastics should wear the cassock at least in the morning, that they should not indulge in forbidden games, and that they should not wear long hair. Oh, what a spectacle to see certain priests at the altar with their ample garment forming a ring under the alb, and with a head of hair long and even frizzled, on which, as a preparation for Mass, they have labored the whole morning before a mirror, curling it with a hot iron;—priests who surpass in vanity the most worldly women, and who even have their heads covered with powder, which afterwards falls

upon the corporal and mixes with the fragments of the consecrated Hosts! Oh, what a shame for our times! It belongs to the bishops to remedy these scandals, which are the cause of the loss of devotion, of the esteem of the priests, and of even the faith of poor seculars.

#### 4. Parish Priests.

In order that the parish priests, who have already been approved, may maintain themselves in the spirit of piety and of zeal, which is necessary for them in order to save souls, the bishop should take care that they make every year the spiritual exercises in some religious house (conformably to the order given by Benedict XIV. of happy memory), after the manner of the exercises that are usually given by the Fathers of the Mission.

As regards parish priests in particular, it must be remarked that there are few priests capable of fulfilling this so difficult and so important a ministry, since on their care depends the spiritual good or the ruin of the people. Hence, before appointing them, the bishop should use all possible diligence to assure himself of their merit by gathering information as to their conduct and their virtue, of which they stand in greater need than of science.

Then he should frequently recommend to the parish priests, who have been appointed, the fulfilment of their duties. Let them take special care to instruct the children in the little catechism of Cardinal Bellarmine (which has been generally approved), and let them do this with the assistance of clerics. Moreover, they should preach to the people on every festival or on all Sundays; their sermons should be familiar and instructive, well prepared, not delivered without preparation, and should have reference to the eternal truths. They should bestow their chief care on assisting the dying;



and, this duty they should not intrust to other priests, indifferently, for such a confidence has sometimes given rise to horrible scandals, which easily happen on like occasions. Let them be, besides, assiduous in hearing confessions, without ever refusing, or showing any repugnance before those who present themselves for confession or Communion.

The bishop should also remind the parish priests that it is their duty to reprove those that lead wicked lives, and to remedy the abuses and the scandals, telling them at the same time that for the cases that they cannot remedy themselves they should inform him of what is going on. And for this purpose it will be necessary that the bishop should always keep his door open to the parish priests, by showing themselves well pleased with their visits and with their vigilance; he should listen to them patiently and courteously, and give orders to his servants that as soon as a parish priest arrives, no matter at what hour, they should hasten to announce him, so that the parish priests, being always sure of obtaining an immediate audience, will easily come when they find it necessary, and not have an excuse to stay away.

Concerning the Paschal duty, the bishop should rigorously ordain that the parish priests must exact of all their parishoners, without exception and without human respect, the certificates of Communion, and to transmit an account of them, given under oath, one or two months after the term fixed for the fulfilment of the precept, and to denounce to him, on the other hand, the transgressors, in order that he may proceed to use the required remedies by exposing the placard of excommunication against the obstinate, etc.—Oh, how many unfortunate people fail against this precept without the knowledge of the bishop, because the parish priests neglect to exact the certificates, or through



human respect they do not notify him! For this reason he should necessarily impose upon them the obligation of sending or bringing to him the list of their parishioners who are capable of receiving Communion, with the assurance given under oath that they have satisfied the precept, and of making those children receive holy Communion who are old enough to be admitted to the Holy Table. Generally speaking, the age of ten is sufficient for many among them when the parish priest takes the trouble of instructing them; so the theologians teach. O God! what compassion have we not felt in many missions at the sight of so many children, often capable, who were fifteen or sixteen years old, and had not yet communicated, because of the negligence of the parish priests!

It is, moreover, expedient that every bishop, in order to provide for all the wants of souls and for all that regards the government of his Church, should establish, after the example of St. Charles, a Congregation of which he himself and all the parish priests of the diocese and other sagacious priests should be members, and should assemble once a month, every one being obliged to expose the needs and the disorders of which he has knowledge in order that they may be remedied. In these assemblies one should treat of the discipline of the clergy, of the duties of the parish priests, of the observance in the monasteries of nuns, of the government of the seminary and of other pious establishments, of decorum and respect to be observed in the churches, of scandals, of abuses, of liberal doctrines, of the spiritual and temporal alleviation of the poor, of the care to instruct the people by means of sermons, novenas of the Blessed Virgin (for it is very useful to celebrate one of these novenas at least every year in every parish, with sermons and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament), by propagating the frequentation of the sacraments, as well

as visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, before some venerated picture of the place, and by establishing Congregations for seculars, with the secret Congregations when they can be introduced: these are works that produce the greatest good, etc. But in these assemblies the bishop should give each member full liberty to expose what he finds to be good for the glory of God, and also what the people say about his tribunal, about his council, his servants, or even about his house and his person. Moreover, in cases of special emergency let him call together extraordinary meetings. Ah! if all bishops acted thus, many things would be better observed, and many evils would be remedied which otherwise one would not even notice!

#### 5. Vicars and Servants.

In the choice of ministers, the first resolution of the bishop, to secure a good administration, should be, never to yield, for any reason whatsoever, to motives of relationship, friendship, or of any other worldly consideration.

As for the Vicar, we clearly see that on him depend in a great measure the quiet and the good condition of the diocese. The bishop should, therefore, use all possible diligence to secure a Vicar who is at the same time well instructed and virtuous, who has an affable and gentle character, who is unremitting in giving audience to every one, who expedites affairs, and is, above all, not attached to self-interest. St. Charles positively forbade his Vicars and ministers to receive gifts, of whatever kind they might be. One of them having on one occasion accepted a present, was dismissed without mercy. It is advisable that every day, or on several appointed days of the week, the bishop should cause an account to be given by his Vicar of the important affairs that are to be settled;

otherwise, he may often find himself involved in a perhaps irremediable confusion.

The bishop should especially take care that piety reigns in his house; he should dismiss those that do not lead a life of piety, and much more so those that live in sin, far from God: if he does not do so, the people will justly complain. He should also strictly forbid, under penalty of dismissal, any of his ministers or servants to ask for or accept presents from any person or Community whatsoever, especially from candidates for the priesthood, from parish priests, confessors newly appointed, or from those that have been endowed with any benefice. He should also ordain, in a positive manner, that no one should interfere in any matter of justice for the purpose of recommending any one, as was ordained by St. Charles; for thence arise many disorders, and often even the reputation of the bishop suffers. It is his duty to be the first to give a good example by not receiving any presents from his subjects, especially from the candidates for ordination, from beneficiaries, from individual nuns, except those presents that rightly belong to him, or it is customary for him to receive. Presents that are received cause the loss of a good reputation, and of the liberty to administer corrections, or to refuse what is not just.

#### 6. Convents of Nuns.

Virgins consecrated to God are the finest portion of the flock of Jesus Christ, if they live like true religious. Hence the bishop should, above all, be watchful that young women may not receive the religious habit, if he does not recognize in them true virtue and a true vocation; for unfortunately, at the present time, most of them become religious to obey their relatives, or for other purposes, rather than to give themselves entirely to God. This is the reason why in so many convents

one no longer sees a truly religious spirit, and laxness increases more and more. A remedy should, therefore, be applied to the root of the evil. The bishop should carefully examine the dispositions of the postulants before admitting them to the reception of the habit, by questioning them individually, not simply as a matter of form, as is so often done, but in order to assure himself of the truth in regard to the chief motive that induced them to enter religion; whether the impulse was given by the relatives, or by the nuns, etc. When he does not discover certain signs of a true vocation in a postulant, he should be firm enough not to grant her admission, by telling her to reflect a little while longer on the subject, so as to dispose herself better. Oh, if bishops would act in this manner what a different spirit and what a different perfection should one not see in the convents! And of what use is it to the Church of God to admit so many young women into convents without a vocation? It only serves to furnish dwelling-places for cloistered women, who live, as we see, in a way not at all exemplary, and who during their whole lives disturb the convent and annoy the bishop.

Moreover, it would be well to fix the number of religious for each house; for it is certain that when they become too numerous it will be difficult to maintain regular observance. Then the bishop should try as much as possible to have common life observed, or to have it introduced where it does not exist; without it it is impossible to prevent continual disorders in the convents.

As for the permission to speak with the religious, it is expedient that the bishop should reserve it to himself, and that he should not easily grant it on account of the abuses that may result therefrom; for if permission is given to some without inconvenience, it cannot afterwards be refused to others, who will perhaps offer

lawful pretexts, but who have no good intention. Besides, it sometimes happens that attachments spring up, not in the beginning, but, in the course of time, in consequence of frequent interviews, and a single attachment of this kind is sufficient to cause the ruin of the whole convent.

According to an ordinance of Pope Benedict XIV. of happy memory, it is positively forbidden to the religious holding office to expend out of their income any money for the celebration of the feasts of the Church, and for making presents to their confessors and others. What is expended should come from the Community. O God! what disorders arise in convents in which this cursed abuse exists! Through a desire to make a show, the religious hardly think of anything else during their whole lifetime than of procuring money, of tormenting their families, and of making friends; and for this reason they give up prayers, retreat, detachment, and lead a life of distraction, of disquietude, and keep no rule: these are evils that necessarily flow from such an abuse. There are other evils still more grave; this is well known by the experience of those who are acquainted with convent life.

The bishop should also take great care that those religious that have most virtue and prudence should be appointed Superiors; for it is on them and on the confessors that depend regular observance or a life of relaxation. It should be borne in mind that when an abuse has been introduced into the convent, it is nearly impossible to correct it; now the Superiors and the confessors are responsible for all the abuses. Hence there should be chosen confessors who are very virtuous, firm, and disinterested, and it should always be recommended to them, as well as to the Superiors, never to permit any abuse to creep in while they have charge of the convent.

It is also necessary to send to the religious several times a year extraordinary confessors, at least for the purpose of repairing the evil of bad confessions made to the ordinary confessor; and one should be convinced that these cases are not rare. Would to God that they were not frequent! The bishop should guard against reappointing the same confessors in the same convents after three years, and against sending them these, either as extraordinary confessors, or to hear the confession of any one of the religious if at least an interval of three years has not elapsed; otherwise such a pretext might give rise to the danger of allowing some attachment to continue, or at least the danger of holding the entire Community exposed to disorder would always exist.

Moreover, it will be expedient to have the spiritual exercises given to them every year by a priest, provided he is a man whose conduct has been notoriously exemplary, who is prudent, and is practically acquainted with religious Communities; otherwise it would be better for the religious to make the exercises by themselves without the preaching. Oh, how many convents have become relaxed, and perhaps ruined, because there were sent to them priests who had very little virtue, who were uninstructed, or imprudent!

## CHAPTER II.

THE MOST EFFICACIOUS MEANS THAT THE BISHOPS SHOULD  
EMPLOY TO DIRECT THEIR FLOCKS.

*It behooves . . . a bishop to be blameless.*<sup>1</sup> On these words St. Jerome says: "All virtues the Apostle comprises in one word."<sup>2</sup> Hence the schools commonly teach that the bishop (to use their own terms), *est in statu perfectionis exercende et communicande*—he is in a state of perfection in which he himself practises perfection and communicates it at the same time to others. That is, as Father Suarez explains, it is proper that the bishop should possess the perfection which religious strive to attain by their vows and their rules. It is true, says St. Thomas, that the bishop is not obliged to attain such a perfection under the pain of grievous sin; nevertheless, he adds, if the bishop is not a saint he can never sanctify his flock as he is in duty bound. A piece of wood that does not burn cannot set fire to other wood. No one can be a canal unless he has before been filled, according to what St. Bernard says: "Show yourself to be a reservoir, and not a canal. Be at first filled, and then try to pour yourself out."<sup>3</sup> This is what St. Paul wrote to Timothy: *Take heed to thyself, and to doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Oportet, . . . episcopum irreprehensibilem esse."—1 *Tim.* iii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Omnes virtutes in uno sermone comprehendit Apostolus."—

<sup>3</sup> "Concham te exhibebis, et non canalem. Imple prius, et sic curato effundere."—*In Cant.* s. 18.

<sup>4</sup> "Attende tibi et doctrinæ; justa in illis. Hoc cum faciens, et teipsum saluum facies, et eos qui te audiunt."—1 *Tim.* iv. 16.



To arrive at this perfection, there are nine chief means which the bishop should use, namely: 1. Prayer; 2. Good Example; 3. Residence; 4. Visitations; 5. Missions; 6. The Synod; 7. Counsel; 8. Audiences; 9. Correction.—It will therefore be necessary for him to love prayer before all things.

### 1. Prayer.

It is certain that mental prayer is one of the greatest means to sanctify one's self; of this we are assured by all the masters of spiritual life. St. Aloysius Gonzaga said that no one can arrive at any notable degree of sanctity without devoting himself much to prayer. Light, strength, fervor, which are necessary in order to strive after perfection, are acquired by prayer. Hence all the saints have been men of prayer. St. Charles, as we see in his life, consecrated to study and to prayer the whole time that business and the little sleep that he took permitted him. Thus did he usually devote every day several hours to mental prayer, and when anything happened that had any important bearing on the public good, he passed the entire night in prayer.

The bishop, then, should not omit prayer on any account. It would also be expedient for every bishop to say prayers in common with those of his house who assemble in the chapel. This was also the practice of St. Charles and of the Cardinal of Arezzo, who went every day to the church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

### 2. Good Example.

It is not sufficient that the bishop should be *lucerna ardens*—a shining light as to his own interior; he should also be *lucens* exteriorly by his good example if he wishes to see his flock walking the road of virtues. In order that they may ascend the mountain, the shepherd

must go before them within sight of them. The bishop is this light placed by God himself on the candlestick that it may shine *to all that are in the house.*<sup>1</sup> In vain will he preach and recommend the practice of the evangelical maxims: if he does not before set the example, it will happen what is said by the Council of Vercelli, that the hearers would put but little faith in him, because "Men believe with their eyes more than their ears."<sup>2</sup>

The bishop should then give a good example in all things, as St. Paul wrote to Titus: *In all things shew thyself an example.*<sup>3</sup>

Example of *meekness*, by bearing with the rudeness of his diocesans, and by treating with all possible charity those that are insolent, those that are detractors and ungrateful. Every bishop should enter upon the government of his Church with the conviction that he will be repaid with ingratitude, and with the intention of rendering good for evil; such is the spirit of Jesus Christ and of his true servants. How many beautiful examples of this have been especially given by St. Charles and St. Francis de Sales! Their lives are full of them.

Example of *poverty*. The bishop should consider that the Church provides him with revenues, not that he may employ them as he pleases, but that he may help the poor as if he were administering their patrimony. St. Charles said that it is a shame for a bishop to allow money to accumulate, and that it is honorable if he is always in debt on account of the alms that he gives, which, says St. Gregory, is the first work of mercy that the shepherd should perform towards his flock. Oh, how many evils do not good bishops remedy by their alms, notably when there is question of preventing the

<sup>1</sup> "Ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt."—*Matt.* v. 15.

<sup>2</sup> "Magis oculis quam auribus credunt homines."

<sup>3</sup> "In omnibus teipsum præbe exemplum."—*Tit.* ii. 7.

sins of those that are engaged to be married, of children who sleep in the same bed with their parents, of poor women whom necessity tempts to sell their honor, and similar things!

It is true that the bishop may lawfully spend of his revenues what is necessary for his decent support; but in everything he should always allow holy poverty to shine forth. His household should be moderate, consisting only of as many servants as are needed. Father Hippolytus Durazzo, while a bishop, before he entered the Society of Jesus, used to appear accompanied by few servants; he would say: "I find that in the Gospel Jesus Christ commands humility, and not pomp." Moderation should also be observed in regard to the garments and furniture of the bishop. Oh, what a subject of edification to every one to see that the house of the bishop is poor, stripped of those ornaments which seculars love to display! St. Charles absolutely banished from his house tapestries, draperies, and paintings. There should also be moderation in reference to food. We should be persuaded that usually that which gives the people a good or a bad idea of the spirit of an ecclesiastic is, when they hear of the frugality or sumptuousness of his table. Moreover, it will be well for the bishop always to season his meals with the reading of a spiritual book, as was practised by St. Charles.

He should also set an example of all the other Christian virtues: of mortification by depriving himself of certain diversions; of the love of retirement, by avoiding much conversation; of modesty, by taking care not to raise his eyes in the presence of women; of zeal, by introducing into every private conversation some pious thought, as St. Charles was accustomed to do with every person, etc.

### 3. Residence.

At his consecration the bishop receives the ring in order that by wearing it he may always remember that he belongs not to himself, but to the Church, his Spouse, whom he is faithfully to serve till death, It is not my intention to explain here how far the bishop is obliged to reside in his diocese: I only repeat what the sacred Council of Trent says, that the presence of the pastor is necessary that he may govern well his flock—a presence which is certainly enjoined upon the bishops by a divine precept. We read in the Life of St. Charles that when he found himself absent from his diocese he felt himself as if bound by chains, so great was his desire to return home as soon as possible. Cardinal Bellarmine, although constrained by an order of the Pope to remain at Rome outside of his diocese of Capua for the good of the universal Church, he yet believed that he could not do so in conscience, and he therefore resigned the See.

### 4. Visitations.

Residence on the part of the bishop is particularly necessary so that he may be able to visit the different places of his diocese; and he should personally visit them. Oh, how many disorders does he not remedy in these journeys when he sees things with his own eyes! He that does not see, cannot provide. It is impossible to govern well by means of the reports that others furnish; the latter, actuated by private ends, either deceive us, or they are themselves easily deceived, or at least they know not the evils that really exist. This is a fact which I myself have seen and deplored in the courses of the missions that I have given. Although St. Charles had in his service so many ministers, we read in his Life how much he did and how much he corrected in his pastoral visitations.

According to the Council of Trent, the bishop should personally visit all the places in his diocese at least every two years. The inconvenience in travelling certainly does not dispense one from this obligation; for it is the indispensable duty of the pastor, in spite of inconveniences and fatigue, to examine into the condition of his flock so as to provide for their wants. How many times did not St. Charles continue his visits notwithstanding the fever from which he suffered! It was a maxim of his that a bishop should go to bed only after the third attack of fever. On one occasion, in order to make a visitation in a certain place, he crept on his hands and feet through the mud and snow. And St. Francis de Sales, as we also read in his Life, in order to visit certain places was also obliged to drag himself along roads that were so bad that his feet were badly bruised, and he could not stand erect for several days. At other times he had to pass the night sleeping on leaves of trees, and when his friends begged him not to expose his life in this manner, he said: "It is not necessary that I should live, but it is necessary that I should perform my duty."

As for the occupations of the bishop in the visitations, the following rules should be observed:

First, he should nourish with the divine word the flocks that he visits, and do so with his own voice according to the counsel given by the Council of Trent: "Bishops are personally bound, if they be not lawfully hindered to preach."<sup>1</sup> The same council adds that among the functions of the bishop that of preaching is the principal one: "This is the principal duty of bishops."<sup>2</sup> Is it only a simple ceremony that the Church in consecrating a bishop should place upon his

<sup>1</sup> "Episcopos teneri per seipsos, si legitime impediti non fuerint, ad prædicandum."

<sup>2</sup> "Est præcipuum episcoporum munus."—*Sess. v. cap. ii. de Ref.*

head and shoulders the book of the Gospels? Oh, how much greater is the impression made by the voice of one's own pastor than by the voice of others! Besides the many sermons that St. Charles was accustomed to preach in the city of Milan, it was a usual thing with him to preach two or three times every day. It will be well for the bishop to speak in his sermons oftenest on the eternal truths, which are the most powerful means for gaining souls; then he should moralize against the commonest abuses of the place, and should generally always exhort the people to avoid the occasions, and not to conceal sins in confession through shame. Finally, let him always try to impress upon the hearts of his hearers the resolution to frequent the sacraments, and to recommend themselves continually to Jesus and to Mary by invoking them especially in temptations, and fortifying themselves with the sign of the cross. .

Secondly, it will be well for the bishop to examine the children of every parish to see how they are instructed, and to distribute little presents to reward those that answer well; he can thus remedy the negligence of the parish priests by reprimanding them, and even if necessary by appointing some one to assume the duties of catechist in punishment and at the expense of the parish priest: this will at least serve as an example for the rest. It is of the greatest benefit that the bishop should examine the children himself, so as to make the parish priests attentive to their duty of instructing them well. This was done by St. Charles, and also by the most vigilant archbishop of Naples, Cardinal Spinelli; hence there is not seen in their dioceses that ignorance of divine things which one sometimes sees elsewhere, and which is the cause of many sins.

Thirdly, in the rural parishes the bishop should have the priests examined as to the manner in which they observe the ceremonies of the Mass.



Fourthly, he should not fail to personally examine all the priests and all the clerics of the place which he visits by interrogating each one of them in private, first on their employments and their mode of life so as to recommend to them, if necessary, assiduity in hearing confessions, in attending the dying, application to study, or prayer and detachment from dangerous societies, etc. Finally, he should make inquiries in regard to the defects of others, and especially of the parish priest (since the visitations aim particularly at reforming parish priests), to find out whether he attends to the duty of preaching, of hearing confessions, of assisting the dying, whether he visits dangerous places, takes care to remove scandals, sees that the church is always kept clean, etc.; he should put similar questions in regard to the other ecclesiastics. For this purpose it will be very useful, as is done by vigilant bishops, to keep a register in which, with the names of all the priests and all the clerics inscribed in alphabetical order, are noted their good or bad qualities according to the secret information that has been obtained. This register may prove very useful, particularly in order to select parish priests, rural deans, and other ministers, to give to every one the advice that he needs, and to watch more carefully over his conduct, etc. The bishop should also make general inquiries about the abuses, the scandals, and the dissensions which exist in the place. Let him rest assured that in these private and secret examinations he will succeed in learning many important things of which he would have been ignorant; he will thus be able to remedy many abuses which otherwise would not be remedied.

Fifthly, he should visit the nuns in their convents, and preach to them a sermon in order to make them more disposed to receive opportune commands. Then he should privately listen to each one, and encourage



her to expose her wants, and to declare freely what she knows to be amiss in the convent or among the nuns. But in these examinations the bishop should be cautious not to show himself attached to any of the factions that are usually formed in the convents. After having heard all of them impartially, he should decide or counsel what he believes to be the best before God.

Sixthly, he should give opportune orders for keeping the churches in repair, either in reference to the building, or the altars and sacred vessels, and recommend cleanliness and silence in the holy place. Before his departure he should leave in writing the given orders, and rigorously exact their execution, so that everything may be done promptly.

Seventhly, it is also expedient that in his visitation the bishop should examine the confraternities of the seculars, and take care that they be frequented and that each should have its own spiritual Father, who preaches to the members and hears their confessions; and that these confraternities be established where they are not. It is too notorious that seculars who do not frequent the confraternities are but little inclined to frequent the sacraments, and only with difficulty persevere in God's grace. But we would do well in these confraternities not to oblige the members to pay any contribution for funerals, for suffrages, or for any other thing; for one knows by experience that many in order not to be obliged to incur this expense, however small it may be, prefer to give up the confraternities, and they thus wander away from the path of virtue. At least let the bishop make a rule that one may be admitted into these confraternities even when one does not wish to pay anything, but on condition that the suffrages, etc., will be only for those that pay the contribution. For the rest the rule should be rigorously observed that those are to be effaced from the list of

members who without a lawful excuse fail to be present at the confraternity three times in succession, or to communicate once a month.

Eighthly, it is necessary that the bishop in his visitations should administer the sacrament of Confirmation.

In reference to the administration of the sacrament of Penance, *unusquisque in sensu suo abundet*, St. Francis de Sales did not object to hear the confession of any one that asked him. There are some who say that if the bishop administers this sacrament there will arise danger of deceit, sacrileges, etc. Nevertheless it will at least be expedient in these visitations that he should go to the confessional, not to hear confessions, but to listen to any one that wishes to speak to him privately, and under the pretext of a special devotion to confess to the bishop, and thus avoid all criticism. This may especially be useful in order to hear the declarations of any woman who could not go to the bishop's house.

### 5. Missions.\*

He that has not given missions, nor heard confessions during missions, cannot know how useful these exercises are. Owing to the extraordinary manner in which the bread of the divine Word is broken, when the eternal truths are methodically exposed to the hearers who have assembled in great numbers, it is nearly impossible for them not to be converted to God. It is, moreover, evident that God co-operates more efficaciously with this work. Father Contenson assures us that it is only by the missions that souls reach eternal salvation.<sup>1</sup>

But, O God! there are some who say that by the missions disquietude is spread among consciences.

<sup>1</sup> "Per solas missiones impletur prædestinatio."—*Theol.* l. 3, d. 6, c. 2, sp. 2.

\* See on this subject Letter to a Bishop, Volume XV. p. 73.

Would it then be better, in order not to disquiet consciences, to leave poor sinners in their deplorable state, with this cursed peace which is the seal of their damnation? One disquiets consciences! But it is the duty of a pastor to disquiet his sheep that sleep in sin in order that they may awaken, recognize the danger in which they live, and thus return to God. Now for this purpose there is no better means than the mission. We also manifestly see the efforts that hell makes to hinder missions, using sometimes for this end the parish priests themselves, but only those who, in order that their faults may not become known, seek under various pretexts to avoid having missions. But in such cases it is the bishop who is to provide by sending missionaries specially into the parishes in which he knows that the parish priest is negligent, without waiting for his request or that of the parishioners, and this above all when he sees that the parish priest does not desire a mission.

If the missions are very useful even for cities, we should be convinced that in small places they are not only useful but necessary, because as only a few priests are there who are even natives of the place, it easily happens that many souls commit sacrileges by making bad confessions on account of the repugnance that they feel in confessing to those who know them and whom they continually meet. Hence if these souls have not the convenience of a mission so as to be able to confess to priests who are strangers, it is morally certain that they will continue in their sins and thus lose their souls. I am praying to Jesus Christ to make all bishops understand this truth in order that one may not have to exclaim with Contenson, already quoted: "So many little ones in the towns cry for bread, and there is no one to break it to them. Woe, woe to sleeping bishops!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Tot parvuli in oppidulis petunt panem, et non est qui frangat eis. Væ, væ prælatis dormitantibus!"

It is therefore advisable that the bishop should have a mission given every three years in every village, however small it may be. This I say, because there are missionaries who, in districts where small villages are close to one another, are accustomed to give a mission in a central place for all of them at the same time. I respect their zeal in wishing to sanctify all these souls at the same time; but I do not approve of their mode of action, and I would ask the bishops for the love that they have for the glory of Jesus Christ not to be satisfied with missions thus given in groups: they should take care that each place, however small it may be, may have its special mission, which is to last at least for eight days; for we know that if a mission is given in a place for several neighboring parishes, the faithful who go there are those that need it the least.\* Those, on the contrary, who are laden with sin the most, and are consequently less careful of their salvation, do not attend it at all, under the pretext that it is too far, or that the sermon is over too late, or that the weather is bad, etc. And so they remain at home and lead the same wicked lives, while if the mission had been given in their own church they would have been compelled to attend it at least out of human respect, fearing to be looked upon as reprobates. I speak from experience. We have seen many places where it was said a mission had been given; but because it had been given in some central church, or because it had been given in too short a time, we found there people really abandoned, as if no mission had been given there.

This is the reason why our humble Congregation, when it is called to give missions, takes care to give the exercises in every place, however small, at least during eight days; and in those places where this time does not suffice to hear the confessions of all the faithful, we prolong the mission as much as twenty and even thirty

days. We should be convinced that the greatest fruit to be derived from the missions does not consist in that one hears sermons, but in that every one goes to confession to the missionaries. If in a mission one does not settle the accounts of one's past life, and does not regulate one's future conduct by means of confession, the hearing of sermons will be of little use. Hence our most esteemed Father of happy memory, Monsignor Falcoia, Bishop of Castellamare, whom we have had the happiness to have for our first and only director of our little Congregation, said with good reason that it is better not to give a mission than to give one that is too short, so that the hearers do not find the opportunity to make their confessions; since sermons create scruples, and if those that have scruples do not succeed in confessing to the missionaries, they will continue to have troubled consciences, and not have the courage to manifest their troubles to the confessors of the place. Hence, being now in bad faith they will, commit sacrileges and lose their souls. It will, therefore, always be better for the bishop to have complete missions given in a few places rather than permit them to be given in many places in an imperfect manner; then, at least, one will know that in certain parishes no mission has been given, and missionaries can be sent there afterwards.

## 6. The Synod.

The synod is an invention of the Holy Ghost in order that the bishops may by this means assure themselves of the good government of the Church. It is notorious that St. Charles by means of the synod reformed and sanctified his whole diocese. In the synodal conferences one examines the faults that are to be corrected, the rules to be established for proper maintenance of the churches, for the offices, the choir, holy Orders, suffrages, sermons, catechism, etc., so that the parish

priests who must be present are better instructed in their obligations, and become more attentive in fulfilling them.

Relatively to reserved cases, which it is customary to determine in the synod, it will be expedient for the bishops to be cautious rather than easy in extending them. In the dioceses in which reigns the execrable vice of blasphemy against the saints, it would be useful to make it a reserved case. Monsignor Fabrizio, of happy memory, Archbishop of Salerno, a prelate of great zeal, by making a reserved case of blasphemy was successful in moderating this vice in his diocese. And in regard to the company-keeping of persons engaged to be married, which gives rise to innumerable sins, it would be advisable to ordain in all dioceses that the parish priests cannot accept the promises of such persons without being assured that they are ready to be married within a few days. Because if one receives these promises too long a time before the marriage, as is done in many places, it happens that the men engaged take the liberty of entering the house of those whom they intend to marry, and that they continue to live together in disgrace with God. Hence it would be at the same time expedient to reserve not only carnal union and cohabitation, or the remaining together at night of the betrothed, but also the sin of the parents or heads of families who permit these disorders.

#### 7. Counsel.

*He that is wise hearkeneth unto counsels,*<sup>1</sup> says the Holy Ghost. On this subject Campano, Bishop of Terme, said that the bishop who believes that he does not need counsel in order to govern well, either must be a God, or will be a beast among men. Surius<sup>2</sup> praises St. Hugh of Lincoln, saying that his first care on entering

<sup>1</sup> "Qui autem sapiens est, audit consilia."—*Prov.* xii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Die 17 Nov.*



the episcopate was to choose learned and pious counsellors. It is desirable for the bishop in his consultations to refrain from expressing his own opinion, and to give to others all liberty to express their views.

The bishop should weigh well every order before giving it, and not be too quick in taking resolutions, especially in the heat of passion and in matters of importance. It would, generally speaking, even be expedient, when entering upon the government of his church, not to do anything else than note the defects that exist, and search after remedies that might be used. He may then begin the work, being more fixed in his resolutions after having taken the necessary information concerning men and things of his diocese.

During the progress of his government he should take counsel first of God in prayer, then of prudent men; after that let him act with firmness, not only in giving opportune orders, but in maintaining them and seeing that they be punctually carried out, otherwise it would be better not to give them. For if it is seen that the bishop bears without resentment the non-observance of any of his orders, it will happen that the rest of his orders will be disregarded. This is what St. Paul gave Titus to understand when he wrote to him that he should see that his commands be fulfilled: *Exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*<sup>1</sup> This firmness, so necessary to the bishop, is represented by the holy unction which he receives at his consecration. He who in the interests of God fears to displease men will never be a good bishop. *If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ,*<sup>2</sup> says the Apostle. And a pious bishop added, that bishops should resolve to be poisoned, to be prosecuted, or to be damned.

<sup>1</sup> "Exhortare et argue cum omni imperio. Nemo te contemnat."  
—*Tit.* ii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> "Si adhuc hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem."—*Gal.* i. 10.



8. Audiences.

Except during the time of prayer, of Mass, of necessary rest, the bishop should be ready to give audience to every one and at every hour. He belongs not only to his church, but to his flock. For this purpose the bishop should specially recommend to his servants to announce to him those that have come; above all, if they are parish priests; because these, as has been said above, are the most occupied, and have charge of the most important affairs. If we once delay in giving them an audience, they will afterwards neglect to come by pleading in excuse that they could not obtain an audience; and thus the good of souls and the interests of the glory of God will have to suffer.

The bishop should avoid being familiar, and should not give too much confidence to any one of his subjects, so as not to be deceived by him nor criticised by others; but, on the other hand, he should hear and treat every one with the greatest kindness. He is a father, and he should treat his subjects as his children, and not as his servants. St. Jerome says that a bishop who treats his subjects with harshness is not a fit person to govern.

When treating with women he should take care, at least for the edification of others, to keep his eyes cast down, to be brief, and always to be in the presence of some one. St. Charles when he spoke with women wished that at least two persons should be present.

It is also necessary that the bishop should not easily believe what is secretly reported to him, and that he should take no steps before he has heard the other side, or has been well assured of the facts through the information given him by trustworthy persons.

9. Correction.

It is, besides, the special duty of the bishop to remove his flock from a wicked life by means of correc-

tion; he is obliged to do so even if it cost his life: *The good shepherd giveth His life for His sheep.*<sup>1</sup> Otherwise he will have to render an account to Jesus Christ of all the evils that will happen, and that he could have prevented by correction. This is the great burden which makes holy bishops tremble. Monsignor Sanfelice, of happy memory, said to me one day in a trembling voice: "Don Alphonso, how can I sleep quietly when I know that one of my flock is living in disgrace with God?" St. Gregory condemns the bishops who corrects no one as guilty of the same crime that the malefactor commits.

But in order that the correction may be suitable the following rules should be observed:

1. The correction should be administered in *charity*; and if in extreme cases severity becomes necessary, we should always mix wine with oil, that is, severity with kindness; hence it is expedient not to administer correction when one is excited; for then one easily falls into excess.

2. We should correct others with *prudence*: the same remedy that is good for one may not be good for another, especially when the culprit is blinded by passion, which does not permit him to acknowledge his fault nor profit by the correction.

3. It is true that in order to administer a useful correction we should wait for the opportune moment; but when the moment has come, we should correct the guilty one with *promptness*, without delay. We should remedy the evil as soon as we can; for the fire is easily extinguished when it is only a spark, but not when it has become a flame.

4. We must administer correction in *secret*, especially when the fault is hidden. He that has lost his reputation easily gives himself up entirely to vice.

<sup>1</sup> "Bonus pastor animam suam dat pro ovibus suis."—*John*, x. 11.

Finally, when the correction is disregarded by the culprit, we must punish him by acting with firmness even though we should expose our lives. St. Peter Damian says that the good pastor loves justice more than life.<sup>1</sup> And St. Leo says: "Those whom correction has not profited, let them not be spared as to separation."<sup>2</sup> If chastisement does not serve to bring back the culprit, it will at least serve as an example to others.

However, while exercising justice we should make room for leniency, to which the bishop should always be inclined; for it is a less evil, says St. Augustine, to have to reproach one's self with too great an indulgence than too great a severity. Especially should the bishop restrain himself in the infliction of censures; as they are an extreme remedy, if they are inflicted with excess, they are apt to remain unnoticed. And when a culprit under censure truly amends himself, he should be at once absolved unless prudence requires a longer trial, or we are in danger of being deceived.

In regard to ecclesiastical culprits, if after the correction we perceive some amendment in them, the best thing, as is done by a prudent bishop, is, instead of imprisoning them, to send them out of the diocese and to grant them permission to return only after we have been assured that they have entered upon the path of duty by a long trial. These are the sick that are healed with difficulty by ordinary remedies.

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As I had proposed to myself to be short, I shall now conclude, and pass over in silence other things less important. But I cannot conclude this little work without saying that every bishop should be convinced that in receiving the mitre he loads his conscience with a great burden, so that if he wishes to save his soul he

<sup>1</sup> "Magis amat justitiam, quam vitam."

<sup>2</sup> "His quibus prodesse non potuit correptio, non parcat abscissio."

must necessarily resolve on entering upon the government of his See, to embrace a life, not of ease and of rest, but a life of crosses, of trials, and of labors; a life which St. John Chrysostom calls "a sea of labors, an abyss of troubles."<sup>1</sup> Hence arises for bishops the extreme danger of losing their souls, and this has filled many holy men with so great a fear, that they found themselves as it were forced even to fail in obedience to their Superiors by refusing to take upon themselves such a burden. And one cannot regard as vain such a fear if the saying of St. Augustine<sup>2</sup> is true, namely, that it is very difficult for a bishop to be saved, because it is very difficult for him to comply with his grave responsibilities. Most terrible is, besides, what St. John Chrysostom says, and I do not think that he is wrong, namely: "I believe that among the bishops not many will be saved, but many more will be lost."<sup>3</sup> And here the holy Doctor speaks of those that are truly called to the episcopate and are forced to accept it; he speaks quite differently of those that ambitiously seek after it, for he says: "I wonder whether any one of them will be saved."<sup>4</sup> Whether in this matter there is any exaggeration, I know not; but I know that when Pius V. was elected Pope he was seen to tremble and to grow pale; and when asked the reason, he answered as follows: "When I was a religious I had great hopes of saving my soul; having become a bishop, I began to fear; now having been chosen Pope, I feel nearly desperate."

All these considerations should, however, not discourage good bishops, nor fill them with diffidence, but should excite in them great watchfulness in regard to

<sup>1</sup> "Pelagum laborum, et ærumnarum abyssum."—*De Sacerd.* l. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Serm.* 339, *E. B.*

<sup>3</sup> "Non arbitrior inter episcopos multos esse qui salvi fiant, sed multo plures qui percant."—*In Act. hom.* 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Miror si potest salvari aliquis rectorum."—*In Hebr. hom.* 34.

their duties; should fill them with zeal, and at the same time with holy hopes; for they know that if the chastisement of negligent bishops is to be great, much greater will be the reward that an infinitely good and generous God will give to those that are zealous. St. John Chrysostom says that as much difference as there is on earth between an ordinary, private individual and a monarch, so much difference will there be in heaven between the glory of a solitary who lives a holy life in the desert and that of a pastor of souls. Let him who fears on account of his weakness take the resolution to do all that he can for God; let him afterwards have recourse to God with confidence, and he will be able to do all, by saying with St. Paul: *I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.*<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, I beg every one that has deigned to read this poor little work, written, as may be seen, without art and in a simple manner, to have the charity to recommend me to Jesus Christ in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, either during my life, or after my death, in order that he may show me mercy. For when I find myself, although in another manner, burdened with the great duty of laboring for the salvation of souls, I very much fear for my own salvation, dreading lest I am not fulfilling as I should my obligations. On my part, as wretched as I am, I promise always to pray to our Saviour Jesus and to his most holy Mother Mary for all the pastors of the Christian flock, in order that they may all be holy, and inflame every one with the love of Jesus Christ.

MAY JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY EVER IMMACULATE BE ALWAYS PRAISED !

<sup>1</sup> "Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat."—*Phil.* iv. 13.

**Rules for Seminaries.\***

## INTRODUCTION.

THE holy Council of Trent had a very useful and divine idea when it ordained that in the Church seminaries should be established, in which young men who are destined for the ecclesiastical state might be instructed in the sacred sciences, and especially in the exercise of virtues, in order to make themselves fit to labor for the sanctification of the people. Such was the intention of the Council; but would to God that so many seminaries by their bad direction did not become a source of ruin for young men ! It is deplorable to see so many poor boys, who, at first innocent and pious, become, after their entrance into the seminary, sinks of vice. A boy of seven years of age, having entered a certain seminary in the kingdom of Naples, left it two years afterward so filled with vice that he resembled a demon, and his own parents no longer wished to receive him into their house. Hence while a young man by remaining with his family would have preserved his innocence, and would perhaps have become a good priest, useful for the salvation of others, if he enters a seminary

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\* St. Alphonsus published this Rule towards the end of the year 1756 (Villocourt, l. vi. ch. iii.) He had that year introduced a wonderful reform into the seminary of Nola, which was in a very bad state, as is related by Father Tannoia (Book II. ch. 44). It is without doubt in consequence of this undertaking, which was crowned with such success, that he composed the present opusculc. In order to understand certain details, it should be known that by a seminary we here understand an establishment which comprises not only what we call a *Great Seminary*, but also all the classes of humanities, and even of the preparatory courses, to which very young boys are admitted; the whole, however, is divided into several separated sections.—ED.



that is badly managed he will be a priest; but through the vices contracted in his youth, and not laid aside in old age, he will cause the ruin of many souls, and will be a scandal to the Church.

Therefore, some one will say, has not the establishment of seminaries been more hurtful than useful? Would it not be better to abolish them everywhere?— I answer: If the seminaries are well managed, far from abolishing them, we should take all possible care to maintain them and make them prosper; for in such seminaries the bishop will find the means to provide all his churches with good parish priests, confessors, preachers, canons, and other priests, and he will thus see piety flourish in his whole diocese. If, on the other hand, the seminary is not well kept, there is no doubt that it would be better to give it up. It would certainly be better to have in the diocese priests that are less learned, but of good morals, than to have those that are a little more learned, but that are wicked and scandalous. I say “a little more learned,” because the wicked make but little progress in the sciences; nevertheless, by the reputation of learning which they have acquired they will do more harm to souls, as they are thus better able to deceive them and to conduct them on the road to perdition. For myself, if I knew of a bishop who had a seminary that is badly managed or governed by a bad Director or bad Prefects, I would certainly beg him, if he wished to save his soul, and did not wish to see his diocese go to destruction, to suppress this establishment and to provide in another manner, as best he could, for the wants of his church. O God! how many bishops will be damned and will cause the damnation of a multitude of their flock on account of the little attention which they pay to the government of their seminaries! Would to God that it were not so!

But let us stop complaining, and let us speak of the



remedies. In order to keep a seminary in good order, let us see what should be the care of the bishop, that of the Director, that of the Prefects, and which are the rules that should be most carefully observed by the seminarians.

### 1. Duties of the Bishop.

I. The bishop must before all things take care that the seminary should have its rules well ordered, as well for piety as for the sciences. For this end it will be useful to indicate here the principal rules that are in use in well-organized seminaries, especially in those of Naples and Aversa, which have been and still are, we may well say the model for the rest.

As to the *exercises of piety*, the following shall be performed:

1. Mental prayer in the morning, the meditations being mostly on the eternal truths, the consideration of which is very salutary for young men.

2. Mass, with the Office of the Blessed Virgin.

3. Confession and Communion every eight days, or at least twice a month.

4. Spiritual reading during half an hour, or at least during a quarter of an hour. Here there is question of spiritual reading other than that which is made at table; it will be well to have the reading made out of the Lives of the Saints, and this should never be omitted.

5. The visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Mother of God in the afternoon, that is, after the hour's recreation, and after the rest which is allowed in summer. It will be well to allow a half-hour's rest even in winter, as is practised in the seminary at Naples.

6. The Rosary and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

7. The examination of conscience, with the Christian acts of faith, etc.

8. There should be added the short prayers that are

usually recited at the beginning of class, study or of rest, and especially in the morning after rising. When rising, the following is the order that is to be followed: When the seminarians have been awakened by the ordinary signal, there shall at first be recited, in an undertone, after some pious formula, the acts of adoration and of thanksgiving to the Lord; and while every one shall dress modestly near his bed, there shall be read from the *Diario* of Father Marchese, or from another collection, a few pious facts. This reading shall continue during the time necessary for dressing, washing, combing, etc., and shall be finished at the signal given for meditation, which is to follow immediately.

In some seminaries I have found that the seminarians were made to take the discipline in common, in the dark; but prudence requires that such an exercise should be altogether disallowed, so as to avoid the danger of any impropriety occurring among the young men.

It will be most useful that the spiritual exercises should be given in the seminary every year during eight or ten days, with a sermon in the morning and in the evening, and with an instruction on the virtues and the rules that should be observed. Moreover, it will also be very useful, in order to preserve the spirit and the fruit of these exercises, to make every month a retreat of one day, during which there should be no class nor study, except in the evening, in winter. This day should be devoted to meditation, to spiritual reading (especially to that of the rules), to sermons, to instructions, as well as to confession and Communion.

As regards the *sciences*, the following should be observed:

For beginners there shall be instruction in grammar; then follows the study of humanities, in which we should strive to interest them well, for afterwards they will

study them no more; and if they do not well understand the Latin language, they will always be weak in all the other sciences.

The more advanced shall at first study philosophy, in which they should carefully learn logic, which is the most necessary part of it. In the study of the sciences I think it to be much better to use books than writings: in doing so there will be considerable saving of time and of health. We might use Purcozio or Verneio, at least for logic, or the logic of the philosophy called *Burgundia*, which is excellent for seminarians.

They shall afterwards study scholastic and dogmatic theology, for which we might use the abridgment of Tournely, lately published at Venice, a work which has met with general approval. Especially should the bishops, notably those of our kingdom, take care to have the seminarians instructed in moral theology, in order that they may afterwards be able to choose among them subjects most capable to labor for the good of souls; otherwise the same young men after having left the seminary will study this science but little, and the bishops will then complain, as I have seen them do, that they have not priests to hear confessions and to take charge of souls. The greatest good that the bishop can derive from the seminary is to have confessors and parish priests, since among the seminarians he will choose for these functions the best instructed and the most exemplary, without, however, forgetting that, *cæteris paribus*, the most exemplary should always be preferred to the others. In this way he will always be able to keep his diocese in a good condition.

If it should be thought expedient not to make any one apply to a complete study of philosophy and theology, either because he is too advanced in years, or for some other some reason, he should, however, study moral theology after the humanities and logic, which are

always necessary. No one should be allowed to be ordained priest before having studied moral theology for two or three years.

The other things concerning silence, modesty, charity, etc., will be treated farther on, when we speak of the duties of the Prefects and of the seminarians. It will be well to have printed or written in a small volume all these rules, with the other precepts and observances of less importance, and have them read every week, or at least twice a month. This can be done on the day of retreat or on another feast or week day.

II. The bishop should try to have a good Director and good Prefects for the seminary; for if these officials fail in their duty, whatever the bishop may do, the seminary will certainly go to destruction. Besides good morals, they should have some skill and practice in taking care of seminaries. The bishop shall often inquire of the Director how the Prefects and the seminarians conduct themselves; but above all should he obtain information, by every means in his power, in regard to the manner of acting, the charity, the vigilance of the Director. Once or twice a year he shall make a general examination of the seminarians in order to hear and to find out the irregularities and faults of both the seminarians and officials.

III. The following are the *officials* whom the bishop shall employ for the government of the seminary:

First, the Director, who shall take care of the spiritual as well as of the temporal. The bishop should enjoin upon all the obligation of showing great respect and obedience to the Director; otherwise there will always be factions and troubles in the seminary.

Secondly, it is necessary that each section should have its own Prefect. Moreover, there shall be at least one general Prefect, if not two. He shall have charge of the seminarians when they go forth, either to go to

the chapel, to the class, to the door, or to speak to the Director; he shall always watch over the corridors, which should never be without some one to keep an eye upon them. When the seminarians go out of the seminary he shall take care that no one remains behind. He shall visit all the sections to examine how they study, how they observe silence, how they make recreation, etc. He shall be present when the barbers, shoemakers, tailors, come, so as to prevent all disorder. He shall give the signal for the common exercises. When informed by the special Prefects, he shall call in the physicians for the sick. In a word, he shall have general superintendence of all the observances of the seminary, and shall notify the Director of all faults of omission.

In some seminaries there is also a Vice-Director, who has the superintendence that has been just described and who presides in the absence of the Director. He has also charge of the servants, of procuring provisions, and whatever is necessary; but where there is a house steward and a general Prefect, as has been said, these cares may be divided among them.

Thirdly, it will be well, and even very useful, to keep at the seminary a confessor who constantly remains there. He should not interfere with the external government, and much less with the punishments that are to be given, nor reprove any one in the presence of others. He should attend only to hear with charity all those of the seminary who come to confess to him or to be directed in the spiritual life. He shall have special charge of the servants of the house, that they may frequent the sacraments and learn Christian doctrine. On the arrival of a new seminarian he shall instruct him for a general confession, mental prayer, etc., and assist him in the spiritual exercises, which on entering are to be made during eight or at least three days. He will

do well from time to time to address to all in the chapel some discourse or instruction on piety.

Besides this confessor established in the seminary, there should be made to come from without several prudent, exemplary, and well-informed confessors to hear the confessions of the seminarians. They should be firm in refusing absolution to backsliders, who, obliged by the Rule to confess and communicate in the seminary, are apt to come without being well disposed. It will be well to have two confessors to come together, in order that the seminarians may have more liberty in confessing. And three or four times a year the bishop should have extraordinary confessors to come, being persuaded that the seminarians are in great danger of making sacrileges by always confessing to those that know them.

Let all the confessors take care to recommend well to the Prefects, if they come to confession, to be faithful to report to the Director all the faults of the seminarians, and let them even go so far as to refuse them absolution if the importance of the case requires such a measure; for if the Prefects fail in this matter through human respect, there will thence arise many infractions of the Rule and many scandals, to the injury of the common good. They should therefore always inculcate this point. And if the case presents itself, let them also refuse absolution to those seminarians who, when able to remedy some grave scandal by informing the bishop or the Director, refuse to do so. It must be borne in mind that as there is here question of a common injury, they are often not excused because of a grave inconvenience or private injury.

IV. The bishop should, above all, be attentive not to admit into the seminary and to dismiss subjects who give little hope of becoming good ecclesiastics. On this point he should use a rigor which is not ordinary nor



great, but which is supreme, as he must be convinced that to relax at times in this rigor is an act, not of charity, but is much against charity; for the indulgence that we use towards any one will be the cause of common evil to the seminary. Among the subjects that enter, however careful we may be, there will not fail to be some who will not be what we thought that they were, or who being in the seminary will become bad. If we do not use towards them extreme rigor, one of them will suffice to corrupt all the rest; and so the seminary will be ruined, and become a receptacle of scandals.

We should at first use diligence and extreme rigor in the admission of pupils by admitting oftenest only those who are young (as for those that are grown up and ignorant, what hope can we have that they will become good laborers in the Church?); who we know by experience are given to piety, and who also show an inclination for the ecclesiastical state. For this purpose we should procure secret information, not from their relatives nor from their parish priests, but from strangers who are trustworthy. It is certainly better to have a few seminarians who are good and who likely will become useful to the Church, than to have many who are found to be imperfect and who will afterwards spoil the good.

In the second place, the bishop should use rigor, and great rigor, by dismissing the incorrigible and the scandalous.

By the *incorrigible* I understand those who after several remonstrances and after punishment give little hope that they will correct their faults, when these faults are multiplied and habitual, though not scandalous nor grave. Although such a one may not be positively scandalous, yet by his conduct, which is so negligent and faulty, he always gives scandal, at least by his bad example, and also makes others lukewarm; and so there



can be very little hope that such a one will become a good ecclesiastic. If therefore such a young man, after various means have been employed, gives no hope of amendment, he becomes certainly hurtful.

By the *scandalous* I understand those that commit faults of positive scandal; for instance, when they induce their companions to transgress a rule, or not to submit to the orders of the bishop or the Director, or to commit some grave theft or insolence. The scandal would be more hurtful if a seminarian would give bad example against decency by some word or some immodest action. The one that gives scandal in this way could scarcely be tolerated the first time that he falls into such faults, after having inflicted upon him a chastisement which is exemplary and of long duration. I use the words "Scarcely . . . the first time;" for the surest way would be to dismiss him at once; for such a one, after having been detected and punished, will easily find means to keep acts of this kind hidden, and as long as these acts do not become again known, they will be the cause of common evil, which it will afterwards be difficult to repair entirely, so that such a one may be the cause of ruin to many. What prudence is, therefore, required, which, in hoping for the amendment of an individual, exposes many to the danger of being lost? The expulsion of such a subject is not a great evil, although he may correct himself in the course of time; the ruin of the Community is a much greater evil, which one should much more fear and try to prevent. If the dismissal is an injury to the young man, it is a private injury, which injures only an individual; but if he injures others, the injury is very grave, as it injures the Community. I repeat, and I repeat a thousand times, that to be indulgent in this matter is not charity, but is imprudence, is tyranny, since in order to use charity towards an individual one wishes to permit the ruin of

many, or at least to expose them to the danger of ruin. As to this, it must be regarded as certain that in the seminary in which the pupils, being young, are easily drawn to good or evil, following the examples and the occasions that are before them, a single one giving scandal can infect all the rest. When they are infected there will probably be no remedy. The only remedy will be to dismiss them all, and to admit new subjects, otherwise the evil once introduced will stay, passing from one to the other forever. Such a severity should not be called, as is done by some, excessive rigor, but rather a duty of charity and of justice, since the bishop is obliged by a grave obligation of charity and of justice to promote the good, and the greatest good, of his diocese; this certainly depends in great part on having a well-regulated seminary.—Let us pray to the Lord that he may make all the bishops who govern the Church understand this truth.

## 2. Duties of the Director.

1. When there is question of receiving any subject, the Director shall endeavor carefully to inquire of trustworthy persons about his morals and inclinations.

2. When a seminarian has been received, he should have him make a retreat of eight or at least of three days; in these exercises, with the reading of the rules, he shall be instructed in the observances by the confessor of the house, to whom he shall afterward make a general confession.

3. The Director shall often and strongly enjoin upon the Prefects to come to him to report the faults committed in their sections, at least every week and every time that it is necessary, and when they come he should leave everything in order to hear them, and not make them wait. He shall correct with some severity those that neglect to report to him the faults that they have no-

ticed; sometimes even he shall publicly reprove them before the seminarians themselves, in order that the Prefect may be more easily excused by them if he afterwards accuses them to the Director. If on this point a Prefect, even after correction, neglects to amend, he should necessarily be dismissed.

4. He shall also tell the seminarians to call upon him when they have something to communicate to him, but always with the permission of the Prefect, who should not refuse it. Moreover, he shall appoint in each section one or two of the most virtuous and faithful seminarians as secret inspectors, to report to him from time to time the faults that they notice, or at least to make them known to him in a surer and less exposed way.

5. He shall keep a small register containing the names of all the seminarians, one on each page, under which he shall note the faults of each in order to be mindful of them,—at least when he has to render an account to the bishop previously to ordination.

6. He shall be specially watchful in regard to faults against purity; he shall recommend modesty in dressing and undressing. He shall order that the lamp at night should always be kept burning, and placed at such a height that no one can extinguish it. Moreover, during the night the dormitory should always be kept locked, and the Prefect should keep the key: this should always be done without exception; otherwise many sins will be the consequence, for which he will have to render an account to God. He shall ordain that, without his express permission, no seminarian should leave his section after the *Ave Maria*, or even during the day, nor go to the room of the teachers; and he should not easily give this permission; for this is a thing that is not practised in the seminaries where there is regular observance; and besides, it is dangerous for one to be quite alone in the room with a boy. In regard to the difficul-

ties which the pupils meet with in their studies, they will do better to propose them in the class; this will serve at the same time as an instruction for others. He shall assign to each the place of his bed, taking care that the beds be separated from each other at a distance of five or six palms; he shall also assign to each his place at class, at table, and for recreation, and keep separate the quarrelsome, the negligent, and those among whom there may be any danger of scandal.

7. He must employ the greatest rigor in punishing faults against purity committed either in actions or in words; so also if any one converses with a companion alone or in secret, or gives him a note or a present. He shall punish the servants that take letters from the seminarians, since all the letters should be given to the porter, and handed by the porter to the Director. It would be a grave fault to speak to a pupil of another section, and still a graver fault, worthy of expulsion, to approach any one when he is in bed.

8. In punishing, he must make others understand that he does not act out of revenge or out of passion; hence he should defer punishment as long as he is excited. He shall do the same when it is the seminarian who is excited; for prudence requires that we should wait till he is calm. His passion having then subsided, he should be punished; otherwise in his anger he might easily go to excess. Sometimes, when the fault is secret, a charitable remonstrance will have greater effect than any other punishment. I use the word *secret*, for if it is public, the punishment should be public; however, even then it will be well to make a gentle remonstrance before or after the chastisement.

9. He shall try to find out what kind of conversation is held during the recreations and the walks into the country. For these walks he should point out the places where seminarians should go.

10. He shall be vigilant that the prescribed silence be observed, especially at table, when silence is indispensable; if one wishes to avoid innumerable faults, acts of intemperance, disputes, improprieties; for when the seminarians are at table the Prefects cannot observe the seminarians, nor all that is done or said.

11. He shall often go through the sections to see what is done in the time of study or recreation, or in free time. Moreover, several times a year, or every three or four months, he shall examine the beds and cupboards, and unexpectedly ask for the keys in order to see whether he may not find arms, books, and other unsuitable things.

12. He shall have an understanding with the bishop to have a rule made that during the vacation it shall not be permitted to the seminarians to return home, as is done in some seminaries; this inflicts upon these poor young men immense harm, which is perhaps irreparable. During this time the seminarian will easily lose all that he has gained while at the seminary, especially if he remains away during the vintage. It will then be well to give vacation in the seminary by dispensing the young men from study, and allowing them some rational amusement.

13. If there is question of giving to a seminarian permission to return home on account of sickness, care should be taken to assure one's self beforehand, by the advice of the physician, whether the sickness is real, and whether it is necessary for the young man to leave the house; for often seminarians pretend to be sick in order to be able to be present at some festival, or through other capricious motives. If any one should go away for some other urgent cause, one should fix the time of his return; and after he has come back, in regard to the time that he has been absent, the Director shall take care to obtain information how he conducted himself,

with whom he stayed, whether he frequented the sacraments, practised mental prayer, etc.

14. Often, as on the days preceding the principal feasts and those of the Blessed Virgin, he shall preach a sermon; and he shall never fail to make a day of retreat in the manner indicated above, page 477.

15. He should often ask a seminarian, in the presence of the others, how mental prayer is made, or whether he remembers what has been read in the refectory, or what he himself has read privately.

16. He shall speak at least once a week with the house steward about the necessities, the provisions, and the treatment of the seminarians.

17. He shall read over from time to time these instructions in order to refresh his memory as to the things to which he should pay attention; otherwise it will be difficult for him not to fail in many things, at least through forgetfulness.

18. When the seminarians are to go to the church, to be present at the offices, or to serve the bishop, they shall leave the seminary together, wearing the surplice, keeping silence, and with their Prefect, who must never lose sight of them. It shall never be permitted them, in the church, sacristy, or elsewhere, to speak to any one whatsoever, however distinguished the person may be; for this is very important for the welfare of the seminarians and for the good order of the seminary, to which the most worthy ecclesiastics of the diocese must attend, and which they should even promote. The latter should therefore not be offended if one lets them know, in a respectful manner, the necessity of such reserve; and certainly the zeal that animates them will aid them to be edified and pleased.

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### 3. Duties of the Prefects.

1. The Prefect shall take care to keep and have others keep the rules and all the particular orders of the bishop and of the Director; he shall see that every one punctually obeys the common signal. He shall be the first to rise and the last to go to bed. He shall be ready to accompany the seminarians when they go to the chapel, to class, or to the table. During the time of study, he shall avoid distracting the seminarians by speaking to them or by going about. If he must leave the seminary to attend to some business, he shall not do so without the permission of the Director; then he shall choose for this the time during which the seminarians are in class, and he shall return before they leave it. When he is to go to some place in the seminary itself, he shall notify the general Prefect, who will watch over the section in his absence.

2. While the seminarians are sleeping at night, he shall take care to lock the dormitory with a key which he shall put under his pillow, and to keep the lamp always burning. He shall assure himself that the wick is in order, that there is enough oil, and shall have the tinder-box always near him in case the light should happen to go out. During the rest that is taken during the day the windows should not be entirely closed; they should remain half open, so that one can see what is going on.

3. In the morning and in the evening, at rising and going to bed, he shall watch that modesty be observed in dressing and in undressing. The rule of the seminary at Naples is, that every one after having put on his cassock should at once leave the bed, and dress with his face turned towards the clothes-press. If the dormitory happens to be too cold, this practice should be followed



at least when the weather is mild, that is, from the month of April till October; during the other months one may dress in bed. And when in the morning the seminarians go to meditation, he shall take care that no one remains in the room: if any one should remain, he should not be left alone; he shall notify the general Prefect of the fact: this would be better. Should any seminarian be called to the door, the general Prefect should have some one to accompany him, and not permit him to go alone.

4. If the Director has not assigned to some one his place in the dormitory, the class, the refectory, recreation, the Prefect himself shall do so conformably to prudence, as has been explained on page 482, until the matter has been attended to by the Director himself, who shall always have charge of it. He shall be watchful that the recreation be always in accordance with the rule, namely, that all should sit in a circle; in the evening he shall make them sit at some distance from one another.

5. During the recreations, at home or in the country, he shall take care that all remain under his eyes and near him, so that he can see and hear all that is done and said. In these recreations one should avoid all plays with the hands, sharp words, disputes on the score of talent, birth, and the like; in the same way all worldly discourses, such as on marriages, possessions, riches, comedies, and other amusements of the world.

6. He shall correct with firmness him who fails in regard to the Rule, the signals, or the orders of the Director. The Prefect cannot inflict punishments; he can only impose silence, and then refer all to the Director. If he happens to find arms or improper books, he shall take them away and carry them to the Director. He shall retain at least one of the seminarians to be an inspector, charging him with faithfully and secretly

notifying him of certain faults which he himself has not noticed.

7. He shall be exact in watching that the seminarians never speak with the servants; if they have something to say to them, let them do so in the presence of the Prefect. Moreover, he shall never permit them to enter the refectory, the offices, under any pretext whatsoever.

8. He shall be most attentive and faithful to report to the Director the faults of every one, especially if they are habitual, and more especially if they are contrary to modesty. For this end he shall keep a list of the faults which can be more easily committed in order to subscribe the names of those that commit them. For this reason we add here the following list prescribed for the Prefects by the great Cardinal Paleotto. It will at least serve to call to mind the faults that one has seen committed, and that one should report to the Director:

1. On such and such a day arose too late, and was not found at the beginning of meditation, N . . . . (We here leave a space, and should do so after the other faults that are indicated, in order to inscribe the names of the subjects, as is indicated above.)

2. Has not been modest in chapel, at table, or in walking, N . . . .

3. Has spoken to some one of another section, or to a companion alone or in secret, etc., N . . . .

4. Has said improper or offensive words, or has touched another, N . . . .

5. Has been at the door, or elsewhere, without permission, N . . . .

6. Did not go to confession this week, N . . . .

7. Shows but little devotion, does not observe silence, does not obey such an order, N . . . .

The Prefect should, finally, consider how great will be his reward if he is diligent and faithful in reporting all to the Director. I use the word *all*, for certain

faults, although light, when they are habitual, or when they are united to other failings, will at least indicate that the subject has not the ecclesiastical spirit requisite to be admitted to holy Orders. And, on the other hand, how great will be the account that he will have to render to God if he fails in this point, either through negligence or through human respect! It is true that by performing the duties of his office as he should he will draw down upon him the aversion of many; but he must act in this manner, or resign, if he does not wish to make himself guilty before God of the ruin of his section, and perhaps of the whole seminary. because neither the Bishop nor the Director, who cannot always be present as the Prefect can, could remedy the disorders and the scandals if the Prefects neglect to report the faults that they see.

#### 4. Rules that the Seminarians must Observe.

1. The seminarians should, above all, observe modesty and propriety. Hence no one should leave his bed or go to bed without throwing his cassock around him, and let him dress and undress seated before the clothespress; only in places where it is cold may he dress on the bed, but under the coverlet. When any one changes his linen, let him avoid remaining exposed. When in bed he should always wear shirt and drawers, and always be covered.

2. No one can speak alone or secretly to any one of his companions, nor give him notes or presents. It would be a great fault to speak to any one of another section, and a greater fault to approach any one who is in bed. The letters cannot be given to the servants; they must be handed to the porter, who before forwarding them shall take them to the Director. Every one is to bear in mind that every word or action against

modesty, even in jest, will never be passed by without notable punishment.

3. No one can leave his section to go to the door without the permission of the Prefect. And if any one wishes to go to the room of the Professor, or leave the section after the *Ave Maria*, one cannot do so without the express permission of the Director.

4. Each one shall sit at the place assigned to him, either in class, in recreation, or in the refectory, where during the meals he shall keep his hands on the table; after having finished eating, he shall adopt a composed and modest posture. In the evening, at recreation, all shall be seated in a circle as during the day, but at some distance from one another. In their walks to the country, when they recreate themselves, they shall guard against causing any damage or showing themselves mischievous; they shall then take care to remain within sight of the Prefect, and near enough that he may see what they do and hear what they say. They shall always observe custody of the eyes, not only in the church and in the chapel, but also in the refectory and in the streets, by not looking at any object that may be a cause of temptation to them. In this matter the Prefects shall be careful to accuse those wanting in reserve, and the Director shall punish them.

5. Each one, under pain of grievous chastisement, shall guard against offending a companion by injurious words. For this purpose they shall avoid disputes, rival pretensions on the score of birth, talents, and fortune. They shall also abstain from discoursing on the acquisition of honor, and of riches, or on comedies, festivals, and other similar amusements, which are not suitable for those that aspire to the sacerdotal dignity.

6. No one shall play dice or cards, nor is it allowed to any one to engage in playing any game whatsoever for money.

7. The penances imposed by the Superiors for any fault must be performed, even though one should be innocent of the charge. To no one is it permitted to make known to persons outside of the seminary the penances inflicted upon the pupils, nor other things that are done in the seminary.

8. Fraternal charity requires, moreover, that every one should acquaint the Prefect or the Director with the faults of his companions, in order that a remedy may be applied in time and when scandalous things occur, there is a grave obligation to reveal them, even though one had to do so at great inconvenience, since there is question of a scandal, which in seminaries causes common injury.

9. The seminarians shall confess and communicate every eight or fifteen days, according to the Rule of the seminary; they must at least confess at this time, even though they cannot go to Communion.

10. Outside of the two recreations, after dinner and after supper, which shall last one hour, and outside of the days on which they go out to recreate themselves, silence should be observed not only in the church, the chapel, but also in class, in the refectory, in the corridors, and also in the inhabited places when they go out. This holds good also for the section, especially during study time, and more rigorously in the evening at the signal for the examination of conscience, and in the morning till the end of meditation.

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Here follows an *Appendix*: "Exhortation to young men who devote themselves to the study of the ecclesiastical sciences." See Volume XII., page 449.

**Fidelity of Subjects to God**

RENDERS THEM FAITHFUL TO THE PRINCE, THEIR RULER.

ST. ALPHONSUS published this last of his little works in 1777. At the age of eighty-one, after having given to the world so many excellent instructions, at first in general for persons of every condition, and then in particular for nuns and religious, priests and bishops, the holy Doctor seems to have remembered that he should also give specially some good advice to those to whom divine Providence has deigned to intrust the exercise of the temporal power, for the glory of God, for their own good, and for the good of their subjects. He sent copies of this little work to Cardinal Castelli, and through him and Canon Hennequin at Liège to all the Catholic princes and their chief ministers.—ED.



## Fidelity of Subjects to God

MAKES THEM FAITHFUL TO THE PRINCE, THEIR RULER.

### CHAPTER I.

IF KINGS WISH THEIR SUBJECTS TO BE OBEDIENT TO THEM,  
THEY MUST ENDEAVOR TO MAKE THEM OBEDIENT TO  
GOD.—PROOF OF THIS ASSERTION.

By promoting good morals we promote also peace among citizens, and consequently the good of the whole state. This is an evident truth, which is everywhere proved by experience: subjects that obey the commandments of God are necessarily obedient to the laws of princes. The fidelity that the subjects practise towards God renders them faithful to their sovereigns. The reason of this is clear: when subjects obey the divine precepts, we see a cessation of licentiousness, of thefts, of frauds, of adulteries, of homicides; then the state flourishes, order is maintained by submission to the sovereign, and peace is preserved in families. In a word, those that resolve to lead an orderly life resolve at the same time to fulfil their duties: they will take care to suppress their passions, and so live in peace with themselves and with others.

But, one will say, for this purpose the laws of princes and the punishments inflicted upon delinquents are sufficient. No, these things are not sufficient; human laws with their penalties cannot suffice to check the boldness and inordinate passions of bad subjects who seek only to serve their own interests and to gratify their wicked desires. If, when an occasion presents itself, they despise

the laws and chastisements of God, they also will easily despise the laws of their sovereign and the punishments with which he threatens them.

Human laws can aid in preserving good morals in those subjects that are well disposed, but they cannot infuse them into those that are depraved; religion alone introduces into souls and forms in them holy morals, and thus causes the laws to be observed. If religion were not there, teaching that there is a God who sees everything and knows how to punish the wickedness of the impious, rarely would they make an effort to fulfil their duties; and without this fear of divine justice which restrains men, the number of the wicked would everywhere multiply enormously.

It is religion alone that renders subjects truly obedient to their princes, by teaching them that they are obliged to obey their sovereigns, not only to avoid the punishments inflicted upon transgressors, but also to obey God and to preserve peace of conscience, according to the teaching of St. Paul, who declares that the sovereigns are the ministers of God: *For they are the ministers of God, serving unto this purpose.*<sup>1</sup> He moreover adds, that the laws of princes even bind the consciences of subjects: *Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.*<sup>2</sup>

Neither the laws nor the punishments that they menace suffice, therefore, to repress the boldness of malefactors who trouble the public peace; for often misdeeds remain unpunished, either because the delinquents remain hidden, or because sufficient proofs are wanting to condemn them; and it is not rare that the guilty, although their misdeeds are well proved, escape punishment by flight. Le Clerc, although a heretic,

<sup>1</sup> "Ministri enim Dei sunt, in hoc ipsum servientes."—*Rom.* xiii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Ideo necessitate subditi estote, non solum propter iram, sed etiam propter conscientiam."—*Ibid.* 5.

said: "Most men are incapable of doing what is right solely in view of the public good; private interest is nearly always opposed to the common good; only the fear of divine chastisements keeps in check all disorders."

On the other hand, as it is true that the princes are the ministers of God and his representatives, since the subjects are obliged even in conscience to obey their princes, so the princes are obliged to watch over their subjects that they may obey God. For a private individual it is sufficient to observe the law of God in order to save his soul; but for a king that is not sufficient. He must do all that he can, that his subjects may observe the law of God by endeavoring to reform bad morals and extirpating scandals.

And when the honor of God is at stake, the princes should arm themselves with courage, and not fail in their duty through fear of any adversity or contradiction that may arise; for every king that fulfils his duty has God to assist him, as the Lord himself has declared to Josue when he intrusted to him the government of his people: *Take courage, and be strong. Fear not, and be not dismayed; because the Lord thy God is with thee.*<sup>1</sup>

Consequently the principal end that princes should propose to themselves in the government is not their own glory, but the glory of God. Those that forget the glory of God to occupy themselves only with their own glory, shall lose both. Whoever governs should be persuaded that it is not possible for him in this world, filled with wicked and ignorant people, to acquire by his acts, however just and holy they may be, the praises and the applause of all his subjects. If he exercises liberality towards the good and the poor, they will call him a spendthrift; if he executes justice in regard to

<sup>1</sup> "Confortare et esto robustus. Noli metuere, et noli timere; quoniam tecum est Dominus Deus tuus."—*Jos. i. 9.*

the wicked, he will be called a tyrant. Kings should, therefore, seek to please God rather than men; for then, if they are not praised by the wicked, they will be praised by the good, and above all by God, who will know how to reward them in this life and in the next.

Princes should in a special manner be watchful that their states be purged of people that profess false doctrine; hence many Catholic sovereigns admit to their service neither heretics nor schismatics. They should also strictly prohibit the introduction of books infected with pernicious doctrines; the want of precaution of certain princes against this sort of books has caused the ruin of several kingdoms.

One should also consider how many virtuous princesses have increased the glory of God and piety among the subjects by their devotion and the good example which they have given. This one may see in the Lives of St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal; St. Hedwig, Duchess of Poland; St. Bridget, Princess of Sweden; and St. Catharine, her daughter.

## CHAPTER II.

### MEANS TO INDUCE SUBJECTS TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD.

LET us now see which are the means used by good princes to induce their subjects to live like Christians.

1. In the distribution of offices and of honors, they give the preference to those that distinguish themselves by a more irreproachable life, excepting the case in which, in an affair of great importance to the State, another would be much more capable. Princes, however, should always consider that those persons who are more pleasing to God, receive from the Lord greater lights and much more strength to secure the execution of the orders that regard the public good.

2. They bestow with liberality graces and favors upon the good, and they are on the other hand reserved and strict in regard to those that lead wicked lives.

3. They take care to have always near them at court persons that are edifying in their conduct; for princes can always trust such persons, but not those that are free in their manners.

4. They profit by every occasion to praise the virtuous, and they show that they esteem but little those that care not for piety. If it is understood that the prince looks upon good people with an eye different from that with which he looks upon libertines, this would be sufficient to reform the greater part of the subjects of his kingdom. Hence it is advisable for princes to invite to their courts zealous preachers who can persuade each one of his duty to serve God.

5. They should choose functionaries who are not only

exact in rendering justice, but who are also filled with the fear of God; for those that are not filled with the fear of God will hardly be exact in the administration of justice as they should be. Moreover, they should also take care that the functionaries are zealous for the laws, not only by observing them themselves, but by having them observed by others, in order that the laws may be maintained in all their rigor.

6. As for the choice of functionaries, many Catholic princes are accustomed to employ for this purpose their counsel or the highest tribunal, to whom they propose three subjects among whom they choose him who seems to them the most worthy, so that in this way they may assure themselves of having the best.

7. Then, in order that the functionaries chosen may suitably acquit themselves of their charge, the prince should, as well as he can, reward those that behave themselves, and punish those that neglect their duty.

8. The ecclesiastical offices to which the prince has the right to make appointments should be conferred upon the most worthy subjects. It is also expedient that ecclesiastical pensions be granted to those that have labored most for the Church.

9. The prince should also see to it that the Superiors of religious Orders have the rules of their Institute observed; for when the religious fail in their duty and those in charge neglect to correct them, great injury to seculars and to the State itself will be the result.

**A Few Maxims concerning the Good Government of the Kingdom in order that all may conduce to the Glory of God, of the King, and to the Welfare of the Subjects.**

1. The good prince, in order to govern well, always has God before his eyes, and he prefers the interests of God's glory to every reason of State.

2. He shows himself an enemy to every kind of flattery; he loves the one that tells him the truth, and he wishes every one to know this. When Henry IV., King of France, was asked why he loved so much the Bishop of Geneva, who was St. Francis de Sales, he answered: "I love him because he does not flatter me."

3. He exercises justice towards every one, without passion and without partiality.

4. Before resolving important affairs, he examines everything himself.

5. In all doubtful things, or where a doubt is possible, he must consult prudent men.

6. This is the reason why he does his best to choose counsellors who are wise and of an upright conscience.

7. After having taken counsel and the counsel has been judged good, he should carry it out with firmness, unless he meets with another good reason that is the very opposite. To change one's opinion for a good reason is not weakness; it is praiseworthy prudence.

8. When he hears any one praised or blamed, let him be slow to believe what is said, and let him examine whether he that speaks does not speak with a view to personal interest.

9. Finally, the good prince, in order to urge his subjects to live well, relies more on good example than on force. The good example of the prince effects more in this respect than a thousand private individuals.

10. It is the duty not only of the bishops but also of the sovereign to induce the subjects to practise exercises of devotion, and to render to God the honor that is due to him. It is said that in the world one must have fortune; well, it is piety which is the foundation of the true fortune of all men, and especially of princes. It is certain that all prosperity or adversity depends on God, who disposes all things; no one, therefore, can hope for more happiness in the present



life than he that renders himself most pleasing to God by his piety. The Lord takes to heart the prosperity of those princes that take especially to heart the glory of God. In a word, a sovereign who desires to govern well his temporal kingdom should live in such a manner as to make himself worthy of the eternal kingdom.

## CHAPTER III.

EXAMPLES OF PRINCES WHO BY THEIR ZEAL CONTRIBUTED MUCH TOWARDS THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE.

### I. Emperor Constantine.

AMONG these princes, he who deserves to be mentioned in the first place is the great Emperor Constantine. Eusebius relates that this prince judged that only God whom his father had adored should be acknowledged and venerated, when he considered that the other emperors, who had put all confidence in a multitude of gods, after having immolated to them so many victims and offered so many gifts, found themselves disappointed in the hopes which the oracles had made them entertain, and that they all ended their lives by an unfortunate death, while his father Constantius alone, after having condemned the errors of his colleagues and recognized one only God as his Lord, died a happy death.

At this epoch, being at war with the tyrant Maxentius who reigned at Rome, Constantine began to supplicate the omnipotent God to enlighten and to help him in the state in which he was. God, who is full of mercy, did not fail to take the young emperor under his protection. Towards the end of the same day a luminous cross appeared to Constantine and to his whole army; it shone in the heavens above the sun, and bore this inscription: *In hoc vince*.

Then the emperor sent for some Christian priests to explain to him the meaning of this sign and of this inscription. Having received the desired explanation,

(so Cardinal Orsi writes), and having been thoroughly instructed by the priests, he resolutely embraced the faith of Jesus Christ. At the same time he had a model of the *Labarum* made, representing the sign of the cross that had appeared to him. Afterwards, in the wars that he had to wage, the *Labarum* was carried before him in every battle, and he always gained the victory.

In regard to the war against Maxentius, after the apparition of the cross, Constantine was animated with great courage; he engaged in a battle under the walls of Rome, October 28, 312, and gained a brilliant victory which filled the whole empire with joy on account of the death of the tyrant, who was drowned in the Tiber. The victorious emperor, full of gratitude to God, would even have desired to abolish idolatry; but in the beginning he had to tolerate many things, because the Romans were too much attached to their gods. For the rest, he at once began to favor the Christian faith as much as he could, and he publicly made known even in Rome itself what was due to the Pope, who was at that time St. Melchiades, and to the priests by admitting them to his table.

Then he undertook to establish the worship of the true God in various parts of the empire, by the building of many magnificent churches, which he enriched with precious vessels and ornaments and endowed them with abundant revenues. He also published several edicts in favor of the Church and of the faithful, and for this he even obtained the sanction of the Senate.

The Lord also augmented the prosperity of Constantine by the death of his enemies Maximian and of Licinius, who did not cease to persecute the Church. In regard to the Church he continued, as he had proposed to himself, to labor so as to unite the empire in the belief in Jesus Christ, and he persecuted not only the idolaters but also the heretics, and especially the Arians. Hence

in 325, in order to put an end to this heresy, he promoted the assembling of the Council of Nice at which he wished to be present himself. At the sight of this august assembly of bishops, of whom several bore the scars of the wounds suffered during the preceding persecutions, he was transported with joy, rendered thanks to God, and encouraged these holy prelates to defend with firmness the cause of God. The Council having finished by condemning Arius, before the bishops separated the emperor wished to receive all of them at table, and he made each one of them a noble present. But he was more particularly generous towards those bishops who still bore the marks of the persecution they had endured.

He afterwards began to found at Rome several churches, such as that of the Saviour in the Lateran, that of St. Peter in the Vatican, that of St. Paul in the Ostian Way. He also built many others at Rome and in many distant provinces, in Greece, in Africa, in Egypt, and in Syria.

Seeing afterwards that the Roman people persisted in defending idolatry to the injury of so many souls, he resolved to found in the city of Byzantium in the East a new Rome, which was to be peopled only by the disciples of Jesus Christ, and which he called after his own name Constantinople. Permitting only Catholics to live there, he excluded therefrom all infidels and heretics. From this place he also issued several edicts against the Novatians, the Marcionites, and other heretics, by forbidding their sects all private or public exercise of worship. Moreover, he ordained that all oratories where the heretics held their meetings should be handed over to the Catholics.

In a word, since Constantine, enlightened from on high, resolved to embrace the faith, he always lived as a true Catholic. A certain author taxed him with a

leaning towards the doctrine of Arius; but in ecclesiastical history it is too plainly seen that he always venerated and defended the Council of Nice in which Arius was condemned.—But why did Constantine receive baptism at the hands of Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was an Arian?—The reason is because Eusebius and Arius deceived him by making him believe that their doctrine was the same as that of the Council. Men, even the wisest and the holiest, are liable to be deceived without any fault of theirs, as was the case with Constantine. For the rest, Natalis Alexander in a learned dissertation<sup>1</sup> affirms and proves that all the ancient writers, such as St. Athanasius, St. Epiphanius, and St. Hilary, agree in saying that Constantine always remained firmly attached to the Catholic faith; for this the Lord rewarded him with a happy death.

There is a discussion among authors about his baptism and death. Cardinal Baronius, with several others, says that Constantine was baptized at Rome in 324 by Pope St. Sylvester; however, the learned of the present day more commonly believe, and with more probability, that he received baptism at the end of his life at Nicomedia, as we are informed by Fleury, Cardinal Orsi, and Natalis Alexander, with St. Ambrose, St. Isidore, and others. They say that Constantine, having fallen ill at Nicomedia, and growing worse, he called several bishops and begged them to confer baptism upon him. After he had received it he felt such consolation that he cried out: "Now I find myself truly happy!" Then as his officers were expressing the pain that they felt in seeing him in this state and the desire that they had for the preservation of his life, he answered them: "I have just received true life; I desire nothing more than to go to enjoy my God." It was in these pious sentiments that he died, May 22 of the year 337. In the Greek

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, sæc. iv. diss. 21.

Martyrology, according to what Natalis Alexander says, he is venerated as Blessed on May 21.

**2. St. Louis, King of France.**

In reference to the subject that occupies us,—the honor of God and the salvation of souls,—he who merits to be mentioned for the second place is a great king and a great saint; it is the King of France, St. Louis. I omit to praise here all the virtues of this illustrious prince; books containing the history of his glorious life are everywhere found. To give an idea of his great zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls, it suffices to recall to mind the magnanimous courage with which he undertook the conquest of the Holy Land in order to deliver it from the hands of the Saracens.

History informs us that the first time that he set out for Egypt with his army in 1249, having arrived with his naval forces before the city of Damietta and seeing himself surrounded by the principal lords of his kingdom, he thus spoke to them: "Friends, if we are united in charity, victory is ours. Let us then attack the enemy with courage. Do not regard my person; I am like any one among you whose life the Lord may take if he pleases. Whatever will happen will always be advantageous to us: if we are conquered, we shall be martyrs; if we are victorious, this will be for the glory of God. It is for God that we are fighting; we desire only his glory and not ours." Then, having ordered all to disembark, the king was the first to go ashore to engage in a hand-to-hand conflict with the hostile forces who were waiting for him; but, seized with astonishment at such courage, they took to flight, so that Damietta was captured on the sixth day.

It is true, it did not please the Lord to allow the enterprise to succeed; for a pestilence having broken out among the troops, St. Louis was obliged to return to

France. Later, however, in 1270, he resumed the enterprise; but disease again attacked his soldiers, and, being himself seized with the malady, he laid down his life amidst the barbarians. Such a death, however, procured for him the greatest merit in heaven.

Let us now consider the zeal with which he was animated for the spiritual good of his subjects. He undertook for this purpose to visit his States, and in this visit he left everywhere marks of his great piety and of his justice. He specially published most severe edicts against blasphemers and perjurers, and ordered that their tongues should be pierced with a red-hot iron. He said: "I would consent to suffer myself this torture if I could by this means banish from my kingdom blasphemy and perjury."

He never omitted to devote himself every day to the good government of his subjects, so that everything might be in order and all scandals might be avoided. At the same time he never failed to make every day his meditation and spiritual reading, and prayed for himself and for the people intrusted to his care. One of his intimate friends, seeing that he employed much time in the exercise of piety, said to him one day that this was too much; but the saint replied: "If I spent much more time in amusements, as is usual with those in my state, no one would say anything about the matter." It is thus that he merited to die a happy death.

### 3. St. Stephen, King of Hungary.

The third place is occupied by St. Stephen, the first king of Hungary. He was born in 977, when the greater part of Hungary was yet pagan. Having succeeded his father in 997, and wishing to attract his idolatrous subjects to the worship of the true God, he began by often assembling a large number of them in his palace, where, having received them with kindness and affability, he



himself instructed them in the divine law. But the obstinate pagans suspecting that the king wished to force them to change their religion, a great multitude of them revolted, so that the saint was obliged to oppose them by an army of Christians. It would have been easy for him to reign peaceably, had he wished to permit the unbelievers to live according to their false law; but the good prince preferred the advantages of religion to those of the State. Hence, full of confidence in God and in his dearly beloved Sovereign the Blessed Virgin, under whose protection he had placed his kingdom, he did not refuse to give battle, although the number of unbelievers was much superior to his own soldiers. The pagans were totally defeated.

When he saw these obstacles removed, he labored to rid his kingdom of all that remained of idolatry. For this purpose he invited from various parts religious priests to come to preach the Gospel to his people; and as he himself was always found at the head of the missionaries, the conversion of the country was general. He then divided the kingdom into eleven dioceses, and chose the city of Strigonia as the Metropolitan See. For this he obtained the approbation of Pope Sylvester II., who conferred upon him the title of king, and confirmed all the bishoprics that he had established and all the bishops that he had appointed.

Later on, when Emperor Conrad II. had sent a formidable army to take possession of Hungary, he resigned himself entirely to the hands of God, and the Lord, who loved this faithful servant, did not fail to protect him. At the moment when the attack was feared, the troops of Conrad withdrew, and no one ever heard why the Emperor ordered the retreat of his powerful army.

When the saint had restored peace to his kingdom, he devoted himself entirely to the work of making the

religion of Jesus Christ prosper, and of removing abuses. To this end he published several very salutary laws in order to abolish the barbarous customs of his subjects. At the same time he charged himself with the care of the poor and of the administration of justice for all kinds of persons. He thus employed the greatest part of the day in the government of his subjects; as for the night, he devoted it to meditating on the eternal truths and to recommending himself and his subjects to God.

Entirely resigned to the divine will, he suffered in peace the death of all his children, and especially that of Emeric, his eldest son, who was endowed with the greatest virtue, and whom he loved fondly. He also suffered with exemplary patience his numerous infirmities until God, in 1038, called him to heaven at the age of sixty-one. He died in profound peace on the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, whom he had honored with singular devotion during his whole life, and to whom he had raised a magnificent church in which he wished to be buried.

#### 4. St. Ethelbert, King of England.

When St. Gregory the Great, in 596, had sent the monk St. Augustine, accompanied by other religious, to preach the faith in England, King Ethelbert, enlightened and converted, gained by the aid which he gave to these good missionaries several provinces to the religion of Jesus Christ. His successors, continuing to favor the mission, had the consolation of seeing this kingdom remain faithful till the time of the unfortunate King Henry VIII., who in 1533 separated from the Church. During this interval one may say that England was a seminary of saints, so that there was found no country that had not as its special protector one of its own canonized countrymen. But then came Henry

VIII., who, forming a new heresy, declared himself the head of the Church; and from that time till the present the kingdom has become a sink of heresies in which all Protestant sects find room, while the Catholic religion is banished from the whole country. O England! who should not weep with compassion when considering what thou wert formerly, the Land of Angels, as thou wast called, and what thou art at the present day!

**5. Louis XIV., King of France.**

It would take too long were I to relate here what has been done by many other monarchs who by their zeal have purged their kingdoms of infidels or heretics. But I cannot omit to mention with special praise what was accomplished by the great Louis XIV., a truly Christian king. In 1685 he revoked the Edict of Nantes of the year 1598, by which his predecessor, Henry IV., had permitted the Huguenots the free exercise of the impious sect of Calvin. Louis XIV., notwithstanding the clamors of the Calvinists, courageously prohibited all their religious exercises and all their assemblies, public and private, under the penalty of imprisonment and confiscation of property. He, moreover, ordained that all those subjects that wished to profess their pretended reformed religion to depart from all the lands subject to his authority, together with their wives and children; he allowed them only to take with them their personal property.

There were at that time politicians who taxed with imprudence this measure by which the king banished from his kingdom so many thousand families, so many millions of gold, so many renowned artisans, who were obliged to go to live in a strange country on account of religion. But Louis Muratori says: "The king wished to prefer the welfare of the Catholic religion and the peace of his kingdom to his own interest; for the State,

on account of preceding events, never felt itself secure while harboring in its bosom people of a different religion, who never ceased to injure it and to hamper the exercise of its power. In a word," concludes Muratori, "so pious and generous an action on the part of Louis XIV. will always suffice to render his name glorious and immortal."

#### 5. Charles Emmanuel I., Duke of Savoy.

There are not wanting other similar examples that we may relate; but those given seem to suffice because I do not wish to weary the reader. I cannot, however, omit to relate here the manner in which Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, brought about with the divine help the conversion of Chablais, which was quite infected with Calvinism. The inhabitants of this whole country had entirely abandoned the Catholic religion, and lived without sacraments, without churches, and without priests, having only preachers who continued to pervert them. It was then that the Duke wrote to the Bishop of Geneva to persuade him to make choice of several fervent missionaries, and to send them to preach to his erring people in order to bring them back to their old religion. He promised to aid them with his protection. The bishop chose as the head of the mission St. Francis de Sales, who with his companions converted a large number of heretics, but many others remained obstinate.

The Duke had then recourse to several other means to secure the entire conversion of Chablais; especially did he wish to go there himself so as to give the mission the aid of his presence and of his authority. But seeing that the obstinate did not wish to yield, he one day ordered all the heretics to assemble the following day at his palace. He then went there himself, accompanied by his soldiers, who might prevent all disorder.

When he saw them all gathered before him, he bade all to be silent and said that, although in the beginning he could have used authority and force to make them re-enter the Catholic Church which they had abandoned, yet he wished to employ only peaceable and gentle means by which the most of the erring ones had already been brought back to the bosom of the Church. Seeing the others blinded to such an extent as to wish to ruin themselves in this world and the next, he declared that he had decided not to suffer in his States those who by their obstinacy would show themselves enemies of God and of their prince. Consequently, he ordered the good to separate themselves from the obstinate, and those that wished to follow his religion should place themselves on his right, and the others should stand on his left.

When he had ceased speaking and had waited for some time, a small number remained on the left, and the greater part went over to his right. Then the Duke, turning to the latter, said that he would always consider them his faithful subjects who could rely on his favor; then turning towards those on his left, he spoke thus to them: "As to you who in my presence dare to declare yourselves the enemies of God and my enemies, you must leave my States without any hope of ever being able to come back. I deprive you of your offices and your dignities; for I prefer to have no subjects than to have such as you are, whom I should always have to mistrust." Having said this, he turned his back upon them. But afterwards the Lord consoled this good prince; for St. Francis de Sales, after this event, had the happiness of inducing them all to repent and to be converted; whereupon he was able to obtain for the prince the favor of their return, so that they all lived in peace in their country.

**Conclusion.**

These last two examples make us see especially how ill-founded is the opinion of some cavillers who say that even in Catholic kingdoms unbelievers should be tolerated in order that the peace of the State may be preserved. Peace is a gift of God; how can those that are the enemies of God preserve the peace? A heretic named John Leonard Froëreisen in a discourse which he published at Strasbourg, speaking of the churches of the communion of Augsburg, although a Lutheran, wrote this memorable sentence against himself: "Our communion is an army in which every one wishes to be the chief. It is a serpent, cut up into several parts, which lives but will soon die." This means that among unbelievers every one wishes to act as he pleases, because, as has been said at the beginning, those that do not obey God will no longer obey their sovereign.

We know that sovereigns cannot always do what they wish for the good of religion. They must sometimes use prudence in order not to lose everything. I also know that it is not expedient to employ force to induce subjects to embrace the true faith. Force was formerly a means used by tyrants who wished to compel men to believe what they should not believe, such as idolatry. God forces no one to come to him: *Nullum ad se trahit invitum*. He wishes us to adore him with a free heart, without constraint. Moreover, zealous princes did not fail to use means more appropriate and more efficacious than force, in order to prevail upon their subjects to follow sound doctrine; and when every other means fails them, they call into their States good missionaries who by holy instruction dissipate error and make known true faith and the true way of salvation, as have done the before-mentioned princes and many others.

It is true, it is the duty of the bishops to found



missions; but experience has proved that the zeal of a virtuous and prudent prince is worth more than a thousand bishops, a thousand missions, and a thousand missionaries. Hence when a Catholic prince has heretics in his States, he should try his best to have with him good priests to labor for the conversion of these unbelievers. In many non-Catholic countries it is forbidden to zealous preachers to enter; but a prince who loves the glory of God may remedy this evil by his power and his prudence.

I conclude, so as not to weary the reader; since it was for this reason that I have made this little work as brief as possible. I finish it while praying to God to give by his grace to all sovereigns, especially to those into whose hands this writing will fall, the courage to co-operate in the increase of his glory. I implore at the same time our Lord to grant them a happy reign in this life and perfect happiness in life eternal.





## INDEX.

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### A

- ADMISSION of subjects into the Congregation, 77, 83; dispositions required, 77, 104, 122. See *Novices*.  
ADMONITION of the Rector Major, his appointment and his functions, 80;—of the Provincial, his appointment, 81 (note);—of the local Rector, his appointment, 77, and his functions, 81.

### B

- BISHOPS: useful reflections for governing well their churches, 429.  
Care of the seminary, 434.  
BLASPHEMY, one of the principal gates of hell, 358.  
BOOKS that one may have, 68.  
BROTHERS, Lay, confession, Communion, and spiritual Prefect, 71.

### C

- CALAMITIES: God sends them for our good, 378. Texts of Scripture and of the Fathers, 421.  
CHAPTER, General, its formation and its functions, 78, 79, 84;—Provincial, 81 (note).  
CHASTITY, vow, 69.  
CHILDREN : age of first Communion and preparation, 438.  
CLOTHING, poor but suitable, 67.  
COMFORTS of life: one must be detached from them, 107, 171.  
CONFESSORS: requisite qualities and duties, 435. Confessors for the seminary, 480; for the religious, 442.  
CONFESSORS of the subjects, two are appointed in each house, 71.  
CONGREGATION: its end or aim, 61, 64, 66, 157; charges or occupations contrary to this end, 65 Particular obligations of the members. 67. See (*Admission, Rules*.) Government of the Institute, 76.  
CONGREGATIONS for ecclesiastics, 434; or confraternities for seculars, 452.

CONSULTORS-General, their appointment and their functions, 78, 79  
83, 84.

CORRECTION: manner of making it, 469.

## D

DIGNITIES: obligation in regard to them, 68.

DISCIPLINES prescribed by the Rule, 74.

DISPENSATION from the Rule, 84;—from the vows, 71, 84.

DISMISSAL of subjects, 78.

DRESS, ecclesiastical: to be worn by parish priests, 435.

## E

EXAMINATIONS of conscience to be made every day, 72.

EXERCISES, spiritual: for seminarians, 436; for religious, 443.

## F

FASTS and abstinences which the Rule prescribes, 74.

FOOD, 67, 70.

## G

GOD threatens us with chastisement to make us avoid it, 321; he wishes that we should fear his justice, 324; he hates sin, 342; he chastises us to make us merciful, 388.

## H

HATRED, one of the principal gates of hell, 354.

HELL: its four principal gates, 354

HOURS, canonical: they are recited in common, 72.

HUMILITY: practice of this virtue, 72.

## J

JESUS CHRIST: we must imitate his virtues and examples, 62, 72,  
104. Love and gratitude that we owe him, 149.

## L

LECTORS, or professor's, their appointment, 77.

LENT, sermons, the Rule does not permit the members of the Congregation to preach them, 65.

LETTERS : permission required to write and to receive them, 70.

M

MARY, Mother of God: she is the mediatrix of sinners with God, 410.

MASS: the priests should celebrate it every day, 71.

MASTER of Novices, his appointment, 78, and his functions, 84.

MERCY of God, 321, 388; misfortune of those that abuse it, 337, 342.

MINISTER of the local Rector, his appointment and his functions, 82.

MISSIONS, one of the ends of the Institute, 62, 64; occupations contrary to this end, 65; appointment of the subjects, 64, 84; meetings or conferences on the manner of giving them, 75; their use, 463.

MORTIFICATION, interior and exterior, 74, 107.

N

NOVICES: admission and dismissal, 81 (note); exercises, 83; temptations to which they are exposed, 165.

NUNS, their direction and spiritual exercises, 65.

O

OBEDIENCE, vow, 70.

OBSERVANCE. See *Rules*.

ORDERS minor or major: conditions required to receive them, 437.

ORDINARIES, submission that is due them, 62, 70, 77.

ORDINATION of subjects, 77, 84.

P

PARENTS: we must be detached from them, 108, 166; they cannot oppose the vocation of their children, 97; permission required to visit them, 75.

PASSION of Jesus Christ, sermon, 298.

PENANCES, corporal, imposed or permitted, 74.

PERFECTION or sanctity, we must desire it and tend to it, 146; necessity of purity of intention, 192.

PERSEVERANCE, vow and oath, 70, 84; prayer to obtain it, 184.

PLAGUES of God. See *Calamities*.

- POVERTY, vow, 67. Dissertation on religious poverty, 197.  
 POOR, abandoned, we must succor them in their spiritual wants, 62.  
 PRAYER: mental, 72; it appeases God when it is offered as it should be, 401.  
 PREFECT of the students, his appointment and his functions, 84.  
 PRINCES: fidelity of subjects to God renders them faithful to their prince, 495.  
 PROCURATOR-General, his appointment and his functions, 80;—Provincial, 81 (note).  
 PROVINCES of the Institute, their erection, 77 (note). See the historical notice at the beginning of the volume.  
 PROVINCIAL, his appointment and his functions, 77, 81 (note).

## R

- RECTOR Major: his election, his residence, and his functions, 76, 81, 83; he can be deposed, 79;—Local, his appointment, 77, and his functions, 75, 81. See *Superiors*.  
 ROSARY: manner of saying it with profit, 289.  
 RULES, 61; they should be read in common, 75; obedience that is due to them, 70, 83.

## S

- SANCTITY. See *Perfection*.  
 SILENCE, time and places where it is to be kept, 73.  
 SUPERIORS: their obligations in regard to the observance of the Rules, 68, 83; obedience and respect that is due them, 70.  
 SELF-ESTEEM, detachment from it, 111.  
 STRANGERS, prohibition to bring them into the house, 70.  
 STUDENTS, the spiritual care of them and ordination, 84.  
 SICK: the care that should be taken of them, 71; they shall not desire to return to their families, 110.  
 SIN: God hates it, 343; exterior devotions are useless if we do not remove sin from our souls, 368.  
 SINNERS: they will not believe in the divine threats until the chastisement has come upon them, 331.  
 SEMINARIES: duty of the bishop, 434, 476; of the director, 434; of the Prefects, 435; Rules, 474.

## T

- THEOLOGY: weekly conferences, 75; moral: a science necessary to the

priest and difficult; knowledge of it required of the candidates of ordination; duty of studying it, 434, 477; tepidity, 140.  
THEFT, one of the principal gates of hell, 361.

## V

VIRTUE, to be practised more especially each month, 72.

VICAR-GENERAL named at the death of the Rector Major, his functions, 78.

VISITOR, his appointment and his functions, 77, 81 (note).

VISIT, to be made every day to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin, 72.

VOCATION: it comes from God, its importance, 87; we must follow it without delay, 92; misery to which one exposes one's self by not corresponding to it, 89, 130, 132; means of preserving it in the world, 96, and in the novitiate, 180; temptations against vocation, 118, 165.

VOWS made in the Congregation, 67, 84; dispensation, 71, 84.

VENGEANCE: to wish to revenge one's self is to renounce Paradise, 356.













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