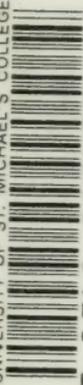


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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MEDITATIONS  
ON THE  
LIFE OF OUR LORD

NIHIL OBSTAT:

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DUBLINI, DIE 6<sup>o</sup> JUNII, 1955.

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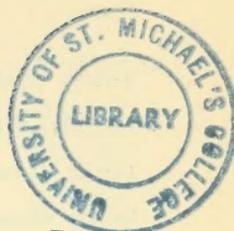


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MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY  
OF THE YEAR



## FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*On the Necessity of preparing the Heart, by Penance, for the coming of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "As many as received him he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (*John*, i.) Jesus Christ enters into the world to destroy sin; therefore if you desire to receive him, search the foldings of your soul, that you may discover any secret sin, which could wound the eyes of his divine Majesty. Listen to our Lord, who says, I will not enter into your heart, until you have destroyed sin therein ; I cannot dwell with pride, envy, or disobedience.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ enters into the world to bring peace to men of good will. You must banish all inquietude from your soul, if you desire to receive him. He is the God of peace, you must offer him a peaceful victim, immolating your desires, your cares, your impetuosity, on the altar of your heart, and retire within yourself by recollection; otherwise it is to be feared that you will be like unto the Bethlehemites, among whom he found only a stable, instead of a temple.

O King of Peace, come thyself to calm the trouble of my heart, that it may become thy dwelling-place. Happy are they who desire nothing but thy love! They have found the only true happiness on earth: for beside thee there is nothing that can fill the heart of man.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ enters into the world to establish the law of the spirit, and engrave it in our hearts. If you desire that he enter into yours, you must banish thence all that is carnal and sensual ; for the life of the spirit and that of the flesh are incompatible. For the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace. " Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. . . . For whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (*St. Paul, Rom. viii.*)

## MONDAY

*On the Mission of the Angel Gabriel to Nazareth.*

1ST POINT. The province of Galilee being the nearest to the country of the Gentiles, it was in this province that Jesus would assume our nature, to teach us that he came for the salvation of all, without distinction of Jew or Gentile. It was there also that he assembled his disciples before ascending into heaven, to assure us that he went to take possession of it in the name of all, and that no one should be excluded unless through his own fault.

2ND POINT. The city of Nazareth was the least considerable of Galilee, whence Nathaniel, understanding that Jesus was a Nazarean, said with surprise—"Can any thing of good come from Nazareth?" (*John*, i. 46.) Admire the humility of the Son of God, who begins so early to practise that which he is afterwards to teach, viz.—to choose always the lowest place.

3RD POINT. The Son of God has particularly honoured four places on earth—Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Rome. His humility appeared in choosing the first, his poverty in the second, his patience in the third, and the last named is the dwelling-place of faith, and the immutable seat of the religion which he has established. Love these four virtues; begin with the lowliest, which is humility, if you desire that Jesus enter into your heart.

How great is the veneration due to the dwelling of the Blessed Virgin in which was wrought the greatest of all miracles, the Incarnation of the Holy of Holies. Visit in spirit that Holy dwelling, unite your Vows and oblations to the prayers and good works there offered to thank God for the mercies He has bestowed on us and to obtain an increase of His Grace for yourself and for all the faithful.

## TUESDAY

*The Salutation of the Angel.*

1ST POINT. What was the disposition of the Blessed Virgin when the angel saluted her? It was already midnight; and yet St. Bernard says she still watched in prayer. When the Angel Gabriel appeared to Zachary, the Scripture remarks that he was offering incense; and when he appeared to the Blessed Virgin, he found her in prayer. Who can conceive the lights, the graces, the holy desires, the ardours of divine love, the heroic acts of virtue the Holy Ghost produced in the heart of his spouse, to dispose her for this mystery?

How powerful is prayer to attract the benedictions of heaven, when it is accompanied by humility, confidence, and love.

2ND POINT. The angel enters the chamber of the Blessed Virgin, the doors being shut; imagine the modesty, humility, and profound respect that appear in the countenance of this divine messenger, who comes to announce the descent of a God upon earth, to her whom he had chosen for Mother. Learn what your reverence should be, when you present yourself before God in prayer, or when you supplicate the holy Virgin.

3RD POINT. Note the praises with which the angel salutes the Blessed Virgin, before declaring to her the subject of his embassy—"Hail, full of grace." (*Luke*, i. 28.) The Lord is with thee in love, thought, and action, but he will soon be with thee as the child of thy womb.

O most holy of all creatures! I ask thee not to obtain for me earthly goods, the favour and esteem of creatures, since thou hast taught me by thy example to despise all these; I only desire and esteem three things in this life: the grace of God, the presence of God, the benediction of God. O obtain these for me, and I shall esteem myself rich indeed.

## WEDNESDAY

*On the Alarm of the Blessed Virgin.*

1ST POINT. "Who having heard, was troubled at his saying." (*Luke*, i. 29.) The angel, having saluted the Virgin in this strain of praise, paused in expectation of her reply; but she was silent, and was troubled at his words, and thought within herself what kind of salutation this might be. This did not prevent her from thinking what she ought to do, nor from examining the words of the angel; her surprise was not caused by the novelty of the apparition, for her ordinary and familiar conversation was with heaven and the angels.

2ND POINT. Another cause of trouble marks still more the sanctity of the Blessed Virgin. Her profound humility could not suffer the praises or extraordinary respect rendered to her by the angel. There is no more solid mark of virtue, than to fly praise with the same care with which worldlings seek it. "As gold is tried in the furnace: so a man is tried by the mouth of him that praiseth." (*Prov.*, xxvii. 21.) A weak mind is easily caught by this poison: the saints, on the contrary, rejected it with horror; they feared it would be the recompense of the good which they did through the grace of God. Imitate the Blessed Virgin by carefully suppressing all vain complacency at your own praise: it will pass away and leave you nothing but bitterness.

3RD POINT. The angel, in order to calm the fear of the Blessed Virgin, calls her by her name. For the soul must be calm, in order to receive the divine impressions. Learn hence how necessary are peace of heart and tranquillity of mind, when you pray. For if even a just trouble is an obstacle to receiving the light of the Holy Ghost, how can it enter amid the tumult of irregular passions? Be not surprised if God and his angels rarely visit you: and if their visits have little effect, it is because your heart is like a sea agitated by the winds.

## THURSDAY

*The Annunciation of the Mystery of the Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. The angel bears happy news to the Blessed Virgin: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High." (*Luke*, i. 31.) Thou hast already conceived him spiritually in thy heart by faith and love, thou shalt conceive him corporally by obedience, and the power of the Holy Ghost. Admire the happiness of the Blessed Virgin, in whom virginity and the divine maternity are united. Honour in her person these two singular prerogatives.

2ND POINT. You can participate in her happiness; first by conceiving Jesus Christ spiritually by faith and charity; secondly, by receiving him corporally in the Holy Communion. This conception and reception will cause in you a great purity, united with a fruitfulness in all virtues. They will render you capable of bringing forth Jesus Christ, not only in yourself, but also in the hearts of many others. It is not enough to conceive Jesus Christ; you must bring him forth. It suffices not to form good desires, they must be reduced to practice by the exercise of good works.

3RD POINT. The angel reveals to the Blessed Virgin the name her son is to bear: first, because it belonged to God alone to impose a name on his only Son; secondly, to give her to understand, by virtue of the name of Jesus, that God would give her not only a Son but a Saviour. He gave him not for herself alone, but for the whole world. This shows that when God imparts to us any grace, he intends not merely our particular profit, but also that we should employ it for the salvation of our neighbour. Thirdly, to win her consent by the charm of the sweet name of Jesus. It, undoubtedly, excited in her heart the tenderest emotion, since it operates so powerfully even on the most obdurate.

Holy Virgin, thou wert the first to hear this adorable name, and to engrave it in thy heart; obtain for us, from thy divine Son, that he may pass from thy heart into ours, to enlighten, console, and fortify them with his love.

## FRIDAY

*On the Consent of the Blessed Virgin.*

1ST POINT. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." (*Luke, i.*) How noble the faith of the Blessed Virgin! Can anything be more above our understanding than the most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, and the maternity of a virgin? These are, nevertheless, the object of her faith. Moreover, *she* requires no miracle to induce her to believe in all these things. In opening her understanding to the simple light of faith, she attracts to it the Sun of Justice himself, who enlightens her with his glory. O how much are we indebted to her! Well may we consider her as the model of faith!

2ND POINT. The Incarnate Word is the fruit of all the virtues of the Blessed Virgin. It is humility itself that speaks, and annihilates before God all that is in the creature. It is purity that opens its heart, to receive within it the lily of the valley. It is the voice of divine love, which the Holy Ghost breathes over this virginal earth, to produce the fruit of life. It is obedience speaking by the mouth of the Blessed Virgin, who offers herself for all the designs that God has over her, who associates herself with the labours, the pains, and the cross of her Son.

3RD POINT. It is written of the valiant woman: "She hath considered a field, and bought it." (*Prov., xxxi.*) What is this field the Blessed Virgin purchases this day? It is the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, united to the Divine Word. What does she find in this field? She finds much pain and suffering for the space of thirty-three years, and under those a great treasure hidden. What is the amount of the purchase? The purest blood of her heart, to form the precious flesh with which the Divine Word shall clothe himself, in order to make war on the demon, and to destroy his empire. Ah! what should we not give to purchase Jesus Christ? Is it that we have not sufficiently considered the value of this evangelical field, and that we are ignorant of its worth?

O my Saviour, if men knew the treasures thou hidest in thy bosom, they would spare nothing to purchase thee.

## SATURDAY

*On the Virtues exercised by the Blessed Virgin in the Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." (*Luke, i.*) Fidelity is a leading quality in a perfect servant. The fidelity of the Blessed Virgin is accompanied by an admirable wisdom. She first examines the message the angel bears; but as soon as the order of God is declared to her, she faithfully corresponds with his will, reserving nothing to herself and giving all to God. She consecrates to obedience all the powers of her soul and body.

2ND POINT. Consider—the love of labour manifested by the Blessed Virgin. This virtue appears in the services she rendered to the Incarnate Word, in the journeys she undertook, and the exile she endured. She was never idle, but employed carefully every moment of her time, to the glory of God, and to labouring for the support of her divine Son. In this spirit she offers herself to God to be employed in the service of the Infant she is to conceive. She joyfully devotes all her powers to be consumed therein.

3RD POINT. In the moment of the Incarnation the promise of God is accomplished; the Immaculate Virgin crushes the head of the serpent. For as the Incarnation of the Son of God depends on the word of the Virgin, she has no sooner uttered it than the well-beloved of his Father descends from heaven. He destroys the empire of darkness. He crushes the head of the infernal serpent. He causes death itself to die.

How powerful is an act of obedience! It puts all the demons to flight, and triumphs over every vice.

## SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*On the Incarnation of the Eternal Word.*

1ST POINT. "The Word was made flesh." (*John, i.*) As soon as the Blessed Virgin has given her consent, the Holy Ghost descends upon her. By an incomprehensible miracle He forms of her pure blood a most perfect body. He creates a soul of incomparable beauty, and at the same instant the Word unites himself to this soul and body. He becomes the Man-God, the Blessed Virgin concurring in this great work in the quality of a mother. Although there is but one man who is God, we all participate in this honour, and each of us may be united to the Word in quality of brother, friend, or spouse, provided we dispose ourselves for this union.

2ND POINT. This prerogative of Mother of God, which is the source of the dignity of the Blessed Virgin, should also be the motive of the homage you render her. It gives her an admirable power over the person, the heart, and all the graces of her Son. It should also give her the same power over you and all that regards you. Examine if you honour her as Jesus Christ did.

3RD POINT. He who is without a beginning in the bosom of the Eternal Father begins now a new life in the womb of his blessed mother. When shall he begin to live in you by a holy and perfect life? When will you be able to glory with St. Paul, that you live no longer for yourself, but that Jesus Christ lives, and continues in you the life that he led on earth, viz.—a life of innocence, purity, and simplicity, a life of all the virtues? Happy is he who, having Jesus living within him, can say in each thought and action, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me, and delivered himself for me.

## MONDAY

*On the Perfections of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the soul of Jesus as a sun. This divine light discovers all things, penetrates the secrets of all hearts. Nevertheless its splendour remains hidden during his mortal life. While he converses with men, he manifests not his wisdom, his science, or the lights of his understanding. All is concealed under the veil of humility. If some rays break forth, it is only to enlighten and instruct the poor, the simple, and the lowly.

2ND POINT. “I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight.” (*Matt.*, xi. 25.) Learn to prefer virtue to all human knowledge or natural gifts. Never value yourself for any supposed talent. If it be necessary to discover any acquirement you may possess, for the edification or utility of your neighbour, let it be with great modesty. Never dispute, or desire to triumph over the opinions of others. Employ willingly the talents God has given you in the instruction of the poor. Your merit will be greater, and the danger of vanity less. Happy is he who can say with Jesus Christ: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me: Wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart. To preach deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind.” (*Luke*, iv. 18.)

3RD POINT. The sacred body of Jesus is the organ, not only of the soul, but also of his divinity. In this respect it possesses a divine virtue capable of acting miraculously on souls and bodies. His touch heals the leprous, his word chases away devils, his spittle restores sight to the blind, the hem of his garment gives health to the infirm, and his very look touches the hardened heart, and converts the sinner. Why has he not the same power over you? Is it a want of faith? Is it a want of courage? Is it that you are too much preoccupied by self-love?

## TUESDAY

*Jesus in the first Moments of his Human Life.*

1ST POINT. Consider—Jesus beholding clearly the infinite goodness and sovereign beauty of God, is at the same time inflamed with the beatific love. This love attracts directly to God all the powers of his soul with an incomparable ardour. We may say in this blessed moment, God began to be loved to the greatest possible extent. Rejoice that there is in the world one heart that loves God perfectly, and repairs the offences committed against him. Rejoice also, that this is a human heart like unto your own. Honour the Blessed Virgin, of whose pure blood it was formed.

My sweet Saviour! my consolation is, that you have given me your own heart to supply the weakness of mine. O God, my heart is incapable of loving. Allow me to offer thee that of thy beloved Son, to implore one spark of the fire that consumes it, that it may purify and inflame mine.

2ND POINT. The love of Jesus tends towards God with all its force, and at the same time extends to his works. He considers creatures as the property, the dependents, the subjects of God. He cannot but love them. True charity loves all that belongs to God, and which is loved by Him, purely because he loves it. Is it thus you love your neighbour, your friends, your relatives? Is it thus you love yourself? Do you love nothing but for God? Do you love God in all things? Do you love all things in God? Your charity should have no bounds; it should embrace all—friends, enemies, relatives, strangers, the poor, the rich, adversity, prosperity, in a word, whatever comes from God, or belongs to him.

3RD POINT. Jesus, loving God above all, loves all men as his brethren, desiring for them every good, and, above all, their eternal salvation. His love is infinitely communicative: he associates us with all the good he possesses. Let charity pour back upon your neighbour the benefits you receive from God. "The charity of Jesus Christ presseth us." (2 Cor., v 14.) You can render nothing to the Son of God, because you have nothing but what you have received from him. He has no need of you, but he holds himself indebted for the good you do to your brethren. Be charitable to them. Spare nothing to save

them. Whatever good you do them for his sake, you can do nothing comparable to what he has done for you.

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WEDNESDAY

*Jesus in the first Moments of his Human Life—(continued).*

1ST POINT. Jesus, beholding the sovereign excellence and infinite majesty of God, adores him with profound submission, as the creator and glorifier of his sacred humanity. This reverence which the soul of Jesus gives to his eternal Father, arises from the clear knowledge he possesses of his own nothingness as man. As his light surpasses that of all the saints, he better understands the distance between the Creator and the creature. Learn that the knowledge of self contributes much to the glory of God. It is of much import to sound well your own nothingness and baseness. Dive deeply into this abyss; this knowledge is a rich treasure. When you arrive at its centre, you will there find God.

O majesty of God, grant that I may know thee and know myself.

2ND POINT. Jesus, knowing that the infinite greatness of God is worthy of all praise, employs both the lights of his understanding and the ardour of his heart to praise and bless him. He praises him by his works, as well as by the affection of his heart. The admirable life he now commences is a praise as touching as it is effective. O how pleasing to the sanctity of God is a holy life!

3RD POINT. Every moment of such a life renders to God a tribute of honour; every action of it glorifies some of the divine attributes. Virginity honours the purity of his being; voluntary poverty, his independence and the inexhaustible treasure of his riches; obedience, his sovereign dominion; hope, his infinite power; love, his supreme goodness. Reflect on yourself. What glory do you render him by your actions? There is not a moment of your life, a sigh of your heart, a movement of your body, which should not praise God, and lead others to praise him. "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall ever be in my mouth."

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus offering Himself to his Father for the accomplishment of all his Designs.*

1ST POINT. The soul of Jesus being replenished with the graces of the Holy Ghost, he suffers them not to remain inactive a single moment. He makes an offering to his Eternal Father, the most precious and pleasing that had ever been presented. To understand this, consider, he offers *himself*, the greatest and richest of all gifts. Many offer to God their prayers, alms, fasts, and mortifications; but few offer *themselves*, and make an oblation of their *hearts*. They always secretly reserve to themselves the disposal of their own will. This reservation is displeasing to God.

2ND POINT. Jesus makes an entire offering of himself. He places no limits to his obedience, but the good pleasure of his Father. Already he pronounces in secret that which one day he will express in the excess of his agony: My Father, dispose of me according to thy will, and not according to mine, of which I make thee a sacrifice, having no desire but to please thee. Offer yourself, in like manner, for the designs that God has over you. Say to him, with the prophet: "Lo, here am I. Send me" (*Isaias*, vi. 8), I am ready for all things; or with St. Paul: "What wilt thou have me to do?" (*Acts*, ix. 6); or rather with Jesus Christ himself, at his entrance into the world: "Behold, I come to do thy will, O God." (*Heb.*, x. 9.)

3RD POINT. Jesus offers himself generously, and with the most pure, holy, and perfect devotedness, having no other view than to be entirely consumed for the Glory of God and for our salvation. Animate all you do for God with a like devotion. Let the fervour of your affection compensate for the meanness of your offering. Unite your heart to that of Jesus, your life to his: thus shall your sacrifice become of inestimable price.

But who am I, my God, that I dare present this offering? All is thine; I can give nothing but what I have received from thee.

## FRIDAY

*On the Compassion of Jesus for our Miseries.*

1ST POINT. Jesus, at the moment of his Incarnation, extends his view over the past, the present, and the future. He discovers the pitiable condition of mankind. Seeing on one side heaven closed, and on the other side hell open to sinners, he is touched with compassion for their misery: "Seeing the multitudes, he had compassion on them; because they were distressed and lying like sheep that have no shepherd." (*Matt.* ix. 36.)

2ND POINT. Of all the miseries of man, that which afflicts Jesus most is sin—an evil in some way infinite, whether viewed as an offence against an infinite majesty, or as depriving man of an infinite good. This enkindles in his heart a devouring zeal for the honour of God, and a pressing desire for the destruction of sin, together with an incomparable ardour to make his Father known to men, in order to draw them to his love. Are you sensible to the offences committed against God, and the loss of souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ? Are you consumed with zeal for the honour of God? Do you deplore the fall of your brother, for whom Jesus Christ died? Would to God that you were as jealous of the salvation of souls, as you are of your own interest!

3RD POINT. Amongst all the sins of the world, he is sensible to yours in particular. He sees all the tepidity, weakness, and misery of your soul. He knows your ingratitude and infidelity to grace; he ardently desires your conversion. Should not your heart respond to his love? Should you not think seriously on your salvation, for which he is consumed with zeal? Yet you defer your amendment from day to day; you love your danger. Admonition offends, and you cannot endure reprehension.

"O Lord, rebuke me not in thy indignation, nor chastise me in thy wrath." (*Psalms* vi.)

## SATURDAY

*On Jesus offering himself as a Victim of Divine Justice for our Sins.*

1ST POINT. Jesus knowing it to be the will of his Father that he should become the Redeemer of the world, repair the glory, and satisfy the justice of God, willingly accepts the charge, taking upon himself, from that moment, the heavy burden of our sins. He might have chosen a life of glory and happiness, for one single sigh of his heart would suffice to atone for the crimes of the whole world; but he voluntarily renounces this, and in order to satisfy the divine justice, deprives himself of all the pleasures, honours, and riches of life. What return have you made? Remember the most agreeable service you can render Jesus is to renounce your judgment, will, and desires, to follow the inspirations of his spirit, and every day to retrench some innocent gratification, to testify your desire of doing something to please him.

2ND POINT. Jesus is not satisfied with renouncing all things for the love of you, he also willingly embraces labour, suffering, confusion, and even a most cruel and ignominious death. His whole life is a perpetual cross, of which all the moments are so many sacrifices. Can you then refuse him a life so short and worthless as yours? Yet there is not a moment of your life that should not be consecrated to penitence, employed in labour, or destined to mortification or the cross; yet show me one in which you suffered anything for God. When will you begin to do penance, and to bear the cross with Jesus?

3RD POINT. Consider—Jesus embraces the cross, but he does not choose it. He receives it from the hand of his Father, and accepts it with submission, that he may live and die by obedience. He submits to all his orders. As if he had no will, he allows himself to be conducted by that of his Father, renewing each moment of his life the desire of pleasing him. With what advantage you would bear your cross, did you know how to take it from the hand of Jesus Christ, and conform yourself in all things to his sacred will! Your misfortune is, that you will neither do nor suffer but in accord with your own inclination, and thus suffer and labour much, with little consolation or profit.

O Saviour of my soul, teach me to renounce myself, and to regard only thy good pleasure in all the events of life.

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### THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

*Jesus exerts himself for the Glory of his Father and our Salvation, from the first Moment of his Life.*

1ST POINT. Jesus commences his work for our salvation, and the glory of his Father, from the first moment of his Incarnation. Can you say the same of your life? Say at least this day, I shall now begin. But say it efficaciously. If you desire Jesus to dwell in your heart, remember he cannot remain inactive, he must be living therein; and to live he must act.

O Jesus, be thou my strength, my life, and the principle of all my actions. May my soul live only by thy spirit, my understanding form no thought but what proceeds from thee, and my will receive no affection but that which thou inspirest.

2ND POINT. Jesus begins to act, not only with promptitude, but also with fervour, giving each action its utmost perfection. On the contrary, your actions are full of imperfections, because performed with tardiness and indifference. Have you ever performed one worthy of the master whom you serve? How weak the efforts you make to follow Jesus—how ill you correspond with his graces! Do you not fear that he will say to you in his wrath—I would thou wert cold or hot; but thy lukewarmness makes me cast thee out of my mouth; I can no longer endure it!

3RD POINT. Such is the commencement of the life of Jesus, such shall be its progress and its end. Time shall not change his devotedness; all the persecutions, ingratitude, and contradictions of sinners, shall never be able to extinguish the fire of his love. Admire the constancy with which Jesus Christ labours for your salvation; compare it with your fickleness and tepidity in his service. Your disposition changes almost every moment. You give yourself to devotion when you feel in it a sensible relish: you quit it when that fails. These frequent changes

destroy your perfection, and cause Jesus Christ to suffer in your soul an extreme violence.

O Sun of Justice that dissipatest the darkness of the world, and rekindlest the fire of charity, by renewing the love of all the virtues, hide not from me the rays of thy grace, and thy divine inspirations.

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## MONDAY

*The Merits of Jesus commence with his Life.*

1ST POINT. Jesus being in a state to merit from the commencement of his life, begins to acquire for us an inexhaustible treasure of grace and spiritual riches. His understanding is enlightened by the eternal wisdom: his will, though impeccable, is perfectly free for effecting all good. He is holy in his human nature, not only by sanctifying grace, but also in a manner infinitely more noble, by uncreated sanctity, which is the source of all grace; and his soul, being capable of suffering is consequently capable of meriting. Admire this Child, who already triumphs over the powers of darkness, closes the gates of hell, and opens for us those of heaven. Be sorry for the treasures you lose by your tepidity, and which you could so easily amass by the good employment of time.

2ND POINT. The merits of Jesus Christ are infinite; first, on account of the infinite dignity of his person; secondly, on account of the infinite sanctity with which his soul is invested. What joy filled the heart of Jesus, in beholding the extent of these merits, sufficient to redeem all sinners, and acquire as much grace and glory as God himself can bestow! What consolation and happiness to possess in him such a treasure! What confidence and courage should you have, remembering that the merits of Jesus Christ are your inheritance.

Blessed are they who participate in thy graces! Grant that I may never be deprived of them; I ask, O Lord, but one drop of thy blood, one tear from thine eyes, one sigh of thy heart.

3RD POINT. Every action of the life of Jesus was infinitely meritorious, as each was infinitely holy. He merited in repose, he merited in all his exterior and interior acts: but, above all, he consummated his merits in dying by obedience on the wood

of the cross. His death was the completion of his merits, and the seal of the promise of his Father, who had attached to this august sacrifice the entire recompense of his labours. Learn hence that all your actions should be full, so that not one should be devoid of merit; but all the recompense you can hope for, depends upon Christ's suffering and death.

O my Saviour, I am resolved henceforth to labour with more ardour to amass treasures in heaven: nevertheless it is not in my own merits but in thine I place my confidence. Have mercy on me.

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## TUESDAY

### *Jesus a Prisoner in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Divine love has reduced the Incarnate Word to be a threefold prisoner in the womb of his Virgin Mother. He is a prisoner for crime, although innocence itself. He is a prisoner for debt; having taken upon him our sins. He is a prisoner of war: love has vanquished and reduced him to this state. Love encloses his immensity in a point, his eternity in a moment, his immortality in a mortal body, his wisdom and omnipotence in the simplicity and weakness of infancy.

2ND POINT. Jesus will only issue from his prison to embrace the cross and death. Learn henceforth, first, that your life should be a perpetual captivity of love, and that the religious life, to which God has called you, is a prison whence you should never come forth, in thought or effect, but to enter into heaven. Learn, secondly, that you only live in order to die. Be then always ready, and only consider time precious when it is employed in disposing you for that last moment which is to bear away the crown.

3RD POINT. Jesus being on the point of ascending into heaven, is once more bound by his charity, and made prisoner in the holy Sacrament, even to the end of ages. O devoted captive, who, by a miracle of power and love, whilst ascending into heaven, remaineth at the same time on earth, to dwell with us and in us, by a presence real and true. Shall not this victorious love have power to make thee his prisoner, and render him master of thy heart?

## WEDNESDAY

*The Solitude of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Jesus enters into solitude the first moment of his Incarnation. The Blessed Virgin may be compared to the desert, where this Divine Infant hides himself. It should be recollected that she herself was in retreat when the angel announced to her her divine maternity. Do you desire that the Son of God should be born in your soul? Love recollection, and withdraw from useless conversation. Jesus Christ is born in the solitude of the heart; he is not found with the dissipated.

2ND POINT. Jesus does not anticipate the moment for manifesting his divine power, by the operation of miracles. He remains in his solitude with perfect submission to the will of his Father, unknown to the world, which knew him not. Learn that it is better to remain hidden, attending to your own soul, than to perform miracles, neglecting yourself. The glory of a religious is, to appear seldom. Close the door of your heart, and invite Jesus, your beloved, into it. Entertain yourself with him in your little retreat; you shall nowhere find so much peace.

3RD POINT. Jesus is not inactive in his solitude. He there treats with his Father of our salvation. Endeavour, after his example, to render your solitude agreeable and useful. It will be agreeable, if you consider you are never more with God and with yourself than when alone in the time you give to prayer and self-consideration. It will be not only agreeable, but useful, if you know how to entertain yourself with God, and treat with him of the conversion of sinners, the salvation of souls, and your own perfection.

Teach me, my Saviour, ever to find employment in my solitude, and solitude in the midst of employments.

## THURSDAY

*The Silence of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Jesus chooses the time of night for his Incarnation; because it is a time when all creatures are silent. This shows that the time of silence is the most suitable for attracting God, and giving him an entrance into our heart. It is easy to lose God by immortification of the tongue; for the scripture says, "In the multitude of words there shall not want sin." (*Prov.*, x. 19.) Silence elevates the soul to God, and invites him into it. All discourses that violate the rule of silence are so many streams that divide the heart, and dissipate the thoughts and affections.

My Saviour, be the master of my tongue and heart.

2ND POINT. When the Son of God entered the world to make God known to men, he employed only the three last years of his life in preaching and instructing, preserving silence during the space of thirty years. Why has he done so? To expiate the sins of the tongue, which are innumerable; to glorify his Father by silence, as he had glorified him from eternity, by the expression of his greatness. To teach us that silence is the school of wisdom; and that a man that has not learned to hold his peace shall never speak to the purpose. Follow then the example of Jesus: to pay homage to the greatness of God who surpasses all our praise; to obtain from the Holy Spirit the lights necessary when you ought to speak.

3RD POINT. The silence observed by religious, originates in that of the Incarnate Word. Therefore you should account it as sacred; and as you respect the image that represents this Divine Infant, you should also revere this holy practice, which is an image of his silence, and an excellent disposition for prayer, communion, and the presence of God.

Eternal Word! whom love has rendered mute as an infant, place the seal of thy silence on my lips; that my tongue, on which thou art laid in the adorable Sacrament, may never sully its purity, or be rendered unworthy of receiving thee.

## FRIDAY

*The Prayer of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Prayer was the chief occupation of Jesus from the moment of his Incarnation until that of his death. We may say that prayer was his life, and his life a continual prayer: he perfectly accomplished that which he taught his disciples, that we must always pray. The saints have followed his example, and have always tried to keep their hearts united with God. If you cannot do this, at least endeavour to begin and end each action by prayer. Never undertake anything until you have called God to your aid, that you may do nothing but in union with him. In concluding each act, omit not to give the glory to God, if it has succeeded, and to ask pardon if you have committed any fault. Observe this practice and you will soon arrive at perfection.

2ND POINT. Jesus, being the Saviour and Mediator of men, prays for all, and obtains by his prayers the graces necessary for their salvation. Place all your confidence in Jesus Christ, and be assured he has obtained for you the graces you require. But in praying for you he has not dispensed with your praying for yourself and your own perfection. One of the greatest graces he has obtained for you is the grace of prayer. Be then a lover of prayer; and that you may profit the more by it, unite your will to that of your divine Master.

3RD POINT. Although Jesus prays for all, nevertheless he prays especially for some, and above all, for his blessed Mother. Look upon her as the sanctuary where he offers his prayer, as the temple where this sovereign Pontiff commences his sacrifice. Is it not just that she should have the largest share in his prayers as well as in his merits?

O Blessed Virgin, temple of the Divinity, throne of the Father, sanctuary of the Son, dwelling of the Holy Ghost, present our vows to our High Priest, that he may accept them.

## SATURDAY

*Sufferings of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Consider—Jesus begins to suffer from the first moment of his Incarnation. He suffers with a knowledge, which considerably augments his pain. He suffers with resignation, humbly accepting the chalice presented by his Father. He does not defer a moment to assume the penalty due to our sins. Jesus will not be a moment without suffering for your sake; and you cannot suffer a moment in his service. Are you not amazed at his bounty, and confounded at your own coldness and ingratitude? Hasten to do penance: begin from this moment to mortify yourself, and to bear the yoke of your master.

2ND POINT. Consider—Jesus, not content with enduring his present sufferings, anticipates the future. Instead of a crown of immortal delights, his Father presents torments. He accepts all. He offers his head to thorns, his hands to bonds, his face to be spit upon, his body to the cross and death. Yes, my Father, I willingly accept all the dispositions of thy providence, however severe they seem to my senses; thy good pleasure is sufficient to make me love them. Such is the heart of Jesus: in what does yours resemble him? He goes to meet the cross; and you cowardly fly from it. He calls for suffering; and you repel it with horror. Encourage yourself to suffer something for him who has suffered all things for you.

3RD POINT. Jesus not only feels his own pains; his love makes him sensible of the sufferings of his blessed Mother, the torments of the martyrs, the tears of penitents, the persecutions of all the saints. His heart tastes their bitterness, and by compassion he suffers with all, and more than all. The Son of God alone has borne in his heart all the miseries that man ever had, or ever shall have, even to the consummation of ages.

O my Saviour, what a generous heart hast thou imprisoned in this little body, if I may so speak. Ah! how narrow is my heart when compared with thine! How little am I touched by the sufferings of my neighbour, and how sensible to my own! What tenderness for myself, what hardness in believing and feeling the affliction of others!

## FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

OR THE FEAST OF THE EXPECTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

*The holy Desires with which Jesus inspires his  
Blessed Mother.*

1ST POINT. Jesus is united with his Blessed Mother, as the fruit with the tree, with this difference, that the fruit draws its nourishment from the tree that bears it, whilst Jesus communicates his perfections, and desires to the Blessed Virgin. The first desire she forms is to give him to men as their Saviour and Redeemer. Jesus is a treasure the Eternal Father has confided to Mary, that he may become the ransom of sinners. She bears within her breast the Eternal Wisdom, not for herself alone, but to communicate to us her riches.

O my sovereign advocate, I beseech you to obtain for me two things equally necessary. Give unto me your Divine Son, without whom I should be for ever poor: and give me to your Son, who is my wisdom and light, and without whom I should be for ever in darkness.

2ND POINT. The second desire of the Blessed Virgin is to see Jesus. Her eyes would behold the object her heart so tenderly loves. The desires of the patriarchs and prophets, who so ardently sighed for the Messiah, are coldness when compared with those of Mary. Compare your coldness with the fervour of her devotion, and accuse yourself of having so little love of Jesus Christ. Why do so many useless desires disturb your heart? You should only desire two things in this world: one is, to possess Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, as the Blessed Virgin possessed him in the Incarnation; the other is to behold him in heaven, as the Blessed Virgin beheld him in the manger.

3RD POINT. The third desire of the Blessed Virgin is, to serve Jesus Christ as her Son and her God. As her Son, she desires to render him the most devoted cares of maternal love. As her God, she desires to adore him with the most profound submission. As her Son and her God, she desires to consecrate to him every instant of her life, every movement of her heart. Renew this day, after her example, your resolution to serve God more faithfully. Consider the day well employed, if you

can by frequent acts, enkindle in your heart the desire of serving God, of seeing God, and of communicating to the whole world the knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ his only Son.

O Virgin Mother of God! that I could place in thy hands the hearts of all men, to be consecrated as an offering of gratitude for the favours given to us through thy mediation! Accept at least the only heart over which I have power, my own—faithless and guilty though it may be—that presented by thy pure hands it may become an oblation worthy of thy divine Son.

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## MONDAY

### *The Poverty of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. All things were made by the Word, and consequently all things belonged to him. Nevertheless he despoils himself of all in his Incarnation, and makes himself poor for love of us. “You know,” says St. Paul, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor for your sakes: that through his poverty you might be rich.” (*Cor.*, viii. 9.) Jesus loves poverty; and not finding it in the bosom of his heavenly Father, he comes to seek it in that of his blessed Mother. You, far from seeking it, fly from it. Jesus feels the effects of extreme poverty, and you are contented with the honourable title and vow of poverty, without being willing to suffer its privations. Jesus proposes to be born, to live, and to die in poverty. You are not content with necessaries, you seek superfluities. Compare your life with your state, yourself with Jesus Christ.

2ND POINT. Jesus not only despoils himself of all things; he renounces himself to become ours. He had given us an entire world by the act of creation; but *himself* he had reserved. In the Incarnation he reserves nothing, he gives himself to us, not for time only, but for eternity. He begins to be ours for ever, if we lose him not through our own fault. All true religious are then rich! though poor in their cell, they are rich in their conscience, and their repose is more tranquil on their hard bed, than that of the rich man in purple and silk.

Saviour of the world, how rich is the man who possesses thee! What can be wanting to him who possesses Jesus? If the poverty of Jesus makes us rich, what may we not hope from his treasures?

3RD POINT. Jesus, having reserved nothing, is reduced to have need of us. "Thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods." (*Psalm xv. 2.*) Thou art wisdom, thou wantest not my counsels. Thou art the sovereign judge, thou needest not that I should usurp that function. But behold here a marvellous change. God has made himself so poor, that he cannot live, or be clothed, or nourished, without the aid of his creatures. If you say you have nothing to offer to the Son of God, you have only to give him your heart; he will be satisfied, for it is what he most desires; he seeks everywhere hearts that love him, but he finds none. He complains not of hunger or thirst; but he complains of having so few friends, although he loves all men with such ardent tenderness.

My Saviour, pardon the obdurate, selfish traitor, who, for the future, will devote to thee and thee alone every thought and affection of his heart.

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## TUESDAY

### *The Submission and Obedience of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Jesus draws his being from the obedience of the Blessed Virgin—"Behold the handmaid," etc. O how efficacious is this fiat! It is not a word of command, like that which drew the world forth from nothing; it is a word of submission and obedience: but this obedience gives a human nature to the Creator, destroys the tyranny of the devil, and re-establishes peace between God and man. How powerful is the will of man, when submissive to that of God! You say to him every day, Thy will be done; but it proceeds not from your heart. You will what God wills, but you do not will it strongly; you do not will it entirely, in that you fail.

2ND POINT. The obedience of the Blessed Virgin raised her to the dignity of Mother of God. Her Divine Son will dwell in her during the time appointed by his Eternal Father. He

measures not the time to his desires, but accommodates his desires to the time, without retarding or advancing it a single moment. What he does in the commencement of his life, he will continue until the end; and his death will be the completion of his obedience. You can never make any progress in perfection, if you are not exact in observing the orders of obedience, and doing each action in the time and manner prescribed.

3RD POINT. Jesus not only submits to the will of his heavenly Father; he would also obey his blessed Mother, St. Joseph, the princes, judges, servants, in a word, all men. He beholds his Eternal Father in creatures, and renders him obedience in the persons of all those who represent his power on earth. He would obey even the executioners who put him to death.

Thou renoucest thy will, though thou art God; and I would do mine. Thou art pleased to obey, and I would command. Crush my pride by thy submission, and grant I may serve and respect thee in the persons of my brethren.

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## WEDNESDAY

### *The Humiliations of Jesus in his Incarnation*

1ST POINT. See the infinite humiliation of the Word Incarnate, descending from the throne of his glory to the lowly place of his conception. Although the Blessed Virgin exceeds in purity and sanctity the most elevated of the heavenly spirits, yet the Church exclaims in astonishment: Thou hadst no horror of the Virgin's womb. Ponder the humiliation of the Son of God, who disdains not to enter our breasts, and become the food of our souls. Daily does the Lord Jesus humble himself as he did in descending from his royal throne to become incarnate for us.

2ND POINT. Jesus humbles himself beneath the majesty of his Father, by the submission of his soul, although it is united with the Divinity. The more the Father glorifies the Son, the more profoundly the Son abases himself before his Father. How opposed is the spirit of Jesus to that of the world, and to the vanity which makes you so often forget your own baseness!

A passing feeling of sensible devotion fills you with secret self-complaisance, and you think yourself something. Distrust this self-love, and beware lest it feed upon the consolations of heaven. The gifts of God humble great souls, and render them more fearful.

3RD POINT. Jesus, not content with humbling himself before his Father, proposes, for his sake, to abase himself beneath all men, to fly honour, to converse with the poor, to wash the feet of his disciples, to accept the contempt and opprobrium which the pride and envy of the Pharisees shall cause him to suffer. He renounces every mark of greatness. Although he is King of Kings, he prefers the quality of servant to the title of monarch, as more appropriate to his design of becoming the least of all. He invites you to follow him, and by his eloquent example says: "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart." (*Matt.*, xi. 29.)

O Jesus, who, in thy Incarnation, didst embrace humiliation, destroy in my heart every sentiment of vanity; that my life may be conformable to thine, and that I may place all my glory and ambition in participating in thy humiliations and contempts.

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## THURSDAY

### *The Weakness of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Jesus could have entered the world with royal power, and in the vigour of manhood, yet he prefers the weakness of infancy. He is so weak as not to be able to pronounce a word, either to complain or declare his wants. He could make his voice resound from the heavens, but he chooses rather to weep in the manger, and remain mute in the Virgin's womb, to teach you to suffer in silence, and hide your little inconveniences as a treasure, lest they be taken from you—not to dispute in words, to yield modestly, to bear injuries, as if you felt them not; in fine, to restrain your tongue when impelled by passion.

Incarnate Word! grant me thy grace to practise the lessons thou teachest; and let my tongue cleave to my palate when I

am tempted to manifest the trouble and disorder of my irregular affections. I must, by silence, imitate the infant Jesus. His weakness is my strength, his simplicity my defence.

2ND POINT. Jesus is incapable of all movement, except that which is natural to unborn infants. You must so bind and weaken self-love that it can no longer oppose divine love in your heart. Be not afflicted when corporal infirmity obliges you to remain inactive, but rather say with St. Paul: I glory in my infirmity, I delight in being despised as a useless person; and far from being dejected in the condition to which I am reduced for the love of Jesus Christ, it constitutes the subject of my glory; because when I am weak, then I am strong, I am nearer unto God, the virtue of Jesus Christ dwells in me.

3RD POINT. Jesus is so weak he can neither see nor hear; feeling is the only sense that is free, and it is so only to suffer. This should oblige you to mortify your senses, since it is to expiate their indulgence the Son of God is reduced to extreme weakness. Repress the curiosity and wandering of your eyes, which often endangers the purity of the heart.

Divine Infant! communicate to me thy strength, that I may be deaf, blind, dumb, and impotent for evil, that I may be gifted by thee with the strength and courage of the saints for doing good.

## FRIDAY

*The Dependence of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Jesus, who is sovereignly independent in the bosom of his Eternal Father, is dependent on his blessed Mother for his mortal life and existence. Learn to depend on the Mother and the Son: from him you hold the life of nature and grace; through her you expect the preservation of both; from him you hope for glory; through her you expect the grace that will enable you to obtain it. Love your dependence, it is your happiness.

2ND POINT. Jesus depends on his blessed Mother for his support; the heart of an unborn infant is too weak to act of itself, it must be sustained by that of the mother. If your heart is too weak to practise mortification turn to Jesus and Mary: draw from them your support. Remember that in the Blessed Eucharist is communicated to you the same blood which he received from his blessed Mother; that being fed with the same nourishment, your life may resemble his.

3RD POINT. Jesus depends on his blessed Mother for his preservation. He is unable to defend himself; he depends entirely on his blessed Mother. Learn to live under the protection of Mary, and know that nothing is more frail than the life of grace; a word, a thought, a look may deprive you of it. Distrust yourself, be always fearful of losing it, and recur continually to your blessed Mother, whose aid will never fail.

O Blessed Virgin! take me under your protection; remember that your most dear Son lives in me by grace, but he is yet weak in my heart; obtain for me that he may not die therein, but rather that he may become daily more strong in all that regards his glory and my perfection.

## CHRISTMAS EVE

*The Holy Desires of Jesus in his Incarnation.*

1ST POINT. Jesus is inflamed with an ardent desire to glorify his Father, and manifest Him to men. He proposes to himself the honour and service of God as the centre of all his affections, and the end of all his actions. His example has inspired the saints with zeal: all their fervour was but a spark of that furnace of love in which his soul was consumed. "I seek not my own glory." "My glory is nothing." (*John*, viii.) I make no account of the applause of men. Approach this fire to enkindle your zeal. Can you say, with Jesus, that you despise reputation and the praise of men; that all your desires tend only to the greater glory of God?

2ND POINT. Jesus, beholding the love his Father bears to men, burns with an ardent desire to trace for them a model of all virtues, to employ his power in relieving their miseries, and his wisdom in teaching them the way to heaven. You have before your eyes the humility, patience, charity, meekness, fortitude, and all the other virtues that Jesus Christ has exercised, in a manner all divine. How have you profited by his example?

Spirit of Jesus, animate my heart, and elevate my intentions, that I may become a perfect imitator of thy heroic virtues.

3RD POINT. Jesus desires to enter into the world, to be born in a manger, as a preparation for the cross; to confer on the Blessed Virgin the glorious title of Mother of God; to gain our hearts, and bring peace to the world by his birth. O that you loved Jesus Christ as he has loved you! O that you would prepare a place for this Divine Infant in the midst of your heart! Though that heart may be now but a vile stable from the impurity of its affections, Jesus Christ would soon change it into a paradise by his presence.

## CHRISTMAS DAY

*The Blessed Virgin brings forth the Saviour of the world  
in the Stable of Bethlehem.*

1ST PRELUDE. Enter in spirit into the stable of Bethlehem, where with the Blessed Virgin you will find St. Joseph, and many blessed spirits, amongst whom is your Angel Guardian.

2ND PRELUDE. Beg grace to honour this mystery, to taste of its sweetness and draw profit from it.

1ST POINT. Consider—the *patience* with which the Blessed Virgin suffers the ungrateful reception her Divine Son meets in Bethlehem. She seeks everywhere for a lodging, and everyone rejects her, because she is poor. She has to retire into a stable with the infant that she is soon to give to the world. She enters it with meekness, without complaining of this comfortless abode. She respects in this the will of God, and the sweet dispositions of his providence.

2ND POINT. Consider—that the Blessed Virgin, being retired in prayer, rapt in heavenly contemplation, and glowing with intense love, brings forth her Divine Son with inconceivable joy and miraculous purity. With what humility and devotion does this blessed Mother behold her Son, the fruit of benediction, the desire of the eternal hills. She adores him as her God, embraces him as her Son: she clothes him, and lays him in the manger, whilst her eyes and heart are immovably fixed on him.

O Blessed Virgin, how great is my joy to behold thee mother of such a Son! Thanks to the Eternal Father, who hath given him to us; to the Son, who hath united himself to our nature; to the Holy Ghost, who hath formed this sacred humanity in thy virginal womb.

3RD POINT. The holy occupation of the Blessed Virgin attending her new-born infant; her joy in being mother of such a Son; the delight with which she beholds the most beautiful amongst the children of men; the respect with which she adores him—the holy fervour with which she offers herself to fulfil the duties of Mother and servant.

Most holy and happy Mother of God, teach me thyself to adore thy Divine Son, and consecrate myself to the accomplishment of his most holy will. Offer him my vows, offer him my whole being, that I may find access to him, and draw fruit from his nativity.

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## SECOND DAY OF THE OCTAVE

*On the Birth of Jesus in the Stable of Bethlehem.*

1ST POINT. Who is this new-born infant? He whom you behold laid in the manger, trembling with cold, and seemingly in all things like unto other infants, is the Son of the living God, the heir of all his Eternal Father's possessions, the Mighty One, the Omnipotent, the Saviour of mankind. What has wrought this stupendous prodigy, and reduced sovereign greatness to this abjection? It is his love for you. For you he is become man; for you he is born in a stable. What have you done for him?

2ND POINT. He enters the world poor, weak, and humble, a stranger, unknown, and unprotected by any. How opposed is the spirit of God to that of the world! The Son of God chooses poverty; the world values only riches and honours. Which will you follow, the one that leads to beatitude, or the other which leads to perdition? The Son of God takes his delight in the humble; he embraces their condition, and makes himself little with them. Do you desire to enjoy a familiarity with God? Love abjection, prefer the conversation of the poor, to that of the rich of this world.

3RD POINT. Consider this new-born babe in the bosom of his Father, and as an infant in the crib. As God he is begotten in the splendour of his Father's glory, as man he is born amid the darkness of sinners. As God he is clothed with majesty and power; as man he bears the garb of poverty. As God he sustains all things by his word; as man he is not able to support himself, but is borne in the arms of his mother. Happy Mother, who bearest the treasure of the Eternal Father, to impart it to men! Happy Infant, I beg of thee the spirit of humility, the spirit of poverty, the spirit of obedience, which will hereafter fasten thee to the gibbet between two thieves.

## THIRD DAY OF THE OCTAVE

*Sentiments of a devout soul on the Birth of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "This day is born to you a Saviour." Rejoice in God your Saviour; for the Holy of Holies is born to restore innocence and virtue to the world! Be consoled, because a Saviour is born, who will deliver his people from their sins! "Come, let us praise the Lord with joy; let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour." (*Ps. xciv.*) Let our hymns and canticles resound at his crib; and let us not go forth from this stable which he has chosen for the place of his nativity. Glory and praise to the most Holy Trinity, which hath invented so admirable a means to save man, and confound the pride of the demon!

2ND POINT. "This day is born to you a Saviour." Approach with confidence to the throne of his mercy. Enter the house of God, and unite your heart to that of this new-born babe. He will not reject or cast you from him; he will receive you meekly. What canst thou fear from an infant weeping in a manger? He complains not of his sufferings, but he weeps for your sins. He is not come to destroy, but to seek you; not to judge, but to save; not to punish, but to bear himself the penalty of your offences.

3RD POINT. "This day is born to you a Saviour." Enter this poor stable which the King of Heaven has chosen for his dwelling-place, that he may converse familiarly with you. Behold this humble crib, which contains the treasure of heaven, the ransom of the world, the joy of men and angels! Behold a God made man, laid on straw! Prostrate yourself humbly at the feet of this Divine Infant, to adore him as your God. Offer to him the sacrifice of your heart. Give it to him without reserve, and beseech him to engrave thereon his most sweet and adorable name. Abandon yourself entirely to him, and let him act in you and by you according to his good pleasure. Your God is so nigh to you, that you can bear him in your arms and press him to your bosom.

O most sweet and humble Babe! thou who hast descended from the throne of thy glory, draw me that I may be united to thee for ever.

## FOURTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE

*The Angels render Homage to Jesus at his Birth.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the joy and astonishment of the angelic host, in beholding the Son of God born in a stable. They are amazed to see a God thus humbled; they rejoice that the Sun of Justice shall soon dissipate the darkness of the world, and restore to man the life of grace and glory. Admire the charity of the angels and the humility with which they behold the glory of the hypostatic union communicated to human nature, which is inferior to theirs. Love virtue and the favours of God in your brethren, and see them exalted above you without envy.

2ND POINT. With what ardour the blessed spirits descend from heaven to adore their new-born King! Admire the devoted submission with which they render him their homage, acknowledging the infinite greatness, power, and wisdom concealed beneath his humiliation. They acknowledge that, compared with his perfections and prerogatives, their charity is coldness, their light darkness, their strength weakness. They confess that all they possess, whether by nature, grace, or glory, is his gift. They break forth in strains of the liveliest gratitude, praise, and benediction. Unite with those blessed spirits in honouring your Infant Saviour.

3RD POINT. The rays that proceed from the countenance of the Son of God change midnight into a brilliant day, and a stable into a paradise. In the splendour of this light, see how the blessed spirits adore the infant Jesus, and offer themselves to be employed in his service. Be not content to love Jesus yourself, desire that he be known and loved by all men. Make him known as much as you are able, infuse his love into all hearts, and let your only happiness be to see him served and honoured by his creatures.

## FIFTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE

*An Angel is sent to the Shepherds.*

1ST POINT. Who are they to whom the Son of God, the Sovereign Monarch of the universe, sends his heavenly ambassadors? To poor and obscure shepherds. Not only did they devote the day to labour, they spent the night in watchings. Behold the persons whom the angels visit, and who receive the first favours from Jesus Christ. God prefers those who are poor, vigilant, and laborious. Are you humble, poor—that is to say, detached from the world? Do you love labour? Are you vigilant in watching over those whom God has confided to your zeal? The first flock with which God has entrusted you, is your own heart with all its affections.

2ND POINT. “You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.” (*Luke*, ii. 12.) The humility of our Saviour is manifested in his infant form; his poverty in his swathing bands; his mortification in his crib. Do you desire to know whether Jesus Christ is born in your soul? Examine if these three signs are to be found in you. Humility, poverty, and mortification, are the livery of the heavenly King, and opposed to the three marks of the kingdom of Satan, under whom reign in the world the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Open my eyes, O Lord, to discover the beauty of these three signs of thy empire. Holy Virgin, clothe us in the garments of thy Son.

3RD POINT. “Glory be to God in the highest.” The angels publish the glory rendered to God in heaven by the mystery of the Incarnation, an inexhaustible subject of eternal praise. Never did the perfections of the Godhead shine forth with such splendour as in this mystery. “And on earth, peace to men of good will.” The angels announce the peace concluded between God and man, through the merits of Jesus Christ. Although this peace must be signed in his blood, and sealed with the cross, the angels already announce this heavenly peace to men of good will. It is not to men of learning, or worldly greatness that the angels promise peace, but to men of good will, who correspond faithfully with the designs of God.

## SIXTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE

*The Adoration of the Shepherds.*

1ST POINT. "Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see this Word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste." (*Luke*, ii. 15, 16.) The shepherds, at the first word of the angel, quit their flocks, and repair with speed to the appointed place. The inspirations of God are so many heavenly messengers inviting you to Jesus Christ; obey promptly, lest they remain without effect. Encourage yourself, saying: Let us go to Jesus. When shall the fire of his love and the light of his spirit make me renounce myself to seek him?

2ND POINT. Consider—the devotion and faith with which the shepherds enter the stable; their happiness in finding Jesus with Mary and Joseph. They adore him with profound respect, offering their humble presents, which are more agreeable to the King of Glory than the richest gifts. The stable is now become a paradise of delights. O Jesus, the only love of Mary and Joseph, grant me mercy for their sakes. O Joseph and Mary, it is between you both that the shepherds find the infant Jesus; obtain for me grace to find him in the crib, that is, in poverty, humility, and sufferings.

3RD POINT. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." (*Luke*, ii. 20.) How do you come forth from prayer and Holy Communion? You should always gather from your spiritual exercises these three fruits: a more ardent desire of God's glory, a more profound knowledge of your own nothingness, and a more firm resolution of correcting your faults. The zeal of the shepherds should be the object of your imitation. It is a sign you have profited by your devotions, if you quit them with a lively desire to speak of God, and to bear Jesus Christ into the hearts of others.

When, O Lord, wilt thou grant me the grace to do what I have so often promised? I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be always in my mouth.

## SEVENTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE

*The Blessed Virgin lays up all these Things in her Heart.*

1ST POINT. The object of the contemplation of the Blessed Virgin is her only Son, and all that passes in his regard. She observes with great attention the words of God, the wonders she beholds, and the mysteries that take place. She bore the Divine Word nine months in her womb; but during her whole life she bore him in her heart, meditating on all his words and actions. Such should be the ordinary subject of your prayer and interior occupation during the day.

O heart of Mary! teach us so to meditate on the words and actions of thy Divine Son.

2ND POINT. The sweetness, patience, and humility of the Son and the Mother in this mystery. Compare your defects with their virtues. "Well may you be confounded in considering the life of Jesus Christ, seeing the little care you have taken to conform to his example." (*Imitat.* b. 1, xxv.) Ponder seriously on the remedy to be applied to your defects and passions, that you may guard against them in the coming year. Resolve to walk always in the presence of God.

3RD POINT. The means of preserving charity with your neighbour. Make a firm resolution not to offend him in word or action; to guard your ears against all uncharitable discourse. Prefer yourself to none. Love and esteem all, treat them with meekness and affability; support their defects with patience, remembering we live not with angels but with frail men. Offer these holy resolutions to Jesus Christ in the crib. Invoke the protection of the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, your angel guardian, and holy patrons, so to pass the ensuing year that if it be the last of your life, you may have the consolation of having spent it in the divine service.

O sweet Jesus, give me a tender love for thy holy infancy, and filial affection towards thy dear Mother. O Mother of Mercy, Mother of Jesus, obtain for me this grace, that I may place him as a seal upon my heart and my affections for ever.

## FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION

*On the Spirit with which we should commence the Year, in Imitation of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. We should begin the year by an ardent desire of salvation. Meditate on the proofs given by Jesus Christ of his will to save you, in consecrating this first day by his blood, and taking the name of Jesus. With what fidelity should you not correspond with his mercy. The least action of Jesus Christ would have sufficed for your redemption, but in his charity he would employ for that end the labours of his whole life, and the last drop of his precious blood. Why this superabundant redemption?—To show to you the importance of your eternal salvation, and the magnitude of that evil which is inevitable, if you fail in co-operating with his mercy. Contemplate the blood of this adorable Infant; admire the charity that impels him to give you this early and precious pledge of his love. He is consumed with zeal for your salvation; what is your ardour for his glory?—what for your own interest? Are you convinced that the only affair of importance is to secure a happy eternity—the only evil to be dreaded, the loss of your immortal soul? Endeavour this day to animate yourself with a new fervour, corresponding to that manifested by your Saviour in this mystery.

2ND POINT. We should begin the year by a true circumcision of heart, that is, a general mortification of all vicious inclinations. Jesus Christ, coming into the world to destroy sin, begins to efface it by the effusion of his blood. In imitation of his divine example, ground yourself solidly in that fear of God which attracts the benedictions of heaven. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (*Ps. cx. 10.*) He needed not circumcision, but he submitted to this painful law to facilitate for you the exercise of continual mortification, because concupiscence unceasingly shoots forth evil inclinations. If you do not deceive yourself, you will always find something to retrench.

3RD POINT. We should begin the year by a fervent love of Jesus Christ, and a holy zeal for the glory due to his adorable name. The Jews, seeing the Son of God weep at the tomb of Lazarus, said one to another: “Behold how he loved him.” (*John, xi. 36.*) If tears are a mark of love, this day he sheds

not only tears, but the first oblation of his precious blood, which shall one day be poured forth for you on Calvary. Behold how he loves you. How long will you be ungrateful?

My God, accept all that I have to offer—my tears, my compunction, my profound gratitude, my devoted love for the future.

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## SECOND OF JANUARY

*Jesus Christ submits to the law of Circumcision, in obedience to his Eternal Father.*

1ST POINT. By the ceremony of circumcision Jesus commences the office of Saviour, and renders homage to the sovereign dominion of his Father, repairing the disobedience of Adam, the cause of the ruin of mankind. Learn from this the obligation and motives for observing faithfully your rules. They proceed from God; the saints who instituted them were inspired by his Holy Spirit. He has called you to religion, to honour them by their observance. Your vocation and your rules are derived from the same source, and tend to the same end. In fine, on your rules is founded the kingdom of Christ.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ submits to the law of circumcision, though it is most painful. "Looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith . . . that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood." (*Heb.*, xii. 2, 3.) This law was ignominious with regard to the Son of God, since it was a badge of servitude and sin. O profound humility of the Holy of Holies! O inconceivable pride of sinners! Reflect seriously on your human respect. You fly the confusion of an ingenuous confession. You fear the humiliation of an abject office.

3RD POINT. The spirit with which Jesus Christ submits to the law of circumcision. The painful wound of the legal ceremony which he suffers for us, he changes into the unction of holy baptism, which is a spiritual circumcision of love. Our Lord discharges us from the Jewish ceremony, and imposes on us the obligation of a spiritual circumcision, to be accomplished by the aid of his grace, and the fervour of our love; an obligation

we first contract at baptism, in which we are spiritually buried with Jesus Christ. Learn from his example a spirit of meekness towards your neighbour, and exercise the interior and exterior mortification, without which you cannot observe your rules, acquire solid virtue, or lead a religious life.

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### THIRD OF JANUARY

#### *On Devotion to the Name of Jesus.*

1ST POINT. The adorable name of Jesus expresses in a single word, the wisdom, goodness, sanctity, power, mercy, and love of God, co-operating for our salvation. It comprehends all the graces, virtues, and gifts of the Holy Ghost which flow to us from the plenitude of Jesus Christ. It signifies master, physician, father, judge, advocate, and pastor. It expresses all the benefits this Divine Saviour has conferred on mankind, as the remission of sins, victory over temptations, the acquisition of virtues, the gift of perseverance. It represents the sufferings, ignominies, and torments that his ardent zeal for your salvation have caused him to undergo.

2ND POINT. True devotion towards the sacred name of Jesus consists in an efficacious will to attain your own salvation—the most ardent desire of your Saviour. He has abundantly supplied you with means to accomplish perfectly the great, important, only affair of eternity. He shed even the last drop of his precious blood to satisfy the Divine Justice for you. But after all, if you make not good use of these graces, in vain has he suffered for you.

3RD POINT. Solid devotion towards the holy name of Jesus consists in labouring seriously for the salvation of your neighbour. His laborious life and most painful death are incontestable proofs how dear the salvation of a soul is to the Son of God. How should you value a vocation, in virtue of which you are associated to the labours and sufferings of Jesus Christ? Compare your life with what the spirit of your vocation demands. You should be another Jesus conversing with men, edifying by example, instructing by holy conversation, charitably aiding

them in all their necessities, sustaining them by continual prayer, and consuming yourself in their service by the ardour of your zeal.

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## FOURTH OF JANUARY

*How we should bear the Holy Name of Jesus.*

1ST POINT. It is the character of the predestinate to bear the name of Jesus. They are signed with it in heaven, as a mark of glory and triumph; they are signed with it on earth, as a title of sanctity, and a mark of the warfare in which they are engaged against the powers of darkness. We, also, must bear it, if we desire to rank in their number. We must enshrine it in our understanding, that it may enlighten us. We should make it the object of our most frequent reflection; for amongst all the names which express the grandeur and the mercies of the Incarnate Word, this sweet name in a special manner brings to the mind the most exalted ideas of the Son of God.

2ND POINT. We must carefully preserve this sacred name in our hearts, that they may be inflamed with the fire of his divine love. We must also engrave this sacred name on our arm, to invigorate us to combat our enemies, and to practise good works. St. Bernard says, you possess a remedy for all your weakness in the holy name of Jesus; for, being invoked in commencing your actions, it applies a preventing grace, to overcome your tepidity and inconstancy, and enable you to execute the good thoughts and holy desires it has given birth to in your soul.

3RD POINT. If this adorable name be imprinted as a seal on your heart and on your hand, it must necessarily be often on your lips; that is to say, you should frequently invoke and endeavour to impress it on the hearts of others. The name of Jesus is a spring of living water, which, the more it communicates itself, the more clear and fruitful it becomes. It is a sun, whose light should have no other bounds than those of the universe. O that I could consecrate all hearts to his love, and all tongues to publish his glory!

## FIFTH OF JANUARY

*On bearing the Holy Name of Jesus—(continued).*

1ST POINT. To bear worthily the sacred name of Jesus, it is necessary to have the same spirit with which Jesus Christ has borne it. "He emptied himself."—Behold the spirit of humility. "Becoming obedient unto death."—Behold the spirit of obedience. "Even to the death of the cross." (*Phil.*, ii. 7, 8.)—Behold the spirit of fortitude and constancy in the sharpest trials and torments the most dreadful to nature. We cannot save souls but by the cross; and it is through this sacred sign alone we find our own salvation.

O Lord, suffer not that we should be thus ungrateful. Far from flying the confusion and opprobrium of the cross, let us place therein our glory and our joy because we are redeemed by the glory of thy name. In the cross is the salvation of the world—in the cross are all the benefits of grace and glory—in the cross, O Lord, is thy abode, and it is there I must seek thee if I wish to find thee.

2ND POINT. The graces and favours that God imparts to those who worthily bear this holy name. With it is found light, joy, peace, glory, and happiness eternal. Ask the apostles to what they are indebted for the conversion of all nations: they will answer that it is to the holy name of Jesus. Ask the martyrs whence they derived the strength that rendered them victorious over all the powers of the earth: they will tell you it is from the glorious name of Jesus.

3RD POINT. By the virtue of this holy name, the saints arrived at the most eminent degree of grace and glory. "When the saving name of Jesus presents itself to my mind," says St. Bernard, "my passions are immediately allayed, my sadness is dissipated, and my temptations vanish. For in pronouncing this sweet name, I represent to myself a man meek and humble of heart, affable, kind, merciful, adorned with every virtue; at the same time I call to mind, that this man is the Omnipotent God who gives me the aid of his grace, while he proposes the example of his life for my imitation."

## FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

*On the glory of Jesus Christ in this Mystery.*

1ST POINT. This day is infinitely glorious to the Son of God, because on it he displays, in an admirable manner, his sovereign power in heaven and on earth. On earth he is adored by the Magi, and although but an Infant, he causes Herod to tremble. In the heavens he creates a new star, whose miraculous beauty marks the wonders of his birth. Join with St. Augustine in his praise and wonder: O adorable mystery! Jesus Christ laid in a manger, attracts the wise men from the east. He is hidden in a stable, and manifested in the heavens. If, while yet an Infant in the crib, he causes the haughty powers of earth to tremble, what will it be when he comes in the power of his majesty to judge the world?

2ND POINT. This day is infinitely glorious to the Son of God, because on it he displays a wisdom all divine. He condemns the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, and renders poverty precious, ignominy glorious, sufferings desirable, and all that men hold in horror, adorable in his own Divine Person. Thus, all wisdom that tends not to eternity, that seeks not Jesus Christ in the humility and poverty of the manger, but is confined within the narrow limits of self-love, is no better than false wisdom and real folly.

Thou alone, O true Light of the world, hast dissipated this darkness, and manifested to us the mode and means of acquiring true wisdom. To thee, then, O Lord, I must have recourse, that I may become truly wise, not according to the world, but according to God.

3RD POINT. This day is infinitely glorious to the Son of God, because in it he displays the excess of his goodness. He is no sooner born than he begins to labour for the salvation of man, without exception of persons. He loves the poor, but he rejects not the rich. He manifests himself first to the shepherds, says St. Thomas, because they represent the apostles, the pastors of his church; afterwards to the Magi, who represent the Gentiles; and to holy Simeon, who represents the Jewish people. Admire a goodness that excludes none; learn to love all, and to desire that all may participate with you in the benefits of God.

## SEVENTH OF JANUARY

*The Vocation of the Magi.*

1ST POINT. Before the birth of Jesus Christ, the world was in darkness, crime, and misery. Those are the works of the devil, which the Son of God begins to overthrow by the calling of the Magi, giving us, in their persons, faith to dissipate the darkness of our minds; his love and his grace, to destroy sin; and the promise of salvation to remedy all our miseries. Thus, when he would enter into our hearts he first illuminates them with the rays of faith, whose light discovers to us the truths of eternity, and dispels the false maxims of a world that is buried in darkness. Without faith, neither human reason nor worldly wisdom can understand the ways of God and salvation. Bless God who has given you this divine light. Beseech him to increase it in your heart, to impart it to infidels who have never known, and to sinners who close their eyes to its brightness.

2ND POINT. The goodness of the Son of God appears this day in calling us, in the persons of the wise men, to his divine love. He attracts them by the beauty of a new star; he causes it to move before them, to smooth the difficulties of their journey; and if he hides it for a time, to purify their love and faith, it is that its re-appearance may increase their joy, and lead them at last to the treasure they are seeking. The star represents the means by which God attracts us to his service. It disappeared for a time—grace is not always sensible, it is sometimes concealed, for reasons to us inscrutable. The star conducted the Magi to Jesus Christ—grace conducts us to God and to the cross where he is found.

O divine star, conduct me to Jesus, guide me to the stable of Bethlehem, or to the cross of Calvary; lead me where thou wilt, provided I may find him who is my soul's treasure.

3RD POINT. This day, those who were afar off approach unto God; sinners are received to pardon, and a harbour of safety is open to the miserable. The Son of God, in destroying sin, has not freed us from the sufferings of this life; but he has taken away their bitterness, and changed the penalty of sin into the means of salvation. All our woes are consecrated, since he has assumed them in his own person.

O my most amiable Saviour, happy are they who seek thee with all their hearts! All things contribute to the good of those who love thee. Grant that I may never fly poverty, abjection, or pain, since therein thou art to be found.

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## EIGHTH OF JANUARY

### *On the Co-operation of the Magi with the Divine Call.*

1ST POINT. In the vocation of the Magi the Eternal Father shows his desire that all men give his Divine Son as their only Saviour the homage of their love and adoration. He wills "all men to be saved; and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (*Tim.*, ii. 4); that all learn to imitate the humility, charity, and other virtues which his beloved Son practises in the crib, and which are necessary for their salvation. The heart of Jesus also burns with the same desire.

2ND POINT. Consider—the obligation on our part to correspond with the merciful designs of God, and obey the grace that calls us to his service. Had the Magi neglected the star, and the interior grace that secretly impelled them to seek Jesus Christ, never would they have found or enjoyed the happiness of possessing him. "Not I, but the grace of God with me" (*Cor.*, xv. 10), is the declaration of the Apostle. God demands our free co-operation in the affair of salvation—to ennoble and perfect our liberty, drawing us to seek the sanctification of the soul and the possession of himself.

3RD POINT. The fidelity of the Magi in corresponding with the divine call! Of so many who beheld the star, they alone followed the inspiration of God. Others profit not of this grace, either from want of consideration, the want of esteem for so great a blessing, or a fear of the difficulties which may beset their path. Thus, "many are called, but few chosen." (*Matt.*, xx.) Consider the virtues which fidelity to grace produces in the Magi. They are yet but novices in the faith—they have only seen a new star in the heavens, and forthwith they resolve to submit to the empire of him whom it represents. "We have seen his star in the east, and are come to adore him." (*Matt.*, ii. 2.) The ardour of their love impels them promptly

to obey the divine inspiration, without regard to the difficulties, undertaking a perilous journey to a distant land. They display great courage and strength of mind, which enable them to despise human respect and temporal considerations, in order to execute the command of God. Learn to obey the divine inspirations. Learn, also, not to be led by the example of others; but consult in all things the light of faith, and the will of God, after the example of the Blessed Virgin.

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## NINTH OF JANUARY

### *On the Journey of the Wise Men.*

1ST POINT. Divine Providence provides for the Magi a guide, in the miraculous star which appeared to them. With what joy and fervour they pursue their journey under its influence! Happy those who imitate their example, whose conversation is of heaven, who desire God alone, who quit all to find him.

2ND POINT. As the Magi approach the city of Jerusalem, the star disappears. The Magi are not discouraged—their faith and love are not abated. Learn to bear the privation of interior light, when it occurs without cause on your part; but fear to lose it through your own fault. It often happens that we lose the presence of God in conversation with creatures. Avoid this snare; and if you notice dissipation gliding in, renew the consecration of your heart to God. Beware lest envy, jealousy, ambition, flattery, or any other irregular passion, get admittance. If you feel disturbed, be assured a serpent has found entrance, and cease not to pursue it until you have driven it away.

3RD POINT. The Magi having learned where the Messiah was to be born, go without delay to Bethlehem, which had been pointed out as the birthplace of the Saviour. No sooner did they recommence their journey, than they again beheld the star, and “they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” (*Matt.*, ii. 10.) This faithful guide conducted them to where they find Jesus and Mary. These should also be the object of your search and aspirations when you approach the Holy Communion; these you ought to seek in every action of your life.

O if you seek Jesus Christ with the faith, fervour, courage, and diligence of the Magi, you shall assuredly meet the same recompense.

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## TENTH OF JANUARY

### *On the Arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the astonishment of the Magi on entering the palace which the King of kings had chosen for his dwelling! In selecting that gloomy cavern for his abode, he teaches us that the world into which he enters is a den of sinners, who, by their idolatry and sacrilege, rob God of the glory that is his due; a receptacle of vice, which he comes to purify by his presence; a place conformable to Calvary; all of which discovers the uniformity between the commencement of our Redeemer's life, and its consummation on the cross. Who can form ambitious desires, seeing his king thus humbly lodged? The star rests, not over the splendid dwellings of the great ones of this world, but over the simple hut of poverty, where tranquillity and peace of heart are to be found. I will fly the pride and ostentation of the world; my only desire shall be to imitate the poverty and humility of my infant Saviour.

2ND POINT. Consider—the manger where, as on a throne, the King of Glory reposes. The Eternal Word dwelt in the bosom of his Father, where he could not be approached by men; love draws him to this lower world, where they may have free access to his Divine Person. To the eye of faith the perfections of our divine Saviour shine forth in this mystery with peculiar splendour; his wisdom, power, and mercy have here prepared a brilliant throne. But his charity, not content with being laid between two beasts, will afterwards find, between two thieves, on the wood of the cross, a still more glorious throne.

O living and life-giving Bread, who hast descended from heaven to be at once the pastor and the food of man, grant that I may change the life I have hitherto led, into a life spiritual and divine.

3RD POINT. In the stable and the crib are found an example of the mortification of the senses. In this abode of poverty the eye meets no agreeable object. The smell is disgusted by the odour, and the sense of feeling suffers still more from the hardness of the manger and the intensity of the cold. It is in humiliation and abjection that Christian virtues increase.

O my Saviour! may neither death, nor poverty, nor sufferings, nor confusion, ever separate me from thy love.

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## ELEVENTH OF JANUARY

### *The Adoration of the Kings.*

1ST POINT. The star pauses over the stable of Bethlehem and casts forth a more than ordinary brightness, as if to say, here you shall find the new-born king. The Magi enter and find Jesus and Mary. The faith of these holy men has now attained its perfection. They had made a heroic act of that virtue, when they had seen the star in the east, leaving their country in the belief that the universal king was born. They made one still more heroic, when the star disappeared and they persevered with unabated ardour in the object of their search. But the faith which they exercise on entering the stable far surpasses the former; for, beholding an infant laid in a manger, they firmly believed him to be God and Lord of the universe. How penetrating is the eye of faith! It discovers the majesty of God under the impotence of an infant; afterwards it will recognize him through the ignominy of the cross!

2ND POINT. "And falling down, they adored him." (*Matt.*, ii. 11.) This prostration expresses the exterior act of adoration; the interior consists in the submission of their hearts to the Divine Infant. How powerful the virtue of humility, since it is the means of attracting all the lights of heaven. Humble yourself, after the example of the Magi, if you desire, whether in prayer or Holy Communion, to know how good God is; but beware that your humiliation be not merely exterior. If it is only the lips that pray, the hand that labours, or the body that is humbled, you lose more than you gain; but even the least of our actions, if proceeding from the heart, becomes of inestimable value in the eyes of God.

3RD POINT. The joy of the Magi is consummated on finding Jesus and Mary. Were I to approach the divine mysteries, to participate of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, with a faith as lively and a humility as profound, what heavenly consolations would he impart. O wise Magi, the toils of your journey are well recompensed by the joy you experience in the presence of your sovereign Lord.

I bless thee, O my Saviour, and I invite all creatures to unite with me in giving thee thanks for the light of thy divine faith.

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## TWELFTH OF JANUARY

### *On the offerings of the Magi.*

1ST POINT. The Magi, having adored the Son of God, open their treasures, and offer him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts denote the virtues exercised in this offering. The gold signifies their love; the frankincense, used in sacrifice, denotes the devotion that burns in their hearts; and the myrrh marks the spirit of mortification, and the desire of imitating the Divine Infant in his extreme humiliation and sufferings. Say not that you have nothing worthy to offer to the Son of God. Do you not know that time is a rich treasure, to each moment of which God has attached an infinite value? Consecrate it, then, entirely to Jesus Christ, and resolve to employ it solely in his service. Thus will you present him a most agreeable offering.

2ND POINT. The three gifts of the Magi mark the principal qualities they recognize and adore in the person of Jesus Christ. Gold signifies his royal power, incense his dignity as sovereign pontiff, and myrrh his interment. Resolve to serve Jesus Christ faithfully as your God and your King; to love him ardently as your sovereign High Priest, who having once immolated himself for you on the cross, daily continues that sacrifice on the altar.

3RD POINT. With what tender approbation the infant Jesus beholds the hearts and offerings of the holy Magi. While they presented their treasures, he bestowed on them gifts much more

precious. For their gold, he endows them with wisdom, to understand the most exalted mysteries of religion. For their incense, he confers the gift of piety, which inspires them with a contempt of all worldly greatness. For their myrrh, he infuses into their souls a sublime spirit of the cross, and of continual mortification. Guilty and ungrateful as you are, do you imagine that the Mother of Mercy, who is also come to seek sinners, will withhold that Divine Son from your embrace, if you be persevering in seeking, and generous in devoting all to him?

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### THIRTEENTH OF JANUARY

#### *On the Return of the Magi.*

1ST POINT. With what devotion and love the Magi take leave of Jesus and Mary! With what heavenly consolation was their hearts filled in speaking to their Infant Saviour; how ardent their thanksgiving, how devoted their protestations of eternal fidelity. Who can express the holy discourse which they hold with the blessed Virgin, the sweetness with which she reveals to them the hidden greatness of her Son. Happy they who come from prayer and Holy Communion with the devotion of the sages, and who listen to the divine instructions of the Eternal Wisdom, with an ardent desire to fulfil them.

2ND POINT. The care of Divine Providence over the Magi! They are warned in sleep not to return to Herod, but to take another road back into their own country. Thus the heart of Jesus watches over you during sleep, and, provided you seek and serve him generously, he will protect you from every unforeseen danger. Had the Magi sought Jesus Christ as an earthly king, they would have remained near his person; but because it is the King of Heaven they seek, and the pure performance of his will, they are satisfied with accomplishing that for which they are called, and then return without delay. Follow their example. Whatever devotion you feel in spiritual exercises, is but an illusion, if attachment to them cause you to neglect the duties of your charge.

3RD POINT. Consider—the zeal displayed by the Magi when they arrived in their own kingdoms. They publish aloud the

birth of the Great King; they relate how the star had guided and pointed out to them the place of his dwelling; how they had seen the Divine Infant, and had found him laid in a manger. Reflect on the progress in perfection made by these great saints in consequence of their faithful correspondence with the grace of vocation.

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#### FOURTEENTH OF JANUARY

##### *On the Journey of the Blessed Virgin to Jerusalem.*

1ST POINT. Forty days after the birth of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin leaves Bethlehem, bearing the Divine Infant in her arms, to comply with the law of purification and presentation of the first-born. With what humility, obedience, resignation, gratitude, and love, does she offer this action to God, in commencing her journey! We should never go forth but with Jesus, that is to say, led by motives of obedience and charity, uniting our intentions and actions with his. The Mother of God was not included in the law made for ordinary women; nevertheless she ranks herself with the other daughters of Eve, to teach us that it is a glorious virtue to show no singularity. She neither anticipates nor defers a single moment the time prescribed by the law. How does this example condemn the facility with which we seek dispensations?

2ND POINT. Contemplate Jesus in the arms of this blessed Mother as the living source of purity, who will one day wash away the sins of the world in his blood; as a flaming torch scattering the fire of love; as a treasure which shall afterwards pay the ransom of all men. Jesus is the treasure you are to possess in eternity: let your heart desire and love but him alone.

3RD POINT. With what joy the Blessed Virgin ascends the steps of the temple! How profound the respect and devotion with which she enters and prepares to offer her sacrifice. Never had so many prodigies met in this magnificent temple. Men entered it, never before a God-man. Virgins and mothers had presented themselves, not a Virgin-Mother. God had there received the homage of angels and men, but not that of an adoring God. Victims had been offered, but not the Victim

that effaces the sins of the world. Did you go to prayer, Communion, and Mass, with the same sentiments as the Blessed Virgin entered the temple, with what heavenly benedictions would you be replenished!

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## FIFTEENTH OF JANUARY

### *On the Purification of the Blessed Virgin.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the obedience and love of the Blessed Virgin in submitting to the legal ceremony of purification. It is not the law, but love, that impels her. During forty days she denies herself the consolation of entering the temple. She waits with the other women at the gate of the temple; she who was the sanctuary of the Divinity. She complies with this legal observance to honour the sanctity of God and to imitate the voluntary obedience of her Divine Son to the law. If you believe this, whence comes the difficulty in obeying those whom God has placed over you?

2ND POINT. The humility and love of holy poverty practised by the Blessed Virgin in this mystery! Her humility makes her desirous to pass for a weak and sinful creature, notwithstanding the favour she enjoys with God, who grants us no grace but through her mediation. From a love of holy poverty she presents the offerings of the poor, a pair of turtle doves or pigeons. Love these two virtues, if you love Jesus and Mary, and if you desire to be loved by them.

3RD POINT. Consider—the piety and modesty with which this purest and holiest of creatures presents her offering. Holy Simeon recognised the Mother of God by her singular modesty. Thus should you comport yourself before God and men, regulating your interior and exterior in so holy a manner that your piety may render you pleasing in the eyes of God, and your modesty diffuse edification among men.

I am not worthy to be called thy child; but O my sovereign Mistress, receive me into the number of thy servants, and allow me to dwell in thy holy house.

## SIXTEENTH OF JANUARY

*On the Blessed Virgin presenting her Divine Son in the Temple.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the justice of the law which obliged the Jews to offer their first-born to God, in acknowledgment of his benefits. How many reasons oblige you to holiness of life, and an entire consecration to God, to whom you belong by so many titles! He has created you to his own image. He has redeemed you with his precious blood. He has called you to the faith, to religion, or to an apostolic life, that you might sanctify yourself, and labour for the sanctification of others. Make him an unreserved offering of that which alone he demands, in return for all his benefits, saying, “Son, give me thy heart.”

2ND POINT. The perfection with which the Blessed Virgin fulfils the law, in presenting her only blessed Son to the Lord. The offering presented is a God-man, the source of every grace, the treasure of all the wisdom, the first-born of the living, the object of the love of the Eternal Father. This offering is presented by Mary, the most exalted of creatures. Jesus also offers himself to his Eternal Father, to lead a most painful life, and to undergo a cruel and ignominious death.

3RD POINT. The Blessed Virgin ransoms her Divine Son with five shekels, the price ordained by the law for all the first-born. Admire the humility of the Son and the Mother. What gratitude do you owe to the Eternal Father, who is not only content with what you can offer for his Son, but furnishes the price he demands? The Blessed Virgin ransoms her Divine Son, that he may redeem you by the five wounds he will suffer on the cross. Give thanks to this good Mother, who here performs the office of mediatrix with so much charity.

## SEVENTEENTH OF JANUARY

*On Holy Simeon entering the Temple.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the happiness of this holy man, who was chosen by God to manifest the birth of the Messiah, and the promise of the Holy Spirit, who had assured him he should not die until he had beheld the Saviour of the world. Your rules and the commandments of God are so many oracles which assure you that you shall not die if you observe them. Fear God and keep his commandments: for in this consists the happiness and glory of man. Oh! were you careful to observe your rules, how calmly would you look on your temporal death. Learn to rely on the promises of God and leave to him the care of your honour. The world promises much, and gives no real happiness; on the contrary, the benefits of God always exceed those which he promises.

2ND POINT. Consider—the virtues by which the Holy Ghost disposed Simeon to behold the Messiah, and publish his greatness. He was just. He feared God. He lived in expectation and desire of beholding the Lord. Therefore it is said that the Holy Ghost dwelt in him. Learn from the example of this prophet, to prepare yourself, by these virtues, for the visits of our Lord, particularly when he shall come to you at the hour of death. “Expect the Lord; do manfully,” in whatever place or employment you may be.

3RD POINT. The spirit leads holy Simeon to the temple: it is a spirit of prophecy, which discovers to him that the Messiah at that same hour had entered the temple; a spirit of devotion and fervour; a spirit of love that replenishes him with joy, while he holds in his arms the long-expected Saviour. Reflect on what passed between his heart and that of the infant Jesus, thus closely united to each other. With what disposition do you present yourself before God in prayer? How do you comport yourself during your spiritual duties? In what spirit do you enter the church, and approach to receive the Holy Communion? Is it with fervour, reverence? Ah! if you put no obstacle to the operation of the spirit of Jesus, you would taste those delights which fervent souls find in him.

## EIGHTEENTH OF JANUARY

*On the Canticle of Simeon.*

1st POINT. Consider—this holy and venerable man, holding in his arms the Son of God, and illuminated by the Holy Ghost, penetrates the hidden greatness of the infant. Admiration, joy, and love divide his heart. He blesses God—the salvation of the world, the light of nations, and the glory of Israel. Jesus Christ is the true light of our souls; therefore the church, on the festival of the Purification, gives to her children candles blessed and lighted, emblematic of the interior light of faith which the Son of God came to enkindle on earth. The flame is the type of his Divinity, which is the eternal and increated light. The taper consumes itself in enlightening us; thus the Son of God employed his whole life, and gave the last drop of his blood for our salvation.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ is the glory of Israel, the glory of God, of angels, and men. The honour of a Christian is to know God, and Jesus Christ his only Son; to preserve a pure conscience; to gain many souls to Jesus Christ; to suffer for his love, and to bear the cross here below, that he may one day receive a crown of glory in heaven.

O Lord, thou art my protector, thou art my glory; from thee I have received all that I am.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ is the salvation of the world; his Father has sent him to be the light of nations, and the salvation of man: "I have given thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation even to the farthest part of the earth." (*Isaiah*, xlix. 6.) Meditate the words of holy Simeon: "My eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples." (*Luke*, ii. 30, 31.) This Divine Saviour presents himself to your eyes. His light surrounds you. It is in your own power to become a great saint; for on his part he desires, he can and will effect it if you place no obstacle.

"O Lord, the God of my salvation: I have cried in the day and in the night, before thee. Let my prayer come in before thee and incline thy ear to my petition." (*Ps.* lxxxvii.)

## NINETEENTH OF JANUARY

*On the Flight of Jesus Christ into Egypt.*

1ST POINT. The flight of Jesus Christ is not an effect of fear, it is a mystery of wisdom. The Son of God, for your example, flies the world, and you seek it! Form now a firm resolution to seek Jesus Christ in all things, and with him to flee the world. Flee it when it flatters, when it tempts, when it persecutes. Beware of following its laws, which are quite opposed to the maxims of the Gospel.

2ND POINT. The flight of Jesus Christ is not a mark of human frailty, but of divine power. If he is omnipotent, why does he yield to the pride of Herod, whom he could instantly have annihilated? Why does he permit this early persecution? and why does he use such feeble means of defence? To teach us how to yield to our neighbour with charity and modesty, giving no person offence, neither resenting nor retaliating injuries. It is better to suffer all things than to lose meekness and peace of mind. How willingly Jesus sacrifices to God his Father his judgment, his will, and all the powers of his soul, and abandons himself unreservedly to the guidance of St. Joseph. Is it thus you submit to the commands given you on the part of God? Are you content that he disposes of you absolutely, and without regard to your inclinations?

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ flies not to avoid death, but in order to give us life. He came on earth to teach us the way to heaven, and to trace in his life a perfect model of every virtue: this he would not have accomplished, had he submitted to death in his infancy. His death will not be the result of compulsion, but of his own free will. The blood of his infant veins is not sufficient to satisfy his desire of saving us. The stream must swell for thirty-three years, that he may pour it forth more abundantly. Reflect here on the words of St. Augustine: that Jesus Christ is born in us by faith, animated by charity. We must cause him to increase, and suffer him not to die within us.

O true Light of my soul, my strength, and my salvation, reveal to me the secret of my own weakness. Grant that I may every day so increase in the knowledge of self, as to be induced utterly to distrust myself, and to place all my confidence in thee.

## TWENTIETH OF JANUARY

*On the Journey of Jesus Christ into Egypt.*

1ST POINT. Jesus Christ willingly submits to exile, with all its inconveniences and painful consequences, to teach us detachment from the natural affection we bear to our relatives, friends, and the place of our birth; willingly to quit all that is most dear, when such is required for the service of God. "He who loves his country," says Hugh of St. Victor, "is yet weak in virtue; he who considers the whole world as his own country, is already strong and generous." Do you feel equally disposed for whatever place obedience shall appoint? Have you no tie to the earth? Do you only sigh after heaven, which is your true country, and that of the saints? Accustom yourself to consider God everywhere; and you will feel indifferent to all places.

2ND POINT. Consider—the journey of these three holy pilgrims: accompany them in spirit, and render them all due honour and service. Compassionate the fatigue of the tender Infant, of his blessed Mother, and of St. Joseph, who conducts them through the dreary desert. To what privations and difficulties were they not exposed? Admire their patience, humility, and meekness.

3RD POINT. The will of the eternal Father, and the visible presence of Jesus Christ, is to the Mother of this Divine Infant, and to his holy guardian, a living source of joy, that changes the desert into a paradise of delights. "When Jesus is present all goes well, and nothing seems difficult; but when Jesus is absent everything is hard." (*Imit.*, b. ii 8.)

O Jesus, the brightness of eternal glory, the comfort of a soul in its pilgrimage; my tongue cannot express the sentiments of my heart; but my silence itself speaks to thee. How long doth my Lord delay to come. Let him come to me, his poor servant, and make me joyful; let him stretch forth his hand, and deliver me, a wretch, from all anguish. Come, for without thee I can never have one joyful day or hour, for thou art my joy; and without thee my table is empty.

Holy Virgin, who didst bear this Divine Infant into a foreign land, to sanctify it by his presence, hasten to visit us, and bear

him into our hearts, that they may be re-modelled according to his most holy heart, and that he may reign in them for eternity.

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## TWENTY-FIRST OF JANUARY

### *On the Sojourn of Jesus in Egypt.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the extreme poverty in which Mary and Joseph, with the Divine Infant, lived during their residence in Egypt. They subsisted only by the labour of their hands, and received from an infidel and barbarous people cause of suffering rather than assistance in their necessities: but they received all equally from the hand of God. Want, hunger, labour, and the other privations of life are the sources of virtue, and the cradle of the servants of Jesus Christ, who was himself accompanied by them from the moment of his birth, to his last sigh on the cross. If you desire to follow him, you must not fly them, since they are his inseparable companions.

2ND POINT. Consider—the humility exercised by Jesus Christ in his exile! Why does he remain so long in obscurity, without other occupation than that of an artisan? It is to teach you contempt of the world, and perfect indifference with regard to whatever place or employment Providence may ordain. Self-love is grieved to remain inactive, in contempt or oblivion, whilst others enjoy honour and reputation. It complains that its talents are useless, that others of inferior merit are preferred; in a word, that it is forgotten as one buried in the tomb. “I am forgotten as one dead from the heart. I am become as a vessel that is destroyed.” (*Ps.* xxx. 13.) Let your reply be—thus has the Eternal Father treated his well-beloved Son, and I am too much honoured in wearing his livery. If the apprehension of humiliation and confusion terrify you, say with St. Paul: “My life, my reputation, my honour, contentment, are not more precious than my duty.”

3RD POINT. Consider—the zeal that glows in the heart of this Divine Infant, and how he is occupied in his solitude for the salvation of men and the glory of God. He pities the blindness of those infidels, and deploras the loss of so many souls,

whom the spirit of darkness holds captive. The honour which those idolaters render to their false gods, and the multitude of temples erected to their idols, increase the sorrow of the Son of God. He conceives an ardent desire to remedy all those disorders. He offers himself to his Father as a victim, to expiate the sins of the world; and if he defers the shedding of his blood, he already sheds abundant tears.

O Divine Infant! Come and lodge in my heart; sanctify it by thy amiable presence, and make it fertile in good works, good thoughts and desires. O Blessed Virgin, this heart is thy conquest, vouchsafe to take possession of it in the name of thy beloved Son, and obtain that his love may burn unceasingly therein.

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## TWENTY-SECOND OF JANUARY

### *On the Massacre of the Innocents.*

1ST POINT. Consider—in the person of Herod the evil consequences of unsubdued passion. He falsely imagines that the Infant whom he seeks to destroy, comes to despoil him of his crown, whereas he is come into the world only to give us his heavenly kingdom. How short-sighted are the wise ones of the world! how late they discover their error! “He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them: and the Lord shall deride them.” (*Ps.* ii. 4.) His passion is as cruel as it is blind, for he has no sooner conceived the suspicion that troubles him, than he resolves on the destruction of the innocents. Often a false imagination is sufficient to lead to the greatest extremities. How important to study the interior of the heart, and to gain an ascendancy over our passions. Crush them in the moment of their rising; have recourse to prayer, and form no resolution until you are restored to your wonted calm of heart.

2ND POINT. Consider—in the persons of the innocent victims sacrificed to the ambition of Herod, a wonderful secret of Divine Providence, which permits that the persecution of creatures is often more useful to us than their false caresses. The cruelty of the tyrant, in depriving them of life, has made them instrumental in publishing the birth of Jesus Christ to

the whole world; and placed on their heads the crown of martyrdom. They die for Jesus Christ, and in his place. They confess his name before they have learned to speak. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." (*Mark*, x. 14.)

O Lord! what can I fear if I am faithful in thy service? No evil can happen to him who has the honour of serving thee.

3RD POINT. Consider—the sorrow with which Jesus Christ is penetrated at the death of these innocent victims—it is on his account they are thus cruelly persecuted. Learn from his example to deplore the spiritual death of those who, having long persevered in grace, fall unhappily into sin. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace; yet wherever he enters war makes its appearance. As soon as he comes to take a new life in your soul, self-love raises all the passions to oppose his reign. In this encounter you cannot remain neutral. If you desire the life of Jesus Christ within you, make continual war on self-love, with which you can never form any truce.

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## TWENTY-THIRD OF JANUARY

### *On the Return of Jesus Christ from Egypt.*

1ST POINT. As Jesus Christ fled into Egypt at the command of his Eternal Father, so he returns into his own country in obedience to the same all-ruling will. This return teaches us that affliction shall not continue for ever; but that we must await the order of God for our deliverance. Whilst he is pleased to leave you in poverty, sickness, or dereliction, be not dejected, nor wearied with the endurance of your suffering: listen to these words which he speaks in your interior: "Remain until I shall tell you to return. Abandon yourself to me without reserve, in the least things as well as in the greater." Preserve yourself, therefore, in a holy indifference, which will dispose you to bless God equally in peace and in trouble. Let Jesus and Mary be your models: seek in them your consolation; learn of them to receive with respect all that comes from the hand of God.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ returns into Nazareth, after the death of Herod, who had sought his life. He will not establish

his dwelling in your soul, until you have destroyed his enemies. He flies the tumult of irregular passions. We must die to ourselves, in order peaceably to enjoy the presence of Jesus and Mary. He who has the happiness to see Jesus Christ, should die to all that is earthly. For his love possesses a virtue that causes us to die to all our vicious inclinations. Were we dead to ourselves, and interiorly disengaged, we could then taste divine things.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ returns to his own country, from a tedious exile, in order to deliver us from eternal exile. As his patience in banishment should encourage us to undergo cheerfully the miseries of this life, his return should fill our hearts with joy, in the belief that heaven, our dear country, is open to receive us. "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord." (*Ps.* cxxi. 1.) "O most happy mansion of the city above! O most bright day of eternity, which knows no night, but is always enlightened by the sovereign truth! a day always joyful, always secure, and never changing its state to the contrary!"

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## TWENTY-FOURTH OF JANUARY

*On Jesus Christ going to the Temple at the age of twelve years.*

1ST POINT. The Blessed Virgin conducts the child Jesus to Jerusalem at the solemn festival of the Passover, instructing us how to celebrate the appointed festivals in a holy manner. Consider those days consecrated to the commemoration of the divine mysteries, or the virtues and rewards of the saints, as a special time of the most precious graces. Endeavour to profit by them. We ought to make our resolution from festival to festival, as if we were then to depart out of this world, and to come to the everlasting festival.

2ND POINT. Consider—the festivals solemnized by the church should constitute our delight, as they do that of God himself; for they are days especially devoted to prayer and all the works of piety, in which the true Christian seeks his only joy. More-

over, we know from the words of God himself, that his delight is to converse familiarly with the children of men, which he does more willingly on those days particularly dedicated to his divine service. Beware of indulging in your wonted imperfections, lest you change those days of benediction into days of wrath.

3RD POINT. The Blessed Virgin leads the child Jesus to Jerusalem, to visit the holy places, to participate in the sacrifices, and to hear the explanation of the law. The Incarnate Wisdom enters the temple, not to exercise the office of a master, but to teach you the duty of a disciple. From this example we learn to frequent the church, that we may assist at the sacrifice, give ourselves to prayer, approach the sacraments, and attend to the word of God. And where shall we hear that word, but in the house of God. There you learn what is necessary, in order to repair the time you have lost in sin, to dispose yourself for death, and to gain a happy eternity. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord; they shall praise thee for ever and ever.

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## TWENTY-FIFTH OF JANUARY

*On Jesus Christ remaining in Jerusalem while his Parents knew it not.*

1ST POINT. We learn from this mystery that many lose God by sin, and perceive not what they lose, nor understand the evil they commit. Job compares sin to the moth; for as that insect silently destroys the most costly garment, so sin corrupts the unguarded soul before it is aware of its danger. Fly this criminal ignorance; close not your eyes through fear of beholding the evil you commit.

2ND POINT. We learn from this mystery that we may lose God without fault on our part. To lose sanctifying grace by mortal sin, is to lose God as sinners who live in his disgrace. To lose the sweetness of the divine presence, and sensible devotion, by venial sin, is to lose God as the imperfect, who are cold in his love. To lose sensible devotion, and suffer the privation of heavenly consolation, without occasion on our

part, is to lose God as the saints, who have frequently endured the most painful dereliction, without losing peace of soul and perfect submission to the divine will. Adore here the secrets of Divine Providence, which treats its dearest children with such seeming severity: this trial is permitted in order to strengthen the soul, and render virtue more solid.

3RD POINT. We learn from this mystery, that to avoid losing God, or forcing him to forsake us, we must renounce human respect, and remove every obstacle to his divine presence in our hearts. Meditate these words of the child Jesus: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (*Luke*, ii. 49.) This is the first oracle of the Son of God recorded in the Gospel; and we should place it among the most important maxims of Christianity. Let our motives be, the will of God, the example of Jesus Christ, our own spiritual advancement, fidelity, gratitude, the necessity we are under of doing penance.

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## TWENTY-SIXTH OF JANUARY

### *How we lose the Child Jesus.*

1ST POINT. Consider—in what manner the Blessed Virgin lost the child Jesus, notwithstanding the love that united her heart to that of her Divine Son: reflect also, how that which occurred without any fault on her part, is frequently a chastisement to you. The Blessed Virgin lost her beloved Son going down to Nazareth. The loss of grace frequently occurs when we by little and little fall from the fervour of our charity, and return to our accustomed vices and defects. How important to renew frequently the resolutions formed in the presence of God, and preserve the fervour with which we have entered his service.

2ND POINT. The Blessed Virgin lost the child Jesus, reasonably supposing that he accompanied St. Joseph. This supposition that her Son was amongst those of their own company, was not an error, but an opinion, on which she might prudently act. We may lose God either through ignorance, inadvertence, or error. This obliges us to excuse many defects, from which even the most holy persons are not exempt, but which do not

render them displeasing in the eyes of God. This should teach us to avoid many rash judgments, by interpreting their actions as charity and Christian simplicity demand. "He that loseth Jesus, loseth exceeding much, and more than if he lost the whole world. Whoever finds Jesus, finds a good treasure, yea good above all goods." (*Imit.*, b. ii. 8.)

3RD POINT. The Blessed Virgin loses the child Jesus through the confidence she reposes in him. Knowing that he is omnipotent, and that nothing can happen but by his appointment or permission, she fears nothing on his account. Many lose God by a presumptuous confidence, persuading themselves there is nothing to fear, even where the danger is most imminent. How many are thus deceived and lost! They imagine such a contract to be lawful, such a vengeance but a just defence, such a society not attended with danger, such a companion to have no evil intention. They forget eternity in the smiles of fortune and the flattering caresses of the world. Avoiding all these snares, walk in the divine presence with filial reverence and holy fear, cultivating an intimate union of heart with God. "O God, be not thou far from me: O my God, make haste to my help!" (*Ps.* lxx. 12.)

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## TWENTY-SEVENTH OF JANUARY

### *How we should seek the Child Jesus.*

1ST POINT. As soon as the Blessed Virgin notices the absence of her Divine Son, she defers not a moment in seeking him, to teach us with what diligence we should seek God when he withdraws from us, or when we have lost him through our own fault. The present moment of life is the only one in your power, and it may, perhaps, be your last. If you allow it to pass, and death to surprise you, the evil is irremediable. Man, while in this life, may lose God, which is his greatest misery: he may also find him, which is an infinite happiness; but he must seek him, as did the Blessed Virgin, without delay. Jesus Christ, the best of friends, demands your conversion; he solicits your return at the present moment. The time you trifle away, is an offering

made to the demon; but that consecrated to penance, is a sacrifice presented to Jesus Christ.

2ND POINT. The diligence with which the Blessed Virgin seeks her Divine Son, is an effect of the love, which impels her to return without delay, and allows her no repose, until she had found the object of all her desires. Thus should we seek the child Jesus, when we have lost either the sweetness of his presence, or his holy grace. "You shall seek me; and shall find me, when you shall seek me with all your heart" (Jer. xxix. 13); that is to say, with a heart inflamed, an undivided heart that desires God alone. You must seek Jesus Christ, as he who hungers seeks bread; as one condemned to death seeks to preserve his life. For Jesus Christ is the fountain of living water, that extinguishes the fire of concupiscence. He is the bread of heaven, giving strength to walk in the way of God's commandments. Finally, he is the life of our souls, delivering them from eternal death. This we cannot avoid but by seeking him with fervour. "My heart hath said to thee: my face hath sought thee: thy face, O Lord, will I still seek! Turn not away thy face from me: decline not in thy wrath from thy servant." (Ps. xxvi. 8, 9.)

3RD POINT. Consider—the heart-felt sorrow with which the Blessed Virgin seeks her Divine Son, although she had lost him without fault. How much more cause have you to be afflicted, when you have lost him by sin? We can only lose God by sin: and we can find him only by penance. Penance is the way by which God conducts us to heaven, through the confessor or director to whose care we are committed. You weep over imaginary evils, whilst you behold with indifference the supreme evil of sin, which your tears could blot out for ever. The only sorrow worthy of our tears is that with which we should seek Jesus, when we have lost him by sin. To repair this loss, sin must be annihilated by contrition, and its traces effaced by the tears of sincere compunction.

## TWENTY-EIGHTH OF JANUARY

*How we may find the Child Jesus.*

1ST POINT. There are three classes of persons who seek God, and, like the Blessed Virgin, find him after three days. Thus penitents find him after three days. The first of these days is one of contrition; it is a day of affliction, atonement, and reconciliation. Contrition effaces the stain of the soul, appeases the anger of God, and satisfies for the penalty of sin. The second is that of confession, a day of confusion, of which may be said—"All the day long my shame is before me: and the confusion of my face hath covered me." (*Ps.* xliii. 16.) This shame mainly contributes to our justification. The third is that of satisfaction, which obliges the penitent to renounce sin, to despoil himself of the old man, and to burst asunder the bonds of evil habit. Such is the first condition "of them that see the face of the God of Jacob." (*Ps.* xxiii. 6.) "The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." (*Rom.*, xiii. 12.)

2ND POINT. The just seek God, and find him also after three days. The first is that of evangelical poverty, which should be voluntary, humble, and perseverant. Some, says St. Bonaventure, are willing to be poor, on condition that all their wants are supplied; they despise riches, but will not endure contempt. Those persons find not Jesus Christ. The second is that of purity, wherein the mind and heart must be detached from all that is earthly, and this can only be effected by the perfect mortification of the senses. As these are the ordinary channels of temptation, the combat against them is the most frequent and dangerous. The third is that of obedience, which includes not only the execution of what God, by the voice of superiors, enjoins, but also entire submission of will and judgment, without murmur, excuse, or delay. This is the day of which Solomon says, "an obedient man shall speak of victory." (*Prov.*, xxi. 28.)

3RD POINT. The perfect seek God, and find him after three days in a manner still more excellent. The first is that of repose. St. Augustine says, that a good conscience alone is tranquil; and this tranquillity is the repose of the heart. Beware of

charging yourself with worldly occupation, and let nothing that could sully or trouble the imagination, enter through the senses, which are the gates of the soul. The second is that of mental prayer, a day of light, which comprehends thought, meditation, and contemplation. This day is followed by a third, which is that of divine love, when the devout soul contemplates the sufferings of her spouse, the benefits she has received, and the eternal glory he has prepared for her.

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## TWENTY-NINTH OF JANUARY

### *On the means of preserving Jesus in the Soul.*

1ST POINT. It suffices not to find Jesus, we must preserve and guard him in the soul. The Blessed Virgin having found her Divine Son, separated no more from him. If you desire to retain Jesus Christ, you must resolve to undergo the difficulties you will have to encounter. The heavenly spouse loves your soul, and desires to establish therein his eternal dwelling; but there are many enemies who would banish him thence: the world, the flesh, the passions, would force him to yield his place to them. The tepid and inconstant soul betrays her spouse. The faithful and courageous soul says with the spouse—"I found him whom my soul loveth." Jesus Christ shall reign in my heart for ever. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (*Romans*, viii. 38, 39.)

2ND POINT. In order to preserve Jesus Christ in the soul, you must be vigilant, and place around him faithful and generous guards. Firm and efficacious resolutions will guard the soul wherein God reposes, holding it in humility and fear. "The soul," says St. Augustine, "that is sustained by holy thoughts, becomes impenetrable, invincible, and immutable: the spirit that is fortified by a lively faith in eternal truths remains firm and unshaken by all the terrors with which it is menaced by the world and the devil."

3RD POINT. If, notwithstanding all your vigilance, Jesus withdraws his sensible presence from you, you have, indeed, cause of affliction, but not of discouragement. The absence of Jesus, though short, seems long to the soul that loves. Yet he often withdraws the sensible consolation of his presence, in order that you may seek him with more fervour, and find him with more joy. According to St. Augustine, that which you seek with difficulty, you find with pleasure. If you would find and preserve the presence of Jesus Christ, prepare for him a dwelling in your heart, listen to his words, and follow his divine example. Have recourse to his blessed Mother. From her, learn to meditate, and to practise all that her divine Son has taught by word and example. "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." (*Luke*, ii. 19.)

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### THIRTIETH OF JANUARY

#### *Reflections on the foregoing Mystery.*

1ST POINT. "They found him in the temple." (*Luke*, ii. 46.) They seek the child Jesus "among their kinsfolk and acquaintance," but they find him not. If *you* would find him, "forget thy people and thy father's house, and the king shall greatly desire thy beauty; for he is the Lord thy God, and him they shall adore." (*Ps.* xlv.) He is lost among your friends and relatives, he disappears in the crowd. He is found in the temple, not in the palaces of the great; there the Magi sought him in vain. O good Jesus, if you are not found amongst your own relatives, how shall I find you among mine? If your blessed Mother, though pierced with sorrow, with difficulty found you, how shall I find you amidst vain joy and idle gratifications?

2ND POINT. "They found him . . . sitting in the midst of the doctors." (*Luke*, ii. 46.) Jesus ranks himself as a disciple, although he is the teacher of the doctors! His modesty gains their hearts; while they are lost in admiration of the wisdom and discretion manifested in his questions and replies. His zeal obliges him to give them proof of his doctrine, and his humility conceals the supreme dignity of his divine person. He stood

not in need of their instructions, since he is "the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." (*John*, i. 9.) But you required this example, to teach you not to confide in your own prudence. Be persuaded that you are not capable of being your own guide. Besides the grace of God, you stand in need of human aid. No one is so weak, no one is so easily vanquished, as he who has no guide or director in the ways of God.

3RD POINT. "And his Mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." (*Luke*, ii. 48.) This is not the murmur of impatience, it is the overflowing love of a mother's heart, expressing its feelings of mingled joy and sorrow in this tender complaint. But the Son of God replies: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (*Luke*, ii. 49.) Know ye not that I am come into the world only to re-establish the reign of my Father's glory, and obtain the salvation of mankind? This is the only important "business." We must forsake all when the divine honour and service demand the sacrifice? How few are able to comprehend the extent of their duty towards Almighty God! O Christian! you are born for a nobler end than to be a slave to this world! your occupation is to serve God, to secure the salvation of your soul, to labour for heaven and eternity. Yes, this is the *one thing necessary*. For what will it avail a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

## THIRTY-FIRST OF JANUARY

*On the return of Jesus Christ to Nazareth.*

1ST POINT. Jesus Christ, by an admirable secret of his wisdom, would remain unknown to the world until the age of thirty years. His whole life, from the age of twelve years until his baptism, is totally unknown. For what mind can conceive the works he wrought during that time, since the Scripture is silent thereon? "O Lord, how great are thy works! thy thoughts are exceeding deep." (*Ps. xci. 6.*)

O true Wisdom! teach me the happiness and benefits of a hidden life, and so imprint the lesson on my heart, that I may place all my ambition in following thee in that obscure and lowly path.

2ND POINT. Consider—how astonishing that the Son of God should so abase himself as to pass for the son of Joseph, and to exercise his trade. This humility is more to be admired than the most splendid actions of his life; and the greatest of his miracles is to have performed none during so long a repose. Ah! Lord, is humility so difficult of practice, that the Most High must descend to teach us its importance? Yes, truly, there is no virtue more exalted or more difficult. He that despises himself, and desires with his whole heart to be despised by others, has arrived at the highest and most difficult degree of virtue. Obedience necessarily springs from a humility so profound. "He was subject to them."

3RD POINT. Consider—four other virtues taught by Jesus Christ during his hidden life. The first is the flight of idleness, the mother of all evil. The second is liberty of heart, and disengagement from all the cares of the earth. The love of solitude and silence are the other virtues which the Son of God practised in Nazareth. There are two solitudes: that of the heart, which can be preserved by a holy recollection of mind, even amidst the conversations and business of the world; that of the body, which actually separates us from human society, but is of little effect if not united with the former. Behold your divine model in Nazareth. Jesus lost nothing by remaining in solitude until his thirtieth year. "Whosoever, therefore, aims at arriving at internal and spiritual things, must, with Jesus, go aside from the crowd."

## FIRST OF FEBRUARY

*On Jesus advancing in wisdom, age, and grace.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men." (*Luke*, ii. 52.) Meditate on the motives which oblige you to increase in grace and virtue. The most important is the example that Jesus Christ has given you during his life. Whoever does not advance in the school of Jesus Christ, is not worthy to have him for a master, much less for a friend. St. John assures us that he who would live in Jesus Christ, should walk as he walked, and follow the path he has traced. He has run on with ardour as a giant in his course; if then we would not be put to confusion, we must also run in his footsteps. Glorious Conqueror, who hast promised to draw all unto thee, when thou shalt be elevated on the cross, draw me after thee; and grant that I may draw others.

2ND POINT. "Blessed is the man whose help is from thee." Without the divine assistance we can do nothing. What am I of myself, says St. Augustine, but a blind guide who leads to a precipice, having nothing of my own, but an unhappy facility of casting myself into peril. Ascend towards God by loving him: the more you love, the nearer you approach unto him. But remember the place of your dwelling "is the valley of tears." Our love in this life is not one of enjoyment, but of suffering; it is nourished with tears and ardent desires, which are inflamed in proportion as charity augments.

3RD POINT. If you desire to advance in a Christian life, and perfect yourself in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in his virtues and spirit, observe these three points of practice. Imagine each day that you then only commence, and endeavour to serve God with as much fervour, as if it were the first of your conversion. Never lose the remembrance of the divine presence. Let all your actions tend to God by a pure intention, and an ardent desire of fulfilling his will. Never say it is enough; be not satisfied with what you are, if you would attain that to which you are not arrived. Our spiritual advancement depends principally on the desire of advancing in the way of virtue. Earnestly implore this grace of God, in the words of St. Augustine: "My Lord, I love thee; and if I love thee not as I ought, grant that I may love thee more."

## SECOND OF FEBRUARY

*Festival of the Purification.*

1ST POINT. "And presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple." (*Mal.*, iii. 1.) Who is this sovereign ruler but Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords, who wields the sceptre of the universe. He whose coming kings and prophets have desired to see, and after whom they have ardently sighed. In this quality you should receive him this day as king of your heart, which is his temple, with all the respect and joy his presence deserves. Deplore your own coldness, and try to awaken in your heart a lively devotion towards Jesus Christ, in the most holy sacrament of the altar.

2ND POINT. This day the prophetic words of David are fulfilled: "We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple." (*Ps.* xlvii. 10.) What is this mercy which we have received from God? It is Jesus Christ, who, in all the actions and sufferings of his life, had no other end in view but to reconcile us with God, and draw us forth from our miseries. What title can be more justly applied to him than that of mercy; since all that he has done and suffered for us was due neither to our merits nor to our good works, but solely to his own charity? It was his infinite mercy that brought him down from heaven to be born in a stable, and to die upon a cross, and this same mercy impels him to offer himself to the Father of mercies: that we may be heirs according to hope of life everlasting.

3RD POINT. When holy Simeon held the Divine Infant in his arms, he exclaimed: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace: because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (*Luke*, ii. 29, *et seq.*) Learn from these words to consider our Lord in the most holy sacrament as the glory, the light and salvation of our souls; but that we may be worthy to participate in these three favours, let us approach him with a preparation suitable to the sanctity of this mystery. Let us embrace the infant Jesus with all the tenderness and love that the state of infancy which he has assumed for our salvation serves to inspire. Let us reflect on the meekness, obedience, and humility of this amiable Saviour, and study to

become like unto this little one; lest it may prove in vain for us that this great God has become the lowliest of men. Honour the Mother through whom we received him, and bless the Eternal Father who has given him for our salvation.

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### THIRD OF FEBRUARY

#### *On the Oblation of Jesus in the Temple.*

1ST POINT. The Son of God, at his entrance into the temple, offers to his Eternal Father his body, soul, life, actions, labours, persecutions, and sufferings, his blood and death. To his divine mind all these are present, and knowing how much they would redound to the glory of his Father, he makes of them a perfect holocaust. How precious is this offering! Never had such been presented since the formation of the world! What a victim! What a priest! With what gladness should you present yourself before God! How unreservedly should you consecrate to him your entire being! We lose nothing in giving all: whatever we give to God is returned to us a hundredfold.

2ND POINT. The Son of God offers himself with profound reverence to the Divine Majesty, which he regards as the source of his happiness. He also offers himself with an infinite love and zeal for the advancement of God's glory, of which only he understood the full grandeur and extent. With a sentiment of joy he sees himself in a condition to suffer and die by obedience, in order to repair the injury offered to the Godhead by our rebellious will. He presents this offering with a love the most incomprehensible, making a general renunciation of his rights to the honour and glory of his Father. Is such your disposition? In what esteem do you hold your vows? Do you observe your rules in a spirit of love?

O Blessed Virgin, who hast offered thyself, with thy only beloved Son, as a perfect holocaust to the Divine Majesty, obtain for me a spark of that living fire of charity that it may consume all that belongs not to God, or tends not to his honour.

3RD POINT. Consider—The fidelity with which the Son of God will accomplish all that he this day offers in the temple.

As to the interior, his oblation will be uninterrupted; and as to the execution and consummation of his sacrifice, every moment of his will be a perfect holocaust. How do you fulfil the promise made to God when you consecrated yourself to his service? "After the days were accomplished." You should endeavour to fulfil your duties at all times, since God is always the same. All our days are days of purification.

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#### FOURTH OF FEBRUARY

*On the Blessed Virgin as our Mediatrix of Intercession in the Temple.*

1ST POINT. Jesus enters the temple as mediator of redemption, to reconcile us with God by the oblation of his sufferings and death; and Mary accompanies him as mediatrix of intercession through his blood and merits. Admire the heroic devotedness with which the Blessed Virgin offers herself, in union with her Divine Son, as a victim to the Eternal Father, for his glory and the salvation of man. Is such the generosity with which you offer yourself for the glory of God and the accomplishment of the divine will, when an occasion of sacrifice or suffering is presented to you? Do you practise that noble lesson of generous abandonment into the hands of God, of which Mary gives you so touching an example on this occasion? Do you give its value and perfection to the sacrifice by uniting it with that of Jesus Christ's? O Mary! through your intercession we expect salvation; you are the door of the heavenly court.

2ND POINT. Consider—the dignity of Mother of God entitles the Blessed Virgin to a share in all that belongs to her Divine Son, in so far as a pure creature is capable: this takes not from the glory of Jesus Christ, because all that she possesses she holds from him, and renders for it an eternal homage. Jesus Christ is the supreme mediator between God and man. But being God, this exalted majesty is to man an object of awe. We praise not alone his mercy; we must also extol his justice. Although he has learned to compassionate our miseries yet he ceases not to be our judge. It was necessary for our encouragement to give us an intercessor. Who can so well exercise this

prerogative as his Blessed Mother? In her there is nothing austere or terrible to human frailty; she is benignity itself.

3RD POINT. Consider—with what perfection the Blessed Virgin fulfils the office of intercessor, whether in offering her Divine Son for the salvation of mankind, or in offering herself to all the crosses she shall have to bear during her entire life for the same end. Already she begins to feel the sorrows of Calvary; and the remainder of her life shall be a continual martyrdom. She shall suffer each moment in her heart all that Jesus is to suffer one day in his sacred body. The Son immolates his body, the Mother immolates her heart. The Son offers to the Eternal Father the vows of his Mother in union with his own; the Mother prays, the Son presents, and the Father grants her prayer.

O Blessed Virgin, how powerful is thy aid for advancing our salvation! If thou deignest to supplicate in our behalf, we need no other intercessor with thy Divine Son.

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## FIFTH OF FEBRUARY

*On the Blessed Virgin as our Model in the contemplative and the active Life.*

1ST POINT. How perfectly the Blessed Virgin fulfilled all the duties of the contemplative life. Her prayer partook more of the contemplation of the blessed, and the lights of heavenly glory, than of the obscurity of faith. Her heart was entirely separated and disengaged from things temporal and perishable. Divine truth regulated the whole tenor of her life. All her application was to cultivate the interior spirit. The divine union was the centre of her repose; for God was the sole treasure of her heart. O admirable life! Life that is a foretaste of heaven! Life of continual prayer, which no earthly object ever could interrupt!

2ND POINT. How faithfully the Blessed Virgin fulfilled all the duties of the active life. These consist in the exercise of the works of mercy, spiritual and corporal, and in the practice of all virtues. She practised the corporal works of mercy towards

her beloved Son, serving him as her son and her Lord. She practised the spiritual works of mercy towards St. John, in contributing to the sanctification of his soul, and obtaining for him many graces. She united the exercise of both towards St. Elizabeth, assisting in her domestic occupations, and bearing the benediction of heaven to her house. She still daily exercises them towards mankind, procuring for them all benefits, spiritual and temporal. She provides for the necessities of all who invoke her; she is all to all; none are excluded.

Mother of my Lord, lead me to thy Son. Daughter of my Creator, conduct me to thy Father. Spouse of the Holy Ghost, present me to thy spouse.

3RD POINT. The servants of the Blessed Virgin should learn from her example to unite the duties of the active life with those of the contemplative; that is to say, to pass from contemplation to action, and from action to contemplation. Come to the service of your neighbour by the preaching of the Gospel and the example of good works. Remember that the duties of Martha and Mary should not be separated. Mary is necessary to Martha. By uniting them together you will approach unto God, which is to you the *one thing necessary*. The two precepts of charity, that is, the love of God and our neighbour, are, as it were, the two feet by which we must advance towards God; beware of failing in either, which would cause you to lose him for eternity.

## SIXTH OF FEBRUARY

*On Jesus curing the blind man of Bethsaida.*

1ST POINT. Consider—in what manner Jesus cures the blind man, whom they led to him on entering Bethsaida. He takes him by the hand, and leads him out of the town; he anoints his eyes with spittle, and having laid his hands on him, inquires if he saw anything. He takes the hand of the blind man, with the same humility and charity that caused him to assume human nature in the Incarnation, and leads him by the hand as it were to conduct him towards heaven. He withdraws him from the town, because it is not in the crowd or tumult of the world that God gives himself, and operates his wonders in souls. It is in solitude he illuminates them by his Divine Wisdom, and gives them relish of God, and understanding and love of his grandeur and beauty.

2ND POINT. Consider—the Son of God having asked the blind man if he saw anything, he replied: “I see men, as it were trees, walking.” (*Mark*, viii. 24.) During this life we have only an obscure and confused view, which makes objects appear what they are not in reality. Honours, pleasures, and riches seem to us great and desirable. On the contrary, humiliations, sufferings, and afflictions have a terrifying aspect, though, when viewed in the spirit of Jesus Christ, they become precious. We shall always remain in blindness until Jesus Christ shall lay his hand on our eyes, as he did to the blind man, and then, our interior vision being perfectly restored, we shall see all things as he did, clearly and distinctly.

3RD POINT. Consider—the command given by the Son of God to the blind man after having restored him to sight: “Go into thy house, and if thou enter into the town, tell nobody.” (*Mark*, viii. 26.) Learn that the graces of God are increased by the same means from which they derive their beginning. A soul that has been enlightened in retreat, should carefully exclude all idle thoughts, and shun all that could lead to dissipation of mind. She should preserve recollection, in order to contemplate him who has restored her to sight. She should meditate attentively on what God has done for her in the past, the mercy he exercises towards her at the present, and the exact account he will demand of her in the future.

## SEVENTH OF FEBRUARY

*On Jesus inquiring of His Disciples what men said of Him.*

1ST POINT. "As he was alone praying, his disciples also were with him: and he asked them saying: Whom do the people say that I am?" He well knew what men thought of him, but he would thus draw from his apostles a profession of their faith. He inquires not what the Pharisees, or the great ones of the world say of him; because those were blinded by hatred and envy. But the people were more upright in their sentiments, and less biassed by passion; nevertheless, how far they were still removed from that esteem in which they ought to have held Jesus Christ! "But they answered, and said: John the Baptist; but some say Elias; and others say that one of the former prophets is risen again." (*Luke*, ix. 19.) Imitate the humility and meekness he manifests in supporting with patience the little esteem in which he was held by men. Learn with what intention you should inquire what men say of you, not that you may hear your praises, but that you may know and correct your defects. Study to become all to all, to please all according to God.

2ND POINT. Our Lord demands of his disciples: "But whom do you say that I am?" (*Luke*, ix. 20.) And Simon Peter answering, said—"The Christ of God." (*Ibid.*) This admirable confession of faith was an effect of the prayer that Jesus Christ had just offered, which St. Luke says, obtained for them all, and principally for St. Peter, a supernatural light, by which they understood, more clearly than before, that he whom they saw a passable and mortal man, was at the same time truly the Son of God, equal to his Father in all things. Therefore our Lord replies to St. Peter—"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven." (*Matt.*, xvi. 17.) Reflect that the faith you received in baptism was a special favour of God, merited for you by Jesus Christ, and that it opens for you an infinite treasure of heavenly gifts, amongst which is the glorious title of *child of God*.

3RD POINT. "And I say to thee: that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." (*Matt.*, xvi. 18.) Faith in Jesus Christ is the foundation of his church: St. Peter is the

first stone that Jesus Christ lays in this foundation. He destines him, with his successors, to be the visible head of his kingdom on earth, even to the end of the world. He promises to his faith that priority which he gives to his love after the resurrection. The Eternal Father has given to his Son the keys of the kingdom of heaven; the Son confides them to St. Peter, with absolute power to govern his church—to bind and unbind, to condemn and absolve under his authority, without appeal. Bless God, who has left in his church the power of forgiving sins, and of opening to you the gates of his heavenly kingdom; but remember, that if they are not opened before death, they must remain closed against you for eternity.

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## EIGHTH OF FEBRUARY

### *On Jesus predicting his Death.*

1ST POINT. “From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients, and scribes, and chief priests; and be put to death, and the third day rise again.” (*Matt.*, xvi. 21.) Jesus reveals the secret of his death only to those whom he elevated to the knowledge of his greatness! He will teach them by experience the sublime knowledge of the cross. “In the cross is salvation; in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the cross is strength of mind; in the cross is joy of spirit.”

2ND POINT. This lesson is so elevated, that St. Peter himself could not understand it, even after having penetrated the secret of his master’s divinity; for he drew him aside, and lovingly reproved him, saying: “Lord, be it far from thee; this shall not be unto thee.” (*Matt.*, xvi. 22.) O weakness of the human heart! Though you are at times elevated to a high degree of prayer, and to sublime sentiments of the majesty of God, humble yourself profoundly; for after the movements of grace, those of flesh and blood will not fail to attack, and cause you to fall, if you are not on your guard.

3RD POINT. The fault of St. Peter proceeded only from a natural tenderness towards his divine Master, which caused

him to believe that the ignominy of the cross was contrary to the dignity of Jesus Christ; and nevertheless, reflect on the severity with which the Son of God replies: "Who turning, said to Peter: 'Go behind me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.'" (*Matt.*, xvi. 23.) How precious is the cross in the eyes of God, since he treats as Satan him that would oppose his sufferings! "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." (*Gal.* vi. 14 *et seq.*)

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## NINTH OF FEBRUARY

*On the Exhortation of Jesus to Mortification and Sufferings.*

1ST POINT. "And calling the multitude together with his disciples, he said to them: If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (*Mark*, viii. 34.) Jesus assembled the people, together with his disciples, not to declare to them openly the secret of his death, but to propose three important maxims that lead to the summit of the cross, and are necessary for all those who adore a crucified God. The first maxim is: "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself." He says, if any man *will*. It is in your own power either to follow or not to follow his call; but if you will follow it, you must necessarily renounce parents, friends, pleasures, and honours. You must also renounce your will, your judgment, and all your irregular inclinations. You must even renounce your life, and be ready at all times to lay it down, if necessary, for the divine service. Is such your disposition?

2ND POINT. Consider—the second maxim: "If any man will follow me, let him take up his cross." If, then, we would follow him, we must necessarily suffer with him, after him, and for his sake. That man tends to Jesus Christ, by the way he himself has chosen, who endeavours to walk in the road of humiliation and suffering; a road in which many labours and sorrows are to be encountered, many difficulties to be overcome.

My God, my Lord, and my King, wherever thou art, my Sovereign Master, I will remain inseparably united to thee.

3RD POINT. Consider—the third maxim: “If any man will follow me, let him take up his cross and follow me.” It does not suffice to bear the cross; we must bear it for the sake of Jesus Christ, and with his spirit. The love of Jesus is the sword of grief, which carries patience to the soul which it pierces. Whatever you endure, remember that Jesus Christ has suffered before you. Hide yourself in his sacred wounds—you shall there be in security. “Be thou my helper, forsake me not; do not thou despise me, O God, my Saviour.” (*Ps.*, xxvi. 9.)

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### TENTH OF FEBRUARY

*On the Exhortation of Jesus to all Men to walk in the way of the Cross.*

1ST POINT. “For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel, shall save it.” (*Mark*, viii. 35.) The first motive which Jesus Christ proposes to lead us to a love of the cross is, that a sensual life causes eternal death to the soul, and that the mortification of the irregular appetites and passions ensures eternal life. Whoever makes choice of one must renounce the other. And can you make a difficulty of bearing your cross after Jesus Christ? The cross of voluntary poverty, ignominy and pain. Behold the way which he has traced for you.

2ND POINT. The second motive is the excellence and value of the soul, which is inestimable. “What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?” (*Matt.*, xvi. 26.) The entire world is not equal in value to an immortal soul. By how many titles is the soul of man consecrated to his God? It is his throne, his temple, his inheritance, and his treasure, in which he has placed his heart and his delights.

3RD POINT. “The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then will he render to every man according to his works.” (*Matt.*, xvi. 27.) What shall be the joy of those generous conquerors of the world and the flesh? What the confusion of carnal men, who live the life of beasts?

Jesus Christ will render to every one according to their merits. He makes no distinction between the poor and the rich. He values not the persons, but the works. "Learn now to suffer in little things, that hereafter you may avoid what is great." (*Imit.*, b. i, 24.)

O Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead! remember thou art also our Saviour. If our sins have provoked thy justice, thy own wounds plead in our behalf. Look, then, upon the wounds thou hast suffered, and the blood thou hast shed to efface our sins. We beseech thee, by those precious pledges of salvation, to pardon our sins, and impart to our hearts the true spirit of penance.

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## ELEVENTH OF FEBRUARY

### *On the reasons why Jesus chose the Cross.*

1ST POINT. "And they spoke of his decease that he should accomplish in Jerusalem." (*Luke*, ix. 31.) The first reason why God sends his elect the cross is the excess of his love towards them, to take from the debt which they owed to his justice. For man having sinned, as did the angels, deserved, like them, to be condemned to eternal fire, if the Saviour of the world had not changed, by his infinite mercy and the merit of his death, this miserable eternity into momentary sufferings, as the apostle says. Should we not hold this disposition as a singular favour, adore the sovereign goodness of God, submit to his sentence with humble acknowledgment, and accept willingly the crosses of this life, in order to avoid everlasting torments? If you seriously reflect on this reason, and if you conceive what it is to be condemned to eternal flames, you will never complain of the transitory sufferings of the present time.

2ND POINT. The second reason is founded on divine love. Now, love is never more strongly demonstrated than by suffering for him whom we love. It is easy to love God when he replenishes us with favours and graces; but when he sends us the cross, it is then we can prove whether we love him or not. Thus our Saviour, desiring to testify his love towards his Father and his brethren, has preferred the cross to other

means much less painful. Should he not present to us the cross, which is the most sensible mark of the love he bears us ?

3RD POINT. The third reason is taken from our spiritual maladies, self-love, an evil so universal that no one can claim exemption, so obstinate that nothing less than extreme violence and the severest treatment can effect its cure. What then should a charitable physician do who loves the salvation of his patients, but to dispense unto them sufferings, as salutary remedies for the present, and preservations for the future, especially against pride. There is no means more powerful than affliction and suffering to humble the proud. Take up your cross, therefore, and follow Jesus, that you may live with him eternally.

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## SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY

### *Jesus is sold to the Jews.*

1ST POINT. "Jesus said to his disciples: You know that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified." (*Matt.*, xxvii. 2.) He has fulfilled the office of teacher, he now enters upon that of priest and victim; and as he had given us the treasure of his doctrine, in pointing out the way of salvation, he will now give us that of his blood, to open the gate of heaven. Will you make a difficulty of giving your life, which is but a breath of wind, for that of a God, which is of inestimable value?

O Jesus, I consecrate to thee my heart, soul, and life, as a perpetual sacrifice.

2ND POINT. "Then were gathered together the chief priests and ancients of the people and they consulted together, that by subtilty they might apprehend Jesus, and put him to death." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 3, 4.) Jesus meditates the work of our redemption, treating of it with his Eternal Father, while the Jews deliberate how they may surprise and put him to death. Learn from the generosity of your Master, that the triumph of virtue is to do good in return for injuries. Learn, again, to distrust the vain promises of the world, and the suggestions of the flesh, and of your own heart.

O my Saviour! shall I be so base as to betray thee? or so miserable as to conspire against thy life?

3RD POINT. "What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 15.) Judas sells that which he has lost; the Jews purchase at the value of a slave the priceless life of Jesus. God of infinite greatness, how low art thou in the estimation of man! and how precious is man in thine! Blind of heart! you offer thirty pieces of silver to purchase Jesus. What will you give me, and I will deliver him to you? I ask not thirty pieces of silver: I will be content with two—the love of God and of your neighbour. Is this too much? I will ask but one—your heart will suffice. Do you desire to have him without cost? He will give you himself for nothing. Come to the tribunal of penance, he will give you his blood. Approach his altar, he will give you his body. Humble yourself in his presence, he will give you his heart. The lowliness of humility is the price of his love.

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## MONDAY

*Jesus celebrates the Passover with his Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the pasch?" (*Matt.*, xxvi. 17.) It is in your heart Jesus desires to make this paschal feast. The disciples he sends to prepare it are faith and love. O how pure, how generous, how exalted above all that is terrestrial, should be the heart that is honoured by the reception of such a guest! How holy should be the soul that is nourished with so precious a food!

2ND POINT. "The Master saith, my time is near at hand; with thee I make the pasch with my disciples." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 18.) The day of communion, on which he gives you the Bread of Life, is peculiarly dear to Jesus Christ. He then takes a life of love in your heart. Love it as the day of your espousals, and the joy of your heart. Love it as the centre of his repose and your desires; for the object of all the labours of his life, is to unite himself to you in the Holy Communion; your desires should be to unite yourself to him by love.

Come, O thou God of my heart! come, take thy repose, and accomplish all my desires.

3RD POINT. "With desire have I desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer." (*Luke*, xxii. 15.) Jesus, before his passion, accomplishes the most ardent desires of his whole life: he fulfils the ancient law, and institutes the law of love. Jesus does not destroy the law, but fulfils and gives it the utmost perfection, observing it unto death. Happy they who can say at the hour of death: I have received my God, and I have accomplished all his designs.

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## TUESDAY

### *Jesus washes the Feet of his Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and goeth to God: He riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments, and having taken a towel, girded himself. After that he putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." (*John*, xiii. 13, 4.) See him before whom the pillars of heaven tremble kneeling at the feet of poor fishermen, washing them with his sacred hands, and kissing them with his divine lips; not even excepting those of the traitor Judas. Love presses him thus low; this admirable humility is produced by charity the most intense. The greater he is the more he abases himself. He knows that his Father has placed all things in his power, even the traitor whom he could destroy by a word: but mercy triumphs over justice.

2ND POINT. Peter said to him: "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" (*John*, xiii. 6.) St. Peter, surprised at the humility of his master, is seized with a holy fear. Considering his own nothingness, and the majesty of the Son of God, he exclaims—"Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" Thou who art God, and I who am nothing—thou who art the Holy of Holies, and I who am a sinner. What should a Christian say when he comes forth from the laver of penance where the Son of God effaces

the stains of our souls in these three precious streams. Can he refuse him the tears of gratitude in return as long as he lives?

3RD POINT. "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me." (*John*, xiii. 8.) To have no part with Jesus! this is a misfortune the saints feared more than death, hell, or all imaginable sufferings.

O Jesus! author and lover of purity, I beseech thee to wash not only my feet, but also my hands and head. Purify my thoughts, my affections, my actions, to the end there may be nothing to prevent my approach and union with thee in the adorable Eucharist.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *Jesus discovers the Treason of Judas.*

1ST POINT. "When Jesus had said these things, he was troubled in spirit." (*John*, xiii. 21.) The malice of Judas, who has received him unworthily, so afflicts the tender and loving heart of Jesus, that sorrow constrains him to break forth in these words: "One of you is about to betray me." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 21.) How dangerous to approach Jesus Christ unworthily! How true, that the greatest benefits of God, if abused, deserve the most grievous punishments.

2ND POINT. "The disciples therefore looked one upon another, doubting of whom he spoke." (*John*, xiii. 22.) The words of Jesus enter the hearts of the faithful disciples as a sword of fire, piercing them with a most sensible sorrow, yet that of Judas remains impenetrable. The innocent tremble, while the criminal stands unabashed. Pure souls tremble at the shadow of sin; they fear to lose Jesus. The fear of the Lord is a fruit of the Holy Communion.

Grant that thy holy fear may so occupy my heart, that sin may no longer find place therein.

3RD POINT. "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: 'Who is it of whom he

speaketh? ' ' ' ( *John*, xiii. 23.) St. John clings to the bosom of his Master, whilst Judas shrinks from that throne of holiness. The heart of Jesus is between them, as the diamond which attracts one and repels the other. The one brings to Holy Communion an angelic purity; the other approaches with an envenomed heart.

God of all purity, preserve me from the misfortune of this faithless Apostle. I am poor, and thou art my only good. I must therefore approach thee, since my soul cannot subsist without this divine food.

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## THURSDAY

*Jesus reproves his Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "And there was also a strife amongst them, which of them should seem to be the greater." (*Luke*, xxii. 24.) The fall of Judas has caused the Apostles to tremble, yet it has not quelled their ambition, nor banished the spirit of the world from their hearts. They have seen Jesus, at their feet—they have received him into their hearts—yet they still seek after worldly honour. Fly vanity, which insinuates itself into the greatest minds.

My Redeemer, thou broughtest peace to men. Grant me that peace, and let me behold thee in my brethren.

2ND POINT. "And he said to them: The kings of the gentiles lord it over them. But you not so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he that is the leader, as he that serveth." (*Luke*, xxii. 25, 26.) Do you desire to be great before Jesus Christ? Become as the least. Thus has the Son of God acted in your regard. He is become your servant; he has not spared even his own flesh and blood, which he has given for your food. You are ashamed, perhaps, to imitate the humility of man: at least you cannot disdain to follow that of God.

3RD POINT. "And you are they who have continued with me in my temptations: And I dispose to you, as my Father hath

disposed to me, a kingdom: That you may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and may sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (*Luke*, xxii. 28.) Incomparable sweetness of the Son of God! How powerful his words to heal the vanity of his disciples! Listen to the voice of the Incarnate Wisdom. You, he says, have persevered with me in poverty, persecution and contempt. Will you now be false to yourselves? Will you lose all the fruit of your merits? It is not in these worldly precedences that true greatness consists. If you desire glory labour with invincible courage in the conquest of the world.

O Incarnate Word! Teach me the difference between a truly noble spirit and the spirit of pride.

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## FRIDAY

### *Jesus establishes the law of Charity.*

1ST POINT. "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another." (*John*, xiii. 34.) Jesus, having banished the spirit of the world from the hearts of his disciples, employs the last moments of his life to engrave upon them the law of love, the sweetest and most admirable of all laws. "My little children, I am on the point of returning to my Father. Love me constantly, breathe only after my love, and let not death itself separate us, since it is for you I die. But if you love me, love one another for my sake. This is the most ardent wish of my heart, the new law. Revive this love in the hearts of men; unite them all with me; unite them with each other."

2ND POINT. "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another, as I have loved you." (*John*, xiii. 34.) Jesus is the model of perfect love. The ancient law says, you shall love your neighbour as yourself; and the new law, love your neighbour as Jesus Christ has loved you. Consider in this admirable model the charity you are to imitate. It should be universal: it excludes neither friend nor enemy. It should be strong as death. You should deem yourself happy to lay down your life for your brethren, as Jesus Christ has given his life

for you. It should be exalted as heaven; you should love them only for God, as the children of God, brethren and disciples of Jesus Christ.

O my Saviour, how narrow is my heart compared with thine! Confounded as I am, my consolation is, that thou who beholdest me canst redress all my miseries. Give me, O Lord, that which thou commandest, and command what thou pleasest.

3RD POINT. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." (*John*, xiii. 35.) The kings of the earth are recognised by their sceptre and diadem; the disciples of Jesus Christ, by their fraternal charity. Behold how they love, said the Pagans, speaking of the primitive Christians; behold how they are ready to die for one another. Neither miracles, nor prophecies, nor ecstacies, distinguish the children of God from the children of darkness: charity is their sceptre and crown; their greatest ornament, and the most certain mark of their dignity.

Whence comes it, my adorable Saviour, that so good a master hath so unprofitable a disciple? Is thy doctrine so obscure or so difficult to practise? Ah! what can be sweeter than the name of charity, or more amiable than its effects? Undoubtedly, it is because I want that light of the understanding, and generosity of heart, which thou impartest to thy faithful disciples who obey thy will and fulfil thy precepts. Give me, O Lord a new heart, that I may observe thy commandment!

## SATURDAY

*Jesus predicts the fall of St. Peter.*

1ST POINT. "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat." (*Luke*, xxii. 31.) It is wisdom to foresee evil, and goodness to warn those whom it menaces. Jesus does both with regard to his disciples. As he is infinitely wise, he cannot be ignorant of their weakness, and he is too merciful to conceal it from them. He foretells that all shall be scandalized in him, and as St. Peter expressed more resolution than the rest, to moderate his fervour by a salutary fear, he tells him that Satan had demanded him. How true that those who are most courageous when peril is remote, are often the weakest when it presents itself! Distrust yourself; fear is your security.

If the pillars of heaven are shaken, what may I not fear who am as dust before the wind? Open, O Lord, my eyes, that I may see my danger; that I may know my own weakness, and the strength of the enemy who unceasingly persecutes me; lest I sleep in death, and Satan, triumphing in my misfortune, say: He is mine, I have vanquished him.

2ND POINT. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (*Luke*, xxii. 32.) Our Saviour, who warns us of danger, would, himself, be our safeguard. Jesus prays for me whilst I am tempted. His sacred wounds demand for me the succour of his Eternal Father. Jesus opens his divine heart to hide me therein, and save me from the power of my enemies. Let us call upon him who is our support and our security.

3RD POINT. "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death." (*Luke*, xxii. 33.) St. Peter considers not his weakness, but follows the movement of his heart. Distrust your own dispositions, however good they may seem: self-love glides so imperceptibly even into the best actions, that the greatest saints have been deceived by it. How many in fervour say to our Lord: I am ready to die for thee. But the Son of God knows the weakness and perversity of their will.

O Lord, I am not surprised at my weakness, without thee I am nothing. Being so weak, I should depend not on my own strength, forgetful of thee who art my support.

## SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

*Jesus consoles his Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me." (*John*, xiv. 1.) When you are afflicted, remember there is Jesus in heaven, witness of your sufferings. Re-animate your faith. He is your sovereign good, of whom no one can deprive you; that, provided he remain with you, you can lose nothing, because in him you possess all things. Why is your heart troubled, he says. You have lost a friend:—I am the best of friends. You have been deprived of wealth:—I am your treasure. Your health is impaired:—I am the physician of soul and body. You fear death:—I am the life. And if you believe, why do you tremble?

2ND POINT. "In my Father's house there are many mansions. If not I would have told you because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you; I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be. And whither I go you know, and the way you know." (*John*, xiv. 2.) If sadness and sorrow tempt your constancy, raise your eyes to heaven, where Jesus awaits you. This world is but your exile. Patience yet a little while. Fear not that your sins will exclude you from the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Jesus, who is the king and master, has given a place to the good thief among the princes of his court; and he also prepares one for you, which will be so much the more exalted, as you will have suffered more in his service.

3RD POINT. "And he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (*John*, xiv. 21.) Love, and you will no longer complain of suffering. The love of Jesus is the sovereign remedy of every evil, without which life would be more intolerable than death. If it is beatitude to love the Son of God, what shall it be to be loved by him, by his Father, and the Holy Ghost? If he who has created all things loves you, say what harm can befall, or what good can be wanting to you?

Teach me, O Lord, what is the recompense thou givest to thy friends, that I may seek, and seeking find, love, and possess it. My son, "he that loveth me; . . . I will love him, and I will manifest myself to him." (*John*, xiv. 21.)

## MONDAY

*Jesus continues his Discourse.*

1ST POINT. "But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I; arise, let us go hence." (*John*, xiv. 31.) "Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to drinking the chalice of his passion." (*Imitat.*, b. ii. 11.) Be ready to lose all, to suffer all, rather than be separated from him. He is the vine, you the branch; without him you cannot bear fruit. For one of these two must be the condition of the vine—Either fruit or fire. Either Jesus Christ or hell. Choose which you will; there is no half-way. The grace of Jesus is the principle of your spiritual life and fertility. Without him you cannot be loved by God, for he can only love you as belonging to his divine Son.

Dwell then, with me, O Lord, who hearest the secret cry of my heart, who alone canst satisfy all its desires.

2ND POINT. "But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." (*John*, xvi. 7.) Although Jesus withdraws his sensible presence, you can still preserve a precious union with him. The secret bond which unites your heart with his is the Holy Ghost—the gift of Jesus suffering and triumphant, a fruit of the cross, and a present from heaven. Jesus crucified has merited for you the Holy Spirit: Jesus glorified has sent him from on high. He comes to teach you to enter into these two states of suffering and of triumph. During this mortal life your union must be with Jesus crucified; after death it will be with Jesus glorified. Now, the Holy Ghost unites you with Jesus by conformity of mind, he is the spirit of truth; by conformity of desire, he is the spirit of love; by conformity of action, he is the spirit of sanctity; and by conformity of suffering, he is the spirit of Christ crucified.

Most sweet Jesus, send forth thy Divine Spirit into my heart, that, inebriated with thy love, I may seek only thee, the source of true delight, desirable on the cross as on the throne, in the bosom of thy Father and in the crib of Bethlehem.

3RD POINT. "These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world." (*John*, xvi. 33.)

Peace and union with Jesus Christ and with the world are incompatible. Envy not its vain joys. Sufferings are the livery of Jesus Christ, the mark of your predestination, and the portion of the children of God. Your confidence should increase with your difficulties, for the Son of God will give you strength to gain the victory.

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## TUESDAY

*Jesus addresses his heavenly Father.*

1ST POINT. "These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." (*John*, xvii. 1.) There are moments especially marked by Divine Providence, which should be considered moments of glory and of salvation—when the spirit of Jesus knocks at your heart, and solicits a return of love; when the spirit of darkness seeks to withdraw you from your Saviour; when the Son of God asks some considerable service; when he presents the cross, and offers you a thorn from his crown—that is, any humiliation or sensible mortification. In those moments, raise without delay your heart to your heavenly Father, and say with his divine Son: this is the hour of my happiness, and the glory that I should render to my Master.

2ND POINT. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me; because they are thine." (*John*, xvii. 9.) Jesus prays to his Eternal Father for all his elect. As he loves them with a love of preference, a love full of tenderness and strength, in dying he recommends them with a particular affection. What does he demand for them? That his Father should cherish them as his brethren. He is the Holy of Holies: he would have them to be holy as he is holy. He is one with the Father in love. He desires that they be one with him, and among themselves. You then occupied a place in the heart of Jesus; you were included in his prayer. Thank him for so great a benefit.

Most adorable Saviour, my life would not be sufficient to praise thy goodness; grant that I may continue in eternity what

I commence in time; and that, immutably contemplating thee, I may unceasingly love and bless thee during endless ages.

3RD POINT. "Just Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee: and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have made known thy name to them, and will make it known: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them." (*John*, xvii. 25, 26.) Jesus prays not for the world, because it knows him not; and it knows him not because it does not love him. No one can see God whose heart is not pure, and replenished with charity and meekness.

I desire to be all thine; and since true happiness consists in seeing and loving thee, I desire to love thee here, that I may see and love thee for eternity.

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### WEDNESDAY

*Jesus goes forth from the Supper-room with his Disciples to the Mount of Olives.*

1ST POINT. "When Jesus had said these things he went forth with his disciples." (*John*, xviii. 1.) Jesus goes from the supper-room, lest the house of his host should be disturbed. Fear not to lodge him in your heart, his presence always brings peace. He is considerate for all; try as far as you can, to be so towards your brethren. He goes forth, having sung a hymn. This hymn is a mark of his courage, and of the love he bears you. He counts his sufferings as nothing, in comparison to your salvation. You then should not be cowardly under so magnanimous a leader.

2ND POINT. "Then Jesus came with them into a country place . . . called Gethsemani, and he said to his disciples: Sit you here till I go yonder and pray." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 36.) Whilst his heart is overwhelmed with sadness, he provides for the repose of his disciples; he commands them to sit, whilst he goes forth to the death struggle. He is careful of us even in such little things as would seem unworthy of him. Learn to obey your superior, not only in the penances that subdue the

body, but also in the counsels which tend to preserve your health. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

O most sweet Jesus! how greatly deceived are they who think you a severe master. You only require our reasonable service. My soul, let us seek the kingdom of God, and leave to him the care of ourselves: he will bless all our designs; and add to spiritual graces the temporal blessings conducive to our salvation.

3RD POINT. Consider—"And he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here and watch." (*Mark*, xiv. 34.) It was necessary that he should discover the sorrow of his heart, otherwise never could they have conceived to what an excess it arrived. Lord, what consolation can thy disciples give thee? They are heart-stricken with grief; astonishment has closed their lips, and they can only reply by their tears. How can I console thee? My child, remain here and watch with me. Suffer with patience; learn of me to humble yourself, and submit yourself to a creature in your desolation. Watch and contemplate the wounds of my soul, in order that you may sympathize with me. Watch, that you may learn to console the afflicted, and mutually relieve each other in your sufferings. My Saviour, if thou wouldst have me console others, speak to them by my lips.

## THURSDAY

*Jesus is overwhelmed by a profound Sadness at the Sight of our Miseries.*

1ST POINT. "He began to grow sorrowful." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 37.) All the miseries of the world press upon the heart of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemani. He feels them more deeply than his own, and by compassion attracts them all into his heart, in order to sweeten their bitterness. This heart, so expanded, becomes a sea of sorrows. O my Saviour! thy charity is inconceivable: my pains pierce thy heart, whilst thine touch me not. Lord, were thy mercy less than infinite, I would not dare to hope for pardon of my insensibility.

2ND POINT. "He began to grow sorrowful." The cause of all the sorrows of Jesus Christ was our spiritual miseries. From the first moment of his life, he beheld the pitiable condition of souls; their blindness, ignorance, and malice; finally, their eternal reprobation.

How sensible to Jesus the loss of so many souls! How touched by the weaknesses and imperfections of his elect! How long, O Lord, shall I sadden thy spirit by my disorders, adding evil to evil, and piercing thy heart with as many wounds as I commit sins?

3RD POINT. "He began to grow sorrowful." There is no object more pitiable than a sinner insensible to his own misery. We are extremely sensitive in our temporal sufferings, and we are not sufficiently touched by our spiritual evils. One and the other wound the heart of Jesus. He grieves that our impatience under afflictions causes spiritual evils much more deplorable; and he grieves still more that our insensibility to these evils prevents our seeking a remedy.

Sweet Jesus, never withdraw this mercy from me, or let me be confounded in my expectation.

## FRIDAY

*Jesus conceives a profound sorrow for our offences against his Father.*

1ST POINT. "He began to grow sorrowful." Ask the Son of God why he is sorrowful, why he weeps, why he sheds tears of blood. He will tell you it is your sins. He receives all things from the hand of God, and he is content with whatever Providence ordains. Jesus is the Holy of Holies, but he has charged himself with our crimes. He is now a penitent, because we are sinners. The offences by which we outrage the majesty of his Father, cast him into a sadness so profound that no creature can conceive it. All that we can say is, that his sorrow is commensurate with his knowledge. The beatific vision unfolds the grandeur and goodness of God, at the same time it reveals to him the enormity of sin; and instead of that joy it produces in his heart a piercing sorrow.

2ND POINT. Would you understand more clearly the depth of that sorrow which overwhelms the heart of Jesus? It is equal to his love, and as his love is unbounded, so his sorrow is without measure. There have been saints whose sorrow for even a venial offence has caused their death. Did you love more, your contrition would be more intense! Is your heart not touched when you consider that your sins have outraged the goodness of God, so deserving of your love? Have you no regret for afflicting so sensibly the heart of Jesus?

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ suffers in proportion to all the crimes that have been, or ever will be committed, even to the end of ages. The heart of Jesus overflows with sweetness; yet one sin is capable of changing all the sweetness into bitterness. Consider the number of his wounds; above all, those which you have inflicted. Where is your penitence? What use do you make of that of Jesus Christ?

## SATURDAY

*Jesus suffers excessive Confusion at being charged with the sins of the world.*

1ST POINT. Be not surprised that the Son of God is prostrate on the earth; the leprosy of our sins, with which he is covered, fills him with horror. He bears the regret and the confusion due to sin. He is humbled and afflicted as if he were the guilty person. He who is the Holy of Holies, to be the chief of sinners! He, the true Son of God, is confounded to see himself so little followed, so little loved, so little esteemed and acknowledged.

O King of Glory! I am the sinner, thou art sanctity itself. Take from me, in thy mercy, that false shame which causes me to sin.

2ND POINT. Jesus employs the endearing name of Father, and he is treated as a stranger and an alien. He stretches forth his hands to the divine mercy, and he is repulsed by justice. He expects some consolation in the extreme anguish that oppresses him, and he receives but the gloomy sentence of death. How severe, how humiliating is this treatment!

O my Saviour! why should I complain, when thy Father rejects or seems deaf to my prayer? Have I not deserved it?

3RD POINT. Shame causes us to conceal ourselves, lest men should behold our abjection. But Jesus would have men and angels witness his confusion. He, in whom fear or sadness had never appeared, is suddenly so overwhelmed, that he is constrained to seek consolation amongst his disciples, and to receive it from the angel who is sent to comfort him. His eternal Father condemns him to an ignominious death, and heaven and earth must witness this decree.

Alas! I am ashamed to confess my sins in private to a creature, and I am not ashamed to commit them in thy presence.

## QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

*Jesus is seized with Fear at the Sight of his Torments.*

1ST POINT. "He began to fear." (*Mark, xiv.*) The Omnipotent, whom no evil can approach but by his own permission, is seized with a mortal fear. What fearest thou, O Lord, since nothing can oppose thy omnipotence? His fear is not a mark of weakness, but an effect of his courage and love. He fears because he has become the substitute for sinners.

Why should I be troubled at my weakness or surprised at my fears? My Saviour has feared confusion and contempt; he has dreaded pain, persecutions, calumnies, and the violence of his enemies. What wonder that the leaf trembles since the tree is shaken to its root.

2ND POINT. Jesus is seized with fear, because he would rectify our fears, and even sanctify them by his own. Your nature is timid and fearful: unite yourself to Jesus, and make his weakness your remedy. Leave nothing undone that you ought to accomplish; and though you should meet death in the midst of the way, recoil not a single step.

O Jesus! if I cannot banish fear, I can sanctify it by thy grace. I shall thus convert a natural defect into a virtue.

3RD POINT. Jesus suffers fear, he trembles, to render his disciples intrepid. His fear is our strength, and should awaken our confidence. Before Jesus feared death, it was an object of terror to all. But now that he has conquered, it would be cowardice to fear it. Arm yourself then against the terrors of death. Look upon it with a firm eye; you know not the place where it awaits you: expect it in all places. You know not the moment; be then always ready.

O charitable Physician! how great is thy love, how admirable thy goodness; may thy mercy be ever blessed!

## MONDAY

*Jesus feels an Extreme Repugnance for his Passion and Death.*

1ST POINT. "And he began to fear and to be heavy." (*Mark, xiv.*) Jesus feels an extreme repugnance to suffer and die. This is a natural feeling which he suffers to console us in our weakness. The very repugnance he feels for suffering aggravates his torments. O my Saviour, thou art pleased to undergo this to animate me in the combat, and give me strength to overcome. Thou fearest death, to teach me that the faithful Christian flies suffering and death, because he is man, yet he is ready to accept them contrary to his inclination, if God so wills.

2ND POINT. "And he began to fear and to be heavy." Jesus foresees that the greater portion of mankind, unmindful of, and ungrateful for, the benefit of his bitter passion, will render it unavailable to their salvation. This redoubles his torments.

Grant, O my Saviour, that I may be of the happy few who profit of the grace so dearly purchased. I will not complain that my labours are useless. I will accept the employment thou appointest me—I will accept my cross with simplicity from thy hand—I will undergo all the difficulties of my occupation, leaving to thee the success, without disquietude.

3RD POINT. "And he began to fear and to be heavy." It is afflicting to labour much, without profit; but it is much more grievous to perceive that the pain we undergo for another, turns to his prejudice instead of profit. This wounds the heart of Jesus, and fills it with bitterness. The Jews have the Saviour of the world amongst them, to see, to hear, to possess him! Instead of availing themselves of so signal a grace, they change it by their malice, into an occasion of eternal misery.

## TUESDAY

*Jesus has recourse to Prayer in his Sadness.*

1ST POINT. "And he was withdrawn away from them, a stone's cast: and kneeling down he prayed." (*Luke*, xxii.) Jesus penetrated with sorrow has recourse to prayer. He chooses the time of night, because it is in silence that the soul can better listen to the voice of God. He separates himself from his beloved disciples, because prayer is a secret conversation between God and the soul, without witness, without noise, in the profound solitude of the heart. He knows that his sadness will increase in this holy exercise; he goes, however, not to seek consolation, but to honour his Father, and submit himself to his will. Is it thus you go to prayer? Do you seek the glory of God, and the death of self-love?

O my Saviour! if I possess not the qualities necessary for prayer, inspire me with the prayer that is necessary to obtain them.

2ND POINT. "He fell upon his face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 39.) Behold your model in prayer. He is in the presence of his Father with a profound respect. His confidence is equal to his humility. My Father, he says, I am sorrowful unto death; have pity on thy Son.

O sweet Jesus, whose every action is my instruction, what a reproach that I should be so distracted in prayer, where thou art so attentive; cold, where thou art so fervent; without respect, where thou art prostrate on the earth! O beautiful countenance, that art imprinted on the dust, mayest thou be engraven on my heart, sordid and earthly though it be.

3RD POINT. "If this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 42.) Jesus prays, and is not heard; his Father rejects his prayer, and he complains not; and I murmur when I am disregarded. Learn thence, the true ecstasy of the most sublime prayer is to lose yourself in the will of God. God willingly listens to the prayer that is conformable to his eternal law; but that which has its source in the inordinate desires of the heart, he rejects; and this refusal is not so much a chastisement as a benefit.

## ASH-WEDNESDAY

*Jesus is strengthened by an Angel from Heaven.*

1ST POINT. "And there appeared to him an angel from heaven." (*Luke*, xxii. 43.) Whilst Jesus prays, all heaven is silent. An angel bears his prayer to the throne of God. All the blessed spirits unite in his supplications; not that he needs their assistance, but they owe their Divine Lord this homage. Learn the esteem which you should have for prayer, by that of the angels, and by the power which it possesses over the heart of God. It is the angels who present our prayers, as incense at the throne of the Most High.

O my good angel, offer to God the sacrifice of my prayer, and render it pleasing in his sight.

2ND POINT. The angel who presented the prayer of Jesus descends from heaven, and appears to him in the excess of his sorrow. What does he bear in the chalice he presents in the name of the Eternal Father? The bitterness of the cross and death. Oh, how bitter is this chalice! It is bitter, but it comes from heaven, it comes from the hand of God, and is carried by an angel. It is an angel who conducts you through the desert of this life, and who is to assist you at the hour of death.

3RD POINT. What does the angel who fortifies the Son of God in this prostration do to impart strength? He represents the motives capable of sustaining the soul, abysed in sorrow. He shows the necessity of his passion, and the glory that will redound from it; the good pleasure of his Father, and the salvation of his elect. Turn to the angel whom God has given you. One single inspiration, that through him God shall breathe into the depths of your heart, will restore your interior peace.

## THURSDAY

*Jesus falls into an Agony.*

1ST POINT. "Being in an agony he prayed the longer." (*Luke*, xxii. 43.) Jesus is strengthened by the words of the angel, but he receives no consolation in his pains. His humility accepts the one, to teach us to fear our weakness; but his charity refuses the other, to prove that we can remain firm in the service of God without sensible devotion. Thus Jesus instructs the strong and the weak.

O Jesus, example of the strong, teach me to serve you without sensible consolation. O strength of the weak, teach me to make a good use of the consolation you have gained for me by your sorrows.

2ND POINT. Jesus, seeing the justice of his Father inexorable, and knowing that he must die, his heart appalled at the frightful multitude of evils represented to it, is riven as it were into two parts. The one trembles under the scourge of God's wrath, the other accepts it with respect. The one fears torments, the other desires them. He is drawn by each with such violence, that he suffers a mortal agony.

Grant, I beseech you, by your grace, that my life may be a perpetual combat against nature, and my death a victory, followed by a glorious triumph in eternity.

3RD POINT. Jesus quits not prayer under this extreme desolation; on the contrary, he prolongs it with greater application and fervour. He teaches us that to overcome our dejection we must pray, and in order to pray, we must vanquish the repugnance we feel in prayer. He teaches us that we must follow God notwithstanding all the repugnances of our own will.

O my Saviour, teach me ever to prefer thy will to mine, and to persevere in prayer until I feel my interior calm, and my will submissive to that of thy Eternal Father.

## FRIDAY

*Jesus, in his Agony, sweats Blood.*

1ST POINT. "His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground." (*Luke*, xxii. 44.) Jesus opens all the pores of his body to demand mercy. To what, O Lord, do we owe this prodigy?—to the weakness to which his love has reduced his body, exhausted by his intense sufferings, to the ardour of his love—the magnanimity of his courage—the violence with which he combats his repugnances, and the sadness which our infidelities have caused him. My Saviour, thy mercies are above all thy works!

2ND POINT. This miraculous shower of blood is a mystery which instructs us in great truths. It is a sign of a great combat, and glorious victory of the excess of his love, his zeal, and his sorrow. O how will this sweat one day accuse our sloth, that will not endure the least inconvenience, while he suffers for us the extremity of evil!

3RD POINT. "Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bosra? This beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength?" (*Isaias*, lxiii. 1.) Come to the fountain of life, all you who thirst after the sovereign good. Lose not this precious blood which is shed for you. Jesus sheds it, first, to merit for you abundant graces in your last agony; often, then, recall the remembrance of his, and beseech him to assist you in that awful combat. Secondly, he sheds it to merit for you a spirit of penance and to animate you in the combat against nature. Why are you so tepid in the service of God? It proceeds from your not seriously reflecting on the agony of Jesus.

My Saviour, thou shedest thy blood, to restore me to life. Let it purify my soul, change my will, regulate my passions, and heal my wounds.

## SATURDAY

*Jesus thrice visits his Apostles, and finds them sleeping.*

1ST POINT. "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour?" (*Mark*, xiv. 37.) Judas watches, the enemies of Jesus are active, and the apostles sleep. Thus we sleep in prayer, we sleep in temptation, we sleep in our evil habits, and in our most important duties. Religious soul, thou who shouldst watch over thy passions, over thy thoughts, and thy whole deportment, "why sleepest thou?"

O my Lord, I know not how to reply to a reproach so just. Confusion is my only excuse, silence my defence. I cast myself on thy mercy.

2ND POINT. "Watch ye and pray, that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (*Mark*, xiv. 38.) Admire the vigilance of this good pastor. He prays, directs, visits his flock; he animates, reproveth, in the depth of his agony; in the gloom of desolation, when his heart is rent by contending emotions, he is still watchful and devoted in his charity for his disciples. Pray, he says, and watch. Behold three excellent maxims against temptations—pray, watch, and distrust yourself. Vigilance discovers temptation. Prayer is the vivifying principle that imparts strength and resolution to vanquish.

3RD POINT. "He cometh the third time, and saith to them: Sleep ye now, and take your rest." (*Mark*, xiv. 41.) Never was a mother's love more indulgent to an only son than that of Jesus to his disciples. Thrice he visited, and thrice he found them sleeping. Yet how cutting this indifference to the heart of Jesus. The more their weakness appears, the more tenderness he testifies. He reproveth them with love. He awakes them without reproach. He consoles and desires them to take their rest. Spirit of Jesus, how sweet thou art!

## FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

*Jesus goes forth from Prayer.*

1ST POINT. Jesus commands his disciples to take a little repose, but immediately he awakes them, saying—"It is enough." (*Mark*, xiv. 41.) How short the repose of this life! We must watch without ceasing, because our enemies sleep not. Necessity alone should be the measure of your comforts. You desire more time for prayer, and to feel more sensibly how sweet God is; be satisfied with what is given you. The present life is not a time for enjoyment, but for action and suffering. You would have more relaxation; but do not exceed what the rule prescribes. Nature is never content; the more you give the more it requires.

2ND POINT. To confirm his apostles, and prepare them for the combat, Jesus adds, that—"the hour is come" (*Mark*, xiv. 41,) in which they should remember their promise to follow him unto death. I form good purposes in prayer, but when called on to practise, I no longer remember them; I despise danger when absent, and I lose courage as soon as it presents itself. My child, if so many faults are committed, notwithstanding your good resolutions, what would be the consequence of neglecting to form them? Beware of omitting, but be more careful in accomplishing them.

3RD POINT. "Rise up, let us go. Behold, he that will betray me is at hand." (*Mark*, xiv. 42.) It is no longer the voice of a man agonised with fear. Divine love has prevailed over the weakness of the inferior part of the soul by means of prayer. In this divine exercise we must seek vigour of mind. Prayer is the nerve of our strength. Behold Jesus, pressed by love, advancing to meet his sufferings. He invites you to follow him—to the poor, to the prison, to the hospital, and to learn to suffer the miseries of life with meekness and charity towards all, notwithstanding the risings of nature.

## MONDAY

*Jesus, by his word, casts his enemies on the ground.*

1ST POINT. "As soon, therefore, as he had said to them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." (*John*, xviii. 6.) The Jews seek Jesus as a mortal man, and he replies as God, making them feel the power hidden under the weakness of our nature. Be comforted in thy affliction, thou hast a God for thy protector. God beholds me, he knows all, he is near me, whispering secretly, "I am He." How sweet is that voice to his elect! that voice which gave courage to his apostles amidst the tempest; which converted the Samaritan, and gained St. Paul!

2ND POINT. Consider—the Jews who had been prostrated by the power of Jesus, arise by his permission; but they are not converted. He, who by his word could have annihilated, is satisfied with prostrating his enemies. But instead of repenting, they persevere in their blindness.

O my sweet Jesus, I beseech thee, that the pain I suffer may be a remedy for the evil I have committed, and may preserve me from falling into the eternal punishment of the reprobate.

3RD POINT. "If therefore you seek me, let these go their way." (*John*, xviii. 8.) How consoling to think Jesus interposes himself as a victim between the justice of God and sinners! "My Father," he says, "let thy anger fall upon me, but spare those whom thou hast given me; let not one be lost." "My child, be ready to bear the heaviest burdens, rather than cast them upon others."

## TUESDAY

*Jesus is bound by the Jews.*

1ST POINT. "They took Jesus and bound him." (*John*, xviii. 12.) Whence comes it then that the Son of God is loaded with chains? Is he not the King of kings, and absolute master of the human will? Jesus is bound as a victim, for the salvation of the world. The victim should be bound, lest pain should occasion any natural movement which might cause the sacrifice to appear involuntary; for God will not be served with an unwilling heart. A generous devotedness is alone worthy of him.

O my Saviour! grant that my obedience be always voluntary, and my will always submissive to obedience.

2ND POINT. Jesus is bound by the chains of love. "He loved me and delivered himself for me."

My Divine Jesus, when I behold thee bound, I am filled with horror. It is mercy that has made thee a prisoner, to deliver me from slavery. I give thee thanks. My Master, who alone hast power to bind and unbind, make me a prisoner, in order that I may be free. Disengage me from myself, and unite me inseparably to the cross.

3RD POINT. Jesus would be bound, to console the afflicted. Are *you* in desolation? Call to mind the last sorrowful night that our Lord spent in chains. Are you pressed by temptation? Bind your will with the chains of Jesus, that you may never be separated from him. Are you in humiliation and dependence? Remember that Jesus Christ, to console you, was pleased to suffer vile creatures to deprive him of liberty, forcing him from tribunal to tribunal, manacled as a criminal. O Lord, who would not esteem himself too much honoured to be in bonds with thee?

## WEDNESDAY

*Jesus is led from the Garden of Olives.*

1ST POINT. "And they led him away to Annas first." (*John*, xviii. 13.) Jesus is led forth as a criminal from the garden of Olives, as Adam was driven from the terrestrial Paradise. Were God to trifle with the lives of men, it would not be strange, for he is master of them. But that a vile creature should sport with the person and life of a God, is an unsupportable outrage. And you, how do you treat the Lord of glory? What irreverence in prayer! How little modesty and recollection in thy divine presence, O Lord! What coldness and indifference in receiving thy sacred body, which thou givest with so much love to those who make thee so ungrateful a return!

2ND POINT. "They led him away to Annas first." Who would not be touched by the meekness with which the Son of God suffers himself to be led to death? What he endures from his enemies, and the cords that bind him, is inconceivable. He is reduced to extreme weakness by the agony and loss of blood. Yet, he is driven along with blows and injuries. He bears all without complaint, without resistance, to atone by this painful journey for so many idle and dangerous steps, so many useless visits, and, for the wanderings of your mind and heart. Follow him in spirit. O precious blood, flowing from the feet of my Saviour, efface the stains of my sins.

3RD POINT. "And a certain young man followed him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and they laid hold on him. But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked." (*Mark*, xiv. 51.) To leave all things, that we may preserve the grace of God, is an act of great wisdom. Of all worldly possessions, a winding-sheet alone will accompany us to the tomb; and even that must be abandoned to the moth and the worm. Let us forsake the world before it flees from us. "My child," says the author of the *Imitation*, "renounce all, and you shall find all." (*Imit.*, b. iii. c. 32.)

## THURSDAY

*Jesus enters Jerusalem.*

1ST POINT. Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem by the same gate as on the day of his triumph; but that was an entrance of glory, this of ignominy. In the first he entered as King, when they cried, Hosanna to the Son of David; now he enters as a criminal, while they exclaim, Crucify him. Is it as king, or rather as captive, he enters your heart by the participation of his divine mysteries? Is it to live or die therein?

O Lord, enter as King, in the splendour of thy glory, to commence therein a new life, by triumphing over all my passions and vices.

2ND POINT. Jesus now entering the city, proves the inconstancy of the human mind. Whatever treatment he receives from us, he is still our Redeemer; he never abandons the design of saving us. Be careful to preserve equality of mind under all vicissitudes; be not elated by prosperity, nor dejected in adversity; bless God alike in desolation as in consolation; for God is always the same.

3RD POINT. Whilst Jesus passes through the streets, the people, awaked by the noise, run to behold the spectacle. All are in astonishment. Heretofore considered as a prophet, they now declare him to be a criminal. Jesus suffers this confusion in silence. When will you have courage to receive meekly an affront, although you have power to resent it? It is a glorious victory to yield in argument, and be willing to appear overcome. The honour is due, not to him who would triumph, but to him who can restrain and moderate himself.

O most humble Redeemer! although omnipotent, thou wouldst seem as if weak and infirm; and I, who am impotence itself, desire to display a power that belongeth not to me. Teach me, Lord, true humility of heart.

## FRIDAY

*Jesus is presented to Annas, who sends him to Caiphas.*

1ST POINT. "They led him away to Annas first." (*John*, xviii. 13.) Jesus is presented first to Annas. The divine Redeemer knocks at the door of his heart, secretly reproaching him with his malice and cruelty. Happy had he recognised his Saviour! The pitiable state to which the Man-God is reduced would have touched a heart the most hardened, but he stifles all the sentiments of compassion, he immediately sends his prisoner to Caiphas, who was the high priest of that year. Learn to correspond with fidelity to grace when it is offered; if you trifle with it, it will pass away, and may never return.

2ND POINT. Consider—Caiphas interrogates Jesus concerning his doctrine and his disciples. "Jesus answered him: I have spoken openly to the world, and in secret I have spoken nothing." (*John*, xviii. 20.) Jesus replies regarding his doctrine, but he is silent with respect to his disciples, as he could not commend, neither would he dispraise them. Learn to be silent when you cannot speak to the advantage of your neighbour. Learn, that being a disciple of Jesus, your life should be formed on that sacred model.

Grant, Lord, that my life may be henceforth conformable to thy doctrine; that at the hour of my death thou mayest not be ashamed to acknowledge me for thine own.

3RD POINT. Consider—"One of the servants standing by, gave Jesus a blow." (*John*, xviii. 22.) How astonishing! how cruel, how ignominious, and unjust, the outrage offered to Jesus! Innocence and truth speak by the mouth of a God, whence issue only words of life, and there is found a hand so daring, so impious, as to strike him on the face. Admire the patience and meekness with which Jesus suffers this atrocious insult. He suffers it to efface the shameful stain of original sin. He suffers it to give a signal example of patience, and to teach us the forgiveness of injuries.

O Lord, take from my heart every feeling of resentment that pride and self-love excite therein; and grant that I may embrace for thy glory, the humiliations thou mayest ordain for my sanctification.

## SATURDAY

*Jesus outraged in the house of Caiphaz.*

1ST POINT. "Then did they spit in his face." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 67.) Hitherto the enemies of Jesus had observed some form of justice, but having now condemned him to death, their fury is no longer restrained. They load him with unheard-of outrages, they cover his face with their vile spittle. O glorious Sun of Justice! what storm has covered thee with these thick and foul clouds?—Evil thoughts which thus sully thee, by tarnishing the divine image impressed on my soul—Uncharitable tongue that woundest thy brother, think to whose resemblance he is made. O my Saviour, give me a heart of flame, to love him who has borne such indignities for love of me.

2ND POINT. "And the men that held him, mocked him and struck him." (*Luke*, xxii. 63.) The soldiers and servants of Caiphaz, assembled round Jesus, to mock and insult their prisoner. Now is fulfilled the prediction of the Prophet: "There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him; despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was, as it were, hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows, and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted." (*Isaiah*, liii.)

3RD POINT. "And they blindfolded him, and smote his face. And they asked him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck thee?" (*Luke*, xxii. 64.) The contempt which the Son of God endured all this night, was not the least of his torments. But above all, the foul bandage they placed on his eyes, as if to mock the Eternal Wisdom, was an intolerable insult. These impious men perceive not, that in veiling this divine face, they condemn themselves never to behold it. Bewail also the folly of sinners, who think themselves secure in hiding their crimes under the veil of night, as if they could conceal them from the eyes of him who is the author of light.

## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

*Conversion of Saint Peter.*

1ST POINT. "But Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them. Whom when a certain servant-maid had seen sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said: This man also was with him. But he denied him, saying: Woman, I know him not. And the Lord turning looked on Peter." (*Luke*, xxii.) That look is most powerful, for it raises his courage, animates his hope, and melts his heart into tears of bitter sorrow. It is sweet and gracious, for it spares the confusion of his crime. After such an example of mercy, who shall fear to expose his wounds to so charitable a physician?

2ND POINT. "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as he had said: Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter, going out, wept bitterly." (*Luke*, xxii.) Let us contemplate this miracle of grace, and learn from the tears he sheds how we should weep for our sins. The tears of Peter flow not from fear, but from the love he bears his Master. He weeps bitterly. He needs not to declare his sin, for, as St. Ambrose says, his tears are mute prayers, that merit pardon without asking it.

3RD POINT. Consider—In the spirit of adoration, the designs of Divine Wisdom in the fall and repentance of this great saint. His fall is permitted, to humble his secret pride. He is permitted to fall that he may be more solidly established in fear and love; that he may learn meekness and mercy towards sinners, and that he, who is to be the sovereign pastor of the church, should not refuse to others the pardon he needed himself.

## MONDAY

*Jesus passes the night in prison.*

1ST POINT. Why is the Son of God enclosed in this dungeon? Because he has charged himself with our crimes; the violence of his enemies has prevailed against him, because he has assumed our weakness;—but love is the chief cause. This it was that imprisoned him during nine months in the Virgin's womb; afterwards in the crib of Bethlehem, and in the tabernacle on our altars. It was this which bound him in the Garden of Olives, will shortly enclose him in the sepulchre, and cause him to descend into hell, that he may deliver thence the captive souls.

2ND POINT. “Friend and neighbour thou hast put far from me; and my acquaintance, because of misery.” Jesus is abandoned by his disciples; Peter has denied him; his enemies have confined him in a narrow prison; he is left to the mercy of slaves and servants; he is become as a mark for their cruelty and insolence. Go in spirit to console him in his captivity, in the horror of darkness and under the weight of his fetters. Divine love can force gates of iron, and nothing is impenetrable to him who seeks God in sincerity of heart.

3RD POINT. “I was in prison, and you did not visit me.” (*Matt.*, xxv. 43.) Jesus is still a prisoner: if he suffers not the fetters in his own person, he bears them in his members. You have heard the reproach he will one day make to the rich worldling—“I was in prison,” &c. Beware of appearing before this tribunal devoid of works of charity. Faith suffices not; if you have not charity you are nothing. Amongst the works of mercy, that of visiting the prisoner holds a prominent place. Only visit him in his lonely cell, that you may be taught commiseration for the suffering members of Jesus Christ.

## TUESDAY

*The Jews confirm their sentence against Jesus.*

1ST POINT. "And as soon as it was day, the ancients of the people, and the chief priests and scribes, came together, and they brought him into their council, saying: If thou be the Christ, tell us . . . Who said: You say that I am. And they said: What need we any further testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth. And the whole multitude of them rising up, led him to Pilate." (*Luke*, xxii. 66-70.) The Jews conspire the death of Jesus, but would have him perish by the hands of strangers. Admire the judgments of God, who draws from their crime our advantage and their punishment. Jesus had been promised to the Jews. They received him not but closed their hearts against his graces, their eyes against his sanctity and miracles. O blind and ungrateful of heart! have you so long expected your Messiah, thus to betray him? Have you so ardently desired he should be born of your nation, only to give him over to the infidel?

2ND POINT. "And they brought him bound." (*Matt.*, xxvii.) The only son of God comes forth from the house of Caiphas, and appears in the streets of Jerusalem, bound and manacled, surrounded by officers of justice, followed by the magistrates and a multitude of the people, who look upon him as a seducer, and change the honour they had rendered to him into injuries and opprobrium. Admire the patience and bounty of Jesus, who, with a generous meekness, sustains all these insults for your salvation.

Let us follow Jesus, with Mary, unto the cross; for death itself shall not break the bond that unites their hearts in sufferings and in love.

3RD POINT. "Then they led Jesus from Caiphas to the governor's hall." (*John*, xviii.) The Jews being arrived at the palace of Pilate, deliver unto him their prisoner; but they enter not the house, that they may not contract a legal impurity that would prevent their eating the Paschal victims. Thus treason and vengeance are masked under a pretext of religion. Their souls are charged with fury, their tongues with calumny; and yet they scruple the violation of a legal ceremony! How many are there who thus scruple trifles, while they neglect without

remorse the duties of their state! They will not moisten their tongue in water on their fasts of devotion, yet they make it an instrument to break the law of charity, and wound the feelings and character of their neighbour.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *Jesus interrogated by Pilate.*

1ST POINT. "Pilate, therefore, went into the hall again, and called Jesus, and said to him: Art thou the king of the Jews?" (*John*, xviii.) The governor having heard the accusations of the Jews, re-enters the pretorium, and interrogates Jesus. "Art thou," he says, "king of the Jews?" Jesus displays an equal wisdom in his silence and in his replies. "Sayest thou this thing of thyself," he says, "or have others told it thee of me?" Do my poverty and humility give any cause of umbrage to Cæsar? Pilate, admiring the modesty and meekness of Jesus, replies: "Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee up to me: what hast thou done?" (*John*, xviii.) O judge, didst thou know him to whom thou puttest this question, thou wouldst not interrogate him on unjust allegations, but thou wouldst accuse thyself before him. Thou demandest what he has done. O Pilate! it is a secret above thy comprehension. He has created the heavens and the earth; thou thyself art the work of his hands. Wouldst thou know what he hath done? Interrogate the demoniacs whom he hath delivered, the sick whom he hath cured, the dead he hath resuscitated.

2ND POINT. "Pilate saith to him: What is truth?" (*John*, xviii.) Though truth is nigh to us, yet, like Pilate, we see it not. It speaks to us interiorly, but we are deaf to its voice. Why do we not see it? Because we will not. Love is the eye of the heart; we are unwilling to see what we do not love. We see truth as we do lightning, closing our eyes and trembling with fear. Why do we not listen to it? Because it flatters us not. It does not conceal or dissemble our faults, but confounds and terrifies

by its reproaches; and since Truth itself was nailed to the cross, all Christian truths are crucifying. Lord: send forth thy light and thy truth, to lead me securely to thy holy mountain, and to the splendour of thy glory.

3RD POINT. Pilate says to the Jews: "I find no cause in him." (*John*, xviii.) The enemies of Jesus exhaust their malice in defaming him, his innocence is proclaimed by all creatures. Judas declares he has betrayed just blood; Pilate washes his hands, protesting he is innocent of it; his wife conjures him to do nothing against this just man; the good thief acknowledges the divinity of Jesus, while he accuses himself; the pagan centurion, seeing the manner in which the God-man dies, exclaims: Truly this was a just man. Even inanimate nature miraculously deposes in favour of his innocence. Give yourself with a generous devotedness to God, and he will watch over your reputation. He is jealous of the glory of his friends. If you can say, with Jesus: I seek not my own glory, be assured that God will take care of your interests; you shall lose nothing by consigning them into his hands.

Create in me, O Jesus, a pure heart! Thou, through whose innocence alone we are purified from every stain.

## THURSDAY

*Jesus observes a profound silence before Pilate.*

1ST POINT. "When he was accused he answered nothing." (*Matt.*, xxvii.) He needs no defence. It belongs to him who fears being overcome, to vindicate himself. His very judge absolves before he condemns him; and we may say that his silence is the triumph of his innocence. When do I suffer an unjust accusation without excuse—suppressing, not only complaints, but even a just defence? This is a rare virtue, that all admire, but few practise.

2ND POINT. "But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate wondered." (*Mark*, xv.) Amongst all the miracles that the Son of God wrought in proof of his divinity, his patience was the most signal. Such a patience is a characteristic of the Divinity, and by it the Jews might easily have recognized that of Jesus Christ. O what a grace! What a favour from God! to endure an affront, a calumny, a sensible injury, without complaint, murmur, or defence! This is truly a greater grace than to resuscitate the dead, or work the most stupendous miracles.

3RD POINT. Jesus, who gives speech to the dumb, and makes the tongues of children eloquent, observes a profound silence when he is accused. Silence must be a virtue very precious in his esteem, since being the Incarnate Wisdom he yet fears not to expose his life to preserve it. This divine Master teaches us by his example, that it is prudence to be silent, when we treat with persons who will not listen to reason, or who are warm in contesting, for then our advice or justification is useless. He who guards his tongue preserves his soul. It is difficult to speak much without committing many faults. The virtue of silence attracts God into the soul.

O Jesus! teach me to speak and to be silent.

## FRIDAY

*Jesus is mocked by Herod.*

1ST POINT. "And Herod, with his army, set him at nought, and mocked him, putting on him a white garment, and sent him back to Pilate." (*Luke*, xxiii. 11.) Herod, disappointed by the silence of Jesus, revenges himself by treating him with mockery and scorn. He sends him back clothed in a white robe, showing that he regarded him not as a criminal, but as a fool. The adorable Saviour suffers with invincible meekness the taunts and scoffs they cast upon him, to teach you to trample on the spirit of the world.

2ND POINT. Admire and adore your Redeemer under this mysterious garb. He teaches you that the grandeur to which he aspires is not the false grandeur of this world, which is but vanity; it is the sublimity of the cross, where he will perform at once the office of king and of sovereign pontiff, to accomplish the work of our redemption. This should be the object of your ambition; the cross and your salvation; the cross for salvation, and salvation by the cross; the cross, to be like unto Jesus crucified; salvation, to be like unto Jesus glorified.

3RD POINT. The Eternal Father thinks on the glory of his Son, and the Son on the salvation of man, whilst man offends him by contempt. Adam had lost the robe of innocence, together with that of immortality, Jesus recovers the former in the court of Herod, the latter in the pretorium of Pilate. He restores to you innocence and immortality, but on condition that you preserve the first until death. Beware of appearing before him without this robe at the day of your death. Live holily, in order to die happily; live in the fear of God, that you may die in his love; live in his grace, that you may enter after death into the glory of his elect.

## SATURDAY

*The efforts of Pilate to deliver Jesus.*

1ST POINT. "Pilate, calling together the chief priests, and the magistrates, and the people, said to them: You have presented unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people, and behold I, having examined him before you, find no cause in this man in those things wherein you accuse him. No, nor Herod neither." (*Luke*, xxiii. 13.) Pilate seeing Jesus return, was on one side glad, because this reciprocal deference of Herod was a commencement of their reconciliation; but he is again perplexed at being obliged either to oppose the cruelty of the Jews, or to act against his conscience. The violence with which they pursue defenceless innocence, excites his compassion. Draw instructions from his example. Have pity on the destitute and abandoned poor. On the prisoner who pines in his dungeon. On the bashful poor, who suffer in silence the extremity of want. On the sick, who languish without succour or consolation. On the virtuous, who are persecuted for justice' sake. Have pity on sinners, and implore their conversion. But, above all, have pity on your own soul; and if you are merciful towards others, be not cruel to yourself.

2ND POINT. Pilate leading forth Barabbas from prison, and Jesus from the pretorium, presents both to the people, saying: "Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus, that is called Christ?" (*Matt.*, xxvii. 17.) The only Son of God is compared with an infamous murderer. Barabbas finds protectors and Jesus finds none. Jesus, the advocate and consoler of the afflicted! Human judgment bestows pardon to the robber, and the cross to the Saviour. Of this we are daily guilty; for when we yield to the suggestions of passion, we prefer Barabbas to Jesus.

O increated Wisdom and eternal Truth! redress my judgment and correct my thoughts.

3RD POINT. "What shall I do then with Jesus, that is called Christ? They say all: Let him be crucified." (*Matt.*, xxvii. 22.) How merciful art thou, O God. This murderous cry is a great crime in the Jews, but a great grace for us. What would the death of Barabbas have availed us, whose blood could efface no stain from our souls? But the blood of Jesus can wash away all the sins of the world.

## THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

*Jesus is condemned to be scourged.*

1ST POINT. "Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him." (*John*, xix.) Pilate, who has not courage to sustain justice, would at least preserve its form. He ascends his tribunal to pronounce sentence. Jesus receives it standing, with profound humility, and, by his silence, acquiesces in what he regards as proceeding from the lips of his eternal Father. The dignity of the divine person shines forth through all the obloquy that overwhelms him. With reverence he says: O my Father! I am ready to receive the scourge from whatever hand thou art pleased to ordain. Is your heart like that of Jesus, submissive to the orders of God? Are you ready to receive from the hand of this good Father whatever he pleases?

2ND POINT. In the pretorium of Pilate the Man-God becomes a spectacle to angels and men, naked as a worm of the earth, exposed to the laughter of a vile populace. An excess of mercy has despoiled him, that he may clothe us with the grace and virtue, which we lost in paradise. Fly sin, which alone can deprive you of them.

3RD POINT. Jesus would animate us by his example, to the combat, not against a visible enemy, but with spirits replete with artifice and malice. Therefore it is necessary that we strip ourselves of the old Adam, that is, our perverse inclinations, which are the weapons they use against us. Fear not to renounce the pleasures, honours, or consolations of the world, which are only an occasion of sin. Say, with the victorious martyrs whom the tyrant had stripped to plunge into a frozen lake: "We give thee thanks, divine Redeemer, for this opportunity of cancelling our sins in casting off these garments."

## MONDAY

*Jesus is bound at the pillar, and cruelly scourged.*

1ST POINT. "Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged him." (*John*, xix.) "Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted." (*Isaiah*, liii.) He hath voluntarily exposed himself to the fury of his enemies that by the excess of his sufferings he may manifest the infinitude of his love. O my soul! adore these wounds of love. Consider how valuable thy soul must be in the esteem of Jesus. The Holy of Holies is scourged for the impious; the just for the guilty; innocence itself for crime.

2ND POINT. Consider—"O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." (*Lam.*) Approach the pillar, ungrateful and insensible soul, and behold how this innocent Lamb is mangled, who hath committed no crime, but hath taken upon him the chastisement due to thy offences, that thou mayest be pardoned. They tear his skin, they open all his veins, they pluck his hair, they break his nerves, they penetrate his very bowels, the ground is strewn with his sacred flesh, and saturated with his blood. Jesus silently weeps, whilst his sacred body is lacerated by the cruel scourge. He says not, it is enough: he would suffer still more were it necessary, to obtain your salvation, and touch your heart. If Jesus has so many enemies who persecute and outrage him, shall he find no one to console him?

3RD POINT. "He was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed." (*Isaiah*, liii. 5.) It is our sins that rend his flesh, and make his body a universal wound, because of our unbounded malice and corruption. O Christian! behold this bleeding body, sustained by miracle amid the excess of violence; in his wounds as in so many mirrors, contemplate the multitude and deformity of thy sins.

O infinitely merciful Redeemer, I have sinned, and thou hast borne the penalty! If thou complainest not of thy executioners, thou mayest complain of me—my evil thoughts, uncharitable words, and unworthy actions. My God, my offences pierce thee to the heart, the chastisements thy mercy imparts to me carry balm to the wound which they inflict.

## TUESDAY

*Jesus suffering at the pillar.*

1ST POINT. "I will chastise him therefore, and let him go." (*Luke*, xxiii. 22.) The scourge is the punishment of slaves, and Jesus is the only Son of God; why then shall he suffer so degrading a punishment? We fly confusion; few suffer contempt with a truly Christian humility. Subjection is opposed to our self-judgment and will; it is with difficulty we submit and make a sacrifice of them. Pain renders us impatient. St. Paul says, that no one hates his body and mortifies his flesh, without doing violence to nature. This violence, nevertheless, is necessary for all those who would serve God and labour for their sanctification.

2ND POINT. Pilate "having scourged Jesus, delivered him unto them!" (*Matt.*, xxvii. 26.) It is charity that has stripped, bound, and wounded him, and this charity should, after his example, bind, wound, and strip you of all attachment to creatures, and love of yourself. Draw near the pillar to which Jesus is fastened. It is the standard of his love, the throne of his mercy, which enlightens devoted souls.

O my Master, who will give me to suffer something for thee? Let the continual mortification of my senses be the pillar to which I shall fasten my body, to render it submissive to the spirit.

3RD POINT. Jesus despoiled of his garments teaches you to walk by a naked faith, and to support the privation of interior light when it is withdrawn. This is difficult! God alone is your protector, your support, and the centre of all your hopes. These bleeding wounds, which the scourge has inflicted on his sacred body, demonstrate that there cannot be love without suffering, and suffering cannot be supported without love.

Adorable spouse of perfect souls, when shall I be so united to thee, that every thought and feeling may be referred to thee alone?

## WEDNESDAY

*Jesus is unbound from the pillar.*

1ST POINT. Then Pilate, "having scourged Jesus, delivered him unto them." (*Matt.*, xxvii.) Now is fulfilled that description of the prophet: "From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no sound part." He is become as a "leper," from the multitude of his wounds. He is given up for a time to the power of Satan, who exercises on him his infernal fury. Take courage, afflicted soul, be not dismayed; though all hell unite in persecuting you, they can do nothing but as God permits, and he will permit only that which is for your good.

2ND POINT. Jesus, the sanctity of God, becomes the victim of sinners. Contemplate him covered in his blood, and so exhausted with pain that it is with difficulty he rises from the ground. His sufferings are alone surpassed by his mercies. It is this gives me confidence to approach thee, O Lord and gather in the vessel of my heart this precious blood so profusely shed. O Father of mercies, "look upon the face of thy Christ," who offers for me a sacrifice of atonement. O God! I ask in his name what I cannot merit.

3RD POINT. Jesus prays both for his friends and enemies. We must love him, if we desire to participate in the fruit of his prayer. Behold the pitiable condition to which his love for you, and the desire of attracting your love, have reduced him. Consider how much he has loved you, even to the shedding of his blood and expiring on a cross.

O Jesus, so great is the love thou bearest me, thy only ambition seems to be, to restore me to life by thy own suffering and death.

## THURSDAY

*Jesus is clothed with a robe of mockery.*

1ST POINT. "And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him." (*Matt.*, xxvii. 28.) Contemplate the Son of the living God in this doubly dyed robe of purple with which the soldiers clothe him. Their intention is to insult, while the Holy Spirit shadows forth a profound mystery—Jesus is king of heaven and earth, of Jew and gentile; king both as God and man.

O King of glory! I adore thee in thy humiliation, as in the splendour of thy majesty.

2ND POINT. The soldiers join insult to cruelty. In stripping Jesus of his clothes, the flesh is torn off, and his wounds opened once more. They are insolent, in casting on him a vile purple garment, deriding him as a mock king. This God of armies has chosen a new manner of warfare. Men in combat endeavour to wound their enemies and defend themselves; he, on the contrary, displays his strength in bearing the stripes to save those who wound him.

3RD POINT. "They put on him a purple garment." (*John*, xix. 2.) Behold the most glorious conqueror, walking in the power of his majesty! Others are strong in the multitude of their soldiers, but Jesus is victorious by the multitude of his wounds. His arms are silence, humility, prayers, tears.

The kingdom he promises as the fruit of your combats is not of this world; but you must combat in this world.

O Jesus, who knowest my weakness, grant that the remembrance of thy wounds may strengthen me in all difficulties.

## FRIDAY

*Jesus is crowned with thorns.*

1ST POINT. "And the soldiers plating a crown of thorns, put it upon his head." (*John*, xix. 2.) Why do these silent tears mingle with that stream of blood which gushes from his brow? Recall the hours devoted to pride and vain glory—remember the sins which ought to have made you the scorn of all creatures, they will proclaim to you, that he could not become your representative without being covered with confusion before God and man. That crown also teaches that Jesus has taken upon himself, the continued cares and pains of our life, that we may, without disquietude devote ourselves to his service. O sacred thorns, pierce my insensible heart with a true feeling of the dolours of my Master and my King.

2ND POINT. "If, indeed, you mean to make me king, come ye and rest under my shadow." (*Judges*, ix. 15.) Let us, then, take refuge under the shadow of his thorns. We shall there find security against temptation, and repose in all our difficulties. Jesus makes choice of a crown, not of flowers, but of thorns. How shameful would it be to see delicate members under a thorn-crowned head.

3RD POINT. The majesty of Jesus Christ is hidden under thorns. You must pass through these in order to find him. If peril menace, if temptation press, make this thorn-crowned head your shield. Are you tempted by vanity? Do the senses allure? Let your rebellious passions feel the point of these thorns. Have recourse to Jesus in all your pains.

Let the fire of thy divine love consume in me the thorns of sin. Then shall all the powers of my soul bless thee, O divine Lamb, who takest away the sins of the world!

## SATURDAY

*Jesus bears a reed instead of a sceptre.*

1ST POINT. "And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand." (*Matt.*, xxvii.) The soldiers present a reed to the Son of God, in mockery of his empire, which they esteem imaginary and vain. They wish to exhibit him as king of fools. Yet this is the sceptre which has subdued the haughtiness of the proud, and crushed them as earthen vessels. It is in appearance a weak reed agitated by the winds. But its strength is invincible, and its duration eternal.

2ND POINT. Nothing is more frail than man; he is a withered leaf, that the least wind casts upon the earth; he is an infirm reed, that every breath of temptation prostrates. Beg of Jesus, who is the virtue of the eternal Father, and the power of his arm, to take you under his protection, and govern you according to his will. In subduing the power of our enemy, he has strengthened our weakness, quickened our courage, and rendered us invincible to all the efforts of hell.

3RD POINT. "They took the reed, and struck his head." (*Matt.*, xxvii. 30.) Your levity and inconstancy are like the reed which Jesus bears in his hand, because he suffers the pain and confusion of it for your deliverance. The soldiers place the reed in his hand, and then taking it, strike him on the head. It is of this you are guilty, when having consecrated your soul, your judgment, your will, your inclinations to God, you so soon retract. You form good purposes in prayer, and you forget them the next hour. You resolve to moderate your tongue, to repress your anger, to be exact in your duties, yet, on the first occasion, you fail.

O good Jesus! thou hast mercifully taken upon thyself my weakness, that thou wouldst impart to me thy strength!

## FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

*The soldiers bending the knee before Jesus, salute him in mockery, as King of the Jews.*

1ST POINT. "And bowing the knee before him they mocked him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews." (*Matt.*, xxvii. 29.) Behold the king of eternal glory scoffed by an insolent rabble! And yet, O patient Lord, you show no mark of indignation.

O Jesus, my King and my God! I will love only thee, and seek but thy glory. In acknowledgment for all thy favours, and that patience with which thou hast borne so much contempt for love of me, I sacrifice myself and all that is most dear to me.

2ND POINT. "They did spit on him." (*Mark*, xv. 19.) See their foul spittle mingled with his sacred blood. And striking his sacred head, they force the thorns deeper into his wounded brow. Contemplate this man of sorrows. Raise your thoughts to the sacred heart of Jesus, and admire the intense charity with which he suffers so much for such ungrateful creatures. Acknowledge the share you have had in the torments of Jesus. Never lose the remembrance of them, nor of your own sins, which have reduced him to so pitiable a condition.

3RD POINT. Look again upon that crown. Is there no throb of pity in your ungenerous heart? His brow is blue and livid from the blows he has received, red with his blood, stained with the verdure of the reed, and fouled with spittle. Be not so cruel as to renew his dolours by sin. You wound him by your idle and vain thoughts, your desire of honour, your solicitude about earthly things, your curiosity in what regards not your own duties, and above all, by your tepidity.

Pardon, O divine Redeemer! all the opprobrium and sorrow that I have hitherto caused thee to suffer. O Jesus, let one drop of this precious blood fall upon my callous heart, to purify it!

## MONDAY

*“Jesus came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and purple garment; and Pilate saith to them: ‘Behold the Man.’”*  
(*John, xix. 5.*)

1ST POINT. Pilate, desiring to soften the fury of the Jews, leads Jesus forth, his head crowned with thorns, his face swollen with blows and fouled with spittle, all his members bleeding and trembling. Then raising the purple robe, and exposing his naked body, all torn and covered with wounds, he says to them, with mingled pity and contempt: “Behold the Man.”

O Jesus, I behold thee a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Thou wouldst be treated thus, to save me from that confusion which I have cause to fear.

2ND POINT. “Behold the Man.” Thus the Eternal Father discovers to men his mercy, his justice, and their malice. See in this sacred body, covered with wounds, the state of thy soul. These thorns, this reed, this spittle, this blood, these mortal wounds, are a figure of the crimes with which thy soul has been stained. Behold him who is to judge me, and who will one day appear in his majesty as he is now meek in his humiliation. He will then judge those who now judge and despise him.

3RD POINT. “Behold the Man.” Jesus is the head of the blessed in heaven, and also of those who are still pilgrims upon earth. He is one and the same head; but he shows himself differently to each. He manifests himself to the blessed, crowned with glory, that they may be like unto him. He manifests himself to the pilgrim, crowned with thorns, that he may become the imitator of his sufferings. What a reproach! He embraces ignominy, and we desire honour and esteem. He assumes the cross and thorns, and we love our own ease. Instead of walking in his path, we go by a way quite opposite, without considering where it leads.

O Father of mercies, look upon the face of thy divine Son, and in consideration of his wounds, blot out my sins.

## TUESDAY

*“Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made; taking water, washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it.”* (Matt., xxvii. 24.)

1ST POINT. Consider—“Then, therefore, he delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him forth.” (*John*, xix. 16) The executioners seize Jesus as a man abandoned to their power. This meek lamb makes no resistance, because the same love that brought him down from heaven, obliges him to suffer! With what sorrow does the Blessed Virgin behold her divine Son receive the sentence of death, and see him seized by his enemies, in sight of all the people! She saw Pilate wash his hands, and heard the fatal imprecation of the Jews! Her maternal heart is agonized. She is unable to afford him aid!

2ND POINT. “They took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments.” (*Matt.*, xxvii. 31.) The pain is sensible, but the confusion is still greater. The Holy Ghost would teach us by this mystery, that to suffer and bear the cross with Jesus, we must be stripped, like him, of all worldly affections, which is a strange robe, and be clothed in the divine love and grace. But observe, he does not remove the thorny crown. Imitate your Saviour, in bearing during time the crown of thorns, if you will bear that of glory in eternity.

3RD POINT. “And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary.” (*John*, xix. 17.) At length Jesus comes forth from the pretorium, and descends the steps of the palace; at a little distance the cross is laid upon him. It is the altar on which he is to be immolated as the victim, not of the temple but of the world. It is the throne of his love, the instrument of his mercies, the trophy of his victories, which he has chosen from eternity. It is the magnet which has attracted him from heaven, as the cherished object of his desires, and the end of all his labours.

O Victim of love, I have nothing to offer on this thy altar, but I will at least come to supplicate before it. It will be a consolation, to think that I have chosen it as the centre of my repose on earth.

## WEDNESDAY

*Jesus carries his Cross.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary." (*John*, xix. 17.) Jesus bears the wood of torture, which is a great ignominy; but he changes it into a royal sceptre which the monarchs of the earth shall one day adore. He walks as a criminal with two thieves, and holds the lowest rank as the most guilty. He, the Holy of Holies, is associated with robbers, and he disdains not their company; but looks upon them with an eye of love. Jesus does not despise sinners, he bears them in his heart and in his thoughts, and desires that they should come to him.

2ND POINT. This divine Victim, like the good shepherd, bears us with his cross upon his shoulders. This loving Father is not content with carrying our sins, he also bears our miseries; and exhibits a miracle of strength, patience, and love, to comfort and encourage us.

Have confidence, Jesus bears you on his shoulders. Fear not, he is strong enough to carry your cross; and if he desires that you carry it with him, he will supply you with fortitude and courage.

3RD POINT. Consider—Our King walking before us. Behold the model. We must imitate it. Some reject the cross; some bear it willingly; some with cowardice, hardly raising it from the earth; and there are some who bear it generously. Be persuaded that every one meets the cross, even those who reject it. The cross, without our crucified Jesus, is hard; it is an evil without consolation or fruit. But with Jesus it is a sweet and gentle yoke; a burden which grace renders not only light but pleasant.

## THURSDAY

*Jesus aided by Simon in carrying the Cross.*

1ST POINT. "And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon: him they forced to take up his cross." (*Matt.*, xxvii.) The executioners, with brutal fury, drag their unresisting victim towards Calvary. The weight of the cross presses his lacerated flesh even to the bone. At length he falls under this insupportable burden, and suffers the insolence of the soldiers, who, by their stripes, would force him to arise. Complain not that you are overcharged with labour; do all in your power. Be consoled by the example of Jesus Christ, who suffers unpitied, who labours for the salvation of all, meeting only ingratitude.

My suffering Saviour, my ungenerous heart shrinks from the least labour in thy service. Change my vain fear into an invincible courage.

2ND POINT. "They laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him." (*Luke*, xxiii.) The Jews, urged rather by cruelty than compassion, relieve Jesus from the weight of the cross. He is visibly fainting and they yield him this succour only to prolong his torture. As Jesus refuses not the burden that overwhelms him, neither does he reject the aid that prolongs his sufferings. Is it in this spirit you either mortify your body or afford it relaxation? Do you grant it repose only to prepare it for *greater labour*? Are you not too indulgent to yourself, and too austere towards your brethren?

3RD POINT. The cross being an object of malediction with the Jews, which they avoid with horror, a stranger whom they meet on the way to Calvary is constrained to carry the cross of Jesus. Jesus will have us bear the cross after him, if we will reign with him. We love not the cross, without continual violence to the inclinations of nature; God is so good, he would attract our hearts by a happy necessity; therefore he sends us sickness, disgrace, afflictions, and desolation, that he may force us to seek our salvation, notwithstanding our corrupt will. The world says, when its votaries quit its service to consecrate themselves to God, that disappointment alone has determined their choice; but though it were so, O happy disappointment! which engages them in the divine service, and thereby procures

for them that spirit of love which sweetens the yoke of Christ, which before had appeared so heavy.

My sweet Jesus, give me not that which is pleasing to me, but that which is agreeable to thee. Possess my heart, change my will and force my rebellious desires.

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## FRIDAY

*Jesus is led to Calvary.*

1ST POINT. "And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary." (*John*, xix. 17.) It is not difficult to find the way by which he goes to Calvary, which is the true way to salvation. He has traced it with his blood, that everywhere he passes he may leave you sensible marks of his love. You journey towards eternity—what are the traces you leave in the way? Are they those of piety, charity, obedience, mortification, humility? Are you not like unto those worldlings who run thoughtlessly to an unhappy end? Do you leave only marks of dissipation, and irregularity in religious observance? If so, you can hope for no other portion than theirs. O fatal portion! unhappy lot! which, to avoid a momentary mortification, plunges you into an abyss of woe, from whence you can never come forth!

2ND POINT. "And there followed him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him." (*Luke*, xxiii. 27.) Whilst Jesus goes to be immolated for us on Calvary, marking the way with his blood, many follow, but few compassionate his sorrows. A woman named Veronica presents a linen veil to wipe his sacred face. Some weep, through compassion natural to their sex. Our Divine Lord requites these charitable offices. We cannot doubt that, in leaving the divine impression of his countenance on the veil of Veronica, he imprinted it more deeply in her heart.

My crucified Redeemer! Grant me that perfect contrition which will so deeply imprint thy sufferings on my heart.

3RD POINT. The salutary lesson which Jesus gives to the other women in recompense of their devotion. He turns to

them, saying: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. He does not forbid them to weep over his passion—it is worthy of an ocean of tears—but he admonishes them to weep for their sins, the cause of his torments, and for the dreadful chastisements with which they are menaced. It is true that we often weep for others when we should weep for ourselves. We weep over the evils of the body, and not for those of the soul. You weep for the sufferings of Jesus—that is good; but you are not sufficiently sensible of your own miseries. Alas! if the Son of God is so treated, what shall the torments of the damned be?

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## SATURDAY

### *Jesus arrives at Calvary.*

1ST POINT. “And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary.” (*Matt.*, xxvii. 33.) Behold the place where the Son of God triumphs over the powers of darkness, and restores man to liberty. It is the centre of the world. It is a place the most elevated in Judea. It is a place of public infamy, exposed to the view of all, because Jesus would there teach us the value of humility, and the love he bears it. He hides himself in a stable when he is to be adored by angels and kings; but when he is to die on a gibbet, he chooses a place the most calculated to publish his ignominy. O how contrary is the spirit of Jesus to that of the world!

2ND POINT. “And they gave him wine to drink, mingled with gall; and when he had tasted, he would not drink.” (*Matt.*, xxvii. 34.) Whilst Jesus prepares for us a heavenly banquet, sinners, in return, offer him wine mingled with gall. Jesus would taste this bitter mixture, that no sense might remain free from suffering, to atone for the gluttony of Adam, and leave to his children a remedy for that sensuality unworthy or a Christian, and much more of a religious; to teach us to mortify ourselves, and in our repasts to remember the gall which he tasted, and that of our sins, which was much more bitter to him.

3RD POINT. Jesus is stripped of his clothes for the fourth time. They first stripped to scourge him, his robe cleaved to his skin from his sweat of blood. The second time, when they took off his own robe to cover him with the purple, it adhered to his wounds, which were then torn anew. Again, when they tore off the purple, and put on his own clothes, to lead him to Calvary. But the last time, when they stripped him for the cross, the pain and confusion were extreme; the pain, because his robe was pressed into the flesh by the weight of the cross; the confusion, because it was in presence of an immense multitude, who ran in crowds to this spectacle. Jesus would suffer this confusion, to expiate the audacity with which we deliberately offend him; to restore to us sanctifying grace, which is the royal purple of his elect; to console the poor, and to animate us in serving him in his suffering members.

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## PASSION SUNDAY

### *The Crucifixion of Jesus.*

1ST POINT. "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified him there." (*Luke*, xxiii. 33.) Jesus being stripped of his garments, in obedience to the executioners, lays himself on the cross, offering his hands and feet, which they place on the holes of the cross. The first takes the right hand, and applying a gross nail, drives it with strokes of the hammer, through the flesh into the wood, opening a fountain of blood. The second, drawing violently the left hand, to the hole prepared in the cross, dislocates all the bones: then piercing it like the former, a new stream of blood issues from this wound. The two others taking each a foot, draw them in like manner, extending the nerves which the pain of the former wounds had contracted. They make, at once, two cruel wounds, whence flows this precious and divine balm, which is the remedy of all our evils. Dwell on the torture which our Lord endures. Admire his silence, and see how he offers himself as a victim for the sins of the world.

2ND POINT. "They crucified him there." Behold an inconceivable increase of pain to the Son of the living God. Being

nailed to the cross, they raise it with cords, and with a sudden shock let it fall into the cavity prepared in the rock, fastening it with stakes. This adorable body of Jesus, suspended by its wounds, and sustained only by three nails, is shaken and dislocated at every moment. The arms bend under the weight, the feet are torn. In this state Jesus appears to the eyes of the multitude, who only distinguish him from the thieves by his crown of thorns, his wounded body, and by the title of the cross. This infuriated rabble renew their vociferations, hardening their hearts to a spectacle that should dissolve them in tears. His agonizing mother feels, in every pang, a thrust of the sword of sorrow which was predicted for her; yet by a miracle of fortitude, she stands unmoved, exposed as a mark to all the shafts of the wrath of God, and the cruelty of man. Contemplate how she imitates her Divine Son. He is erect, and so is she: He is elevated in body, she in heart: He is the father of the elect, and she performs the office of mother.

O afflicted mother, grant I may share with you in the sorrows of your Son.

3RD POINT. "They divided his garments." (*Mark*, xv. 24.) The soldiers took his garments, of which they made four parts, one for each soldier—they did not divide the tunic because it was without seam—that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says, "They divided my garments, and on my vesture they cast lots."

O Jesus! how great is thy love of holy poverty! He had only a cloak and seamless robe, and of these he would be despoiled before his death.

## MONDAY

*The title of the Cross.*

1ST POINT. "And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." (*John*, xix. 19.) Pilate writes this inscription, but it is God dictates it. Whatever might be the intention of the judge, in the designs of Providence it is to show forth the glory of the crucified and the enormous crime of the crucifiers.

O Jesus, King of glory! when the multitude in the desert would make you king, you fly to avoid the honour; and now that this title is given in ignominy, you receive it with meekness. If you will make Jesus your king, love contempt and sufferings.

2ND POINT. "This title, therefore, many of the Jews did read." (*John*, xix. 20.) It exalts the glory of Jesus above his ignominy. Never was title read by so many, and understood by so few. Range yourself under the standard of your king, engrave his laws in your soul; he will powerfully protect you in life and in death.

O Incarnate Word, thy infinite greatness merits adoration. Thou hast humbled thyself even to the death of the cross, and thy Father in recompense hath given thee a name above all names.

3RD POINT. Pilate answered: "What I have written, I have written." (*John*, xix. 22.) Divine Wisdom makes this obstinacy serve to the glory of Jesus and for our instruction. It teaches us to observe faithfully the promises we make to God. It teaches us also to persevere until death in the pursuit of our perfection. Whither tend all the actions of our lives, if not to the kingdom of heaven, which is eternal?

O most sweet Jesus! I beseech you by your most bitter sufferings on the cross, to have mercy on me!

## TUESDAY

*Jesus prays for his enemies.*

1ST POINT. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (*Luke*, xxiii. 34.) It is the prayer of a dying God; the first words he utters after he is elevated on the cross, before he thinks of his mother, his friends, or himself. My Saviour, in what do you employ the first and most grievous moments of your agony on the cross? In prayer, for your implacable enemies; and it is with an intense fervour you plead their cause. Father, look upon thy Son, listen to the voice of his blood demanding mercy for his brethren.

O most amiable Redeemer, thou art truly a God of love, since thy charity has no bounds.

2ND POINT. What consolation should not a weak and fearful soul feel in these sweet and charitable words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If the hope of a Christian rests on the power and mercy of God, both wonderfully meet in the prayer of Jesus. Having only his eyes and tongue free, he weeps and prays for his crucifiers. Thus would the Son of God excuse his enemies, and appease the wrath of his Father. Can any one lose confidence, having with God so favourable an intercessor? If Jesus Christ excuses, who shall accuse us?

3RD POINT. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If you feel a difficulty in forgiving an injury, think for a moment who he is that prays? Who he is that is fastened to the cross. Compare yourself with him. Who are you that would resent an injury? You say the offence offered to you is too great. Behold that which he receives. Listen to the words of a dying God. Are your sentiments and expressions conformable to his?

O Lord, grant that I may participate in the divine prayer thou didst offer for thy enemies.

## WEDNESDAY

*Jesus converts the Thief.*

1ST POINT. Jesus agonizing on the cross prepares for us a powerful remedy in his blood; he would prove on the good thief how efficacious its virtue, how salutary its effect. It impresses the dying criminal with a faith penetrating and lively. He believes in Jesus Christ naked on the cross, when the Jews crucified and the Pharisees blasphemed him; when the apostles wavered in their faith. It fills him with confidence. It enkindles in his heart a most ardent charity, a profound humility, heroic patience, and sincere contrition. How far are we from the sanctity of this penitent sinner!

2ND POINT. Consider—The liberality of Jesus Christ towards the good thief. This humble penitent asks only a remembrance, and he offers him a kingdom. “Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.” (*Luke*, xxiii. 43.) How good a master do we serve? He is silent when they load him with maledictions; and as soon as he hears the cry of affliction, he responds with mercy to its prayer. Are you thus forgetful of yourself when the wants of the suffering members of Christ demand your care? What sacrifices do you make for the salvation of souls? “Dispose yourself as a good and faithful servant of Jesus, to bear courageously the cross of your master.” (*Imitat.* b. ii. c. 12.) All must bear the cross. The saints, the penitent, the reprobate, all bear it, but in a different manner. The saints carry it with love; penitents with resignation; the reprobate with impatience and despair. The cross of the saints augments their merit; that of penitents expiates their crimes; that of the reprobate commences their hell in this life. We adore the cross of Jesus, we honour that of the saints and penitents. The cross of the reprobate only brings eternal confusion. Choose which you will, and if you deserve not to carry the cross of the innocent, at least take up generously that of the penitent. The way of the cross is that alone which leads to Paradise.

3RD POINT. How important it is for salvation to make good use of grace. The good thief gives us an example. Had he suffered that grace to escape, he could never have recovered it. Who would not fear, seeing that of two criminals but one is

saved. They have both the same Redeemer. The same blood is shed for their ransom. Both have the same example of patience. Yet one is lost whilst the other is saved.

Adorable Saviour, being so liberal, whence comes it that so few seek thee? I desire to enter into thy treasures, and to enrich myself with their merits.

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## THURSDAY

### *Jesus prays on the Cross.*

1ST POINT. "And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour." (*Mark*, xv. 33.) It is not surprising that the world should seem returning to its primeval chaos, when death was about to close the eyes of its Creator. The splendour of the sun is but his gift: should it not therefore be eclipsed when his perfections seem as it were annihilated—Christ's wisdom is hidden under the folly of the cross, his strength under weakness, his glory under opprobrium, his innocence under the appearance of guilt, and his immortality under the horrors of death? The moral darkness of human infidelity, is still more general and more profound than that which veils the face of nature. It would seem that with few exceptions, fidelity is enclosed within the heart of Mary. Contemplate the soul of this Mother of sorrows under the cross of her divine Son.

O holy Virgin! beseech your divine Son, that the light of his spirit may never be extinguished in my soul.

2ND POINT. Jesus imposes silence on his enemies. He covers Calvary with an awful obscurity, so that the Jews terrified by the prodigy, may leave him in a repose suited to the sanctity and importance of the action. Every occasion of suffering is a sacrifice God demands: that you may offer it with the respect due to his infinite majesty, recollect yourself, stifle every murmur. Let your heart alone speak to God, and conceal, if possible, from creatures, whatever you may have to endure.

3RD POINT. Consider—what passes in the sacred heart of Jesus, during these three hours of silence and prayer. The

Blessed Virgin standing by the cross passes these three hours of darkness and silence in continual prayer, accompanied by tears of intense anguish, offering to God the bleeding sacrifice of her beloved Son.

My holy angel, obtain for me one of those tears which my expiring Saviour shed upon the cross, to mitigate the mortal agony and terrifying apprehensions that my poor heart may have to undergo at the hour of dissolution. Pray, also, that the holy Virgin would favour me in that dangerous passage, with one of those pitying looks she cast upon her divine Son, while extended on the cross. O tears infinitely precious! O look in which sovereign love and sorrow are united.

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## FRIDAY

### *The Blessed Virgin at the foot of the Cross.*

1ST POINT. To follow Jesus to Calvary is the most certain proof of love. The Virgin Mother approaches nearest to her crucified Son, fastened in spirit to that cross by the intensity of her love. Mary is not only a martyr, but queen of martyrs, because she has sacrificed her life in that of her divine Son, the head and chief of martyrs; because she has been his most devoted companion, suffering in desire all that he suffered in effect.

O Mother of love and sorrows! obtain for me to love and suffer after thy example.

2ND POINT. It is in great sufferings that virtues the most heroic are practised. The Blessed Virgin, at the foot of the cross, exercised a most ardent charity, co-operating with the Eternal Father in the passion and death of her beloved Son, for the divine honour and salvation of man. This mother of sorrow stands with invincible patience, not opening her lips either to complain of the cruelty inflicted on him, or to give expression to her own griefs. Look upon yourself in this mirror of patience, and acknowledge your weakness and defects. What a little thing makes you lose courage! A word, a look, suffices to overcome your resolutions.

3RD POINT. Jesus, in the midst of his torments, omits nothing of the office of Saviour and Mediator between God and man. From his cross he bequeaths *us*, in the person of St. John, to his beloved Mother, saying—"Woman, behold thy Son"; and to St. John, "Behold thy Mother." (*John*, xix. 26, 27.) These words are not simple signs of his will, but operate what they signify; impressing on the heart of the Blessed Virgin a maternal love, and on that of the disciple a filial respect and confidence. Rejoice that Jesus has also given you as a child to this all-powerful Queen of Heaven.

O afflicted Mother, suffer not a child that has cost thee so much, to perish.

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## SATURDAY

### *Jesus complains of thirst.*

1ST POINT. "I thirst." (*John*, xix. 28.) The extreme thirst that the Son of God endures on the cross is one of his greatest torments. A burning heat consumes him, from the overpowering fatigue and torments endured since the preceding evening, without repose or refreshment. The loss of blood had dried up the tongue, mouth, and throat. Consider the charity of the Son of God, who suffers to atone for your sensual gratifications; to console the poor in their necessities; and, to deliver you from that eternal thirst. Reflect often during your repasts: first, that Jesus crucified is consumed with a burning thirst.—Is it just that the master suffer and the slave indulge?

2ND POINT. "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst." (*John*, xix. 28.) Jesus complains of thirst, not to be relieved, but to drink vinegar, and so accomplish the prediction of the prophet. He only declares his thirst, without asking to drink, to teach us to support our pains, and discover our necessities with resignation and without inquietude. At the commencement of his passion he prays that the chalice may pass from him, and at the close he says that he yet thirsts for it. It is not wrong to fear chastisement, and pray that it may be averted: but if God wills, you should embrace it generously, and desire it still more.

3RD POINT. This thirst of the Son of God will never be allayed. His heart thirsts after yours: will you be so ungrateful as to refuse it? And if he thirsts after you, will you not thirst after him? You are astonished at the cruelty of the Jews. What do you do to alleviate his sufferings in the persons of the poor? Your impatience, your want of zeal in imparting instruction and consolation in their spiritual necessities, are more bitter to him than the vinegar and gall. You afflict him still more in the spiritual thirst of his soul. Instead of the virtues he demands, you only offer him imperfections.

O my adorable Saviour, my soul, wounded with thy love, sighs after thee, as the thirsty stag after the fountains of living water.

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### PALM SUNDAY

*“Tell ye the daughters of Sion: behold thy King cometh to thee meek.”*

1ST POINT. Jesus Christ derives his meekness from the bosom of his Father, and he exercises it in ours, when he enters in the Holy Communion. But in order to enter our hearts, he takes another birth in the sacramental species, that he may reign by clemency in our souls. He enters in triumph, yet he hides every sensible mark of his greatness, and shows only his humility, poverty, patience, and bounty, to make us love him, and learn that he is meek and humble of heart.

O Lord, take possession of my heart, that it may love and serve thee for ever.

2ND POINT. In the adorable Sacrament he comes to you as Saviour, to sanctify, and give you a pledge of the felicity he prepares for you, in recompense of your worthily receiving him. His recompense is to render you happy, his work to render you holy. He comes as the just one, not to condemn, but to satisfy for you, and to offer himself to the divine justice to expiate your sins. He comes in the spirit of humility and poverty, to encourage the poor and the lowly, supporting with meekness our irreverence and neglect.

3RD POINT. Consider—What you ought to do in order to receive your king. Dismiss excessive fear that prevents your drawing fruit from this sacrament; change it into a profound respect, mingled with a loving confidence in the goodness of your Master. The day of Communion is a day of harvest, of victory and triumph, a happy day, which will deliver you from the yoke of your evil habits, enrich you with the spoils of your enemies. Place yourself amongst those who follow him, tread underfoot all desire of honour and esteem.

My Lord Jesus, it is thy meekness that draws me after thee. Thou didst not reject the confession of the good thief, nor the tears of Magdalen, nor the humble prayer of the Canaanee, nor even those who crucified thee. Glory to the Son of David, the meekest of all Kings.

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## MONDAY

*“Jesus therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said:  
It is consummated.” (John, xix. 30.)*

1ST POINT. Jesus being ready to give up his spirit, reflects on all the labours, humiliations, shames, and torments, which Divine Justice had ordained him to suffer finds that the work of Redemption is consummated. You cannot say the same, either for the past or the future. How often have you shrunk from the cross, or received it with murmuring? Animate yourself to suffer with more patience and constancy. Persevere generously on the cross until death, that you may be able to say: I have fought well, I have suffered, I have consummated my course; there remains for me the crown of glory.

2ND POINT. Jesus reflects on the work his Father had given him. He considers all the actions of his life, with all the charges that had been committed to him. Mediator, redeemer, teacher, legislator, sovereign pontiff, guide to eternity, and he finds that all is consummated. He has preached the gospel, and traced a model of every virtue. O who can enter into the mystery of the cross! There is to be found a summary of all perfection. Examine is your life conformable to the model traced for you; have you accomplished the work he has given you to do; if

not, do so without delay, to the end that you may be able to say at the moment of death: All is consummated.

3RD POINT. Consider—Jesus being about to die, reflects on all he desired to confer on mankind, and he finds he has spared nothing in their favour. His blood, his strength, his merits are exhausted; he has not reserved a single moment of life which he has not given us. “He learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and being sacrificed as a holocaust, he became the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey him.” He has placed all spiritual goods in the cross. But we must ascend and persevere on it with Jesus Christ, in order to gain them. You often conceive good desires, but you do not execute them. You sometimes begin well, but, if you continue for a time, you do not persevere to the end.

O my divine Saviour! who hast given me all with so much bounty, grant that I may seek thy grace with care, and employ it with fidelity.

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## TUESDAY

*“Jesus cries with a loud voice: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

1ST POINT. “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (*Matt.*, xxvii. 46.) Of what does Jesus complain—of the interior desolation in which he was left by his eternal Father from the commencement of his passion,—of his exterior sufferings, which continue unto his last sigh. Although he continues his prayer for three hours, yet the eternal Father remains inflexible to the cry of his beloved Son. Be not troubled if it sometimes seem as if God had forgotten you in your interior or exterior pains. Fear not to drink this chalice, after the example of the son of God, who was the most forsaken of all, although the most beloved. Fear not that God will ever abandon you, if you do not abandon him.

2ND POINT. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Since Jesus has offered himself to all the sufferings of the cross, with an ardent love, why does he complain? To

discover to us the excess of his sorrows; for although he is God, he suffers as man. To give us an example, that it is only to God we are to complain in our difficulties, and it is to make us understand that the cause of his sufferings is not in himself, but in us.

O Jesus! though I should be abandoned by heaven and earth for a time, dare I complain, when I behold thy dereliction.

3RD POINT. "This man calleth Elias!" (*Matt.*, xxvii. 47.) Heaven hears the complaint of Jesus with respect, the Blessed Virgin with sorrow, the soldiers with contempt, because they know him not. How few there are who understand the language of God! How few who respect his words, or enter into the depth of his sorrows! Ah! if men considered who it is that complains thus upon the cross; if they knew what he suffers for them, there is no heart so insensible as not to be touched; though it were of iron, the fire of compunction would penetrate it; though it were stone, compassion would break it, or love would melt it into tears.

O sweet Jesus! I behold thee abandoned, bereft of strength and support. Who will give to my eyes tears, and to my heart tenderness, to compassionate thy sufferings?

## WEDNESDAY

*Jesus commends his spirit into the hands of his Eternal Father.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (*Luke*, xxiii. 46.) He cries with a loud voice, to show his power, and that he laid down his life because it was his will. Listen to the cry of your Redeemer, who expires amidst the torments inflicted for your sins. In fine, Jesus cried with a loud voice, to terrify his enemies, and publish his victory over the powers of hell. Satan, chained at the foot of the cross, becomes the trophy of his vanquisher. Prepare for your last combat, by devotion to the angels who were present at the death of Christ, not to assist him, but to honour his victory. He needed not their succour, but you will require it at that most important moment.

2ND POINT. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Jesus, calls upon God by the tender name of Father, to testify his confidence, and teach us the practice of this virtue in the most terrible of all combats. He recommends not his body, which he abandons to suffering, but his soul—thus terminating as he had commenced his life, by prayer. He would engrave in our inmost spirit this truth—that the soul alone is of paramount importance. Unite, then, your voice with that of your dying Saviour, and say with him, both in life and death: My God and my Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

3RD POINT. "And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost." (*John*, xix. 30.) It is a sign of true obedience to bow the head, and humbly submit to the will of those whom God has placed over you. This thought will humble you like the publican, who dared not raise his eyes towards heaven. It will cause you to place yourself beneath the feet of all, remembering the dust from which you were created, and to which you shall again return. Meditate, for your consolation, how the Son of God bows his head to impart the kiss of peace, and reconcile you with heaven, before appearing at the tribunal of his divine justice.

## MAUNDY THURSDAY

*Jesus institutes the Blessed Sacrament.*

1ST POINT. "And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to his disciples." (*Matt.*, xxvi. 26.) Jesus, by a miracle of unexampled love, bequeaths us his sacred body and blood in the Eucharistic Sacrament, in the same night in which he is to be delivered up to death for our sins. Whilst his enemies are plotting against his life, he invents a means of remaining with us to the end of ages. Admire the charity of this tender Father. Beseech him to cast on you that eye of mercy which will not be repelled by your offences.

2ND POINT. Consider—"Take ye and eat: this is my body." (*Ibid.*) Jesus would himself be our treasure, and our patrimony. He leaves us his body and blood by his last testament. What can the heart of man possess comparable to that of the body of Jesus Christ, when he receives it in the spirit of humility and devotion? Receive it with reverence; guard it with love; and hide it deeply in your soul, that no one may rob you of this treasure.

O God of love! take my heart into thy own care; be thou its guardian, that nothing contrary to thy will may enter therein.

3RD POINT. "Do this for a commemoration of me." (*Luke*, xxii. 19.) Such is the last will of our Father, declared to us by his testament. He asks but one thing—that having died for us, we should fondly cherish the memory of this ineffable benefit, particularly in approaching his altar. For this he comes into our hearts in the Holy Communion, that he may engrave thereon the image of his wounds and sufferings. Let Jesus crucified be so deeply engraven in your soul, that you may become like unto him, a man of sufferings and of the cross. Fear not to bear his wounds on your heart, for love will render the pain more desirable than all the pleasures of the world.

O Lord, I bequeath my heart to thy love, my will to thy law, my understanding to the meditation of thy mysteries, and remembrance of thy death.

## GOOD FRIDAY

1ST POINT. "And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost." (*John*, xix. 30.) Jesus having endured all that the cruelty of his enemies could invent submits to death. A mortal paleness overspreads his countenance, his body grows cold, his eyes close, his lips fade. He languishes, he dies, he is dead. Mother of sorrows, "thou hast heard the cry that declares thee desolate." The sword has now penetrated thy inmost soul. He has died to redeem us, at the price of his own life!—He has died that we may be forced to acknowledge him as our Sovereign Lord, since he has given himself for our ransom! You belong not to yourself, but to him who has died to restore your life. Why then do you follow your own inclinations, you, who are the work of those hands, now pierced with nails and fastened to the cross?

2ND POINT. "Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost." (*Matt.*, xxvii. 50.) How miserable soever life may be, we cling to it with a natural love, because there is in it something divine. Jesus would terminate his under the most violent torments to confound our delicacy. Had we meditated and felt the agonies and pains of Jesus Christ, we would be ashamed to complain of our sufferings. Your bed is softer than the wood of the cross; your food is not so bitter as his gall and vinegar, nor your pains so sharp as the thorns that pierce his sacred head. You are not despised, persecuted, and abandoned as he was. Yet he is innocent, and you criminal; he is God, and you but a mean creature!

Teach me, O Lord, to die, as thou didst, in prayer, in tears, and in sorrow for my sins.

3RD POINT. "Jesus having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost." (*Mark*, xv. 37.) Jesus Christ having died for love of man, justly desires to survive in our hearts by love. He should live in our thoughts by a perpetual remembrance. He should live in our affections, since love delivered him unto death for each in particular. He should live in all our actions, so that we perform them with a view to the glory of him who has done so much for us. Destroy sin and self-love, which is the root of all vice, and make the virtue and love of Jesus crucified live within you.

## HOLY SATURDAY

*Jesus laid in the tomb.*

1ST POINT. "They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices." (*John*, xix. 40.) Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, with a ladder, reach the sacred body of Jesus, take off the crown of thorns and draw out the nails; then supporting him who bears up the world, they descend from the cross. Contemplate the obedience of the Son of God, who leaves himself entirely to the disposal of those disciples; but admire still more the promptness with which he descends upon the altar, whenever the sacramental words are uttered. When will you be thus perfectly submissive? This most holy body, this fruit of obedience, being now detached from the cross, falls into the bosom of the Virgin Mother. Behold her embracing the dead body of him who was her consolation and her life. She wipes his livid face, closes his eyes, and bathes his wounds with her tears. Be humbled and confounded at your insensibility.

2ND POINT. "They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." (*John*, xix. 40.) The tomb of the dead is the best school for the living. Consider attentively that of the Son of God, which should be your model in receiving the Holy Communion. Approach not these divine mysteries, until prepared by mortification: you cannot be united to the body of Jesus Christ, but by the thorns and the nails of the cross. Bring therefore to the holy table a new heart, and take care that Jesus alone enter therein. Receive not the bread of heaven, until you have banished sin from your soul, calmed the passions that darken it, and purified its sensual affections.

3RD POINT. From the burial of the Son of God you may learn the duties you should render to Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament, where your soul should seek him, and where your body is to serve him as a sepulchre. Approach it with that purity of conscience and lively devotion necessary for the reception of such a guest. Carefully seal your heart, place a guard on your senses, that your Lord may remain with you, and engrave on your soul his image, as he did on the winding-sheet in which his sacred body was wrapped.

My God and my all, why should any created object divide my heart with thee?

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### EASTER SUNDAY

1ST POINT. Consider these words—"Be mindful that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen again from the dead." (2 *Tim.*, ii. 8.) Contemplate the glory of the soul of Jesus Christ returning victorious from Limbo, to reunite itself to his sacred body. He shows it to the saints, who accompany him in triumph that they may behold the excess of his love for man. With what sentiments of love, joy, gratitude, admiration, and reverence, are these ancient Patriarchs and Prophets transported, in seeing the adorable body of their Liberator lying in the tomb, deprived of life, and covered with those wounds which proclaim how much he suffered for their salvation! "Thou hast so much love for me, my God, it would seem that thou hast none for thyself. Why do I not imitate thy incomparable charity?"

2ND POINT. The glory of the resurrection has extinguished all the opprobrium of the passion. How liberal is God in recompensing the labours of those who suffer in his service! Fear not the mortification of the body; if you suffer with Jesus Christ, you shall reign with him. What sadness or grief can dwell in the heart of him who believes that nothing perishes by death? All my efforts shall be to follow the humble Jesus: I will embrace him who has loved me, and delivered himself for me; but I must eat of his flesh and drink of his blood—that is, participate in his passion and death, or I shall not possess life eternal.

3RD POINT. The glory of his divinity, which had been as it were hidden in his passion, begins to shine forth in his miraculous issuing from the tomb. He comes forth as sovereign Lord of life and death. He comes forth as the Omnipotent to take possession of his eternal kingdom, and seated on the throne of his Father, to receive from heaven and earth the homage due to God alone. Adore the divinity of Jesus, manifested by so stupendous a miracle, and learn that you must rise from the tomb of sin and evil habits, if you would

reign with him. Let it be said of you: He is no longer impetuous, irritable, uncharitable.

O glorious Conqueror of death! display to the whole earth thy glory. Amen, Amen, Alleluiah!

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## MONDAY

*On Jesus Christ in his Resurrection, the model of the glorified bodies of the just.*

1ST POINT. "This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad, and rejoice thereon. Thy dead men shall live, my slain shall rise again: awake, and give praise, ye that dwell in the dust." (*Isaiah*, xxvi. 19.) "It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory. . . . Behold I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not all be changed." (*Cor.*, xv.) This happiness is only for the elect. The impious shall not rise in glory, they shall have no place in the assembly of the just. Both shall come forth, but their lot shall be different. With which do you desire to rank? O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying?

2ND POINT. Consider—the certainty and infallibility of the resurrection of the dead. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality." (*Cor.*, xv. 52, 53.) Our bodies are the members of Jesus Christ, who is our head: the head should not be separated from the body. This hope sustains us, we "bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. . . ." Our bodies are united by the Holy Communion to the immortal body of Jesus Christ. He himself assures us: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." (*John*, vi. 52.)

3RD POINT. Consider—the consolation which is imparted by a firm hope in the resurrection. Then tears shall be changed

into joy, pains into delights, poverty into abundance, confusion into glory, death into eternal life. Such was the consolation of Job amidst his sufferings. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God." (*Job*, xix. 25, 26, 27.) Yes, I shall see him with my eyes, and "this my hope is laid up in my bosom," sustains me in all my pains. The king of heaven and earth will raise us to an eternal life, if we die for the observance of his laws.

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## TUESDAY

### *On the spiritual Resurrection of our Souls.*

1ST POINT. "Be mindful that the Lord Jesus Christ is risen again from the dead." (2 *Tim.*, ii. 8.) His resurrection is a passage from death to life: ours should be one from sin to grace, from vice to virtue, from self-love to charity; "For we are buried together with him by baptism into death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (*Rom.*, vi. 4, 5.) His body is endowed with subtilty; we must courageously overcome all difficulties that retard our progress in perfection. It is resplendent with light and beauty; the interior light of the Divine Spirit should so illumine our understanding that, replenished with the knowledge of things divine, the light of our example may infuse into the hearts of others a love and esteem for virtue.

2ND POINT. "Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over him." (*Rom.* vi.) You have prepared your heart to become the dwelling-place of Jesus Christ: will you oblige him to abandon it, by returning to evil habits? Does the time of his resurrection demand less vigilance than that of his passion? The graces received during the holy season of Lent demand this: that the sanctity of your actions testify what the sacraments have

operated in you; and that you have not received the grace of God in vain.

3RD POINT. Our perseverance in grace, our spiritual resurrection should continue until death. As the body dies but once, it shall have one resurrection; but as human frailty causes man to sin and destroy the life of the soul, the goodness of God has prepared for him a means of rising again by the sacrament of penance. The resurrection of the body is deferred to the last day, that of the soul is daily in our power. Labour seriously to preserve the spiritual life of the soul, lest death surprise us in the state of sin. Leave the care of the body to Divine Providence, fearless either of suffering or death.

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## WEDNESDAY

### *On the time of the Resurrection.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the words of Jesus Christ: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (*John*, ii. 19.) On the first day he carries his cross, suffers and dies thereon. Our Lord says: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (*Luke*, ix. 23.) Behold your portion in this life. On the second day his body rests in the tomb, and his blessed soul also enjoys its repose. After death our bodies will remain in the earth, our souls, if no debt remains, will enter into eternal repose. On the third day the soul of our Lord is re-united to his body, and communicates to it a glorious and immortal life. This is what we expect at the day of general resurrection. If you die not with Jesus Christ, you cannot partake of his resurrection.

2ND POINT. Consider—Our Lord arises from the dead on the first day of the week. He clothes his sacred humanity with a glory more resplendent than the sun. He sheds on his disciples the light of faith and charity; on his infant church the evangelic spirit. On this day he communicated the light of grace to penitent sinners, in imparting to his apostles the power of forgiving sin. Reflect whether the Son of God has risen in your heart,

and shed therein a new light of love and joy, together with the spirit of penance.

3RD POINT. Consider—Jesus Christ arises at the dawn of day, when the sun revives all the beauty of nature, and in the season of spring, when the flowers and fruits of the earth resume a new life. Remark that our Lord expired three hours after noon, in the decline of the day, and arose about three hours after midnight, at the rising of the sun. The sun anticipated the ordinary hour, on the day of our Lord's resurrection, to compensate for the darkness in which the world was enveloped on the day of his passion. This urges you to redouble your fervour at this holy time, in order to repair so many precious moments due to the service of God, and lost through your negligence. Arise quickly, for the sun of justice comes to enlighten your darkness, warm your coldness, and cause all the virtues to flourish in your soul.

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## THURSDAY

*On the Eucharist as a pledge of the Resurrection.*

1ST POINT. Consider—Jesus Christ in his resurrection restores the gift of the divine Eucharist in its full perfection and plenitude. Before the passion he gave his sacred body mortal and passible; now, he gives it immortal and impassible: He would also, in the excess of his charity, employ his glorified life, and join eternity with time, for the work of our sanctification. Each day we communicate should be to us a paschal feast; our joy should equal that of the disciples in beholding Jesus Christ risen.

O Father of the world to come, impart to thy children a new life, that we may no longer live, but for him who died and arose again for our sakes.

2ND POINT. Consider—Jesus Christ, in the blessed Eucharist makes us partakers of his resurrection, by impressing on our souls virtues like to the endowments of his glorified body:—Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance, all of which

leave us at liberty to act according to the lights of reason and grace. The holy Eucharist gives the body a special right to a glorious resurrection: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life and I will raise him up in the last day." (*John*, vi. 55.)

3RD POINT. In receiving the Eucharist, we make public profession of believing, honouring, and commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Mass Jesus Christ is on the altar in a state of mystic death. But we also commemorate the mystery of the resurrection, because his sacred body is there, resuscitated and glorious, and it renders our bodies spiritual and glorious like itself.

Adorable Saviour! how great is my confusion in approaching thy sacred table with faith so weak, charity so cold, and a heart so dissipated! Enlighten my darkness, O Lord, by one of those rays that issued from thy glorified body, and impart to my soul dispositions suitable to this adorable mystery, that so thy promise may be fulfilled in my regard: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." (*John*, vi. 52.)

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## FRIDAY

### *On the day of the General Resurrection.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the spiritual resurrection of the soul must be effected during the present life; that of the body is deferred until the end of ages;—to give us a horror of sin, by the image of corporal death. Had we light to discover the deformity of sin, we could not behold it and live. We should avail ourselves of the consideration of death, and of the evils of this life, to conceive a fear of sin, the only cause of these fatal effects.

2ND POINT. Consider—the second cause of this delay, is to give us an opportunity of practising exalted virtue; in the hour of suffering and death we may exercise, in a more heroic manner, acts of humility, acts of patience and resignation to the will of God, under the pains that accompany sickness; of obedience

in our dependence on those who assist us; of confidence in God, and abandonment to his mercy; offering ourselves to sufferings and death, in acknowledgment of the love which Jesus Christ has manifested in dying for us on the cross. Henceforth we need not fear either malady, or pain, or death, for we are consoled in the hope of a glorious resurrection.

3RD POINT. Consider—the third cause of the delay of the general resurrection is, the homage rendered to God by the sacrifice of our life, and the exercising of the noblest act of divine love, which is, to suffer and die for the service of God or the salvation of our neighbour. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (*John*, xv. 13.) Therefore St. Augustine calls the martyrs the princes of the church, holding the first rank, and worthy of being imitated and honoured by all. Again, he asks: Why are the martyrs so elevated in glory, and crowned with a diadem of peculiar splendour? Why are they distinguished amongst the dead? The church prays not for them, but recommends herself to their prayers. Whence is this? Because death, which they endured rather than deny Jesus Christ, is assuredly bitter and dreadful to nature. Let us then implore their prayers, that we may walk in their steps, because they have fulfilled the most perfect act of charity, according to the testimony of Jesus Christ.

My divine Saviour, death is become a remedy instead of a punishment in regard of thy servants; it is no longer an object of fear, but of love.

## SATURDAY

*On our Lord appearing to the Blessed Virgin.*

1ST POINT. Consider—the great love the Blessed Virgin bore her divine Son merited the privilege of being the first to behold him after his resurrection. The love which glowed in the immaculate heart of Mary incomparably exceeded the united love of angels and saints. Through her we will not fail to obtain, besides all other gifts, divine charity, which is so necessary, as without which all other goods are useless. We must love God before we can behold him in his glory. In order to obtain this divine love, we must address ourselves to her; her joy in the triumph of the divine Son is equal to her intense agony when she stood beside his gibbet. Therefore we say with the universal church in the Antiphon—“Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven!”

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ appeared first to his blessed Mother, because he loved her most. If never mother so loved a son, never did son so love a mother. She loved him in poverty and sorrow, in cold and want—amid the pains of exile—when the tyrant’s sword was unsheathed against him—when he wore the wreathed thorns upon his brow—and when, with a breaking heart, she stood sprinkled with his blood, and listening to his death-sobs at the foot of the cross. He showed his love for her, by drawing from her pure breast the sustenance of his mortal life—by making his youth a sacrifice of obedience to her—by giving her to his orphan church, in the person of the beloved disciple—and now, in the glory of his triumph, by making her a medium of his choicest graces.

3RD POINT. Do you prove your love of Jesus as the Blessed Virgin did, by works, sacrifices, and suffering? Has he not given you the most tender and special marks of his love—in the grace of your vocation—making you the mother of his suffering and afflicted members, or the instrument of their salvation—in becoming for you, on the altar, a prodigy of obedience—in becoming the food of your spiritual life in the Eucharist?

Incomparable Mother, behold thy divine Son; it is no longer the beloved disciple, the adopted son; it is thy only begotten Son, the fruit of thy womb. He is risen, immortal, impassible, glorious, and resplendent with light.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Regina Cœli!

## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

*On the holy Women visiting the Tomb of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. The love these holy women bear to Jesus Christ leads them early in the morning to visit his tomb. They enshrined his memory in their hearts, their love followed him even to the tomb. Is it thus you love Jesus Christ? Do you frequently remember him during the day, and does your heart seek him at your waking moment? Is this remembrance active? Does it lead to mortification and the practice of good works? Do you love to make him the subject of your conversation? Your morning prayer should animate all the actions of the day with a holy fervour and tender recollection of your merciful Redeemer.

2ND POINT. The love of these holy women is generous and courageous. In bringing their precious perfumes to anoint the sacred body they feared no difficulty, though soldiers guarded the sepulchre, and its entrance was closed by a stone which they could not remove. Their example instructs you to surmount with courage all obstacles to the execution of your good resolutions. "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." A tepid soul is dejected by the least opposition. In every state of spiritual life there is a stone, which arrests the progress of those who are wanting in confidence and courage. But if you love Jesus Christ, his divine spirit will remove these obstacles at the first step you make in his service.

3RD POINT. The love these holy women bear our Lord is accompanied with profound respect and singular wisdom. Their desire of embalming his sacred body was ardent, yet they await the termination of the sabbath, to comply with the law. At dawn, they depart without delay. Thus zeal should not be precipitate, neither should it be tardy or languid. True charity is fervent and discreet. You should have continual recourse to prayer, that you may obtain the light of heaven to direct, and divine love to animate you in the discharge of every duty.

## MONDAY

*On the apparition of the Angels to the holy Women.*

1ST POINT. "How good is God to Israel, to them that are of a right heart." (*Ps.* lxxii. 1.) "The angel answering, said to the women: Fear not you; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified." (*Matt.*, xxviii. 5.) What should the soul fear who seeks Jesus Christ? Is it penance? This is a heavy stone and difficult to carry. But the unction of the Holy Ghost will render it light. Is it temptation? My God, illuminate my darkness; by thee I shall be delivered from temptation. Is it poverty and contempt? God is our refuge and our strength. The Lord is with us, whom shall we fear? The success of our enterprises depends not on human strength, but on the favour of the Omnipotent.

O Lord, how good art thou to those who hope in thee, and to the soul who seeketh thee!

2ND POINT. You must seek Jesus Christ crucified, that you may see him one day glorified. "Thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy cross. In the cross is salvation: in the cross is life. Take up, therefore, thy cross and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting." (*Imit.*, b. ii. c. 12.) Divine faith and wisdom are requisite that we may discover the infinite treasures hidden in the cross of Jesus Christ. "It is in vain for you to rise before light." (*Ps.* cxxvi. 2.) The spouse sought him during the night, and found him not. You must implore the light of the Divine Spirit and imitate these holy women, who allowed the night to pass before they repaired to the sepulchre. Whatever labour a soul may undergo in seeking Jesus Christ, she will not find him unless she be enlightened by the Holy Ghost.

"Be thou my helper, forsake me not; do not thou despise me, O God, my Saviour." (*Ps.* xxvi. 9.)

3RD POINT. Those who seek Jesus Christ shall assuredly find him. The holy women sought him crucified, they find him risen. If you seek Jesus Christ with your whole heart during life, you will find him at the moment of death; when he will bestow on you an immortal crown of glory. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his

great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That the trial of your faith (much more precious than gold which is tried by the fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 *Peter*, i. 3, *et seq.*)

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## TUESDAY

### *On the holy Women entering the Sepulchre.*

1ST POINT. "Be not affrighted" (*Mark*, xvi. 6,) said the angel to the holy women, as they entered the sepulchre of our Lord. The tomb is a place of repose, where our bodies are deposited until the general resurrection. It is a passage to a blessed eternity, which the Saviour has opened to us by his victory over death. Who shall henceforth fear the darkness and dust of the tomb, since it is the source of immortal life?

2ND POINT. "Know you not, that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism into death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer." (*Rom.*, vi. 3, *et seq.*) A man dead, buried, and hidden in the tomb, no longer cares for the goods of the world; he is neither moved by praise nor dispraise; he is equally insensible to injuries or caresses, to pleasure or sorrow. Such is a perfectly mortified Christian, who lives as if he were no longer in the flesh.

3RD POINT. Consider—the sacred body of Jesus Christ, which we receive as a pledge of our resurrection, is on the altar in a state of mystic death. Your heart should be as the tomb wherein is to be laid this precious treasure. Let the purity and innocence of your soul be his shroud, the odour of your virtues the perfume to embalm him, your heart, sealed with his divine love. Woe to that heart in which Jesus Christ "is not." Guard

him in your own, for your happiness and glory consist in his dwelling there. Remember that the paschal time is a time of passage: let it not be one of return. Pass from vice to virtue, from darkness to light from earth to heaven. You will behold there the Son of God in the splendour of his eternal glory.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On Saints Peter and John repairing to the Sepulchre.*

1ST POINT. "Mary Magdalen cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre. She ran therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." (*John*, xx. 1, 2.) Believe not lightly, but be not too much attached to your own judgment. Imitate not these disciples who deserved to be reprehended for their little faith in the resurrection of their Master. Never make that which is holy a subject of raillery. Ridicule not the simplicity of those who discourse with you on matters of piety. O Lord, increase my faith!

2ND POINT. "Peter, therefore, went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre." (*John*, xx. 3.) Joy impelled them to go with speed, and this joy proceeded from the love they bore their Master, and their faith in his resurrection. "The lover flies, runs, and rejoices; he is free, and not held." Imitate these two great Apostles, Peter and John, running to the tomb. This fervour is the characteristic of great saints, who are always zealous to forestall others, in duties in which humility and charity are exercised.

3RD POINT. "And they both ran together, and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. . . . but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying. . . . That other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw, and believed." (*John*, xx. 4, *et seq.*) We should not cease to run in the way of perfection

until we arrive at the tomb—that is, at perfection; but the more we advance, the more humble we should become.

My divine and glorious Master, who givest light to our eyes and strength to our hands, to be employed continually in thy service, enkindle also in our hearts the fire of thy love, that being inflamed therewith, we may run on with renewed vigour in the way of thy commandments. Amen.

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## THURSDAY

### *On Jesus Christ appearing to Magdalen.*

1ST POINT. The happiness of this penitent saint, who merited to see Jesus Christ, the first after his Virgin Mother. By tears of devotion and love she merited the happiness of seeing Jesus Christ in the glory of his resurrection. Her love is persevering, and surmounts every obstacle. Jesus being the only object of her love, no other than himself can afford her consolation. Delay increased her desire, and her desire is changed into joy. Are your good desires ardent? Are they efficacious? Are they persevering? Can you at least say with the prophet: Lord, I feel not these generous desires, but I earnestly desire and humbly implore them.

2ND POINT. Consider—"But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. . . . They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." (*John*, xx. 11, 12, 13.) To be deprived of a trifle, a nothing, grieves us to excess; we lose Jesus Christ, yet we remain insensible to our loss. We know not where they have laid him, yet we seek him not. But where have you laid him? Do you desire to know where he is? He is in your heart, if humility, patience, mortification, and charity reign therein. If these virtues are wanting, you possess not Jesus Christ. Our Lord presents himself to Magdalen; he says to her, "Woman: why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to him: Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." (*John*, xx. 15.) How powerful is the love of this holy penitent! nothing seems impossible. She is ready

for all things. Is such your disposition? Are you resolved to do and suffer all that is necessary in order to find God?

3RD POINT. Consider—the change which Jesus Christ effects by a single word in the heart of Magdalen. “Jesus saith to her: Mary. She turning, saith to him: Rabboni (which is to say, Master).” What tenderness and sweetness in the heart of Jesus! What transports of joy in that of Mary! The voice of her Master dissipates all the gloom of her mind, and fills her with consolation. She would embrace his sacred feet, but he prevents her, saying: “Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them: I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.” (*John*, xx. 17.) The merit of the soul consists not in divine consolation, but in a submissive obedience, sincere humility, ardent love of God and our neighbour. Fear not to quit Jesus Christ, to aid and console your brethren. He will restore with advantage what you have quitted for his love.

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## FRIDAY

### *On Jesus appearing to the holy Women.*

1ST POINT. “And behold Jesus met them, saying: All hail.” (*Matt.*, xxviii. 9.) On how many occasions does he present himself to you, and testify the care with which he watches in your regard? When you go where obedience calls, Jesus presents himself to bless your labours, and crown them with a happy issue. When you go to prayer, when you observe your rules, when you conceive holy thoughts, and desires of mortification, Jesus presents himself to you, and honours you with his presence. He says to you: I am thy salvation, thy joy, and thy life. Happy is that soul which heareth the Lord speaking within her.

O King of glory, who changes our darkness into light, and our tears into joy, hide not from me in the hour of affliction.

2ND POINT. “But they came up and took hold of his feet, and adored him.” (*Matt.* xxviii. 9.) No one can approach Jesus Christ unless he first presents himself. It is our part to

correspond with grace when it is offered, otherwise it passes away and is lost. We shall profit by it if we humble ourselves before God, and refer all that we do to his glory. Were you established in this contempt of yourself, you would enjoy the greatest peace that can be possessed in this life. You would be delivered from all immoderate fear, and self-love would be destroyed.

3RD POINT. Consider—the words of our Lord to these holy women and to Magdalen. To the latter he says, “Do not touch me” (*John*, xx. 17), and to the former, “Fear not.” In both he is equally good. Learn that indiscreet fervour is displeasing to God, and that we must never forget that respect which is his due. Neither should we yield to excessive fear. He is the friend of peace and tranquility of mind; and in order to receive his divine communications, we must approach him with this preparation of heart. Do not suppose that your life is perfect, when all things happen according to your desire, or that you are particularly loved by God, because he favours you with sensible devotion. The perfection of the spiritual man consists in an entire consecration of the heart and will to God, without self-interest in things either great or little, either in time or eternity; receiving good and evil with equal thanksgiving. Then will Jesus Christ present himself to that soul, and make it sensible of a heavenly light and joy.

## SATURDAY

*On Jesus appearing to St. Peter and St. James.*

1ST POINT. "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." (*Luke*, xxiv. 34.) "After that, he was seen by James, then by all the Apostles." (*1 Cor.*, xv. 7.) The holy fathers are of opinion that our Lord appeared first to St. Peter. St. Chrysostom attributes that prerogative to the dignity of St. Peter, because being chief of the Apostles, and the foundation stone of the Church, his authority gave more credit to the apparition. The faith of the Apostle, and the ardent love he bore his divine Master, prepared him to believe all that regarded the glory of Jesus Christ. St. Bernard says, that Jesus Christ would thus console his disciple, whose heart was penetrated with sorrow for his sin. It was truly a condescension worthy of our Saviour, to manifest himself first to him who was overwhelmed with confusion for his infidelity, in order that where sin had abounded, grace might still more abound.

2ND POINT. "After that, he was seen by James, then by all the Apostles." (*1 Cor.*, xv. 7.) We may attribute the favour conferred on St. James to his eminent sanctity, his rare spirit of prayer, and especially to his sorrow for the death of the Son of God, and the ardour with which he sighed for his resurrection. Approach unto God, and he will approach unto you. Be confounded at your tepidity, and endeavour to awaken your fervour in prayer, in Holy Communion, and in the practice of solid virtues. "Jesus Christ will come to thee if thou wilt prepare a fit dwelling within thee. Make room, then, for Christ within thee, and deny entrance to all others. Thou hast not here a lasting city; nor wilt thou ever have rest, unless thou be interiorly united to Christ."

3RD POINT. Consider—the different manner in which these two Apostles correspond with the same grace. St. Peter, without delay, imparts to his brethren that which he had received: "And thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren." (*Luke*, xxii. 32.) St. James, on the contrary, buries it in silence. Hence we learn that we should conceal the favours of heaven, unless obliged by duty to declare them for the edification of our neighbour. Our Lord often appears to superiors, as he did to St. Peter; that is to say, he instructs, and communicates to them

many lights for the guidance of those under their charge; you should listen to them with respect. Imitate the simplicity of the Apostles, who believed what St. Peter had related, without jealousy, deferring unanimously to his authority, and believing on his word that Christ was risen.

My Lord Jesus Christ, grant me the faith and obedience of St. Peter, the humility and perseverance of St. James, the simplicity and charity of the other Apostles.

## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

*On Jesus performing the office of the good Shepherd.*

1ST POINT. "I know mine." (*John*, x. 14.) Every good shepherd must know his sheep, otherwise he could not lead them. Others know their sheep only by the exterior, Jesus Christ by their interior. He penetrates the depth of our hearts, our thoughts, and intentions; neither our vices nor virtues are concealed from his sight. Be not that soul in whom he recognises no mark of charity, humility, patience, or fidelity in his service. Lord, what will it avail me to be known by men, if I am unknown to thee? I would rather live forgotten by all creatures, provided I have the happiness of knowing and being known by thee.

2ND POINT. "And mine know me." (*John*, x. 14.) For as the knowledge he has of his elect is the principle of their eternal happiness, their knowledge of him is equally necessary. This knowledge of Jesus Christ is an assured mark of predestination. Not that sterile, cold, and speculative knowledge, so ordinary among Christians, but that which is strong, enlightened, effective. If the predestination of the angels was founded on the respect and homage they rendered to God at the moment of their creation, how much more does that of man depend on his devotion, love, and respect towards the person of his Saviour? The tender and generous heart of Jesus Christ cannot behold his creature with an ardent desire to know and love him, without granting that favour.

O divine Pastor, how few are they that seek thee with a generous devotedness. Grant that I may earnestly seek to know thee, and learn by thy words and example to despise things temporal, and desire only such as are eternal.

3RD POINT. "I lay down my life for my sheep." (*John*, x. 15.) Jesus Christ alone can pay the price of our redemption. Where shall we find a pastor so charitable, as he who has given his life for our ransom? In whom can we repose such confidence, as in him who not only lays down his life for his sheep, but, when they have strayed, seeks them with incessant toil, until he has found and led them back to his fold? Out of his fold we are in want of all real good, and our false and fleeting pleasures are followed with disgust and bitterness. Let us hasten to a dwelling abounding in all that is good; the delights whereof are eternal. Our good Pastor calls us to this, his blood has merited for us an entrance, our knowledge of him conducts us to it, and we may hope that his knowledge of us will place us in the possession of it for eternity.

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## MONDAY

*On Jesus appearing to the two Disciples going to Emmaus.*

1ST POINT. These disciples, by separating from the apostles put themselves in danger of losing their faith, hope, and charity; had not the Son of God, by his prompt appearance, afforded them succour. They believed neither the holy women nor the apostles, who had seen the sepulchre and assured them of the resurrection. Their hope wavered—"We hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel." (*Luke*, xxiv. 21.) They, indeed, retain a love and esteem for Jesus Christ, since they speak of him as a "Prophet, mighty in work and word," (*Luke*, xxiv. 19,) but not as of their Master and their God. We learn from these disciples how dangerous it is to quit our spiritual exercises in time of affliction, for it is then we should attach ourselves to God with more generous confidence: "I am the Lord who gives strength in the day of tribulation. Come to me when it is not well with thee."

2ND POINT. Consider—in the persons of these disciples, the tepidity and impatience of the human heart, which is repelled by the least difficulty. Our Lord had predicted that after three days they should behold him arisen. The term of three days was not long, and nevertheless they wait not. They quit the company of the apostles, perhaps never to return, had not the good Pastor led them back. Such is also our impatience in what regards our salvation. Neither labour nor length of years can cool our ardour in the pursuit of things temporal; but in the study of virtue we are overcome by the least obstacle. You desire to be perfect in a moment and immediately to obtain the object of your petition; you commence prayer, and if you succeed not, you quit all and lose courage. This irregularity is a great obstacle to grace: your impatience causes you a great prejudice.

3RD POINT. “O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?” (*Luke*, xxiv. 25, 26.) Meditate the words of the Saviour. Do you believe we can enter heaven by any other than the way of the cross; that is to say, by patience, humility, mortification, obedience even unto death, and abnegation of self-judgment and will? Do you frequently reflect on these truths? Are you perfectly convinced of their importance? If not, you are “slow of heart to believe.”

My Saviour, who art the wisdom of the Father, and the source of divine love, enlighten my mind and fortify my will. Grant that I may sincerely esteem the cross.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus acting the part of the good Pastor towards the two Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus himself also drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know him." (*Luke*, xxiv. 15, 16.) Compassionating their weakness, he bears them company, and suits his conversation to the capacity of their minds. Happy disciples, that meet so good a master! He "went with them." The efficacy of grace consists in a secret and merciful condescension of the Spirit of God, which suits itself to the will of man, winning the heart, gaining the consent without constraining his liberty.

2ND POINT. Consider—The wisdom of this good Pastor, in the order he observes in these two disciples, whom he withdraws from their wandering, disposing them by degrees to receive the grace he desires to impart. "What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad?" Thus he draws out their grief, that he may console them, and hear them discourse of his sufferings and death. "O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken." (*Luke*, xxiv. 25.) This reproach is an effect, not of anger, but of love. He wounds only to heal. He instructs them. He touches their hearts, and having enlightened their minds, awakened their faith, he inflames their will, and rekindles the fervour of love.

3RD POINT. "And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going: and he made as though he would go farther. But they constrained him, saying: stay with us." (*Luke*, xxiv. 28, 29.) He desires to be detained, even when he seems to withdraw, says St. Bernard. "And it came to pass, whilst he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him." (*Luke*, xxiv. 30, 31.) O depth of the mercy and goodness of Jesus Christ towards his erring sheep! What does he not do to lead them back to their duty? He appears under the form of a traveller to these disciples, to draw them back into the ways of God, and teach them the path of the cross. He

makes himself all to all, in order to console, instruct, and save them. How often have you experienced the tenderness of his love in such ways?

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### WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus appearing to the two Disciples as a Stranger and Pilgrim.*

1ST POINT. Jesus appears to his disciples, but they know him not: "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days?" (*Luke*, xxiv. 18.) "Their eyes were held that they should not know him." (*Luke*, xxiv. 16.) Our Lord is also with us, as king, pastor, and judge. How often, through negligence, are we unmindful of the presence of God? Blinded by self-love we know him not as he is. The eye of the mind is very weak. In God alone can it find all that it seeks and desires. Happy he whose actions are not swayed by the weight and bias of his vicious inclinations, but who regulates them according to right reason!

O Father of lights! grant that I may know, and knowing despise myself. Grant that I may know, and knowing love and serve thee.

2ND POINT. Jesus appears to his disciples as a pilgrim. On earth he shows himself but in passing; heaven is the dwelling-place of his glory; he is a pilgrim in the holy Sacrament; the guide of pilgrims, who pass through time to a blessed eternity. He is on the altar as priest and victim, continuing the sacrifice of the cross. He daily renews this bloody oblation in a mystic and unbloody manner, to apply to us the fruit of salvation, which is the work of his love. "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come." (*Heb.*, xiii. 14.) We should hold ourselves in thought and affection unceasingly united to Jesus Christ, who is the faithful companion of our journey.

3RD POINT. Consider—"And he said to them: what are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk and are sad?" He proposes this question for their consolation, and

your instruction. "The heart of the sage, which relishes divine things, shall supply words to his lips, and teach him to speak of God." If the Son of God drawing near during your conversations, inquire what are these discourses that you hold, should you not blush at your contentions, the levity, impetuosity, and indiscretion of your words? Are these the discourses you held in the time of your fervour? Are they such as you purposed in the time of retreat, prayer, and Communion? Is your conversation that of a religious, who aspires after sanctity, a servant of Jesus Christ, whose tongue has been purpled with the blood of his Redeemer?

O Jesus, grant that the odour of thy name may be always in my heart and lips.

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#### THURSDAY

*On Jesus instructing the Disciples in the mystery of the Cross.*

1ST POINT. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" (*Luke*, xxiv. 26.) The glory our Lord merited by his death is shown by his resurrection—his triumphant ascension—the knowledge of his divinity, spread throughout the earth by the merits of his passion—the exaltation of his sacred humanity, as King of glory—the conversion of the Gentiles,—the establishment of his Church, and the regeneration of the world.

2ND POINT. Consider—"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" Although the passion of the Son of God was not absolutely necessary for remitting our sins and healing our wounds, nevertheless, it was a remedy the most suitable to our evils, and the excess of his love. When an occasion of suffering occurs, let the remembrance of that infinite mercy with which the Son of God delivered himself to death for your salvation, animate your courage and zeal. Say to yourself, God demands this sacrifice. "The kingdom of God suffers violence." "If any one will come after me, let him take up his cross." "Salvation is in the cross." (*Imitat.*, b. ii., c. 12.)

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ has suffered death and is risen. Suffer as he has suffered, and hope to participate in his glory. He has suffered poverty, contempt, torments, and death. Can you enter heaven by another way? This would be an illusion; heaven was his birthright, yet he entered it only by the cross; and shall we, who expect it only through his merits, possess it without labour or pain. Such would be a signal folly. Place Jesus crucified, with his sufferings and opprobrium, as "a bundle of myrrh" on your heart, that you may never be unmindful of the price paid for your redemption.

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### FRIDAY

*On the Disciples entreating the Son of God to remain with them.*

1ST POINT. "But they constrained him saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent." (*Luke*, xxiv. 29.) We should also pray thus to Jesus Christ, when he permits that dereliction so ordinary to persons who aim at perfection. Sometimes it seems as if God had forgotten them, being left without light or piety in their spiritual exercises. Again, he seems as if deaf to their prayers, or as if holding the rod of anger over them. Sometimes he presents them with a heavy cross, to prove their courage. Then we should say with the disciples, "Stay with us," lest our heart should seek consolation from creatures.

2ND POINT. "They said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in the way, and opened to us the scriptures?" (*Luke*, xxiv. 32.) These consolations are transitory; we cannot enjoy them when we will, for they are the gratuitous gifts of God, which are conferred or withdrawn according to his pleasure. Let us cultivate liberty of spirit, whether we are proved by dereliction or favoured with sensible devotion. This can only proceed from a perfect detachment from all things; general renunciation of oneself; continual mortification of the senses, mind, and heart; great purity of intention; a serious examination of our words, actions, thoughts, and desires, in the presence of God. Lord, stay with us!

3RD POINT. "Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is far spent." Our life is but a day. There is no hour of the day, nor part of our life, exempt from temptation. We must incessantly cry to our Lord: "stay with us." We are more in danger at the approach of death. The devil spreads his snares to oppose our perseverance. With redoubled ardour should we call upon our Lord to "stay with us," because "it is towards evening, and the day is far spent." We have less strength to resist our enemies.

O my God, abandon me not in the hours of my distress; under the shadow of thy wings I shall rest secure.

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## SATURDAY

*On Jesus revealing himself to the Disciples in the breaking of bread.*

1ST POINT. "And he went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed and brake and gave to them." (*Luke*, xxiv. 29, 30.) Thus he acts with us in communion, prayer, and all our actions. Without him we can do nothing, we need assistance on every occasion. His charity is never wanting to us, but all do not avail themselves of his grace. Are you careful to walk in his presence? Does he accompany you in your labour and in your repose? Can you say with the wise man: Entering into my house, I will converse with the Incarnate Wisdom; this is my consolation and my joy, for his conversation has no bitterness.

2ND POINT. "They knew him in the breaking of bread." Our Lord reveals himself to his disciples. Learn where you must seek, find, and know Jesus Christ: in the breaking of bread you shall know the Lord. Do you desire to increase in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ? Imitate these disciples, who listened with avidity to the words of our Lord, whilst he revealed to them the mysteries of the cross. In Holy Communion the truly fervent discover our Lord in the breaking of bread; and perceive, like the two disciples, that Jesus walks with them, because their hearts are glowing and replenished with his love. Hungering and thirsting after this fountain of

living water, they receive the sacred body of Jesus Christ with a spiritual ardour and inconceivable delight.

Grant, O Lord, that in receiving this holy sacrament my faith may be enlivened, my hope fortified, and my charity enkindled into a flame that shall never be extinguished.

3RD POINT. "And rising up the same hour they went back to Jerusalem." (*Luke*, xxiv. 33.) From these disciples we learn, promptly to execute the good desires which our Lord inspires, either for the correction of our defects, or the acquisition of virtues. Observe the remarkable effects of the visits of Jesus Christ—a holy ardour and disposition to virtue. Are your meditations animated by fervour? Do you mingle affections and elevations of the heart with the discourse of the understanding? When in prayer and Holy Communion you conceive strong desires of mortifying and humbling yourself, of suffering with patience, or exercising charity, are you careful to put them into practice? Have you resolved to be more attentive to the divine presence? Say with David: "O Lord: Be thou mindful of thy word to thy servant, in which thou hast given me hope." (*Ps.* cxviii.)

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### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

*On Jesus appearing to the Apostles on the day of his Resurrection.*

1ST POINT. "The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord." (*John*, xx. 20.) Jesus showing himself to his apostles and filling them with joy, on the same day of his resurrection, accomplishes all he had promised on the eve of his sacred passion. "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." (*John*, xvi. 22.) This life is but a moment of joy and of sorrow. The portion of the wicked is a momentary joy, and an eternal sorrow; that of the just, a moment of sadness, and an everlasting joy. Close thy heart to worldly pleasures, and make use of the mortification of the senses, the fear of God, and the love of Jesus Christ. How can those eyes, created to contemplate Him, the source of true pleasure, rest upon the things of this world?

2ND POINT. Fear not to open your heart to that compunction which the Holy Ghost inspires. Such sadness is more desirable than all the joys of worldlings. God exercises those whom he loves during this life; but afterwards they shall gather in peace the fruit of justice. The joy of the just is continual, because God, who is an infinite good, is its source, including all that can render them happy; an immortal and unfailing good, of which they can never be deprived. "My God and my all! O savoury and sweet word! He that has a relish of thee will find all things savoury. And to him that relishes thee not, what can ever yield any true delight." (*Imit. b. iii. 34.*)

3RD POINT. Even in this life Jesus Christ changes our afflictions into joy, in the most holy sacrament, where he consoles us by his presence, entering our souls, "the doors being shut"—that is to say, our senses being guarded, and our hearts closed to all earthly objects. There he makes us taste of his sweetness, after which all the pleasures of the world become insipid or bitter. Our Lord treats the elect with his wonted mercy, withdrawing earthly gratifications, lest they become attached thereto, and imparting divine consolations, to convince them that he is the God of all consolation.

O! when will this blessed and desirable hour come, when thou shalt fill me with thy presence, and become to me all in all? There is no hope nor refuge for me but in thee, O Lord, my God.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus saying to his Apostles: Peace be to you.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saith to them: Peace be to you; it is I, fear not." (*Luke*, xxiv. 36.) Peace is the fruit of charity; for in loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and all our strength, our passions are reduced to obedience and repose. In loving our neighbour as ourselves, our two wills make but one. This establishes the soul in peace. This, according to St. Thomas, is the immediate effect of actual charity.

2ND POINT. Peace is the fruit of actual charity, accompanied by the other virtues necessary for its preservation—especially, humility, which prevents the sadness and inquietude ordinarily springing from concealed pride, subtle ambition, or secret self-esteem; patience, by which we support the miseries and vexations of this life; and conformity to the divine will, the most powerful defence against every evil. Troubles usually arise from our opposition to the divine decrees. We are placed in an office that accords not with our inclinations, or we are required to act in opposition to our own judgment or will. Obey willingly, for the difficulty consists not in the command, but in the repugnance of our own will.

3RD POINT. Peace being, next to the grace of God, the best gift we can possess in this life, we can never sufficiently love and honour the Son of God, through whom this heavenly benefit has been imparted. The demon strives, by every wile, to rob us of this treasure, let all our care be employed in its preservation. Watch over your interior, lest anything warp or embitter your mind. Cultivate purity of heart. Make frequent acts of divine love, of adoration, and entire abandonment of yourself to the tender providence of God. Often cast your eyes on the Son of God. Ask yourself, what would he say, what would he do, how would he act on such an occasion?

Grant, O Lord, *that peace which the world cannot give*, purchased for me by thy sorrows, thy ignominy, and thy pains. I know that, during this mortal life, peace can only be found in patiently enduring the trials and sufferings incident to our exiled state. Give me that meek and humble heart wherein alone thy peace dwelleth here below.

## TUESDAY

*On the wounds of Jesus in his glorified body.*

1ST POINT. "He showed them his hands and his side." (*John*, xx. 20.) Learn from your divine Master the inevitable necessity of suffering during this life. Behold the God-man, the just man, and the sinner, attached to the cross. The sinner, who is not exempt from suffering, the just, who also must bear the cross, for thus God proves and perfects his virtue. Is the Man-God exempt? Look upon his hands and feet! He is truly "a man of sorrows," whose cross alone is heavier than the united sufferings of the just and the sinner. He is covered with wounds on the cross, to teach us that each member of his mystic body must be marked with this cross, by participating in his sufferings. You must suffer, either with Magdalen, by the practice of penance; like Martha, by the exercise of good works, or united to his Sacred Heart, with St. John, by the fervour of charity.

2ND POINT. Nothing can be more advantageous than to suffer in the service of God. Jesus Christ has sanctified sufferings, and rendered them adorable in his own divine person. By his wounds he has merited his glory. The cross has glorified Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ has glorified the cross; and it is also the cross that has glorified all the saints. Jesus Christ, the uncreated wisdom, having taken upon himself our sufferings, has communicated to them the sweetness of his divine wisdom. Poverty, chastity, obedience, pardon of injuries, and other virtues so difficult to practise, now seem easy and delightful to souls united to the Son of God, who is their example and their strength.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ retains the wounds on his glorified body, as a refuge for his children in all their necessities. Does the world and the flesh solicit, or the devil lay snares to surprise you? Enter the sacred wounds of Christ. Does remorse for past sins afflict your conscience? Cast yourself, with Magdalen, at your Saviour's feet. If discouragement hovers over you, the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the source of mercy, and his wounds are the channels through which it flows. Are you advanced towards perfection? Enter the wound of the heart that excites a hunger and thirst for poverty, pain, and opprobrium.

O Lord, I sigh after thy love, and await the happy moment when thou shalt call me to thyself.

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### WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus giving power to his Apostles to remit sin.*

1ST POINT. "He breathed on them, and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." (*John*, xx. 22, 23.) Jesus Christ imparts the Holy Ghost to his Apostles, because the remission of sins is a work of charity attributed to the Holy Ghost. He chooses the day of his resurrection, which is a day of joy, for establishing the sacrament of penance, because the conversion of a sinner rejoices heaven and earth. Should not the sinner approach the tribunal of penance with liveliest gratitude and joy, since there he finds a remedy for all his spiritual evils, the life of the soul, the treasure of grace, the favour of God, the merit of past works, with an increase of glory.

2ND POINT. Consider those words: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven." Admire the liberality of Jesus Christ, who communicates to man so marvellous a power. Two words suffice: "I absolve thee." No more is required than the penitent confession of sin, to receive absolution! There is no sin, however grievous and multiplied, that cannot be remitted in the sacrament of penance. How blinded, then, the sinner whom a false shame withholds from this tribunal of infinite mercy. With what charity should the sinner be received by those who hold the place of so meek and merciful a judge! With what alacrity, solicitude, and patience should they attend and minister to his spiritual necessities!

3RD POINT. "He breathed on them, and he said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (*John*, xx. 22.) Thus he confirms them in the faith of his resurrection, and in the hope of their own. Our Lord assures the disciples of the certainty of this mystery, appearing in the midst of them, eating of the food they had prepared, breathing on them, and inviting them to touch his sacred wounds. It is thus you should prove your spiritual

resurrection: by charity, devotion, and humility; by patiently enduring pain or inconvenience, and afflicting your body with wholesome austerity, retrenching every indulgence of the taste—by spreading around the odour of good example, so that you may say with the apostle: We are the good odour of Jesus Christ.

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## THURSDAY

*On the goodness of Jesus Christ to his incredulous Disciple.*

1ST POINT. “And after eight days again his disciples were within and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said: Peace be to you. Then he said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.” (*John*, xx. 26, 27.) The incredulity of this apostle is without excuse: he neither believed his divine Master, nor St. Peter. He has the temerity to prescribe laws to his sovereign and his God; the very thought of putting his hand in the sacred wounds of his Saviour should cause him to tremble with awe. Jesus bears with the infidelity of his disciple, and prepares a remedy for his incredulity, and the fortifying of our faith. Shun especially all attachment to your own judgment. Yield willingly to the opinion of others.

2ND POINT. Consider—The charity with which Jesus withdraws St. Thomas from his infidelity. Should not the servant seek the master, the sick person the physician, and the disciple his Lord? Yet the divine Saviour is the first to seek this faithless disciple. “Jesus cometh, the doors being shut.” Here he performs a miracle. He shows him his wounds. “Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand and put it into my side.” St. Thomas discovers that nothing can be concealed from the infinite wisdom of his Master, who, sweetly invites the disciple to touch those sacred wounds, whence issues the light of faith.

3RD POINT. St. Thomas had failed in his faith, and was deprived of the supernatural virtues founded thereon. In the

wounds of his Master all his losses are repaired. In the absence of St. Thomas, the Son of God had imparted his peace to the disciples, made them pastors of his Church, ministers of his sacred word, and of his divine mysteries. Shall this apostle be deprived of those favours? Shall the church lose so zealous a pastor, the vineyard of the Lord so excellent a labourer? No. Thomas receives his mission, his authority, with the peace and gifts of the Holy Ghost, who makes of him a witness and confessor of the resurrection of our Lord.

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### FRIDAY

*On the holy affections of St. Thomas on seeing his Master.*

1ST POINT. Those words of the apostle, "My Lord and my God" (*John*, xx. 28), are a confession of his faith, which former incredulity renders more ardent. He is the first who declares the union of the divine and human nature in Jesus Christ. The Son of God requires them to combine the prudence of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove. Thomas, in desiring to appear more wise than others, lost his simplicity, until happily finding a refuge in the wounds of Jesus Christ, where he may weep in secret, in the sorrow and confusion of his heart, imploring pardon for his ingratitude to his Lord and Saviour.

2ND POINT. Consider—again those words: "My Lord and my God." It is the outpouring of joy and love from a heart that has recovered its lost treasure. The charity of the apostle is rekindled in touching the sacred wounds of his divine Master, whence came that fire which had inflamed the heart of St. Thomas, when before the passion of his Saviour, he said, "Let us go and die with him."

3RD POINT. Consider those words, "My Lord and my God." When you visit the most Holy Sacrament, or receive the Bread of Life, pronounce them with a lively faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ, and tender gratitude for his grace. Pronounce them with humility—with a profound sorrow and confusion for your sins. Again pronounce them with a sentiment of love and holy joy.

“My Lord and my God.” Enlighten my mind, inflame my will, that all the powers and affections of my soul may be consecrated with an eternal devotion to thee, “my Lord and my God.”

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## SATURDAY

### *Jesus recommends Faith to his Apostles.*

1ST POINT. “Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.” (*John*, xx. 29.) Faith is a virtue that has subdued the world to the Son of God; it is the key that has opened to him those hearts that the enemy had possessed. Faith inspires the just man to prefer the service of God to his own interests, and to despise himself for the love of his Creator. Saints, “by faith, conquered kingdoms.” (*Heb.* xi.) Cultivate this virtue with care, since “without faith it is impossible to please God.” (*Heb.* xi. 6.) It is the virtue of great souls, whose desires extend beyond the visible world.

2ND POINT. Faith is a virtue that confers beatitude even in this life—a participation of the light of glory, imparting knowledge, love, joy, and sanctity. The knowledge faith gives of divine things exceeds all human science. Charity cannot subsist without faith. The joy imparted by faith is of inestimable value. Where faith is, there is repose, tranquillity, and a remedy for every evil. Without faith there is no true sanctity. “The just man liveth by faith.” (*Rom.* i. 17.)

3RD POINT. Faith is a virtue that enlightens our darkness, and leads us securely through the shadows of death unto the light of life eternal. Faith teaches us that visible things are transitory, but that the invisible endure for eternity. Those deceive and distract. These are of infinite price. God imparts the gift of faith to all within the church, but how few act under its influence! How few meditate on eternity! How few seek God in the sincerity of their hearts. Frequently place yourself in the presence of God; remember his eye is upon you, although you behold him not. When you shall behold him in the unveiled

splendour of his glory, it shall no longer be said to you: believe in that which you see not, but rather rejoice in beholding that in which you have believed.

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#### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

*On Jesus promising the Holy Ghost to his Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "It is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go I will send him to you." (*John*, xvi. 7.) The death of Jesus Christ is the meritorious cause of the mission of the Divine Spirit, the gift of God by excellence. O infinite mercy of God, that imparts to us a gift equal to himself! What gratitude should we have for all the favours contained in this treasure? When you are inspired with some pious thought, or receive light to aid you in the practice of good works, or to overcome evil habits, it is the Holy Ghost that visits you, and he comes through the merits of Jesus Christ. This visit is a fruit of his death, the price of his blood, the recompense of his labours and sufferings. How should you esteem this grace?

2ND POINT. The Apostles were so tenderly attached to their divine Master, they could not endure his absence, nor even think of his departure without extreme sorrow. Could their attachment to Jesus Christ render them incapable of receiving the Holy Ghost? The love the Apostles bore him was too human, too much mingled with self-love. It was not "according to knowledge"; therefore they could not relish the fruits of the Divine Spirit. "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you." However trivial the inordinate affection may be, it is an impediment to our strict union with God. Can it be a small evil that deprives us of so great a good?

3RD POINT. The Son of God desires to form a marvellous intercourse between heaven and earth. For this effect he elevates his sacred body to heaven, that his Divine Spirit may descend on earth, and by his means establish between the celestial and terrestrial worlds an intimate communication. He

had said—"And I, when I am raised up from the earth, will draw all things to myself."

Come, Holy Ghost, replenish the hearts of the faithful, and enkindle therein the fire of thy divine love. May all creatures unite in glorifying the adorable Trinity, through the sacred wounds and precious blood of Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.

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## MONDAY

*On Jesus appearing to the Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.*

1ST POINT. "And that night they caught nothing." (*John*, xxi, 3.) Those labour in the darkness of night who are in the state of sin; for sin is a fatal night. Those labour in the night, who seek themselves rather than the glory of God or their own sanctification. Again, those labour in the night who presume on their own strength; or who withdraw from obedience, and are guided by their own judgment and will; for obedience enlightens and points out to us the way to heaven. Whoever follows not this heavenly light, walks in darkness.

2ND POINT. "Jesus therefore said to them: Children, have you any meat?" (*John*, xxi. 5.) This tender Father is touched with compassion, in beholding them after their fruitless labour, fatigued, hungry, and destitute of nourishment. Therefore he asks, "have you any meat?" "They answered him, no." He would have them acknowledge their necessity to dispose them for the favour he was about to impart. He addresses you thus: my child, have you humility, patience, devotion, obedience? Reply that you are destitute of all these, that you expect them from his infinite goodness. But remember, that he gives only to those who labour.

3RD POINT. "Jesus . . . saith to them . . . : Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find." (*John*, xxi. 5, 6.) He then blesses their obedience with a miraculous success. Do you also cast your net on the right side, and not on the left; that is to say, on the side of grace, not of nature. In all your actions, let grace prevent the movements of nature, and

regulate the tenor of your life. Cast on the side of the cross, not of sensual delights, nor even of spiritual consolations. Seek the glory of Jesus Christ—in him you will find the plenitude of all good. We are not required to do greater or more difficult things than those we actually perform; but animate them by obedience, charity, or some other motive of virtue.

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## TUESDAY

*On Jesus revealing himself to his Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.*

1ST POINT. “Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.” (*John*, xxi. 4.) A special light and grace are necessary for recognizing the presence of our Lord. He finds not in all the purity of heart and application of mind necessary for so precious a gift. How few study to know him in his several states of suffering and glory, and in the whole economy of his love, so that they can say, in all times and places: “It is the Lord.” (*John*, xxi. 7.) He permits this malady, this humiliation, this unexpected and vexatious accident. He speaks by the lips of this preacher or superior. Suffice it to know this comes from God; I respect and love him, whether he appear as an infant in the crib, an artisan in the shop of Nazareth, a fool in the court of Herod, or a public victim on the cross. He is equally, under all circumstances, my Lord and my God!

2ND POINT. “That disciple, therefore, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter: It is the Lord.” (*John*, xxi. 7.) The first who recognised Jesus is the disciple whom he loved, because the eye of love is clear-sighted. Do you desire to know Christ? Endeavour to deserve his love. Do you desire that he love you? Love purity; join purity with charity: these two virtues are the eyes of the soul, which are open to all the secrets of God. “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.” (*Matt.*, v. 8.) “Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from thy face, and take not thy holy spirit from me.” (*Ps.* i. 12, 13.)

3RD POINT. "That disciple, therefore, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter: It is the Lord." St. John, by a special grace, discovers his divine Master by the interior impressions of love and he now recognizes his Lord in the splendour of his new and glorified life, having followed, and loved him amidst all the opprobrium and horrors of his ignominious death on Calvary. Thus Jesus is accustomed to manifest himself to pure and innocent souls. His infinite holiness inspires them with a contempt for created objects; so that, far from mistaking the creature for the Creator, they discover, even at the first glance, that it is not their God. From you, my God, proceed this light, this peace, this strength and benediction.

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### WEDNESDAY

*On St. Peter casting himself into the Sea to meet his Master.*

1ST POINT. "Simon Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea." (*John*, xxi. 7.) This is the duty of a fervent disciple of Jesus Christ, who desires to labour profitably for the salvation of souls. He must clothe himself with humility, patience, obedience, and all the virtues which constitute the livery of the Son of God, in order to follow his divine Master, and succeed in his undertakings. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." (*Rom.* xiii. 14.) Meditate on these words. He is your Master. He is Jesus, that is, Saviour. Having taken upon him human nature with all its miseries, for your redemption, is it not just, that in order to attain salvation you should be clothed with his sanctity, and partake in his sufferings?

2ND POINT. St. Peter "cast himself into the sea," more speedily to reach his divine Master. The disciple of Christ should spare no labour, fear no danger, when there is question of the service of God. The fervent expose themselves to every suffering for the love of Jesus Christ. The cold and tepid fear to be drowned in the waters. The fervent undertake difficult and heroic works. Imitate St. Peter, and you will soon

arrive at union with God. The ardour of your love will overcome every obstacle, and render you in a manner omnipotent. "A continual effort of fervour is necessary to surmount the torrent of the world, which hurries away the soul in its rapid course, and casts it into an abyss of woe."

3RD POINT. "The other disciples came in the ship (for they were not far from the land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fishes." (*John*, xxi. 8.) This marks two types of persons who tend to perfection. The first are fervent and courageous, they cast themselves into the sea of sufferings, to attain a more speedy union with Jesus crucified. The second are meek and peaceful; submissive to the will of God, they remain in the vessel of divine Providence, enjoying the favours of their Master when he is present, and when he absents himself awaiting his approach in peace and in silence.

O my divine Lord! I am entirely thine; if thou art pleased to cast me into the sea of humiliation and sorrow, impart to me that fortifying grace which may animate and sustain me in a manner worthy of thy faithful follower. My love for thee is yet so weak, that I shrink with terror from suffering and the cross. When shall I courageously embrace voluntary humiliation and suffering in thanksgiving for thy devoted love?

## THURSDAY

*Jesus invites his Apostles to dine.*

1ST POINT. "As soon then as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread." (*John*, xxi. 9.) This is a type of the spiritual nourishment which our Lord prepares for those who labour in his service, the bread of angels renews their vigour. Our Lord not only invites his disciples to eat, he serves them himself in person. The soul that is nourished with the Eucharistic bread on earth has a foretaste of the delights with which it shall be satiated in the heavenly kingdom!

"Lord, give us always this bread." (*John*, vi. 34.)

2ND POINT. "Jesus saith to them, Come and dine." (*John*, xxi. 12.) The presence of this Divine Master fills the disciples with joy. Yet, "none of them who were at meat durst ask him: who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." (*John*, xxi. 12.) In silence they adore, and enjoy the sweetness of his conversation. The nearer we approach to God, the more profound our respect; and if sometimes we inquire, "who art thou?" it is not from a presumptuous desire of penetrating his greatness, but from an ardent will to know, love, and praise him—to humble ourselves, in the consideration of his excellence and our own nothingness.

O Lord, my God, thou art all my good; and who am I that should dare to speak to thee?

3RD POINT. "Jesus saith to them: bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land." (*John*, xxi. 10, 11.) Our Lord demands a correspondence with his love. Charity is ready to undertake and suffer all things, in order to obey God, and co-operate with the graces received. The true disciples of Jesus Christ, draw all to him, and refer to his glory alone the fruit of their labours. Is such your love for your Divine Saviour? Is your love so strong as to sustain the weight of every labour, and sink under no fatigue? Were our Lord to say to you, as to the disciples: "Bring hither of the fishes you have caught," what good works have you performed? what mortifications have

you practised? what victories gained over self? how many souls converted? what reply would you make?

Empty thy heart of creatures, and God will fill it with the plenitude of his divinity.

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## FRIDAY

*Jesus demands thrice of St. Peter, whether he loved him.*

1ST POINT. "Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" (*John*, xxi. 15.) Our Lord puts this question, to instruct those who are called to govern others, or labour for the salvation of souls; because they should excel in charity, which is the bond of perfection. Is patience requisite? "Charity beareth all things." Does the weakness of others demand meekness and compassion?—"Charity is patient, is kind." Charity is the most precious ornament of those placed in superiority, for "charity is not puffed up." "Charity . . . seeketh not her own." (*1 Cor.*, xiii.) Therefore seek God's glory, and not your own interest. Admire the goodness of the Son of God, who not only loves, but inspires with the same love those by whom you are governed. Give him thanks for the charitable care of your superiors. Love them; pray for them; respect and esteem them.

2ND POINT. "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" This is to demonstrate how exalted should be the charity of those called to labour for the salvation of souls. Do you love Jesus Christ more than fortune, friends, honour, even yourself? Otherwise you are not worthy of being entrusted with the care of souls redeemed with his precious blood. St. Peter repairs, by his triple protestation of his love, the threefold denial of his divine Master. Let not your many faults discourage you; you may efface them by tears, and even surpass those who have lived in innocence, if henceforth you will more ardently love Jesus Christ, and repair the past by the fervour of a contrite heart.

3RD POINT. "And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God." (*John*, xxi. 19.) Having established St. Peter head of the Church, our Lord promises him neither

the riches, the delights, nor the honours of the world. He, on the contrary, predicts to him persecutions, martyrdom, and the death of the cross. "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not." (*John*, xxi. 18.) A true disciple of Jesus Christ should willingly endure pain and labour, renounce fortune, and life itself, for the glory of his Master, and the salvation of souls purchased with his blood.

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## SATURDAY

### *On Jesus reproving the curiosity of St. Peter.*

1ST POINT. "So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou me." (*John*, xxi. 22.) Here you are instructed to watch over yourself, without inquiring curiously into what regards your neighbour. If you occupy yourself with God and the care of your own soul, you will have peace of heart and union with God. The heart that truly loves God despises all things else; for God himself, whose eternity and immensity fill all things, is its true and only joy.

2ND POINT. "So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou me." Do not desire to penetrate the secrets of my providence; leave to me the disposition of all things, regarding yourself or others. My son, fear the judgments of God; tremble with fear at the wrath of the Omnipotent. Let not thy heart exalt itself to penetrate the works of the Most High, but rather humble thyself to sound the depth of thy sins, to examine the number of thy offences, and how often thou hast abused my grace.

3RD POINT. "So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou me." Moderate your solicitude and desires, however just or charitable they seem; to meet with a spirit of humility and resignation every occurrence contrary to your inclination; and willingly to receive admonition or correction. Look not back to examine the conduct of others. Charity requires that you rejoice in the good they operate, and make allowance for the frailty of nature, but warns you neither

to be troubled nor scandalized at the disorders which may happen.

Lord, grant me grace that my will may firmly adhere, and tend to the accomplishment of thine in all things. Dispose of me and all creatures according to thy good pleasure.

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## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

### *On the necessity of Prayer.*

1ST POINT. "And he spoke also a parable to them, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint." (*Luke*, xviii. 1.) There are three sorts of prayer in which the life of a Christian should pass. The first, mental and vocal prayer; the second includes every species of good works which are as a tribute of honour rendered to God, and a supplication presented to his divine clemency. The third kind of prayer is exercised by the affection of the soul for this holy exercise, a habit of recollection, and a secret inclination to apply itself to God when works of necessity or charity leave it free. A Christian is always under an obligation, and always capable of prayer—if not actually, by word, at least virtually, by disposition and the bias of inclination. He is obliged to hold himself in a disposition of charity, and meekness towards his neighbour—of humiliation towards himself—of reverence, love, and supplication towards God.

2ND POINT. There are times in which prayer is especially necessary—as, the morning and evening. Thus, in the ancient law, they daily offered in sacrifice a lamb, and burned incense on the altar of perfumes morning and evening. Our Lord himself passed the night in prayer before selecting his Apostles; not that he needed aid, but he did so for our instruction. Again, prayer is necessary when danger, persecution, or temptation threaten. Let prayer be the commencement of every action; without Jesus Christ you can do nothing. Many wise have been deceived, and many holy ones have endangered their salvation, by neglecting to recur to God by prayer.

3RD POINT. Our Lord, now about to return to his Father, has left prayer as the bond of union between heaven and earth.

We shall have no part in the Holy Spirit which Jesus Christ has promised to send, unless we live united with him by grace: "Ask and you shall receive." To whom has he promised the Divine Spirit but to those who ask? Give yourself to prayer with all possible recollection. Let your heart be "hidden in God with Jesus Christ." The Apostles, when separated from our Lord, hide themselves from the world and persevere together in prayer, awaiting the promised Comforter.

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### MONDAY

*On Jesus appearing to his Disciples on the mountain of Galilee.*

1ST POINT. "And the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And seeing him they adored: but some doubted. And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." (*Matt.*, xxviii. 16, 18.) This power, inherent in his Divine Person, he has merited for his sacred humanity by his sufferings and death. "He became obedient even unto the death of the cross." In the example of this divine model, you learn that the cross is the path of glory: humility, patience, meekness, and obedience, are the titles by which you are to reign with Jesus Christ, and triumph over the enemies of your salvation. Our Lord could have vanquished the powers of the earth by other means than the cross. But he would purchase at the price of his precious blood, the honour of victory, to teach you that you must place all your strength and consolation in the cross.

2ND POINT. The power of Jesus Christ is terrible to the sinner, who cannot resist him because he is infinite; nor fly from him. We are all sinners, we have all cause to fear, and to say—There is none like to thee, O Lord: thou art great, and great is thy name in might. Who shall not fear thee, O king of nations? for thine is the glory: among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee. When we remember what man is, shall we be astonished that

he is seized with fear at the thought of the divine judgments, since his own conscience is witness of his guilt?

3RD POINT. "Going therefore, teach ye all nations." (*Matt.*, xxviii.) He says not: Go, avenge my death, destroy those who have crucified me; such is the language of sinners. The Son of God says: Go, labour for the salvation of mankind, teach them the path that leads to heaven, wash away their sins in my blood, impart to them the graces I have merited, and of which I constitute you the dispensers. You shall suffer much in this work of charity; but let neither torments nor death abate the zeal with which you labour for those souls for whom I have laid down my life.

Thou knowest, O my Jesus, that my weak nature shrinks from the cross. Inspire me, I beseech thee, with patience and courage; I can give thee no greater proof of gratitude and love than by bearing the cross after thee. May I embrace it generously!

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## TUESDAY

*On Jesus appointing his Apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations.*

1ST POINT. Jesus Christ now going to ascend into heaven would draw us after him by the virtue of faith. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned." (*Mark*, xvi. 16.) Our Lord says: "Going, therefore, teach all nations." Cold and void of the fear of God must be the heart of him who would not willingly spend himself, and be spent, to contribute to the salvation of souls redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ. Is not the salvation of souls the masterpiece of the mercy of Jesus Christ? O blessed vocation, to bear this adorable name throughout the world, and cause every knee to bow before it, and every tongue to confess it!

2ND POINT. Baptism is the gate by which men enter into the Church, which is the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He would have this conferred in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Ghost, to teach them that their souls are consecrated to the most Holy Trinity. The primitive Christians were accustomed to commence every action by the sign of the cross, saying: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Our whole conduct should be holy, our lives worthy of the presence, the approbation, and love of the sacred Trinity—Give thanks for the grace of baptism.

3RD POINT. To have received the faith in baptism, suffices not for salvation; we must add the observance of God's commandments. Faith in the indivisible Trinity is the foundation of the edifice of salvation; but we must build thereon. "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him?" (*James*, ii. 14.) The commandments of God must be observed with devotion. O how have I loved thy law, O Lord! it is my meditation all the day." Consider who he is that speaks, and declares to you his will. It is your God, your Redeemer, your Judge, who will render to every one according to his works.

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### WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus promising to his Apostles to be with them to the end of time.*

1ST POINT. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (*Matt.*, xxviii. 20.) The presence of Jesus Christ constitutes the happiness and strength of his servants. Let not your weakness make you fearful; confide in me, says Jesus Christ: I am thy strength. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." (*Matt.*, xxviii. 18.) Faithful souls draw profit from that which the world esteems evil, as poverty, contempt, temptations, persecutions. How is this effected? By faith in Jesus Christ.—By confidence.—By charity.—Love and do all that you will. By prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.—If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you.

2ND POINT. How important to remain united to Jesus Christ, since his presence is so advantageous and necessary. He will

be always with you, if you weep his absence, as did blessed Magdalen; if you efface your sins by the tears of sincere repentance, as St. Peter; if you communicate the knowledge of God to your neighbour, as the devout women made known the resurrection of our Lord to the Apostles; if you exercise charity towards the poor, and communicate with devotion and reverence, as the disciples of Emmaus; if you assist with fervour at public prayer and sacrifice, and preserve fraternal charity; if you love labour, and refer all your actions purely to the glory of God; if you love Jesus Christ, and ardently long to behold him in his glory; if you live in obedience, and the observance of your rules.

3RD POINT. The words of consolation with which our Lord terminates his glorified life on earth: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." We are therefore assured that he is always with us, but we are frequently unmindful of our resolutions to hold ourselves in his divine presence. Our only care should be to cultivate an intimate union with Jesus, victorious over death. After the resurrection, our Lord conversed only with his chosen friends. He spoke only of the kingdom of God. If he eat with his apostles, it was only to confirm their faith in his resurrection. Such was his glorified life on earth, and such should your life be. You should seek the society of the virtuous, give yourself to prayer, mortify your senses, and let your whole conduct be so changed, that you may say with St. Paul: "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me." (*Gal.*, ii. 20.)

## PART II



## ASCENSION THURSDAY

### *On the triumphant Ascension of our Lord.*

1ST POINT. "While they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their sight." (*Acts*, i. 9.) Jesus Christ ascends into heaven, to take possession, in our name, of the crown which he inherited from eternity, and purchased for us by his sufferings and death. His humility shall be crowned with a diadem of glory. He is the first-born of the Father. He shall, therefore, be the first who shall ascend into heaven. God is ascended with jubilee, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet. Sing praises to our God; sing praises to our king, for God is the king of all the earth. God shall reign over the nations.

2ND POINT. The chariot of God is attended by ten thousands; thousands of them that rejoice; the Lord is among them in Sina, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive. Jesus Christ has now accomplished his divine mission; he has filled the earth with his graces; overthrown the powers of hell; delivered the captive souls from limbo; and burst the prison of the tomb. This day he gives joy to heaven with the glory of his ascension, and fills those places left void by the pride of Lucifer.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ ascends slowly, as if leaving us with regret; he raises his hands, giving to the disciples his last benediction; he leads with him those blessed souls delivered from the captivity of limbo; he is borne in triumph by millions of angels, who render this service, not to the need, but to the honour of their sovereign Lord and Creator. He prepares for us the way to heaven, and forgets not the meanest or lowliest of his creatures. Listen attentively to the parting expression of his love: "I go to prepare a place for you." (*John*, xiv. 2.) To render yourself worthy of this favour, walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, follow the traces of his humility, patience, poverty, and contempt of the world. Thus shall you follow him into the kingdom of his glory.

Come, Holy Spirit, take possession of our souls, enlighten, govern, and animate them with the love of Jesus.

## FRIDAY

*On detaching our Hearts from the Earth to follow Jesus Christ into Heaven.*

1ST POINT. Jesus Christ has no sooner ascended to his heavenly throne than he draws us after him by the power of an omnipotent love. He operates, by his power, what human strength could not do, sending his grace to the aid of corrupt nature. Love is the impelling principle of the heart. If, then, you love Jesus Christ you will no longer love the pleasures of the earth.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ has planted his cross throughout the world, to remind us that here we have nothing to hope for, and that all our good is centred in heaven. His visible presence is withdrawn—he still remains with us under the sacramental veil—not to make of this earth a place of heavenly delight, but rather to sustain us in our exile and sufferings. He invites us to renounce all things and follow him; his love presses us, afflictions compel, and maladies warn us to think on eternity; death, which shall forcibly sever every tie, leaves us no moment of security. But “the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart: and he will save the humble of spirit.” (*Ps.* xxxiii. 19.)

3RD POINT. How great the blindness of man—who prefers being deprived of his true good, of grace, of God himself, rather than renounce wretched pleasure, which brings with it only confusion and remorse!

Where your treasure is, there also should your heart be. Since Jesus Christ, who is your treasure, is ascended into heaven, your heart should follow, and dwell there inseparably united with him. It is the place of your everlasting inheritance. Dwell there in affection, in thought; let it be the centre of all your desires, your joy, your hope.

## SATURDAY

*On Jesus leaving the Print of his Sacred Feet on the Mount of Olives.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he departed from them and was carried up to heaven." (*Luke*, xxiv. 51.) Jesus Christ, departing from the earth, leaves the trace of his footsteps imprinted on the Mount of Olives. Jesus is the salvation of sinners, the light of the just, and the glory of the blessed; how important, therefore, not to stray from the path he has traced with his blood, since it is the way of life, of salvation, of light, and glory. The name of Christian, which you have received in baptism, imposes the obligation of imitating Jesus Christ, in the practice of his virtues.

2ND POINT. "And going out he went, according to his custom, to the Mount of Olives." (*Luke*, xxii. 39.) Jesus commences his passion by prayer; he terminates it on the cross. By prayer and suffering he has opened heaven; by prayer and suffering you must follow him. The life of a Christian should be a continual prayer. "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me." (*Ps.* lxxv. 20.) As long as you persevere in prayer, be assured that God will not withdraw from you his mercy. The mercy of God and the prayer of man form a bond of the closest union.

3RD POINT. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven." (*Acts*, i. 11.) You have seen his glorious ascension; hereafter you shall see him descend in the splendour of his majesty, to judge the living and the dead. His elect shall rejoice with an everlasting joy, and his enemies shrink terror-stricken from the wrath of his countenance. The remembrance of that tremendous day is the most powerful preservative against sin. Will you encounter the rigour of his justice, or be sheltered under the protection of his mercy. If he is not your protector, he shall be your judge; if he is not your friend, he must be your enemy.

## SUNDAY

## AFTER THE ASCENSION

*On Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father.*

1ST POINT. "And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God." (*Mark*, xvi. 19.) In the incarnation, his glorified soul is united to a mortal and passible body; in the resurrection both soul and body are glorified; in the ascension their glory is perfected in being raised to the throne of the Divinity. His being *seated*, marks the end of his labours and combats, the consummation of his work, and the stability of his everlasting kingdom—the equality of his divine person with that of the Father. If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.

2ND POINT. "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me." (*John*, xv. 26.) The testimony of the Holy Spirit has banished from the world the darkness of ignorance and sin, and has caused every virtue to flourish. Listen attentively to the voice of the Holy Ghost, who, in the depth of your heart, renders testimony of Jesus Christ. He will produce in you the effects of his grace. He will humble the pride of your spirit, weaken the tyranny of passion, enlighten you with his lights, which impress on the soul the truths of eternity.

3RD POINT. "And you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning." (*John*, xv. 27.) Who were those that first followed Jesus Christ? They were poor fishermen, weak, simple—that is, without knowledge or power. "For see your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might bring to naught things that are. That no flesh should glory in his sight." (*1 Cor.*, i. 26, &c.)

And let them trust in thee, who know thy name: for thou hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

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## MONDAY

### *On Jesus as our Advocate in Heaven.*

1ST POINT. "For Jesus is not entered into the holies made with hands, the patterns of the true, but into heaven itself, that he may appear now in the presence of God for us." (*Heb. ix. 24.*) He presents to his Eternal Father those wounds he received for our redemption, through which he begs the divine clemency in our behalf. The sacrifice daily offered in the church is not only a commemorative sign of what he suffered in his passion, but also the offering which he presents of those sufferings in the church triumphant. In the ancient law they offered lambs and calves: now we offer Jesus Christ; but we offer him in a state of mystic death, under the sacramental veil. In heaven he pleads for us before the Eternal Father, without veil or figure. Have confidence in that infinite mercy, which can never be unmindful of your wants, but with that confidence unite a faithful co-operation with his grace.

2ND POINT. The Son of God, as our advocate, offers to the Eternal Father our penances, good works and prayers, which become acceptable through union with his merits. If Jesus Christ has laboured, watched, and prayed for you, with what fervour should you not offer yourself, through him, to the Eternal Father? Reflect on the importance of uniting all your actions and prayers with those of the Son of God, and performing them with the utmost possible devotion and perfection, to the end they may deserve to ascend through him as an odour of sweetness.

3RD POINT. "And I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom: that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom: and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (*Luke, xxii. 29, 30.*) Jesus disposes of all things in heaven and on earth; he disposes of our life and death, our fortune and honour, of all that regards us to prepare

for us a heavenly crown. For this he was born, for this he lived, died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. "I go to prepare a place for you." (*John*, xiv. 2.) "Be you then also ready; for at what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come." (*Luke*, xii. 40.)

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## TUESDAY

*On the coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the world.*

1ST POINT. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven." (*Acts*, i. 11.) He shall return, not as a victim of humiliation and suffering, but in the splendour of his eternal glory, as judge of the living and the dead. With what consolation will the blessed be filled, on hearing that tender invitation: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me." (*Matt.*, xxv.)

2ND POINT. Consider the honour the saints shall receive in the general judgment. The least of their actions shall not pass without recompense. Those who were least upon earth shall be greatest before God. This mortification, practised in private, that injury or confusion suffered for the love of Jesus Christ, this pain of body or mind borne in silence, unknown to all but God, shall then be published in the presence of the universe, and praised by the lips of the Son of God. "Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints." (*Sap.*, v.)

3RD POINT. The bodies of the saints shall issue from the tomb, clothed in glory, like to the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ arisen from the dead. The sight of the glorified body of Jesus Christ will complete their happiness and glory.

O Lord! shall we henceforth refuse whatever thou demandest? Shall we not joyfully sacrifice for thy sake all we hold most dear, since thou restorest a hundredfold whatsoever we renounce for thy service.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On the terror of the Reprobate at the coming of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven." (*Acts*, i. 11.) What will be the terror of the reprobate, when called forth from the infernal dungeons, to receive the sentence of final retribution? The re-union of their souls and deformed bodies will be one of their most excruciating torments.

O Saviour of the world! imprint in my mind a profound fear of thy judgments, and pierce thou my flesh with thy fear. Thou hast said, that he who loveth his life shall lose it, and he who loseth it for thy sake, shall save it in eternity. Grant that this truth may be ever present to my thoughts, and so deeply engraven on my heart, as never to be effaced therefrom.

2ND POINT. Fear, shame, and confusion will overwhelm the wicked, when they shall be arraigned before the judgment-seat of the Son of God. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (*Heb.*, x. 31.) "For the great day of their wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand" (*Apoc.* vi. 17) the reproaches of his abused goodness and clemency? For your sins I have been immolated; I have been despoiled of my glory, that you might be clothed with my grace and merits; I have given you my blood to drink, and nourished you with my flesh: how have you requited my benefits?

3RD POINT. What envy, rage, and confusion shall seize the reprobate on hearing the sovereign judge say to his elect: Come, ye blessed of my Father; and then turning to those on his left hand, pronounce: Begone, ye accursed. . . ! Can I never blot from my remembrance that which I have lost; shall I always

be sensible to what I now suffer? Think seriously on this: lose not heaven for a nothing, if you would not incur an eternal regret for the privation of an infinite good which you could easily have acquired.

Lord, reign henceforth over all my affections; annihilate all that displeases thee in me.

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## THURSDAY

### *On our Spiritual Ascension.*

1ST POINT. Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? As the resurrection of Jesus Christ has been followed by his ascension, so spiritual resurrection obliges us to seek the means of ascending after him. Let us make of our vices a ladder, by which we may ascend after Jesus Christ into heaven. We must raise the affections of the heart to that place where Jesus is exalted. The Son of God has entered heaven only by the way of the cross. We must sacrifice our natural inclinations and self-love, in order that we may be united with Jesus Christ.

2ND POINT. "Blessed is the man whose help is from thee: in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps. . . . They shall go from virtue to virtue: the God of gods shall be seen in Sion." (*Ps.* lxxxiii.) Having ascended in spirit with Jesus Christ, we should fix our thoughts on Heaven. How useful is the remembrance of Heaven to strengthen us in the practice of virtue. Keep thy heart free, says the author of the *Imitation*, and raised upwards to God; because thou hast not here a lasting city. Our hearts should be as disengaged from the earth as if we already enjoyed the society of the blessed. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever." (*Ps.* lxxxiii.)

3RD POINT. Consider—the example of the angels, who descend on earth. All their joy and beatitude consists in accomplishing the will of their Divine Master, who has appointed them to instruct his disciples. Imitate these heavenly spirits in accomplishing the will of God, whether in uniting

yourself with him by contemplation, or in exercising the works of spiritual or corporal mercy. Seek God alone, in all places, at all times, on all occasions. "Bless the Lord, all his works; in every place of his dominion, O my soul, bless thou the Lord." This is what thou oughtest to wish, that whether in life or death, God may be always glorified in thee.

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## FRIDAY

### *On the Apostles preparing to receive the Holy Ghost.*

1ST POINT. "And I send the promise of my Father upon you: but stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high." (*Luke*, xxiv. 49.) Imitate the apostles in preparing for the reception of the Holy Ghost. The Divine Spirit brings with him his sevenfold gifts, more precious than all the treasures of the earth. Yet, you are cold and negligent in disposing your soul for the reception of these graces. Lord, the mansion of my heart is too narrow to receive thee, enlarge it thyself that thou mayest enter.

2ND POINT. The solitude, and desolation of the apostles in the absence of their Divine Master, served as a preparation for attracting the Holy Spirit. Do you desire that the Paraclete fill your heart with his consoling presence and gifts?—empty it of creatures, and of all that is displeasing in his sight. "Give not up thy soul to sadness, . . . there is no profit in it." (*Eccles.*, xxx.) The spirit of compunction draws down the Divine Spirit into the soul. Banish from your will all inordinate desires: for how can a man attached to sensual appetites, and, subject to passions, hope for that torrent of heavenly delights, which even the apostles could not receive when they were attached to the visible presence of the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ.

3RD POINT. The apostles, when they were preparing to receive the Holy Ghost, "were all together in one place" (*Acts*, ii), and united in one spirit. St. Luke says, "they had but one heart and one soul." They lived under one head. They prayed without ceasing. Imitate these eminent virtues, which will

dispose you for receiving the spirit of Jesus and his gifts. Cherish fraternal charity, and obedience towards those appointed to govern you. Acquit yourself with fidelity of all your duties. Give yourself to prayer. Let your heart be united to God by an entire dependence on his paternal bounty. The Spirit of God communicates himself more willingly to those who ardently desire, and fervently prepare, for his reception.

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## EVE OF PENTECOST

### *The Mission of the Holy Ghost.*

1ST POINT. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the fruit of the merits of Jesus Christ. Our reconciliation with God is accomplished by his death. It has pleased God that all plenitude should reside in him, that by him and in him all things should be reconciled, and that by the blood he shed on the cross, peace in heaven and on earth should be restored. It was necessary that Jesus Christ should offer a sacrifice, and reconcile us with God, before we could receive this rich present.

O sacred wounds of my Saviour, source of my happiness, obtain for me that purity necessary for receiving the inestimable gift you have merited for me.

2ND POINT. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a fruit of the prayer of Jesus Christ: "I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever." (*John*, xiv.) Jesus Christ prayed during his mortal life, that we might receive the Holy Ghost; and having ascended into heaven he continues this prayer. Although Jesus has demanded this incomparable gift for us, he requires that we demand it for ourselves. O didst thou know the gift of God, and who it is that says, "if any one thirst, let him come to me."

Lord, give me this water, that I may not thirst for ever; Spirit of Jesus, fountain of delight, come water my soul, cleanse what is sullied, water what is dry, heal what is wounded; that I may say: "The Most High has sanctified his dwelling-place."

3RD POINT. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the fruit of the ascension of Jesus Christ: "Ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts in men." (*Ps.* lxxvii. 19.) The glory of the Saviour is the triumph of the cross. He is crucified as man, and gloried as God. Before the Holy Ghost descends, Jesus must be crucified. The Holy Ghost is given to detach our hearts from earth and love of the present life, that they may be animated with a desire of heaven.

Do penance; renounce that attachment; mortify this passion; overcome that evil habit. Jesus Christ invites you.

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## PENTECOST SUNDAY

### *The Mission of the Holy Ghost.*

1ST POINT. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (*Acts*, ii.) The Holy Ghost descends to-day, and in virtue of his divine mission, takes the place of the Son of God. He comes to crown the merits of Jesus crucified. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (*John*, xx.) Our Divine Lord does not say, receive the grace of the Holy Ghost, but, receive the Holy Ghost in person. He imparts to them the fruit of his prayers and tears. An infinite merit demands an infinite recompense. The mission of the Holy Ghost is the fruit of the death of Jesus Christ, the end and crown of his admirable life.

2ND POINT. The Holy Ghost descends to-day to display the majesty of Jesus Christ, and the splendour of his triumph. The Son of God is no sooner ascended to the throne of his glory, rich with the spoils of the earth, than he dispenses to men his munificent gifts. What gift can the King of Heaven give, proportioned to his greatness, except God Himself? He gives that Divine Spirit which proceedeth from his Father and himself from eternity. Truly, he must be sovereignly great and infinitely good, since what he has bestowed on us is infinite.

Who can worthily praise thee, thou King of glory, who givest us a gift of no less value than thyself?

3RD POINT. The Holy Ghost descends this day to establish the law of love in our souls, and to constitute the bond which

unites us with Jesus Christ. Unless we receive God, we cannot love God. As the charity of God is shed in our hearts by the coming of his Holy Spirit, we may truly say, let us love with the heart of God. In the heart of God there is an infinite inclination to bestow, and in the heart of man there is an inclination to receive, that can only be satisfied by an infinite good. As the Eternal Father communicates his nature and divine attributes to the Son, so, in imparting the Divine Spirit to the just man, and regenerating him by grace, he renders him participant in his nature, and consequently in all his perfections.

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### MONDAY

*The gift of the Holy Ghost compared to that given us in the Son of God.*

1ST POINT. The union of the Holy Ghost with our souls, resembles the union of the Divine Word with the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, in rendering us the children of God by adoption. Do not abandon the noble sentiments which should animate the children of God. Esteem only that which is divine. If you understand the dignity to which you have been raised, you can never descend to what is merely human.

2ND POINT. The hypostatic union places the soul of Jesus Christ in possession of all the riches of heaven. The union of the Holy Ghost, in like manner, enriches the soul with all spiritual gifts. St. Paul says: "Because you are sons, God hath sent the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father." (*Gal. iv.*) Words full of tenderness, that manifest the goodness with which the Holy Spirit, according to the apostles, sustains us in our many weaknesses. "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." (*Rom. vii.*)

3RD POINT. The union with the Divine Word elevates the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, to an absolute dominion over all creatures, as sovereign pontiff and king. The union of the Holy Ghost impresses on our souls a similar character of great-

ness. The holy Scripture calls the Christian people, who live according to the spirit of Jesus Christ, a holy nation, a royal priesthood. This day the Holy Ghost descends on the apostles, as a royal unction, which consecrates them princes of heaven and earth. The end of the mission of the Holy Ghost is to make us gods, and the children of the Most High.

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## TUESDAY

*Of the great love God bears us, considered in the mission of the Holy Spirit.*

1ST POINT. Consider the depth of this love, by which he descends from the splendour of his glory, even unto the dust of which we are formed; and without regarding other qualities but that of his children, receives with equal tenderness the lowliest slave, and the greatest monarch, commanding all to call him Father. He loves us, notwithstanding our defects. "Lord, . . . what is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. viii. 2, 5.) His body is but dust, his soul a monument of thy benefits, his understanding darkness, his heart selfishness, his memory forgetfulness; yet, thou rememberest him, and thy love triumphest over his ingratitude.

2ND POINT. The Father wills all men to be saved. He wills it if you will it, and offers his grace to excite that desire, and his aid to obtain it. The Son wills it, since he died for all, and calls all men with a design of saving them: "Come ye all to me." "My heart is an inexhaustible source of bounty to efface every crime. Come to me and I will refresh you. Yours is the sin, mine the remedy." The Holy Ghost wills it, for he has filled the house of God: and though all are not disposed to receive him, nevertheless he comes for the sanctification of all. Such is the measure and extent of God's love.

3RD POINT. The charity of God is eternal. His love for us is without a beginning. He loves us without interruption. Interest often changes the human heart; passion extinguishes friendship; forgetfulness effaces it; but God cannot be deceived in his choice; he is infinite goodness, therefore his charity is

continually active. Sanctifying grace, the bond of this charity, is a gift which can only be lost through our own fault. Learn hence what your love should be. Let it begin from this moment, to continue for eternity.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *The Opposition we give to the Inspirations of the Holy Ghost.*

1ST POINT. Divine love is to the heart what the soul is to the body. It detaches from earth and elevates towards heaven: it is saddened by offences offered to God, and it compassionates the miseries of the neighbour. A spark of that divine fire which the Holy Ghost enkindles in the heart consumes the rust of earthly affections. To find God we must quit creatures and renounce self. Are your sentiments thus generous? Is the love you bear yourself grafted on the love of God? Do you love health only for his service? Do you enjoy no relaxation but that which he approves and permits? Do you desire consolations, or the goods or conveniences of this life, but inasmuch as they are necessary?

2ND POINT. Divine love teaches us to converse familiarly with God. A soul inflamed with charity, entertains a continual remembrance of the divine presence, speaks to God, heart to heart, consults neither passion, interest, nor human respect, but only the will of God, and makes the Gospel the rule of all her enterprises. Under sufferings—she looks not to secondary causes, but addresses herself to God with filial confidence, seeking consolation in the bosom of infinite mercy. In prosperity she returns all to the glory of her Benefactor.

3RD POINT. "Charity hath grown cold in the hearts of many." All say they love God, yet hate his image in their brethren. They abandon the poor who are his members. They give all to nature, nothing to grace—all to pleasure, nothing to true piety. They love God, yet they never think of him; their own will is preferred to his. Let the Holy Ghost reign over all the powers of your soul, and banish therefrom the spirit of the world. Beseech this divine spirit so to impress the seal of his love on your soul, that death itself may not be able to break it.

## THURSDAY

*On the Holy Ghost as the Guest of our Souls.*

1ST POINT. "And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever. The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him; but you shall know him, because he shall abide with you and shall be in you." (*John*, xiv. 16, 17.) Our souls are the temples of the Holy Ghost. He enters by the memory, the understanding, and will; sometimes by a remembrance of his benefits; sometimes by new light in the understanding, and again, by sweet attractions gaining the will, replenishing it with love and joy. But he comes not in the tumult of passions. He comes sweetly breathing peace.

2ND POINT. The Holy Ghost knocks at the door of the heart, but finding it closed, he enters not. Sometimes he enters and remains not, because he meets therein infidelity and inconstancy. Do you desire that the spirit of Jesus remain always with you? Be you always submissive to his inspirations; make him reign in your heart; let the spirit of the world and the flesh find no place therein. The Holy Ghost is master, for "the spirit breatheth where he will," on whom he will, when he will, and as much as he will. Expect not to enjoy his presence unless you abandon yourself to his guidance.

3RD POINT. Sanctifying grace is the bond that unites the soul with God; when sin has broken this bond, the Divine Spirit withdraws his love and grace; consequently, we are no longer children of God, or heirs of his heavenly kingdom, but slaves destined to eternal flames. We weep the loss of a friend, but we behold with indifference God depart from the soul.

O God of love, thou alone shall be henceforth the master of all my affections. Hide not thy countenance from thy poor servant. Let me die to myself, that I may behold thee.

## FRIDAY

*On the marks of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Soul.*

1ST POINT. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." (*Acts*, ii.) The first mark of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the soul, is a filial fear and profound reverence for the majesty of God, who is everywhere present. The soul in which the Holy Ghost dwells, knows the value of the treasure possessed, and the fragility of the vessel in which it is contained; therefore it trembles at every step. This fear is a morally infallible sign of his presence, and a happy presage of salvation. This filial awe is accompanied by spiritual joy. Love is the source of joy.

2ND POINT. Another mark of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the soul, is a great courage, which elevates us above all the goods and evils of the present life, by a generous contempt inspired by the gift of fortitude. Man is created for a more noble end than the world. God is the centre to which he should aspire with all the powers of his soul. When the Paraclete enters the soul, and proclaims the law of love, he restores man to all his lost advantages. The faithful soul, fortified by this grace, and animated with a holy confidence generously raises itself above nature. All that the world contains in the circle of its vanities, becomes an object of contempt, because the light of the Holy Ghost discovers that it is a shameful baseness in him who is heir to a heavenly empire, to become the slave of earth, and to cast himself beneath that which God has placed under his feet. The soul animated by the Holy Ghost displays courage under sufferings. It possesses God, having nothing to fear.

3RD POINT. The third mark of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the soul, is the light infused into the mind by the gifts of counsel, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. By the gift of counsel, he directs every action, and resolves every difficulty. By knowledge, he teaches to judge all things in the light of eternity. By the gift of wisdom he shows that as God is infinitely powerful, it is blindness not to fear him; and being the sovereign good, he merits the love of all hearts. By the gift of understanding the soul understands how it is possible that they who suffer persecution are blessed, that there is honour in bearing contempt, and that the flight of worldly pleasure is solid joy.

## SATURDAY

*On the reign of the Holy Ghost in our Hearts.*

1ST POINT. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak." (*Acts*, ii. 4.) The Holy Ghost reigns in the heart, because he is the Spirit of Love, and love has its seat in the heart. Amongst all creatures he has no more delightful dwelling-place than in the heart of the Immaculate Virgin. Her soul and body are his consecrated temple. Previous to the Incarnation he prepared her to become the Mother of God: on the day of Pentecost he comes to her as a spouse, and distributes through her hands the treasures of grace. Therefore we should honour her with all the powers of our soul, and the affections of our heart.

2ND POINT. Consider—the reign of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the apostles; how admirable the change instantly wrought by the light shed in their understanding, the gift of tongues they received, the fortitude and zeal with which they were inspired for the preaching of the Gospel! What incredible success did he impart to their words, which are the breath of his trumpet, to proclaim the truth to all nations! O Spirit of God! when wilt thou touch my heart? When wilt thou change my weakness into strength, my tepidity into fervour, and my ignorance into the knowledge of salvation?

3RD POINT. Consider—the joy of the Blessed Virgin in the happy commencement of the reign of her Divine Son, and of the conquest of so many souls. With what sweet and powerful words did she instruct and encourage the first children of the Church, the first fruits of the cross, and of the coming of the Divine Spirit. This tender Mother will entertain the same sentiments for you, if you practise the virtues of the primitive Christians. Aim generously at the perfection of a Christian life. Thus will you rejoice the Holy Ghost, prove your gratitude to the heart that bled for you on Calvary, and console that Immaculate Mother who stood sorrow-stricken at the foot of the cross.

## FESTIVAL OF THE HOLY TRINITY

*On the glory we should render to the Most Holy Trinity.*

1ST POINT. The most Holy Trinity is the centre of glory, whither tend all the works of the Creator. All that is in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, sing the praises of one God in three Persons. The eternal occupation of the blessed is to chant the sacred canticle, "Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of hosts." (*Isaiah*, vi. 3.) The earth is a great temple consecrated to the honour of this adorable mystery. In Purgatory is found this profound esteem and homage of the most Holy Trinity, from the intense desire of the sufferers to enjoy it.

2ND POINT. The special obligation of man, amongst all creatures, is to glorify the most Holy Trinity. Man is the master-piece of the creation, image of the three Divine Persons. In baptism man is consecrated to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by an inviolable character impressed on his soul. Never forget the vows of your baptism. The Church is the witness of your vow. If you violate the vow made to the Father, you no longer possess a right to the inheritance of his children. If you fail in fidelity to the Son, you lose the fruit of his merits. If you lie to the Holy Ghost, you extinguish the charity he has shed in your heart. The eternal Father has adopted man as his child; the Son calls him by the name of brother, the Holy Ghost regards him as his temple. But that which surpasses all is the honour conferred on man in giving him a Man-God to supply his deficiency in adoring the supreme Trinity, thus perfectly discharging a debt which must otherwise remain eternally unpaid.

3RD POINT. Man alone, amongst creatures, is capable of rendering glory to the Blessed Trinity. To him is confided, as a precious deposit, the honour which the Creator designs to draw from his works. If man reflect on his origin, God is its principle and author. If he look to his last end, God is his sovereign beatitude. If he consider himself, he finds God in the essence of his being. To know God and to love him, is the sovereign good of man in time and eternity.

With heart and lips I repeat: Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

## MONDAY

*On the Love we owe the three Divine Persons.*

1ST POINT. God is our Father by creation, and by the providence with which he watches over his children. He is Father, by predestination, by the preaching of the Gospel, by regeneration in baptism, by the infusion of sanctifying grace, and by the communication of glory. Whom shall we love, if not him who has given us being as many times as there are moments in our life?

2ND POINT. From the Blessed Virgin we learn the love we should render to the Divine Word whether considered as Son of God or Son of Man. She loved him, above all, as Son of God. In this quality Jesus Christ should absorb all our affections. As Son of Man, and consequently Son of the Blessed Virgin, he has given himself to us in the excess of his love; without reserve; given us all, his tears, his blood, his very life. Can we, without the blackest ingratitude, refuse to give ourselves unreservedly to him? "May I die for love of thy love, since thou wouldst die for love of me."

3RD POINT. The Holy Ghost being the Spirit of the Father and the Son, we owe him an equal love with them. He is the Spirit of Love. What, therefore, should be our love for this Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life, the Spirit through whom alone Jesus Christ lives in us, the Spirit who of sinners makes us saints? Are we not obliged by gratitude and justice, to devote ourselves without reserve to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, since whatever we are or have, we have received solely from these three adorable Persons?

Grant, Lord, that I may remember thee; grant that I may know thee; grant, that I may love thee.

## TUESDAY

*On the Reverence we owe to the Three Divine Persons.*

1ST POINT. Reverence is due to the power of the eternal Father which is unbounded, and is absolute over all creatures. It is a more dreadful evil to offend him, than to draw upon ourselves the wrath of all creation. He reaches to all times, and even to eternity. He punishes sin, not only during the present life, but he has lighted up an inextinguishable fire which torments without destroying, that punishes without expiating. "Fear ye him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." (*Luke*, xii. 5.)

2ND POINT. Consider—the reverence due to the wisdom of the Divine Word. For all things were known to the Lord God, before they were created; so also, after they were perfected, he beholdeth all things. (*Eccl.*, xxiii. 29.) The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vain. With what profound reverence for the majesty of the Divine Word should this impress us. It is more shameful for the sinner to offend in his presence, than if he were exposed to the eyes of all angels and men.

3RD POINT. The Spirit of God is ever opposed to sin. During this life his mercy draws the sinner to repentance, which effaces sin, and restores life to the sinner; but after death, he will be delivered over to justice. O Lord, my God, how infinite thy power, which no one can resist! How awful thy sanctity, when opposed to my innumerable sins.

What can I do, O my God, but cast myself on thy mercy, beseeching thee to remedy all my disorders?

## WEDNESDAY

*On Devotion to the most Holy Trinity.*

1ST POINT. The worship of the most Holy Trinity is the characteristic of Christianity. The Christian professes to adore one God in three Persons, by a grace peculiar to the law of love. The sign of the cross (in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost) shows that the knowledge of the adorable Trinity is a fruit of the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ. Three Divine Persons in unity of essence, is the object of our beatitude in heaven, and the principle of our sanctification on earth. The Father draws us by communication of love, and a humble submission on our part to his adorable will. The Son draws us by conformity to himself in a life of recollection in the bosom of his eternal Father. The Holy Ghost draws us by fidelity and pure love, that we may be strictly united by and with him to the Father and the Son.

2ND POINT. Consider—the most solid practice of devotion towards the most Holy Trinity is imitation: the most perfect act of religion is to imitate that which you honour. Let your mind be continually occupied in contemplating the divine perfections. This should be followed by a great love for God, and contempt of self, for we cannot know God without loving him, or know ourselves without a contempt for our own nothingness. Your love for God should extend to your neighbour, uniting you with him by the bond of perfect charity, whatever difference may exist of temper, condition, occupation, or inclination. Your charity must be active in relieving his necessities.

3RD POINT. To the imitation of the most Holy Trinity must be added an invocation of the Divine Persons. Accustom yourself, therefore, to commence all your actions by the sign of the cross, saying: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. During the course of the action, frequently elevate your heart to God, saying—Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts! Finally, conclude your actions by a return of the heart to God, imploring pardon for the faults committed, and referring to him all the good effected—saying, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. Thus the Church terminates the Psalms. Thus you should terminate your mortal life to commence a blessed eternity.

## FESTIVAL OF CORPUS CHRISTI

*On Reverence due to the most Holy Sacrament.*

1ST POINT. The presence of God, whose sanctity consecrates the universe as a temple, should everywhere impress us with veneration and awe, but in no place more profoundly than in the presence of the Eucharistic species. The homage there offered should, if possible, equal the opprobrium he has suffered for sin. To lively faith this tremendous mystery is not less touching than the spectacle of his death on Calvary. If the life of Jesus Christ was a solemn oblation, commencing at the crib and terminating on Calvary, is not the Eucharistic sacrifice of the altar the life and death of Jesus Christ, perpetuated to the consummation of ages?

2ND POINT. "Is it credible then that God should dwell with men on the earth? If heaven and the heavens of heavens do not contain thee, how much less this house which I have built." (2 *Paral.*, vi. 18.) Shall the Sovereign Lord, the Omnipotent God, the Holy of Holies, in whose presence purity itself is not unspotted, enter a heart so tepid, so imperfect as mine? What shall I say to this divine Lord? What reception can I offer worthy this heavenly King? What will he say on entering this cold ungenerous heart? Will he not behold with indignation a lodging so unsuited to his greatness? Lord, I am alike overwhelmed by thy immensity and my own nothingness. Be thou alone absolute master of my entire being.

3RD POINT. The saints approached the Son of God in this mystery of the Blessed Eucharist with reverential awe and profound humility. Were God to honour you by making you the instrument of his miraculous power in creating new worlds, raising the dead, with what reverence would you unite with him to receive the influence of this power? Are you engaged in a work less tremendous, when present at the sacrifice of the *Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world*? The tongue on which he is laid; the heart in which he takes a new life, should it not tremble in receiving this precious deposit?

Let thy clemency, my Saviour, sustain my weakness, since thou ordainest that I bear the weight of thy greatness.

## FRIDAY

*On the change of heart required for approaching the Holy Communion.*

1ST POINT. "For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come." This implies the necessity of dying to the world and our evil inclinations; for no one can draw life from this heavenly banquet, unless by this mystic death and spiritual resurrection you can say, "I live now, not I: but Christ liveth in me." (*Gal.*, ii. 20.) "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." (*1 Cor.*, xi. 27.) How heinous the offence; how deplorable the condition of him who approaches the Holy of Holies with a conscience sullied with crime, without sentiment of sorrow, without a desire of amendment. Religious soul, have you a horror of deliberate venial sin? Have you a determined resolution of correcting all habitual defects? Sound your own heart; are you a friend or an enemy?

2ND POINT. By being admitted to the Holy Communion, you should be transformed into a new man, which is no other than Jesus Christ! His birth, life, doctrine, virtues, death, resurrection, and ascension, all are new and marvellous. Consequently, in virtue of the union contracted with him in the Holy Sacrament, you should so faithfully imitate the Son of God, and practise the virtues he has taught, that it may be said *Jesus Christ liveth in you*. Make not your weakness an excuse.

3RD POINT. The Holy Eucharist seals our conversion by the miraculous change it operates in the powers of the soul; in the understanding, by the light it sheds therein; in the will, by the strength it imparts in resisting evil; by repressing the violence of passion in the heart, and by the increase of charity; rendering the weak and imperfect, strong and invincible; and the earthly and selfish, spiritual and divine. Why then are there so many communions, and so few conversions? The goodness of God is not wanting to us; but we are insensible to his attractions. He comes in the Holy Communion to sanctify us, but we remain voluntarily in our defects.

## SATURDAY

*On the Holy Eucharist as the Bread of the strong.*

1ST POINT. The most Holy Sacrament is called the Bread of the strong, because those who are nourished therewith are obliged to curb their passions, and generously to combat all that could trouble the peace of the heart. "Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people; and God himself with them shall be their God." (*Rev.*, xxi. 3.) When quitting this earth to return to the bosom of his Father, Jesus Christ chose the tabernacle, and our heart, as the place of his repose. Faithful souls who communicate often, should be generous, vigilant, always armed and ready to combat their enemies. The place of his dwelling must be calm and peaceful.

2ND POINT. The Holy Sacrament is called the Bread of the strong, because this Bread imparts strength and vigour for the combat. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him." (*John*, vi.) I am in God, says St. Augustine; what more strong? God is in me; what more sweet? Though I should walk in the midst of the shadows of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me.

3RD POINT. The Holy Sacrament is called the Bread of the strong. It is given to conquerors as a crown of life. Fight therefore generously against all temptations; be master of your senses; gain control over your passions, if you desire to taste the fruits of the divine Sacrament. "He that shall overcome, shall possess these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (*Apoc.*, xxi. 7.)

Grant, O my Jesus! fidelity, the plenitude of thy love, and an invincible courage in resisting temptation.

## SUNDAY

## AFTER CORPUS CHRISTI

*On a lively faith in the Blessed Eucharist.*

1ST POINT. "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith." (*Heb.*, x. 22.) Faith is most necessary for participating in this sacrament. It gives light to contemplate the Son of God, ardour to approach, and peace to enjoy him. You should fix the interior eye, not on the weak accidents, but on the Son of God, the king of glory, who conceals his splendour that you may have access to his mercy, unabashed by the greatness of his majesty. The spirit of faith should cause the heart to thrill with joy, and elicit acts of every virtue. You should concentrate all the powers of your soul in profound recollection. In silence and repose he communes familiarly with a faithful soul.

2ND POINT. Faith is most meritorious, because it subjects to Jesus Christ the noblest power of the soul, and opens to him the door of the heart, the throne of his love. The effort that captivates the spirit to the obedience of faith is heroic. Faith is the key by which souls enter into the secrets of God, and enjoy the riches of his grace. Faith assures them that all the treasures of his goodness are poured out in this Sacrament. It discovers the beauty of his countenance, and makes them sensible of his divine attractions. By faith they understand that Jesus Christ, in whom they confide, is the arm of the eternal Father, to whom nothing is impossible.

3RD POINT. With what fervour should you cultivate a spirit of faith. Many graces are lost, because of the weakness of your faith. Why do you relapse so frequently into habitual failings, and draw so little fruit from Holy Communion? You approach with a faith weak and languid. Enliven your faith that you may receive it with a reverence and devotion worthy your divine guest. Lose not his presence by levity or inconstancy. Above all, love this most amiable and loving Lord, who will himself be the crown of your obedience, and the recompense of your faith.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist, as the model of self-abnegation.*

1ST POINT. The Son of God enters this holy Sacrament, bearing with him all the merits of the cross. If you desire that the spirit of Jesus continue in and by you the work of redeeming charity, you must destroy all that nature has vitiated, that it may give place to grace. So long as you act from merely natural inclination, secret vanity, or self-love, you will never draw one soul to God. The salvation of souls is not the work of nature, it is that of Jesus Christ, whose Divine Spirit cannot enter where self-love reigns. If you will, you may become a glowing fire, inflaming all hearts with divine charity.

2ND POINT. The sacred Body of Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist is the model on which should be formed the truly mortified man, whose faculties must be perfectly spiritualized. The mortified man should neither see, speak, treat with his neighbour, act, nor take repose, but by the movement of Jesus Christ. See whether Jesus alone lives in your thoughts, affections, words, and entire conduct. How sensible are you to vain honour? How eager to seek self-ease and convenience? How attached to self-will and the gratification of sense?

3RD POINT. Although Jesus Christ died but once on Calvary, he daily renews that mystery on the altar. During this holy octave, the Church celebrates the mystic death of her divine Spouse with more than usual solemnity, and calls her children to renew the fervour of the spirit, which is the death of nature. Be not satisfied with having entombed this domestic enemy, for without the practice of unremitting mortification, it will soon spring up again and prevent you from exercising a holy indifference in the employment appointed by obedience.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, as a model of the  
Evangelic Spirit.*

1ST POINT. The life of Jesus Christ in the most Holy Sacrament is an interior and hidden life, although he dwells in the midst of creatures. Such should be your life, if you would live according to his spirit. When conversing with men you should hold yourself so united to God, as to draw all your strength from communicating with his Divine Majesty. It is not the natural talents, success, or public admiration, that render you great before God, but the hidden life of prayer, from which natural talents draw all their efficacy.

2ND POINT. Consider—the holy life of Jesus Christ in the blessed Eucharist, is directed by an infinite wisdom, inconceivable to human wisdom. Your life should resemble the mystic life of Jesus Christ, by a filial love that has no other bounds than the good pleasure of God, and the maxims of the Gospel. You adore Jesus Christ in the morning as your master and guide, and promise to overcome yourself, but on the first occasion yield to the impulse of nature. Beseech him to control your senses and inclinations.

3RD POINT. The life of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist is a continuous miracle. He exercises an unwearied patience amidst all the insults offered to him by ungrateful man. For twenty centuries he has dwelt with us in the tabernacle, yet he daily renews his sacramental life, on innumerable altars throughout the world. Such is the life of those who act by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. They serve God in honour and in ignominy; they rise above opprobrium; they undergo labour, without losing repose of spirit; they daily renovate their spirit; they die continually to themselves, and persevere with fidelity in the service of God. Beg of him to create a clean heart within you, or rather to purify, to sanctify, and inflame, that which is now so earthly, that it may bear some resemblance to the generous and devoted heart hidden in the Eucharist.

## WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus as a Model of Zeal in the Holy Sacrament.*

1ST POINT. The zeal for the salvation of souls causes Jesus daily to descend on the altar, that through him we may receive life. The image of his sanctity should animate the spirit of his ministers of charity, whom he sends forth to invite all men to the heavenly banquet. They should prefer the salvation of souls to every personal consideration. All their talents, all their efforts, should be devoted only to draw souls to God, never seeking their own honour, or interest. If they converse with the world, let it be to lead many into the path of salvation. Were you now called to give an account of your stewardship, could you say no soul has been lost through your indifference or neglect?

2ND POINT. Although the Son of God burns with the most ardent desire for the salvation of souls, he only exercises this zeal in a spirit of obedience to his heavenly Father. He renders obedience promptly. Perseveringly during twenty centuries he renders it, and with such indifference and resignation, that having descended on the altar, he leaves it not, until borne by the hand of the priest. Such ought to be the disposition of him who acts in the true spirit of Jesus Christ. Obedience should regulate zeal. He should receive from the hand of God and the lips of his superior whatever occupation they assign; his own choice would be fatal to himself, and render his labours unprofitable to his neighbour.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ makes himself all to all, without distinction, of rich or poor, learned or unlearned. He is the consolation of the afflicted, the strength of the weak, the wisdom and light of the simple. Evangelical labourers should consider Jesus Christ alone in those with whom they treat. If there is any inclination, it should be rather towards the most lowly, remembering that they constitute the court of the heavenly King.

My Saviour, grant me thy grace, that as I approach more frequently thy august mysteries, I may also increase in true devotion and zeal.

## THURSDAY

*On the fruits of frequent Communion.*

1ST POINT. Pure and holy should be the tongue, on which the Son of God is so often laid. Let those who utter words wounding to charity, words that proceed from vanity or self-complacency, remember that the lips thus sullied and dishonoured, bear the seal of the Holy Ghost, who has sanctified them. Meditate by whom you are surrounded, when receiving the Holy Communion: the cherubim and the seraphim, whose continual occupation is to bless and glorify God. Join in their canticle of praise.

2ND POINT. You will have drawn fruit from the Holy Communion if you become more spiritual, more interior, more jealous of the purity of that heart which Jesus Christ so frequently honours with his divine presence. When God, says St. Chrysostom, enters the soul as his temple, he banishes all that is terrestrial, making it celestial, angelic, and divine. The soul speaks but of divine things, in the presence of such a Guest. Should we not live in the presence of the adorable Trinity? As Jesus Christ invites us to his heavenly table, we should also prepare a banquet of these *fruits that are sweet to his palate*; these are charity, peace, meekness, liberality, patience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and all other virtues, which are the effects of a worthy communion.

3RD POINT. You will manifest the fruit of a worthy communion in the mortification of the body, and vigilance in restraining all the senses. Abstinence from all the gratifications of sense seems bitter; but without this we cannot celebrate the Eucharistic festival. The body, in participating of the sacred communion, becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost, and a member of the mystic body of Jesus Christ. It should then be preserved in great purity. The eyes that have beheld Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, should never be opened on vanities; the lips which he has entered, should never utter an idle word; they should only pronounce the praises of God or words edifying to their neighbour. Our Lord says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever (*John*, vi. 51, 52), and my

Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him." (*John*, xiv. 23.)

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## FRIDAY

*Behold this Heart which has so loved men.*

1ST POINT. The revelations of the Sacred Heart were made in an age when men, through heresy and error had begun to doubt the love of the Saviour. What more astounding gesture of love could one think of? Lovers have gone to great extremes to manifest their devotion but none save God could think of such sublime testimony. The heart is a symbol of effort, as when we say that a man perseveres under stress because he has a great heart; of life too, for where the heart fails the impulse of life is gone. In the Heart of Jesus we have the symbol of his superlative courage, of his vitality and power which stirred those about him to the very depths—of his love for "having loved his own who were in the world he loved them to the end."

Divine Heart of Jesus, I adore you substantially one with the Eternal Word of God. Make me meek and humble of heart.

2ND POINT. In the Sacred Heart is summed up all the mysteries of his life—his infancy, his hidden life and public life with its miracles, struggles and tremendous conclusion. All is there.

Would that I, like Jesus, had a great heart, to love, to forgive, to endure, to advance!

Would that my heart were pure so that I should see God! Would that it gave to my life as to his—fullness, meaning, fortitude!

3RD POINT. In heaven and in the Eucharist, the Heart of Jesus beats always with love in spite of the sins of ingratitude, forgetfulness, indifference, incomprehension. Model your whole life on the Heart of Jesus—the ideal that has transformed mediocre people into saints. The Heart of Jesus is large and embraces all mankind. Forget yourself, your petty interests,

your fears, your hurts—real and imaginary, your progress and your virtues. Lose all self-interest in the desire to see him reign. It is his Kingdom that alone counts. See in your neighbour another member of Christ and try to envelop him with the love of Christ through you.

Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, increase my faith, hope and charity!

NOTE.—The above meditation does not occur in the original, but has been included for the purpose of completing the series on the Eucharist.

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## SATURDAY

*On Jesus demanding our Heart in return for that which he gives us in the Holy Sacrament.*

1ST POINT. “My SON, give me thy heart.” (*Prov.*, xxiii. 26.) God will never accept our services if they are not tendered with a willing heart. Some give to the poor; some sacrifice their bodies by austerity; but these are valueless unless accompanied by the offering of the heart, for God needs not our riches nor mortifications, but he is jealous of the heart. We can indeed refuse our heart; but we cannot do so without injustice; since, although it is free, it belongs to God, who has only given it, in order that we may sacrifice it to his love.

2ND POINT. Consider—the Son of God demands our heart as a tribute, not only of love, but of justice. We have consecrated ourselves inviolably to his service, renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our heart belongs to God as the work of his hands. No one may dispute its possession, he has impressed on it two signal marks, by which is recognised its almighty author—boundless capacity that God alone can fill and a resemblance of infinite beauty which causes God to love it above all his works. “You are no longer your own; you are bought with a great price.” Can you not awaken a single pulse of love or gratitude in your cold and faithless heart?

3RD POINT. The Son of God incessantly knocks at the door of our heart, yet all refuse him entrance. What does he seek

in the desolate manger? To what does he refer all his labours and journeys? What does he thirst for when expiring on Calvary? What does he desire in remaining with us in the most Holy Sacrament? Hearts that will love him—yet he finds them not! “My son, give me thy heart.” To whom will you give it if you give it not to God? The Son of God would make it a paradise. Will you refuse it to him who is your only good?

Come, then, Lord, come, reign over my will, that it may have no other impulse but thy love.

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### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus resolving to manifest himself to the world.*

1ST POINT. “And Jesus himself was beginning about the age of thirty years: being (as it was supposed) the Son of Joseph.” (*Luke*, iii. 23.) Meditate on this long silence, this hidden and humble life. Why does He remain so long hidden among the people as a weak and ignorant man, He who is the virtue and the wisdom of God? The King of Heaven is called, and considered the son of an artisan? He is the true glory of the eternal Father. “The Word was God.” (*John*, i.) Should not the humility of Jesus confound our pride? We are ignorance itself, yet, we seize every occasion of displaying our supposed knowledge; we rashly interfere and dictate to others; we are prompt to speak, and desirous to appear learned in all things.

2ND POINT. When Jesus is about to begin the preaching of the Gospel, he declares to his Mother that the time is come, when he must quit her dwelling, to give himself to the *business of his Father*, and the salvation of man. He explains the necessity and importance of this work, and gives her to understand the labours and persecutions he is to undergo. He deprives himself of her society to obey the will of his heavenly Father. What a censure on your conduct, who so often disobey God, to satisfy your attachment to creatures!

3RD POINT. Jesus, by an act of humility and penance, mingles with the crowd of penitents, that he may receive baptism from

the hand of his precursor. He that is to baptize the world in his blood, seeks a baptism of water, as if he were but an ordinary person. "He would be baptized to teach us, by his example, to humble ourselves, if we desire to be saved." He is the Holy of Holies, yet he bears the resemblance of sin, and we who are sinners, desire to appear saints. Nothing is more weak than a proud man; he is prostrated by the least breath. Be humble, if you would be victorious and crowned with glory before God and man.

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## MONDAY

### *On the Baptism of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him. But John staid him, saying: I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said to him: Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice. Then he suffered him." (*Matt.*, iii. 13, 15.) St. John was baptizing and announcing the coming of Jesus Christ, whom he had seen but in the spirit, when the Son of God presented himself to be baptized. With what profound and tender awe, did he lay his hand on the head of him whom angels adore! The soul that approaches to God, and treats with him without profound respect, knows neither God nor herself.

2ND POINT. Jesus encourages his awe-struck precursor, saying: "Suffer it to be so now;" and instructs us, that every humiliation which the divine will demands, should be embraced with a generous devotedness. "For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice." This grand maxim should be the impelling principle of a soul that aspires to perfection. Those who by duty are called to instruct others, should practise all virtues in a spirit of humility, purity, and compunction. Humility so practised, is consummate justice. The first degree of humility is to submit to superiors, and not prefer yourself to equals; the second to submit to equals, and not prefer yourself to inferiors; the third, to place yourself beneath inferiors, in which consists the plenitude of justice, which Jesus Christ has practised.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water." (*Matt.*, iii. 16.) Man, by baptism, is elevated to the highest dignity, being made the child of God, and heir of his heavenly kingdom. "Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened." (*Luke*, iii. 21.) To his baptism you are indebted for the graces received in your own. First, that of adoption, which made you a child of God, and the object of divine complacency. Second, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which enable you to lead a life conformable to the dignity of children of God. Finally, a right to the kingdom of heaven, the inheritance of the saints. Co-operate with these graces by sanctity of life; and let your only care be to please God in all things.

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## TUESDAY

### *On the retreat of Jesus in the desert.*

1ST POINT. "And immediately the spirit drove him out into the desert." (*Mark*, i. 12.) Jesus withdraws immediately after having received the glorious testimony of heaven. He flies the honour which is his due; and you seek the glory and praise which you merit not: "Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert." (*Matt.*, iv. 1.) When he replenishes the soul with his divine presence, he always excites it to labour ardently. If you are not animated by the spirit of fervour, it is a mark that the Holy Ghost has not filled your soul. It is after extraordinary favours that the Holy Ghost leads Jesus into solitude. Heavenly consolation is soon lost by the soul that loves not silence and recollection.

2ND POINT. Jesus withdraws into the desert, to treat with his Eternal Father about the great work for which he had descended on earth. He retires to sanctify and lay the foundation of an active and contemplative life; to establish fasting and penance in his Church, and to teach evangelic labourers what they must do to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Why does the Incarnate Wisdom, who beholds in one view the past, present, and future, thus prepare in solitude for the execution of his design? It is for my instruction; to teach me to

think more seriously than I have hitherto done, on my eternal salvation. Weak and blind that I am, eternity draws near, and I prepare not for its approach.

3RD POINT. In the desert Jesus Christ offers for you a sacrifice of penance. Learn to listen to his inspirations that you may join recollection with action, in labouring for the salvation of your neighbour. Fly worldly conversation, eliminate unprofitable discourse, withdraw from dissipating society, and appear in public only for the glory of God, and the instruction of the people. Those charged with the care of souls are obliged frequently to treat with God, and to meditate in his presence what they are to declare on his part. They are obliged to spread around the odour of their virtue, which alone can give influence to their words. They are to converse with the world only when charity requires, and God calls them there. The evangelic labourer must be united with God, to watch over himself, "to spend and be spent" in the service of his neighbour.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On the temptation of Jesus in the desert.*

1ST POINT. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry." (*Matt.*, iv. 2.) The Son of God permits the evil spirit to spread his snares, in order that you may be on your guard, and provide for your defence. You have an enemy that sleeps not, and continually seeks your destruction. He watches the inclinations of your heart, to discover what passion predominates therein, that he may surprise you in the weak point. To vanquish him you must despise both his threats and promises, because he cannot overcome you without your own consent. This enemy is indefatigable—he wears us down by importunity often worse than violence. Have recourse to prayer, and implore the divine assistance, without which you cannot resist the least temptation.

2ND POINT. "And the tempter coming, said to him: if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." (*Matt.*, iv. 3.) The wily enemy tempts our Divine Lord with

gluttony, under pretence of the necessity he endures. "When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry." (*Matt.* iv. 2.) How often has he vanquished you by the same artifice? "Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written: *That he hath given his angels charge over thee.*" (*Matt.*, iv. 5, 6.) Thus has he often deceived you into dangerous occasions, presuming that no evil would result. Under pretence of prudence, has he not whispered: "Cast yourself down;" that is, moderate your indiscreet fervour: preserve health, lest you become useless to others. You, indeed, require direction; consult your superior, through whose lips you will hear the voice of the Holy Ghost. "Again, the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And said to him: All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me." (*Matt.*, iv. 8, 9.) Did Satan possess the entire world, gladly would he give it to draw you into a single sin; yet, blind that you are, you commit them without number for a phantom, a nothing!

3RD POINT. "And all the temptation being ended, the devil departed from him for a time." (*Luke*, iv. 13.) From the example of the Son of God you learn how to vanquish your enemy. He rejects the tempter promptly; he deliberates not, but repels him with horror, opposing to his assaults the eternal truths, and the word of God. Is it with such resolution and firmness you resist? Do you defend yourself on supernatural motives? "It is written: *The Lord thy God shall thou adore.*" (*Matt.*, iv. 10.) Make this your shield: God has forbidden it; my rule permits it not; it is contrary to the Gospel and the spirit of Jesus Christ: "Then the devil left him: and behold angels came and ministered to him." (*Matt.*, iv. 11.)

## THURSDAY

*St. John saying to the people: Behold the Lamb of God.*

1ST POINT. The Eternal Father has chosen St. John to publish the coming of his divine Son. The heart, voice, and hand of St. John all are devoted to glorifying the Lamb. Jesus is the Lamb by excellence, because of his innocence, his meekness, patience, silence, and obedience. He is the Lamb of God, because he is the divine Son, who has offered himself as an atoning victim to the justice of the Eternal Father. He is the Lamb because his merits are priceless and superabundant for the expiation of the sins of the world. By an excess of love, he has given himself for our redemption, through his blood, and that we might thence draw, as from an inexhaustible source, the remedy of all our evils, and the plenitude of every grace. With what joy, love, and respect, should you hear these words pronounced by the priest: "Behold the Lamb of God! behold him who taketh away the sins of the world!"

2ND POINT. "The next day again John stood, and two of his disciples; and beholding Jesus walking, he saith: Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they follow Jesus." (*John*, i.) They were not impelled by curiosity, but drawn by the Holy Ghost, by whom they were inspired with a desire of more intimate knowledge of the Son of God, and of becoming his disciples. These three words, "Behold the Lamb of God," suffice to gain their hearts.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus turning, and seeing them following him, saith to them: What seek you? Who said to him: Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith to them: Come and see." (*John*, i. 38, 39.) Were Jesus to ask you: "What seek you?" could you reply, that you seek him alone—our blessed Lord, who ardently wishes your salvation! He would have you frequently inquire *where he dwells*. He would have you contemplate heaven, and conceive a generous desire of its possession. "They came, and saw where he abode, and they stayed with him that day; now it was about the tenth hour." (*John*, i. 39.) Happy are the disciples who follow Jesus Christ in the narrow path of humility, patience, mortification and charity! "Come and see." Enter the stable of Bethlehem. Ascend the hill of Calvary, and beho

what he there suffers for your salvation. Approach the most holy sacrament, where his love is as a "consuming fire."

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## FRIDAY

### *On Andrew bringing Simon to Jesus.*

1ST POINT. "And Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who had heard of John, and followed him. He findeth first his brother Simon, and saith to him: We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." (*John*, i. 40, 41.) Andrew proclaims that he has found him, who from the beginning, the holy patriarchs had so ardently expected and desired to behold. "He that has found Jesus, has discovered a precious treasure; or rather a good above all goods." (*Imitat.*, b. ii., c. 8.) All the good that I possess is but a little foretaste of God. How few they are that penetrate this truth, how few are they that reduce it to practice! We count it nothing to gain Jesus Christ, and nevertheless, every sacrifice should be esteemed as nothing for attaining this sovereign good.

2ND POINT. "And he brought him to Jesus." No sooner has Andrew found the treasure, than he shows it to others. He holds not long discourse with his brother; he leads him at once to the source of grace. Fire produces fire; and he who has found Jesus, has nothing more at heart, than to manifest him to the entire world, were it in his power. Andrew drew his brother; Philip drew Nathaniel. How many have you drawn? Fear, lest as yet you have not found Jesus Christ; since you have so little zeal to see him known and served.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus looking upon him said: Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter." (*John*, i. 42.) As soon as he understands that the Christ has appeared, Peter goes to consecrate himself to his service. Suffer yourself to be led to Jesus Christ by the inspirations he sends. Listen to the counsel he imparts through your directors and superiors. "Thou shalt be called Cephas." The supreme head of the Church chooses the fundamental stones of his edifice. The Father of the family sends labourers into

his vineyard, and dispenses to each his office. Be contented with that which he has appointed you. Envy not those who are preferred before you. Andrew was not jealous of his brother. Be satisfied with whatever rank you hold in the house of God, it is always far above your merits. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord, they shall praise thee for ever and ever." (*Ps. lxxxiii.*)

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## SATURDAY

### *On the calling of Philip and Nathaniel.*

1ST POINT. "On the following day he would go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip. And Jesus saith to him: Follow me." (*John, i. 43.*) What account do you make of a similar vocation? Reflect on the sweetness and strength of that call which attracted you to his service. How have you corresponded with it? "Follow me." These words will inspire you with strength and courage when you undertake anything difficult for the glory of God. "Follow me." Jesus Christ speaks: he has suffered death, to obtain for you the graces necessary to follow him; that is, to imitate his life. He says: *I am the way.* There is no other. *I am the truth.* All other ways are false. *I am the life.* All other ways lead to death.

2ND POINT. "Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith to him: We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus, the Son of Joseph of Nazareth. And Nathaniel said to him: Can any thing of good come from Nazareth? Philip saith to him: Come and see." (*John, i. 45.*) Learn from the zeal of Philip. His zeal is ardent. He has no sooner received the grace of his vocation, than he burns to communicate it to others. If you love Jesus Christ, you will desire to draw all to the service of this Saviour. The zeal of Philip is wise and prudent. He contends not with Nathaniel, knowing that the sight of Jesus will suffice to gain his heart. You are, perhaps, repelled by the difficulties in the practice of virtue. "Come and see." Experience will convince you that the *yoke of Jesus Christ is sweet* and his *burden light.*

3RD POINT. "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and he saith of him: Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." (*John*, i. 47.) How agreeable in the eyes of the divine Majesty are simplicity and sincerity? "Nathaniel saith to him: Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said to him: Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathaniel answered him and said: Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." (*John*, i. 48, 49.) Learn how important to correspond with preventing grace, which increases in proportion to your fidelity.

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#### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

##### *On the Marriage Feast of Cana in Galilee.*

1ST POINT. "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage." (*John*, ii.) Jesus and Mary are invited as guests to the marriage feast. We also are invited to the nuptial feast of the Lamb. But to sit at his table we must be clothed with grace. "You are my friends, if you do the things that I command you." (*John*, xv. 14.) "If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him." (*John*, xiv. 23.) The union of the Divine Word with human nature has formed so strict a bond between God and man, that we truly constitute his family, dwelling in his house, and eating at his holy table. The real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, renders him personally present to us. When therefore you communicate, place Jesus Christ in your heart as on a throne, consider him as your king, who prescribes laws to all the powers of your soul and body.

2ND POINT. "And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine." (*John*, ii. 3.) We also frequently experience a want which should humble and confound us. The wine of human consolation often fails by a secret permission of Providence, in order to detach us from creatures. The wine of sensible devotion is liable to fail, but this poverty, though

more humiliating than the former, should not disturb us, because it is sometimes more profitable than interior sweetness. The wine of real virtue frequently fails in the want of humility, patience, charity, mortification, fidelity to grace and to the practices essential to the attainment of perfection. This we should lament bitterly, and labour with all possible diligence to expiate.

3RD POINT. "The Mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine." Jesus Christ would honour his blessed Mother and strengthen the faith of his disciples: for the miracles wrought by the Son of God during his life were visible proofs of his divinity, and the seal with which the Eternal Father marked his mission. As the wine failed at the marriage feast of Cana, so sensible devotion is sometimes withdrawn at the Eucharistic table, because Jesus Christ permits it to fail; to unite us immediately to himself by a vivid faith and a pure love, that depends not on this interior sweetness. Let us humble ourselves under the hand of God, and suffer ourselves to be conducted in all things by his divine wisdom.

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## MONDAY

### *On the Marriage Feast—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come." (*John*, ii. 4.) His hours and moments are marked by Providence, and regulated with an admirable justice. To the intercession of his blessed Mother alone appertains the privilege of anticipating the time predestined for his miracles and mercies. To us it belongs to expect them with patience, to receive them with reverence, and co-operate with them faithfully. "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in his own power." (*Acts*, i. 7.) Let it be sufficient for you to prepare for the coming of the Holy Ghost, when it shall please the Father to send him. Abandon yourself therefore to the guidance of divine Providence. All that you should ask of the Father of mercies is that preventing and accompanying grace in every duty, which will enable you to obey his will.

2ND POINT. The times and moments of divine Providence differ in our regard. There is "a time of war and a time of peace" (*Eccles.*, iii.)—a time of humiliation, and a time of glory; moments of darkness, dereliction, and the cross, and moments of light, of enjoyment, and repose. You should neither fear nor shun the moments that seem painful, nor desire nor anticipate those that appear more favourable; but love them equally, receive them with simplicity, saying, with the Son of God: "Father, the hour is come." (*John*, xvii. 1.)

3RD POINT. When the Son of God engages you in occasions of suffering, receive not this as a mark of anger or indignation. He has observed this same apparently rigorous conduct towards his blessed Mother, to give her occasion of exercising the most heroic acts of virtue. He himself was thus treated on the cross, although he was the well-beloved of the eternal Father. He writhed under the severity of that hand, when agonized with sorrow he exclaimed: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." (*Matt.*, xxvii. 46.) We should not be depressed with sorrow, if sometimes we experience on the part of God, a cold silence, a repelling severity, or the keen reproach he whispers interiorly in our conscience. On the contrary, we should, in imitation of our heavenly model, and our most holy patroness, sustain such trials with humility, patience, meekness, and confidence in him who thus exercises our virtue. If he seem deaf to our prayers, let us say, with St. Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (*John*, vi. 69.)

## TUESDAY

*On the Marriage Feast—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye." (*John*, ii. 5.) In order perfectly to gain the heart of the Blessed Virgin, you must be obedient to her Divine Son: "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye." The Son of God entered into the world to obey, and accomplish the will of his heavenly Father; also to command in your heart, and establish therein the kingdom of God. You must obey with him, if you would reign with him. For in proportion as you obey Jesus Christ, you shall also participate in his glory. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (*Acts*, ix. 6.) Or with David: "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God." (*Ps.* cxlii. 10.)

2ND POINT. "Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast." (*John*, ii. 8.) Jesus again repeats this miracle at the marriage feast, in your heart, when he changes servile fear into filial love. The delicious wine of charity gives fortitude that sustains the spirit against all the weakness of nature; and so inebriates the soul, that she thinks only on God, and is forgetful of all things else. The soul which is inebriated with divine love, receives suffering with joy. Jesus Christ alone can effect this miraculous change from sin to grace, from tepidity to fervour. One movement of grace suffices to complete a conversion so miraculous, that no human industry could accomplish it. Draw now, and carry to your brethren; for your vessels are filled even to overflowing.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ performs daily another miracle, by changing wine into his own most precious blood. The same is wrought when, through the efficacy of divine love, your soul lives truly the life of Jesus Christ. "He . . . that drinketh my blood, abideth in me." (*John*, vi. 57.) You shed the blood of Jesus Christ if you separate yourself from his mystic body or separate others from it by mortal sin.

Spirit of God, through whom we are united by love to Jesus Christ, grant that my life may be a continuation of his; that is, a life holy, pure, and innocent, so that I may say—"I live now, not I: but Christ liveth in me." (*Gal.*, ii. 20.)

## WEDNESDAY

*On the Marriage Feast—(concluded).*

1ST POINT. "And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew, who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now." (*John*, ii. 9, 10.) The customs of the world are contrary to those of Jesus Christ, because the spirit of the world by which they are directed, is opposed to the spirit of God. Be not then of the number of those who lead a life altogether sensual and terrestrial, which bears no resemblance to Jesus Christ crucified, either by mortification, or by humility, which St. Paul calls by excellence the virtue of Jesus Christ!

2ND POINT. Amongst the customs of worldlings, the most opposed to the spirit of the Incarnate Wisdom, is the avidity with which they enjoy the delights of the present life. They do not consider that their end can be no other than everlasting woe. The present life, considered relatively to the future, is as the dream of a short night compared to a thousand years. What blindness then, for the fleeting gratification of a moment, to plunge into everlasting torments, and with the rich man in the Gospel to cry out during eternity, "I am tormented in this flame." Hear the admonition of Wisdom: "Look not upon the wine when it is yellow, when the colour thereof shineth in the glass; it goeth in pleasantly, but in the end it will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk." (*Prov.*, xxiii. 31, 32.)

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ daily changes wine into his precious blood in the holy Eucharist. This is the precious wine of which is written, it "rejoiceth the heart of man." For in receiving holy Communion, do we not draw waters with joy from the Saviour's fountains, which so inebriate the soul as to obliterate the false maxims of the world, to deaden corrupt nature, and inspire her with generous devotedness. "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God." (*Ps.* lxxxiii. 3.)

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus casting the buyers and sellers out of the Temple.*

1ST POINT. "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." (*John*, ii. 17.) "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 *Cor.*, iii. 16.) "For you are the temple of the living God: as God saith: I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 *Cor.*, vi. 16.) You should consider your soul and body as sacred, being consecrated to God in baptism, honoured with his divine presence. The holy Fathers esteem the Blessed Virgin more happy in being the temple of the Incarnate Word by faith and love, than in giving him to the world by his temporal birth.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ is most jealous of the purity of your heart, which is his sanctuary. In this sanctuary we render him homage, by perfect obedience, by our fervour in the discharge of all our duties, by patience and charity. If such dispositions govern our hearts we may be assured that God dwells therein.

3RD POINT. The sweetness and clemency of Jesus Christ, prevent him not from chastising with rigour those who profane his sanctuary. "If any man violate the temple of God; him shall God destroy." (1 *Cor.*, iii. 17.) Apply to yourself the words of the Son of God to those whom he cast out of the temple: "Take these things hence." (*John*, ii. 16.) Remove from your heart this jealousy, contempt of others, desires of revenge, rash judgments, irreverence, and self-love, "and make not the house of my Father, a house of traffic" (*John*, ii. 16), in which self-love carries on a profane commerce with the enemies of God, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

O Lord! "Cast me not away from thy face, and take not thy holy spirit from me." (*Ps.* 1, 13.) Divine Spirit, Spirit of love, Spirit of zeal, come purify thy temple, burn and destroy all that displeases thee therein.

## FRIDAY

*On the Jews demanding a sign from Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "What sign dost thou show unto us, seeing thou dost these things?" (*John*, ii. 18.) The Jews who beheld the Son of God cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple, demanded a miracle in proof of his authority. Such murmuring is ordinarily among men when God chastises them. They ask, what have they done to incur so great a misfortune. Even the virtuous are subject to this temptation through want of light to penetrate the judgments of God, who always acts from most just reasons. Such murmuring is often the effect of impatience, which will suffer nothing repugnant to sense or painful to self-love; it also proceeds from a secret pride, the enemy of subjection and humiliation. From whatever cause this rebellion arises, stifle it promptly. "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (*John*, xviii. 11.)

2ND POINT. "Jesus answered and said to them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews then said: six and forty years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body." (*John*, ii. 19-21.) Some persons, imitating their Divine Master with a laudable fervour, complete in a short space the house of God; others, from a shameful negligence, after many years, have scarcely laid the foundation of the edifice of perfection. Do you labour coldly and tepidly for your spiritual advancement? Do you not often interrupt the work, or cast down again that which you had already built? Press forward in the path of perfection.

3RD POINT. "Now when he was at Jerusalem at the pasch, upon the festival day, many believed in his name, seeing his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them." (*John*, ii. 23, 24.) May he not also justly distrust you? What weakness does he discover in your will, what infidelity in your promises, what inconstancy in your resolutions? But why did he not trust them? "For that he knew all men, and because he needed not that any should give testimony of man: for he knew what was in man." (*John*, ii. 24, 25.) In vain do you conceal your defects. You cannot deceive God: he penetrates your most secret thoughts, and will one day unveil them in the presence of all men.

## SATURDAY

*On Nicodemus coming to Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "And there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night, and said to him: Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him." (*John*, iii. 1, 2.) Whilst Nicodemus is enlightened by grace, others remain in darkness. "The spirit breatheth where he will; and thou hearest his voice." (*John*, iii. 8.) The works of God are impenetrable. Their origin and their end surpass our understanding. Admire the meekness, patience, and wisdom of the Master, whom the eternal Father sends. What is your desire to hear, or to profit by his instructions?

2ND POINT. "This man came to Jesus by night." Nicodemus chooses the hour of silence and repose, as that most suitable for treating with and receiving the lights of heaven—he came by night, because he feared the hatred and indignation of the Jews, who were scandalized at the poverty of Christ. This weakness was excusable in a man who came, for the first time, to visit the Son of God; but you who make profession of being his disciple are ashamed of the practices of piety and zeal, and seek dispensations from duty through human respect—you are without excuse. What an impediment in the way of virtue is human respect! How many good desires does it stifle?

3RD POINT. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (*John*, iii. 5.) The Son of God seeing in the heart of his disciple a sincere desire of salvation, tells him that he must be born to a new life. "Nicodemus answered, and said to him: How can these things be done? Jesus answered, and said to him: Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" (*John*, iii. 9, 10.) He then reveals his mission and incarnation: "For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son." He reveals the necessity of faith: "That whosoever believeth in him, may not perish."

## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On St. John giving testimony of Jesus Christ, at his return from Jerusalem.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"And John also was baptizing in Ennon, near Salim." Learn from the example of St. John, who humbly retired at the approach of our Lord, to yield willingly to others, preferring them to yourself, and rendering to each one that honour and respect which his particular office requires. Repose of soul can only be found when you have eradicated pride, the source of disquietude. Shun above all things a spirit of pride and haughtiness, which provokes the hatred and indignation of God. How often have you displayed the appearance of virtue, devoid of the animating spirit? You seemed patient, yet you interiorly murmured. You gave exterior marks of charity, meekness, and humility whilst you nourished bitterness, disdain, or vanity.

2ND POINT. "And there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews, concerning purification. And they came to John, and said to him: Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold he baptizeth, and all men come to him." (*John*, iii. 25, 26.) These disciples treat Jesus Christ with contempt. They accuse him of ingratitude. Yet persons of piety fall into this weakness; so artful is self-love in deceiving itself. "Charity envieth not." (*1 Cor.*, xiii. 4.) Envy separates, but charity unites all in one common interest.

3RD POINT. "John answered and said: A man cannot receive any thing, unless it be given him from heaven. You yourselves do bear me witness, that I said that I am not Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." (*John*, iii. 27, *et seq.*) Jesus Christ must increase in you, that you may increase in his knowledge and love. In proportion as you increase in the knowledge of God, you will learn to despise the littleness of all that is human.

## MONDAY

*On the imprisonment of St. John the Baptist.*

1ST POINT. "For Herod had apprehended John, and bound him, and put him into prison." (*Matt.*, xiv. 3.) Herod fears John; he seeks and caresses him, whilst John fearlessly reproves him. Herod is a king, and the Baptist is poor, but he is holy, and that far outweighs the royal dignity. His only care is to draw hearts to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ watches over him, and renders him venerable even to his enemies. Human fear may for a time suspend the execution of crime, but cannot rectify the will.

2ND POINT. John accepts imprisonment and chains with courage. He is not disturbed at being treated as a criminal although he had been honoured as a prophet. He changes his prison into a place of prayer and holiness. The saints received affliction without losing their tranquillity even for a moment, knowing they were under the protecting hand of God, who directs all things for his own glory. When you meet humiliation, look not to secondary causes: it is the hand of God that strikes.

3RD POINT. "And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. . . . And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and came and told Jesus. Which when Jesus had heard, he retired from thence." (*Matt.*, xiv. 10, 12, 13.) Jesus, knowing the jealousy of the Pharisees, meekly withdraws into Galilee. Yield to others, even when they unjustly thwart your designs, in order that you may not irritate, but gain them by meekness. "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (*Matt.*, xi. 29.) Jesus teaches his disciples only that which he is, and commands them only that which he does. Why does the least contradiction provoke, and why feel you such difficulty in yielding to others? Because you are proud; because you know not your own defects, nor sufficiently distrust your own evil inclinations.

## TUESDAY

*On the conversion of the Samaritan Woman.*

1ST POINT. "Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." (*John*, iv. 6.) Jesus rests at the well of Jacob, only that he may labour for the conversion of a sinner. He awaits the Samaritan woman who comes to draw water, and mercifully helps her by his grace. How admirable the care with which the Son of God watches over our souls! Not one is unworthy of being remembered by him. Wearied by his journey, he ceases not to seek sinners whom his zeal embraces with a tenderness that would draw all to himself. Beseech him to grant you that grace, without which no one can come unto him.

2ND POINT. "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink." (*John*, iv. 7.) He asks a little, in order that he may give much. From some he asks water, that is the tears of repentance; from others, a little bread, an act of charity towards the poor; of some again the renunciation of a dangerous gratification. Examine what he demands of you. "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who he is that saith to thee: give me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (*John*, iv. 10.)

3RD POINT. "The woman saith to him: Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw." (*John*, iv. 15.) The Samaritan being touched with the desire of divine grace, the Son of God reveals to her the disorders in which she lived; he teaches her to adore God in spirit and in truth, and infuses such light and ardour into her heart, that leaving her water-pot, she publishes the coming of the Messiah throughout the city. Admire here the progress of grace, which converts an abandoned sinner into an apostle, and leads her in a moment through all the degrees of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive life.

## WEDNESDAY

*On the efficacy of Divine Inspirations.*

1ST POINT. "Jesus answered and said to her: if thou didst know the gift of God, and who he is that saith to thee: Give me to drink; thou, perhaps, wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." (*John*, iv. 10.) If you knew whence came the good thought that arises in your heart, you would hold it in far greater estimation than you are wont to do. A good thought is the breathing of the Holy Ghost, and surpasses all the power of nature. "No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost." (*1 Cor.*, xii. 3.) When the Samaritan woman left the city, she thought neither of her salvation nor the happiness that awaited her. Our Saviour's meeting with her was not casual, he expected her at the well of Jacob, that she might drink of the fountain of his mercy.

2ND POINT. "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who he is that saith to thee: Give me to drink." Did you know who he is that has merited for you the grace of this holy inspiration, and at what price it has been purchased, you would receive it with gratitude. As God alone can produce a good thought, nothing less than the blood of his divine Son could have purchased it for you. Wherefore, the Holy Fathers, when they proclaim the mercies of God, and comment on the words of the royal Prophet: "For nothing shalt thou save them" (*Psa.* lv. 8), say, by a moral application, that he saves us gratuitously, because he gratuitously bestows the lights and graces instrumental to our salvation. So precious are graces, that the whole creation does not contain a treasure sufficient for their purchase. The Saviour of the world alone could merit them. He spared neither the sweat, nor his blood, neither the labours of his life, nor the torments of his death to do so.

3RD POINT. The graces of the Holy Ghost remain barren unless they descend upon hearts that appreciate their value. Grace falling on an abandoned sinner makes her a herald, announcing salvation to the city of Samaria. But for one Samaritan who receives this grace with gratitude, and employs it with advantage, how many hearts remain hardened as the rock! Yet it is the blood of Jesus Christ that is rendered fruitless; it is the voice of the Incarnate Word, not less precious than his blood.

## THURSDAY

*On the efficacy of Divine Inspirations—(continued).*

1ST POINT. “If thou didst know the gift of God.” (*John*, iv.) And to what happiness it conducts, you would follow it with more fervour and fidelity. The design of the Son of God is to re-establish his glory in the world, and teach men to serve him in spirit and in truth. He sheds on your soul a ray of his grace—that is, a holy inspiration. Thus he commences his reign in your heart. His glory depends not on your homage. If he require you to adore him as God, he will impart a knowledge of himself by forming good thoughts in your mind. He reveals the secrets of his providence, his great designs, by which he leads to their accomplishment.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ proposes, next to the glory of his Father, to convert sinners and transform them into saints. For this he descended from heaven, and expired on a cross. He draws the free will by a good thought, he strengthens it, he sustains it by the gift of perseverance. A holy life depends on the exercise of good works; good works depend on pious desires; and these proceed from good thoughts. Without this first grace, there could be neither faith among Christians, nor charity among the just, nor sanctity among the children of God? If you believe this, whence comes it, that when Jesus Christ presents this favour, you close your heart, or endeavour to stifle it within you. This refusal exposes you to the danger of losing the sovereign good, without which you will be eternally miserable?

3RD POINT. With what respect should you hear, with what affection should you receive, and with what fidelity should you obey the inspirations of God! In vain does the Son of God speak, if you listen not to his voice; in vain does he call, if you refuse to follow. The Son of God sheds the light of his grace on your soul, to infuse a spirit of penance, to encourage mortification and all virtues. But what will it avail to know his will if you do not do it.

## FRIDAY

*On the Ruler seeking the cure of his Son.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"And there was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus, therefore, said to him: unless you see signs and wonders you believe not. The ruler saith to him: Lord, come down before that my son die." (*John*, iv. 46, *et seq.*) Concupiscence, which insensibly weakens divine love in the soul, will extinguish it in the end, if we bring not a speedy remedy. Happy he of whom it can be said, as of the son of the ruler, "The fever left him." (*John*, iv. 52.) His inordinate affections have "left him;" self-love no longer reigns in his heart; the inferior appetite is submissive to the spirit, and the spirit to God! Spare nothing for your perfect cure, do violence to yourself, make use of the necessary remedies, however bitter to nature, since it is to preserve the life of your soul.

2ND POINT. "Lord, come down before that my son die." This good father has recourse to Jesus Christ, expecting from his power and goodness his son's restoration to health. Men risk their eternal salvation equally by hope and despair, even though these extremes are so widely removed. They deceive themselves by hope, who say: God is good, God is merciful. I will follow my inclinations, gratify my senses, and accomplish all my desires. If the good works of the just do not render them secure; how dare you sin presuming on pardon?

3RD POINT. "Lord, come down before that my son die." From Jesus Christ alone can you expect the remedy of your evils. Go to him as your physician at all times, and in all necessities—in sadness he is the source of joy. If you have fallen into any fault, arise promptly. Be not discouraged by your weakness, nor let a secret pride cause you to repine. Go with speed to Jesus Christ, and beseech him to come to your assistance.

## SATURDAY

*On the Delay of Repentance.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"Lord, come down before that my son die." (*John*, iv. 49.) The longer your conversion is deferred, the more difficult it becomes. Reflect on the prayer of the Church: Lord, whilst you afford us a favourable time to return to thee, give us also the spirit of penance. For in vain have we time to correct our faults, if thou grantest not also the gift of compunction, to amend our lives. Do you expect to obtain mercy by deferring your conversion, in contempt of the inspirations and reproaches of your conscience? You think you will have time; you reckon on many years to come, and perhaps this may be your last day.

2ND POINT. The longer you defer your conversion, the more incapable your heart becomes of receiving grace. Your evil habits daily increasing, become more difficult to be vanquished; and as evil habits increase, the darkness of the soul increases with them.

Grant me grace, O my God, to execute without delay the resolution with which thou inspirest me, and to labour, from this moment, to overcome my evil habits.

3RD POINT. If you suffer yourself to be deceived by the delays which the evil spirit suggests, you will be in danger of losing your soul for ever. How many unexpected accidents may betray you into the worst of evils? If you have not been able to vanquish him when armed with all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the infused virtues that accompany his grace, how will you resist him when you will be covered with wounds? You know not when that hour will arrive; *be always ready*, as the Gospel admonishes, that you may never be surprised.

## SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On deferring Repentance to the hour of death.*

1ST POINT. "Lord, come down before that my son die." (*John*, iv. 49.) If there is danger in delaying conversion from day to day, how much more in deferring it to the hour of death? God can indeed grant the grace of repentance at what time soever he pleases; yet there is nothing more uncertain than repentance at the hour of death. Hear the words of St. Augustine: If a dying sinner demand absolution, we refuse it not; yet I will not deceive you, I must speak the truth, I dare not promise that his salvation is secure. Do penance whilst you are still in health. If you will defer repentance until you can no longer sin, you do not renounce sin, but the power of sinning fails you.

2ND POINT. Conversion is difficult and uncertain at the hour of death. The violence of the malady which overwhelms at once the mind and body prevents the sinner from raising his heart to God. Sadness and fear so occupy and agitate the soul, that its sufferings engross all its attention. What folly to defer the most important of all concerns to a moment when you are incapable of even a serious thought! Penance should be voluntary, and proceed from a generous heart, that not only fears, but also loves its judge, and who renounces vice, not by constraint, but because he hates and detests it. The sinner must return to God by faith, and by love, by which he conceives a perfect sorrow for his offences. How shall a man who has never seriously thought of his salvation, elicit such holy acts?

3RD POINT. Meditate seriously, while you have time, on the perils of death, through which you must infallibly pass. Your life flees by moments, of which the last must soon arrive, and the present alone is at your disposal. What will you do, when, overwhelmed with pain and anguish, and deprived of human aid, you await the sentence, whether happy or unhappy, which must irrevocably decide your fate? Now it is in your power to secure a favourable sentence. Follow then the counsel of the prophet: "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call on him, while he is near."

## MONDAY

*On Jesus healing the Ruler's son.*

1ST POINT. "Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not." (*John*, iv. 48.) The reproach the Son of God makes to this ruler is a warning to you. Your want of faith, confidence, and purity of intention, are the great obstacles to a perfect conversion. You ask "signs and wonders;" you would see, taste, touch, and feel all things, without raising your mind above that which is material. Hence you lose courage when God withdraws sensible consolations. "But my just man liveth by faith." Wherefore seek Jesus for his own sake, and not from an interested self-love. Approach in a spirit of humility and abandonment to his holy will.

2ND POINT. Consider—"Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him, and they brought word, saying that his son lived." (*John*, iv. 50, 51.) Admire the infinite power of the Son of God. He has not recourse to prayer; he commands maladies and death, and he is obeyed. His power extends to all places. His word alone suffices. "Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him." (*John*, iv. 52.) O Jesus! say thou the word, command my tepidity, my vanity, and other passions to leave me, and my soul shall be healed.

"Give glory to the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." (*Ps.* cv. 1.)

3RD POINT. "And himself believed, and his whole house." (*John*, iv. 53.) If you are placed in authority, imitate this wise ruler, who establishes the reign of Jesus Christ in his house. If you have no person under your charge, yet you have an empire to govern. Govern yourself. Regulate your interior life. Cause all that is within to be submissive to the Son of God; your mind, in believing; your heart, in loving; your tongue, in praising; all your powers, in showing forth your faith, by the exercise of good works. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all he hath done for thee." (*Ps.* cii. 2.)

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus beginning to preach the Gospel.*

1ST POINT. "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (*Matt.*, iv. 17.) This great master, the Son of the living God, the only begotten of the Father from all eternity, disdains not to shed the rays of his brightness on this world, which is covered with the darkness of sin, and the shadow of death. Imagine you hear the Son of God saying: O mortals, I have entered into the world to teach you the ways of salvation; I have laboured, I have journeyed, I have endured fatigue and pains, solely for the glory of my Father and your interest. If you seek truth, let not my designs be frustrated, nor suffer yourselves to be deprived of that eternal good which I have purchased for you at such a price.

2ND POINT. The doctrine of Jesus Christ is the science of salvation, the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven and the nourishment of the soul! Indifference for this sacred nourishment is a sign of spiritual death. "He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord." (*Prov.*, viii. 35.) Dispose yourself therefore to receive it. The desired of nations is come: the kingdom of God is at hand. The sun of justice has arisen, to dispel the darkness of sin by the virtue of penance.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee, and the fame of him went out through the whole country. And he taught in their synagogues and was magnified by all." (*Luke*, iv. 14, 15.) Jesus acts only by the movement of the Divine Spirit. In the virtue of this Spirit he returned into Galilee, to bear thither the light of the Gospel. This Spirit animated his zeal. "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled." (*Luke*, xii. 49.) This Divine Spirit endued his words with such power, that his enemies were constrained to acknowledge, that never had man so spoken. In the Spirit of God he wrought many miracles, to satisfy the tenderness of his own heart, by healing spiritual and corporal maladies. True zeal must act by the virtue of the Spirit. "And my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom." (*1 Cor.*, ii. 4.) . . . "For I judged not

myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 *Cor.*, ii. 2.)

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On the miraculous draught of fish.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass, that when the multitudes pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth." (*Luke*, v. 1.) Contemplate the humility of the Son of God, in conversing familiarly with the poor and simple. When they press on him in crowds to hear the word of God, he is not offended at their irreverence. It is not the great ones of the world who compose the crowd that listen to this divine preacher; it is not the wise of this world, it is not the rich, they have other cares and occupations. It is the poor, the sick, the afflicted, who press upon him, having more regard to his goodness than his greatness. O humility of my Saviour, how thou confoundest my pride.

2ND POINT. "And going into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting, he taught the multitudes out of the ship." (*Luke*, v. 3.) "We pray and beseech you in the Lord Jesus." (*Thees.*, iv. 1.) Such is the language of the saints, knowing that the human heart is more easily led by sweetness than compelled by force. In this they follow the example of Jesus Christ. Yet the sinner would domineer, treating inferiors with contempt, equals with arrogance, superiors without respect, and God himself without reverence!

3RD POINT. "And sitting, he taught the multitude out of the ship." Learn not to seek your own honour in serving your neighbour, but only the glory of God, neither be you repelled by contempt nor elated by success. From the multitude, learn to love and cherish the Word of the eternal Father; but endeavour to approach him with more respect. The greater condescension he manifests towards you, the greater should be your reverence for his sacred person. Do you desire to profit by his discourse, and enjoy his conversation? Listen

to him in a spirit of simplicity, adoration, and praise. He speaks to you from the barque of Peter, that is, from his holy Church; from the place of his repose, that is, the most Holy Sacrament. Examine with what reverence you approach him, with what attention you listen, and with what fidelity you execute that which he inspires.

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## THURSDAY

*On the humility exercised by St. Peter.*

1ST POINT. "Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." (*Luke*, v. 4.) St. Peter exercises perfect submission. He is desired "to draw back a little from the land." (*Luke*, v. 3.) Unless you remove from your heart the desire of esteem, of honours, or pleasures, Jesus Christ will not enter; he cannot dwell there, whilst you entertain an affection for this world. In proportion as you disengage yourself from creatures, you will be united with God: then he will repose in your heart, and instruct you in his heavenly secrets. "Launch out into the deep." Our Lord leads souls that are perfectly submissive, by a continual progress to the highest point of perfection. If you are obedient to his inspirations, he will whisper: "Launch into the deep." Be not content with ordinary virtue; aim at those heroic acts that glorify me, and augment your own merits.

2ND POINT. "And Simon answering, said to him: Master, we have laboured all night, and have taken nothing." (*Luke*, v. 5.) May we not say, with St. Peter: "We have laboured all night, and have taken nothing." Your efforts have been fruitless, because you labour in the night, in the absence of Jesus Christ. A night of trial is an effect of his love, by which he purifies the soul in humility by the experience of her own weakness. There is also a night of justice, in which God chastises the infidelity to his grace, that the soul may enter into herself. He leaves her in her natural weakness, and she feels the fruitlessness of her own efforts. Let her have recourse to Jesus Christ. For sooner or later he will bend to the prayer of a soul that humbles herself.

3RD POINT. "But at thy word I will let down the net." (*Luke*, v. 5.) St. Peter neither represents his fatigue, nor urges that the night was a time better suited for taking fish. He submits his judgment and his will to Jesus Christ. With a holy confidence, he casts his nets the moment he has received the command. A soul that is humble expects all from God, nothing from herself. She obeys promptly and generously in matters of difficulty, as well as in the most trifling and unimportant. Thus should you fulfil all that obedience enjoins, saying, Lord, it is not by my own efforts I expect to succeed, but by the virtue of thy divine word.

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## FRIDAY

### *On the humility and love of St. Peter.*

1ST POINT. "Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (*Luke*, v. 8.) The apparent contradiction between his words and the action accompanying them, proceeds from the humility and love that arise simultaneously in his heart. In a transport of love he clings to the sacred person of his Master, at the same time humbled, and overwhelmed with the infinite greatness of Him in whose presence he stands, he beseeches him to "depart." In time of prayer and holy communion, his sweetness and clemency should draw our tenderest affections, whilst his greatness inspires us with the profoundest awe.

2ND POINT. "For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken." (*Luke*, v. 9.) The power of Jesus Christ, the magnitude of the favour conferred, and his own unworthiness, impress the apostle with a reverential fear. "And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men." (*Luke*, v. 10.) He that is truly humble, and who loves Jesus Christ, fears only sin; but this fear troubles not the peace of his soul, because God is the centre of his repose, as his heart is the throne of God's rest. In this sanctuary the divine mercy treats familiarly with him, enlivens and inflames him with love, enriches him with

the abundance of his gifts, and enlivens his confidence, saying: "Fear not."

3RD POINT. "I am a sinful man." There is no appellation so suitable to man as that of sinner. The titles of holy, virtuous, wise, patient, are interior, but belong not to man. Sin alone properly belongs to him. Each one must confess, "I am a sinful man." What have you been? What are you? What shall you be? A sinner even until death. Let this thought continually humble and confound you in the presence of God. A humble soul is so pleasing to God, that he gives it possession of all his treasures, and confides to it that which he holds most dear: his own glory and the salvation of souls. A single missionary grounded in solid humility is more useful for gaining souls than a thousand others, because he acts in union with the spirit of God. His prayers are efficacious, his words persuasive, his example powerful, and his entire conduct holy.

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## SATURDAY

### *On the vocation of the Apostles.*

1ST POINT. "And he saith to them: Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men." (*Matt.*, iv. 19.) The Son of God calls poor fishermen to his service, and to the conquest of the world. He makes them founders of his Church, and fathers of a chosen people. How weak is human wisdom, how limited its view! Man sees but the surface, God penetrates the secrets of the heart. He sees poor fishermen, and beholding their interior dispositions, he destines them for the conversion of the world, he chooses them for the companions of his labours, and gathers through them the fruits of his cross.

2ND POINT. "And he saith to them: Come ye after me." Thus he daily addresses you, calling you to practise charity, patience, humility, and all the virtues that form saints. This invitation animated the martyrs to follow their Lord to Calvary, and the death of the cross. When he calls apostolic men, he will give all that is necessary for the re-establishment of his empire if they walk in the traces of his humility and poverty.

Seek, he says, the kingdom of God, and all things shall be given you. Fear not the persecution of the wicked. If they have persecuted the master, will they not persecute the servants? But fear them not. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, and salute no man by the way. Who could speak thus, but he that feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the flowers with their beauty?

Command, O Lord, my soul to follow thee. What fearest thou, O my soul? It is God that calls.

3RD POINT. Consider—"And they immediately leaving their nets, followed him." (*Matt.*, iv. 20.) These obey promptly, and correspond with fidelity to their vocation. To follow Jesus Christ, you must also detach yourself from the honours, pleasures, and conveniences of life. The greater man's possessions, says St. Chrysostom, the more he is enslaved. There is no one so free, and consequently so happy, as he who is attached to Jesus Christ alone. The draught taken by St. Peter was miraculous! But the word of Jesus Christ to the disciple was still more stupendous; for by it he is raised to the dignity of the apostleship, given true liberty of spirit, divine love, and all that can render man happy for eternity. Blind that we are, we will remain in our barque, we will be attached to our nets, we will love our chains, unless we break them either by violence, or the power of divine love.

## SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus delivering a Demoniac.*

1ST POINT. "And in the synagogue there was a man who had an unclean devil, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying: Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." (*Luke*, iv. 33, 34.) The insolent demand of the proud spirit receives no other answer than the menaces he has deserved. Let your petition to Jesus Christ be, to show you what prevents your intimate union with him. Examine yourself; you will discover a fund of self-love, self-judgment, and self-will, which the spirit of God alone can regulate and subject to his empire. You will discover innumerable sins, but the precious blood of your Saviour can efface the sins of a thousand worlds. The unbounded mercy of God supplies a remedy for all.

2ND POINT. "Art thou come to destroy us?" The evil spirit fears being banished with his companions, from the temples and idols wherein they were adored. He dreads the restriction of his power over us, because his happiness is found in our ruin. Yet we listen with pleasure, and follow his pernicious counsels with as much ardour as if he were our greatest friend. Jesus Christ has not entered into the world to destroy the demons, for they have wrought their own destruction; or to save them, *for out of hell there is no redemption*. But he is come to destroy sin, which is their work, and to restore us to the liberty of the children of God.

3RD POINT. "I know who thou art, the Holy One of God." If the evil spirit knows the Son of God, his knowledge cannot render him more happy, but only serves to increase his misery; for he knows him only as an irreconcilable enemy and an avenging God who confounds him by the weight of his wrath. He knows, but he cannot love; and this is the source of his misfortune. It will avail little to say: "I know thee," unless you can also say: I love, I adore thee, and submit myself entirely to thy divine will.

O Holy of Holies, I adore thee with no less respect on the cross than on thy seat of royalty; "Thou alone art most high."

## MONDAY

*On Jesus banishing the unclean spirit.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus rebuked him, saying: Hold thy peace, and go out of him." (*Luke*, iv. 35.) The demon insinuates his pernicious maxims and evil counsels, into the most important truths of salvation. He never speaks truth but as a snare for your destruction. Your divine Master instructs you to silence those who artfully instil the poison of praise, only to deceive you, and gain their private ends. Far from imitating Jesus Christ in rejecting merited praise, you desire still greater adulation, so agreeable to your pride is the vain applause of creatures.

2ND POINT. "And when the devil had thrown him into the midst, he went out of him, and hurt him not at all." (*Luke*, iv. 35.) Reflect on the power of Jesus Christ. With one word he constrains the impure spirit to go forth. Your soul is much more rebellious to his will; he expels the demon with one word; yet how often has he spoken to your heart without bending its obstinacy. The evil spirit torments this man with redoubled fury when forced to quit him, yet notwithstanding all his efforts he is not permitted to inflict injury. But be not discouraged; Satan redoubles his efforts when you endeavour to drive him forth. He can injure only tepid souls that make no resistance. Have recourse to the Son of God. Beseech him to banish self-love from your heart, that charity may take possession thereof.

3RD POINT. "And there came fear upon all, and they talked among themselves, saying: What Word is this; for with authority and power he commanded the unclean spirits, and they go out?" (*Luke*, iv. 36.) Would you know "what word is this" under which all bend submissive? It is the Eternal Word, the increated Word, the Word that proceeds from the bosom of the Father, the infinite Word, which must be adored in silence. It is the Word Incarnate in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, that manifested himself to our souls, conversing with us, and speaking our language, so that we might speak and understand his. It is the secret Word of love which penetrates the heart, and is understood by the soul that is humble and interior.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus curing St. Peter's mother-in-law.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus rising up out of the synagogue, went into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever, and they besought him for her." (*Luke*, iv. 38.) The bodily malady of this woman is an image of the spiritual malady of your soul. Passion produces a spiritual fever in the soul which weakens, and at length destroys charity. This fever causes a thirst after temporal goods, which the whole world suffices not to quench. It destroys the relish of heavenly things. For he who loathes spiritual exercises, is truly nigh unto death. Examine in what degree your soul is infected with this fever. Are you sensible of its evil? On the contrary, do you nourish it to the imminent danger of your salvation?

2ND POINT. "And standing over her, he commanded the fever, and it left her." (*Luke*, iv. 39.) The cure is a figure of the grace which Jesus Christ gives when he enters your soul in the Holy Communion. It re-establishes your spiritual health, regulates your passions, and deadens the fire of concupiscence. The Son of God, at the prayer of the disciples, approaches the sick person. He commands the fever, and it obeys. Yet, how often do you resist this Sovereign Lord, and refuse to bear the sweet yoke of his law. Abandon yourself unreservedly to God, and cease to oppose the designs of his providence. The hand that strikes is directed by the hand of a God, who tenderly loves, and as ardently desires your love in return.

3RD POINT. "And immediately rising she ministered to them." (*Luke*, iv. 39.) This pious woman turns to good account the benefit received. At the same moment that Jesus Christ restores her corporal health, he imprints in her soul a deep humility and fervour. The spirit of Jesus Christ is a spirit of love and fervour, which impels the soul to follow his secret inspirations. If he lead to action, it is with diligence, but without impetuosity. If to the cross, he has traced in his blood the path to Calvary. Learn from the example of this woman, not to spare yourself in the service of Jesus Christ.

## WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus healing the sick.*

1ST POINT. "And when the sun was down, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them to him. But he laying his hands on every one of them, healed them." (*Luke*, iv. 40.) Almighty God sends sickness to draw the health of the soul from the infirmity of the body. The sinner cannot discover the interior disorder of his soul; his pride rejects the admonitions of charity. But cast down by pain and sickness; he becomes more humble and tractable, better disposed to receive the lights of heaven, and the remonstrances of those who govern him.

2ND POINT. During health fear is lost in the expectation of long life. The remembrance of death makes but a weak impression when viewed as a remote evil. But when the sinner is on his bed of sickness, weak, exhausted, and overwhelmed with pain, then he remembers that he is mortal. Beholding the awful passage to eternity which hitherto he had concealed from himself, he is seized with terror at the sight of his danger. Thus the divine mercy leads him back. How many would have attained eternal happiness had they profited by the merciful visitation of corporal sufferings!

3RD POINT. The Son of God, the physician of souls, strikes the flesh in order to heal the spirit. Should you not love the hand that inflicts so salutary a wound? He seeks not your death but your conversion. It is not a mark of anger, but rather an effect of love. If he deprives you of health and strength, to withdraw you from those dangerous amusements, it is only that he may raise you up to a new life, a life of virtue and perfection.

O God! be merciful to me a sinner!

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus healing the sick—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "And all that were sick he healed." (*Matt.*, viii. 16.) Sickness is the school of Christian wisdom, where the spirit gains new vigour. The strength of the soul is in Jesus Christ; his virtue is in the cross; and the cross of Jesus Christ is found in sickness. Therefore you should receive corporal infirmities as no less a gift from God than health; complain not of sufferings, since they afford a most favourable opportunity of advancing in solid virtue.

2ND POINT. Sickness, far from being an impediment, contributes much to advancement in perfection. Daily examples afford convincing proof, that habitual infirmity is a silent exhortation to prayer, compunction, and other virtues. Moreover, in health the practice of humility is difficult; but sickness is a state of dependence that humbles alike the great and the lowly. In time of sickness you must obey the prescriptions of a physician, however repugnant to natural inclinations; you are entirely dependent on the care of others. Even the vicissitudes of season, of heat or cold, are often a trying inconvenience, and the near approach of death makes you sensible that you are but dust. Sickness is a heavenly messenger, warning you to redeem the time misspent.

3RD POINT. It is said that sickness incapacitates the mind for any great exertion. To judge by the example which the saints have left, what mind more active, what zeal more inflamed, what courage more undaunted, than that of St. Bernard, who astonished the world by his miracles, shed a new lustre on religion by his virtues, and added to the kingdom of Jesus Christ by the conquest of innumerable souls? Yet he laboured under continual infirmities. What more extreme mortification, and unremitting penance, than that of St. Francis! Yet he was subject to habitual maladies, which he called his companions, and which he cherished so tenderly, as to complain with many tears when God would have delivered him from those sufferings. St. Servilus suffered from a general paralysis, so that of all his members, none seemed free but the movement of his heart to love, and of his tongue to bless God. Yet he lived the life of an angel, and died the death of the saints.

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus retiring to a desert place.*

1ST POINT. "And rising very early, going out he went into a desert place: and there he prayed." (*Mark*, i. 35.) The Son of God, enjoying the beatific vision, and incapable of distraction, seeks a retired place for prayer. You, whose heart is so dissipated, fear not to expose yourself to occasions that increase the natural levity of mind. He rises early in the morning, instructing you to consecrate the first fruits of the day to God. He commences and terminates the day by prayer. Prayer is the salt with which all his actions are seasoned. To other actions you should apply with moderation. But you must give yourself entirely to prayer, to consecrate yourself to God, to whom you are united in prayer. Let prayer accompany and season all your actions.

2ND POINT. "And Simon and they that were with him, followed after him. And when they had found him, they said to him: All seek for thee." (*Mark*, i. 36, 37.) What a happiness for you to seek but God alone! Many seek Jesus from interested motives, but few seek him purely for his own sake. How do you seek him? Truly there are few who seek with sincerity the honour of God; but you must be of that few, if you would be of the number of the elect. What more glorious than to seek, with a pure intention, the glory of God! Jesus is in the glory of the Father, because he sought not his own. You shall be there with him, if you can say with him: "I seek not my own glory."

3RD POINT. "And the multitudes sought him, and came unto him: and they stayed him, that he should not depart from them." (*Luke*, iv. 42.) This also should be the end of all your desires, the object of all your prayers: "My God, depart not from me." (*Psa.* xxi. 11-12.) "And unto old age and grey hairs, O God, forsake me not." (*Psa.* lxx. 18.) Adore with respect the judgments of God, who sometimes withdraws from those who seek him, and the more earnest their desire to detain, the more he seems to withdraw; thus exercising their virtue and proving their fidelity. Christ instructs and enlightens all. "And he saith to them: Let us go into the neighbouring towns and cities, that I may preach there also: for to this purpose am I

come." (*Mark*, i. 38.) Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shall teach him out of thy law. (*Ps.* xciii. 12.) Beseech him to enlighten and teach you the path to heaven.

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## SATURDAY

*On three who offered themselves to follow Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus, seeing great multitudes about him, gave orders to pass over the water. And a certain scribe came and said to him: Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou shalt go." (*Matt.*, viii. 18, 19.) A doctor of the law offers himself to follow Jesus Christ. But as he loves honours and riches, he cannot relish the reply of the Son of God: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." (*Matt.*, viii. 20.) Had he been well disposed, these words would have sufficed to enlighten the mind and inflame the heart of this scribe. But on the contrary, he refuses to follow Jesus in his poverty, not understanding the spiritual riches concealed under humility. Jesus Christ, himself, is the only possession of his servants. He has no superfluity, he is even destitute of necessaries. He is content with your heart: shall not the possession of his satisfy your desires?

2ND POINT. "But he said to another: Follow me. And he said: Lord, suffer me first to go and to bury my father." (*Luke*, ix. 59.) The delay seems just according to human reason, but it is not conformable to the evangelic maxims. It suffices not that what you propose is good, you must further inquire, whether it be according to the will of God. "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." (*Luke*, ix. 60.) Jesus Christ does not censure the duties of piety, but if affection prevent your obeying the divine call, he requires you to prefer the Creator to the creature.

3RD POINT. "And another said: I will follow thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house." (*Luke*, ix. 61.) This man does not await the declaration of the

will of Jesus Christ, he follows the attraction of his divine service; only asking permission to take leave of his friends. Yet, the Son of God finds him not sufficiently detached. "Jesus said to him: No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (*Luke*, ix. 62.) The new disciple, terrified at the fervour required of the followers of Jesus Christ, loses by pusillanimity the fruit of his good desires. You are hereby taught not to trifle with grace, and that the Holy Ghost is an enemy of excuses and delays. If you aspire to a heavenly dwelling, why *look back* to earth?

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## EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### *On Jesus appeasing the tempest.*

1ST POINT. "And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that the ship was filled." (*Mark*, iv. 37.) Although you are assured of the presence of Jesus Christ in your heart, you are not secure from danger so long as you are on the stormy sea of this world. Frequently the tempest arises when least expected; scruples, temptations, interior pains and fears, rise suddenly as a tempest, or as the waves of the sea. Watch during the tempest; but without fearing that Jesus Christ has abandoned you. Fear not the malice of the demon, nor let the persecution of man abate your courage; but trust in the aid of the Most High.

2ND POINT. "And he was in the hinder part of the ship sleeping upon a pillow." (*Mark*, iv. 38.) The tempest arises in the presence and at the command of Jesus Christ. Souls are not only afflicted by the devil who tempts, by man who persecutes, or by their own misery; God also exercises them by the purifying influence of his love. He combats their self-love; he humbles and mortifies nature in all its most secret windings. If human weakness cause imperfections amidst these tempests, the justice of God, uniting with his sanctity, permits nothing to pass without correction, so that purified in this life, we may be disposed to receive the crown of glory, which infinite mercy has prepared for us from eternity.

3RD POINT. "And he was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow; and they awake him, and say to him: Master, doth it not concern thee that we perish?" Jesus Christ sleeps during the tempest which he himself has raised; he defers succouring those in affliction. Arise, O Lord, help us and redeem us for thy name's sake. God defers your deliverance, that he may display the extent of his power. Our Lord treats his disciples like generous soldiers whom he exercises in the combat, to prepare them for the conquest of the universe. The life of the servants of Jesus Christ is a continual exercise of patience, by which they find peace amidst the tempests of the world.

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## MONDAY

*On the remedies against the tempests that arise in the soul.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"And they came to him, and awaked him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish." (*Matt.*, viii. 25.) The remedy against the temptations that raise a tempest in the soul, is to know and fear the danger. You are but too sensible to temporal evils. But frequently you are ignorant that you risk your spiritual goods. You sleep in the vessel while the winds drive it on the rocks, or you mistake the tempest for a favourable gale. This inordinate affection pleases; this passion seems reasonable: far from combating the temptation, you second, and increase its strength. Meanwhile you are on the brink of ruin, unless you apply an immediate remedy.

2ND POINT. "Lord, save us, we perish." You must approach Jesus Christ by sincere sorrow for sin, with a firm purpose of amendment. You must awake Jesus Christ by the remembrance of his sufferings and labours. He sleeps in your regard when you cease to remember him. You must implore his aid by fervent prayer. Prayer is the channel through which our Lord sheds from his sacred wounds the graces necessary for resisting sin, and supporting with patience the trials of this life. "Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge to save me." Jesus has extended his arms on the cross, to shelter his followers in their trials and afflictions.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus saith to them: why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" (*Matt.*, viii. 26.) Faith and confidence in God are the virtues that render prayer omnipotent for obtaining all it implores. Our Lord, in reproving the fear of his disciples, shows that the cause of their trouble is distrust. He calls them men of little faith. Though in the company of Jesus Christ they fear to perish. They have witnessed his miracles, yet they tremble as if he lacked power to protect them. Is not this to want both faith and confidence? *O, man of little faith.* You know that God beholds all things, can do all things, is present in all places; yet, you parley with temptation, and deliberate whether you shall yield. Resolve to act in the spirit of faith, even in the deepest obscurity.

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## TUESDAY

### *On the calm that succeeds the tempest.*

1ST POINT. "And rising up he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: Peace, be still. And the wind ceased; and there was made a great calm." (*Mark*, iv. 39.) The Son of God commands the winds and the sea, as a master his servant, as the Creator his creature. With one word he calms the tempest, yet a hundred inspirations fail to calm the passions of your soul, because faith sleeps in your heart. If you act by faith, you remain calm amid the waves. If you are forgetful of its maxims and Jesus Christ sleeps within you; beware of shipwreck. Awake the Son of God, saying: "Lord, save us, we perish." (*Matt.*, viii. 25.) Then he will command the winds, and say to your heart: "Peace, be still."

2ND POINT. "And the wind ceased, and there was made a great calm." After the storm, Jesus Christ restores peace and calm to the heart of the just. He appeases the remorse of their conscience, and effaces their sins in his blood, whilst he says: "Go thy way in peace." (*Luke*, viii. 48.) He subjects the flesh to the spirit, regulates the senses, and subdues the passions to reason and grace. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the sanctuary of the Divinity, and when he opens to us this sacred asylum, he unites us to God himself, who resides therein. Quelling the

passions, and calming all the powers of the soul, he changes our misery into unspeakable happiness.

3RD POINT. "And there was made a great calm." The calm which the Son of God *makes* in the soul does not always consist in a cessation of the tempest, but in peace of mind amidst the troubles and agitations of life. The disciples of Jesus Christ resemble rocks against which the waves dash and break. Weak and imperfect souls are like shells with which the tide sports without resistance. The cause of this difference is the good or evil state of the conscience. A guilty soul fears even the darkness that shrouds her crimes. The just are never troubled, for their confidence is founded, not on their own strength, but on that of the Omnipotent.

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### WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus delivering the demoniac in the country of the Gerasens.*

1ST POINT. "And as he went out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the monuments a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man now could bind him, not even with chains." (*Mark*, v. 2, 3.) Behold the figure of a soul held captive under the tyranny of the devil. Having wandered from God, the centre of her happiness, she finds repose neither in herself, nor in creatures. Neither fear nor love can restrain the violence of her passions. She breaks the chains of God's commandments, and will endure no other bonds than those with which she is enslaved by the devil. In fine, she is enraged against herself, for every sin is a mortal stroke inflicted on her own soul. Cast yourself at the feet of your Saviour, and beseech him whose mercy is infinite, to deliver you from the power of the evil one.

2ND POINT. "And seeing Jesus afar off, he ran and adored him." (*Mark*, v. 6.) Do you also draw near to the sacred feet of your Redeemer: if your sins would make you to recoil with fear, look upon him as your Saviour, and say with the publican: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." (*Luke*, xviii. 13.) If,

during this exile, you feel remote from his presence, from your place of banishment, look upon him as your sovereign good, to whom your heart instinctively turns. This poor demoniac recovers his liberty, health, and tranquillity of mind. He becomes in a moment more happy than he had been miserable. From a state of slavery, he is restored to a heavenly freedom. He is changed into a devoted follower of his liberator. Happy is the soul whose abode is at the feet of Jesus. Choose it for your asylum and the place of your repose.

3RD POINT. "And all the multitude of the country of the Gerasens besought him to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear. And he, going up into the ship, returned back again." (*Luke*, viii. 37.) "Now the man, out of whom the devils were departed, besought him that he might be with him. But Jesus sent him away, saying: Return to thy house, and tell how great things God hath done to thee." (*Luke*, viii. 38, 39.) Jesus Christ makes him the apostle of his country. And as the inhabitants had besought him to depart, he substitutes him in his own place. How often have you rejected the visits of Jesus Christ, yet he is not weary of seeking an entrance into your heart. Imitate the virtue of this man, who, though so desirous of enjoying the presence of his liberator, yet, in obedience to his divine will, relinquishes that happiness, to employ the health he has received, for the glory of God and salvation of souls.

O Lord! I have been insensible to the grace of thy divine presence: Permit me not to be separated from thee.

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus healing the paralytic.*

1ST POINT. "And again he entered into Capharnaum after some days. And it was heard that he was in the house, and many came together, so that there was no room, no, not even at the door; and he spoke to them the word." (*Mark*, ii. 1, 2.) The Son of God employs all the resources of his power and wisdom to gain those hearts into which he seeks an entrance. The Creator of all things has enclosed his immensity within the narrow limits of our nature, that he may attract by his goodness, and persuade by his sweetness, those whom fear would discourage. Beseech your divine Lord to enter into your heart, and make of it his dwelling-place. Banish pride. Labour for the cure of your spiritual infirmities, that you may also, by the divine grace, become a medium of healing to the souls of your neighbours.

2ND POINT. "And they came to him, bringing one sick of the palsy, who was carried by four." (*Mark*, ii. 3.) In the pitiable condition of this poor paralytic, you may trace your own miseries. You have neither strength nor courage to resist temptation. You fall every moment because your spiritual energies are deadened, and the inspirations of heaven fail. You relish neither mortification, prayer, humility, nor the exact observance of rules. Seek a remedy in that sacrament of love which is the fountain of spiritual life and strength, the burning source of charity.

3RD POINT. "And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles with his bed into the midst, before Jesus." (*Luke*, v. 19.) Perfect charity is kind and beneficent to all, but aids with particular alacrity the more necessitous. Charity is industrious and laborious, it embraces all, sustains all, shunning neither pain nor fatigue. It undertakes all things for the service of God with invincible courage. Had you more love and fervour, what might you not obtain from Jesus Christ? "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." (*Phil.* iv. 13.)

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus manifesting his divinity in healing the paralytic.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." (*Matt.*, ix. 2.) Jesus Christ proves his divinity in the cure of the paralytic by the remission of his sins. The Pharisees murmur: "Who can forgive sins, but God only?" (*Mark*, ii. 7.) He proves his divine power by a miracle: "But that you may know that, the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, . . . I say to thee: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." (*Mark*, ii. 10, 11.) "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." A miserable poor man, whom the priests would not deign to touch, Jesus calls by the name of son. Penetrate the efficacy of these words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Happy the soul to whom they are addressed.

2ND POINT. "And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?" (*Matt.*, ix. 3, 4, 5.) The Son of God manifests his divinity by penetrating the secrets of hearts. Learn that it is in vain you conceal your sins from man, since God beholds them. Jesus Christ penetrates your most secret thoughts. If you fear being seen by men, how dare you sin in the presence of God? Men can only judge of your designs by conjectures; but God, who cannot be deceived, sounds the depth of your heart. "I am the Lord who search the heart, and prove the reins." (*Jer.* xvii. 10.)

3RD POINT. "Then said he to the man sick of the palsy: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." (*Matt.*, ix. 6.) The Son of God does not restore corporal health until he has applied a remedy to the spiritual evil. In the designs of God, the infirmities of the body are the remedy of those of the soul. "My son, in thy sickness, neglect not thyself, but pray to the Lord, and he shall heal thee." (*Eccles.*, xxxviii. 9). Your dwelling is in God, in whose mind you have dwelt from eternity. Abide in him by recollection of his presence. Let not self-love draw you to exterior objects. Banish vanity, envy, jealousy, and suspicions, and you will find spiritual delights.

## SATURDAY

*On the vocation of St. Matthew.*

1ST POINT. "And when he was passing by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and he saith to him: Follow me. And rising up he followed him." (*Mark*, ii. 14.) One look, one word from the lips of Jesus, changes this publican into an apostle; who quits all to follow the call of the Saviour. Beseech your divine Saviour to look upon you and enlighten you that you may learn to weep for your sins, and purify the stains of your soul. "And Levi made him a great feast in his own house." (*Luke*, v. 29.) "But the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying to his disciples: Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering, said to them: They that are whole, need not the physician: but they that are sick. I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance." (*Luke*, v. 30, 31, 32.)

2ND POINT. "Follow me." Do not expect that in following Jesus Christ you will enjoy the prosperity of this world. The way he treads is narrow and thorny, it is traced with his blood; but by his sufferings he has merited for you an infinite recompense. Follow him perseveringly: You there find neither honours, nor pleasures, nor temporal riches; but you will find peace of the soul, the joy of the Holy Ghost, and all the treasures of heaven.

3RD POINT. "But the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying to his disciples: Why do you eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" These malicious men would depreciate the Saviour in the minds of his disciples. They blame what they should praise, they hate what they should love. If infinite clemency rejected the sinner, to whom could we have recourse? Give thanks to this God of goodness, who has vouchsafed, not only to eat with sinners, but to become himself their food. "I came not to call the just, but sinners." (*Mark*, ii. 17.)

## NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus defending his Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "And the disciples of John and the Pharisees used to fast; and they come and say to him: Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast; but thy disciples do not fast? And Jesus saith to them: Can the children of the marriage fast, as long as the bridegroom is with them?" (*Mark*, ii. 18, 19.) Jesus is the spouse of our souls, whose presence banishes all sorrow. "But the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice." (*John*, iii. 29.) He was easy of access to all, even towards his implacable enemies. He replies to the Pharisees with an incomparable modesty, ignoring the injury he receives. Learn from his example, meekness of heart, and moderation in your words, when you meet with reproach and contempt.

2ND POINT. "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them; and then they shall fast in those days." (*Mark*, ii. 20.) The disciples of Jesus Christ are not always consoled with his sensible presence. They receive from his divine hand both consolation and mortification, as his providence ordains. St. Paul says of himself: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content therewith. I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound; (everywhere and in all things I am instructed), both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need." (*Phil.*, iv. 11, 12.) A disciple of Jesus Christ should be ready for all things, and submissive in all to the will of his Master. Were he to choose, his inclination would lead to the cross, because there he is more sure of finding Jesus Christ. Fear neither exterior nor interior mortification. But fear a tepid and sensual life, which would lead you to the loss of his grace and his love.

3RD POINT. "And he spoke also a similitude to them: that no man putteth a piece from a new garment upon an old garment; otherwise he both rendeth the new, and the piece taken from the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: otherwise the new wine will break the bottles, and it will be spilled, and the bottles will be lost." (*Luke*, v. 36, 37.) Our Lord, by both similes, instructs you in

the discretion necessary for the care of those souls committed to you. He teaches you not to impose heavy burdens on those weak in virtue, or who have but just entered into the service of God. Again, our Lord instructs you to distrust those desires for exterior mortifications which are not united to the interior. Those lead to spiritual pride and contempt of others, whom perhaps you accuse of relaxation. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own lord he standeth or falleth." (*Rom. xiv. 4.*)

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## MONDAY

*On Jesus raising the daughter of Jairus.*

1ST POINT. "Behold a certain ruler came and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." (*Matt. ix. 18.*) This afflicted father deplores the death of his beloved child. How passionately are men attached to this passing life, and how little do they value the life that is eternal! Happy he who learns to die daily to himself! He will relinquish without pain what he has possessed without attachment. Alas! what do we seek in this mortal life? What is there in it to engage our affections? "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." (*Eccles., i. 2.*)

2ND POINT. "Behold a certain ruler came, and adored him." (*Matt., ix. 18.*) All the powers of heaven and earth, humbled in the presence of the Incarnate Word, adore him who, being the only sovereign Lord of the universe, "humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name, which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." (*Phil., ii. 8, 9, 10, 11.*) "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel: who alone doth wonderful things." (*Ps. lxxi. 18.*)

3RD POINT. "Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but

come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." (*Matt.*, ix. 18.) This afflicted father prays with fervour and humility, and he is heard. Jesus refuses nothing to humility. It ascends as incense before the throne of his mercy. Complain not that God abandons you in afflictions. If he deny your petition, it is only that he may purify and sanctify you by the virtue of his cross. If you seek aid from creatures, let it be by the impulse of grace.

Grant, O Lord, that amidst all the cares and afflictions of this life, my heart may turn instinctively to thee.

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## TUESDAY

*On Jesus going to the ruler's house.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus rising up followed him." (*Matt.*, ix. 19.) Jesus rises at the prayer of Jairus: the Divine Word at the voice of a man. Yet man makes a difficulty of rising at the call of God. He refuses to walk in the path of the saints, he forfeits eternal happiness. Hasten then to follow the call of Jesus Christ. Renounce yourself, do violence to your corrupt inclinations. If you walk slowly, you can never overtake him. To stop is to recoil; to recoil is to perish: arise, make haste. The way is long, life is short, grace presses you to advance, and by delay you incur great danger.

2ND POINT. "And he went with him." (*Mark*, v. 24.) Jesus consoles us and facilitates our pilgrimage by the sweetness and strength of his grace. He conforms to our disposition in order to gain our heart. Should not love, gratitude, and duty, force us to conform to his spirit, and follow his divine inspirations? Will you not permit him to lead where and as he pleases? You should continually fix your gaze on him, for he is your light and your sun: when he is before your eyes, creatures disappear as shadows in his presence.

3RD POINT. "And he admitted not any man to follow him but Peter, and James, and John, the brother of James." (*Mark*, v. 37.) He permits all to follow him to the cross, to sufferings, and the exercise of virtue; but he admits few to a knowledge of

the secret wonders he operates. Of twelve apostles he chooses but three. Learn not to aspire to extraordinary favours. Your perfection consists not in receiving great favours from God, but in obedience to his divine inspirations, and the declaration of his will. Listen to no inspiration, however good it may seem, that disturbs the peace of the soul. Reject the thoughts that inspire a secret complacency, and withdraw you from the sense of your own nothingness. Embrace not a multiplicity of acts and practices that would embarrass. Study to simplify your thoughts, and recollect yourself in God, for these lead you to unity, the friend of peace.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On Jesus entering the house of Jairus.*

1ST POINT. “And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and he seeth a tumult, and people weeping and wailing much.” (*Mark*, v. 38.) The multitude which the Son of God finds on entering the house of Jairus, is a figure of the world, where some are happy, others miserable, but all passing away. It is again an image of the condition in which the Son of God finds many souls, when he visits them in Holy Communion, or by his inspirations in prayer. Their interior is disordered by a crowd of ungoverned passions, which prevent the voice of God being heard in their souls. How few seek Jesus Christ with a pure intention; how few are disposed to taste of the bitterness of his chalice, and suffer with him the dereliction of the cross!

2ND POINT. “He said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth.” (*Matt.*, ix. 24.) The Son of God desires to occupy your heart as sovereign master. Order your interior that all your faculties may be perfectly under his control. Listen with respect to what the Son of God adds for your consolation—“The girl is not dead, but sleepeth.” Because all things live in the bosom of God, who can restore them when he pleases. Abandon yourself to his providence, and he will restore to you that which he judges profitable. If he restores it not, he will give

you what is more conducive to your good. He only deprives you of that which is injurious, and in return he gives you himself as your everlasting recompense.

3RD POINT. "And when the multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose." (*Matt.*, ix. 25.) The united powers of mankind could not force death to restore a single captive? Yet a single word from the lips of Jesus Christ shall one day call forth all the dead from the tomb. Jesus works his miracles silently and without ostentation, to condemn the slaves of vanity, who seek the applause of the world. He also gives an excellent model of the hidden life, on which his disciples should form themselves; concealing those favours that would attract the esteem of creatures, and using them only for the glory of God.

Spirit of Jesus, come into my heart, to fill it with thy force, and rekindle in it the fire of thy love.

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#### THURSDAY

*On Jesus healing the Woman who was troubled with the issue of blood.*

1ST POINT. "And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed." (*Matt.*, ix. 20-21.) Love and confidence attract her to Jesus Christ, but respect and a feeling of her own unworthiness cause her to remain behind him. Love draws us to Jesus Christ by confidence; humility, by respect for his greatness. All that belongs to the Son of God is worthy of respect, even to the hem of his garment. This garment is his sacred humanity, with which he clothed himself in his Incarnation. The sacramental species are also the garment of his humanity; these we should approach with profound humility, mingled with holy confidence, saying: "If I shall touch only his garment." (*Matt.*, ix. 21.)

O my God and my Saviour, vouchsafe to shed from thy sacred wounds the stream of mercy that will cleanse our defile-

ments, for those fountains of life are the inexhaustible source of grace, healing the maladies of the soul.

2ND POINT. "Who hath touched my garments?" (*Mark*, v. 30.) "And his disciples said to him: Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, who hath touched me? And he looked about to see her who had done this. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said to her: Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace, and be thou whole of thy disease." (*Mark*, v. 31, 32, 33, 34.) Whilst this woman touches the garment of the Son of God, she at the same time touches his heart by her humility and faith. Beseech him to touch your heart, in order to convert it; your passions, in order to mortify them; and all your faculties, spiritual and corporal, to unite them to himself.

3RD POINT. "Master, the multitudes throng and press thee, and dost thou say, who touched me?" (*Luke*, viii. 45.) Many press to the Eucharistic table; to few can the Son of God say: "Somebody hath touched me." (*Luke*, viii. 46.) "But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth." (*Mark*, v. 33.) Such is the effect of divine grace in the soul; it illuminates with a knowledge of eternal truths; it fills with reverence for the divine presence. She confesses at the same time her maladies and her cure, her baseness and the mercies of God. When a soul so loves Jesus Christ as to forget her own interest in the desire of his glory, he rewards with a profound peace, and he sends her away satisfied.

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus restoring sight to two blind men.*

1ST POINT. "And as Jesus passed from thence, there followed him two blind men, crying out and saying: Have mercy on us, O Son of David." (*Matt.*, ix. 27.) These men, though deprived of light, are clear-sighted according to the spirit; since they discover and follow Jesus Christ, "the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." (*John*, i. 9.) He testifies of himself: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me may not remain in darkness." (*John*, xii. 46.) How often has passion dimmed your spiritual vision, or inordinate affection to creatures deprived you of seeing the Creator? You confess that you must suffer, must pardon injuries, and receive all things from the hand of God; but when a vexatious event occurs, you are again involved in darkness, and cannot see the light. How often should you cry out with these blind men: "Have mercy on us, O Son of David." (*Matt.*, ix. 27.)

2ND POINT. "And when he was come to the house, the blind men came to him. And Jesus saith to them: Do you believe that I can do this unto you? They say to him: Yea, Lord. Then he touched their eyes, saying: According to your faith be it done unto you." (*Matt.*, ix. 28, 29.) He confers not this favour until they have entered the house. Heaven is the mansion of God. There he illuminates the blind, to contemplate his sovereign beauty. At present faith is the light of the soul, the fundamental virtue of salvation. God acts towards us according to our faith and confidence. If these be great, he operates great things in us; if they be wanting, we remain in spiritual poverty. Faith is the treasure of a Christian, including all the gifts of heaven.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus strictly charged them, saying: See that no man know this." (*Matt.*, ix. 30.) The Son of God gives an example of contempt of human praise and honour. And thus it was understood by these men, for "they going out, spread his fame abroad in all that country." (*Matt.*, ix. 31.) Gratitude impels the receiver to publish a benefit; but modesty and humility oblige the benefactor to bury it in silence. The more heroic the deeds you perform, the more carefully should

you conceal them; for thus shall you receive the greater glory before God and man. "God does not permit signal actions or heroic virtues to remain long unknown; but if you hide, he will publish them."

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## SATURDAY

### *On Jesus delivering the dumb demoniac.*

1ST POINT. "And when they were gone out, behold they brought him a dumb man, possessed with a devil." (*Matt.*, ix. 32.) Who can unbind the tongue of the dumb, but the eternal Word? The power of Jesus Christ is alike salutary to man and fatal to the devil. "Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil." (*Eph.*, vi. 11.) What can a Christian fear in the presence of Jesus Christ? We are daily exposed to the attacks of the devil, but Jesus Christ is our defence. His charity is mindful of us in all places. His zeal is our protection, not only against the pride of man, but also against the powers of darkness, who watch continually for our destruction.

2ND POINT. "And after the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke, and the multitudes wondered, saying: Never was the like seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, By the prince of devils he casteth out devils." (*Matt.*, ix. 33, 34.) The Pharisees, filled with pride, envy, and hatred of Jesus Christ, not being able to deny his power, attribute the miracle to the prince of darkness. Fly envy; the devil is its author. Pride was the first sin of the devil, and the cause of his ruin. Envy was the second; it impels him to our destruction. He seeks to involve us in his own misfortune.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus went about all the cities and towns, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease, and every infirmity." (*Matt.*, ix. 35.) The Son of God continues to instruct the people and to heal the sick, repaying injuries with benefits. When you have received an injury, place the seal of silence on your lips, that your heart may be closed to the spirit of discord,

and that you retain the Holy Spirit therein. If you retaliate, you open a door to the demon. Be not content with burying the injury in silence; turn it to your advantage, by offering it to God as a sacrifice. Imitate the Son of God, who repays the injuries of the Jews by healing their sick. Thus will you show forth the character of children of God, and become like to your heavenly Father.

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### TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

#### *On Jesus healing the paralytic at the pond.*

1ST POINT. "After these things was a festival day of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem a pond, called Probatica, which in Hebrew is named Bethsaida, having five porches." (*John*, v. 1, 2.) The Probatica pond is a figure of baptism. Baptism regenerates all the predestinate, effaces sin, and gives a title to glory. The Son of God said to the paralytic: "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." If you have already lost the grace of your baptism, cast yourself, without delay, into the second pond, which is that of penance, where Jesus Christ awaits to restore your spiritual life.

2ND POINT. "In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water." (*John*, v. 3.) Such is the image of the spiritual maladies of many Christians. Some are weary of walking in the way of virtue; others blind to eternal truth; others paralytic, who pass their life in sloth; others withered, having no relish for devotion. To what class do you belong? Seek a speedy remedy. When the heart of the sinner is touched with sincere sorrow for his offences, he should have immediate recourse to the sacrament of penance. Of so many sick who awaited the movement of the water there was but one cured. Diligence is necessary. The sinner must prove that he is healed, by an exemplary life, in bearing the yoke of Jesus Christ.

3RD POINT. The Probatica pond is also a figure of the passion of Jesus Christ, the king of martyrs. The blood of the imma-

culate Lamb "taketh away the sins of the world." His five wounds are as the "five porches," whither sinners receive his mercy. From his heart flow water and blood, as a salutary balm to heal all spiritual maladies. If you cannot return blood for blood by martyrdom, at least offer love for love, and tears of compunction with the water that flowed from his sacred side.

Spirit of Jesus Christ, open in my heart a source of love, whence tears of perfect compunction may unceasingly flow.

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## MONDAY

### *On the complaint of the paralytic.*

1ST POINT. "The infirm man answered him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond." (*John*, v. 7.) During thirty-eight years had this poor paralytic implored the aid of man, without finding one to help him. How little can we expect from creatures. Jesus alone remains constant. Whithersoever we turn, if we find not Jesus, we remain deprived of all good. The Incarnate Wisdom is the author of every benefit we receive. Woe to him that seeks his happiness in man! He leans on a feeble reed, that will break and leave him without support! He whose hope is in the Omnipotent, will find strength, defence, and remedy for all his necessities.

2ND POINT. God permits his friends to be abandoned by creatures, thus drawing them to seek their happiness in himself alone. He is their path, their support and their spiritual life. If we are members, he is our head. If we combat, he combats with us. If we conquer, he is our judge and our crown. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I descend into hell, thou art present. If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me: and thy right hand shall hold me." (*Psa.* cxxxviii. 7, 8, 9, 10.)

3RD POINT. "The infirm man answered him: Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond."

(*John*, v. 7.) Jesus Christ alone is necessary to my soul, that it may be sanctified: to my understanding, that it may be enlightened: to my will, that it may be inflamed with his love: to my passions, that they may be subdued by his power: to my senses, that they may be purified and subjected to the spirit. I wish not to live in the heart of any creature; I only desire a place in that of my Saviour, who is the universal friend whom the Father hath given to men, who has died for all, and who is the sovereign good of all. My Jesus and my all!

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## TUESDAY

### *On the warning of Jesus to the paralytic.*

1ST POINT. "Afterwards Jesus findeth him in the temple, and saith to him: Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." (*John*, v. 14.) Gratitude for the pardon of past sins, should be the first motive to guard you against relapse. God willingly grants pardon to a sinner although he be unworthy, but he does not so easily pardon the ungrateful. All the benefits you possess are so many graces from his hand, obliging you to revere that source of mercy. But the consideration that should redouble your gratitude is, the great evils whence he has delivered you: from eternal damnation, spiritual blindness, the misery and malice of the world, and the abyss of evil, into which you were precipitated, and whence you could never arise without his compassionate succour.

2ND POINT. "Sin no more." The pardon which you previously received imposes a more strict obligation to shun the occasion which has already led you to offend God. Although God will not impute to you, or inflict chastisement for sins already forgiven, nevertheless, you become more criminal by abusing the pardon previously received. As by repentance you had acquired an increase of grace, the abuse of this by your perfidy is more considerable, and renders you more unworthy. In this sense may be understood the words of St. Basil, that the remission of past offences avails not the relapsing sinner.

3RD POINT. "Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." "And he that passeth over from justice to sin, God hath prepared such a one for the sword." (*Eccles.*, xxvi. 27.) Fear to separate yourself from God by sin, lest the sword of avenging justice separate you eternally from his Mystical Body as a useless member, to be cast into the fire. The remembrance of so dreadful an evil will preserve you from sin. Fear not to descend now into hell. It is a place of torment for the dead, but for the living a refuge against everlasting misery.

O Lord, "who will grant me this, . . . hide me till thy wrath pass, and appoint me a time when thou wilt remember me . . . ? Thou shalt call me, and I will answer thee: to the work of thy hands thou shalt reach out thy right hand. Thou, indeed, hast numbered my steps, but spare my sins." (*Job*, xiv. 13, 15, 16.)

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### WEDNESDAY

*On the disciples plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath day.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass on the second first sabbath, that as he went through the corn fields, his disciples plucked the ears, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." (*Luke*, vi. 1.) The disciples of Jesus Christ forget privations in the happiness of following their divine Master, and in living in his society. They are content with simple and scanty food, and you murmur at an accidental mortification of your palate. They are happy in this extreme poverty and austerity of life, because Jesus is with them. The love they bear their divine Lord, the sweetness of his conversation, and the sanctity of his doctrine, sooth all their pains, and are to them as a delicious banquet. If Jesus dwelt within your soul, or if you had tasted the sweetness of his love, you too would even rejoice to suffer something for his sake.

2ND POINT. "And some of the Pharisees said to them: Why do you that which is not lawful on the sabbath days? And Jesus answering them said: Have you not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was hungry, and they

that were with him?" (*Luke*, vi. 2, 3.) "But I tell you that there is here a greater than the temple." (*Matt.*, xii. 6.) "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath." (*Matt.*, xii. 8.) In what indifference may we hold the judgments of men, provided we are approved by him who is the author of the law, and the judge of all the actions of men! The praise or the censure of creatures is alike insignificant, since the one renders us not more holy, nor the other more wicked. The Lord is my judge, him alone do I fear.

3RD POINT. "And it came to pass on the second first sabbath, that as he went through the corn fields his disciples plucked the ears, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands." (*Luke*, vi. 1.) *Hungering after justice* they seek the bread of life to satiate, and at the same time to augment their hunger. This they do on the Sabbath day, that is, when moderating their passions, they taste how sweet the Lord is, and how happy the man who places in him all his confidence. They gather the ears, and press out the grain with their hands; that is, they choose some words from these sacred writings, which are most proper to touch their hearts, and repass them frequently in their mind, until they have drawn forth the fruit of full and perfect charity.

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## THURSDAY

*On Jesus healing the man whose hand was withered.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught. And there was a man whose right hand was withered." (*Luke*, vi. 6.) In this man you behold an image of the avaricious, who imitate the wicked rich man in his sin, and are therefore in danger of becoming the companions of his punishment. "Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor close thy hand, but shalt open it to the poor man." (*Deut.* xv. 7, 8.) It typifies the slothful and tepid, who will not embrace the practice of mortification, and the children of the world, who are industrious in temporal affairs, and careless and inactive in spiritual concerns. Their

left hand is vigorous, but their right hand withered and motionless. "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly." (*Eccles.*, ix. 10.)

2ND POINT. "And the scribes and Pharisees watched if he would heal on the sabbath, that they might find an accusation against him." (*Luke*, vi. 7.) Envy finds its torment in the happiness of its brethren, it opposes the most holy actions, and finds fault with all that is accomplished by others. The priests, jealous of Jesus Christ, lay snares for virtue because they love vice. Fear of misrepresentations or sarcasms, must never cause you to relinquish the good works which God and your state of life demand. Be careful, however, to observe the meekness and discretion exemplified in the Son of God, who healed the sick, but forbid them to divulge the miracle.

3RD POINT. "He said to the man: Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth: and his hand was restored." (*Luke*, vi. 10.) To you also he says: "Arise and stand forth in the midst." (*Luke*, vi. 8.) "Stretch forth thy hand." This is the essential point of perfection. Be not satisfied with weak desires. You must proceed to practise. Jesus Christ says not, multiply sublime thoughts, ardent desires, elevated discourse; frequently it is more necessary to restrain those. Exercise those virtues which you know, and in which you instruct others. For the kingdom of God consists not in words, but in virtues. "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (*Matt.*, vii. 21.)

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus choosing his Apostles.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and he passed the whole night in the prayer of God. And when day was come, he called unto him his disciples; and he chose twelve of them (whom also he named Apostles)." (*Luke*, vi. 12, 13.) His prayer is long. It is fervent, because the subject is most important. It is "the prayer of God." He offers his prayer on a high mountain, instructing us, that we should elevate our mind to God, and remove as far as possible from creatures. Jesus Christ prays not from necessity. He who has power to command, teaches you to obey, and becomes himself your advocate. What should you not do for your own salvation, since our Saviour passes whole nights in prayer, to obtain for you the graces you stand in need of?

2ND POINT. Consider the employment, the qualities, and number of the Apostles. The dignity of the Apostles is the most exalted. Their qualities bear no proportion to their employment; for he chooses men of low condition to subject kings, men simple and unlearned to confound the sages of the world, men poor and destitute to gain and attract the rich. This he does designedly to show forth his sovereign power and infinite greatness. "For the Lord is high, terrible, a great king over all the earth. He hath subdued the people under us; and the nations under our feet." (*Psa.* xlvi. 2.)

3RD POINT. The Son of God calls Judas to the apostolic dignity. He chooses him whilst he is yet a man of virtue. He chooses him, though foreseeing his future treason. Yet, Judas incurs eternal reprobation, by the abuse of grace; teaching us that it is not the nature of man, but his free will, that is the cause of his perdition. Distrust yourself, and let your fear of abusing the graces you have received increase in proportion to their number.

## SATURDAY

*On Jesus instructing the people.*

1ST POINT. "And seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain, and when he was set down, his disciples came unto him. And opening his mouth, he taught them." (*Matt.* v. 1.) Jesus teaches the way to beatitude. It is a way most elevated. He ascends the mountain, as a throne, to establish the rules and precepts of a heavenly life. Happiness is the centre of all our desires, and who would not rejoice at finding the way thereto? Who would believe that poverty, sufferings, and tears, were the road to happiness? Happy are they whom God calls to the society of his Son, and to his admirable light, to enter into the teaching of the Gospel.

O Jesus, let thy voice sound in my ears. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." (*Kings*, iii. 9.)

2ND POINT. Jesus has pointed out by his example the way to beatitude. He has traced for us in his life a model of every virtue. He quitted a rich inheritance to embrace poverty. He endured contradiction with meekness. He exhibited a patience invincible, under persecution, shame, and torments. All this, to point out the path to heaven. Beseech him, therefore, to shed upon you the light of his wisdom, that you may walk in his footsteps. "Make me to understand the way of thy justifications; and I shall be exercised in thy wondrous works." (*Ps.* cxviii. 27.)

3RD POINT. Jesus makes easy for us by his grace the way to beatitude. To judge according to the senses, that way is narrow and painful. Those who live according to the spirit find it spacious and agreeable. The beatitude of the world is exterior, consisting in riches, honours, and pleasures. The spirit of Jesus Christ is interior, and consists in wisdom, justice, fortitude, meekness, humility, patience, and other virtues delightful to the soul who beholds them in the light of grace. The goal to which he attracts them is the kingdom of heaven, and he leads them there by the sweetness of his love. Nothing is difficult to him who loves; therefore love him who, for the love of you, has descended from heaven, even to the death of the cross. "Draw me: we will run after thee to the odour of thy ointments." (*Cant.*, i. 3.)

## ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On the First Beatitude.*

1ST POINT. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (*Matt.*, v. 3.) The first prerogative of the kingdom of heaven, is to be delivered from all earthly and temporal necessities. "The substance of the poor is according to his heart." (*Eccles.*, xxxviii. 20.) If he desire nothing, if he is content with little, and lives in peace, he is happy; but if he open his heart to covetousness, he becomes wretched. The rich can never be satisfied, whilst the voluntary poor enjoy more than they desire. St. Ignatius says, that we should love poverty, as a mother, without whom we should be unhappy orphans. As patience is the remedy for all our evils, in like manner evangelic poverty provides for all our necessities. Poverty when it is content, becomes a species of beatitude resembling that of God himself, who can need nothing.

2ND POINT. The prerogative of the kingdom of heaven, is an abundance of spiritual and eternal goods. The poor in spirit are rich in all virtues, and abound in heavenly consolations. Poverty has a connection with all the virtues. It is the foundation by which perfection becomes easy. He is infinitely rich who is poor with Jesus Christ. Heavenly consolations are the hundred-fold of holy poverty. These pure delights infinitely surpass all the perishable joys of the world. Could you behold the heart of a man, rich according to the world, you would find it pierced with a thousand goading cares. The heart that is perfectly disengaged from the love of terrestrial goods, is proportionably filled with the grace, the peace, and the consolations of heaven.

3RD POINT. He who has renounced all for the love of God, receives as his recompense God himself. "What have I in heaven? and besides thee, what do I desire upon earth?" "Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever." (*Ps.* lxxii. 26.) Had he reserved anything either in heaven or on earth, God had not been his inheritance. God alone, therefore, is the inheritance of the poor in spirit. We must resemble them, that we may possess, and be possessed by him. Happy is he who can purchase Jesus Christ with the contempt of earthly riches. And what can be more honourable to man, than to sell all he possesses to purchase Jesus Christ.

O my God! I now begin to understand how glorious is the title of poverty. At this price I may purchase God, at this price he becomes my possession.

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## MONDAY

### *On the Second Beatitude.*

1ST POINT. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land" (*Matt.*, v. 4); that is, the dominion of their own hearts. "Lo, the kingdom of God is within you," (*Luke*, xvii. 21); but those of a meek spirit alone shall enjoy its possession. "In your patience you shall possess your souls." (*Luke*, xxi. 19.) If you will endure nothing, if you will not overlook an injury, you belong not to yourself. When we begin to command ourselves, we possess our own hearts. He that offends a brother wounds himself, and gives death to his own soul. Would you save yours? "Cease from anger, and leave rage; have no emulation to do evil. But the meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace." (*Ps.* xxxvi. 8, 11.)

2ND POINT. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land;" that is, they shall rule over the hearts and the affections of men. This virtue is most essential for the preservation of charity, and for converting souls. The word of God, which is a heavenly seed, often falls fruitlessly on the earth. But a meek word always produces some fruit, even in the most obdurate heart. "The prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased thee." (*Judith*, ix. 16.) The meek may truly be said to possess the hearts of men, since they gain the heart of God himself, and he possesses their hearts in peace.

3RD POINT. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land." They are under the protection of God, for, "to the meek he will give grace." (*Prov.*, iii. 34.) "But the meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace." (*Ps.* xxxvi. 11.) The principal advantage of the blessed, is the peace and tranquillity in which they possess their happiness. Meek spirits remain calm in the midst of contradictions; and

whatever storm arise in their interior, they are neither disquieted nor impatient. Their intimate union with Jesus Christ crucified, imparts to them an unalterable firmness. Learn to suffer for Jesus Christ, and to bear meekly the afflictions of this life: thus shall you be of the number of the blessed.

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## TUESDAY

### *On the Third Beatitude.*

1ST POINT. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." (*Matt.*, v. 5.) "Blessed are they who mourn" for their own sins and those of the world; for they apply an easy remedy to a great evil. Tears are a second baptism, in which we are purified by contrition and confession, as in the sacrament of baptism by water and the Holy Ghost. Compunction being the fruit of profound humility, shall enable the mourners to appear fearlessly before the tribunal of the Judge, and impose silence on the accusers. Nothing is so sweet to the penitent sinner, as to weep for his offences at the foot of the crucifix. Such tears are changed into spiritual peace and joy. True happiness is to be found in tears of compunction shed in prayer, in examen of conscience, and confession of sins. In vain do you seek it elsewhere.

2ND POINT. "Blessed are they that mourn" through fear of the judgments of God. "The heart of the wise is where there is mourning, and the heart of fools where there is mirth." (*Eccles.*, vii. 5.) The saints frequently during life descended in spirit into hell, where there are tears without consolation, and evils without remedy. They sojourned there during a short time, lest they should be condemned to it for eternity. Could you understand the bitterness of those fruitless and eternal lamentations, you would undoubtedly weep, and banish all those false, worldly joys, which are a bait of the devil to ensnare souls. Let us weep whilst God will yet receive our tears in satisfaction for our offences, lest having let pass the time of mercy, we should enter an eternity of woe.

3RD POINT. "Blessed are they that mourn" through compassion and love towards Jesus Christ crucified. Do you

compassionate his sufferings, and mingle your tears with his Precious Blood? Do you regret the loss of so many graces rejected? You are inconsolable for a temporal loss, yet remain insensible to the loss of the gifts of heaven. Seek not after the joy that is earthly and fleeting, lest you be deprived of that which is everlasting. The spirit of the world excites vain joy; the spirit of Jesus Christ inspires compunction of heart. Beseech our Lord to grant you this spirit. You can obtain it by much prayer, and seeking it with profound humility.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On the Fourth Beatitude.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill." (*Matt.*, v. 6.) The first mark of spiritual advancement, and of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the heart, is a desire for sanctity. The wise man loves this hunger and thirst, without which there is neither understanding nor true wisdom. Would you know by what means you would attain it? "The beginning of wisdom is the true desire of discipline. And the care of discipline is love;" for she cannot be loved without being known. And love is the keeping of her laws: "for he who loves me," says the Incarnate Wisdom, "keeps my commandments." Ascend by these steps if you would arrive at perfection, which is true wisdom.

2ND POINT. Zeal for sanctity sweetens the bitterness, and obviates the difficulties encountered in spiritual life. They that hunger after perfection, spare no pains, and refuse no labour in the practice of virtue. If the desire of perfection be sincere, it will animate their courage. It will impart fortitude to support the sufferings of this life, to subdue the flesh by voluntary mortification in atonement for past sins, and to obtain some special grace either for themselves or others. When hunger and thirst are vehement, they infuse a marvellous vigour, they replenish the soul with joy, and cause it to run with alacrity in the service of God and the exercise of virtue.

3RD POINT. An ardent zeal for sanctity excites a love of poverty, meekness, peace, compunction, purity of heart, the works of mercy, and endurance of suffering. This desirable hunger and thirst extends to all we should love and desire. Some suffer hunger and thirst on account of justice, others for its acquisition; both are blessed. How miserable are they who are attached only to the joys of the world and the pleasures of sense. "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell." (*Job*, xxi. 13.) The heart of a man is so vast, that God alone can perfectly satisfy and fill all its desires.

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## THURSDAY

### *On the Fifth Beatitude.*

1ST POINT. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (*Matt.*, v. 7.) By mercy, compassion, and charity towards your neighbour, you will correspond with the mercy of God in your regard, and repay him what you owe. How deeply are you indebted to the divine clemency? How often has it pardoned you after innumerable relapses? "He hath not dealt with us according to our sins: nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." (*Ps.* cii. 10.) What will you return to the Lord for all his favours? You can make him no return, but you can show mercy towards your brethren. Have compassion on their necessities, render to them what you owe to your common Lord and Father, he will receive it as done to himself.

2ND POINT. By mercy and charity towards your brethren, you will imitate the mercy of your heavenly Father, and become like unto him. Let love and desire of expressing in yourself an image of the divine goodness be your paramount intention. "Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience. Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another. Even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also." (*Col.*, iii. 12, 13.) This is the livery of Jesus Christ. He has a divine and a human heart;

tenderness to compassionate the miserable, and power to relieve their necessities.

3RD POINT. By mercy and charity towards your brethren, you will draw upon yourself the divine mercy. You have need of many things, which you can expect only from God. What have you merited but chastisement for your sins? Therefore you must have recourse to his mercy, especially for remission of past sins, grace to resist future temptations, and final perseverance. Your mercy and the good you labour to procure your brother will be the price of all the heavenly graces you hope to obtain. Our Saviour, in St. Matthew, declares, that a cup of cold water given to one of his little ones shall not lose its reward. Yes, with a trifling alms you may secure a heavenly throne.

My Lord Jesus Christ, God of infinite and everlasting mercy! to thee I owe this grace, and through thy aid alone I expect to obtain it, by the faithful observance of thy divine precept of mercy.

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## FRIDAY

### *On the Sixth Beatitude.*

1ST POINT. "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God." (*Matt.*, v. 8.) The beatitude of the present life is to be united to God by love. As purity of heart constitutes our present beatitude; so, on the contrary, a defiled conscience is the sovereign evil of man even in the present life. The human heart is refined and exalted by the infusion of divine love. By attaching itself to created objects, which are unworthy of its affections, it becomes degraded and defiled. The priest, offering the adorable sacrifice, admonishes us to *lift up our hearts*. Let us beware of suffering them to sink to the earth, for fear they become altogether terrestrial. Your heart should be a heaven, where Jesus Christ dwells by a lively faith and ardent charity.

2ND POINT. "Blessed are the clean of heart, because they shall see God" in the beatitude and light of glory. Already they behold him in contemplation by the light of faith. The

slightest stain will suffice to deprive you of the sight of God, until you have effaced it in the tears of repentance. You should always hold yourself prepared to enjoy the sight of God, and should burn continually with an ardent desire to possess this happiness. When then you commit any fault, imagine you hear God saying: You shall not behold me. Had you one spark of love, this threat would cause you to tremble. You should pray with the Psalmist, "Let my heart be undefiled in thy justifications, that I may not be confounded." (*Ps.* cxviii. 80.)

3RD POINT. "Blessed are the clean of heart," because the sovereign beatitude both of the present and future life consists in being like unto God. The surest means of attaining this resemblance is to preserve a perfect purity of heart. If you labour diligently to efface the stains that sully purity you will revive within yourself the lustre of the divine beauty. Purity of heart is the mirror of God, representing the image of his beauty. Reflect with attention on the state of your soul. Are not inordinate passions, superfluous cares, unrestrained thoughts, and attachments, the images impressed on your heart, rather than that of the Divinity? How have you defaced the beauty of that divine Original, to the likeness of which you were formed? Admire the infinite goodness of God, who patiently supports your weakness. Rekindle in your heart the love of piety and mortification, which will form and preserve the divine image therein.

## SATURDAY

*On the Seventh Beatitude.*

1ST POINT. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (*Matt.*, v. 9.) Because peace is a fruit of grace, which renders us partakers of the divine nature. Do you desire to enjoy peace? Wash away your sins in your tears and the discord that sin has raised between God and you will be happily terminated. Deplore the loss of peace, but regret still more that of divine grace. Why are you troubled? Why complain of disquietude? Acknowledge the truth, it is "because of my sins." (*Ps.* xxxvii. 4.) Incline your heart to the practice of those virtues that preserve peace: love humility, meekness, silence, modesty, and all that serves to edify your brethren. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in this serveth Christ, pleaseth God, and is approved of men." (*Rom.*, xiv. 17, 18.)

2ND POINT. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." "For whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (*Rom.*, viii. 14.) The love which they continually cultivate is a sign of the presence of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in them. For he is the bond of peace between the Father and the Son, between God and man. Jesus Christ has purchased peace for us at the price of his Precious Blood; and through him we have access to the Father, no longer as strangers, but as children. He has gratuitously given us that peace which he purchased at an inestimable price. He has given it as the fruit of his victories, the pledge of his love, and as a precious deposit, for the faithful guardianship of which he has promised an eternal recompense. Adore the infinite goodness of God. Imitate his only begotten Son. Love peace, preserve it as a precious treasure, and use every effort to cement it amongst your brethren.

3RD POINT. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," because they are his heirs. Peace is a beatitude: and beatitude, the inheritance of the children of God, is consummate peace. Next to the grace of God, peace is the most desirable of all. "The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in

Christ Jesus." (*Phil.*, iv. 7.) He who has peace with God, fears not the evil of men. Jesus Christ has imparted a peace which surpasses the comprehension of angels or men. For what mind, whether human or angelic, can conceive the excess of that goodness by which he abases himself to the death of the cross. Give thanks to God for the grace of peace. Renounce yourself, give all things to purchase peace, it will render you happy in time and eternity.

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## TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### *On the Eighth Beatitude.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (*Matt.*, v. 10.) "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." (*Matt.*, v. 11, 12.) "If doing well you suffer patiently; this doing is thankworthy before God. For unto this are you called." (*1 Pet.*, ii. 20, 21.) He that ardently loves Jesus Christ, would rather suffer for his sake than enter into heaven. The apostles, when they had been ignominiously scourged, were filled with joy for being judged worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. How weak is your love for Jesus Christ, and how far removed are you from this ardent desire of suffering for his sake!

2ND POINT. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." It is a great happiness to suffer in imitation of Jesus Christ, and to be partakers in his cross. "But if you partake of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice." (*1 Pet.*, iv. 13.) You also should glory in the cross, as in the highest degree of happiness and honour. For what greater honour can be imagined than to resemble Jesus Christ, to bear the marks of royal dignity, saying with St. Paul: "I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ in my body." (*Gal.*, vi. 17.) Follow him, therefore, even to the cross. You do not follow him alone; he is accompanied by a host of martyrs; but though all were to

forsake him, be not so faint-hearted as to abandon him. "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." (*Luke*, ix. 57.) If you have not courage to ask the cross, at least be faithful in accepting it.

3RD POINT. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Be not surprised if God try you in the fire of afflictions. "But if you partake of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice that when his glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy." (1 *Pet.*, iv. 13.) When you are visited by any severe affliction, remember that it is for Jesus Christ you suffer. Remember also that he has suffered more for you; that his example should animate your zeal; that he has rendered the cross honourable and precious by anointing it with his sacred Blood. Receive the cross he presents you; and if its weight presses heavily, say generously: O good cross, consecrated by the sufferings of my Master, thou art dear and precious! The more you suffer the greater will be your recompense. Examine with what disposition you bear the cross, and judge thence what shall be your crown.

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## MONDAY

*On Jesus giving his malediction to those who are happy according to the world.*

1ST POINT. "But woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation." (*Luke*, vi. 24.) "Remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life-time." (*Luke*, xvi. 25.) Far from envying the worldly rich, the poor of Jesus Christ should bless the mercy that has delivered them from the dangers of worldly prosperity. Riches are not in themselves an evil, but they entail dangerous occasions which it is difficult to surmount. Our Lord condemns not the possession, but the abuse of riches. The snares of riches are so dangerous, that to escape them requires almost a miracle of grace.

2ND POINT. "Woe to you that now laugh; for you shall mourn and weep." (*Luke*, vi. 25.) The joy of the world pro-

ceeds from earthly pleasures; that of a Christian arises from the testimony of a good conscience. They who rejoice in that which is truly a cause of sorrow, mistake thorns for delights. Still more unhappy, in the end when this mistaken joy shall be changed into bitterness and fruitless tears. It is evident that the faithful can have no subject of real joy, whilst they live in the midst of crimes by which God is continually offended. The only joy a Christian can feel in this life is contained in the admonition of the apostle: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice." (*Phil.*, iv. 4.)

3RD POINT. "Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets." (*Luke*, vi. 26.) Ambition not the praise of men, and shun the vice of flattery. They are vain and foolish who take pleasure in the flattery of men. Praise is a tribute due only to God, not to frail and sinful creatures. Praise can be rendered without danger to the deserving—when charity calls for the defence of the absent—when the cause of religion may be advanced through the good repute of another—when you want to render reproof effective by admitting the possession of other good qualities in the individual you are endeavouring to reform. But like all the other offices of speech, you must entreat the special light of the Holy Spirit for its proper discharge, begging of him, with the Royal Psalmist, to place a door to your mouth, that you may not offend in words.

## TUESDAY

*On the words of Jesus: "You are the salt of the earth."*

1ST POINT. "You are the salt of the earth." (*Matt.*, v. 13.) "Salt is good." (*Mark*, ix. 49.) This may be applied to apostolic men, animated by the spirit of Jesus Christ. Human nature has lost the relish of virtue; but the salt of evangelic doctrine renders it sweet and agreeable. The inclinations of corrupt nature tend to evil; but the heavenly wisdom which apostolic men teach, inspires a holy hatred for whatever can sully the human heart. The Son of God, by the voice of his Apostles, taught mankind the wisdom of the cross. How should you esteem a vocation, by which the Son of God has chosen you, not only to continue the mission of the Apostles, but even to co-operate in the same work of redeeming charity. Will you not give yourself without reserve to him who has called you, and renew your resolution to correspond more faithfully with the grace of your vocation?

2ND POINT. "But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more, but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men." (*Matt.*, v. 13.) This may be applied to those whom Jesus Christ has chosen for the conversion of souls, if they lose the spirit of faith, and relent in the fervour of charity. They become useless in their vocation. It is difficult to rekindle the fire of devotion in one that has fallen from his first fervour; for "if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" One fervent servant of God, burning with zeal for his honour, would suffice to convert thousands of sinners, and inflame them with the fire of divine love. Labour for your own sanctification, if you would become useful to your neighbour. Have recourse to prayer, and beseech God, that whilst you labour for the salvation of others, you may not "become a cast-away."

3RD POINT. "Have salt in you, and have peace among you." (*Mark*, ix. 49.) You must relish the things of heaven, before you can draw others to desire them. "Have salt in you," that is, a spirit of mortification. Your sacrifices cannot be agreeable to God, unless they proceed from a heart perfectly mortified. "Let your speech be always in grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man." (*Col.*,

iv. 6.) "Have salt in you," that is, perseverance and stability in the love of God and of your neighbour. Let the fire of charity burn in your heart, and as it preserves you from the corruption of the world, it will also confirm you in the unremitting exercise of purity and virtue.

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### WEDNESDAY

*On the words of Jesus: "You are the Light of the World."*

1ST POINT. "You are the light of the world." (*Matt.*, v. 14.) It suffices not to speak well of divine matters; the light of good example is still more necessary. To save a soul is to contribute to its redemption. For this end words do not suffice: a soul is of too great value; it has cost the Son of God a great price. To save a soul is not merely to point out the way to heaven; it is to seek it in its wanderings, to await its delays, to support its defects, to relieve its weakness, and bear it, like the good shepherd, on your shoulders. Look upon this divine model; unite yourself with him by love and resemblance. The salvation of souls is his work; you are but the instrument that acts by the power of his omnipotent hand.

2ND POINT. The just form a chosen world, the elements whereof are examples of all the virtues. Against vices they wage an unrelenting war. The virtues of the just, as glowing coals lighted at the fire of charity, rekindle tepid souls. Can you not do what many, as weak as you, have done? But at the day of judgment these flames of divine love shall be changed into the devouring fire of the wrath of God, to punish sinners, proving their crimes to be without excuse. So many others, exposed to the same temptations, have courageously vanquished them. This should oblige you to the practice of every virtue, in order to draw many others, by your example, to the service of God.

3RD POINT. God has sent his divine Son, the Incarnate Wisdom, and the Holy Ghost, the spirit of his love; the one to impart the knowledge of perfection, the other to facilitate its practice. Good example accomplishes both. To make man understand that to save his life he must lose it, that the

poor are blessed, that the lowliest on earth are the most exalted in heaven, that there is pleasure in renouncing the delights of the world—the eloquence of orators and the knowledge of theologians, are not so convincing as one good work. “So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (*Matt.*, v. 16.) “Be thou an example of the faithful, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity.” (1 *Tim.*, iv. 12.) You owe this to your vocation, to the salvation of your brethren, and to the glory of God.

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### THURSDAY

*On Jesus declaring he has come to accomplish the Law.*

1ST POINT. “Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” (*Matt.*, v. 17.) Jesus Christ is come to fulfil all the sacrifices of the law. The victims of the Old Testament typified Jesus Christ, who is the victim of the world, but they did not satisfy the justice of God. Christ’s death is a perfect sacrifice, and his body a holocaust consummated on the cross—accomplishing all the other sacrifices. Can you truly say you are a holocaust, a perfect victim, consumed for the glory of your only Mediator, who for your sake humbled himself even to the death of the cross? He has spared nothing! He has given you all! Do you give yourself without reserve to him? Beseech the divine Saviour, that he would perfect what you this day offer, and grant your life may be a perpetual holocaust, and consumed in the fire of his love.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ is come to accomplish the sacraments of the law. These ceremonies, disunited from his merits, were incapable of restoring the life which the first Adam had forfeited, had not our divine Adam renewed our spirit. You may discover whether you belong to Jesus Christ, if you profit by the sacraments, the living sources of grace. Do you live according to the spirit of the old man? Do you follow the maxims of the world? Is your life still sensual, and worldly?

If so, you belong not to Jesus Christ, you oppose obstacles to his grace, the sacraments operate not in your heart, and you have cause to fear that you receive them without the necessary dispositions for drawing an abundant fruit.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ is come to accomplish the law, by observing its most rigorous precepts. Not content with explaining, he sweetens and perfects, by the evangelic counsels, and gives an example of perfect obedience, by performing more than he has commanded. "In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will: O my God, I have desired it, and thy law, in the midst of my heart." (*Ps.* xxxix. 8, 9.) Do you follow in his footsteps? Are his precepts engraven in your heart, and frequently on your lips? What gratitude do we owe to Jesus Christ, who has not only merited for us an everlasting reward, if we observe his law with fidelity and affection; but also promises, that he himself will be our "reward exceeding great!" (*Gen.*, xv. 1.)

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## FRIDAY

### *On punctuality in observing little things.*

1ST POINT. "He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." (*Matt.*, v. 19.) There is nothing unimportant in the service of God. "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." We fall insensibly into grievous faults when neglectful of the least offences. These fortify our passions, weaken the vigour of the mind, and oppose obstacles to the grace of God. He that neglects mortification and virtue in little things, can never make great progress in perfection. If you have not courage to overcome yourself in that which is easy, how shall you do it in what is more difficult? No one becomes perfect at once. By the practice of small virtues we ascend to the heroic.

2ND POINT. There is nothing, however inconsiderable, which God will not accept, and liberally recompense, when it is performed for his glory. This good Master, who weighs all things

in a just balance, rejects not our least gifts. His infinite charity, regardless of their value, receives them favourably, considering only the heart and affection with which they are offered. A sigh, a good thought, a light mortification, suffices to wound the heart of the divine spouse of our souls. There is not a thought, an affection, a good work, however inconsiderable, that is not written in the book of life. Your offering, however poor, will not fail to be acceptable, if it proceeds from a generous heart.

3RD POINT. "For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled." (*Matt.*, v. 18.) Reflect on the example the Son of God gives as to the exactitude with which you should observe even the least rules. Penetrate the sense of these words—Jesus submissive to the law, Jesus teaching the law, Jesus perfecting the law, Jesus adding the counsels to the law, Jesus meriting for you grace to accomplish the law, even to the least point, the least word, the least circumstance. Form yourself on this model; accomplish perfectly your own particular obligations. "Thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently. O! that my ways may be directed to keep thy justifications." (*Ps.* cxviii. 4.)

## SATURDAY

*On the obligation of tending to perfection.*

1ST POINT. "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect," says Jesus Christ. (*Matt.*, v. 48.) The Christian is obliged to imitate him by the renunciation of mortal, and in as much as human frailty will permit, of venial sin. "Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect." (*Eph.*, vi. 13.) God is holy in all his works, fruitful in his operations, and munificent in the communication of his benefits. God finds in the love and contemplation of his own perfections an infinite happiness. The Christian should rise by faith and love, above all created objects, and unite himself to the Sovereign Good, the centre of his repose. Thus is God thrice holy—holy in his works, holy in the knowledge and love of himself. When will you arrive at this divine resemblance? When will you correspond with your exalted vocation?

2ND POINT. A Christian is obliged to perfection by virtue of his baptism. That sacrament unites him to Jesus Christ as a member of his Mystic Body, animated by his spirit. The spirit of Jesus impels continually towards perfection. Baptism regenerates to a spiritual life, and implies an obligation of increasing daily in Christian perfection. Again the Christian is obliged to perfection by the Sacrament of Confirmation, which the Son of God has established for all the faithful, because he desires not only that all be saved, but that all be perfect. "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." In Confirmation he is made the soldier of Christ, and strengthened to combat the fear and shame of appearing the servant of a crucified God.

3RD POINT. A Christian is obliged to tend to perfection in virtue of the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. From this throne of his love our Saviour says to all the faithful, "thou shalt not change me into thee, but thou shalt be changed into me." Grow in humility—in mortification—in fervour and love—in all virtues, for I am sovereignly holy, and in this Sacrament the model of that perfection to which you are bound to aspire.

## THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On the obligation of avoiding the least faults  
against charity.*

1ST POINT. "But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment." (*Matt.*, v. 22.) Anger renders a man incapable of good counsel; because it troubles the mind, and so obscures reason. "Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God." (*James*, i. 19, 20.) Anger is unworthy of a reasonable man; it robs him of the gravity and propriety that should always mark his conduct. This vice destroys the peace of the soul, and fills the heart with bitterness. Have recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the most holy Sacrament, to draw thence meekness and tranquillity of spirit.

2ND POINT. Consider—"And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council." (*Matt.*, v. 22.) For he that hates his brother inflicts eternal death on his own soul. The man who hates another, does himself a greater injury than the cruellest enemy could inflict. Beware then of retaliating evil. Return blessings for maledictions, that you may inherit the blessing of your heavenly Father. "Bless them that persecute you: bless, and curse not." (*Rom.*, xii. 14.) Imitate the admirable silence with which the Son of God endures the outrages and irreverence committed against him in the most holy Sacrament, and who exercises this astonishing patience, to oblige you to follow his example.

3RD POINT. "And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (*Matt.*, v. 22.) He that wounds charity, offends not merely man, but God himself, whether in banishing him from his heart, or outraging and dishonouring him in his image, or in tearing a member from his body that he cherishes more than life. "If, therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother: and then coming, thou shall offer thy gift." (*Matt.*, v. 24, 25.) Have recourse to the Eucharistic victim of charity, that you may draw from the furnace of his divine Heart a living flame that will rekindle that virtue within

your own. In the adorable Sacrament is the essential charity, as he is named in the Scripture. He is charity itself who desires to animate your heart with love, that in loving him you may also love your brethren in him, and for his sake.

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## MONDAY

### *On the love of our enemies.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." (*Matt.*, v. 43, 44.) Jesus Christ commands us to love our enemies, under pain of incurring his displeasure. Had we a spark of true faith, a command would not be requisite to quell vindictive feelings. We are the children of a Father the most meek and charitable; we have been baptized in the blood of the Immaculate Lamb, in order that we might imitate his meekness; we are styled the brethren of Jesus Christ, whose divine Person is the principle of love, and whose Incarnation is the fruit of mercy, by which he has descended on earth for the remission of sins. The children of God should have the simplicity of the dove, that is, should be free from bitterness.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ, who commands us to love our enemies, is our Lord and God, who died to redeem us while we were yet his enemies. The world commands us to risk fortune and life for a point of honour, and is obeyed. The devil commands to hazard salvation, and meets no resistance. The Creator enjoins the love of enemies, and his precept is disregarded. Remember the compact that God has formed with men, whom he loves as his members. When you offend your brethren, you insult God in them. When Jesus Christ commands the love of enemies, he offers, at the same time, abundant grace for its accomplishment. If this grace remains fruitless, blame the obduracy of your own heart.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ has first given the example; to imitate him is equally honourable and advantageous. Do you

desire to have Jesus Christ for protector, place your interests in his hands; make him the arbiter of your wrongs, he will draw good from evil. Ascend Calvary, and contemplate your agonizing Saviour. Hear his expiring prayer—"Father, forgive them." (*Luke*, xxiii. 34.) Do you not hear the voice that issues from the wounds of your Saviour? Pardon, he says, thy brother; forgive this injury for my sake; or if thou art resolved to seek vengeance, strike those hands pierced for love of thee; force those nails more in my flesh, deprive me even of life, but pardon your brother.

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## TUESDAY

*On Jesus recommending purity of intention in good works.*

1ST POINT. "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have reward of your Father who is in heaven." (*Matt.*, vi. 1.) Purity of intention is a rare virtue even among persons who aspire to perfection. It belongs to great souls alone. He whose heart is turned towards God by a pure intention, does nothing from caprice or impetuosity. He is not elated by success, nor dejected by adversity. He is not less exact in the most trifling actions than those which are most important in the eyes of men. Hence proceeds his equanimity, for he is indifferent to all things except the glory of God. Though his heart be sensible to the different impressions of joy or sadness, hope or fear, aversion or sympathy, his soul changes not, but remains fixed in Jesus Christ; such is his interior disposition, that he can always say with truth: I seek but the glory of God and of Jesus Christ his only Son.

2ND POINT. Purity of intention is a virtue which forms great saints. A soul is truly great, when she is raised above all created objects, and loves and admires but God alone: "I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth." (*Isaiah*, lviii. 14.) The acquisition of virtue depends on purity of intention, therefore the Son of God compares it to the eye. "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be

lightsome." (*Matt.*, vi. 22.) A soul is truly great when her designs are elevated, and when her actions are performed with a noble generosity. What more noble design than that of pleasing God? Human ambition is as the grain of sand that is mocked by the waves. True greatness is that which passes beyond all time, and reaches to eternity.

3RD POINT. "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have reward of your Father who is in heaven." (*Matt.*, vi. 1.) By an elevation of the heart, or an intense glance of the mind, you may render the most trifling action precious, yet you coldly excuse yourself on the plea of difficulty. Is it then so difficult to offer your first thought to Jesus Christ, to open your heart to him on your first awaking? Is it so difficult at each hour, or in commencing each action, to recall your mind to unite it to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the source of divine mercy?

O Lord, that I had a thousand lives to sacrifice for thee !

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### WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus prescribing the manner of prayer.*

1ST POINT. "Thus therefore shall you pray." (*Matt.*, vi. 9.) He that teaches you to pray is your Creator. He who has given you life teaches you to pray. The life of the soul depends on prayer. He that teaches you to pray is the only Son of the Eternal Father. He instructs you as to what you should demand, that you may be favourably heard. What prayer more tender and familiar than that which has issued from the lips of Jesus Christ: The "Our Father." Give him thanks for so signal a favour; and offer it according to the intention of his heart. There is no prayer which deserves to be offered with such attention; yet perhaps there is none you perform with such distraction. Correct so serious a fault, and henceforth offer this prayer with more awe and reverence, that the Eternal Father may recognise his Divine Son dwelling in your heart and speaking by your lips.

2ND POINT. The matter of the prayer that Jesus Christ has taught contains, in few words, all that we can implore of God according either to reason or religion. The three first petitions include all you can desire for eternity; and the four last, all the means for ensuring it. Examine with what sentiments of humility, poverty, obedience, and the other virtues opposed to the capital sins, you recite this prayer. For if you are not possessed of these virtues, or at least desirous of arriving at them, your prayer is hypocrisy, your heart contradicts your lips, your desires correspond not with your words, you ask of God that which you fear to obtain.

3RD POINT. The form and disposition of this prayer is most perfect: there is nothing wanting, nothing superfluous. It is Christ's epitome of the Gospel. It is strange, that being so excellent, you use it with such little fruit. How often have you repeated it in the course of your life? Had you offered it as you should, what progress would you have made in perfection? What graces would you have obtained, what sins and temptations avoided? God, who already knows all your necessities, requires you to pray, that you may humble yourself and acknowledge your dependence; that you may more frequently remember him, and thus become disposed to receive his favours. In prayer the heart speaks better than the tongue, and fervent desires are more efficacious than the most sublime discourse of the understanding.

## THURSDAY

*On the Preface to the Lord's Prayer.*

1ST POINT. Jesus Christ teaches you to call God Father, rather than Creator and sovereign Lord. The name of Father is a name of love; and God attends willingly to the prayer of the heart that breathes only charity. The name of Father excites and sustains confidence. Now we are taught a prayer prefaced with the sweet name of Father, and inspiring a tender confidence. His name reminds you of the grace of adoption, the source of infinite good. It reminds you of the honour of being made a brother of Jesus Christ, and heir to his heavenly kingdom. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God." (1 *John*, iii. 1.) Give thanks to Jesus Christ, through whom this benefit is conferred, and live in such manner as not to be unworthy of the favour.

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ teaches you to call God our Father and not my Father, to recommend charity, which embraces all. Our prayer, says St. Cyprian, is public and common to all. God, who is our Father, desires to unite us in the bond of unity, and would have each to pray for all, as if all were included in one. In teaching you to say *our Father*, he reminds you of the equality that exists between children of the same Father; that the great may not despise the poor. All say: "Our Father, who art in heaven." In saying *our Father*, you are also reminded of the reverence due to Jesus Christ, who by his divine nature is the only Son of the eternal Father—who disdains not to recognize you as his brother, and his Father as your Father!

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ in teaching you to say "Our Father, who art in heaven," reminds you that earth is a place of exile, and that you should long for your heavenly country, the inheritance of the children of God. These words should preserve you in humility and recollection before the throne of God's majesty, warning you to admit no idle thought whilst treating with the Lord of heaven and earth. Seek not your satisfaction in the things of earth, you whose Father is in heaven. "Our Father, who art in heaven," draw our hearts from earthly objects. Show forth thy power, wisdom and bounty; that we may converse continually with thee. Happy the day, happy the

hour, when I possess such a guest! when I may say with the spouse: "I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and I will not let him go." (*Cant.*, iii. 4.)

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## FRIDAY

### *On the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer.*

1ST POINT. "Hallowed be thy name." (*Matt.*, vi. 9.) These words petition grace to know God, to love, to adore, and to render him perfect homage. For this you were created: it is especially the end of your religious vocation. The religious state is nothing else than a school of charity. Ask of him neither riches, nor pleasures, nor honours; ask only to be transformed into him, and to become a child of God. If you have the spirit of his children, such should be your sentiments.

2ND POINT. In these words: "Hallowed be thy name," you should implore the conversion of sinners. To beg that creatures may cease to offend their Creator, that all may fear and love his holy name, is a prayer worthy of a religious soul, worthy of an apostle. Pray that the name of God may be sanctified in you, as it is in himself, that being detached in heart and mind from all that is unprofitable, your interior eye may be turned towards the true light, contemplating him in all things, and in all places, and receiving all events as coming from his divine and paternal hand.

3RD POINT. In this petition you ask God to render you instrumental in extending the glory of his name—by good example. The Lord, says St. Chrysostom, would have us implore grace to glorify him by an exemplary life. You can extend the glory of the divine name by instruction, and spiritual conversation. Again, you may extend it by patience: "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (*Acts*, ix. 16.) Prayer is a further means of glorifying God. It is the occupation of angels. It renders a soul truly angelical. Hence the angels delight in assisting those who pray, beholding them already occupied in the same function they themselves fulfil before the throne of the Most High.

O Lord! thou hast said: "Be ye holy, because I am holy." Grant me in thy clemency that which thou commandest; purify my soul from every stain, chase away the darkness of my mind, sanctify my will, and render me worthy of thy divine presence.

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## SATURDAY

### *On the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer.*

1ST POINT. "Thy kingdom come." (*Matt.*, vi. 10.) These words petition the reign of divine grace; that God may reign in all hearts by charity; that they may not be enslaved to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Divine grace is called in holy Scripture the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven. By it God reigns in the soul, subjecting it to his laws, and granting to it through the Holy Ghost, the justice, joy, and peace, in which the kingdom of God consists. The Son of God has many enemies. "Fight the good fight of faith." "And this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith." (1 *John*, v. 4.) Faith obtains what the law commands, when, animated by charity, it attracts grace which sweetens the yoke of Jesus Christ, and facilitates the practice of virtue.

2ND POINT. In this petition you ask the reign of God's glory; that is, the Beatific Vision by which he reigns in the hearts of the saints. Although the combat of faith be praiseworthy, we should desire the end of this warfare. Divine love should make us aspire to that happy place, where all things are subject to God. Happy shall you be, if you establish the reign of God within you. Then will he occupy all your thoughts and desires.

O! Redeemer of souls! "thy kingdom come."

3RD POINT. In this petition you ask the reign of divine justice; that is, that God may exercise his dominion over the elect and the reprobate; and that having rendered to each according to his works, he may reign for ever in unalterable peace. It is in your own power to choose in what manner you shall expect the coming of Jesus Christ. He defers his coming, that being come he may not be forced to condemn you. His coming is terrible to the hard of heart, but sweet to the tender and devout.

He will infallibly come: are you prepared to receive him? If this day your conscience makes you a reproach, defer not repentance until to-morrow. Say not, God is good, he is patient and easy of pardon. Finally you ask the reign of that special providence with which God governs his elect.

Omnipotent God! listen favourably to the prayer of thy children, and extend over us the power of thy arm, that we may be defended from all our enemies. Amen, Amen.

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## FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### *On the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer.*

1ST POINT. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." (*Matt.*, vi. 10.) In this petition you ask light to discover the will of God. The accomplishment of which is the happiness of this life, and the secure way to eternal beatitude. You are here below in a region of darkness. The path by which you walk is dangerous. You stand in need of a light that can guide you securely, and this light is the law of the Lord: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths." (*Psa.* cxviii. 105.) Teach me to do thy will, O Lord!

2ND POINT. In this petition you ask grace to accept with filial respect the will of God, and to engrave his precepts and good pleasure in your hearts, submitting with resignation to whatever affliction he may permit. This resignation should extend to public calamities, and the afflictions of your neighbour. It should extend even to the imitation of the saints and of Jesus Christ himself. It should be accompanied with joy, fervour, and love; for life is in the will of God. Is it not just that God command and you obey? What occupation can be more advantageous than that which Providence assigns you? What can you desire better, than to conform in all things to the good pleasure of God?

3RD POINT. In this petition you ask grace to accomplish the will of God, as do the saints in heaven. Your will and that of God are opposed one to the other. The will of God ordains sometimes that you endure sickness, and again, that you enjoy

health. Regulate your will by the will of God, not desiring to bend this divine will to yours. Crush the rising of this self-will; submit to the adorable will of your Creator.

Grant, O Lord, that thy good pleasure may be perfectly accomplished in, and by me; that I may seek neither my own desires nor interest, but only to do thy will in all things.

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## MONDAY

### *On the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer.*

1ST POINT. "Give us this day our daily bread." In this petition you ask for all temporal necessities, and those natural gifts you stand in need of for the service of God, and eternal salvation. Our Lord forbids us not to ask these. He only prohibits solicitude for temporal things. By daily representing your necessities to God, you become more closely united with him in acknowledging with humility your dependence on his paternal bounty. Cast yourself without reserve into the bosom of divine providence, where all your wants will be amply supplied. Ask not superfluities, but only what is of necessity, and ask this both for yourself and all creatures.

2ND POINT. In this petition you ask the supernatural aids necessary for spiritual life and advancement in virtue. The soul requires a celestial nourishment. This nourishment is the grace of God, which should accompany, and follow all spiritual actions. As the body without food becomes dry and attenuated, the soul that neglects the word of God becomes weak, and incapable of any meritorious action. The soul lives by faith and charity, by prayer, and the fervent accomplishment of the divine will in the discharge of all her duties. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." (*John, iv. 34.*)

3RD POINT. In this petition you ask the Eucharistic Bread, the Bread of eternal life. Are you as solicitous for the nourishment of the soul as for that of the body? Do you experience the spiritual hunger with which pure souls approach the holy Sacrament? If the words that proceed from the lips of the Son of God are capable of sustaining the soul, what strength must

be communicated by his body and blood! If the odour of this celestial manna suffice to exhilarate the whole world, what joy should be felt in tasting its sweetness! Is it not unworthy of a soul for whom this heavenly banquet is prepared, to be occupied with base trifles, unmindful of the sacramental presence of her divine spouse.

Most sweet Jesus! may my soul desire and sigh after thee, "as the hart panteth after the fountains of water." (*Ps.* xli. 2.)

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## TUESDAY

### *On the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer.*

1ST POINT. "Forgive us our trespasses." Having implored the benefits spiritual and temporal of which you need, you now petition to be delivered from the evils to which you are exposed. The first and chief is sin, whether considered in its own nature or in its consequences. That same God whom you have so often offended, is the first to call you back to his parental bosom, teaching you in this divine prayer how to ask forgiveness for your offences. He that commands you to ask, will not refuse forgiveness, but requires that you implore it with contrition and humility of heart, uniting your efforts with the atoning Sacrifice offered for you on the cross. Do you understand how immense the debt you have contracted? Will you not at least suffer sickness patiently, bear silently an injury, overlook an importunity, and resist natural repugnance in the performance of certain duties? Such acts would be an exercise of penance pleasing to God, and on your part both satisfactory and meritorious.

2ND POINT. All are obliged to implore forgiveness, because all are sinners. Where shall you find a man who does not require the offering of this prayer? Jesus Christ has taught it to the pastors of his flock, and is it unnecessary for the sheep? Even holy persons, though free from great offences, are subject to many venial faults. Therefore they offer the Holy Sacrifice with profound contrition for their "innumerable sins, offences, and negligences." "Blessed are they whose iniquities are

forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (*Ps.* xxxi. 1) with the veil of penance and prayer.

3RD POINT. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." You can never obtain forgiveness unless you also sincerely forgive those by whom you have been offended. God obliges himself to pardon your offences, on condition that you pardon your offending brother. He is truly great who commands his passions, and imitating the infinite goodness of God, dispenses mercy. Be not grieved if men insult, or persecute you, rather let the evils you suffer be a subject of joy, even of desire, because in pardoning injuries you cancel your own debt.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On the Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer.*

1ST POINT. "And lead us not into temptation." (*Matt.*, vi. 12.) As temptation is not essentially evil, you do not ask to be absolutely delivered from its attacks, but only to be preserved from yielding. Not even the most holy is secure from temptation. No one can prove his strength unless he is tempted. As consolations elevate a soul, temptations humble her; the one withdraws from despondence, the other preserves from pride. Temptation reveals her own weakness to the soul, and admonishes her of her defects. "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" (*Ps.* xxvi. 1.)

2ND POINT. The most dangerous temptations are those to which you give occasion by self-indulgence. "Lead us not into temptation." You have to contend with an enemy, vigilant, and experienced, who combats with invisible arms, who often disguises his pernicious designs under an appearance of good. Your senses, passions, and perverse inclinations, your vices, and evil habits, hold correspondence with this enemy. Since of yourself you are unable to resist them even singly, how difficult it is to defend yourself against the many assaults of anger, envy, and other passions, that sometimes rise together in the soul.

Fear, watch, pray, and invoke unceasingly the divine protection.

3RD POINT. God, in allowing his elect to be tempted, permits it for his own glory. Nothing more demonstrates the power of God than to see weak man triumph over the powers of hell by the help of divine grace. He permits it to prove his elect, and render them worthy of his love. He permits it also to increase self-knowledge—to purify the just, and to expiate their offences, that they may increase in sanctity, and become more deeply rooted in humility and all other virtues. “Count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations: knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. And patience hath a perfect work: that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing.” (*James*, i. 2, 3, 4.)

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## THURSDAY

### *On the Concluding Petition of the Lord's Prayer.*

1ST POINT. “But deliver us from evil, amen.” (*Matt.*, vi. 13.) The evils of the future life are, privation of eternal glory, and the torments of hell; and for the souls in purgatory, the suspension for a time of beatitude. The evils of the present life are, darkness of the understanding, propensity to evil, relapses, and all the other miseries that afflict human life. St. Paul has justly said, “Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil. . . . But glory, and honour, and peace to every one that worketh good.” (*Rom.*, ii. 9, 10.)

2ND POINT. You must avert spiritual evils by a serious application to the duties of piety, the good use of grace, fervour of spirit, and custody of the senses. Our Lord permits that you ask to be delivered from temporal afflictions, and teaches you to implore grace to undergo patiently the trials he is pleased to appoint. God cannot more advantageously deliver you from such evils, than by conferring on you an entire conformity to his holy will in the maladies, afflictions, humiliations, and reverses incident to the condition of our mortality.

3RD POINT. Prayer is your secure refuge against all the evils you either suffer or fear. Offer, through Jesus Christ, this prayer which he has taught you. Let it be accompanied with humility, entire abandonment to the providence of God, and submission to his adorable will, universal charity, desiring,—from pure zeal for the glory of God, and salvation for your neighbour—that he vouchsafe to deliver them from all evils spiritual and corporal, eternal and temporal. Hope for all you ask, and all that the Lord has promised, and believe firmly that your petition will be granted.—Amen, Amen.

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## FRIDAY

### *On Jesus healing the Leper.*

1ST POINT. “And when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him: and behold a leper came and adored him.” (*Matt.*, viii. 1, 2.) Leprosy is contagious. The contagion of sin is infinitely more to be dreaded, for it separates the soul hereafter from the kingdom of heaven for eternity. Leprosy is very difficult of healing: for sin there is no remedy, save one—the Blood of the immaculate Lamb is alone its remedy. “But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins.” (*Is.*, liii. 5.)

2ND POINT. “And behold a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” (*Matt.*, viii. 2.) In the prayer of this leper you discover the dispositions with which you should approach Jesus Christ—a lively faith, and a profound sentiment of your own unworthiness. Animated with confidence and love, the leper submits himself to the will of his heavenly physician. You should conform in all your necessities to the will of God. In spiritual infirmities you are assured that God wills your deliverance, and if he grants it not, it is because you place some impediment, or desire it not with sufficient ardour. But in corporal infirmities you should ask relief with holy indifference and absolute submission of your will. If you would merit that which he has promised, regulate your life according to his will.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed." (*Matt.*, viii. 3.) Jesus exhibits no disgust at the approach of the leper; he touches him with his sacred hand. Fear not then to approach Jesus Christ. A single act of his will, a word, a moment, suffices to heal this poor leper. "I will, be thou made clean," and the poor sufferer obtains the health which he sought. God grants all things to a soul who only desires that he dispose of her as he pleases.

Grant, O Lord, that I may yield the liberty of my will as a homage to thy sovereign dominion.

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## SATURDAY

### *On Jesus healing the Centurion's Servant.*

1ST POINT. "And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a Centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented." (*Matt.*, viii. 5, 6.) Faith is a light which guides in the path to heaven, whilst the light of glory discovers the object of beatitude. For the saints behold no more than we believe: that which God reveals to them by his essence, he reveals to us by his word. Without faith it is impossible to please God, it is also impossible to approach him. Faith being so necessary, how deplorable that it should be so weak in the generality of Christians. Habitual faith suffices not: its acts must be frequently reiterated. If you would secure your salvation, let your faith be lively, firm, active, and immutable.

2ND POINT. "Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel." (*Matt.*, viii. 10.) It is faith leads the Centurion to Jesus Christ; faith inspires his prayer. By faith he exercises charity towards his servant, and obtains his cure. By faith he humbles himself before the Son of God, and acknowledges he is unworthy of his presence. "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." (*Matt.*, viii. 8.) "And Jesus hearing this, marvelled; and said to them that followed him:

Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel.” (*Matt.*, viii. 10.)

3RD POINT. Faith renders us happy amidst the sufferings of this life. Faith, hiding the grace of Jesus Christ as an infinite treasure in the depth of the heart, surrounds us with his power as a rampart that defends us from our enemies, and repels the shafts of sorrow that would trouble the peace of the soul. Faith triumphs over the vanities of the world and over the sufferings and miseries of this life. It triumphs over the temptations of the devil, who fears nothing more than a lively and generous faith.

Lord, increase my faith!

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#### FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus raising the Widow's Son of Naim.*

1ST POINT. “And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a great multitude of the city was with her.” (*Luke*, vii. 12.) This only son, who becomes the prey of death in the flower of his youth, admonishes you that the hour of your departure from this life is uncertain. You should always hold yourself prepared. The two most important affairs that should engross all your attention are the care of your life, and that of your death. Let your life be well regulated, and God will not fail to watch over your last moments. Live as if each day were your last. Perform every action with that perfection you would desire at the hour of death. Then will God change your death into a life of eternal glory. Hope in the mercy of God who wills your salvation; at the same time fear his justice.

2ND POINT. “Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her, weep not.” (*Luke*, vii. 13.) You should accept death from the hand of God, with an entire abandonment to all his designs over you, and without complaint. If death is a sacrifice and homage you owe to his sovereign dominion, it is just that you should hold yourself

continually in his presence as a victim consecrated to his glory. If it is a penalty due to divine justice, it is reasonable that you offer it up in satisfaction for your debts. If it is a gift, you ought to receive it with thanksgiving, saying with the well-beloved of the Father: "Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in thy sight." (*Matt.*, xi. 26.)

3RD POINT. "And he came near." The sinner is removed to an infinite distance from God, yet God is the first to approach the sinner. "And touched the bier." The Saviour *touches* the body with the hand of his justice, that the soul awaking from the sleep of death, may recover the supernatural life that sin had destroyed. "And they that carried it stood still." Unsubdued passions bear along the soul unless Jesus Christ arrest their impetuosity. "An he said: young man, I say to thee, arise. He that was dead, sat up, and begun to speak. And he gave him to his mother." (*Luke*, vii. 14-15.) Fear not to sacrifice what you hold most dear for the love of Jesus Christ: he will restore it a hundredfold.

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## MONDAY

*On St. John sending his Disciples to Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?" (*Matt.*, xi. 2, 3.) St. John doubts not that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. He proposes this question, that his disciples may have a more clear conviction of the divinity of Jesus, by sending them to himself to be enlightened. What should be your zeal to lead others to Jesus Christ by your prayers, counsels, and example. Examine your dispositions. If you discover not this true spirit of zeal in your heart, implore it earnestly of our Lord, and desist not from the pursuit until you have obtained your petition.

2ND POINT. "And Jesus making answer, said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them.

And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me." (*Matt.*, xi. 4, 5, 6.) This reply is humble; it is prudent, giving no cause to the Jews to accuse him of ambition; it is solid. The tree is known by its fruit, and the just man by his works. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Prove it by your works, and by the sanctity of your life. Do you make profession of teaching others? "Be thou an example . . . in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity" (*Tim.*, iv. 12), and in all virtues; but especially in humility and contempt of the world. "But we preach Christ crucified." (*1 Cor.*, i. 23.)

3RD POINT. "And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak to the multitudes concerning John. What went ye out into the desert to see?—a reed shaken with the wind? . . . A man clothed in soft garments? . . . a prophet? Yea, I say to you, and more than a prophet: this is he of whom it is written: *Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.* For I say to you: amongst those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." (*Luke*, vii. 24, *seq.*) Jesus praises him neither for knowledge, nor eloquence, nor riches, but for mortification and constancy in virtue. "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." (*Matt.*, xi. 12.)

## TUESDAY

*On the Conversion of St. Magdalen.*

1ST POINT. "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." (*Luke*, vii. 47.) How powerful is divine love in triumphing over a rebellious heart. Magdalen is no longer the votary of pride and pleasure. She despises alike the praise and censures of the world, and her only pleasure is now found in penitence and tears. "And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster box of ointment; and standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." (*Luke*, vii. 37, 38.)

2ND POINT. "And standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet with tears." There is no eloquence more persuasive than that of tears; the mute supplication that holy souls have never offered in vain before the throne of God. Spare no efforts to gain the spirit of holy compunction; it is efficacious in the great work of perfection. It is a remedy against every vice, and a powerful aid in the acquisition of every virtue; the secure path to mercy, and true eternal peace. "And he said to the woman: Thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace." (*Luke*, vii. 50.)

3RD POINT. Magdalen made the sacred feet of her Redeemer her place of safety from the world from the moment of her conversion. Thus the holy Scripture always represents this perfect model of penitent souls. Give yourself from this moment unreservedly to God. If you fear your own weakness, go to the sacred feet of Jesus. Lament in anguish of heart the sins and ingratitude of your life; he will change your tears into heavenly comfort. Offer him your heart; he will transform it into a holocaust of pure love. Consecrate to him your soul; he will engrave on it his image, and it shall never be effaced. What can you fear in the path of penance, having such a Saviour for your aid.

## WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus expelling the Dumb Devil.*

1ST POINT. "And he was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke: and the multitudes were in admiration at it." (*Luke*, xi. 14.) Jesus employs himself during his divine mission, in expelling the infernal spirits from their dominion over the souls and bodies of men. "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread." (*Mark*, iii. 20.) The Saviour's zeal to gain souls seems to increase with the fatigue he undergoes, and the desire of the pious multitude to hear his heavenly doctrine. What is your zeal in reducing to practice the heavenly doctrine and example of your Master?

2ND POINT. "And when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke: and the multitudes were in admiration at it: But some of them said: He casteth out devils by Belzebub, the prince of devils." (*Luke*, xi. 14, 15.) He receives the expression of these sentiments with a marvellous equanimity of spirit; instructing you by his example to cultivate such purity of intention as will raise you above the censure of creatures. Imagine Jesus Christ addressing you in these words: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (*Matt.*, xi. 29.) Imitate his humility when you are commended, and his meekness when you are calumniated; saying with David: "And I became as a man that heareth not: and that hath no reproofs in his mouth." (*Ps.* xxxvii. 15.)

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ replies to his accusers with wisdom. "Every kingdom . . . shall be made desolate." (*Matt.*, xii. 25.) Dissension is the cause of the ruin of kingdoms, families, and communities. It is sufficient to change your heart, which should be the sanctuary of the divinity, into the haunt of demons. The characteristic of Jesus Christ is to unite by peace and charity: that of the demon, to divide and foment dissension. Jesus Christ died "to gather in one the children of God, that were dispersed." (*John*, xi. 52.)

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus despoiling the strong man armed, in expelling the Devil.*

1ST POINT. "When a strong man armed keepeth his court: these things are in peace which he possesseth." (*Luke*, xi. 21.) The devil uses many stratagems to keep possession of sinners. He blinds them, obscuring their faith; he renders them dumb, preventing the profession of their faith, and the acknowledgment of their sins. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." If you employ it in prayer, in the confession of sins, you give life to your soul; if you employ it in raillery, slander, or deceit, you make it the instrument of spiritual death. "May the Lord be in my heart and on my lips that I may fitly proclaim his holy gospel."

2ND POINT. "But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils." (*Luke*, xi. 22.) The heart of the sinner is the stronghold of the evil one. Jesus Christ alone can *overcome him*, by restraining his power, and baffling his wiles. For if Satan has his emissaries, so also Jesus Christ has faithful ministers whom he employs for the salvation of his elect. And Jesus distributes his spoils. These are his graces, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and infused virtues which the Saviour of the world restores to the penitent sinner whom he re-establishes in grace.

3RD POINT. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest, and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out." (*Luke*, xi. 24.) The "places without water" are the hearts of worldlings, which remain as sterile lands, producing only thorns. Wherefore, the demon saith: "I will return into my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first." (*Luke*, xi. 24, 25, 26.) The demon, though vanquished, does not cease to tempt the victor. Therefore, you must unceasingly watch over your heart, because the least negligence gives him an advantage.

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus reproving the Pharisees who demanded a Miracle.*

1ST POINT. "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying: Master, we would see a sign from thee." (*Matt.*, xii. 38.) There are some extraordinary graces, imparted to few privileged souls; there are other graces common to all. God refuses no person the graces necessary for accomplishing his duty and securing eternal salvation. Extraordinary graces gain the will more speedily and efficaciously. Such was the grace that changed St. Paul from a persecutor into an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Ordinary graces lead by degrees to the greater graces in proportion to the correspondence they meet. All should be content with ordinary graces, and it is dangerous to desire others, either for our conversion or greater perfection.

2ND POINT. To pretend to extraordinary favours, is a pride calculated to draw down the wrath of God, and render us unworthy of the most ordinary, because "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (*James*, iv. 6.) The demand is unjust. It is prescribing, instead of receiving from the hand of God. He is master of his graces; he distributes according to his good pleasure. Be satisfied, therefore, with that which has been given you. "I do thee no wrong: take what is thine, and go thy way."

3RD POINT. This demand is captious and malicious. It is a pretext under which you shelter your attachment to certain vices or defects, as if ordinary grace sufficed not to disengage you therefrom. If you remain enslaved to sin, it is not grace, but your own co-operation that is wanting. They who attain a high degree of sanctity, are not always those who have received greater graces. "Woe to thee Corozian, woe to thee Bethsaida. For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the judgment, than for you." (*Luke*, x. 13, 14.)

Teach me thy ways, O Lord: Thou art my God!

## SATURDAY

*On the Mother of Jesus being declared Blessed.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass: as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck." (*Luke*, xi. 27.) The holy Virgin is blessed, because of her divine maternity: and in this quality she is worthy of praise, honour, and veneration. "For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty hath done great things to me." (*Luke*, i. 48, 49.) In her divine maternity is found the commencement and the end of those great things that God has wrought for the Blessed Virgin, and through her, for the salvation of mankind.

2ND POINT. "But he said: yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it." (*Luke*, xi. 28.) The holy Virgin is blessed because of her love for Jesus Christ and her fidelity in observing his word. Imitate her as your model, and as "the mother of fair love, of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope." The Blessed Virgin was more happy in receiving Jesus Christ by faith, than in becoming his mother. Love Jesus Christ, then listen to his words, practise his counsels, and you shall be blessed. If you hear without observing his words; if you know, yet love not the truth; if you believe the law and obey it not; your spiritual danger is great in proportion to the graces you have received and abused.

3RD POINT. "And in the multitude of the elect she shall have praise, and among the blessed she shall be blessed." (*Eccles.*, xxiv. 4.) The holy Virgin is blessed because of her proximity to her divine Son, and the glory to which she is elevated in his heavenly kingdom. As this purest and holiest of creatures rendered to her Son and her God a homage more profound, a love more ardent, than that of the most exalted heavenly intelligences, he has made her queen of angels and saints. Under this title you should invoke her as the blessed medium through whose intercession you hope to obtain everlasting happiness.

## SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus sought for by his blessed Mother.*

1ST POINT. "As he was yet speaking to the multitudes behold his mother and his brethren stood without seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him: Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without seeking thee." (*Matt.*, xii. 46, 47.) The Blessed Virgin and the brethren of Jesus Christ, knowing the envy of the Pharisees, who already deliberated on killing him, would draw him from the threatened danger. What should be your zeal for the honour of Jesus Christ? The Blessed Virgin knew that her divine Son was omnipotent yet she omits no effort to save him from injury. What is your zeal in defending his honour and glory?

2ND POINT. "But he answering him that told him, said: Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And stretching forth his hand toward his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren." (*Matt.*, xxi. 48, 49.) If the ties of kindred withdraw you from following the call of God, say: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" God has more claim on my love than parents or friends. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." (*Matt.*, x. 37.)

3RD POINT. "And stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (*Matt.*, xii. 49, 50.) In these words the Son of God teaches what the spiritual affinity you contract with him is. Faith renders you the brother and sister of Jesus Christ. According to the word of Christ himself, he is his brother, his sister, and his mother, who is faithful to the divine will.

Grant, my God, that the heart thou hast formed for thyself alone may seek its repose only in the accomplishment of thy divine will.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus instructing the people by Parables.*

1ST POINT. "And he spoke to them many things in parables. And his disciples came and said to him: Why speakest thou to them in parables?" (*Matt.*, xiii. 3, 10.) The charity of Christ causes him to suit his instructions to the capacity of his hearers, making use of familiar comparisons to teach them things spiritual and divine. He veils his doctrine in similitudes, as he concealed his divine person in the lowly nature of man, in order to treat with us more intimately, and to lead us more securely in the path to heaven. Those similitudes resemble the sacred veil of the sanctuary, shrouding the sanctity of his mysteries, inspiring profound respect, and an intense desire to learn, and remember them.

2ND POINT. "Why speakest thou to them in parables? Who answered and said to them: Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given." (*Matt.* xiii. 10, 11.) Had the Jews been better disposed to receive his doctrine, he would have spoken more clearly; but because they despised it, "therefore," he says, "do I speak to them in parables: because seeing, they see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath." (*Matt.*, xiii. 13, 12.) He speaks enigmatically to those hardened hearts that abuse his graces. They have power to understand his instructions, yet they close their ears and eyes to the evidence of his truths and miracles.

3RD POINT. "But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears because they hear." (*Matt.*, xiii. 16.) "And he spoke to them many things in parables," (*Matt.*, xiii. 3;) that is, to strangers, to his enemies, to those who listened only to misrepresent and calumniate his doctrine. To the faithful, the docile, those who desire to learn and practise the secrets of heaven, he reserves the key of knowledge and understanding to enter into the mysteries of his church, and discover the secrets of his paternal care over those who constitute his spiritual kingdom.

## TUESDAY

*On the Parable of the Cockle.*

1ST POINT. "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle." (*Matt.*, xiii. 24, 25, 26.) Cockle is pernicious to the good grain; so the wicked by evil counsels and example try to destroy in the hearts of those with whom they converse, the love and esteem of virtue. Cockle is fit only to be cast into the fire. Shun, therefore, the society of the wicked, and beware of being yourself a cause of scandal to others, lest, like the cockle, you be cast into that fire that shall never be extinguished.

2ND POINT. Consider—"And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest, perhaps, gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest." (*Matt.*, xiii. 28, 29, 30.) Our Lord permits not the cockle to be rooted up, because the wicked may be converted. The evil spirit may indeed deceive men who are indolent in spiritual concerns, but he cannot elude the vigilance of the elect. If the wicked be not converted, they afford the virtuous occasion of acquiring merit. Were there no persecutors, there would be no martyrs; all things contribute to the salvation of those who love God.

3RD POINT. "Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn." (*Matt.*, xiii. 30.) "So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just," (*Matt.*, xiii. 49)—to be for ever separated from God, cut off as a dead member from the Mystic Body of Christ, "and burnt with fire." (*Matt.*, xiii. 40.) Those who have been accomplices in crime, shall be united in torments. Those who have by evil example caused the decay of piety in communities shall be united with those whom they have thus drawn from the fervour of their vocation.

## WEDNESDAY

*On the Parable of the Mustard Seed.*

1ST POINT. "Another parable he proposed unto them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed." (*Matt.*, xiii. 31.) Faith, which is called the kingdom of God, resembles the mustard seed, its virtue becomes sensible only when it is bruised. Faith shines forth most powerfully in the saints when under sufferings and persecution. Faith will increase the fervour with which you adhere to the doctrine of the church, and your esteem of the gospel maxims; regulating your life by its principles. This favour should be the subject of your prayer, both for yourself and the church in general. "Lord, increase our faith." (*Luke*, xvii. 5.) "I do believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

2ND POINT. The church, which is also called the kingdom of God, resembles the mustard seed; because from the humblest commencement she has so increased as to surpass the greatest empires in extent and duration. The grace of Christianity has subdued many nations to the cross of Jesus Christ. All the empires of the earth shall at length perish; but the kingdom of Jesus Christ is the kingdom of all ages, the kingdom of eternity. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord, they shall praise thee for ever and ever." (*Ps.* lxxxiii. 5.)

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ with the saints who compose his kingdom, are compared to the mustard seed, because of their humility. By virtue of humility the lowliest upon earth become the most elevated in heaven. Jesus Christ, in his birth, was abject as the mustard seed, but in his ascension was exalted as the towering cedar. His branches are extended even to the ends of the earth. The birds of heaven, that is, all the predestinate, repose under his shadow, and are nourished with his fruits. He was the mustard seed in his Incarnation, and being bruised in his passion, communicates his virtue to all our spiritual actions.

## THURSDAY

*On the Parable of the Treasure.*

1ST POINT. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field." (*Matt.*, xiii. 44.) Jesus Christ is the treasure in which your heart should centre, his knowledge and love constitute your spiritual riches. Holy Scripture is the field wherein is found this rich treasure, that is to say, Jesus Christ. But there is a treasure hidden, "man knoweth not the price thereof. Neither is it found in the land of them that live in delights." (*Job*, xxviii. 13.) It is found in the cross, in the Blessed Sacrament, and in heaven.

2ND POINT. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field, which a man having found, hid, and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (*Matt.*, xiii. 44.) What should you not give to own the treasure hidden in the cross, in the Blessed Sacrament, in heaven, and in the hearts of Jesus and Mary. No one has a right to possess this treasure except by purchase. Heavenly riches can be acquired only by renouncing whatever the world holds valuable. Did you understand this, you would sacrifice all, not only without difficulty, but with joy. Love Jesus Christ and you shall experience a joy more pure and solid than the wicked possess in all the false delights of this world.

3RD POINT. Once you have discovered and purchased this treasure, wisdom and humility require that you hide it anew. If you are wise, guard it with extreme care. If you are obliged to tell your neighbour the lights and graces of heaven with which you have been enriched, you should purify your intention, satisfied that God beholds, and prepares for you a great recompense. "Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy, and teach me thy justifications."

## FRIDAY

*On the Parable of the Pearl and the Net cast into the Sea.*

1ST POINT. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls." (*Matt.*, xiii. 45.) This precious pearl is the knowledge of Jesus Christ—the knowledge of the Saviour, the mystery of his passion, and the secret of his resurrection. Again, the pearl is the love of Jesus Christ—the precious pearl, without which all other treasures are worthless, whilst the possession of this alone fully satisfies every desire of the human heart. Let your spirit resemble refined gold by the fervour of charity, and the practice of the most exalted virtues, in order that it may be worthy to enshrine this evangelic pearl.

2ND POINT. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it." (*Matt.*, xiii. 45, 46.) The great occupation of a Christian is to seek the precious pearl of the gospel, and purchase it at any price whatsoever. Did you understand its value you would make no difficulty of renouncing all things for gaining it. He is a wise merchant who exchanges that which he cannot long enjoy for a treasure including all that can be desired, and one beyond the vicissitudes and accidents to which temporal possessions are subject. It suffices not to give all for the possession of Jesus Christ; you should, moreover, give it joyfully, that whatever you give, you will always gain infinitely more.

3RD POINT. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea, and gathering together of all kind of fishes. Which, when it was filled, they drew out, and sitting by the shore, they chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth. So shall it be at the end of the world." (*Matt.*, xiii. 47, 48, 49.) The religious state affords a peculiar facility to find and preserve the evangelic pearl, that is, the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. The worldly man has neither leisure nor opportunity to acquire this knowledge and love. There are, indeed, saints in every state in the Church, who know and love Jesus Christ with their whole heart; but he warns us in the parable that in his Church there are both good and bad. "So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out,

and shall separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (*Matt.*, xiii. 49, 50.) Labour now with vigilance, seeking the precious pearl of the love of Jesus, that on the day of final retribution you may enter into the peace and joy of the blessed.

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## SATURDAY

### *On the Parable of the Treasure.*

1ST POINT. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (*Luke*, vi. 45.) In these texts our Lord teaches the obligation of mingling spiritual discourse in ordinary conversations. He says of himself: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth." (*John*, xviii. 37.) You also have received existence, were made a member of the church, or called to the holy state of religion, to "give testimony of the truth." Vain or frivolous conversation is unseemly in a religious, who is consecrated to the service of God. In the religious all should breathe sanctity, even to the least word.

2ND POINT. The love of Jesus Christ is an additional motive that impels the religious to converse frequently on spiritual matters. Those who love him, love to speak to him and of him, to listen to his divine voice, and make him the subject of their conversation. "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (*Phil.*, i. 21.) This is the outpouring of a heart that loves Jesus Christ with ardour, and burns with zeal for the glory of his name. You should desire to attract all hearts to this amiable master, and endeavour to enkindle around you the fire of his love.

3RD POINT. Another motive for loving spiritual conversation, is found in the invitation of Jesus Christ, and his promise to those who faithfully respond. Listen to his invitation:

“Open to me, thou my sister, my dove, my perfect one. Open to me, announce me, speak of me to those who have closed their hearts against me. For how can I enter, unless some one open to me the door?” Meditate also his promise: “Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (*Matt.*, xviii. 20.) This is effectively proved in the disciples journeying to Emmaus. “Was not our heart burning within us, whilst he spoke in the way?” (*Luke*, xxiv. 32.) Where Jesus is, there is peace, joy, and salvation. Is not his presence an anticipated heaven?

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### SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus being despised in his own country.*

1ST POINT. “And Jesus said to them: A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and in his own house, and among his own kindred. And he could not do any miracles there, only that he cured a few that were sick, laying his hands upon them.” (*Mark*, vi. 4, 5.) Blindness and incredulity were the effects of the envy the Nazarenes bore to Jesus Christ. The envious man is blind, he imagines that which is not, whilst his eyes are closed to truth. If the virtues of a brother are applauded in his presence, he maintains a cold silence, or insinuates some suspicion. These rash judgments proceed from pride. The envious man would be above all; and not being able to attain this end by other means, he endeavours to raise himself by judging his neighbour—an assumption of superiority.

2ND POINT. Calumny was another effect of the envy of these Jews. Between vices and virtues there is a certain exterior similarity. Prodigality assumes the appearance of generosity: hypocrisy wears the semblance of devotion. Two classes of persons abuse this resemblance, that is, flatterers, and the envious. The former give the name of virtue to the vices of those from whom they seek advantage; the latter obscure the lustre of virtue by attributing to it the character of vice, in order to destroy the reputation of a brother. Jesus Christ healed strangers and not the Nazarenes, because grace is

given, not to a country, but to the disposition of the suppliants. The gifts of God are for those who watch and labour for their salvation.

3RD POINT. "And all they in the synagogue, hearing these things, were filled with anger. And they rose up and thrust him out of the city: and they brought him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong." (*Luke*, iv. 28, 29.) Injustice, to which they are stimulated by anger and indignation, is a third effect of the envy of the Jews. This vice extinguishes faith, multiplies calumnies and violates justice. There is nothing more unjust than envy, because it makes a brother's good the object of hatred; nothing, at the same time, more just, for it constitutes its own punishment. Humility and charity are the remedy for this dangerous evil. Be humble, conceal yourself from the eyes of the world, seek not the favour of men, and you will not repine at their prosperity. Be charitable, love your neighbour as yourself: make his happiness your own, and enrich yourself by enjoying his prosperity.

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## MONDAY

*On Jesus sending his Apostles to announce the Gospel.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus went about all the cities and towns, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. And seeing the multitudes, he had compassion on them: because they were distressed, and lying like sheep that have no shepherd. Then he saith to his disciples: the harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest." (*Matt.*, ix. 35, *et seq.*) "And he called the twelve; and began to send them two and two." (*Mark*, vi. 7.) Admire the tender compassion and ardent zeal with which the heart of Jesus burns to console and save mankind. This charitable shepherd beholding his flock dispersed by discord, and errors, descended from heaven to gather these strayed sheep, and lead them back to the fold.

His intense desire to save unbelievers allows him no repose. When you are attacked by temptation, cast yourself into the arms of this good shepherd: he will not reject you.

2ND POINT. The Son of God animates the hearts of his disciples with zeal for the salvation of souls. Dispose yourself by prayer to labour usefully, and to draw down these graces necessary for success. To God it belongs to send labourers. Nevertheless he requires that you pray, in order to teach you the power and efficacy of prayer. He awaited the prayer of St. Stephen to give St. Paul to the church. St. Augustine was converted through the prayers and tears of St. Monica. Doubt not that he awaits your prayers also in order to bless your labours. The workmen he requires are those of whom the Psalmist speaks: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." (*Ps.* cxxv. 5.)

3RD POINT. "He called the twelve:" A particular vocation and extraordinary grace are necessary to undertake a work that is all divine. "And began to send them two and two," exercising them in mutual charity and humility; and also that each might have a guardian of his conduct. "He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases, and all manner of infirmities." (*Matt.*, x. 1.) The rebel angels would exalt themselves even to the throne of the divinity; God casts them down beneath the feet of twelve poor fishermen, who receive power over them. Jesus Christ confers on his Apostles the power of healing not only corporal but spiritual maladies. He encourages them saying, "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." (*John*, xiv. 27.) Have confidence in me.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus instructing his Apostles before their Mission.*

1ST POINT. "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (*Matt.*, x. 5, 6.) The Apostles had not yet received the plenitude of the Divine Spirit. Jesus therefore proportions their labour to their strength, and sends them, that they may learn to use the weapons of the heavenly warfare before attacking the universal world. He announces the gospel first to all to whom God had given the Law, and promised the Messiah; but, when they despised this inestimable favour, he afterwards transferred it to the Gentiles. Learn to fear the judgments of God, lest he choose another in your place.

2ND POINT. "And going preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (*Matt.*, x. 7.) "And going forth they preached that men should do penance." (*Mark*, vi. 12.) This Divine Master had inspired St. John the Baptist to choose the same for the instruction of the people, and finally adopted it himself. For the kingdom of God consists in the reign of his love in our hearts, by which he renders us partakers in his beatitude. Blush to behold the slaves of the world more ardent in the pursuit of their everlasting ruin than thou in seeking the kingdom of God.

3RD POINT. The Son of God enforces the exercise of heroic virtue as an indispensable qualification for the sacred ministry. This alone unites men to God, without whose aid all their labours are fruitless; further, a holy life makes the deepest impression on the minds of those with whom they treat. Sanctity is truly a miracle, changing what is earthly and human into that which is heavenly and divine. This is the only miracle that God imperatively demands. Crucify your passions, and let the love of Jesus Christ live in your heart if you would draw souls to his service. Do you say you are not called to so important a ministry? All can and ought to take part in it.

## WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus instructing his Apostles in Humility and Poverty.*

1ST POINT. "Freely have you received, freely give." (*Matt.*, x. 8.) The Son of God admonishes his Apostles that the power of miracles, a free gift, should not inspire them with vanity. God chooses the humble as his instruments in this great work, because they refer all the honour to its true source. The conversion of souls is a divine operation, in which man acts only through the influence of God. The more perfect his humility, the more fully is he filled with this spirit. The conversion of souls is dependent on their free will, which can only be gained by a love which humility effects. Without it he will be dazzled by human applause, or if his opinions are contradicted, he will fall into great disorders. Annihilate the desire of honour and esteem, saying with your divine Master: "I seek not my own glory." (*John*, viii. 50.)

2ND POINT. "Do not possess gold nor silver, nor money in your purses." (*Matt.*, x. 9.) Poverty and detachment are essential for those called to the apostolic life. A spirit of poverty is necessary for their own sanctification, because it is the foundation of a spiritual life. It is a virtue which Jesus Christ practised, and placed it at the head of his beatitudes. It is equally necessary for the salvation of others, in order to convince them by a generous contempt of earthly goods, that these are truly despicable, and that God alone is the Sovereign Good. "I will draw all things to myself." (*John*, xii. 32.)

3RD POINT. "Freely have you received, freely give." How wide should be the charity of those called to the vocation of the apostles? He that loves wisdom desires that all adore, love, and possess with him the only Sovereign Good. He labours to enkindle in all hearts the fire of divine love. Display as indefatigable a zeal in drawing all to God, as sinners are ardent and ingenious in their efforts to involve others in their own ruin. "Preach the word: be instant, in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine."

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus recommending to his Apostles a social and peaceable Spirit.*

1ST POINT. "And into whatsoever city, or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till you go thence." (*Matt.*, x. 11.) You must lead your neighbour to God by edifying conversation and the example of a holy life. Missioners should have no attachment to the goods of the earth, nor a preference to any particular place of residence. They are not to consider whether those they meet are rich, noble, or liberal; but rather what are their spiritual necessities. "He that receiveth you," says Jesus Christ, "receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." (*Matt.*, x. 40.) The Son of God cherishes his disciples with such affection, that he recompenses those who assist them, as if their charity were exercised towards himself. How consoling to those who, though precluded from the apostolic functions, may yet participate in their merits, by co-operating with those who are called to this glorious work!

2ND POINT. The children of God should be, like their divine Master, the harbingers of peace wherever they enter. Therefore, he forbids them to carry in their journeys either gold, the cause of discord, or a staff, the instrument of vengeance. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things." (*Rom.*, x. 15.) Weary not in labouring for the peace and salvation of your brethren. Your recompense depends not on the fruit, but on the purity of intention and ardour with which you seek the greater glory of God.

3RD POINT. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, going forth from thence, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony to them." (*Mark*, vi. 11.) This to testify to those who reject them, that they offer not their services through interested motives—and as a declaration to obdurate sinners.

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus instructing his Apostles in Meekness, Prudence, and Simplicity.*

1ST POINT. "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves." (*Matt.*, x. 16.) This good shepherd sends his sheep amongst wolves, but he has promised: "They shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand." (*John*, x. 28.) Sheep of the fold of Christ, fear nothing! you have received your commission from him whose Omnipotence has created, whose Wisdom governs, and whose Goodness preserves the universe. Does the meekness of the lamb mark your conduct? Do you shun the world as the lamb flies the wolf? Do you love your Pastor, listen to his voice, and endeavour to walk in his footsteps? If you resemble the lamb you may draw souls to Jesus Christ; but if you indulge, through the illusion of a mistaken zeal, in natural harshness or impetuosity, you may certainly be defeated.

2ND POINT. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents." (*Matt.*, x. 16.) The serpent is remarkable for caution. You should not forget what you owe yourself, in labouring for the salvation of others. Lead souls to heaven so that you may be the first to enter thereby. The serpent periodically renews its skin. You should be renewed in spirit by continual mortification. The serpent supplies by subtilty its want of strength, and is quick-sighted in discovering danger. You should distrust your own strength, and avail yourself of those lights which God imparts, to discover and remedy your spiritual evils. The serpent exposes his body for the preservation of his head. Preserve a union with Jesus Christ, who is your mystic head: separated from him you can perform no action worthy of eternal life.

3RD POINT. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves." (*Matt.*, x. 16.) Prudence guards you against the snares of the wily; simplicity prevents you deceiving others. Prudence teaches you silence; simplicity renders you sincere in expression. Prudence makes you discreet in action; simplicity directs the attention purely to God. These virtues are essential to apostolic labourers. Are you void of bitterness, anger, or vindictiveness; knowing neither artifice nor malice, but amiable to all? These are qualities that form a missionary according to

the spirit and example of Jesus Christ, and constitute the sweet odour by which you are to attract many to his service.

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## SATURDAY

*On Jesus encouraging his Apostles to suffer Persecution.*

1ST POINT. "But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues." (*Matt.*, x. 17.) The Son of God prepares his disciples for the trials that await them. The labours of a missionary are so liable to be opposed by men, that unless armed with untiring patience, he can never effect permanent good. "Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode. And we labour, working with our own hands: we are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it. We are blasphemed, and we entreat; we are made as the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all even until now." (*Cor.*, iv. 11, 12, 13.) All this you must expect if you would labour profitably in the service of Jesus Christ.

2ND POINT. "But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." (*Matt.*, x. 19, 20.) Learn from this instruction of the Saviour, when treating on the duties of your ministry with persons of the world, neither to yield to anxiety, nor confide in your own judgment, because it is on the Spirit of God you should depend for necessary light. The Spirit of God alone can know that which is of God. It is said in the gospel to those who speak by the Spirit of God: *It is not you that speak*; and it may be said to all that love and practise virtue: It is not you, it is the Spirit of your heavenly Father, that loves and practises it in your person.

3RD POINT. "And when they shall persecute you in this city, flee into another. Amen, I say to you, you shall not finish all the cities in Israel, till the Son of Man come" (*Matt.*, x. 23) to judge the world and crown your labour. It is more generous to fly than endure death. Death puts an end to suffering,

whereas he that flies protracts his trials. The greatest saints have been fugitives. Jesus Christ himself, who came to save mankind by the death of the cross, was pleased to fly from the tyranny of Herod. When he sends his Apostles to convert the world, he admonishes them to shun death, that they may preserve their lives for announcing the gospel, to which they are to draw all nations, before he will come to judge the world.

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## EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus animating his Apostles to Martyrdom.*

1ST POINT. "And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake." (*Matt.*, x. 22.) Our Lord proposes as a motive of encouragement, that *it is for his name's sake they shall be persecuted*. He had strengthened their confidence by the consideration of his power. It is "I," the Omnipotent, that "send you as sheep in the midst of wolves;" have confidence, *I will render you invincible*. Now he tells them that for his sake they shall suffer persecution, in order to fortify their resolution, by his love. "Love is an excellent thing, a great good indeed, which alone maketh light all that is burdensome. Whosoever is not ready to suffer all things, and to stand resigned to the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover." (*Imit.*, b. iii. c. 5.)

2ND POINT. "But he that shall persevere unto the end he shall be saved." (*Matt.*, x. 22.) Sufferings without perseverance merit not the crown. Whatever good you have done, whatever trials sustained, you can never be saved unless you are faithful even unto death. A long life of sanctity cannot save you, if the last moment surprise you in sin. Perseverance is the glory of the saints and the crown of their virtues. It is the nerve of your strength, the consummation of virtues, the crown of merit.

3RD POINT. "The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of

his household? Therefore, fear them not." (*Matt.*, x. 24, *et seq.*) Admire the tender charity of Jesus, who has vouchsafed to bear calumny and persecution, in order to console and fortify his followers by his example. You who are the servant, learn patience of our Lord and Master. Be consoled in your sufferings. Hold it as honour to be treated as was your Saviour. To you he addresses these words—"From the hour of my birth, till my expiring on the cross, I was never without suffering." (*Imit.*, b. iii. c. 18.) "Lord, thy life is our way: and by holy patience we walk on to thee, who art our crown."

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## MONDAY

*On Jesus animating his disciples to suffer—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "Therefore, fear them not. For nothing is covered that shall not be revealed: nor hid that shall not be known." (*Matt.*, x. 26.) Fear not those who oppose the preaching of the gospel. I will add to your words light and power. Proclaim confidently my doctrine. "That which I tell you in the dark, speak ye in the light; and that which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the house-tops." (*Matt.*, x. 27.) Imprint in all minds the knowledge of God, with invincible constancy.

2ND POINT. "And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell." (*Matt.*, x. 28.) A servant of Jesus Christ should fear nothing but sin. You dread a slight injury, a passing inconvenience, yet you fear not to incur the anger of God, and the penalty of eternal damnation. Implore a right understanding of eternal evils, and meditate upon them; thus you will banish the fear of temporal suffering.

3RD POINT. "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword. . . . He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. . . . And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth me, is not worthy of me." (*Matt.*, x. 34, 37, 38.) Your Divine Master will have you wage an unrelenting war with the flesh,

the world, and inordinate affections. He presents you a two-edged sword, his law and his love, to destroy his enemies. Moreover, you must hate yourself if you would love Jesus Christ. Therefore, bear the cross, which is an instrument of death—bear it daily and bear it courageously.

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## TUESDAY

### *On St. John put to death by Herod.*

1ST POINT. “And the king was struck sad. Yet because of his oath, and because of them that were with him at table, he would not displease her: but sending an executioner, he commanded that his head should be brought in a dish.” (*Mark*, vi. 26-27.) See how Jesus Christ treats his most favoured children during life. The most intimate and tender union had existed between the heart of Jesus and that of his beloved precursor, even from the wombs of their mothers. Yet St. John passed thirty years in the desert without seeing Jesus; and when at the baptism of our Lord that happiness was permitted him, it was but momentary. From this example willingly relinquish even spiritual consolations, to conform your will in all things to the dispositions of Divine Providence, and generously to devote yourself to the discharge of duty, without consolation.

2ND POINT. “And he beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a dish, and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother.” (*Mark*, vi. 28.) The life of the *greatest amongst the children of men* is forfeited for a base and frivolous diversion. That venerable head is borne in a dish to the festive hall, as a blood-stained banquet, to satiate the eyes of the impious. That tongue which gave testimony so glorious to the Incarnate Word, converted so many sinners, and combated vice with such invincible courage, is pierced by the fury of a vile woman! Death cannot still the *voice* sent to announce the advent of our Lord.

3RD POINT. God recompenses the just, and chastises the sinner after death. St. John, by suffering and death, secures the possession of immortal glory. Have you never endangered

your salvation by flattering vices, or disorders which you ought to have admonished instead of yielding to human respect? Reflect how avenging justice speedily smites the authors of St. John's death. They are reduced to the condition of outcasts not long after the perpetration of their crime. For grace and peace is to his elect. "But the wicked shall be punished according to their own devices: who have neglected the just, and have revolted from the Lord. . . . For dreadful are the ends of a wicked race." (*Wisdom*, iii. 10, 19.)

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### WEDNESDAY

*On the return of the Apostles after their Mission.*

1ST POINT. "And the Apostles coming together unto Jesus, related to him all things that they had done and taught." (*Mark*, vi. 30.) The mission of the apostles was prosperous. The fame of their preaching and miracles attracted many to their Divine Master, and his reputation extended even to the halls of the great. See the indifference of worldlings to all that concerns the service of God, and their eternal salvation. During two years had the Son of God preached and wrought miracles in Galilee. Yet Herod had not yet seen him, nor heard his heavenly doctrine. In the end he desired to see Jesus, through curiosity and vanity. Religious soul, has the spirit of the world any share in you? Do you *seek the things that are above* with as great zeal as the lovers of the world do the things that belong to it? If you would find God, seek him with sincerity and simplicity.

2ND POINT. With what joy the apostles return to their Divine Master. The Son of God receives them with affection, consoles them in their affliction, and ranks them amongst his disciples. They pass from the precursor to the Messiah—from the creature to the Creator! What will be the joy of a soul, who, having laboured during this life, shall hear these words—"Well done, good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (*Matt.*, xxv. 23.)

3RD POINT. "And he said to them, come apart into a desert place and rest a little." (*Mark*, vi. 31.) Our Divine Lord retires with his disciples into solitude, that they may rest after the fatigue of their mission. The repose he affords them is short. But one day he will invite them to that life of bliss, where for eternity "they may rest from their labours." (*Apoc.*) When engaged in the holiest duties for the salvation of your neighbour, you should, at stated periods, withdraw into solitude, giving yourself to prayer and self-examination, to repair your spiritual vigour, which is dissipated by exterior occupations. If such recollection were necessary for the apostles, while in the society of Jesus Christ, how much more for you, who so frequently permit your mind to wander on exterior objects, or in pursuit of inordinate gratifications.

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#### THURSDAY

*On Jesus followed by the People into the Desert.*

1ST POINT. "After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias, and a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased." (*John*, vi. 1, 2.) A secret virtue, a fascinating grace in the adorable person of Jesus Christ, the unction of his words, the majesty that shone from his countenance, the miraculous works he operated, and the favours he dispensed, attracted all hearts to his love. The people came forth in crowds from the towns and villages, seeking his divine instructions; and forgetful of their corporal needs, they feasted on his words, which engrossed all the faculties of their souls. The Incarnate Word draws us by the triple chain of his word, his grace, and his benefits. "Draw me; we will run after thee to the odour of thy ointments." (*Cant.*, i. 3.)

2ND POINT. "And they ran flocking thither on foot from all the cities, and were there before them." (*Mark*, vi. 33.) The crowd follow him on foot, with pain and labour; they go with such speed as even to arrive before the disciples. Follow Jesus Christ, undismayed by difficulties. Is it just that you should

enjoy without cost that which he has purchased at so dear a price? You must follow with devotedness. Renounce yourself so that all your faculties may be employed in his service, all your passions and inclinations sacrificed to his will.

3RD POINT. With joy the pure souls in the heavenly city "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." (*Apoc.*, xiv. 4.) If the beauty of his sacred humanity attracted the hearts of all, with what delight shall the vision of his glory fill the just for eternity? If, while exposed to the fury of his persecutors, the Son of God said to his apostles, "Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see"—(*Luke*, x. 23), what shall it be to behold him on the throne of his majesty, adored by angels as their sovereign Lord? "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord, they shall praise thee for ever and ever." (*Ps.* lxxxiii. 5.)

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## FRIDAY

*On Jesus instructing the People, and healing the Sick.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus going out saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things." (*Mark*, vi. 34.) He "spoke to them of the kingdom of God." (*Luke*, ix. 11.) Do you mingle piety with your ordinary conversations? The kingdom of God, his providence, the happiness of his subjects, should occupy your thoughts and your discourse. How often would Jesus Christ speak to your heart if he found it disposed. To the interior man he discloses the secrets of his threefold kingdom; that of his glory in heaven, that of his grace in the hearts of the just, that of his sufferings on the cross; happy the disciple that practises the lessons of this divine Master.

2ND POINT. "Which, when the people knew, they followed him, and he received them, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and healed them who had need of healing." (*Luke*, ix. 11.) These words, in a moral sense, signify that he restored health to all for whom it was expedient for salvation. These

are maladies that *are not to death but for the glory of God*, as that of Lazarus; or to show forth *the virtue of Jesus Christ* in his servants, as that of St. Paul. Others shall receive the same answer as did the apostle: "My grace is sufficient for thee." (2 Cor., xii. 9.) They should, by conformity to the divine will, find a healing in their pains, rest in suffering, and health in sanctity: "Gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Cor., xii. 9.)

3RD POINT. "And he had compassion on them." (*Mark*, vi. 34.) The spiritual maladies of this people were evils which demanded a remedy. The Son of God permits that the just fall into certain faults, which they find difficult to correct, because from such defects they draw occasions of humiliation; occasions of merit, by crucifying nature; and occasions of recompense, by the glorious victories they gain. If he leave them for a time to struggle against natural frailty, he fortifies them with a special grace to repair their faults, and arise from their falls.

Lord, what is man, that thou shouldst watch over him with such tender care? To thee I turn with confidence, for thy virtue will sustain me in combating my enemies.

## SATURDAY

*On Jesus multiplying Bread in the Desert.*

1ST POINT. "And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came to him, saying: This is a desert place, and the hour is now past." (*Mark*, vi. 35.) The providence of God watches over those who love him and obey his voice. He even employs extraordinary means to assist them, as he did for the multitude that had followed him. He drew them into a desert place, and awaited an advanced hour, to show more wonderfully his power and goodness. Make him the centre of your confidence, and though he delays his help, say with the prophet: "Our soul waiteth for the Lord, for he is our helper and protector. For in him our heart shall rejoice, and in his holy name we have trusted. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in thee." (*Ps.* xxxii. 20, *et seq.*)

2ND POINT. "Send them away, that going into the next villages and towns, they may buy themselves meat to eat." (*Mark*, vi. 36.) What would it be if our fate were in the hands of men, and if our life depended solely on their care? Had the Son of God been as prompt in dismissing this hungry multitude, as the apostles were in demanding it, many would have fainted in the way.

Lord, send me not to creatures, for thou art my refuge, who art rich and givest all for nothing, and it is to thee I address myself, who knowest my poverty. Keep me with thee, it is already late, and the day is declining. There remains to me but a short space of life, do not abandon me in the end.

3RD POINT. "But Jesus said to them: They have no need to go: give you them to eat." (*Matt.*, xiv. 16.) Should the poor depart from an infinite treasure, the patient from the physician, the weak from the omnipotent, or the Christian from Jesus Christ, on whom he is absolutely dependent? The spirit of man is selfish, seeking to impose on others whatever is burdensome. The spirit of Jesus, on the contrary, is tender and compassionate; he takes our miseries upon himself and would have his disciples imitate his charity. "Give you them to eat. And they said to him: Let us go and buy bread for two hundred pence, and we will give them to eat." (*Mark*, vi. 37.)

This acknowledgment of their need was all the Saviour required. He employs the work of the humble, who attribute nothing to themselves, but render him the glory.

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## NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### *On the Miracle of the Loaves.*

1ST POINT. "When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" (*John*, vi. 5.) Jesus, from the summit, looks with tenderness on the surrounding multitude to which numbers were continually added. From heaven the eyes of his mercy behold all creatures. The watchful providence of the Father beholds and provides for every want of man, and of the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the air. His paternal love is ever mindful of your eternal interest: but how forgetful are you of his presence!

2ND POINT. "He said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Jesus would prove the faith, and charity of his disciple, and manifest his pity for his creatures, in their need and hunger. Jesus has care of me. What a subject of confidence, love and joy! I must show that I love him by obedience to his laws. Jesus requires that I co-operate with him in the care of my salvation. What he demands is little; what he gives is priceless. What he gives depends on the fidelity with which I give that little which he demands.

3RD POINT. "Philip answered him: Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." (*John*, vi. 7.) All created goods suffice not to satisfy one soul, but the possession of the one uncreated Good shall suffice to replenish all hearts, and cause them for ever to repeat: *My God and my all.*

Lord, wherewith shall I purchase bread for the nourishment of my own soul, and for those thou hast confided to my care? In the treasure of thy providence, the inexhaustible source of my riches; "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear." (*Ps.* xvi. 15.)

## MONDAY

*On the Miracle of the Loaves—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes, but what are these among so many?" (*John*, vi. 8, 9.) The Son of God had chosen the disciples as the ministers of his Providence, and would have them supply the matter on which he intended to exercise his sovereign power. He needs not your services, yet he designs that you give something on your own part, to receive his benefits. By co-operating with him in daily life, render yourself worthy of extraordinary graces of almighty power.

2ND POINT. "And he commanded them that they should make them all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties." (*Mark*, vi. 39, 40.) The spirit of Jesus is a spirit of order. Preserve in all your duties the order prescribed by those through whom he governs you. When the charity of Christ shall reign in your heart, that virtue will establish perfect order, there ranging the senses under the guidance of the spirit, the passions under reason, and nature under grace.

3RD POINT. "And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes: looking up to heaven he blessed, and broke the loaves, and gave to his disciples to set before them: and the two fishes he divided among them all. And they all did eat, and had their fill." (*Mark*, vi. 41, 42.) How stupendous the miracle wrought each day at the table of the Lord for the nourishment of souls, in the multiplication of his Precious Body and Blood! "And when they were filled, he said to his disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost." (*John*, vi. 12.) With what vigilant zeal should you *gather up* in your heart, every grace, so that the faithful remembrance, and frequent consideration of his goodness, may increase his love in your heart!

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus fleeing after the Miracle.*

1ST POINT. "Now those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world." (*John*, vi. 14.) The soul tastes the delights of heaven, is endued with spiritual strength, and filled with consolation and joy. Jesus Christ vouchsafes to nourish it with the adorable "Bread which cometh down from heaven." (*John*, vi. 50.) Choose him as king, that he may govern you with absolute sway as Creator and Redeemer. All your powers and affections should exclaim: *We desire that Jesus reign over us.* The divine Saviour, who fled from the temporal royalty with which this people desired to invest him, will never refuse to reign in souls that desire to live under his empire. Make him, therefore, king of your heart; beseech him to reign there, sovereignly, universally, and eternally.

2ND POINT. "And forthwith Jesus obliged his disciples to go up into the boat, and to go before him over the water till he dismissed the people." (*Matt.*, xiv. 22.) It is with regret the disciples separate from their beloved Master, but he obliges them to depart, because he knew their weakness, and the ideas they entertained of the temporal glory of the Messiah. He takes their minds away from vain, terrestrial honours. St. Jerome observes, that in this our Lord displayed his wisdom and foresight though, to the apostles, the separation was a sort of violence. If obedience require you to forgo his conversation in prayer, you may embark with the apostles without danger; your submission will be your safeguard; but you should never leave his internal presence without fear and sorrow.

3RD POINT. "And having dismissed the multitude, he went into a mountain alone to pray. And when it was evening he was there alone." (*Matt.*, xiv. 23.) The Son of God employs his all-persuasive words to change the minds of the people who would make him king; but when the cross is presented later, he embraces it with generous devotedness. You fly the contempt you merit, and seek honour of which you are undeserving. Imitate this adorable model; renounce human praise, seek retreat and silence, and when you have succeeded in what

might occasion vain glory, have recourse to prayer, and sink into the depth of your own nothingness.

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On Jesus walking on the Waters.*

1ST POINT. "And when it was late, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and himself alone on the land." (*Mark*, vi. 47.) Jesus Christ is alone by his essential greatness. He is alone in dignity as Son of God; in office, as universal Saviour; in merit, as author of grace; and alone in suffering without measure or consolation. He is alone in the hearts of the just; he is the object of their thoughts, affections, and desires. He is alone in the imperfect, by their forgetfulness of him and his benefits. They are deprived of the consolation his intimate presence imparts.

2ND POINT. Consider—"But the boat in the midst of the sea was tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary." (*Matt.*, xiv. 24.) When Jesus is absent the wind is contrary, and the soul is agitated by the waves of the world. She is subject to the inconstancy of her own will, which, not being attached to God, expands in vain desires, like wave succeeding wave. God alone can satisfy the insatiable hunger that devours her. She is subject to the inconstancy of men, who are variable as the wind. Jesus is alone unchangeable, without shadow of alteration.

3RD POINT. "And seeing them labouring in rowing (for the wind was against them), and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh to them walking upon the sea, and he would have passed by them, but they seeing him walking upon the sea, thought it was an apparition, and they cried out." (*Mark*, vi. 48, 49.) "For they understood not concerning the loaves, for their heart was blinded." (*Mark*, vi. 52.) Had they recognized the Son of God, and thought on the many miraculous works they saw him do, his walking on the waters would neither have astonished, nor troubled them, since he was the God of peace. Their hearts would have felt the liveliest joy and love

at his approach, if the absence of faith had not deadened the influence of love. If not guided by its light you walk in darkness, that will betray you into error and illusions. "May God have mercy on us, and bless us; may he cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us." (*Ps.* lxvi. 2.)

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## THURSDAY

### *On St. Peter walking on the Waters.*

1ST POINT. "And immediately he spoke with them, and said to them: Have a good heart, it is I, fear ye not." (*Mark*, vi. 50.) "It is I," uttered by Incarnate Wisdom, signifies sovereignty, immensity, eternity, and the plenitude of the Divine Being! It consoles and fortifies the soul amidst darkness and tempests. Did you reflect who it is that says: "It is I," your terror would be changed into confidence. He has walked upon the waters of tribulation to help your misery, and to encourage you to approach him by the same path without fear, because he is Omnipotent to work even miracles in your favour.

2ND POINT. "And Peter making answer, said: Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters." (*Matt.*, xiv. 28.) The word of Jesus enlightens the disciple, impressing him with an exalted idea of the divinity of his Master. It gains his will—it inspires a courage that fears no peril. The saints imitate the Son of God. As he has come upon the waters, that is the way of the cross, they generously follow, by the power of grace which is omnipotent. Charity undertakes nothing but at the command of Jesus Christ.

3RD POINT. "And he said: Come." (*Matt.*, xiv. 29.) There is no desire more acceptable to him than that of a soul prepared to embrace the sorrows of Calvary. St. Peter had no sooner said: "Bid me come to thee upon the waters" than his Lord replies: "Come, and Peter going down out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But seeing the wind strong, he was afraid." (*Matt.*, xiv., 29.) This diffidence is an impediment to his miraculous walking upon the waters, for when he feared "he began to sink." (*Matt.*, xiv. 30.) A fault that seems but

trivial, frequently interrupts the course of divine grace, and retards the progress of a soul. But the faith of the apostle, instantly rekindling, "he cried out, saying: Lord, save me." (*Ibid.*) "And immediately Jesus stretching forth his hand, took hold of him, and said to him: O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" (*Matt.*, xiv. 31.)

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## FRIDAY

*On St. Peter walking on the Waters—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" (*Matt.*, xiv. 31.) In St. Peter you behold a portrait of the power of grace, and the weakness of nature. A man of courage, he casts himself fearlessly into the sea at the sound of his Master's voice. Take him as your model. Generously surmount every obstacle to your union with Jesus Christ. St. Peter trembles at the sight of danger, "he began to sink;" such is your weakness when unaided by the grace of God—for man is nothingness.

2ND POINT. The world is as a sea agitated by a furious tempest. Love God and you will walk upon the waters, treading under foot the fear of the world. Love the world and you will be overwhelmed by the waves. Distrust the smiles of the world—the wind of vanity is to be feared.

3RD POINT. "And thou hast given me the protection of thy salvation, and thy right hand hath held me up." (*Psa.* xvii. 36.) Attach yourself to Jesus Christ by faith, confidence, love, and resignation. His omnipotence will sustain you. He extends to the aid of his apostle the same hand that had formed the heavens, and which shall be stretched forth on the cross to save the world from perishing. Union with Jesus Christ will also enable you to perform miracles of virtue, to surmount passion, temptation, and persecution.

## SATURDAY

*On Jesus coming into the land of Genezareth.*

1ST POINT. "And when they had passed over they came into the land of Genezareth, and set to the shore." (*Mark*, vi. 53.) The apostles, enjoying the society of their beloved master, behold themselves delivered from the darkness of the night and danger of the tempest. Imagine from this the happiness of a soul on quitting this life, or the flames of purgatory, as she enters the land of the living, where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (*Apoc.*, xxi. 4.)

"When shall I come and appear before the face of God?" (*Ps.* xli. 3.)

2ND POINT. "And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent into all that country, and brought to him all that were diseased. And they besought him that they might touch but the hem of his garment. And as many as touched were made whole." (*Matt.*, xiv. 35, 36.) This charitable physician walks through the streets of the towns, dispensing health even by the touch of his garments. What will he not do for you, if you implore what is necessary for your perfection? He presents you, not his garment, but his Sacred Body, not only to touch, but to receive into your heart in Holy Communion. "For as often as thou repeatest this mystery, and receivest the body of Christ, so often dost thou celebrate the work of thy redemption, and art made partaker of all the merits of Christ." (*Imit.*, b. iv. c. 2.)

3RD POINT. "And running through that whole country, they began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was." (*Mark*, vi. 55.) Jesus passes from one labour to another without allowing himself any repose. From the beginning of the preceding day he was occupied in instructing, healing the sick, and feeding the multitude. Afterwards he passed three watches of the night in prayer, at the fourth he came to the help of his apostles. At the dawn of day he recommenced his labours. Thus he spent the days and nights of his mortal life. Prayer and the cross marked all his moments—in all he was consumed by the fire of charity. Reflect on the use you make of the time, which God has given you to purchase eternity; its loss is irreparable.

## TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus addressing the People on the subject of the Blessed Sacrament.*

1ST POINT. "Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled." (*John*, vi. 26.) You must seek God for his own sake; what gift could he confer comparable to himself? You are indefatigable in labouring for this perishable life; why do you not seek that which is everlasting?

2ND POINT. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you." (*John*, vi. 27.) Labour for it; cultivate assiduously the soil of your heart,—the hand of God has prepared, do you dispose your soul to receive this seed of eternal life. The Holy Ghost formed the immaculate Body which a union with the Divinity has endowed with infinite sanctity; he conducted it by the ordeal of the cross, to merit the graces which this Sacrament gives to your soul; you must labour on your side to prepare yourself for the reception of this gift.

3RD POINT. "For him hath God the Father sealed." (*John*, vi. 27.) My Father, he says, has engraved on my person the character of the Divinity, by an eternal generation. He has impressed the same seal on my humanity, to form by the hypostatic union and infusion of all graces, an image of his perfections. I also promise to unite and incorporate myself with you in the Holy Communion, in order to seal you with the same seal of my divinity and humanity. Prepare your soul, that you may become, by the impression of my grace, an excellent portrait of my virtues.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus replying to the Jews regarding the Blessed Sacrament.*

1ST POINT. "They said therefore unto him: What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" (*John*, vi. 28.) St. Paul said the same in the first moment of his conversion—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (*Acts*, ix. 6.) You have been created by the almighty hand of God, to perform the works of God; your great solicitude, therefore, should be to learn what those works are, in order perfectly to execute them.

2ND POINT. "Jesus answered, and said to them: This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent." (*John*, vi. 29.) All good works are the works of God; they proceed from and return to him; his grace is their principle, his glory their end. But amongst all the works of God, the first is faith, the foundation of all virtue. The Holy Sacrament is a mystery of faith. It is by faith that Jesus Christ dwells in us.

3RD POINT. "Jesus answered, and said to them: This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent." Faith is the work of God; without it there is no possibility of approaching him. It is the sacrifice of the understanding, the noblest faculty of man. It is the light of faith that converts sinners, and causes the just to increase in all virtues. It fills them with his Sacred Body and Blood, united to his divinity, in the Holy Communion. What the light of glory is to the angels, the light of faith is to devout souls.

O Lord! increase my faith.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus replying to the second question of the Jews.*

1ST POINT. "They said therefore to him: What sign, therefore, dost thou show that we may see, and may believe thee? What dost thou work?" (*John*, vi. 30.) How amazing the blindness of the Jews. The miracle by which Moses fed their fathers in the desert, seems to them a convincing proof of his divine mission; yet they are unmindful of the miracles of the Saviour, and ask "What dost thou work?" Ah! what work has he not done? Number the sick he has healed, the demoniacs he has delivered, the dead he has raised. But self-love is insatiable, the more you give, the more it demands.

2ND POINT. "Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world." (*John*, vi. 32, 33.) Jesus shows no indignation at their contempt of the miracle of the loaves. He takes occasion to instruct them on the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament, disclosing its infinite excellence of which the manna was but a feeble type. For the Divine Body received in the Eucharistic bread is formed, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, of the purest blood of a Virgin immaculate as the heavens! This heavenly Bread is not only incorruptible, but the source of incorruptibility. It is given to all, yet remains unconsumed. This Bread of Life preserves the soul from the death of sin, and confers on soul and body a blessed immortality!

3RD POINT. "They said, therefore, unto him: Lord, give us always this bread." (*John*, vi. 34.) With good reason do they implore that he *give them always this bread*, for it is always necessary! How praiseworthy their desire! What should be your confusion, who are so cold in desiring, so insensible to the privation of such a benefit?

Lord! give us always this bread.

## WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus replying to the Jews—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus said to them : I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." To live in happiness and content, you must leave yourself and go to Jesus. Approach him by faith and love. For he is the bread of life, its source and principle. "Lord," says St. Augustine, "the source of life is in thee and not in us. Wherefore we must enter into thee that we may find life; for if we seek our sanctification in ourselves, we shall die."

2ND POINT. "All that the Father giveth to me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will not cast out. But I said unto you, that you also have seen me, and you believe not." (*John*, vi. 37, 36.) You approach me not by faith. You desire not to be numbered with my flock, or to obey my voice. Jesus Christ receives most graciously all who follow the invitations of his grace. The Father has placed all his treasures in the hands of his Son. The fund of faith is inexhaustible.

3RD POINT. Consider—"I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. Now this is the will of the Father who sent me: that of all that he hath given me, I shall lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day." (*John*, vi. 38, 39.) Meditate the obedience which the Son of God renders to the will of his Father in all things, and also the value in which the eternal Father holds your soul, for the redemption of which he sent his well-beloved Son, to whom he recommended it with an infinite tenderness. Give thanks to the Father and the Son for this mercy, and dispose yourself for a holy and frequent reception of *the living bread that cometh down from heaven*. Thus shall you become worthy of the love and of the vision of Jesus Christ, wherein consists the life of your soul.

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus replying to the murmurs of the Jews.*

1ST POINT. "The Jews, therefore, murmured at him, because he had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven." (*John*, vi. 41.) The Israelites murmured in the desert against God, and their children murmur against Jesus Christ by incredulity. Instead of venerating the sanctity of his life, the sublimity of his doctrine, and his miracles, they despise his poverty and humility. Worldlings respect only riches, and the perishable greatness of the world. "Hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him?" (*James*, ii. 5.)

2ND POINT. "Jesus therefore answered and said to them: Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." (*John*, vi. 43, 44.) If you believe me not, it is because malice and ingratitude have opposed obstacles to the grace of my Father, without which no man can come to me. Those divine attractions of the heavenly Father are lights, which discover truths important for salvation; a tender violence, which gains, without constraining, the will. If the gratifications of sense can incline the heart of man without infringing on his liberty, with much more reason do spiritual delights possess that power. Wherefore pray with the spouse: "Draw me: we will run after thee to the odour of thy ointments." (*Cant.*, i. 3.)

3RD POINT. "It is written in the prophets: *And they shall all be taught of God.* Everyone that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, but he who is of God, he hath seen the Father." (*John*, vi. 45, 46.) Beseech God to give you a docile heart. For the spirit of God takes pleasure in giving himself to docile souls, whom he draws by his sweet grace, whilst he is repelled by the self-opinionated man. Nourish carefully this docile disposition, then will divine goodness cover all that is earthly in you, whether in your interior or exterior, with the purest gold of charity.

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus promising to give his Body and Blood in the Blessed Eucharist.*

1ST POINT. “The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” (*John*, vi. 52.) The gift which the Son of God promises to bestow is his own Sacred Body, united to his soul and divinity. The Incarnate Word gives himself, as spiritual nourishment, uniting himself to you in a manner the most intimate. The circumstances that accompany this gift enhance the liberality of the Son of God. For he dispenses it over the entire world—to each in particular—not only once but an infinity of times; so that with reason he calls himself *our daily bread*. He has perpetuated this miracle for more than nineteen hundred years, and will continue to do so even to the consummation of ages.

2ND POINT. “If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever.” (*John*, vi. 52.) The Son of God confers this gift to infuse into your soul great sanctity, to form and cement between God and you a most intimate union, and to conduct you to a crown of glory. The lowliness of the creature should also increase the esteem of this divine gift. Jesus communicates himself to ungrateful man, who had been the enemy of his God. He gives it for the life of that world which is to nail him to the cross. “Come to me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” (*Matt.*, xi. 28.)

3RD POINT. “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.” (*John*, vi. 57.) This adorable Sacrament imparts a divine life, by which the devout receiver lives in Jesus Christ, through the influence of whose spirit he thinks, speaks, and acts. “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.” (*John*, vi. 58.) It confers a life of grace and love, and hereafter a life of glory for soul and body. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day.” (*John*, vi. 55.) Jesus Christ consumed with the desire of communicating his benefits, commands you to receive him under pain of eternal death.

## SATURDAY

*On Jesus reprehending the Incredulity of his Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "Many therefore of his disciples hearing it, said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" (*John*, vi. 61.) It was not the seventy-two disciples that murmured, but persons who made profession of following the Son of God. How injurious to the soul is inconstancy in the service of God. The faithless and ungrateful complain that the maxims of Jesus Christ are severe. Nothing is more sweet and amiable than the law of his Master to a Christian, who renounces his own judgment to follow the lights of faith. "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." (*Matt.*, xi. 30.)

2ND POINT. "But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before" (*John*, vi. 62, 63), then without doubt you will believe that he can give you his Body for your spiritual nourishment, and can sustain the life of your soul, without being himself consumed, since in him resides the power of ascending into heaven. Those disciples who faltered in his service were unworthy of beholding the Son of God ascend into heaven, whither he went to prepare for those who persevere to the end. But at the day of final retribution they shall see him descend as their judge.

3RD POINT. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." That is, when separated from the spirit and divinity of Jesus Christ. But united to that spirit it profiteth much. *My words are life.* I will give you, not a lifeless body, but one that derives immortal life from a union with the divinity, and gives eternal life to the worthy receiver. Adore the infinite wisdom of Jesus Christ, who, in order to sustain the life of your soul, has concealed his glorious and all-vivifying Body under the sacramental species, in such manner that he is whole and entire in each host, and in each part of the host, as the soul in the body it enlivens, or the spirit in the place it occupies.

## TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus confirming the Faith of his Apostles.*

1ST POINT. "Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away?" (*John*, vi. 68.) Jesus gives you his grace, and inspires the desire of serving him, but leaves your will at liberty to determine for itself. If you resolve on leaving him, he will not compel you to remain. What need has he of your services? but you depend in all things on his power and goodness. If through the mercy and grace of God you are saved, his beatitude cannot be increased; neither can it be diminished, if you are lost. What can he gain in your regard, except that in procuring your eternal happiness, he displays the excess of his clemency and goodness?

2ND POINT. "And Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that thou art the Christ the Son of God." (*John*, vi. 69, 70.) St. Peter replies as head of the sacred College: those who are but faintly disposed to follow Christ say: "This saying is hard." The tepid are repelled by that which should attract them to the divine love; the fervent are drawn even by what seems most repugnant to nature. Attach yourself inseparably to Christ. If you leave him, death eternal is inevitable.

3RD POINT. "Jesus answered them: Have not I chosen you twelve; and one of you is a devil? Now he meant Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for this same was about to betray him, whereas he was one of the twelve." (*John*, vi. 71, 72.) Judas was already fallen from grace. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray him." (*John*, vi. 65.) Yet he retained him in his society, admonished him secretly, guarded his honour, made him depository of the alms given by the faithful. To fill up the measure of clemency, Jesus affords him yet an entire year for repentance.

O my Saviour, guilty though I be, I will never distrust thee!

## MONDAY

*On Jesus replying to the Pharisees.*

1ST POINT. "Then came to him from Jerusalem, Scribes and Pharisees, saying: Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answering, said to them: Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for your tradition?" (*Matt.*, xv. 1, 2, 3.) False devotion is clear-sighted to the faults of others, blind to its own. Persons of superficial piety murmur without cause, under pretext of zeal for religion. Imitate the apostles, and silently bear that men blame your actions, without occasion for it on your part. "Son, stand firm, and trust in me; for what are words but words? They fly through the air, but hurt not a stone. If thou art guilty, think that thou wilt willingly amend thyself. If thy conscience accuse thee not, think that thou wilt willingly suffer this for God's sake." (*Imit.*, b. iii. c. 46.)

2ND POINT. "You have made void the Commandment of God for your tradition." (*Matt.*, xv. 6.) False devotion seeks its private interest in the service of God, reversing the order of charity, which commands that we esteem temporal goods only for the necessities of the body; the body, for the advantage of the soul; the soul, for the service of God; but that we love God purely for his own sake. Truly, our real interest is included in the divine service.

3RD POINT. Consider—"Hypocrites, well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying: *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men.*" (*Matt.*, xv. 7, 8, 9.) False devotion is satisfied with an appearance of piety, whilst the heart is unfaithful in observing the law of God. It is observant of practices of devotion, to which self-love is attached, yet neglects what is of obligation, and important for salvation. They scruple to omit any exterior mark of respect in approaching the holy table, whilst they fear not to receive the Holy of Holies into a heart stained with secret envy or aversions, or fettered by inordinate attachments they have not sincerely resolved to correct.

O Lord, leave me not alone, nor permit that I leave thee.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus healing the Daughter of the Cananean Woman.*

1ST POINT. "And behold a woman of Canaan who came out of those coasts, crying out, said to him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil." (*Matt.*, xv. 22.) There is nothing so dear to you as your own soul; wherefore you should watch over it with peculiar vigilance, and defend it from all the enemies of salvation. The Cananean loved her daughter, therefore she spared no pains in seeking her cure. You love wealth, honour, or pleasure; you even cherish whatever is connected or depending on them. Why is your soul less precious in your estimation, since it is more intimately your own than all things; for from all else you must separate sooner or later.

2ND POINT. God has given you but one soul. Let all your solicitude centre in it. The mind of the Cananean mother is entirely occupied with the cure of her child, because she is the only object of her love. Your soul is placed between time and eternity.—Time, which is passing away—eternity which is interminable. If you are so unfortunate as to lose that soul, your loss is irreparable.

3RD POINT. If you lose your soul, the loss is not only irremediable, it is also universal. All that you are depends on the soul. "All the glory of the king's daughter is within." (*Pss.* xlv. 14.) If man is the noblest work of God, it is the soul that renders him precious; the body is but dust and corruption. The soul is endowed with immortality; the body is the spoil of death. All the dignity and excellence of your being is centred in the soul, should not this be also the only object of your esteem and love? Is it just that this, so important in the eyes of God, should be treated by you with indifference?

## WEDNESDAY

*On the esteem and care Man owes to his Soul.*

1ST POINT. The excellence of your soul, raises it in an eminent degree above all visible creatures ; their extraction is from base matter, whilst your soul derives its origin from the bosom of God—"Thy hands have made me and formed me." (*Ps.* cxviii. 73.) The dignity of a creature consists in its belonging to God. No other creature has the honour of bearing so intimate a relation to God as the soul of man. He belongs to him on a twofold title—creation, by which he was drawn forth from nothingness; redemption which re-created him. The mystery of the Incarnation has raised man to the throne of the Divinity, an honour incomparably greater than has been conferred on angels.

2ND POINT. The beauty of your soul is superior to any other of the works of God. What is admirable in the body results from its union with the soul. For the soul is the image of God, who has placed it in the body as the symbol of the Divinity. Judge the love you should bear your own soul, and how you should shun whatever could tarnish its beauty, which has gained the heart of the heavenly spouse, and which is consecrated to the service of its God.

3RD POINT. What is the value of your soul? It is consecrated to God and is priceless. Your soul is consecrated to God by innumerable titles; it is his throne, his temple, his inheritance, and his treasure, in which he places his delight. Look upon the cross, on which has been paid your ransom. That which has been given for the redemption of your soul is so precious, that it might be said, man is priceless as God himself. God has compared you with his own greatness; and in delivering himself to death, he shows the value of your soul by the price at which it has been purchased.

## THURSDAY

*On the esteem and care Man owes to his Soul—(continued).*

1ST POINT. You cannot add to the perfections of the body, which are limited, but the soul is endowed with a capacity to increase in perfection. You can continually advance in sanctity by the exercise of virtue. You can be elevated by humility above creatures, by poverty above riches, and by mortification above the senses. Your soul can daily increase its merit; there is not a moment of time that cannot gain an eternal recompense. You can extend the glory of God within yourself, rendering him more absolute by your obedience, more glorious by your praise.

2ND POINT. As you can elevate your soul to a high degree of glory, you can debase it and render it for ever miserable. Jesus Christ has bestowed on your soul faith as a pledge of his love, hope as a dowry, grace as a treasure, his blood as a ransom; why then would you ungratefully renounce him to adhere to his enemies? Daughter of the Eternal Father, temple of the Holy Spirit, companion of angels, heir of grace, what have you to do with flesh and blood? Why sully a heart created for God alone?

3RD POINT. The love that God has manifested to your soul should, if possible, be the measure of your zeal. He employs prayer—*have pity on thy own soul*. Menaces—“This night do they require thy soul of thee.” (*Luke*, xii. 20.) Warnings—“What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (*Matt.*, xvi. 26.) Is it too much to demand for the soul the same attention you pay to the body? You feel a slight illness; how prompt, how indefatigable you are in seeking a remedy! Yet you leave the soul to languish under wounds, not fearing that the justice of God may permit it miserably to perish. What labour should you deem too great to ensure your eternal salvation?

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus healing the Deaf and Dumb Man.*

1ST POINT. "And they bring to him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him." (*Mark*, vii. 32.) How often has the Blessed Virgin rendered you a like charitable care, presenting you to Jesus, to purify the faculties of your soul. How often has your self-love raised obstacles to the mercy of your Saviour. Your vocation requires that you lead others to God by example, holy conversation, prayers, and tears; how shall you fulfil this obligation, if you are forgetful of yourself?

2ND POINT. There is a deafness, like that of the proud, whose ears are closed to good counsel; like that of sinners, who will not profit by the word of God; like that of persons who are deaf to divine inspirations; and that of the avaricious, who will not listen to the cry of the poor. There is also a virtuous deafness, that listens not to the voice of temptation, or the call of flesh and blood—a deafness which excludes the voice of slander. "But I as a deaf man, heard not." (*Ps.* xxxvii. 14.)

3RD POINT. Who are they whose tongues are bound by the demon? They who neglect prayer, and know not how to converse with God. They who conceal their vices in the tribunal of penance. They who acknowledge not benefits received, whether from God or man. They who fail to reprove vice when obliged by duty. As there are occasions in which you should speak, there are also those in which you should be silent—as when you have been made the depository of a secret. When you hear your neighbour traduced: "Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbour? let it die within thee." (*Eccle.*, xix. 10.) Finally, when you are inclined either to praise or excuse yourself.

## SATURDAY

*On the circumstances of the Miracle.*

1ST POINT. "And taking him from the multitude apart he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven he groaned, and said to him: *Ephpheta*, which is, be thou opened." (*Mark*, vii. 33, 34.) Jesus makes use of two means in the curing of this man; that is, action and words. He acts before he speaks; he acts more than he speaks. Imitate this adorable Master. Be docile in receiving instructions, faithful in following him and doing that which he teaches. Like him let your words be few, your good works many.

2ND POINT. "Be thou opened." All that the Son of God says and does in this miracle, is in appearance trivial. A word, a sign, a heaven-directed glance, a touch of his finger moistened with saliva. He is Master of humility, and therefore accomplishes his marvellous works in unostentatious privacy. He performs great actions by the weakest instruments. He demands little, to give much. For frequently in recompense of fidelity in trifling acts of mortification, he causes the soul to taste the sweetness of those words: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (*Matt.*, xxv. 21.)

3RD POINT. "Be thou opened." It is the *word* of the Father; the living and life-giving *word*; the Omnipotent *word*. *One word* suffices to confer health, sanctity, and a blessed eternity. Beseech the Word of the Eternal Father, to open your mind, to receive and follow his light; your heart, to catch the fire of his divine love; your eyes, to admire his wonderful works; your lips, to proclaim his praise; your ears, to hear and obey his voice; and the capacity of your whole being, to adore his supreme majesty.

O Jesus, open to me the treasure of thy grace, that I may be enriched by thy gifts; open to me thy heavenly kingdom, that I may enter into the joy of my Lord.

## TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On the Fruits of the Miracle.*

1ST POINT. "And immediately his ears were opened." (*Mark*, vii. 35.) There are four members which you should keep open to the spirit of Jesus Christ, and closed to that of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Your eyes should be open to believe with fidelity; your ears, to listen with humility; your lips, to speak for the edification of your neighbour; and your hands, to do works of mercy to the poor. But you must guard your senses, especially after prayer, or receiving Holy Communion. Beseech God to hold the key of your heart, that he alone may enter and dwell therein.

2ND POINT. "And the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right." (*Mark*, vii. 35.) "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." (*James*, iii. 2.) You must speak like Jesus, with truth, simplicity, and affability. You must speak of him, with zeal, joy, and love. You must speak for him, that is, with a pure intention, seeking only his glory in all your conversations. You must speak to him, and through him, to his Father, and to your neighbour; to his Father with humility, confidence, and love; to your neighbour with discretion, modesty, and charity.

3RD POINT. "And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." (*Mark*, vii. 37.) "He hath done all things well," both as to the motive, and the manner which render them perfect in themselves, glorious to God, and profitable to men. You should firmly believe, that whatever he does in your regard, "He hath done all things well," even when you feel them most painful and contradictory to natural inclination. It is precisely then he favours you most, provided you love and approve his work, saying: "He hath done all things well."

O Jesus! act in me by thy tender love, governing every power of my soul, every movement of my heart; that I may correspond faithfully with thy adorable will in all things.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus multiplying Bread the second time.*

1ST POINT. "In those days, again, when there was a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat: calling his disciples together, he saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat." (*Mark*, viii. 1, 2.) Prostrate yourself at his sacred feet: expose to his eye of mercy the wounds of your soul. But in order to obtain your cure with more certainty, try to relieve your neighbour in all his spiritual and corporal necessities.

2ND POINT. "I have compassion on the multitude." The mercy of Jesus is extended to all—the just, the sinner, and the afflicted. Were it not for his infinite mercy, the good also would *faint in the way*. The mercy of Jesus is extended to the suffering souls in purgatory and to the blessed in heaven: "Mercy shall be built up for ever in the heavens." (*Ps.* lxxxviii. 3.) "For the stones thereof have pleased thy servants." (*Ps.* ci. 15.) During this life the Son of God prepares the stones that are to compose the edifice; he hews and polishes them with care. After death he will lay them in the temple of his glory, because the time of mercy shall have arrived, and his Blood, the price of their purchase, will render them precious in his sight, and that of his holy angels.

3RD POINT. There is a difference between this second multiplication of bread, and the former. Of the former it is said: "You seek me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled." (*John*, vi. 26.) This marks the worldly spirit of the Jews, who sought only temporal benefits. But it is not said of the latter, because the minds of Christians who live according to the gospel are elevated to desire graces purely spiritual. To the one was given barley bread, the food of menials; to the other, the bread of wheat, the bread of children. Render thanks to your heavenly Father. You enjoy the reality; the Jews saw but the shadow. You possess the Incarnate Word; they sigh in expectation of his coming. You are nourished with the Eucharistic Sacrament; the manna, which was only its type, has alone been their portion.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus reproving the Pharisees, who demanded a sign.*

1ST POINT. "And there came to him the Pharisees and Sadducees tempting: and they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. But he answered, and said to them: When it is evening, you say: It will be fair weather, for the sky is red. . . . You know then how to discern the face of the sky: and can you not know the signs of the times?" (*Matt.*, xvi. 1, 2, 3.) The Son of God reproaches the Jews, that whilst they were quicksighted in temporal concerns, they closed their eyes to the signs that announced his coming, and the miracles that proclaimed his divine mission. Yet, impelled by curiosity, they ask a sign. Jesus replies: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet." (*Matt.*, xvi. 4.) Many probe profoundly into all the secrets of nature, and inquisitively search into the ways of God, yet perceive not the perils of sin by which they are surrounded. May you not be reproached with a similar blindness?

2ND POINT. "And leaving them, he went up again into the ship, and passed to the other side of the water." (*Mark*, viii. 13.) The pride and malice of the Pharisees oblige the Son of God to abandon them. Jesus Christ is the true friend whom you must never quit for another. To him alone you can justly say: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (*John*, vi. 69.)

3RD POINT. "And he charged them, saying: Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." (*Mark*, viii. 15.) "And they reasoned among themselves, saying: Because we have no bread." (*Mark*, viii. 16.) The disciples were guilty of a fault by interpreting the words of their divine Master literally. This divine Master, who tenderly loved them, reproves them with mingled severity and sweetness: "O ye of little faith, . . . do you not yet understand, neither do you remember the five loaves among five thousand men, and how many baskets you took up?" (*Matt.*, xvi. 8, 9.) The spirit of poverty and detachment from terrestrial goods is indispensable for those who tend to perfection. The apostles even forgot to take bread for their

voyage; and no sooner did they show the slightest anxiety, than they are severely reproved by their divine Master.

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### WEDNESDAY

*On Jesus delivering the Lunatic whom the Disciples could not cure.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"And coming to his disciples he saw a great multitude about them, and the Scribes disputing with them. And presently all the people seeing Jesus were astonished and struck with fear, and running to him they saluted him. And he asked them: What do you question about among you?" (*Mark*, ix. 13, 14, 15.) Jesus leaves not his faithful servants in time of need; he comes to their assistance, striking their enemies with dismay. With what consternation shall his look overwhelm the wicked on the last tremendous day!

2ND POINT. "And when he was come to the multitude, there came to him a man falling down on his knees before him, saying: Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic, and suffereth much. . . . And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him." (*Matt.*, xvii. 14, 15.) There are many spiritual lunatics enslaved to the maxims of the world; they walk in darkness. They perform virtuous deeds by caprice. Anger transports them. Their hearts are torn with envy, or dried up with sadness. Never was tyranny so cruel as that which the spirit of the world exercises over its votaries. Beseech the Saviour, the true Sun of Justice, to penetrate all the powers of your soul, to illuminate your mind, to warm your heart, and to confirm your will by his changeless stability.

3RD POINT. "Then Jesus answered and said: O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" (*Matt.*, xvii. 16.) Jesus suffers in you, because you suffer not his spirit to act with freedom. He suffers with you, because you respect not his presence, and prefer the society of creatures to his divine conversation. He suffers from you, because he finds in you an opposition to his will, repugnance to his cross, and resistance to all his designs.

He suffers for you, because you lead others to sin by your example. Will you, in the malice of your heart, renew his pains?

O divine clemency! permit not ingratitude to overcome thy forbearing goodness. But, Lord, *suffer me*, for I am weak, and preserve me, until purified by thy grace, I arrive at thy eternal beatitude.

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## THURSDAY

*On Jesus delivering the Lunatic—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "And he asked his father: How long time is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said: From his infancy. . . . And Jesus saith to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (*Mark*, ix. 20, 22.) Jesus orders the afflicted father to bring his son. To cure the incredulity of the father, he inquires into what he already knows: "How long time is it since this hath happened unto him?" "All things are possible," if you have a firm faith, animated by hope and love. With this you shall vanquish temptation, surmount difficulties, and acquire all virtues. Say with the father of this lunatic: "I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief." (*Mark*, ix. 23.)

2ND POINT. "He threatened the unclean spirit, saying to him: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee go out of him, and enter not any more into him." (*Mark*, ix. 24.) The demon is constrained to obey the command of the Son of God. Let your obedience be voluntary, saying: "I will freely sacrifice to thee, and will give praise, O God, to thy name, because it is good." (*Ps.* liii. 8.) Jesus forbids the evil spirit to re-enter. "And crying out and greatly tearing him, he went out of him, and he became as dead, so that many said: He is dead. But Jesus taking him by the hand, lifted him up; and he arose." (*Mark*, ix. 25, 26.) Divine love, though concealed under temptation, lives in the heart, which it preserved from consenting to sin; and the soul having passed this ordeal, is re-established with an increase of grace, in all its former vigour.

3RD POINT. "And he said to them: This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting." (*Mark*, ix. 28.) Prayer and mortification, animated by a lively faith and confidence in God, give a marvellous power over the evil one. Mortification purifies both the spiritual and corporal faculties. Prayer unites the soul to God, and is terrible to the demons. The prayer of the mortified man is pleasing to God and dreadful to the devil.

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## FRIDAY

### *On Jesus paying the Tribute.*

1ST POINT. "And when they were come to Capharnaum, they that received the didrachmas came to Peter, and said to him: Doth not your Master pay the didrachma?" (*Matt.*, xvii. 23.) St. Peter, knowing the humility of his Master, hesitates not to reply: "He said: Yes." (*Matt.*, xvii. 24.) Not content to render homage to his Eternal Father, Jesus would also be subject to his Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. He submitted to bear all the sinless infirmities of human nature, and subjected himself to the burden of the ceremonial law. In a word, he was obedient to the Roman Emperor, to his iniquitous judges, and barbarous executioners. He has *paid the tribute* of your ransom, yet you refuse to render what you owe him on so many titles.

2ND POINT. "And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying: What is thy opinion, Simon? The kings of the earth, of whom do they receive tribute or custom? of their own children, or of strangers? And he said: Of strangers. Jesus said to him: Then the children are free." (*Matt.*, xvii. 24, 25.) Jesus being the Son of God is independent of creatures. They, on the contrary, owe him the tribute of homage, yet he daily confers on them gratuitous benefits. How many unmerited graces has he bestowed on you? How many sins has he pardoned you? Did you deeply meditate these truths you would be more liberal towards him. It would suffice to know what is most pleasing to his Divine Majesty; you would blush to confine yourself to that which is strictly obligatory.

3RD POINT. "But that we may not scandalize them, go to the sea, and cast in a hook: and that fish which shall first come up, take . . . and give it to them for me and thee." (*Matt.*, xvii. 26.) The Son of God is so poor, he has not wherewith to pay the tribute; but his charity works a miracle, lest the weak should be scandalized. He anticipates the anxiety of St. Peter, predicting what he should find in the mouth of the fish. He manifests his infinite power by effecting what he had foretold. He prefers St. Peter to the other disciples, and honours him by associating him with himself: "Give it to them for me and thee."

Lord, thou payest tribute for thyself and thy apostle; thou wilt soon pay that due to divine justice, not for thyself, but for all the human race.

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## SATURDAY

### *On Jesus reproving the Ambition of his Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?" (*Matt.*, xviii. 1.) The Son of God had conversed with his apostles on his death, and resurrection, instructing them that humiliation is the path to true greatness; yet they still figure to themselves the splendour of a temporal royalty, and dispute for the precedence of this imaginary kingdom. The honour which the Son of God had conferred on St. Peter in the miraculous payment of the tribute renewed the dispute. They are poor fishermen; their condition is abject, their birth lowly, their minds uncultivated; how unfit to fill exalted stations? Nevertheless ambition blinds them, and raises these disputes. Be persuaded, that of all creatures you are the weakest, and most liable to be deceived by passion and self-love.

2ND POINT. "And they came to Capharnaum. And when they were in the house, he asked them, What did you treat of in the way? But they held their peace, for in the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest." (*Mark*, ix. 32, 33.) The patience of the Son of God

in supporting the defects of his disciples, and his wisdom in remedying them, are admirable. He reproveth with sweetness and charity. Instead of open reproaches, he inquires into the subject of their discourse. Their confusion prevents reply. Then Jesus sitting in the midst, encourages them. They do not openly declare their fault, but ask: "Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?" If called on to admonish, let the sweetness of charity season the reproof so that it may produce a good effect.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus calling unto him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." (*Matt.*, xviii. 2, 3, 4.) Jesus loves the lowly and humble, because humility is the centre that attracts and conserves all the graces of God. He tenderly embraces the humble, because he delights in their simplicity, innocence, and obedience. We arrive at a kingdom by humility, we gain heaven by simplicity.

## TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus continuing to instruct his Apostles.*

1ST POINT. "And he that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me." (*Matt.*, xviii. 5.) The poor represent Jesus Christ; in their persons he addresses you, and receives your services. To a worldly eye, they inspire only disdain. But the eye of faith beholds them, as the living sacraments of religion, that conceal great treasures under a lowly appearance. The poor man is the temple in which Jesus Christ would be adored; his hand, the altar on which you lay the sacrifice; your heart is to be the victim presented, while you subtract from your temporal comforts to nourish Jesus Christ in his suffering members. The poor stretch forth the hand, and God himself receives the alms.

2ND POINT. "For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ, Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." (*Mark*, ix. 40.) The poor are your fellow-members in Jesus Christ. You are children of the same Father, followers of the same Master, redeemed at the same price. Why then are you insensible to the necessities of the poor, since it is Jesus Christ that suffers in them? Why do you judge them unworthy to sit at your table, with whom you expect to be fellow-guests at the heavenly banquet?

3RD POINT. The Son of God presents himself in the person of the poor, to confer his benefits upon you. The poor should not be ungrateful; but had you a lively faith, you would not regard them as debtors, but rather as benefactors. Through the lips of the poor the Saviour pronounces a sentence of mercy; their prayer is your refuge, and their benedictions open for you the gates of the heavenly kingdom, which Eternal Truth has declared to be theirs. Jesus Christ desires to receive your gifts by the hands of the poor, that he may return a hundredfold, even in the present life.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus exhorting to a Love of the Poor—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "And he that shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me." (*Matt.*, xviii. 5.) Love and reverence for Jesus Christ should inspire pity for the poor. You glory in being the child of the Father of mercies; how then can you behold with indifference, not merely a fellow-creature, but, in his person, your Redeemer, who has taken on himself all the afflictions of the miserable? It is shameful to be a delicate member, under a thorn-crowned head, why do you repel with disgust your fellow-members in Jesus Christ? Since the Incarnate Wisdom has sought poverty in Bethlehem, and espoused it on Calvary, the saints have loved it as a mother; and far from shunning the poor, they only believed themselves disciples of Jesus Christ when they embraced voluntary poverty for his sake.

2ND POINT. Love and reverence for Jesus Christ should inspire humility towards the poor. You should not be ashamed to enter the homes of the poor, to visit the sick, or be seen amongst the abject; because, being the living images of Jesus Christ, it is an honour to serve him in their persons. Seek and cherish him therefore in the persons of the poor, if you would give him a solid proof of love.

3RD POINT. Love and reverence for Jesus Christ should inspire liberality towards the poor. The relief bestowed returns to God as its final term. Is it not unworthy of a Christian to spare nothing for the gratification of his senses, yet complain of the least expense for the service of God or the salvation of his brethren? You can purchase heaven with a little earth; give a mite and you shall receive all things; give to the poor, and it shall be returned to you a hundredfold.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus proposing maxims of Humility and Charity.*

1ST POINT. "Woe to the world, because of scandals." (*Matt.*, xviii. 7.) The world is filled with scandals. You can avoid these dangers with the aid of divine grace, and the assistance of your angel. But you cannot remove them either from your own path or from the world in general. "For it must needs be that scandals come" (*Matt.*, xviii. 7), either from the envy of the devil, the malice of men, or the passions and inordinate affections that spring from human depravity. A man should not live without fear and distrust, since he bears within himself the cause of his danger.

2ND POINT. "But nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. It were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." (*Matt.*, xviii. 7, 6.) It is a greater miracle to convert a sinner, than to raise the dead. It is also a greater evil to scandalize your neighbour, and destroy his spiritual life, than to deprive him of a life that is temporal. If Jesus Christ has given his life for the redemption of a soul, is not the crime of him who destroys it, greater than that of the Jews, who shed his Sacred Blood? "Now when you sin thus against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ." (1 *Cor.*, viii. 12.)

3RD POINT. "And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." (*Mark*, ix. 46, 47.) Thrice in the same place does the Son of God repeat this terrifying sentence. Eliminate every occasion of sin by mortification, and resolve to sacrifice all that is dear, even life itself, rather than consent to an offence against God. Mortify your senses and your mind. Mortification is *the sword of the spirit*, that cuts off all scandals. Often meditate those eternal flames, which are to the reprobate what salt is to victims. "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every victim shall be salted with salt." (*Mark*, ix. 48.) Remembrance of this will preserve you against sin. For these holy thoughts are wings that elevate you above the snares of the world.

## WEDNESDAY

*On the second maxim of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father, who is in heaven." (*Matt.*, xviii. 10.) Our heavenly Father has given to each of us a prince of his court, to accompany, guard, and direct us, from the moment of our birth to our expiring breath. How great then the dignity of a soul, since the angels consider it glorious to be employed in its service! How dangerous to despise those who are under the protection of angels, and present their prayers, before the throne of God.

2ND POINT. God having given his well-beloved Son for the redemption of man, he could not refuse him the ministry of angels. The soul being attached to a body, suffers many miseries; consequently, it needs the succour of those pure spirits. The soul being surrounded by powerful enemies, requires invisible defenders still more powerful. Judge the value of the benefit conferred on you, and form now with your angel guardian, that intimate friendship which shall last during eternity.

3RD POINT. What reverence do you owe to your angel guardian? What gratitude for the good he renders you? Weak though we are, what shall we fear under such protectors? Certainly you have nothing to fear but your own ingratitude and infidelity; your holy angel will never abandon you in life or death. "I always contemplate my good angel at my side," says St. Bernard; "I fear and respect him as my guide to heaven, and as one who daily presents my thoughts and actions before the throne of the Lamb."

## THURSDAY

*On the third maxim of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone." (*Matt.*, xviii. 15.) Our Lord enjoins you not only to pardon injuries, but also to withdraw your brother from sin, by means of fraternal correction. This duty of charity is not merely a counsel but an obligatory precept, which especially regards superiors, though it extends to all in general, when it is apparent that the admonition will be profitable; otherwise, "Rebuke not a scorner, lest he hate thee" (*Prov.*, ix. 8), and offend God still more. When called on to reprove evil, silence becomes a tacit consent. You become the accomplice of those who sin, if you fail to reprove them. If obliged to watch over others, fear the awful account you will have to render, lest you perish with those who perish through your fault.

2ND POINT. Consider—"Rebuke him between thee and him alone." Never reprove another until you have examined whether charity is your motive; whatever proceeds from embittered feeling, is the act of one who would punish rather than correct his brother. Let compassion precede correction; remembering that human frailty renders you liable to the same. Charity obliges you to guard the reputation of your brother, when the fault is not public. If, having admonished him in secret, and in the presence of one or two witnesses, he refuse to hear, address yourself to the Church; that is, to superiors, who have received authority in such cases.

3RD POINT. "If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother" (*Matt.*, xviii. 15); that is, you shall save his soul, which is the fruit that Jesus Christ designs to draw from fraternal correction. Your charity and zeal are weak if you neglect a duty so salutary. You are still more blind if you cannot suffer a reproof, which is a signal benefit. You feel no resentment towards the physician who inflicts pain in effecting your cure. He that corrects, does you the same good office. God has charged him with your soul, for which he will be called to account.

## FRIDAY

*On the fourth maxim of Jesus Christ.*

1ST POINT. Consider—"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened to a king, who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents." (*Matt.*, xviii. 23, 24.) You stand indebted to Divine Justice on account of many sins. You are indebted to the bounty of God for innumerable benefits, that should be held in continual remembrance, and for which you should bless his divine goodness. Acknowledge with humility that eternal service would not suffice to acquit your debt. The good qualities of body or mind, of nature or grace, with which you have been endowed, are so many talents to be employed in the service of your Master. Cast yourself at the feet of the heavenly king, and beseech him, saying: "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." (*Matt.*, xviii. 26,) through the merits of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2ND POINT. "And the Lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt." (*Matt.*, xviii. 27.) The remission of sins is an asylum which the Son of God has opened in his church for your salvation. "When that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence: and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt." (*Matt.*, xviii. 28, 29, 30.) The injury you have received, is as a penny in comparison of ten thousand talents, which God has liberally remitted to you; yet, with unrelenting severity, you say to your fellow-servant: "Pay what thou owest."

3RD POINT. "Then his Lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his Lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt." (*Matt.*, xviii. 32, 33, 34.) The sinner who refuses pardon to a brother, after having himself received

forgiveness shall be punished for his ingratitude towards God. "So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." (*Matt.*, xviii. 35.) If you will not imitate divine clemency in pardoning, he will imitate you in taking vengeance.

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## SATURDAY

*On Jesus declaring the opposition which exists between his Spirit and that of the World.*

1ST POINT. "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil." (*John*, vii. 7.) The spirit of Jesus Christ is a spirit of truth; the spirit of the world is vanity. The world cannot fill the human heart, since all its goods are imaginary. The world cannot yield any solid support, for it is constant in nothing but its mutability. The world produces no other fruit than disappointment. Tread under foot the maxims of the world, walk on the waves of this world, call Jesus to your assistance as did St. Peter, and to you also he will stretch out the hand.

2ND POINT. The spirit of Jesus Christ is a spirit of sanctity; that of the world is a spirit of malice. The discourse of worldlings is an occasion of sin by the contagion of bad example. "Woe to the world, because of scandals." (*Matt.*, xviii. 7.) Violence, fraud, discord, and falsehood, are the works of the world. The smiles of the world are still more fatal than its injuries; its favour more to be feared than its anger; its persecutions less dangerous than its caresses. "Woe to the world, because of scandals."

3RD POINT. The world is in all things opposed to the spirit of Jesus Christ. Regard it as an enemy. Shun it as excommunicated by the Son of God. Renounce its maxims, which are directly opposed to those of the gospel; avoid its evil example. You have a natural propensity to imitate the vices of others, whilst you feel a difficulty in following their virtues. Above all, fly the occasions of sin, which abound in the world. Do not risk the combat lest you should lose the victory.

## TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus refused an Entrance by the Samaritans.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass, when the days of his assumption were accomplishing, that he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." (*Luke*, ix. 51.) Foreknowing the sorrows which there awaited him, he goes to meet them with generous devotedness. Tepid souls fly the cross, the faithful embrace it with ardour for his glory. The example of Jesus Christ should inspire such courage. You should renounce the world and the ties of flesh and blood, in order to suffer with greater constancy, to serve God with greater liberty, to meet death with greater joy.

2ND POINT. "And he sent messengers before his face: and going, they entered into a city of the Samaritans, to prepare for him. And they received him not, because his face was of one going to Jerusalem." (*Luke*, ix. 52, 53.) If you are of the world, the world will love and applaud you. If you follow Jesus Christ, be not surprised if the world hate you; it has also hated your Divine Master. He presents himself bearing the cross, whilst you desire to receive only his consolations. You fear mortification. But if you desire to partake of the consolations, you must also share in bearing the cross.

3RD POINT. "And when his disciples, James and John, had seen this, they said: Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? And turning he rebuked them, saying: You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save." (*Luke*, ix. 54, 55, 56.) "Christ Jesus," says St. Paul, "came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." (*1 Tim.*, i. 15.) Jesus Christ teaches you the conduct you should observe towards your neighbour. Behold with what sweetness he bears the contempt of his sacred person; he expresses no indignation, but retires silently, because the spirit of his gospel is a spirit of meekness. If he causes fire to descend from heaven, it is that of the Holy Ghost, who is charity. To imitate him in promoting the salvation of your neighbour, you must possess the innocence and meekness of the lamb: the innocence, because the hand that would heal another, must not be itself diseased; meekness, because the heart of man can be gained only by love.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus healing the ten Lepers.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean?—and where are the nine?" (*Luke*, xvii. 17.) Religion, the first of moral virtues, consists of a grateful heart towards God, who has instituted the most adorable Sacrifice to give us a means of paying all the duties of gratitude in the most perfect manner. God being the supreme benefactor, it is just to return all to him by esteem and love, and imitate the Samaritan leper, who, "when he saw that he was made clean, went back with a loud voice glorifying God, and he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks." (*Luke*, xvii. 15, 16.)

2ND POINT. The virtue of gratitude is as rare as it is excellent. Of ten lepers, nine were ungrateful, and of ten thousand Christians, on whom God has shed innumerable graces, there is scarcely one who employs them in his service. When Jesus Christ enters your heart in the Holy Communion, cry to him with humility: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." (*Luke*, xvii. 13, 14.) Having been cleansed in the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, do not, like these lepers, forget the grace you have received, but bless the goodness of God, "who forgiveth all thy iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion; who satisfieth thy desire with good things: thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's." (*Ps.* cii. 3, 4, 5.)

3RD POINT. To render the virtue of gratitude perfect, you must esteem the benefit, and love the goodness of the benefactor. You must proclaim the benefits of God, returning praise and thanksgiving—the only tribute he demands. Being infinitely rich, *he needeth not your goods*; but he desires to be loved and praised. Silence and forgetfulness are the tomb of benefits. You must employ the benefits received, for the service of God, for your own profit, or that of your neighbour.

O Lord, eternal and inexhaustible source of all good gifts, infuse into my soul thy divine charity, that I may love thee and praise thee in time and eternity.

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus preaching at the Feast of Tabernacles.*

1ST POINT. "Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews wondered, saying: How doth this man know letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said: My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." (*John*, vii. 14, 15, 16.) Our heavenly Master imparts the knowledge he has received from his Eternal Father; the truths he announces are drawn from the bosom of the Deity, who speaks to you by the voice of the Incarnate Word. O that you could say with your Divine Lord: My doctrine is not mine; it is not I that speak, but the spirit of God that speaketh in me.

2ND POINT. "If any man will do the will of him, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: But he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, he is true, and there is no injustice in him." (*John*, vii. 17, 18.) Sin troubles and blinds, but virtue purifies and illumines the soul. God gives the understanding of eternal truths to those who obey his will. If you love vanity you cannot comprehend truth. Jesus Christ reproached the Jews—"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law." (*John*, vii. 19.) May he not say to you: Have I not given you, through the Holy Ghost, the interior law of charity, to strengthen and encourage you in the practice of virtue? Nevertheless, how many offences do you daily commit against my commandments?

3RD POINT. "If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath-day, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are you angry at me because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath-day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment." (*John*, vii. 23, 24.) Learn to despise both the praises and judgments of men. It is impossible to please the world and serve Jesus Christ at the same time. Let not human respect warp your judgment. Behold how the children of this world treat the Son of God. Some despise his poverty; others calumniate his doctrine and miracles; many seek his life. Only a small number profit of his heavenly instructions:—to which class do you belong?

## WEDNESDAY

*On the Preaching of Jesus—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "Jesus therefore said to them: Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to him that sent me." (*John*, vii. 33.) Time is short, yet you think it too long to do penance, or work out your salvation. Time is infinitely precious, yet you squander it on trifles. Time, ill employed, leads to a woeful eternity. Avail yourself then of the time you have to avert the anger of God, and secure his divine clemency. Renew your affections, which have grown cold, and weep for the offences you have committed. O eternity, that men would deeply meditate thy duration!

2ND POINT. "You shall seek me and shall not find me." (*John*, vii. 34.) "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found: Call upon him while he is near." (*Isaiah*, lv. 6.) You should seek him without delay, because "time is short." (*1 Cor.*, vii. 29.) Whilst Jesus presents himself, lose not the occasion of securing a happy eternity. You have long resisted the Holy Ghost. Seek God without delay, because had you sought him from eternity, and with all possible diligence, still you must say with St. Augustine: Too late have I known thee, O eternal Truth, too late have I loved thee, O eternal Beauty. Seek him, because the hour is at hand when you shall be called to him to give an account.

3RD POINT. "And where I am, thither you cannot come." (*John*, vii. 34.) You can never reach heaven by violating the divine precepts, or resisting the adorable will of God. If you reach it not, what must be your condition for an endless eternity? Thrice blessed the disciples to whom he said: "I go to prepare a place for you." (*John*, xiv. 2.) Thrice happy the soul that shall merit to enjoy; to behold and to adore the King of immortal ages. Beseech your benign Saviour not to exclude you from that tender prayer which, being ready to offer the sacrifice of his life, he presented to his Eternal Father for his elect: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me; that they may see my glory which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world." (*John*, xvii. 24.)

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus promising his Divine Spirit.*

1ST POINT. "And on the last and great day of the festivity, Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink." (*John*, vii. 37.) The spirit of Jesus quenches the thirst of things vain and perishable, which worldly men seek with inordinate affection. He who has tasted the delights of the spirit, is disgusted with the pleasures of sense. When a soul has found God, she renounces creatures saying with the Psalmist: "*It is good for me to adhere to my God.*" She no longer seeks exterior consolations, because she is united to the inexhaustible source of all good.

2ND POINT. "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink." The spirit of Jesus enkindles a thirst for things spiritual, because he is the sovereign good infinitely desirable, who burns with an ardent love for you, and would be the only beloved of your heart. His liberality and munificence, says St. Gregory, are unbounded. He delights more in conferring than you do in receiving favours. "All you that thirst, come to the waters, and you that have no money, make haste, buy and eat: come ye, buy wine and milk without money and without any price." (*Isaiah*, lv. 1.) And again by the apostle of love: "And the spirit and the bride say: Come. And he that heareth, let him say: Come. And he that thirsteth, let him come: and he that will, let him take the water of life freely." (*Apoc.*, xxii. 17.) In a word, so ardently does he burn to communicate himself, that by a *desire* you can purchase the supreme and everlasting bliss.

3RD POINT. "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture saith, *Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*" (*John*, vii. 38.) The spirit of Jesus satisfies every desire of the heart by the abundance of his gifts. Do you desire to overcome your evil propensities? You will find in him a source of mercy. If you glow with zeal for the salvation of souls, through him you can enlighten the darkest mind, and inflame the coldest heart.

O Lord my God, attend to my prayer, let thy mercy be propitious to the desire of my heart; and give to thy servant those superabundant graces, that first sanctifying my own soul, will make me an instrument in thy divine hands for the salvation of my neighbour.

## FRIDAY

*On Jesus declaring himself the Light of the World.*

1ST POINT. "Therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying: I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (*John*, viii. 12.) Jesus Christ sheds the light of his grace on sinners, that they may understand their evil condition. He sheds it on the penitent, to efface the stains which passion leaves in the heart of man. He sheds it on the just, to give them a knowledge and love of his divine perfections. When the Increased Light rises on the heart of man, shedding on it the rays of divine wisdom, the day of grace dawns.

"O Jesus, enlighten me with the brightness of interior light, and chase away the darkness of my heart. Send forth thy light and thy truth, and the earth shall be enlightened." (*Imit.*, b. iii. c. 23.)

2ND POINT. Jesus Christ will diffuse the splendour of his justice at the last day, when he "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." (*1 Cor.*, iv. 5.) That day will doubtless be terrible, but that of the particular judgment will not be less so. In vain shall the sinner turn from the hideous view of his crimes. Divine justice will force him to pronounce his own condemnation. He will detest his iniquity with the hatred of despair, and remorse will gnaw him for eternity. Whilst time remains, efface by penance every stain of sin: you will prevent the horror and confusion that await the death of the sinner.

3RD POINT. "He that followeth me, walketh not in darkness;" he shall enjoy the light of grace, which banishes sin. He "shall have the light of life"; that is, the light of glory. This produces a security without fear, a joy without sadness, an eternity without end. God offers the light of grace to all, but not to all the light of glory. For that day is for those only who are dead to sin, and who live for the glory and service of God. Live in such a manner as to be of that number. Then shall your justice shine as the light, and your judgment as the mid-day sun.

## SATURDAY

*On Jesus warning the Jews that they shall die in their sins.*

1ST POINT. "Again therefore Jesus said to them: I go, and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin." (*John*, viii. 21.) Death is the destruction of nature, sin that of grace. To die in sin is the sovereign, irremediable, and eternal evil of soul and body. The consequences of death, and not the accompanying circumstances, render it either good or evil. The death of the just, being followed by an eternal recompense, is happy; that of the wicked, entailing everlasting punishment, is the completion of misery.

2ND POINT. The most ordinary cause of dying in sin, is resisting the grace of God, and contemning his warnings. This appears in the conduct of the Son of God towards the Jews. He employs the attraction of his love and hope to soften their unbending temper. But the once chosen people hardened their hearts against all the efforts of their Saviour—an image of a soul that forsakes the way of God during life, and whom his mercy abandons to his justice at the hour of death!

3RD POINT. To escape this unhappy end, you must avoid all that usually leads to a contempt of the inspirations of grace. These are sins of malice or long-indulged habits, and violent passions, which obscure even the light of reason. Again, you must never quit prayer and the exercise of good works; or if you have abandoned, return to them without delay. As God removes from none but those who first fly his presence, beware of waiting to fly sin until you are unable to effect your intention. Return to God, for, we have a good Father. "Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God." (*Jer.* iii. 22.)

## TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus restoring Sight to the Man born Blind.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth." (*John*, ix. 11.) All are born blind, because all are born in sin. Original sin involves the soul in a fatal gloom, filling it with error and illusion. It increases with our existence. Darkness is the inseparable companion of sin, because it banishes grace, the sun of our spiritual existence; it renders the mind incapable of receiving the light of the Holy Ghost, and leaves it exposed to an infinity of dangers.

2ND POINT. The Son of God, *the true light*, sheds on the soul the light of faith, the life of the understanding, as charity is of the heart. He also infuses the gift of understanding, to enable her to penetrate the most profound mysteries; of wisdom, which elevates her to the knowledge of things divine; of knowledge, which leads to the paths of truth; and of counsel, to direct her in all spiritual difficulties. Whilst the mind is enriched by these sacred gifts, it can never be deceived by the illusions of darkness. O Light Invisible, that penetrates the obscurity of the human heart, command thy light to shine on me, that I may behold him who is my true and everlasting life.

3RD POINT. Jesus Christ confers favours on the blind man. He heals him, by which favour he is so changed as no longer to be recognized by those who saw him blind. Thus a soul whom God has perfectly enlightened, seems changed into *a new creature in Jesus Christ*. Her ideas, affections, conversation, and entire conduct, are changed. She acts in a manner much more noble and divine. She can truly say: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." (*John*, ix. 25.) The happiness of the saints on earth is to know only Jesus Christ crucified. This *one thing* comprehends all. The happiness of the saints in heaven is to behold Jesus Christ glorified.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus restoring Sight to the Blind Man—(continued).*

1ST POINT. "They said therefore to him: How were thy eyes opened?" (*John*, ix. 1.) The saints have always concealed the particular graces with which God has favoured them. He who carries a treasure in public view, is exposed to the danger of being robbed. They are also very reserved regarding the souls of their neighbour; because the works of God demand respect, and should not be sought into with rash curiosity. Yet, impelled by charity, they sometimes communicate to others the divine mercies they experience, when this can serve to the edification of their neighbour and the glory of God.

2ND POINT. "He answered: That man that is called Jesus, made clay and anointed my eyes." (*John*, ix. 11.) He who has made the universe disdains not to handle the dust from which you are created, to confound your pride, that fears to exercise humbling offices in the service of your neighbour. Love, therefore, the humiliation applied by his divine hand, and rejoice that he uses your baseness, in order to give you his sanctity, and enlighten you with his light.

3RD POINT. "And they said to him: Where is he? He saith: I know not." (*John*, ix. 12.) The Jews ask where the Son of God is, through curiosity, and a hatred that sought his destruction. Love and desire should make you inquire. If through your negligence he sometimes withdraws, and deprives you of his sensible presence, sorrow and respect should impel you to seek him. Come to the crib to learn innocence, simplicity, and poverty. Come to the desert to live in silence and recollection. Come to Calvary to be immolated with me. Come to the altar to be nourished with my flesh and blood. Enter into yourself, "For lo! the kingdom of God is within you." (*Luke*, xvii. 21.)

## TUESDAY

*On Jesus restoring Sight to the Blind Man—(continued.)*

1ST POINT. "They, therefore, called the man again, that had been blind, and said to him: Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." (*John*, ix. 24.) The works of Jesus Christ are so marvellous, that his enemies pine with envy. Having no other arms but those of falsehood, wherewith to attack him, they say: "This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath." (*John*, ix. 16.) "Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." (*Isaiah*, v. 20.)

2ND POINT. "The man answered, and said to them: Why herein is a wonderful thing that you know not from whence he is, and he hath opened my eyes." (*John*, ix. 30.) "What sayest thou of him" (*John*, ix. 17), Christian soul? What idea do you form of his glory and his ignominy, of his virtues and sufferings, his life and death? "What sayest thou" of his mercy in pardoning, his patience in supporting, and his sweetness in receiving you? How can you respond, since the graces conferred on you are innumerable? Praise your Saviour with all your strength. Your thanksgiving can never equal his bounty; his goodness surpasses all your praise.

3RD POINT. "And they cast him out." (*John*, ix. 34.) "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." (*Matt.*, v. 10.) The Pharisees cast out from their synagogue this zealous disciple of Jesus Christ, and his benign Master comes to reveal to him the mystery of his divinity. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered, and said: Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? And Jesus said to him: Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." (*John*, ix. 35, 36, 37.) Happy they who merit to hear these words, and prostrating themselves at his sacred feet adore their Saviour. Frequently say to your heart: "It is he that talketh with thee," that you may hold yourself in profound recollection in his sacred presence. You can behold your Lord by the light of prayer during this life; if you are faithful, you shall behold him hereafter in the light of eternal glory.

## WEDNESDAY

*On the Judgments of God over the culpably Blind.*

1ST POINT. "And Jesus said: For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not, may see: and they who see may become blind." (*John*, ix. 39.) The Son of God, the true sun of justice, desires to shed his rays on your soul, yet, you may provoke him to withdraw, and leave you in darkness if you place obstacles to his grace, or abuse it by presuming on your own strength. It may also occur, that in punishment of your sins, God shall withdraw from you *the light of his countenance*.

2ND POINT. "Therefore God shall send them the operation of error, to believe lying: because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (*Thess.*, ii. 10.) The evil spirit extends the kingdom of darkness by insinuating himself into the imagination. From the imagination he extends his operation to the sensitive appetite, exciting the passions, which obscure reason. He then takes possession of the exterior senses, which he deludes with a false view of the riches, pleasures, and honours of the world. Thus the demon deceives souls; closing the avenues through which the light of the Holy Ghost could enter.

3RD POINT. "Jesus said to them: If you were blind, you should not have sin, but now you say: We see. Your sin remaineth." (*John*, ix. 41.) Man is the cause of his own blindness, because his enemy cannot injure him but with his own consent. He takes part with his enemy against himself. There is nothing more insupportable to the sinner, than the eye of his own conscience. He falls at last into a reprobate sense. Then prosperity dazzles; vanity darkens the mind; human prudence corrupts the judgment.

O Light eternal, enlighten the darkness of my heart, that I may know thee and know myself! O Light of Truth, shine upon my soul, and inflame it with thy love, that its every thought and sentiment may tend to thee alone.

## THURSDAY

*On Jesus choosing the seventy-two Disciples.*

1ST POINT. "And after these things, the Lord appointed also other seventy-two: and he sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come. And he said to them: The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he send labourers into his harvest." (*Luke*, x. 1, 2.) The Son of God watches with tender solicitude for the salvation of souls. He commands you to pray that he send labourers into his harvest. He requires labourers, not idlers, in his harvest. He also requires that you act by his grace, and be ready to accomplish his will, without regard to the time, place, or manner of your employment.

2ND POINT. "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." (*Luke*, x. 16.) How great the respect you owe to those whom Jesus Christ has invested with his own authority. "For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us." (*2 Cor.*, v. 20.) See God in their persons. Obedience will not be difficult, when you reflect it is God that speaks, and not man. Meditate the reproach of Jesus Christ to those cities that profited not of his miracles and preaching. Truly you have cause to fear, lest his reproach fall upon you, seeing the little fruit you draw from so many graces. "With fear and trembling, work out your salvation." (*Phil.* ii. 12.)

3RD POINT. "And the seventy-two returned with joy, saying: Lord, the devils also are subject to us in thy name." (*Luke*, x. 17.) Having laboured with courage and success, they return with joy to their Divine Master, to render an account, and refer to him the glory of their work. If servants of God quit his presence for the service of their neighbour, and the functions of an active life, they frequently return to contemplative exercises to repair their spiritual strength. The joy of the disciples proceeded from secret pride and vain esteem of themselves. Saints fear, lest vain glory in their good works should cause God to withdraw his grace and leave them to their natural weakness. When tempted to self-complacency in the talents

with which you may be endowed, say to yourself, the proud have been cast down from heaven, and the humble have been exalted to their seat. If the children of light have not been secure, what may not dust and ashes fear?

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## FRIDAY

### *On the Parable of the Good Samaritan.*

1ST POINT. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead." (*Luke*, x. 30.) The sinner goes down, that is, he precipitates himself from the state of grace, unto the gulf of sin. *He falls into the power of the demon*, who "lieth in wait in secret, like a lion in his den." (*Ps.* ix. 9.) The way to Jericho, that is, the path of the world, is filled with the snares of honours, riches, and pleasures, which draw sinners from the safe path. He is stripped of the garment of grace. He is pierced with a mortal wound by the arrow of sin, and *left half dead*, retaining only the life of the senses.

2ND POINT. "But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him." (*Luke*, x. 33.) Jesus is this charitable Samaritan, who has shown mercy towards the sinner. He descended from heaven and assumed the nature of man, in order to come near him and heal his wounds. "And going up to him, bound up his wounds" with the bands of charity, "pouring in oil and wine" (*Luke*, x. 34); that is, sanctifying grace and the spirit of compunction. Seeing the sinner weak and languid, he raises him up, bearing in his own sacred person the penalty of sin. He restores him to the Church, and to the ministers of religion to whom he gives knowledge and power to heal his spiritual infirmities, promising to repay them their charitable care with an eternal recompense.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou in like manner." (*Luke*, x. 37.) "Pray one for another, that you may be saved." (*James*, v. 16.) "If a man be overtaken in any fault, you who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of

meekness." (*Gal.* vi. 1.) Render your neighbour, every office of charity which his necessities demand. "This do and thou shalt live." (*Luke*, x. 28.) Heaven is the reward of good works, not of words. Love is proved by deeds.

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## SATURDAY

### *On the Parable of the Rich Man.*

1ST POINT. "But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (*Luke*, xii. 20.) God alone is truly good, since his presence in the soul averts all evil, and confers every benefit. Terrestrial riches may injure much, and can serve but little. But the riches you possess in Jesus Christ render you truly happy. Do you labour under infirmity?—he is your physician. Do you suffer hunger?—he is the bread of heaven. Are you menaced by death?—he is the source of life. Divide not the affections of your heart, since in One only you can find all things.

2ND POINT. The treasure you possess in God, is advantageous in proportion as you guard it carefully. The pious soul who often partakes of the adorable Eucharist understands how incalculably precious the time during which she possesses within her bosom the source of inexhaustible riches. Who can conceive the treasure of graces which this divine guest communicates to the heart that entertains him in silence and recollection. Moreover, God is a general and universal treasure, where all may be enriched, without exciting envy or jealousy, or prejudicing the interest of any. Your happiness will be augmented by the number of those who partake of the blessing.

3RD POINT. Would you be truly rich?—be rich in spirit and eternal goods. If you have renounced the world, give thanks to God for so inestimable a favour. But beware lest attachment to trifling conveniences should taint your sacrifice. If you have but little, be contented. Let God be your treasure, look with indifference on all things else. Conform yourself in all things to the will of your heavenly Father. "O Lord: Thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living." (*Psa.* cxli. 6.)

## TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*On Jesus curing the Infirm Woman.*

1ST POINT. "And he was teaching in their synagogue on their Sabbath. And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years: and she was bowed together, neither could she look upwards at all." (*Luke*, xiii. 10, 11.) We are bowed down to the earth, with chains of sin, self-love, attachment to creatures, and corporal infirmity. Sin draws man down towards hell, where frequent relapses seem to mark his place. Self-love absorbs him in his own interest or satisfaction. Love of creatures binds him to the earth as a miserable slave. If the body is weak, the mind shares in its pain. Have you not felt the weight of these chains?

2ND POINT. "Whom, when Jesus saw, he called her unto him, and said to her: Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." (*Luke*, xiii. 12, 13.) The Son of God *looks upon us* with eyes of mercy. "Come to me all you that labour and are burdened." (*Matt.*, xi. 28.) "The Master is come and calleth for thee." (*John*, xi. 28.) He calls you to prayer, to treat with you in secret. He calls you to the cross, to suffer for his love. He calls you to the altar, to enjoy his real presence. He calls you to succour him in the persons of the poor. He calls you to recollection in the solitude of your heart. He calls you to the exercise of your various duties, in order to sanctify and render you like unto himself.

3RD POINT. "And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." How few there are who give glory to God, and acknowledge his benefits. "And the ruler of the synagogue (being angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath) answering, said to the multitude: Six days there are wherein you ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day." (*Luke*, xiii. 14.) How great the malice that conceals its envy and hatred under the appearance of zeal!

Look upon me, sweet Jesus, and draw my heart towards thee. Call me to thee at the hour of my death, that I may praise thee with the saints for all eternity. Amen.

## MONDAY

*On Jesus healing the Dropsical Man.*

1ST POINT. "And it came to pass, when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath day to eat bread, that they watched him." (*Luke*, xiv. 1.) Men observe those whom they love, and those whom they fear, to avoid their displeasure. Jesus Christ should be the object of your thought, because his perfections are infinite. Observe all his actions, that you may admire and adore him. He should be the only object of your love, because he is the supreme good. He should also be the object of your fear, because his judgments are inscrutable. Study the dispositions of his will, that you may not incur his displeasure, and pray that he would correct you in this life, either by himself or his creatures, that he may pardon you in eternity.

2ND POINT. "And behold, there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy." (*Luke*, xiv. 2.) Your soul also labours under this malady. It excites an insatiable thirst for honours, riches, and pleasures. The remedy of this is to be found only in Jesus Christ. His humility is the medicine of our pride. His example and his grace will qualify the ungrateful draught. How could a sinner harbour pride in the presence of a God humbled to the death of the cross? The poverty of Jesus Christ is the cure of your avarice. Approach him, for he is the fountain of living water, who satisfies all that drink of his vivifying streams. The sanctity of Jesus purifies the corruption of nature. His Precious Blood, when received with humility, produces in the soul a burning love and desire to possess Jesus Christ alone.

3RD POINT. "And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? But they held their peace. But he taking him healed him, and sent him away." (*Luke*, xiv. 3, 4.) All is vivifying in the person of Jesus Christ; his hand, his word, his look: Present yourself frequently to him in Holy Communion. "He healed him and sent him away." Our Lord permits you but for a short time to enjoy his presence, because during this life divine consolations are transitory. Therefore he leaves you but a moment on Thabor, to taste the sweetness of his love, and immediately

summonses you to Calvary to share in the bitterness of the cross. This trial, however, is only a privation of his sweetness, not of the strength and unction of his grace.

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## TUESDAY

### *On the Parable of the Good Shepherd.*

1ST POINT. "And he spoke to them this parable, saying: What man of you that hath a hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost, until he find it?" (*Luke, xv. 3, 4.*) Zeal for the salvation of souls, says St. Gregory, is the most acceptable sacrifice you can offer to the Omnipotent. How indefatigable should you be to lead them in the path to heaven. At least, beware of losing a single one entrusted to you. Alas! how few can say with Jesus Christ: "Of them whom thou hast given me, I have not lost any one." (*John, xviii. 9.*) How many souls may be lost through your want of fervour, or bad example?

2ND POINT. The only begotten of the Father has redeemed the soul of man at a price. For this he descended from Heaven to a life of humiliation and sorrow, which he ended amidst ignominy and torture. Compare your indifference with the desire which Jesus Christ has manifested for the salvation of souls. The Son of God sheds the last drop of his Blood amidst torments; and you think it too much to spend an hour to console and encourage the afflicted or dying, to instruct the ignorant, or draw a sinner to God. The least inconvenience suffices to chill your zeal.

3RD POINT. The Son of God exhibits an excess of charity in the redemption of man. He expects and awaits the appearance of the sinner. His first sigh reaches the heart of his Saviour, who receives him in his arms, presses him to his bosom, and calls on the angels of heaven to participate in his joy, because he has found the "sheep that was lost." Whence such love for an enemy, such patience? In your misery alone can be found

the cause of his mercy. The Lord is admirable in all his works, but his mercies are above them all.

O God of my salvation! how can I respond to such infinite love? What can I offer in thanksgiving for thy innumerable graces?

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### WEDNESDAY

#### *On the Parable of the Prodigal Son.*

1ST POINT. "And he said: A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance, living riotously." (*Luke*, xv. 11, 12, 13.) The prodigal child, that is, the sinner, commences his fall by leaving the home of his heavenly Father. He is immediately surrounded by enemies, with passions which torment, and make him feel how *bitter* it is to have *forsaken* his God. He feels that Providence no longer regards him with tender solicitude.

2ND POINT. When the sinner separates himself from God, he leaves his Father's house. He is deprived of the place destined for him in heaven. His name is blotted from the book of life, and his crown is awarded to another. The character of grace is effaced from his soul; his former virtues and merits are all covered with the veil of oblivion. He has forgotten the divine benefits. When the sinner casts off the fear of God, like the prodigal child he loses his heavenly inheritance. All who forsake the path of justice shall perish eternally.

3RD POINT. Have you *wasted your substance*, like the prodigal son? What use do you make of the talents which are given you by your heavenly Father? Forgetfulness of God is the distant country to which the prodigal withdrew. How many days and hours do you pass unmindful of your Father and your God! The hunger of the prodigal comes from the privation of the divine word. You endure a similar hunger, because spiritual reading seems tedious, and you love not prayer. The *husks* on

which the sinner would feed, are the pleasures of the world, in which he expects to find satisfaction. But *no one gave him*, for the appetite of passion is increased by every sin. So long as you are at a distance from God, you are a slave, *feeding swine*, that is, your sensual inclinations. Is such an employment worthy of an immortal soul?

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## THURSDAY

### *On the Return of the Prodigal Child.*

1ST POINT. "And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." (*Luke*, xv. 17, 18, 19.) Affliction causes the sinner to enter into himself, as prosperity had made him forget God and his own salvation. If your soul is less wretched than that of the prodigal, you are bound to aim at the perfection from which you are still far removed. What is wanting to you in fervour, humility, patience, or charity? Esteem it a mark of the divine love, that he permit you to find neither repose nor consolation in any created object.

2ND POINT. "I will arise, and will go to my Father." Such are the sentiments and holy resolutions of the sinner who discovers his fault. Though ingratitude and disobedience render him unworthy, yet he hopes that paternal affection and tenderness will plead his cause, and ensure him forgiveness. Say now, in the sincerity of your heart, "I will arise" from such an evil custom, such an indulgence of the senses, of pride, or impatience: "I will arise" to fervour in my spiritual duties, and to an increased zeal for all that can advance my salvation.

3RD POINT. "And rising up he came to his father." (*Luke*, xv. 20.) Promptitude and fervour mark the return of the truly penitent sinner. His confession is sincere; his sorrow is intense, and proceeding from pure love. "I am not worthy to be called thy son." He feels deep confusion, and lively indignation

against himself. "Make me as one of thy hired servants." It rests with yourself, to be received amongst the servants of your heavenly Father, and to be admitted even to the rank of his child. Enter into yourself; weep your offences with tears of contrition; confess them with sorrow and humility; and let the remembrance of the past render you more faithful for the future!

O Lord Jesus Christ! let the compassion of thy own Sacred Heart plead for thy unworthy child, and grant that by future fervour I may atone for the lateness of my return to thy service.

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## FRIDAY

### *On the Father receiving his Prodigal Son.*

1ST POINT. "And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him." (*Luke, xv. 20.*) The father beholds in his unhappy child only the wreck of vice; but he is a father! and he yearns to relieve the misery he cannot endure to behold. He embraces, and gives him the kiss of peace and love. Instead of anger, he pours upon him the excess of his mercy. The ardour of paternal love closes his eyes against the offences of his child. Is there here any room for despair or fear? Who would not abandon himself with entire confidence to such a father?

2ND POINT. "And the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." (*Luke, xv. 22.*) Not content with pardoning his prodigal child, the father restores him to his former dignity. The *first robe* with which he clothes him is sanctifying grace, by which he becomes the child of God. The ring is the image of Jesus Christ, and the seal of the Divine Spirit, with his gifts and infused virtues. The shoes denote a facility in walking in the ways of God, the restoration of merits, and the practice of good works. After considering this example of infinite mercy, will you still defer your repentance? Will you not return to such a father?

3RD POINT. "And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry: Because this my son was dead, and is come to life again: was lost, and is found." (*Luke*, xv. 23, 24.) Thus your heavenly Father rejoices when you return to him by repentance. He comes to meet you, he embraces and restores to you all the ornaments of grace. He prepares for you a festival of rejoicing, where he nourishes you with his own most precious Body and Blood, which is daily immolated and served at the Eucharistic table. Ah! be no longer ungrateful. Will you prefer the slavery of sin to the dignity of a child of God?

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## SATURDAY

### *On the Parable of the Prodigal—(concluded).*

1ST POINT. "But he said to him: Son, thou art always with me." (*Luke*, xv. 31.) Behold the first advantage of a true religious; he is always with God. Do you suppose that God is indebted to you for entering his house, and consecrating yourself by vow to his service; he has in this conferred on you an unspeakable honour. Say not: "Behold, for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends." (*Luke*, xv. 29.) You cannot say he has given you nothing. For your perseverance in his service is an inestimable favour. To the true religious is given grace to fall more rarely, to rise more promptly, and to persevere more constantly. Give thanks for this favour, and beseech him to keep you until death. This is to commence on earth the everlasting happiness of heaven.

2ND POINT. "But he said to him: Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine." (*Luke*, xv. 31.) Evangelic poverty is a treasure which renders you rich in the gifts of heaven, in proportion as you are despoiled of those of the earth. To relinquish all in order to gain all. To give yourself without reserve to God, that God may become entirely yours. Happy the children whose portion is the love of their heavenly Father.

Thrice happy they who ground their happiness on his grace and favour, and endeavour to cultivate it with vigilance and care.

3RD POINT. "But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is come to life again: he was lost, and is found." (*Luke*, xv. 32.) The fervent religious envies not the consolations which divine goodness gives to his brethren, much less those worldly joys which he has renounced by the vow of chastity. All his joy consists in pleasing and loving God, his ambition—to draw the hearts of men to the divine service. The desire of glorifying God makes all the crosses and mortifications of religious life sweet, and he says with the prophet: "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Let my speech be acceptable to him: but I will take delight in the Lord. Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, and the unjust, so that they be no more: O my soul, bless thou the Lord." (*Ps.* ciii. 33, 34, 35.)

MEDITATIONS FOR THE FESTIVALS  
OF THE SAINTS



## DECEMBER

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### SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER

(3rd December)

1ST POINT. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (*Matt.*, xvi. 26.) This so struck the generous soul of Xavier, that he understood that all human glory is but a fleeting mist, all earthly riches but frail and perishable, and that eternal goods alone can satisfy a heart infinite in its desires. Abjection, labours, sufferings, and sacrifices became the object of his most ardent aspirations. Why is not my heart, like that of our Saint, detached from all that is futile and fleeting?

2ND POINT. St. Francis Xavier obeys with unhesitating fidelity the interior grace that repeated in his soul these words: What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Hitherto he had loved the vain applause of men—now he seeks and prizes only their contempt; the desire of worldly splendour had allured him—now he devotes himself to voluntary poverty. By the vow of obedience he enchains the pride of human intellect and will, to which he was faithful "unto death." I also must combat my cherished inclinations.

3RD POINT. Our passions must be subdued. If pride be your dominant inclination, seek obscurity. If levity and dissipation draw your heart from God, you must guard strictly your senses, and rein your imagination by recollection of the divine presence; or if a love of ease and desire of your own convenience be your weakness, you must immolate your entire being to God with generous devotedness. The idea of such a universal sacrifice causes nature to shudder; but even in the present life it brings that solid peace and interior joy which God is wont to impart to the faithful soul, and which exceeds whatever delight this world can bestow. Give thanks to Jesus Christ for the singular graces with which he rewarded our Saint.

O blessed Apostle of the East! obtain, that my heart, like to thine, may be deeply and efficaciously impressed with the important maxim, What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED  
VIRGIN*(8th December)*

1ST PRELUDE. Imagine the beloved disciple, accompanied by all those who never lost their baptismal innocence, offering to the Virgin the tribute of their filial homage and affection. Ask them to present to the Queen of Virgins either the fervour of your first charity, or the tribute of your penitential love.

1ST POINT. Next to the glory conferred upon our nature by its union with the Eternal Word, the greatest perfection it received was in the person of the Blessed Virgin. Her inconceivable dignity as Mother of God, her unsullied purity, and holiness excite our profound homage and admiration; whilst her virtues serve for our instruction and imitation. The faith which assented so promptly; the humility with which she accepted the dignity of Mother of God, together with the perfect oblation of her entire being, are not less instructive to her followers on earth, than they are glorious to God.

2ND POINT. Divine Providence prepared the person of the Blessed Virgin by those favours to become the living temple of the Incarnate Word. How worthy of the Holy One that no shade of imperfection should dishonour the dwelling of his choice! The person of the religious is also a temple specially consecrated to Jesus Christ. None but Mary could aspire to that intimate union with him which was the privilege of her maternity but every religious may, and ought, constantly aspire to a worthy union with her Divine Spouse in the Holy Communion, by purity of heart, mortification of the senses and detachment from creatures and self-will.

3RD POINT. The Blessed Virgin was prepared to become, by these favours, the temple of the Incarnate Word, and the victim of fraternal charity. They fitted her at the same time for the joys of her maternity in Bethlehem, and the sorrows of her martyrdom on Calvary. You are destined to bear in your bosom the Incarnate Word, and to honour and to serve him in the persons of the poor. You become the associate of the Mother of Sorrows when you sympathize with the suffering members of her Divine Son. Your power to succour and relieve them will

be in proportion to your endeavours to imitate her by advancing in the perfection of the state to which you have been called. Correspondence with divine grace will enable you to sweeten the chalice of suffering for others and to accept it with resignation when presented to yourself. O Mary! make me live in God, with God and for God!

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## HOLY INNOCENTS

(28th December)

1ST POINT. "An angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt." (*Matt.*, ii. 13.) Jesus Christ exposes himself to the sufferings of a painful exile; sacrificing his judgment and his will to the commands of his Eternal Father. Do you behold God in the persons of those who command in his name? Are you willing to sacrifice your own inclinations to do the will of your Heavenly Father? Beseech Jesus in Holy Communion to destroy the idol of self-will, and establish in your heart the law of his love.

2ND POINT. "Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry: and sending, killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof." (*Matt.*, ii. 16.) These innocent victims die for Jesus Christ, and in his stead. They precede him in dying, they follow him in rising to glory, where the charity of Jesus Christ prepares for them a recompense for their suffering. This glory which they could not merit before the use of reason, is due to the majesty of him for whom their blood was shed. Fear not then to suffer in the service of so good a master. No evil can befall those who are faithful to his law.

3RD POINT. "*A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning: Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*" (*Matt.*, ii. 18.) The heart of Jesus suffers a martyrdom in each of these innocent victims. He offers them to his Eternal Father as the first fruits of that Precious Blood with which he will one day fertilize the

whole earth. Be not surprised that God permits the innocent to be persecuted: he permits it to draw thence his own greater glory, and their greater good: he permits it for the encouragement of timid souls, and to animate the weak in the practice of virtue.

God of clemency! grant us grace to mortify our passions and vices; that the purity of our lives may be a testimony of the faith which our lips profess.

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## FEBRUARY

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### SAINT BRIGID, VIRGIN AND ABBESS

FOUNDRESS OF RELIGIOUS WOMEN IN IRELAND

(1st February)

1ST POINT. St. Brigid is the foundress and model of that long line of consecrated virgins whose sanctity has shed a lustre on the Church in Ireland. Her zeal embraced in the first instance her own most perfect sanctification. She, with generous devotedness, assumed a life of poverty and humiliation for love of him whose abjection she prized beyond all the dignities of the world. She dedicated her days to the study and practice of those holy rules prescribed by St. Patrick, to guide her and her spiritual children in the path of religious perfection. Does an ardent desire of perfection animate your every action? Do you in every instance make the rules of your holy institute your guiding principle? Resolve, then, to copy her virtues, particularly that interior spirit without which you can never effect your own sanctification.

2ND POINT. Our Saint zealously devoted herself to the instruction of youth, and by her exertions, guided by faith obtained for the daughters of Ireland that purity of morals by which they have ever been characterised. Your vocation requires you to continue this hallowed work. Are you willing to spend yourself and be spent in the service of those little ones for whom Christ laid down his life? Do you endeavour, by fervent and

persevering prayer, to draw down the blessing of heaven not only on your own labours, but on those of the pastors whose duty it is continually to guard and defend the flock against the wily serpent and the ravening wolf.

3RD POINT. St. Brigid was a mother to the orphan, a nurse to the sick, a refuge to the desolate; she poured the balm of consolation into the crushed heart; she ministered to the stranger and distressed wayfarer, like him who "went about doing good." (*Acts*, x. 38.) The interior law of charity which animated those heroic deeds has descended to you as an inheritance from the Saints who have gone before you: they preserved the religious spirit in all its vigour and purity, even through ages of persecution; whilst in secret they mourned over the seeming extinction of those pious functions, the revival of which it is your happiness to behold. Let gratitude for this priceless blessing be manifested in your zeal. Beware, lest in the discharge of the duties of charity, self-gratification, vanity, or human respect mar the odour of the sacrifice.

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## MARCH

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### SAINT PATRICK

APOSTLE AND PATRON OF IRELAND

(17th March)

1ST POINT. St. Patrick proved his love of God by devotedness to the divine will, and the faithful performance of that will when manifested to him. The love of that will soothed and endeared all the sorrows and sufferings of his captivity, and prompted him to zeal and generosity in action, which no perils could intimidate, no labours exhaust, no sufferings subdue, no sacrifices abate. Be grateful to God that in the guidance of superiors you have an infallible means of fulfilling his will, and that by sincere obedience you will hear the words of Christ, as certainly as Mary did who reposed at his feet; for he himself declares: "He that heareth you, heareth me." (*Luke*, x. 16.)

2ND POINT. Prayer was the principal source from which St. Patrick drew his spirit of charity. Even during the labours and distractions of his missionary career he combined the contemplative spirit of an ascetic with the active zeal of an apostle. Although you cannot devote the same time to prayer, it is in your power to attain the highest sanctity to which God has called you, by a fervent use of the time apportioned to prayer, and by cultivating a spirit of recollection, which will procure for you the privilege of mental solitude.

3RD POINT. Consider the glorious example which your great patron presents in the exercise of fraternal charity. It was not only the sacrifice of home and family, of the pleasures and honours of the world, the privations, labours, and perils Patrick encountered in the course of his apostolical career; but the remarkable fact that he endured all this for a people from whom he received the severest injuries.

He looked upon them all with the eye of Faith as the children of his Heavenly Father, and his heart yearned to make them his brethren in Christ. In the variety of characters which call for your charity, some excite natural repugnance. The most perfect exercise of charity is to be found in the services which you render to such persons. Be grateful to Almighty God when he gives you an opportunity of serving a person who has injured you. Even the slightest sacrifices we make in bearing the defects and infirmities of others, have great value before God.

Make a firm resolution to imitate your national patron in these traits, and to cherish increased devotion to him.

## SAINT JOSEPH

SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

*(19th March)*

1ST POINT. Singular graces were conferred on St. Joseph, who was chosen to be the spouse of the Virgin Mother of God, and to hold on earth the place of the Eternal Father towards his Incarnate Son. The name Joseph signifies *he who believeth*. His faith exalted him above all who were most venerable in the ancient law. What consummate perfection did he not attain in the intimate society of the holiest of creatures, and of the Incarnate Wisdom of God? Rejoice with our Saint, and pray that, like him, you may constantly advance in devotion to the Son and the Mother.

2ND POINT. Consider—the severity of the trial prepared for our Saint, when, on the arrival of his beloved spouse from the house of Zachary, he perceived her pregnancy. O inscrutable providence of God over his elect!—the mystery is revealed to Elizabeth, and hidden from Joseph. Tribulation is in reality a mark of the divine favour. On our part we must accept it with humility, and sustain it with patience. Admire the Blessed Virgin, who utters not a word in her own justification; and the meekness of St. Joseph, who without a murmur seeks to satisfy his conscience without compromising the honour of his spouse.

3RD POINT. “But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (*Matt.*, i. 20, 21.) A flood of light and of unspeakable joy penetrates his heart! What is his gratitude, what his thanksgiving for being associated to this work of the Most High! Ask God, through the intercession of St. Joseph, to enlighten your mind in all your doubts, afflictions, or temptations.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul!

## ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(25th March)

1ST POINT. "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." (*Luke*, i. 26, 27.) This message is borne by a prince of the heavenly court to an obscure virgin, whose consent he asks for the accomplishment of a great mystery. How different are the views of God from those of men. He chooses as his Mother a virgin, poor, but adorned with angelic purity, profound humility, and ardent charity.

2ND POINT. Consider—"And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women." (*Luke*, i. 28.) The reverence of the angel is a model to persons consecrated to God, who, being the ambassadors of Jesus Christ, should inspire those with whom they converse with piety and devotion. Reflect on the words of the angelic salutation: "Hail, full of grace." They express the sanctity of this immaculate Virgin. "The Lord is with thee," dwelling in thy soul as in his sanctuary, and soon to become the Son of thy womb. "Blessed art thou among women," because thou shalt give to the world the source of all blessings.

3RD POINT. "Who, having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be." (*Luke*, i. 29.) Her humility is wounded by his praise. "And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God." (*Luke*, i. 30.) The Spirit of God breathes peace to the soul, changing its fears into a sweet confidence. How happy if you shall hear at the hour of death these consoling words: "Thou hast found grace with God."

O Queen of Angels! I rejoice that heaven itself has dictated to us a praise worthy of thy exalted dignity. May I unceasingly address thee in union with the Church.

## APRIL

## THE PATRONAGE OF SAINT JOSEPH

*(Third Sunday after Easter)*

1ST POINT. St. Joseph enjoyed an incomparable dignity in being associated to the divine paternity as the adopted father of the only begotten Son of God. To St. Joseph the Son of God commits the guardianship of his humanity. He was privileged to nourish with the sweat of his brow that precious Body which was to be immolated on Calvary for the redemption of the world. To St. Joseph the Holy Spirit confided the care of his chosen, his immaculate spouse, who loved, honoured and obeyed him as the vicegerent of God.

2ND POINT. The graces conferred on St. Joseph were commensurate to that dignity. He excelled in the virtues of all other saints. His spirit of prayer shines conspicuously. What union more sublime than to converse with Jesus Christ in person—to live, to labour, to repose in his divine society? For this union of soul with God, our Saint was prepared by purity of heart; by humility the most profound, and by an unreserved devotedness to the glory and the will of the Most High.

3RD POINT. The dignity and sanctity of St. Joseph are super-eminent, his power with God is proportionately great. What, then, should be your reverence for this singularly chosen and privileged among all the saints! How unbounded should be your confidence in his patronage? The power of St. Joseph is unlimited, and extends to every want. Impress your heart with a lively and tender devotion to this Saint, the nearest in heaven, as he was on earth, to the virgin Mother of God. Beseech him who was the adopted father of Jesus, the head of the holy family of Nazareth, to receive you into the number of his children; and to guide you safely through the journey of this life, to the haven of a blessed eternity.

## JULY

## VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(2nd July)

“He that is mighty hath done great things to me.”—(*Luke*, i. 49.)

1ST POINT. St. Elizabeth discloses all that had passed in the Incarnation, known only to the Blessed Virgin. In the Incarnation, the angel asked the consent of Mary; in the visitation, St. Elizabeth extols her for having given it, and pronounces her blessed for having believed. In the Incarnation the angel announces to the Virgin that she shall be mother to the Son of God; in the visitation, St. Elizabeth publishes both: “And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (*Luke*, i. 43); and again, “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.” (*Luke*, i. 42.) Mary answers: “My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” (*Luke*, i. 46, 47.)

Let us, with Mary, glorify the Lord, and rejoice in our God, for, although she alone is his mother, we may be allied with him by faith and conformity to his will.

2ND POINT. Never before had God made any human creature the medium of conveying grace, and sanctifying the sinner. But in this mystery, the word of the Blessed Virgin is the organ of the Holy Ghost, conveying light, joy, and grace to the soul of an infant, to make of him the greatest among men. St. Elizabeth expresses thus, this first and only miracle of the Mother of God: “For, behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.” (*Luke*, i. 44.)

3RD POINT. Mary’s faith is perfect. In order to work a miracle the soul must be united to God by submission and dependence, as an instrument in the hands of the artist. Faith subjects to him the most noble faculty of man. Her humility is profound; she descends to the lowest offices of a handmaid. Her zeal aims at nothing less than to destroy the empire of the demon. John leaps for joy because he hears the voice of the Lord, who speaks through Mary. Who can hear Jesus without the intercession of the Blessed Virgin?

## SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, CONFESSOR

(31st July)

**1ST POINT.** The Holy Catholic Church has not brought forth a nobler instrument of the divine glory than the saint whose name she this day honours. Brought up in the profession of arms, the mind of Ignatius was, in his youth, dazzled by that phantom which the deluded world calls glory; but the hand of an over-ruling providence having stricken on the bed of suffering this vessel of election, he discovered, in reading of the life of our Divine Saviour and those of his saints, the path of true honour which their steps have traced. Stimulated by grace, he consecrated himself, with devotedness, to an object worthy of his great soul; taking as his motto: "To the greater glory of God." In the details of duty, how many an act is lost for eternity from dissipation of mind, or by selfish motives.

**2ND POINT.** True to his motto, our Saint, desiring to avenge on himself the injury he had offered to God's glory by worldly ambition, he embraced humiliations under every form. He spared no sacrifice to promote God's honour in his own sanctification. With zeal he devoted himself to the salvation and sanctification of his neighbour. Judging that learning was necessary for attaining the great end of all his aspirations, he who shone at court, who had led heroes to battle, now seated himself amidst children in the lowest classes of the schools. He instituted a society of apostolic men to extend the kingdom of Christ, and bear that name in triumph throughout the world. In the rules of St. Ignatius we have a perfect image of his own spirit and virtues. What are your efforts to exemplify them in your conduct?

**3RD POINT.** Consider the abundant blessing with which Almighty Goodness crowned the zeal and labours of St. Ignatius: paganism defeated, heresy confounded, piety re-established in cities, fervour rekindled in monasteries, and whole nations in both hemispheres made captive to the yoke of Jesus Christ. Let us give thanks to our Lord for the graces that rendered this Saint so worthy an instrument of the divine honour, and for the benediction so liberally poured forth on his works. Above all, let us give glory to *His* name who alone worketh wonders through the ministry of his saints.

## AUGUST

## THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(15th August)

1ST POINT. The glory of the Blessed Virgin, as Mother of God and Queen of Heaven, is inconceivable. Divine charity, the crown of virtues, burned in her soul with an ardour, incomparable, in its commencement, its progress, and its term. The divine Spirit taking possession of her heart, in the first moment of her existence, enkindled in it a love so intense, that the act of charity she then exercised, surpassed that of the greatest saints when consummated in grace and perfection. How must she have progressed in sanctity in the intimate society with the divine Incarnate Charity? To what perfection had she attained, when at the foot of the cross, she became the co-operatrix in man's redemption? Still ever increasing in grace until her glorious assumption into heaven!

2ND POINT. "Put me as a seal upon thy heart: . . . for love is strong as death." (*Cant.*, viii. 6.) Divine love in the heart of the Blessed Virgin, daily consumed her being, until it sweetly disengaged the soul from its immaculate dwelling, accomplished the office of death, which dared by no other path approach her. And if Mary's love for her divine Son would consign her sacred body to the tomb, the love of Jesus for his blessed Mother must again resuscitate that consecrated tabernacle. Let us follow her in spirit, exulting in her happiness.

3RD POINT. By the example of her virtues, our gracious Queen and Mother has traced for us a path leading securely to eternal bliss. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (*Luke*, xiv. 11.) She in heaven crowned Queen of Saints, humbled herself as the lowly servant of all. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." (*Matt.*, v. 8.) Examine yourself, that you may discover every lurking defect, for nothing defiled shall enter therein. "If we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." (*Rom.*, viii. 17.) The sufferings of the Blessed Virgin exceeded the united sufferings of all the saints, as her love for Jesus exceeded their united charity. With what affection do you embrace, with what meek endurance

sustain, those little trials of patience which our Lord daily dispenses to you as portions of his sacred Cross? Strive to follow closely your dear Mother and mediatrix; she leans on her beloved Son, if you lean on her, she will give you her hand in ascending to the grace and glory to which you are called.

We salute thee on this day of thy triumph, O Queen of Heaven!

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## SEPTEMBER

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### NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(8th September)

1ST POINT. "Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits." (*Eccle.*, xxiv. 26.) The predestined Mother of your Saviour, in the mind of her Creator, before the commencement of ages, held a rank super-eminently exalted above all creatures. "From the beginning, and before the world was I created." She is the masterpiece of the Eternal Council, whose creation the three Divine Persons concerted ere time began; a living expression of the Father's power—of the Son's wisdom—of the Holy Spirit's goodness; an object of complacence to the adorable Trinity. "Thou art all fair, O my love."

2ND POINT. Our blessed Mother enters the world when the people of God celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, a type of the living tabernacle of the Most High. The Virgin Mary is not only the glory of Jerusalem; but she is the crowning work of the creation, in nature, grace, and glory. She is born Queen of the universe. Present her the homage of profound veneration and tender devotion—to serve her is to reign.

3RD POINT. The fruits of the spiritual birth of your Queen and Mother in the hearts of her faithful children are the virtues characteristic of her holy infancy; namely, purity and divine love. Immaculate in her conception, she came forth unfettered by even the shadow of inordinate affection—Mary's heart

sprang to her Creator in the dawn of existence, with more than seraphic ardour. To imitate her purity, you must exercise over your heart a vigilance that will discover all those evil propensities flowing from original, and increased by actual sin, and cultivate that spirit of mortification and prayer, which will gradually purify your soul. You may also imitate her exalted charity by making acts of divine love, and offering of your heart to God frequently. Invoke with truly filial love this Star of Jacob—this first beam of peace and hope to the fallen—the mother of the elect. Beseech the Immaculate Virgin to obtain that you may walk in the light of her example, until you are united to her in the kingdom of her divine Son.

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## SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

*(29th September)*

1ST POINT. Let us give thanks to “Him who reigneth for ever” for the favours conferred on the glorious archangel, in making him prince of the heavenly host. Range ourselves under his banner. Beseech him to obtain for us from the Omnipotent the aid we stand in need of, to combat successfully the powers of hell. Those wicked spirits spare neither wile nor violence to draw us into the abyss of eternal woe.

2ND POINT. Almighty God required of the angels an acknowledgment of their dependence on their Creator, by an act of profound submission. Lucifer, rising in his pride, refused to obey. Michael, on the contrary, by humility, attained the honour of being the first to adore the Incarnate Son of God, and leading the faithful host of heaven, cast forth Lucifer and his associates into hell. Rejoice in the victory of the great archangel, detest the pride of the fallen spirits, and learn humility and submission to God’s will.

3RD POINT. But what were the weapons with which St. Michael conquered? Humility, by which he recognised his entire dependence on the Creator who had drawn him forth from nothing. By one act of humility he triumphed over Lucifer, and gained for himself immortal glory. That virtue

will also render us invincible in temptation, and merit for us an infinity of graces. It was by these words: "Who is like unto God?" that St. Michael encouraged the good angels and overcame the evil spirits. These words will arm us against vanity and self-love, convincing us that in comparison with God, nothing is great, nothing good; nor is there anything that could compensate for the injury we would suffer by offending him even venially.

O invincible defender of Jesus Christ! all penetrated with zeal for his honour and glory, obtain for me that I may breathe his spirit; that I may subject to him every faculty of my being—the very centre of my heart; and that having glorified him on earth by a constant homage of adoration and obedience like to yours, I may contemplate him hereafter in the splendour of a blessed immortality, and present him with you eternal canticles of praise and love.

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## OCTOBER

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### THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

*(2nd October)*

"He hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."—(*Ps.* xc. 11.)

**1ST POINT.** The first office of our guardian angel is to assist us during life, and guard us against our enemies. Our angel directs our intentions, that they may be pure, and our occupations, that they may tend to the glory of God and to our salvation. The devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour—our guardian angel serves as a wall and defence to protect and surround us. The demon endeavours to distract us in prayer, and make us forget God, our angel on the contrary loves to inspire us with holy affections. He enjoys the clear sight of God, and desires that we also should be mindful of the Divine Presence. Remember that God beholds our most secret thoughts and actions.

2ND POINT. Our guardian angel assists us at the hour of death, consoling us in the pains and fears which accompany our last struggle; animating us with the hope of heaven, urging us to fidelity. He inspires us with those sentiments of contrition and love which are necessary to die happily. He undertakes this charitable office through love for Jesus Christ, who became man and died for our salvation.

3RD POINT. What joy does a guardian angel receive from a soul that has been docile to his inspirations, and has happily persevered until it reached in safety the haven of salvation! and with what gratitude is not this faithful soul filled towards its kind protector. O my soul, how canst thou adequately thank this charitable guide who labours for thy salvation with such ardent zeal. Listen to the words of the Almighty: "Take notice of him and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned; for he will not forgive when thou hast sinned, and my name is in him." (*Exodus*, xxiii. 21.)

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## NOVEMBER

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### ALL-SAINTS

(1st November)

1ST POINT. God, "who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children, through Jesus Christ . . . that you may know . . . what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." (*Ephes.*, i. 5, 18.) Give glory to God for the wonders he hath wrought in his saints, and offer your fervent congratulations to those "spirits of the just made perfect." You also have been pre-elected to a life of sanctity here and of eternal bliss hereafter. Call to mind the many special graces imparted to you for that end, and beseech the saints to present your thanks to him who hath loved you even from eternity.

2ND POINT. The saints correspond with their sacred vocation; persevering in the path marked out for them in these words of Jesus Christ: "If any man will come after me, let him deny

himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (*Luke*, ix. 23.) They excelled in self-abnegation opposing the propensities of corrupt nature. They daily carried the cross of their Divine Master, by patience under the sharpest trials. Do you follow them in the royal way of the cross? Do you cooperate with the graces you have received? Mortify your senses and passions. Contradict your natural inclinations. Strive so to die, that you may say with the saints: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." (*Gal.*, ii. 20.)

3RD POINT. He glorified his saints during life by the lustre of their virtues, even in the eyes of men. He glorified them at the hour of death, rendering them victorious over the powers of hell, and after death in the militant Church, by the honours paid to their memory, their images, and relics; but, above all, in the Church Triumphant he has enthroned them in light eternal, where he is himself, "their crown of glory and joy."

Remember, O Lord! that as the number of thy saints is augmented, so also is manifested the omnipotence of thy mercy. Deign then, to shed on me that grace that will change me into a faithful imitator of thy saints.

## ALL SOULS' DAY

(2nd November)

“It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.”—(2 *Machabees*, xii. 46.)

1ST POINT. Devotion which excites us to relieve the suffering souls in purgatory is very holy, and of great help to them. This truth is founded, first, on the sacred text. The words of the second book of Machabees are so clear that they leave no room for doubt. It is the universal practice of the Church, where the commemoration of the dead has its place in the prayers of the priest at the altar, when he celebrates the divine mysteries. It is founded on the common opinion of the Fathers. St. Chrysostom says that this custom is of apostolic tradition. The souls in purgatory derive from good works offered for them deliverance or the diminution of their pains: from the sacrifices of propitiation which appease the anger of God. St. Gregory, in his dialogues, relates the example of two persons who were delivered by the offering of the Holy Sacrifice, from the pains which they suffered after their death. And it is related by St. Augustine, that St. Perpetua delivered her brother, who died at the age of seven, from the pains which he endured, by her prayers and good works.

2ND POINT. This devotion is very holy and very salutary to the living. It draws down on us the mercy of God, by the charity we exercise towards the suffering souls. It teaches us to fear divine justice, which punishes venial sin with such severity, and of which we have not sufficient dread. Assisting these poor souls we take more care to avoid the pains of purgatory, the least of which exceeds all that can be suffered in this life. “Lord, purify me in this world, so that satisfying your justice here, I may escape hereafter the pains of purgatory.”

3RD POINT. This devotion is very necessary to all, but especially to apostolic labourers. We are bound to assist the souls in purgatory, on account of the close union we form as members of the one Head. But those who labour in the vineyard of the Lord have still a stricter obligation, which is to procure the salvation of their neighbour, and the greater glory of God. We should have much reason to reproach ourselves with want of charity, if, while professing to lead souls to heaven,

we abandoned them in this so pitiable a state, near the end of their journey, when they are unable to relieve themselves.

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## SAINT STANISLAUS

(13th November)

“Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time.”  
(*Wisdom*, iv. 13.)

1ST POINT. Consider—The means by which Stanislaus acquired his eminent holiness, and his disengagement from the world. One of his most frequent sayings was : “I am not made for this world, but for eternity.” Deep reflections on his last end filled him with contempt for whatever passes, and he loved to soar in spirit to the realms of bliss for which he was created. He lost no occasion of enkindling in his own heart, and in that of others, the love of God, and made every sacrifice to secure the perfect enjoyment of him. For this he abandoned family, friends, wealth, comforts, honours—all that could separate him from cleaving to his Sovereign Good. Do you daily consecrate and give to your Creator, the heart which he made warm and tender that its affections might be directed to him, and become a spur in his service? “My son, give me thy heart.” (*Prov.*, xxiii. 26.)

2ND POINT. The holy youth was penetrated with gratitude to God for his vocation, and his heart glowed with tenderness towards his Benefactor. Nothing seemed small or lowering which was done in the service of his great Master; and he performed with as much zeal and inward joy the menial occupations of the novitiate, as if he had been engaged in the highest studies of theology. By fidelity in little things he advanced so rapidly in the science of saints, as to arrive in ten months at consummate holiness, and deserve the application of those words of the wise man: “Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time.” You are called to a life of perfection, and bound by the same rules. Beg him fervently to take you under his guidance and direction in the study of them. Be faithful to what is within your reach, and God will hereafter bestow on you greater helps to undertake what is above it.

3RD POINT. Consider—The advantage St. Stanislaus derived from his devotion to the Blessed Virgin. If God is the source of all graces, Mary is the channel through which they flow. The saint styled her his mother—she loved him as a son ; he offered her his heart, with its dearest affections—she, in return, placed her Divine Infant in his arms; he recurred to her in all difficulties—she was ever ready to restore peace to his soul. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a mark of predestination. We are sure of obtaining the favour of God when we have so powerful an advocate to intercede for us. Above all, we must imitate her favourite virtues of humility and purity.

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## PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(21st November)

1ST PRELUDE. Imagine you see Mary ascending the steps of the temple; accompany her in spirit.

2ND PRELUDE. Beg a share of her perfect dispositions.

1ST POINT. With eagerness and promptitude the Blessed Virgin consecrated herself to God in his holy temple. She allowed nothing to withhold her, when, at the age of three years, she was inspired to give herself to God. All that retarded her sacrifice afflicted her soul. She would willingly have made it on the day of her birth, had not her piety, her love of God, her reason, which prevented her years, pointed out to her that she was to follow the order of nature, and be subservient to its laws. Every day, every hour, appeared ages to her in the desire she had to see herself solemnly dedicated to the service of her Creator. Do you experience a similar degree of ardour in giving yourself perfectly to God as a tribute justly due to your Creator? But if you failed in the performance of this early act of homage, did you, in succeeding years, endeavour to repair the omission? Will those years be reckoned in the book of life as full and perfect? Mary never relented in this undivided oblation. Such is the example she gives you; and how have you profited by it? I have loved thee late, O Lord!

2ND POINT. The Blessed Virgin not only consecrates—but gives all she has and is, without the least reserve—her parents and worldly goods: the Lord alone is to be her portion for ever. Like the Blessed Virgin, religious have broken the ties of flesh and blood. Do they ever renew these tender attachments in after-life? They have abandoned all worldly goods; was there no reserve in the sacrifice? They have renounced their liberty. Do they ever seek to resume it? They have taken up the cross, and obliged themselves to lead a crucified life; but does the spirit of mortification prevail in their lives? Does self-love ever reclaim its rights? What will it avail these tepid and imperfect religious souls to have made a solemn consecration of themselves to God, if their after-lives belie their holy profession.

3RD POINT. The Blessed Virgin fulfilled every obligation she had contracted with God. Always submissive to the least sign of his adorable will, always inflamed with the fire of his holy love! Have you, religious soul, nowise relented in your fervent efforts to live up to your sacred engagements? Approach your loving Spouse; and though you have been unfaithful to him, he is still ready to receive you with open arms, provided you are sincerely sorry for the past, and resolved to amend. Offer yourself this day to God by a fervent renewal of your vows, under the auspices of the Blessed Virgin, who is your tender mother and your model; beg her to present your offering to her Divine Son, and to obtain for you all the graces you stand in need of to enable you to be faithful unto the end.



MEDITATIONS FOR  
MONTHLY RECOLLECTION DAYS



## I. MEDITATION

### *Feelings and opinions of the dying.*

Implore the grace of a holy death.

1ST POINT. Consider the terror and anguish of the souls of those that have lived in sin and tepidity. They must leave the world they have loved so inordinately, to be judged by a God whom either they have not loved, or have loved very little. They must leave their occupations, their pleasures, their projects, and go—to what? It cannot be to enjoyment. Beseech of God, to know and fulfil the end of your creation.

2ND POINT. Though the dying are capable of rightly appreciating both worldly enjoyments and heavenly hopes, affections are not so easily changed as ideas. Habits cannot suddenly be cast off, and it is very hard to repent when it seems most probable that repentance will be useless. They cannot pray, because they have never done so; it is no comfort to them, it never was. If God himself be the end of our existence, our every desire—all our thoughts and actions should tend directly to him.

3RD POINT. How painful must be the dying remorse of one who, called by God to a state of perfection, has lived therein imperfectly. If there be no comfort for the worldly in the memory of past pleasures, what consolation can the unfaithful religious find in the memory of sacrifices which she has vitiated, and privations which she has endured without merit? She judged the penance of the saints a folly; but now she is convinced that fervour in God's service is the highest wisdom, she feels that it is so indeed. Reflect whether you may not have cause to reproach yourself with negligence in many of your duties, and beseech of God to penetrate your heart with a fear of displeasing him in the least things.

## II. MEDITATION

*The chamber of death.*

Call to mind some person you have seen die.

Implore the grace of a holy death.

1ST POINT. The time of sickness is seldom a good preparation for death, and almost never, if it be the only time given to the preparation; for it is a time of trial and temptation, of proving virtue, not of acquiring it. A whole life is little enough to prepare for death: how then could a few days, when your mental and physical energies are exhausted by sufferings, be found sufficient? Bless God that it is not left to yourself to omit this duty; and resolve to avail yourself of all the helps which he so mercifully gives you in your vocation.

2ND POINT. The virtues most useful in sickness are those which require time, practice, and a strong resolution to attain, viz., prayer, mortification, and patience, which is the perfect work of the two former. If to great vigilance over your senses you add continual recollection, you can, with God's ever abundant grace, acquire a habit of prayer, which it will need but slight effort to maintain in sickness, for your suffering will naturally direct your thoughts where you have been used to find comfort.

Without mortification, prayer has little efficacy, and patience, if exercised at all, is exercised merely in virtue of necessity. How necessary it is for you to acquire a habit of these virtues before the time of trial comes.

3RD POINT. Although the Gospel gives us an example of one converted amidst the agonies of death, it was not on a sick bed. His sufferings were intense—calculated rather to arouse than benumb his mental faculties, while the suffering of the sick have usually a contrary effect. Neither was his conversion wrought by fear, but by love of Jesus. Fear paralyses mind and heart: what must be the terror of one who loves this life, yet knows that in a quarter of an hour she shall have entered eternity, mysterious, immutable, awful eternity! The worldly-minded dislike such thoughts as these. Thank God, who has enabled you to renounce the world, and remember that the only "sting of death is sin." (1 *Cor.*, xv. 56.)

## III. MEDITATION

*The death of the just.*

The soul of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.

Implore the grace of a holy death.

1ST POINT. What usually makes death seem bitter and grievous is that it breaks the ties of earthly affections; it puts an end to the pleasures and the riches of this world; it gives the pampered body to the grave and corruption, it brings the soul with its works before the judgment-seat of God. They who love and fear God can neither feel nor think like the worldly-minded. They do not regret the transitory possessions and enjoyments of this life. God has ever been the first object of their hopes and desires. Death, which alone can bring them to the possession of God, is desirable. They may fear, for the holiest has cause to fear his judgments; but the sight of the crucifix, the prayers of the Church, the intercession of the saints, and especially of the Queen of all the saints, with the receiving of the precious sacraments, inspire a certain confidence in the mercy of God that neither temptation, nor the natural horror of death, can shake.

2ND POINT. For one who dies holily in religion, not only has her heart been disengaged from earthly ties and pleasures, but she has actually and effectually renounced them. She forsook her people and the house of her father : she took upon her the yoke of Christ Jesus, and followed him, denying herself ; and now that her pilgrimage is ended, she hears the voice which the Evangelist heard from heaven, saying : Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, they may rest from their labours, for their works follow them. She who has been crucified to the world can raise her dying eyes with great joy to the image of her crucified Redeemer. Though many a dying nun has bewailed having lived as an imperfect, negligent religious, not one has ever regretted that she entered religion and forsook the world for God.

3RD POINT. Sanctity not only renders death sweet and lovely to the dying saint, but it divests the lifeless corpse of all that is terrifying to the living. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. The throne of a king is not so honoured as

the tomb of a saint. To die the death of the saints, we must live as they lived. Every spiritual duty is a most efficacious preparation for death, every action a means of sanctification. Give thanks to God for the grace of your holy vocation ; resolve, petition, etc.

#### IV. MEDITATION

##### *The certainty of death.*

Place yourself in the presence of God as a criminal under sentence of death.

Beg of him to grant you grace worthily to prepare for death.

1ST POINT. Consider, first, it is certain that we shall die. Health, strength, beauty, talents, rank, wealth, power—the grave covers them. Hopes, fears, sorrows, labours, projects, success, enjoyments—death puts an end to all: no one even doubts it. Dissipation, or business may prevent the worldly-minded from thinking on death; but no one possessed of common sense could be persuaded she was never to die. Do you act on this belief in the certainty of death? Do you endeavour to detach your heart from everything of which death will deprive you?

2ND POINT. In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin. Every action you perform, and every word you utter, every thought you conceive, may be your last on earth—may influence or even decide your fate for eternity. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment: and after this a life that is endless and immutable. It is because we are not mindful of this that we are so negligent. Forgetfulness of death will not fit us for that final hour—will not postpone it. We are not born that we may enjoy life, but that we may holily prepare for death.

3RD POINT. Only death can bring us to the vision and enjoyment of God, for which the saints have ever thirsted; only death can unite us to him without fear or possibility of again being separated from him. The servant of God knows, that if she uses the means of grace afforded her to-day she will not fail to make great gain, though she should die to-morrow. If

this hour be well spent, if the act you are performing be performed to please God, should you die when the clock chimes next, you shall have lived long enough.

## V. MEDITATION

### *The uncertainty of the time of death.*

Place yourself in spirit on your death-bed.

Pray that death may not surprise you in a state of sin and tepidity.

1ST POINT. We are sure that we shall die, but we know not the day nor the hour; all that we know concerning the time of our death is, that we shall die sooner than we expect. Neither youth nor good constitution can insure our existence a single day. We know this; we know that we are certainly to die, but we do not think it will occur for some years. Death seems very far off, yet, in reality, it is as near us as the foreground. Every moment, every action may be the last.

2ND POINT. The Lord expressly declares that death shall always come at the hour least expected, like the coming of a thief in the night; of a bridegroom who delays repairing to his nuptial feast until midnight, and then closes the gate against such guests as were not prepared to enter with him. Watch ye therefore because you know not the day nor the hour. (*Matt.*, xxv. 13.) Truly, the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. They neglect nothing to secure to themselves and their families a portion of earthly wealth: we may secure or lose the kingdom of Heaven, and we are negligent of the means.

3RD POINT. We know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come. How long would it take us to prepare for death, if we were sure of dying when the preparation should be ended? A month—a week—a few hours! We are by no means sure we shall have so much. We have had this day for the purpose: are we content with the preparation we have made? Should we be willing to die now? and if our Lord defers his coming, are we sure we shall be better prepared to meet

him then? Are we sure of such means and helps for our preparation as we have had to-day? Implore grace to know and renounce that which causes you to offend God.

## VI. MEDITATION

### *The value of time.*

Imagine you see a criminal reprieved at the place of execution.

Pray that you may make good use of the time still vouchsafed to you.

1ST POINT. Time is the purchase-money of eternity; it will purchase grace, salvation, and even God himself; for the possession of God, as well as the bliss of Heaven, is the payment of time well spent. All the riches, all the honours of this world, are not of so great value as a moment of time. The saints who have entered on eternity cannot gain for themselves an increase of glory, while we, to whom time remains, can do this at any moment by a single act of the love of God, which would not occupy a minute.

2ND POINT. Salvation can be obtained only while time is granted to us; and all the time you have lived and may live, has been granted solely for that end. Neither can this precious treasure be increased to you; use it well or ill, you shall live out the time appointed to you, and no more. The days of man are short, and the number of his months is with thee, O Lord; thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed. With what diligence, then, should you avail yourself of the time granted to you. If, for every idle word that is spoken, account must be rendered at the day of judgment, what shall it be for idle hours—what for misspent years?

3RD POINT. The loss of time is irreparable. Not all the treasures of earth could purchase an hour of time, or redeem a moment from the past. A good use of the time to come may deliver you from the dangerous consequences of having lost time; but it will not bring back that time, nor indemnify you for the graces and the merit you have lost by losing it. Ponder these words of Jesus Christ: I must work the works of him that

sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work, for, if such diligence were needful to him, how much more to you? Examine; resolve; pray.

## VII. MEDITATION

### *The death of the Imperfect.*

Pray that you may be fervent in the service of God.

1ST POINT. By the state of tepidity is meant the disposition of a soul, who, content with avoiding grievous sins, accounts as nothing the commission of lighter faults; who acquits herself of her spiritual exercises with negligence—makes her prayer without attention—her confessions without amendment—her Communion without fervour. The yoke of the Lord soon becomes heavy and insupportable to her. Her mind is dissipated on all sorts of objects. She performs duty because she likes it or through human respect; seldom with a direct intention of pleasing God. She avoids and dislikes those that are fervent. She forms particular friendships; she murmurs; is capricious and self-opinionated. Reflect a little on your own conduct. Resolve fervently to amend.

2ND POINT. The state of a soul in mortal sin is truly to be feared, yet Jesus Christ Himself declares the state of tepidity to be in some degree worse. "I would thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." (*Apoc.*, iii. 15, 16.) Her faults are always considerable, because deliberate and showing great contempt for God's favours. Prayer, spiritual reading, the Holy Mass, even the sacraments are unprofitable to her. She is deaf to the inspiration of God. Ponder well the danger such a soul is in, and pray to be enlightened concerning what God requires of you.

3RD POINT. The tepid soul is unconscious of her danger, nor does she believe herself in the state of tepidity, for spiritual blindness is one of its first effects. She is accustomed to her defects; she takes pleasure in them; she exhorts others to the practice of virtue; she will be zealous for their perfection; she will point out the path which will lead them to heaven: but she

sits herself on the wayside. By degrees she shall fall from grace. Such souls are rejected and reprobate before they apprehend themselves in danger, and it is a most unusual miracle of God's mercy if they ever rise to a better state. Do not you imitate them in their blindness. If you have fallen from your first fervour, do penance before it becomes with you a confirmed habit. Resolve; pray.

## VIII. MEDITATION

### *The death of the careless Religious.*

Imagine one dying after a life of sloth and tepidity.

Pray for fervour in God's service.

1ST POINT. It is impossible that the tepid soul should not experience the agonies of remorse at the hour of death. If the Lord hath said: When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which we ought to do; what can she account herself who has left undone that which she ought to do? The blessed candle shows very clear light to her that holds it in her dying hand. Yet it shows her nothing but what is evident though disregarded before—that God deserved she should love and serve him; that he was munificent to reward, and mighty to chastise: but it shows that God, his judgment, and his chastisements are near. His rewards—what has she done to deserve them?

2ND POINT. Consider, the terror of the afflicted soul is by no means groundless. My heart is troubled within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me. Fear, because she knew the better way, and did not walk therein. Because of the consciousness of having made most painful sacrifices, and exercised herself in most laborious duties, which her negligences and omissions in other respects have rendered without merit to her. These things ye ought to have done, and not leave the other undone. "The bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." (*Matt.*, xxv. 10.) Thus doth the Holy Scripture confirm the judgment of her terrified conscience.

3RD POINT. Consider, another cause of her affliction is, that while it is then impossible to avoid reflection, it is as impossible to act in consequence of it. I must work the works of him that sent me while it is yet day: the night cometh when no man can work. Night hath fallen on her. She might have wrought with gems and gold, but she hath raised her work of wood and stubble. We may hope, though who can say if the fiery trial through which it must pass will spare the worker? How poignant will be your regret if you bring on yourself such anguish by a like life of sloth and imperfection, for it is in your power to prevent it. The evil which we have foreseen, yet wilfully incurred, has neither excuse nor alleviation.

## IX. MEDITATION

### *The particular judgment.*

Imagine yourself standing at the judgment seat of God.

Beg a salutary fear of the judgment.

1ST POINT. In the death chamber, as her last sigh is breathed, the soul meets her Judge, whose judgment is to be immediate and irrevocable. A Christian, a Religious, she is to be judged on the observance of her baptismal vows, of the Gospel laws, of her Rule; and where these have been violated, neither weakness, nor surprise, nor evil example, nor the violence of temptation, will be an available plea. Oh! the terror of the holiest at that awful moment, when she stands before the tribunal alone with her works, to undergo the severe scrutiny of her all-seeing Judge!

2ND POINT. Not only must she account for her actions, but for her words, her looks, her very thoughts. Not only is she judged for the evil she has wrought, the evil she has caused, but for the good she might have done and left undone, as well as for the good works she has performed negligently. I will search Jerusalem with lamps, saith the Lord. She must account for the graces bestowed on her, and for the graces withheld because of her infidelity to those received; for the use she has made of her natural talents, of her influence, of her authority. Oh! let us judge ourselves uprightly in these things now, that we may be judged more favourably when the judgment cometh.

3RD POINT. Death, judgment, doom, all are instantaneous. While the echo of her last sigh still sounds in the ear of those who pray round the death-bed, the soul has been judged. She offers no prayer for mercy, attempts no extenuation, but acquiesces in the justice of her sentence, and flies to the bosom of her God, or turns to the place of her punishment, be it temporal or eternal, to shelter herself from his offended presence.

O God! deal not with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities. Give us grace to love thee whilst thou art still our Father, that we may have the less cause to fear thee as our Judge.

## X. MEDITATION

### *The sacrament of Extreme Unction.*

Pray that the powerful aid of the sacraments be granted to you at the hour of death.

1ST POINT. Our Lord Jesus Christ so greatly desires our salvation, that he has not only instituted the sacrament of Penance; but, knowing how many faults escape our researches, and how much the dying are in need of help, he has moreover instituted this last sacrament, to remit the remainder of sins which have not been expiated, to uphold and strengthen the soul against the attacks of its enemy, to reanimate its faith and confidence. Should life be necessary to the dying for the salvation of her soul, this sacrament has particular virtue to restore her to health. Give thanks to your Saviour for this his mercy.

2ND POINT. The priest on entering the chamber of the dying prays for peace to the house and all that dwell in it, and he sprinkles the bed with holy water to chase the devil by the benediction of the Church; he invokes the protection of the angels, and prays in the name of the Most Holy Trinity that the power of the evil spirit may be extinguished in the sick. He then proceeds to anoint the chief organ of each of the five senses, beseeching our Lord, through that holy unction and his own tender mercy, to forgive the sins committed by each particular sense. This done he prays that renewed health of

body and amendment of life may be granted to the sufferer. What a merciful mother is our Holy Church, and how truly does she enter into the spirit of him who instituted this sacrament in the form she prescribes for its administration.

**3RD POINT.** The dispositions required for worthily and profitably receiving the sacrament of Extreme Unction are faith, deep contrition for sin, great confidence in the mercy of God, with ardent and grateful love. These are not virtues to be acquired in a short time, above all on a sick-bed. Implant them now in your heart, and acts later on will not be difficult. When you shall be dying it will excite in you no regret that you restrained your senses, even from permitted gratifications, and it will cost you very little now to make each separate sacrifice, if you can form a generous resolution to be faithful and vigilant in this most salutary practice.

[It would be profitable to read the form of administering the sacrament of Extreme Unction before making this meditation.]

## XI. MEDITATION

*The prayers used for the recommendation of a soul departing.*

Pray that God may grant you the use of reason at the hour of death.

1ST POINT. Our Holy Mother, the Church, has instituted a form of prayer for the soul in the perilous extremity of her agony; and we should render her succours available to ourselves, by entering while we are still in health in the spirit of this pious ceremony. Return thanks to God, who inspires all that his Church ordains, and implore his grace that you may live and die faithful in his love and service.

2ND POINT. The Church invokes our Blessed Lady, all the choirs of angels, and the saints, to help the soul by their powerful intercession; and then, in the name of the Father Almighty, who created her—of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who redeemed her—of the Holy Ghost, who communicated himself to her by his gifts, that soul is invited to depart from this world in the hope that her place may be in grace and her abode in holy Sion. Prayer is made to the God of mercy that he may pardon her sins, repairing in her all that was wrought in her to evil by the frailty of human nature and the malice of the devil; that his saints may meet her rejoicing; that she may be a stranger to the horrors of eternal darkness; that the powers of hell may flee before her; that she may enter into the joy of the Lord, and see her Redeemer face to face.

3RD POINT. The soul is recommended to God as his creature, not made by strange gods, but by himself alone; as one who, if sinful, has preserved her faith in her Creator and worshipped his most adorable Trinity. He is again entreated to forgive her sins, and be mindful only of his great mercies. Again are the holy angels, especially St. Michael, invoked; the blessed Apostle St. Peter, who holds the keys, with the other holy Apostles, to whom first was given the power of binding and loosing, and the saints who suffered on earth for their Master's glory, are besought to succour their fellow-servant. Have you a right to hope that the hour of death shall be that of your admission to the vision of God, and to the society of his saints? Reflect likewise on the inestimable grace of your vocation to the

Catholic faith, without which it is impossible to please God, but which being retained gives a right to hope everything from his mercy. Return thanks to God and his saints. Make the acts of humility, contrition, resignation, confidence in your Creator, and desire to be united to him, which are expressed in these beautiful prayers.

## XII. MEDITATION

### *Preparation for death.*

Implore the grace to know what it is most important for you to do, or to renounce, in order to secure yourself a holy death.

1ST POINT. Nothing is so important as to die well ; nothing is so difficult, especially for those who have not duly prepared for it during life. The more we have laboured for God—the more holy have been our lives, the more deeply are we interested in procuring ourselves a holy death, that we may not lose the fruit of our labours; for though such a death is usually the fruit of a holy life, still it is no less true that a bad death annihilates all the merits of the most holy life and that all the merits of the most holy life are not an infallible security of a happy death.

2ND POINT. To die holily is to die in the grace of God, full of a lively faith, of intense contrition, an invincible hope, and an ardent charity, hating all the world loves, and loving God with a love surpassing all other love. Think how necessary it is to be always in these dispositions, that you may be always prepared to die. There is nothing to which our Saviour more earnestly exhorts us. “ Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.” (*Matt.*, xxv. 13.) A lingering illness is not always a profitable preparation, neither is a sudden death necessarily an unprovided death: St. Simon Stylites dropped dead on his pillar, and St. Francis Xavier died without priest or sacraments. But if you were to die now, do you think God would find in your heart such sentiments towards his divine Majesty and your fellow-creatures as would please him and procure your salvation?

3RD POINT. To prepare for a holy death is to do penance for past sins, to repair whatever wrongs you may have in any

way committed against your fellow-creatures, and to live in the true spirit of the Gospel precepts. Sickness is evidently no time for this: therefore, the time to begin our preparation for death is *now*. The best preparation for death is the sanctity of your whole life, and you will give too little time to it if you give less. Our Lord Jesus Christ had his death ever present to his mind, spoke of it and prepared for it from the very beginning; his saints have ever followed his example: why should not you? Agonising Heart of Jesus have pity on the dying!













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Nouet, Jacques,  
1605-1680.  
Meditations on the  
life and passion of Our  
Lord Jesus Christ :

