St. Anthony Mary Claret

PASTORAL LETTER TO THE PEOPLE

Carta pastoral al pueblo

From the Spanish of the Barcelona edition (1853)

English translation

Contributed to Mind of the Church by a friend of the library who wishes to remain anonymous

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About this translation

Translated from the *Carta pastoral al pueblo* (Santiago de Cuba, 25 March 1853), in the Barcelona edition of the same year. The translation is complete.

The notes give the references to Claret's sources and the notes he printed himself; the modern editors' commentary and the translator's own remarks are not reproduced.

Address and Introduction

WE, DON ANTONIO MARÍA CLARET Y CLARÁ, by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See Archbishop of Cuba, Prelate Grand Cross of the Royal American Order of Isabella the Catholic, of Her Majesty's Council, etc.

To all the beloved faithful of this Our diocese, health, grace and peace in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

> *Diverte a malo, et fac bonum: inquire pacem, et persequere eam. \[Turn away from evil and do good: seek after peace and pursue it.\] (Ps. 33:15)*

Fear and Love

Fear and love, dearly beloved brethren and most dear children in Our Lord Jesus Christ, are two most powerful spurs that drive Us to do with all speed whatever We know to be for the greater glory of God and the good of your souls.

Ah, dearly beloved brethren, Our hair stands on end and Our blood freezes in Our veins each time We think of the words that God Himself addresses to Us through the prophet Ezechiel, letting Us know that He has set Us as watchman and sentinel over this archdiocese. Woe to Us if We do not keep watch! Woe to Us if We do not warn and caution the sinner so that he may be converted! For if he dies in his sin through Our omission and negligence, We shall pay for his damnation with Our own soul.

It is true that if We warn him and exhort him to change his life, and he nevertheless continues in it, through pride and rebellion of heart or perhaps through slackness and neglect, and dies in that state, We shall be saved, because We have done Our part in warning him; but he will be lost, because he paid no heed to one who wished him well and exhorted him. But, children much beloved of Our soul, do you think perhaps that Our heart will be consoled by remembering that We on Our part have already done all We ought for his salvation, and that if he is damned it is his own fault?… Ah, no, dearly beloved children. If We loved you less, this thought would no doubt be enough to calm the grief your damnation would cause Us; but We love you too much, and so Our grief would have no comfort. We love you as the apple of Our eye; We love you as Our very heart and soul; We love you as most dear children. And could a good mother, asks St. Bernard, console herself on seeing her son dead merely by remembering that she on her part had done everything possible to save his life? Ah, no!… Neither, then, can a good Prelate console himself on seeing the ruin of his flock, however much his conscience assures him of his good zeal and that he has left out nothing he knew to be useful to them.

You know well, We say to you with the Apostle St. Paul, in what manner We have conducted Ourselves all the time We have been with you, from the first day We entered this Island, *serving the Lord with all humility and with tears… how We have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have preached it to you and taught you,*[1] now in the pulpit, now in the confessional; facing every difficulty, overcoming and mastering the strangeness of the climate, the burning rays of the sun, the influence the moon has here, without stopping for the rains and the mud that made the roads impassable; without fear of lockjaw, the black vomit and the other illnesses to which not only the natives of the country are subject but also, and much more, Europeans and newcomers; and without heeding the wise and charitable warnings that We were exposing Ourselves to a

thousand illnesses and even to losing Our life. We have always answered with the Apostle that we fear none of these things, nor do We count Our life more precious than Our soul, so long as in this way We may finish Our course happily and fulfil the ministry We have received from the Lord Jesus, to preach the Gospel of the grace of God;[2] for, as St. Francis de Sales used to say, it is not necessary that I live, but it is necessary that I fulfil my duty, my ministry.

Therefore, brethren and children much beloved in Jesus Christ, We tell you these things not to shame you, but We admonish you as Our dearest children, so that you may understand how to know the worth of your soul and the esteem it deserves, and how hard you must labour to save it, remembering how much We have done, are doing and, God willing, will do so that you may attain eternal happiness. The holy masters of the spiritual life, when they treat of the life and zeal of a Prelate, say that just as Aaron, high priest of the old Law, always wore upon his breast the rational on which were written the names of the twelve Patriarchs,[3] so the Prelate, priest of the Law of grace, ought to wear the pectoral cross with the relics of holy Prelates and Martyrs, so as to learn from them zeal in always seeking the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, and at the same time to imitate their constancy and courage in suffering adversities, tribulations, persecutions and even death itself, if need be. And the Prelate is to learn not only from these heroes, but above all from Jesus Christ, the model of Pastors, for He is the good Shepherd;[4] and that is why the pectoral is made in the form of a cross, so that he may always keep before him the life, passion and death of the Redeemer Jesus, who died on the cross to save and redeem our souls.

Do not doubt it, children: when a Prelate gives himself attentively, as he ought, to meditating on what Jesus Christ did and suffered to save souls, such a fire is kindled in his heart by this meditation that it does not let him rest or take his ease. Just as the fire of the powder drives the shell or the ball and makes it forget its natural weight and its tendency to rest and stillness, so, and even more, the fire kindled in meditation so drives the Prelate that he forgets himself and goes wherever the Spirit of the Lord leads him, and can say with the Apostle St. Paul: *Charitas Christi urget nos* \[The charity of Christ presseth us\].[5] You know already, children, that this motto is Our device, Our watchword and Our all; for the charity of Christ has made Us undertake so much labour in visiting you, exhorting you, catechizing you and preparing your hearts so as to administer the holy sacraments to you. And We cannot but give God Our Lord the most humble thanks for having endowed you with a docile heart, well disposed to virtue; and We hope, for that very reason, that the seed of the divine word We have preached will bear fruit a hundredfold.

The Purpose of this Pastoral

And so that Our hopes may not be frustrated, We send you the present pastoral letter, which will serve as a wholesome dew to keep green the holy seed of the Gospel that is already growing in your hearts, until, God willing, We come again to plant and water anew, trusting that the Lord will give the increase in all things.[1] Then We shall teach you by word of mouth what you must practise to advance on the way of perfection and of the love of Jesus and of Mary most holy; but for now We only remind you of what We have already told you by word of mouth.

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[2] Acts 20:19–20.

[3] Acts 20:24.

[4] Exod. 39:14.

[5] John 10:14.

[6] 2 Cor. 5:14.

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. 3:6.

Point I. The Existence of God, One and Three, Creator and Preserver of All Things

You must remember, children, how We have taught you, both Ourselves and through Our fellow workers, that there is one only true God; that this God is a Lord infinitely good, wise and powerful, a most pure and most perfect spirit, immense and eternal, the beginning and end of all things, who rewards the good with the glory of heaven and punishes the wicked with the eternal pains of hell. This God is one in essence and three in Persons, really distinct, who are called Father, Son and Holy Ghost; yet all three are but one God. And this holy truth will become easier for you to believe, or be printed more deeply in your heart, if you observe what happens and what you feel in yourselves. Is it not true that you feel within you a spiritual soul which, being the image and likeness of God, is one in essence and three in its powers, which are called understanding, memory and will? The understanding thinks and reasons, the memory remembers and the will loves; and yet it is only one soul, and this soul, endowed with these powers, thinks, remembers and loves. So too in God there are three Persons: to the Father is attributed power, to the Son wisdom and to the Holy Ghost love; and yet there is but one God, and this God is powerful, wise and loving, with all His other attributes. Believe, then, children, in the existence of one God; adore the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity and praise it without ceasing, now by saying the Trisagion, now by saying at the beginning and end of your prayers the verse: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. You will honour the Most Holy Trinity in a special way if you reverence its image, which, as We have told you, is your own soul, keeping it free from all sin; for by sin it would cease to be the friend of God and would become the slave of the devil. Keep yourselves clean, children, in soul and body, and so you will be temples of the Holy Ghost and a dwelling of the Most Holy Trinity. He will come to you and abide in you if you truly love God.[1]

This God, three and one, is He who created all things in heaven and on earth, the whole universe. Before creation nothing existed but God, and the universe existed only *in the thought of God*. God, the supreme and infinite Being, has always been from eternity, is, and will be eternally; otherwise He would not be the supreme Being, infinite and existing of Himself, as the first Being must necessarily be, of whom, by whom and in whom all things have being, life and movement. This great God, by virtue of His power and wisdom and as an effect of His goodness, gave being to all creatures with the greatest ease: He spoke, and things were made; He commanded, and the sun, the moon, all the planets, comets and other stars were created. Earth, seas, rivers and springs; trees and plants, beasts, birds and fishes, and man himself: all is the work of God. And as the prophet says: *Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum ejus annuntiat firmamentum* \[The heavens shew forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands\].[2] The whole heavens proclaim the glory, power and other divine attributes, and all the creatures in the whole extent of the vast universe proclaim that they are the work of the hands of God Himself, assuring us that they did not make themselves, but that God, out of His goodness, has given them the being they have: *ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos* \[He made us, and not we ourselves\].[3]

And God not only created all these things, but with wise and wonderful providence He preserves them; and this preservation requires the same infinite power of God that was required for their creation. That is why the philosophers say very well that preservation is a continued creation: *conservatio est continuata creatio*. Who is not filled with wonder, dearest children, at that great celestial sphere?… What a sun… what a moon… what planets, comets and other heavenly bodies! What size…! What order…! What well-ordered movement…! What exactness in running their orbits, so that years beforehand one can state the day, hour and minute of the eclipses they produce according to the laws the Creator has given them, which they observe with all punctuality! If we admire a well-regulated clock and praise the skill of the craftsman, how much more ought we to admire the great celestial sphere, more intricate than the best-made clock, and how much ought we to praise the infinite wisdom of God who composed and created it! But however well regulated a clock may be when it leaves the craftsman’s hands, even though its wheels and all its other parts

are of solid metal, in the end it wears out, goes wrong and becomes useless; whereas this sphere is preserved and always runs with the same exactness, because the same hand of God that drew it out of nothing preserves it.

There is no doubt that it is a cause of wonder, and matter for praising God, to contemplate the celestial sphere; but the terrestrial globe is no less so. What seas…! What rivers…! What animals…! What trees…! In what order they are preserved!… All these things, created and preserved by God, are all for man: *omnia subjecisti sub pedibus ejus* \[Thou hast subjected all things under his feet\].[4] Man is, as it were, the king and sovereign of all these things; he has no other master and Lord than God, whom he must strive to know, love and serve. And that is why God has created and preserves all these things for man: so that man may know, love and serve Him as his Lord and most loving Father here on earth, who after this life will take him to heaven, where he will be happy with God Himself for all eternity.

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[1] John 14:21–23.

[2] Ps. 18:2.

[3] Ps. 99:3.

[4] Ps. 8:8.

Point II. The Providence and Care God Has for All Things, but Especially for Men

We are well persuaded, beloved children, that all of you believe and adore with the greatest firmness these ineffable truths: that there is one God in three really distinct Persons; that this one true God is He who created heaven and earth and all things; and that this same God preserves and governs them all with the utmost equity and justice. But from what We have seen, heard and observed in the course of the holy pastoral visitation, We fear that you are not so firm in this other truth, as certain as the former: namely, that God has providence and care for all things, and especially for us. For perhaps someone will say: If God has providence and care for us, why does He will that I be poor and that man rich? Why am I ignorant and that man learned? Why am I mocked and despised, and that man honoured and esteemed by all?… Ah, much beloved children, these differences prove nothing against divine Providence; on the contrary, they show the very great providence and care God has for all of us. To understand this you must know that all the things God has created and preserves, and the graces He has granted and grants, are all directed to His greater honour and glory and the good of souls. You must know too that none of us had any right to the being God has given him, nor to the natural gifts with which He honours whom He will and as He will. Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make of the same lump one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour? We are all drawn out of nothing; and who will be able to give counsel to God Himself? Who will be so bold as to say to God: You should have made me richer than that man, stronger, wiser and more honoured than that other? Is He not the master and Lord of all? May not the Lord say to him: *Amice, non facio tibi injuriam.*… \[Friend, I do thee no wrong\];[1] if thou art bad, why may I not be good, doing good to whom I please?[2]

There is no reason to murmur against God or His divine Providence on seeing the inequality of the gifts He distributes among people. What disorder there would be, as St. Paul suggests, if the whole human body were eyes![3] That would no longer be order but the height of disorder; not a body but a monster, useless for everything. For there to be harmony in a body, and for it to be fit for use, there must be faculties for every office: feet to walk, hands to work, a head to govern, eyes to guide, and so on for the other offices; some high, some low, some in between. Thus from this inequality there comes a perfect equality: with it the human body is fit and useful; without it, it would be good for nothing and could not even survive. Exactly the same thing happens in the body of the universe. If all were equal, that would surely be the greatest inequality and

the height of disorder. If all were rich, who would serve, who would till the land, who would do the manual trades so necessary to the public good? If all were ignorant, who would govern? If all were great, learned, rich and noble, how much more ambition, presumption and pride there would be! If divine Providence has placed the rich, it is so that by the exercise of charity and almsgiving they may help the poor and win heaven; and if the poor, so that by humility and patience they may attain the same.

It also belongs to divine Providence that in this vale of tears there should be miseries, poverty, sickness and other calamities and misfortunes. To understand this one must take for granted what St. John Chrysostom says: that nothing happens in this world except by the permission of God, who takes particular care of the faithful, and that when God punishes men He has only their benefit in view. It must also be noted that the calamities God permits, if they are general, are ordinarily a punishment for sins, as we read in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus and in other places of Holy Scripture; but if they are particular, they are sometimes also a punishment for one's sins, yet very often they are special dispositions of God to prove the virtue of the good, as the archangel St. Raphael said to Tobias: *Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.*[4] God permits sickness, poverty, calumny and persecution for the just man so that his virtue may shine and serve as an example to others; so that he may exercise his patience and so merit the heavenly wage and reward; for it is written that none shall be crowned except he strive lawfully.[5] And sometimes God begins to pay the wage even in this world, the reward of the patience with which pains have been suffered, and at last gives its fulfilment in glory. So we see in Tobias, a rich man, loved by the king, charitable and eminent in every virtue. Yet God permitted another king, that king's successor, to persecute him; and to increase his unhappiness and misfortune he lost his sight; from rich he became poor, and so poor that he and his son lived on the little his wife could earn by spinning; and so that nothing might be lacking to the height of his misfortune, he was insulted by his own wife because he had been charitable and had put so much trust in God. But Tobias, although the foolish and wounding words of his wife made him shed bitter tears, always conformed himself to the will of God. And the Lord was so taken with his constancy, courage and patience that He sent the archangel St. Raphael to guide his son; and the same Archangel arranged the marriage of this son with a very virtuous and rich young woman, with which he enriched his parents, and at the same time restored his sight, so that afterwards he lived many years with sight, health, riches and joy. See, beloved children, how God Our Lord has care and providence for His own, and that if at times He permits them some miseries or afflictions, He also knows how to make it up to them with great advantages, not only in heaven but even here on earth. That is why St. James says: *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him.*[6] And patience is precisely the proof of true love; so that he who does not know how to suffer does not know how to love, according to the saying of St. John: *Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth;*[7] that is, by doing, and by suffering with patience.

It is a source of great grief and affliction to Our heart when We find some men and women who, while they boast of being Christians and assure Us in all earnest that they love God, swear falsely in court for some advantage a litigant gives them. We find women too who prostitute their honour for some gown or a few *reales* that some lewd man gives them. And both the perjurers and the immodest women and other sinners assure Us that they love God, and that if they have failed in that respect it was through poverty and want. Ah, my children, how deceived they live!… How far astray they go!… They say they love God, and it is false; for the first proof of whether we love God is the keeping of the divine commandments, as Jesus Christ says.[8] By this vile conduct, besides breaking the precepts of the Lord, which we are bound to keep at all costs, even at the cost of our own life, the greatest injury is done to God. One distrusts His divine Providence in practice, and in practice denies the Gospel, in which Jesus Christ assures us that the heavenly Father takes more care of us than of the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, and that our heavenly Father knows very well that we need food to nourish the body and clothing to cover it.[9] And one distrusts and gives no credit at all to that solemn promise Jesus Christ makes us when He says: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice,*

and all these things shall be added unto you.[10] As if He said: Do you strive to be good, keep the commandments, fulfil the obligations of your state, do not sin; and I give you My word that you will lack nothing you need.

But those men and women who, despising all these promises, sin and say they sin out of want, put more trust in sin than in the divine word; they trust the devil more than God. By their deeds they say to God: Since You cannot keep Your children who live in grace, and give them neither food nor clothing, we hand ourselves over by sin to the devil, who will give us money, food and clothing. You are a bad father, who does not take care of his children; it is better to be the devil's slave than God's, for the devil's slaves, by sin, have what they want. Ah, my children, what a multitude of blasphemies are practised by those who say they sin out of want! Never, ever utter such expressions. Ask God with fervour and perseverance, and say the Lord's Prayer, the *Our Father*, especially those words: *Give us this day our daily bread*; and We give you Our word that you will not lack what is necessary, above all if on your part you do what you ought by working. And if with all your work you do not have enough, humble yourselves to ask, and you will obtain it, being content with food and clothing according to your state and condition. Therefore We can assure you that those who say they sin out of want do not tell the truth: all sin out of wickedness. They sin because they will not work; they sin because they are proud, and not only will they not work, but neither will they humble themselves to ask for what they lack. And especially the women who say they sin out of want are so proud that, though they are of low condition, they want to live without working like great ladies and to dress in all luxury and elegance as if they were gentlewomen. And is this sinning out of want? It is false. It is sinning out of wickedness and pride; it is choosing to follow Lucifer and be damned with him for all eternity.

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[1] Matt. 20:13.

[2] The potter and the clay are from Rom. 9:21.

[3] Cf. 1 Cor. 12:17.

[4] Tob. 12:13.

[5] 2 Tim. 2:5.

[6] James 1:12.

[7] 1 John 3:18.

[8] John 15:10.

[9] Matt. 6:25–30.

[10] Matt. 6:33.

Point III. The Providence and Care God Has Always Had for the Spiritual Good of Men

We have already explained to you, dearly beloved brethren, the very great care and providence God has always had for men as regards bodily goods. Now We shall explain, though briefly, the care He has for these same men as regards spiritual goods, those that belong to their salvation. This is the principal thing; and even those other goods are all directed to this spiritual end, given us as means to attain it more easily.

We have already told you by word of mouth that God created all of us to know Him, love Him and serve Him here on earth, and afterwards to go up to heaven to be happy with God Himself for all eternity. But the common enemy, the devil, envious of the happiness of our first parents Adam and Eve, entered into the body of a serpent and made use of Eve to make them break the precept God had laid on them, and so, by means of sin, to make them unhappy, them and all their descendants, which is to say ourselves. And in fact he succeeded. Our first parents Adam and Eve sinned and were deprived of grace and glory and became slaves of the devil; and we, as children of such parents, share the same lot, so that we are all born children of wrath, in original sin, deprived of grace and glory. And since sin, by reason of the one offended, who is God, is of infinite malice, God alone is able to give worthy satisfaction for it. But how can this be, if God cannot suffer?

By making Himself able to suffer, becoming man in the womb of Mary most holy by the work of the Holy Ghost. And thus made man, He gave worthy satisfaction to divine Justice for the sins of all men, suffering so many pains and torments, and even death itself, to redeem and save them all; for this is what God wills, that all men be saved: *Deus vult omnes homines salvos fieri* \[God will have all men to be saved\], as St. Paul says.[1] And so that these men may attain their salvation more easily, Jesus Christ has placed His merits in the holy sacraments; and it is enough to receive them properly to obtain the pardon of sins, however many and great they may be, and to obtain grace, and even to become a sharer in the merits of Jesus Christ, which are of infinite value.

And if some men are lost and damned, it is not for want of will on God's part, nor because the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is scanty; for in truth it is plentiful,[2] as the prophet says, and enough to save thousands of worlds. It is through the fault of men themselves who, through slackness, sloth, pride or some other wickedness, do not receive the holy sacraments, preferring darkness to light and choosing rather to live in sin and be damned than to live in the grace of God and be saved, despising to be children of God and gladly submitting to the slavery of the devil, to the great injury of God and the merits of Jesus Christ. But blessed are those who will know how to profit by these great mercies of the Lord.

Yet Jesus Christ did not wish to be only our Redeemer, nor only our Teacher, who shows in the holy Gospel the way we are to follow, going before us Himself and practising first what He teaches to all. He wishes also to be our Father and our Mother, feeding us by means of the Most Holy Sacrament with the blood of His veins and with the flesh of His own real and true body, hidden beneath the veil of the sacramental accidents for the increase of our faith and other virtues; so that for our good Jesus Christ could give us no more, nor do more than He did.

And as if all this were still too little, He has also given us His own Mother, Mary most holy, to be our mother too, our advocate, our mediatrix and our comfort. He has also given us the saints of heaven to be our protectors; and more still, His very Angels of heaven, whom He sends to be our guardians, defenders and guides on the road to heaven: *Angelis suis Deus mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis* \[He hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways\].[3] You see, then, my beloved, the great providence and care God has always had for our spiritual good, what He has done so that we may all attain salvation, and how much He wills it. We, therefore, must strive to save ourselves, using and profiting by all these means, so powerful and effective.

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[1] 1 Tim. 2:4.

[2] Ps. 129:7.

[3] Ps. 90:11.

Point IV. You Must Keep Away from Idleness

Up to here, dearly beloved brethren, We have spoken to you of how much God has done for your good, both in the order of nature and in the order of grace. Now We shall tell you how you are to keep away from evil and practise virtue. The chief evil you must strive to keep away from is idleness, because it is idleness that would make you most unlike God and would turn you away from the end He had in view in creating you. We have said that idleness would make you most unlike God, because God is most pure act, the first agent, the first mover, the first of causes; whence it is clear that the idle man is wholly unlike God, and so far removed from Him that he is like a wheel that comes loose from the machine, or a branch cut off from the vine. And it makes us unlike not only God, but also Christ Our Lord; for we know of Jesus Christ that He was always occupied, not only in teaching and preaching His holy Gospel in the last years of His life, but before that He worked at the labour of His hands, and was known to the Hebrews as a workman. The Gospel relates that, amazed to hear His doctrine, so holy, so divine and accompanied by so much learning, they asked in wonder:

Is not this the one we have always seen at work? *Nonne hic est faber?* \[Is not this the carpenter?\][1] And by the mouth of His prophet He says: *In laboribus a juventute mea* \[I am in labours from my youth\].[2] Therefore the idle man makes himself unlike not only God but also Jesus Christ; even though he calls himself a Christian, he will be one only in name and not in deed, because he does not work. But what makes the idle man most unlike God and Jesus Christ, who is God and man, is the loss of grace, which idleness inevitably brings about; and a man without the grace of God is the thing most unlike God and furthest from Him. Enough to say that he is like a devil, according to St. Thomas.

That idleness makes one lose grace by casting a man headlong into wickedness and sin is a truth so constant and so well known that it is affirmed not only by Holy Scripture and the holy Fathers, but also by reason itself and daily experience. In Holy Scripture we read that idleness is the mother and mistress of vices.[3] For this reason St. Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, begs them so earnestly to work, not to be idle but always occupied, and goes so far as to tell them that he who will not work, neither let him eat.[4] And in the book of Job we read that man is born to labour as the bird to fly: *Homo natus ad laborem, sicut avis ad volatum.*[5] And Moses tells us in the sacred book of Genesis that God, as soon as He had created man, took him and placed him in the paradise of pleasure to dress it and keep it; and man kept himself very well until his wife and spouse Eve, idle and curious, seduced by the infernal serpent, seduced him too. Hence St. John Chrysostom says that Adam lost paradise through idleness. “Ah, how many lose heaven through the same idleness!” the Saint exclaims.

St. Augustine, speaking of idleness, says: “Through idleness lust is kindled; through idleness pride takes heart; through idleness one climbs to vainglory; through idleness one comes to desire dainty food and drink; through idleness rich and elegant clothes are coveted; through idleness one sleeps too much; through idleness one goes on to murmur about other people’s affairs.” And he concludes: “He who loves idleness on earth will never be a citizen of heaven.” You see, dearest children, the fatal effects of idleness described by St. Augustine. But no less happy or eloquent is the celebrated and learned Lohner when he treats of the unhappy consequences idleness brings. Here are his words: “Idleness is the confusion of nature, the bilge of families, the enemy of the arts, the mistress of ignorance, the father of poverty, the courier of cares, the end of memory, the night of the mind, the origin of diseases, the seducer and snare of chastity, the exile of virtue, the inn of vices, the sorrow of the Angels, the castle of the devils, the betrayer of the soul, the shame of the earth, the grief of heaven, the hatred of God; and finally it is the tomb of the living man and the hell of the dead.”

That is why Holy Scripture and the holy Fathers so urge us to work, for the great goods that occupation brings and the many evils from which it preserves and frees us; and for the same reason they say that not only the poor must occupy themselves in some work, to earn their keep, but also the rich, even though they do not need it, so as to free themselves from the vices that necessarily go with idleness. The examples historians give us on this point are countless; and so as not to abuse your patience We shall mention only the great example given by the emperor Theodosius, who was always occupied, and when affairs of government left him free, he busied himself copying writings, and what he earned by this work he gave to the poor in alms. Happy alms! Only God can measure the worth of such alms, earned by an imperial hand and for so noble an end.

If this is praiseworthy in men, it is no less so in women. That is why, when the wise Solomon describes the valiant woman,[6] manly and virtuous, he tells us that she eats not her bread idle, but seeks wool and flax and works with the labour of her hands; that she applies herself to the tasks of the household, though they are tiring, and her fingers take hold of the spindle. She rises before daybreak and gives a prey to her household and victuals to her maidens. She opens her hand to the needy and stretches out her arms to the poor. She has made herself clothing and is clothed with purple and fine linen; and though so rich a lady, she works to sell girdles, fine sashes, to the merchants. She opens her mouth to wisdom, and the law of clemency, of love,

governs her tongue. She watches over the ways of her household, so that no one is idle or given to drink, gambling, lust or any other vice. That is why she is praised, loved and respected by all; her children, well brought up, cannot but call her most happy and blessed, and, what is more, her own husband will praise her. A woman is not to be praised for her charm or wit, nor for her beauty, which is a vain thing. That woman, and that woman only, is worthy of praise who fears God and fulfils these duties proper to her state.

On this description of the virtuous woman by the wise Solomon, the commentators say: Let women learn from this, and teach their daughters, occupation and love of work; so they will avoid idleness and preserve chastity. History relates that one day Charlemagne was asked why he kept his daughters always occupied in working wool and flax. And, as his chancellor Einhard records, he answered that it was for two reasons: first, to avoid idleness; and second, so that if by some turn of fortune they should come to poverty, they might have an honest and honourable means of earning their keep. Of the great Caesar Augustus the historian Suetonius Tranquillus says that he kept his wife, sister, daughter and granddaughters, who lived in his house and palace, occupied in such handiwork, and he wore no clothing but what they made for him. And Herodotus relates that one day Alexander the Great said in conversation: *This garment I wear is the work and gift of my mother and sisters.*[7] The queens and ladies Elizabeth of Hungary and Elizabeth of Portugal did the same. But We must add, and can by no means leave out, Isabella, queen and ornament of Spain. This great lady, who in matters touching Castile used to decide the most arduous and important affairs herself, with an intelligence and judgment that would do honour to an illustrious monarch, far from disdaining to take up the distaff and occupy herself in women's work, used to boast among the ladies that the Catholic King Don Fernando, her husband, never put on a shirt that she had not only sewn but also spun herself. Oh, how ashamed those women will be at these examples who, because they have dreamed that they are white, think they need not work! Perhaps they would rather perish of want or give themselves up to a bad life than occupy themselves in some work. Let them be more humble, and so they will be better and more useful, and loved by God and by honourable men.

Nature itself, much beloved children, teaches us the difference between the hardworking and the idle; how useful the one is and how harmful the other. Take water as an example: what a difference between when it is moving and when it is stagnant! When it moves, as in springs, fountains, rivers and seas, how clean, how good, how useful!… But when it does not move, when it stands in a pool, it at once goes bad, fills with insects and gives off such miasmas that it harms the public health. The same happens among people. Those who are diligent in fulfilling their obligations, like moving water, keep themselves clean of sins, good in their habits and useful to their neighbours; but idle people are like water that does not move, stagnant water: they are full of worms, of vices, faults and sins, and they harm the public good with their scandals, gossip, gambling, impurities and other disorders.

The first evil that follows from idleness is the disorder of the tongue. Yes, of the tongue, this little part of our body which the Creator has given us with the power to speak not one language only, but many, even the strangest. With this tongue, if it is well ruled and governed, we ask and pray to God and obtain the divine mercies; with it we sing the divine praises, forming one choir with the Seraphim themselves. This tongue, well managed, is the instrument of great charity: with it we teach the ignorant, give wholesome counsel to those who need it, correct those who walk in evil ways, console the afflicted, with a thousand other works of mercy. And a good tongue is of such use and profit that he who keeps it well ruled not only does good, but with it urges others to do the same, and in a way he is multiplied in all who hear him speak. That is why St. James compares the tongue to the bit of a horse and the rudder of a ship.[8] A small thing is the horse's bit, a small thing the ship's rudder, but of great consequence. For if the bit is well handled by the rider, the horse will go far and well; but if he handles it badly, it will carry him over the precipice. If the rudder is well handled by a wise and prudent pilot, the whole vessel will go well: ship, people and cargo will all keep a good course and come happily to the desired port; but if the rudder is not well handled, instead of reaching

the desired port it will strike a reef, and all will go to the bottom. The comparison could not be more exact or clearer, so We shall not stop to explain it.

So much did the holy Apostle wish this most important doctrine to be engraved on our hearts that he goes on to say that, if the tongue is well ruled, with it we bless God;[9] but if the tongue is not well ruled, with this same tongue that used to serve to praise God we curse our neighbours, who are made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing: a strange thing indeed, for we have never seen sweet and bitter water flow from the same fountain and through the same spout. Yet this rare phenomenon we see in the mouth and tongue of the idle. With the same tongue with which he was saying Holy, Holy, Holy, he afterwards says of his neighbour, rogue, scoundrel, lecher… Now with this same tongue he murmurs and criticizes, now he lies, carries tales, stirs up quarrels and speaks indecencies, with other perversities. For this reason the same Apostle St. James says that the evil tongue is full of deadly poison, that it is a whole world of iniquity,[10] that it is set on fire by hell, and that it is the very fire from which the great conflagrations of wars and of public and private discords take their origin. So that on the Apostle's words *Universitas iniquitatis* \[a world of iniquity\],[11] the commentators and holy Fathers say that the evil tongue is the university where all the vices are taught; and just as the letters of the alphabet are needed to teach the sciences, and from them and with them treatises and volumes are formed, so the tongue has its complete alphabet of vices, faults and sins, after this fashion: adulation, blasphemy, calumny, detraction, excuses, falsehood, glorying in wickedness, heresy, idle chatter, irreligion, boasting, licentiousness, loading with insults, murmuring, not saying what one ought, opprobrium, perjury, querulousness, revealing secrets, sacrilege, taunting, vituperation, impiety, bitter zeal.[12] These are the chief vices that make up the wicked alphabet of the tongue. The other members of the body need an instrument to do harm, but the tongue is sufficient for itself: it has the shape and colour of a pyre or flame of fire to burn what is good; it has the shape of a sword with which it wounds its neighbours present and absent, and not only the living but also the dead; so that no one escapes the evil tongue, not even God Himself, nor is there any place safe from the evil tongue, for it meddles in talk of heaven, purgatory and hell.

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[1] Mark 6:3.

[2] Ps. 87:16.

[3] Ecclus. 33:29.

[4] 2 Thess. 3:10–12.

[5] Job 5:7.

[6] Prov. 31:10–31.

[7] *History of Alexander*, V.2.

[8] James 3:3–5.

[9] James 3:9.

[10] James 3:6.

[11] James 3:6.

[12] *adulación, blasfemia, calumnia, detracción, excusa, falsedad, gloriarse….*

Point V. You Must Abstain from Murmuring

We have already told you, dearest children, in the holy mission and pastoral visitation, that of the sins of the evil tongue the easiest to commit, the hardest to amend, the most common, the most fatal, the one with the gravest consequences and the hardest to repair is without doubt the sin of detraction or murmuring. It consists in speaking ill of one's neighbour, and it is ordinarily committed in four ways: by saying something bad that is not true; by saying something bad that is true but hidden; by saying something that is public and true but adding to its malice; and finally by saying something good but belittling its merit or misinterpreting the intention.

Oh, how wicked, what a harmful and destructive beast is the murmuring person! Some say it is the beast the prophet Daniel saw and tells us of in chapter 7, verse 5, in these words: *Behold another beast like a bear… and three rows were in the mouth thereof… and thus they said to it: Arise, devour much flesh.* This beast was like a bear, which looks much like the figure of a man but is not a man but a beast; so that the person who murmurs may understand that he may have the figure of a man or a woman, but in reality he will be a wild beast. It says moreover that it had three rows of teeth, so that the murmuring person may understand that these three rows of teeth signify the three kinds of harm he does: with his murmuring he harms his absent neighbour in his good name, he harms his present neighbour who listens to him in his conscience, and lastly he harms himself in his soul. And the words *and thus they said to it: Arise, devour much flesh* show that the devils make him speak and urge him on to wickedness, as the devil did with the serpent of paradise; and just as he then used the serpent to ruin Eve and Adam, so now he uses the murmuring person to ruin the present generation. Oh, what wickedness!… Great, very great is the harm the murmurer does to the one he murmurs about: he takes away and swallows his good name, which is better than great riches, as Solomon says. In one of the sacred canons we read *that he who kills his brother and he who murmurs against him are alike shown to be murderers*. And from this one can see why Holy Scripture calls the slanderous tongue now a razor, now an arrow, now a sword,[1] all deadly instruments; so that the murmuring person may understand the harm he does, the persons he kills in their moral life, and the terrible account that awaits him at the tribunal of God.

But the murmuring tongue is so deadly that it kills not only the absent person but also, as it were in passing and with a friendly face, the conscience of the one present who listens to it, directly or indirectly. It harms him indirectly because, hearing those faults talked about, he loses the horror he naturally had for them, readily comes to commit them, and the public is infected. But it harms him directly and in particular because it very easily leads him to take pleasure in the murmuring he hears and to join in it. That is why St. Bernard used to say that between him who murmurs and him who listens there is this difference: he who murmurs has the devil on his tongue, and he who listens has him in his ears. This is to be understood when the one listening takes pleasure in the murmuring instead of resisting it; for if he resists it, or does not consent to it, and dispels the murmuring, then he does not sin. If the one who hears the murmuring knows how to behave well, he not only avoids falling into sin, but even comes to correct the murmurer. Just as no one willingly takes his wares to sell where he finds no buyers, so no one willingly goes on speaking ill of his neighbour where he is not willingly heard. This was the answer a wise man gave to someone who told him: Do you know that so-and-so has said very bad things about you? He replied: He would not have murmured about me so freely if you had not listened to him. The fault is yours. That is why St. Bernard said: I cannot easily say which of these two is more to be condemned, to murmur or to listen to the one who murmurs.

You have heard, dearest children, though briefly, the harm the murmurer does to the absent neighbour he murmurs about and to the neighbour present who hears the murmuring; but worse still is the harm he does to himself. Some compare the murmuring person to the viper full of deadly venom; but the comparison is not exact, for though it is true that the viper poisons, it remains alive. It would be better to compare him to the bee, which, when it stings, dies of its sting, leaving the one it stung only hurt.

The causes of murmuring are many: now malice, hatred, revenge; now pride, ambition; now levity and thoughtlessness, or some other of the passions to which human frailty is subject. For the passions are so many coloured spectacles that make all things look the colour of the lenses through which they are seen. The rancorous and vindictive look at their neighbours through concave glasses, which magnify things; hence they swell the smallest thing into a mountain. The envious look through convex glasses, in which very great objects look very small: for them the most heroic acts of their rival are nothing, and when they cannot deny the deed, they put a bad construction on the intention. Very often murmuring comes from lack of sense, or folly, as Holy Scripture puts it: *A facie verbi parturit fatuus* \[At the hearing of a word the fool is in travail\];[2] that is, the foolish person, when he has seen or heard some fault of a neighbour, is like a woman in the pains

of childbirth, who has no rest or quiet until she is delivered; so the fool cannot rest until he has told others his neighbour's fault. Murmuring also comes from carelessness about one's own good or virtue. When the natural heat goes too much to the extremities of the body, the inner parts are left cold. So it is with those who are always watching and talking about other people's lives: they take little care of their own. And experience teaches that those who murmur most are those who live worst, and especially the lustful, says Segneri; either because they readily believe others guilty of the miseries they experience so fatally in themselves, or because they are glad their evil has become common to many, so as to hide themselves better in the crowd of the sick.

But what is most dismaying is to see how common the vice of murmuring has become; and murmurers do not reflect that to murmur is to judge and pass sentence on what they talk about. What can come of such sentences? How will they judge rightly if they have no knowledge of the case? Most often it is ignorant people who judge or murmur, people who cannot put three words together in order, and yet about other people's doings they can murmur with sharpness for three whole hours. They are like frogs, which have no voice except for their croaking and no blood except what is seen around their eyes: they spend all their spirit in judging and censuring the actions of others, and all their voice in telling them. They spare no one; they murmur about everyone, superiors, equals and inferiors; and, as the prophet says: *They have set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue hath passed through the earth.*[3] They murmur about prelates, priests, princes, governors, masters and mistresses, menservants and maidservants, single men and single women, married men and married women, widowers and widows. All there is from heaven to earth is the target of their arrows; their viperish tongue spares nothing. Oh, what a great punishment awaits murmurers! Ordinarily God does not wait to punish them in hell after death, for He already begins to punish them in this world by permitting them to fall into the same faults as their neighbours, and even worse ones. In proof of this important truth We could bring many examples related in the sacred histories and taught us by daily experience; but so as not to weary you We shall be content with the example of Absalom. This young man murmured about the frailty of Amnon and Thamar, but afterwards he himself fell into obscenities graver and fouler than the one he had murmured about (2 Kings 16:22). Oh, how many experience the same as Absalom! They murmur, criticize the faults of others, and afterwards, by God's permission, come to fall into like faults and even worse. Mary, the sister of Moses, murmured against her brother, and God in punishment sent her the disease of leprosy, with which she was wholly covered, and in a few moments this leprosy ate half the flesh of her body; and she did not recover until Moses prayed for her (Num. 12). But the most horrifying example of murmurers is the one we read in the book of Numbers, chapter 16, of Dathan, Abiron and Core and their followers, who murmured against Moses and Aaron. In punishment God sent an earthquake, a shock so violent that *the ground broke asunder under their feet, and opening her mouth, devoured them with their tents and all their substance, and they went down alive into hell, the earth closing upon them… But all Israel that was standing round about, fled at the cry of them that were perishing, saying: Lest perhaps the earth swallow us up also… The following day all the multitude of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron… And the Lord said to Moses: Get you out from the midst of this multitude, this moment will I destroy them… And there were slain fourteen thousand and seven hundred men, besides them that had perished in the sedition of Core,* who were two hundred and fifty. You see, then, what great punishment murmurers have in this world; and afterwards they will have that of hell, which will last for all eternity. Flee murmuring.

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[1] Prov. 25:18 and elsewhere.

[2] Ecclus. 19:11.

[3] Ps. 72:9.

Point VI. Flee Impurity

Another of the vices born of idleness is impurity. That is why, dearest children, you will find in the sacred History that while Samson was occupied in the war against the Philistines he kept himself chaste; but as soon as he gave himself to idleness he fell miserably into impurity with Dalila, and she delivered him to the Philistines, his enemies, who put out his eyes and set him to turn a mill as if he were a beast.[1] David, while he was occupied in warfare, did not feel the assaults of lust; but when idle he fell into the most scandalous adultery.[2] Solomon, occupied in building the temple, did not know what impurity was, though by his great learning he knew all things; but when he gave himself to idleness he learned by his own experience what lust is, and became the victim of a passion as tyrannical as it is shameful, which robbed him of the piety and the good qualities that had adorned him until then.[3] Hence St. Augustine concludes: "My brethren, I know that you are not as strong as Samson, nor as holy as David, nor as wise as Solomon. If they sinned when they gave themselves to idleness, what will happen to you? Watch, then, pray, and never be idle."[4]

You have just heard, dearest children, the fatal results of impurity in Samson, who lost his sight and was reduced to the state and work of a beast. One may say that impurity is producing the same effects in its followers: they lose their sight; or rather, they have eyes but do not see the gravity of this sin, and they dare to say that concubinage and the other sins of impurity are a light or slight matter. Oh, what a great error! Do not believe them, for they do not tell the truth. It is an error condemned by Pope Clement V at the Council of Vienne. We tell you that concubinage and every sin of impurity is a grave sin, a mortal sin, and admits no lightness of matter, as the theologians teach. And if you ever hear anyone say that such sins are not grave, think that you are hearing a gentile, a pagan, an idolater who, deprived of faith and with his reason clouded because he is given over to the madness of his brutish passions, as St. Paul says, holds to be a slight defect what God condemns as a grave thing. And though he may say he is not a gentile, pagan or idolater but a Christian, you must know that he is one of those Christians who do injury to Christ: *Qui male vivunt, et christiani vocantur, injuriam Christo faciunt, de qualibus dictum est quod per eos nomen Domini blasphematur* \[Those who live wickedly and are called Christians do injury to Christ; of such it is said that through them the name of the Lord is blasphemed\] (St. Augustine, Tractate 50 on John). And precisely because he calls himself and is held to be a Christian, being baptized, think, says Segneri, that you are hearing a heretic who boldly opposes the divine Scriptures, which so many times condemn the unchaste and shut them out of the kingdom of heaven. There are many passages of Scripture We could cite to prove this most important truth, but We shall cite only a few, so as not to weary you, and so that they may serve as a shield to defend you from the darts that the devil and his followers, the vicious, shoot at your weak flesh.

In the first place We tell you that it is God Himself who forbids this wickedness in the sixth commandment of His law. And in Deuteronomy 23:17 God Himself says: *Non erit meretrix de filiabus Israel, nec scortator de filiis Israel* \[There shall be no whore among the daughters of Israel, nor whoremonger among the sons of Israel\]. On these words St. Augustine says: See how it is plainly forbidden to women and to men *fornicari*, to do shameful things. The celebrated a Lapide, in his commentary on the same words, says that the law warns, first, sons and daughters to keep themselves from this wickedness; secondly, fathers and mothers not to permit this iniquity in their sons and daughters; and thirdly, the authorities not to tolerate it: *tertio magistratum ut non toleret in politia sua publicam scortationem* \[thirdly, the magistrate, that he not tolerate public whoredom in his state\].[5] And you know from the Gospel itself that when Jesus Christ speaks of the things that come out of the depraved heart and defile a man, He says they are evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies (Matt. 15:19).

The Apostles, the disciples of Jesus Christ, taught the same; so that when they gathered for the first time in council to see how the newly converted to the Religion were to conduct themselves, they resolved that they should abstain from impurity: *ut abstineant se a fornicatione* \[that they refrain themselves from fornication\] (Acts 15:20). By this resolution and authority you will know that Our doctrine is the same that the holy Apostles taught. And not only when gathered in council, but separately too, they all rebuked impurity and

urged chastity, cleansing nature of this filth with which blind idolatry had stained it with its obscenities, going so far as to deify them under the names of Venus, Bacchus and other idols.

But the one among the Apostles who distinguished himself in a particular way against the abominable vice of impurity was St. Paul. In all his sermons he always urged chastity and rebuked its opposite vice, and everywhere he reaped the most abundant fruits of his apostolic zeal; for in Greece he saw with his own eyes the multitude of chaste Theclas who followed his heavenly doctrine, and in Rome, to the wonder of the whole world, two concubines of the emperor Nero himself were converted into penitent Magdalens. And he made war not only directly on this detestable vice of impurity, but also pursued its causes, which are dances, theatres, love affairs, indecent dress, drunkenness, gambling and others of the kind. Against these he preached and declaimed continually until his death.

And he not only preached against this vice, but also wrote. Hardly one of his letters can be read in which this wickedness is not rebuked. Writing to the Thessalonians, he tells them: *This is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from fornication: ut abstineatis vos a fornicatione* (1 Thess. 4:3). And to the Hebrews he writes that a great judgment, which God Himself will make, awaits the unchaste, single men and women, and married men and women who break the fidelity of marriage: *fornicatores autem et adulteros judicabit Deus* \[for fornicators and adulterers God will judge\] (Heb. 13:4). And the Corinthians, the Ephesians and the Galatians he threatens with these decisive words: *Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, who do shameful things with themselves, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor others like them, shall possess the kingdom of God* (1 Cor. 6:9–10; Eph. 5:5; Gal. 5:20–21). And lastly he never ceased to repeat this saying: *Flee fornication: fugite fornicationem.*[6]

From what has been said so far you will know that impurity is not a light thing but a very grave wickedness, and that it is of faith that it is mortal sin, since it shuts one out of the kingdom of God, out of heaven, from which only mortal sin can deprive us. Ah, if you thought what a mortal sin is, you would not say that concubinage and impurity are a slight evil! St. Thomas says *that sin has a certain infinity from the infinity of the divine Majesty offended*; and that Majesty is offended by whoever breaks any of His holy commandments, as the unchaste man does, for he breaks the sixth commandment of His holy Law. Therefore the sin of impurity, and We say the same of any other mortal sin, being an injury to an infinite God, contains a certain infinity of malice and an abyss of such deformity that no mind can sufficiently grasp it. And will anyone say that this bottomless abyss of malice is a small evil, a light thing? To understand it better, imagine that, to pay the debt of a single one of the impure acts you have committed in the course of your life, all the Angels together present themselves before the tribunal of divine justice and lay at the foot of His throne, as in a bank, all their burning love; the patriarchs all their faith; the Prophets all their fortitude; the apostles all their journeys; the martyrs all their blood; the virgins their purity; the bishops their vigilance; the confessors their austere penances. And more: imagine that the Virgin Mary herself, Mother of God, hands over all her virtues and merits too, which are very great. All this great wealth of merits gathered into one, all of it, I say, would not suffice to pay worthily for a single sin of impurity, a single consented thought; nor would it suffice to pay for it if you multiplied all this great treasure more times than there are stars in heaven, grains of sand and drops of water in the sea. For however much it is multiplied, it always remains in the class of the finite and limited, while the impurity by which God is offended is always infinite by reason of the infinite object, which is God offended. So there is no other way of giving satisfaction to God offended by a mortal sin than by the merits of Jesus Christ, which by reason of the hypostatic union are of infinite value. And shall so excessive a debt weigh so little in the balance of men, when we see it weighs so much in the balance of God? Oh, human balance, deceitful indeed, as God Himself says: *Mendaces filii hominum in stateris* \[The sons of men are liars in the balances\].[7] Let men say what they will; what is certain is that God, who is to judge us all, says that impurity is a great sin, and, by the mouth of holy Job, that it is the greatest iniquity.[8]

Do not think, dearest children, that this kind of talk has only now arisen. It is old, very old, so that the Apostle St. Paul was often obliged to contradict those who had it on their lips at all hours. That is why, writing to the Ephesians, he tells them: See that you are not deceived by vain and false words saying that the sins of sensuality are a light evil; for, so that you may understand how grave and abominable they are, I tell you that it is chiefly for them that God has poured out His wrath upon the unbelieving: *Propter haec enim venit ira Dei in filios diffidentiae* \[For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief\] (Eph. 5:6). And St. Thomas reasons on this: *Note that the Apostle taught the avoidance of deception only with regard to carnal vices; for from the beginning, so that men might enjoy concupiscence freely, they thought to find reasons to persuade that fornication and other shameful things of this kind were not sin.* And here we see literally fulfilled what God says through one of His prophets, that sinners do not see the truth but falsehood: *Vident mendacium* \[they see a lie\].[9] And the worst of it is that they strive continually to make it believed as truth. God Himself complains most feelingly through another of His prophets that they are deceiving and seducing His people with falsehood: *seduxerunt populum meum in mendacio suo* \[they have caused my people to err by their lying\].[10] Flee, then, dearest children, from impurity; flee from those who would deceive you with seductive words; think that you are hearing a seducer, an emissary of Satan, a devil in the flesh.

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[1] Cf. Judg. 16.

[2] Cf. 2 Kings 11.

[3] Cf. 3 Kings 11.

[4] Lohner, *Bibliotheca manualis concionatoria*, “Otium”, IV, 9.

[5] Cornelius a Lapide, commentary on Deut. 23:17 (Antwerp, 1671).

[6] 1 Cor. 6:18.

[7] Ps. 61:10.

[8] Job 31:11–12.

[9] Jer. 23:32 (cf. Ezech. 13).

[10] Jer. 23:32.

Point VII. The Gravity of the Sin of Impurity

Dearest children: so that you may have more horror of this abominable sin of unchastity and all keep yourselves chaste, each in his state, and be like the angels of God, as St. Ambrose says (for he says that he who keeps himself chaste is like an angel, but the impure man is a devil), We have thought it well to speak to you in this point of the gravity of this sin. The angelic doctor St. Thomas[1] proves with the most convincing arguments that unchastity is by its nature, after homicide, the gravest of all the crimes committed against one’s neighbour: graver than detraction, graver than theft. For unchastity is opposed to the good of life, while detraction and theft are opposed to the good of reputation and of property, both lesser goods than life. And so it yields in malice only to homicide; for homicide is opposed to the good of the life of one already born, taking his being from him, and unchastity to the good of the life of one to be born, giving him a disordered being contrary to what nature intends, or hindering the being it would give if generation were not frustrated. The very order of the commandments of God’s law makes known the gravity of this wickedness: for as soon as the fifth has forbidden killing, the sixth forbids impurity.

But to know well the gravity of this sin it is not enough to compare it with theft or detraction; one must consider it in itself and in its effects. In itself it is the most degrading to man, who is a rational animal; and in this vice he acts like a brute and even worse than a brute, for the brute does not depart from the instinct and course its nature has marked out for it, but the lustful man tramples on everything. That is why the same holy doctor says that the lustful man *in nothing proceeds according to the judgment of reason.* Eusebius states that lust makes a man worse than a beast, *luxuria hominem pejorem bestia facit*; and God Himself, speaking of

the unchaste through the prophet Ezechiel, says that they are asses. Hence St. Thomas concludes that by no other sin does man depart so far from God as by lust.[2]

Some theologians say that impurity is the greatest of all sins, not in itself, but because it removes man further from God, and also by its effects. In the sacred book of Proverbs we read that as soon as a person falls into impurity he finds himself plunged into all evils;[3] and for this reason some apply to the unchaste person the description St. John gives of that great and monstrous beast in the sacred book of the Apocalypse, chapter 13, for he says: *I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns… and all that dwell upon the earth adored it, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb.* The seven heads signify that the unchaste person has the seven capital sins. For, as experience teaches, he is proud and arrogant; he is covetous; he is lust itself; he is wrathful and impatient; he is gluttonous and greedy, for gluttony is the fuel of lust; he is envious and quarrels with his rivals; he is slothful, for there is no vice that brings so much slackness, listlessness and neglect as lust. The ten horns of the same beast show that the lustful person breaks all ten commandments, and daily experience teaches it. The unchaste person does not love God above all things, but rather puts Him after a pleasure of his body, as God complains through the prophet Ezechiel: *projecisti me post corpus tuum* \[thou hast cast me off behind thy back\]. He breaks the second commandment too, for he swears falsely, or without intending to keep what he swears, so as to gain his depraved ends; and he also swears to hide his wickedness, denying it on oath. Likewise he breaks the third commandment, for he does not keep holy the feast day, does not hear Mass or perform other devotions, because impurity sets his teeth on edge at the exercises of religion, and he is never disposed to pray or do other practices of Religion; and so he lets many days pass without attending Mass. And if he goes sometimes, it is with a dissipated and distracted spirit, perhaps busy looking about before entering and after leaving the church; and perhaps inside the church itself he will be watching the objects of his passion, for St. Peter says that their eyes are full of adultery;[4] or by his way of looking he shows the passion that rules him. Nor is the fourth commandment kept by the lustful; for if he is a son of the family he neither obeys nor respects his parents; if he is a father, neither does he take care of his family; and if he is married he has no love, peace or perhaps even union with his spouse. The fifth too is broken, for from lust come hatreds, quarrels, duels and other ill will. That the sixth is broken goes without saying. He also fails in the seventh, for he steals to have the means to satisfy his passion of lust; and as he loses the fear of God he readily fails in the rest. The eighth commandment is broken by the lustful too, for he lies to obtain his desires and to hide his wickedness; he likewise murmurs about others' faults, and by his wickedness is the cause of others murmuring about him. The ninth commandment is grievously offended by the lustful, for his appetites and desires spare no one, making no distinction between single and married. Even the tenth commandment suffers from the lustful, for he is covetous too, so as to obtain the objects of his desire.

You see, then, dearest children, how well the heads and horns of the monstrous beast St. John tells us of fit and suit the lustful person. You see how he who stumbles into this vice is plunged into all evils, and that this is why the demon of lust is called Asmodeus, which means a multitude of sins, because he makes the one he causes to fall into this abominable vice commit them. But the most grievous and painful thing is that it not only makes the one who falls sin, but makes him serve as an instrument to make others fall and sin, which is to do the work of Satan. That is why St. Ambrose calls the lustful man a devil; or, better said, he is the devil's slave.

And indeed this vice of lust has a malice so peculiar that it belongs to none of the other vices: it infects other people in order to sate itself. The proud man, for example, cares little if all other men are humbled to the dust, so long as he can raise himself up and set himself among the stars. The covetous man cares little if others have not a penny, so long as he can possess all treasures and riches. The wrathful man is pleased to see others cowed when he flies into a rage. The glutton does not trouble himself about the Lazaruses who die of want, so long as he eats and drinks daintily. The envious man rejoices to see his neighbours dragging the

fetter, so long as he is decorated with every honour. And the slothful man does not care if others burst with weariness, so long as he can take his ease. But the lustful man takes an entirely opposite course: his pleasure is to infect others and make them victims, like himself, of the same passion; and hence all his thoughts, words and deeds are always giving scandal to others. This is one of the reasons why God punishes this sin more than the others: for the greater scandal it gives, directly and indirectly. We say directly, because to sate his disordered appetites he solicits others and makes them fall into sin; indirectly, because others, seeing his evil life, readily come to imitate him.

Another of the reasons why God punishes this sin more than the others is that it clouds the understanding, hardens the will, brutalizes a person's habits and makes him proud and obstinate. Hence what is something new for wood is already very old in the unchaste person. For it is a recent discovery that there is a paint, composed chiefly of two ingredients, which protects wood, by nature combustible, from fire. In the same way the person whom the devil has painted with the paint made of lust and pride becomes so fireproof that neither the fire of all the benefits of creation, preservation and redemption, nor the fire Jesus Christ brought from heaven to earth and wills only that it be kindled,[5] nor all the fire the Holy Ghost poured out upon the Apostles in the upper room and is pouring out upon the ministers of the sanctuary, can kindle him with the fire of divine love. And so, after so much fire of charity has been brought near him, the unchaste person remains as indifferent and cool as if nothing had been applied to him. That is why the indifferent, the impious and heretics all adore the beast of impurity and go about with the mark or sign of the beast.[6]

And what a great punishment is prepared for them! Not only in this world, with the loss of honour, property, health and life with which God often punishes them already, as He did with the men of the flood, the Sodomites, the Israelites, the Sichemites and others; but chiefly in the next, as St. Peter and St. Jude Thaddeus say. But St. John affirms it in a particular way in his Apocalypse, 14:9–11, relating what he saw, namely an angel who said with a loud voice: *If any man shall adore the beast and his image, and receive his character in his forehead, or in his hand; he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled with pure wine in the cup of his wrath, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels, and in the sight of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever: neither have they rest day nor night, who have adored the beast, and his image, and whoever receiveth the character of his name.* So the evangelist speaks, up to verse 11 inclusive, so that the unchaste may know what terrible and eternal punishments and torments are prepared for them if they do not repent and amend; and let them understand that if lust joined with pride repels the fire of the love of God, it does not repel the fire of hell, being of one nature with it, or rather the very fire of hell, as St. Jerome says in these words: *Oh, what an infernal fire is lust! Its fuel is gluttony, its flame is pride, its sparks are impure words, its smoke is infamy, and its end is damnation.*[7] Therefore, desiring your salvation and happiness, We cannot but exhort you to keep away from impurity and unchastity, and to be chaste, each in his state. This was the language of the Apostles; this they preached in their sermons, this they wrote in their letters. This was the Holofernes whose head they strove to cut off, and so they conquered the Assyrians of the other vices; once this Goliath was thrown to the ground, all the Philistines of the other sins were put to flight. So it was that, once the idolatry of Venus and Bacchus was destroyed, all the temples of the other idols came down: purity came forth, virginity flourished, and all the virtues bore their proper fruit. And We do not hesitate to affirm that if this sin could be removed from this country, it would be a garden of virtues. For in the course of the holy visitation and mission We have just made, We have taken the pulse of your character, We have dissected your customs and analysed your spirit; and with great satisfaction We have found faith, We have found religion, We have discovered good hearts, and We have seen hospitality and compassion towards one's neighbour. Only one thing has afflicted Our heart: to see that a great many lived given over to this abominable vice. But We counted on your docility, and We have not been deceived; for as soon as they recognized their error, those who could have sought to marry, and those who could not have separated from their concubinage and unlawful relations. What matters now is to persevere in the virtue begun, and to

exhort, correct and warn if anyone should grow careless. So you will all be happy and virtuous, and the Lord will give you your reward in this world and the next, which is what We wish for all of you.

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[1] St. Thomas, *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 154, a. 3.

[2] *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 153, a. 4.

[3] Prov. 2:18; cf. 5:14.

[4] 2 Pet. 2:14.

[5] Luke 12:49.

[6] Apoc. 13:16.

[7] Lohner, *Bibliotheca manualis concionatoria*, "Luxuria", III, 15.

Point VIII. Flee Gambling

Dearest children: the third evil that follows from idleness is gambling. But We must explain what kind of game We are speaking of, for there are two kinds of games, one lawful and the other unlawful. A lawful game is one which, besides not being forbidden by the laws, does not lead the player to excess either in the money he stakes or in the time he spends playing, when he plays not out of greed or some other passion, but for the relief and recreation of a mind weighed down by business. A game is called, and is, unlawful when it is forbidden by the laws, or when any of the conditions mentioned is lacking, even though it is otherwise permitted.

And so that you may understand the wickedness the gambler commits, you must know that he despises and breaks both divine and human laws. He fails against the tenth commandment of God's law, which forbids coveting other people's goods, because he desires and seeks other people's goods by an unlawful means, which is gambling; for it is well known that no one plays to lose, but to win, and so to get possession of his neighbours' goods. He likewise breaks the human laws that forbid gambling. Many laws have been published on this matter, and a most particular one is the Royal Pragmatic of 6 October 1771.

And unlawful games are forbidden not only by the laws of Castile, but also by the Laws of the Indies. In law 1, title 2, book 7, we read: "We order and command Our courts and justices of the Indies that with great care they prohibit and forbid, imposing heavy penalties, the great and excessive gaming there is in those provinces; and that no one play with dice, even at tables, nor have them in his possession; and likewise that no one play at cards or any other game for more than ten *pesos* of gold in one natural day of twenty-four hours, so that the greatest excess does not pass this amount, and this having regard to the quality and estate of the players; and in other respects let the laws of these kingdoms of Castile be kept. And if, in contravention of the aforesaid, they should play a greater sum in the said time, let them proceed against their persons and goods, executing the penalties they have incurred…"

And in the Edict of Government and Police of this island of Cuba, article 45, we read: "All games of stakes and chance are forbidden; those of thirty-one and *chirimbolos* on billiard tables, card lotteries in cafés and public houses, and the game of *caracoles*; under the penalties laid down in the laws for those of the first class."

But even if there were no laws forbidding gambling, it would be enough to consider the harm it brings in order to abhor it and flee it; for the gambler harms himself, his household and strangers. *He harms himself* by the losses he suffers at play. How many there are who have lost at gaming their capital, their properties and all they had, and from rich have become very poor! And let no one tell Us that some have won at gaming; for We would answer that even when they win, they lose, because what is won at gaming does not enrich, but is an occasion of poverty. You will understand it very well by this comparison. Naturalists say that whenever bees find honey made without labour they profit little by it, because they grow lazy; and no longer attending to their gathering as before, they take harm from the very gain, and what seemed good fortune and luck turns

into their misfortune. The same happens to the gambler: if he sometimes wins, that very gain becomes the cause of his greater misfortune, because he grows fonder of gaming and is bred an idler, vicious in every wickedness, and so incurs his own damnation. For even if he had some gain at play, he would lose much in losing time, grace and his own soul through the sins that go with gaming, which are not few.

The gambler harms his household. If he is a son of the family, he does not obey his parents and keeps them in great affliction; perhaps he robs them in order to gamble; he grows up an idler without applying himself to any trade, craft or profession, and becomes harmful to the public good. But the consequences are worse if the gambler is married and the father of a family. Who can count the sorrows he causes his wife, the scandal he gives his children and the damage he does to all?

The gambler harms not only himself and his household, but others too. To see how pernicious gamblers are, one need only listen to the words of the most learned Dou, chancellor of Cervera, when he treats of unlawful games: “For the State,” he says, “they are vices that destroy it silently and slowly, for they ruin families, drive men headlong into swindles and frauds, upset the union of husbands and wives, brothers, children and relations, and draw men away from the occupation every citizen ought to be busy at, to the notable harm of the economy and of industry.” Aristotle held the same opinion of gamblers, so that he puts them in the same class as thieves and highway robbers and makes one gang of them all, counting them vile. They are false and lying, and they swear a thousand times to be believed in their tricks; and this language and conduct is seen not only among dissolute people without education, but also among those of the highest rank: it is enough to be fond of gaming to fall into this wickedness. History says of the emperor Caligula that he was fond of gaming, and to win he relied more on tricks, lies and false oaths than on honest play.

The gambler is the one who most wounds charity, which consists in loving God and one’s neighbour. For if he wins, he strips his neighbour of his money, ruins his estate, brings want and disunion into his family, and takes pleasure in the gain that causes so many misfortunes; and perhaps to a friend of his, or one who wears the cloak of a friend, he does greater harm than the worst enemy. But his wickedness rises higher still if he loses at play. Then he grows angry, exasperated and proud, and bursts out in the most insolent words against his opponent and against himself, calling down a thousand curses upon himself; and he even turns against God Himself, hurling curses, blasphemies and heresies against God, Mary most holy and the saints. And not seldom he passes from words to deeds: duels, blows, wounds and killings. This gave rise to law 2 of the Indies, title 2, book 7, as is stated in that law itself. You see, then, dearest children, how pernicious and harmful gambling is. Flee from it, then, and from the other vices that follow from idleness.

There is one vice, dearest children, that ordinarily goes with gambling and follows it, namely drunkenness; and so We shall say a word or two about it in passing. There is no doubt that the very money of gaming provides the brandy, beer, wine and other liquors, and the gambler’s occupation seems to make drinking necessary. But the worst of it is that this vice sticks so fast to a man that even if in time he amends and gives up gambling, he will not give up or amend his drunkenness. This vice of drunkenness is one of the most infamous and fatal. It stupefies a man, makes him like a brute, and sometimes makes him even more stupid and savage. The brute knows when it has drunk enough, but the drinker cannot tell. The brute does not depart from its natural instinct; but the drunken man is so brutalized that he becomes so irrational and savage that there is no wickedness that may not be suspected of him and no crime that may not be feared from him. Soon he runs riot in indecencies and quarrels, and with words and actions provokes acquaintances and strangers alike; and from this follow wounds and perhaps killings, disturbing the public peace and obliging the authorities to punish the guilty with jail, penal settlements and other penalties, to the no small distress and sorrow of the neighbourhood.

But the misfortunes of drunkenness do not stop here; they reach much further. For the drunken man becomes so brutal and savage that no brute beast is seen to do what is seen of a man taken with drink. No wild beast is seen to maltreat its innocent mate or maim its guileless cubs; but the drunken man is so brutal, monstrous and

sacrilegious that he does not hesitate to profane the domestic sanctuary consecrated by holy matrimony. He dares to insult with words, and perhaps will even have the boldness to lay hands on the faithful companion and chaste wife Jesus Christ has given him, tormenting and punishing her as if she were guilty, when he alone is the criminal. And what is most pitiful is to see that his own innocent children must be victims of his savagery; and from this follow separations, scandals and every wickedness. We could tell you many examples, but We shall be content with the following. Making the holy pastoral visitation in one of the towns of Our diocese, We visited, as We had done in all the other towns, the jail and the hospital; and We were horrified to find the husband in jail and the wife in the hospital. This unhappy woman had her head wounded, her back injured, an arm broken and the fingers of one hand cut off; her husband had left her so with blows of a machete in a fit of drunkenness. Being poor, she was taken to the hospital, and the husband, being a criminal, to jail. And We know it for certain, because We visited and spoke with both.

But the worst thing about this vice is that it is almost incorrigible, both because of the craving, and because when the drunkard comes back to his senses he neither remembers nor knows what he said and did when he was out of them. See, then, dearly beloved brethren, whether We have powerful reasons to exhort you with all earnestness to keep away from drunkenness. Flee all sin, flee what is evil, *diverte a malo* \[turn away from evil\]; so you will be disposed for what is good, which is what We shall treat of in the following points, God willing.

Point IX. Do Good

Dearest children: the whole sphere of goodness, holiness and perfection rests and turns on these two axes, namely, to abstain from evil and to practise good, as God says by the prophet David: *diverte a malo, et fac bonum* \[turn away from evil and do good\].[1] And from this you will see clearly at once the error into which some Christians fall who, through ignorance or the deceit of the common enemy, live very satisfied, saying: *I don't rob or kill anyone; I don't do or wish anyone harm.* And with this negative goodness they think themselves as safe as if they already had heaven in their hand. But it falls to Us to undeceive them and tell them plainly that it is good that they do and wish no one harm; but this is not enough, as they can easily gather from the words of God Himself, who, besides saying *diverte a malo*, at once adds *et fac bonum*, do what is good. By not doing evil one fulfils only one of the two parts the divine precept embraces. And just as everyone knows that no one walks on one foot, nor does a bird fly with one wing, so neither will he walk the road to heaven, nor fly to it, who, content with doing no evil, takes no care to do good or to act well; for it would be with him as if he lacked a foot or a wing.

Jesus Christ Himself, who tells us that He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it,[2] to keep it and perfect it by His example and teaching, we see in fact not destroying this law of doing good, but perfecting it by His example. He prays: *et erat pernoctans in oratione* \[and he passed the whole night in the prayer of God\].[3] He does good to all: *qui pertransiit benefaciendo* \[who went about doing good\].[4] He preaches, exhorts and counsels; He consoles and forgives; He helps and feeds the hungry crowds; He gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, and even raises the dead. And by these good works, as by a sign, He wishes to be known, as one of His prophets tells us.[5] He Himself in His holy Gospel declares that when He comes to judge us He will say to those who have exercised themselves in good works: *Venite, benedicti*:[6] Come, ye blessed of My heavenly Father, possess the kingdom of heaven prepared for you. And, on the contrary, to those who have done no good works He will say: *Discedite a me, maledicti*:[7] Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his followers. And indeed, say the commentators, Christians who do no good works, even though they have faith, are followers of the devils, who, according to St. James, also believe, but do not do good.[8] And according to the same saint, faith without works is a faith dead in itself. Very apt is the comparison St. John Chrysostom makes on this. The saint says that the Christian is like a lamp whose wick is faith, while good works, or charity, are the oil. Just

as the lamp without oil, though it has a wick, does not burn, so faith without good works does not give light; it is dead, like a lamp gone out. And to show with what strictness Jesus Christ requires the oil of good works, He sets before us the parable of the ten virgins, five of them wise, that is, with oil in their lamps, and the others foolish, without oil; and so, though virgins, they are rejected.[9] The same will happen to many who bear the name of Christians, as those bore the name of virgins. Those had a lamp, and these have a vocation; those had a wick in the lamp, and these have faith; those had no oil, and so their lamps had gone out, and they were rejected, and it was said to them: *nescio vos* \[I know you not\].[10] The same sentence awaits those who have no good works. When the Lord comes at the hour of death, He will say to them: *nescio vos*, I know you not.

This most important truth can be confirmed by other examples and parables of the same Gospel. For example, the rich glutton was buried in hell, tormented in those devouring flames and wrapped in those everlasting fires, not for robberies or murders, but for not having helped poor Lazarus with alms.[11] The wicked servant is cast into the exterior darkness, that is, the fire of hell, not for having stolen his master's talent, but for not having gained with it.[12] And lastly, if Jesus Christ sentenced the fig tree to be cut down and thrown into the fire, it was not because it bore bad fruit, but because it bore no fruit at all.[13]

Even natural reason itself, much beloved children, shows us with full evidence that God cannot be satisfied with the conduct and negative goodness of such Christians. For how is it possible for a master to pay his wage to the day labourer or workman who, though he has not cheated him of his goods, nor murdered or ill-treated his children, has nevertheless refused to apply himself to any work of the house or estate? In the same way we must consider that God Our Lord will not give the wage of glory to one who does no good works. Tell Me, dearest children, can anyone with a paralysed foot or hand or tongue, unable to use any of these members, be content and satisfied, even though he feels no pain in them? Neither will Jesus Christ, who is head of the congregation of all the faithful, be content or satisfied with those Christians who, though they do no harm to anyone, are useless members, as though struck with paralysis, because they do no good at all. Besides, God wishes to give heaven as wages, as prize and reward. How will a man take the wages if he has not worked? How will he take the prize if he has not merited it? How the reward, if he has always sat with folded hands? That is why St. Paul undeceives them and tells them that none shall be crowned except he that has striven lawfully.[14]

Nor need we go far to find proofs of this most important truth: we have them, very evident, within ourselves. For the body to live, for example, it is not enough to avoid evils, keep away from dangers and precipices, and abstain from poisons and harmful substances; it is also indispensable to eat, drink and so on, on pain of certain death. The same happens to our soul. For it to live the life of grace in this world and afterwards that of glory, it is not enough to abstain from doing evil; it is indispensable to do good, to do works worthy of life, on pain of dying in sin, being buried in the abysses of hell, gnawed by the worm that never dies, as Jesus Christ says, and burned in that fire which is never quenched.[15]

You see, then, dearest children, the necessity of doing good works; and therefore We say to you with the Apostle that, while the Lord gives us time, let us work good;[16] and with St. Peter: My brethren, labour the more and do all you can that by good works you may make sure your calling and election; for doing this you shall not sin at any time.[17] This is the sure way to attain salvation. And to conclude this point We shall tell you what St. Bernard says on the words of St. John (First Epistle, chapter 5). This holy Apostle says that there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, and they give testimony to, or vouch for, the divinity of Christ; and on earth there are also three that give testimony and prove the humanity of Christ, which are the spirit, the water and the blood: the spirit He gave up in dying, and the water and blood that came from His side.

The spirit, the water and the blood are also the three things that give testimony and prove whether a Christian is a true one, or a pretended one, a Christian only in name. For if he is a true Christian he has these three

signs, which are, as it were, signs of predestination, says St. Bernard: he has the water of tears, or of penance, with which he weeps for his sins; he has the blood of chastity and the spirit of doing good. That is, the good Christian is penitent, is chaste and exercises himself in good works; and this is what We are urging upon all, so that you may all be happy in this world and the next. This We wish you by the bowels of mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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[1] Ps. 33:15.

[2] Matt. 5:17.

[3] Luke 6:12.

[4] Acts 10:38.

[5] Cf. Isa. 61:1; Matt. 11:5.

[6] Matt. 25:34.

[7] Matt. 25:41.

[8] James 2:19.

[9] Cf. Matt. 25:1–13.

[10] Matt. 25:12.

[11] Luke 16:19–31.

[12] Matt. 25:24–30.

[13] Mark 11:12–14, 20–21.

[14] 2 Tim. 2:5.

[15] Mark 9:47.

[16] Gal. 6:10.

[17] 2 Pet. 1:10.

Point X. Religion

We have already spoken, dearest children, of the indispensable necessity we are under of doing good, just as we are of keeping away from evil. And since it is chiefly on these two points that We have laid the foundation of this Our Pastoral Letter, We shall now tell you what goods you are to practise, as We have told you the evils you were to avoid. We have said that the evils you must keep away from are chiefly four, namely idleness, murmuring, impurity and gambling; and the goods We are going to urge will also be four: Religion, authority, property and family. These are the four great foundations of the organization and order of society. The first of them is Religion, which is, as it were, the queen of all the moral virtues; that is why it is given place in the first precept of the decalogue, after the theological virtues, as St. Thomas says when he explains those words of Jesus Christ that St. Luke records in chapter 10, verse 27: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself.* On this the said doctor says that in the words *with all thy mind* faith is included; in *with thy whole soul*, *hope*; in *with thy whole heart*, *charity*; and lastly, in the phrase *with all thy strength*, the interior and exterior acts of Religion.

Religion is the virtue which, apart from the theological virtues, comes nearest to God, and it belongs to its essence to render Him due worship and honour. And Religion, or the giving of worship to God, is so proper to man that it is enough to be a man, a rational and social animal, to know that God exists, Creator and Preserver of the universe, and at once to feel bound to give Him worship and veneration. The chief motives that move man’s heart to give worship to God, or to practise Religion, are the majesty and the goodness of God; and this is most natural to man, as it is natural to him to venerate and pay homage to majesty, power and wisdom. If, for example, a great King, very rich, very powerful and very wise, were to appear here, We are sure that all of you would go out to see him, and all of you would look at him with respect and veneration; and this even if he were a foreign King. But your veneration would no doubt rise higher if he

were your own King or Queen. The people would greet him reverently and make other gestures of homage, and the noblest and most distinguished gentlemen would be the first to pay him honour. No one would think himself excused from going out to meet him; and if anyone failed to do so, he would be branded by all as a boor, without breeding, education or manners.

Let us then make the proper application. God is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; He alone is master of power and wisdom; all treasures are His; His is heaven and the whole round of the earth: *Domini est terra, et plenitudo ejus* \[The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof\].[1] Other Kings are like an atom in His presence, and whatever power, greatness and majesty they have, they have all received from God: *Per me Reges regnant* \[By me kings reign\] (Prov. 8:15).

Now then, if he is branded a boor who does not pay homage to an earthly majesty, what mark will he incur who does not pay homage to God, or give Him the worship and veneration that are the object of Religion, a God who is majesty and greatness itself, the source and giver of all greatness? Shall we say he is a boor without education? That is little. Shall we say he is worse than a dog? Yes; for that animal knows how to be attentive and obliging to its master who feeds it. And so the man without Religion not only fails in the veneration due to the great majesty of God, but does not even know how to be grateful to His goodness, which has given him the being he has and preserves him at every instant, and without whose goodness and providence he would already have lost all he possessed and has, even his health and life. That is why Aristotle said that a man without Religion does not deserve the name of man but of irrational animal, and that he was the worst among the irrational animals: *pejus omnium animalium* \[worse than all the animals\].

But you must know, dearest children, that man is not only a rational animal, but also a social one; that is, God wills that he live in society, in the company of other men. And so you will see more clearly the necessity of Religion, for it is Religion that dictates the laws or duties man has towards God, towards himself and towards his neighbour. It teaches us how we are to go to God to thank Him for benefits received and obtain new ones. It dictates how we are to behave so as to be happy in this world and the next. And lastly it shows us how we are to treat our neighbours; and that is why Jesus Christ, not without great mystery, after answering the scribe who asked Him which was the first commandment, added: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.[2]

The virtue of Religion is like the sun in the universe and like the soul in the human body. Without the sun, what darkness, what cold!… Without Religion, what darkness of errors, what cold, what lack of charity! The human body without the soul is a fetid, loathsome corpse, all worms and corruption; and the same is true of the social body. With the soul of Religion it is a body alive to virtue and useful for everything; but without Religion it is a dead body, full of the corruption of morals and the worms of vices and sins. So thought even the pagans, guided by natural reason. "It matters very greatly for the tranquillity, security and happiness of a State," said Cicero in the name of all the wise, "that all the citizens be convinced that the world is not the work of chance; that it is governed by a Being infinitely wise, good and powerful; that His providence watches always not only over nations but also over individuals; that we must study His will, observe His laws and walk with respect in His presence; that the present life is only a passing arrangement, and that it must be followed by another that will never end, in which virtue will be rewarded and vice punished. If these principles were well engraved on all hearts, virtue alone would reign; vice, full of shame, would flee from society and try to hide its infamy and ugliness." All the wise show us the necessity of Religion. Historians tell us of the practice of Religion in all countries more or less civilized; and lastly, our inmost sense itself makes plain to us this truth and necessity of Religion. But since through sin ignorance and the disorder of the passions have come in, many have gone astray, either in the manner or in the object of the Religion to which their natural tendency drove them. So it is that some have disfigured Religion: some by mistaking its object, as idolaters do; some its manner, as the superstitious do; and some both, as the other sects do. From this follows the imperative necessity of Revelation, so as not to err in matters of Religion by taking a false object or an improper manner. Yes, much beloved children, Revelation is the only sure means God has given men

so as not to err in a matter so important and necessary as Religion. And that this Revelation exists cannot be doubted. Sacred history itself shows us God conversing with Adam, with Abel and Cain, with Noe and his family, or instructing them as a father instructs his children; the same favour He grants to the patriarch Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. It is He who instructed Moses and Aaron and disposed and commanded all that was to be done in matters of Religion. And St. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says to them in the first chapter: *God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world: who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high.* By these words of the Apostle St. Paul you see not only the existence of Revelation, and how well linked it runs from the beginning of the world to the present, but also the sacrifice Jesus Christ offered to purify us.

The theologians say that sacrifice is the essential act of Religion, the expression of supreme worship and adoration in the strict sense; for sacrifice is an offering made to God of a thing that is destroyed in His honour, to profess His supreme dominion over all that is created. The same God who revealed Religion revealed likewise the sacrifices that were to be offered Him, according to the three ages of the natural law, the written law and the law of grace, in which by God's mercy we now find ourselves. Under the old law, natural and written, animals were sacrificed, and there were many sacrifices, and all of them were a shadow and figure of the sacrifice Jesus Christ made of Himself on the cross, offering Himself as victim until the consummation of the world: *Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem saeculi* \[Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world\];[3] and commanding His Apostles, disciples and successors to continue the same sacrifice: *Hoc facite in meam commemorationem* \[Do this for a commemoration of me\].[4] And this sacrifice is the one we call the Mass, which, while it is one, contains most perfectly all the sacrifices of the old law, as the Church says. This is properly the sacrifice Christians offer and ought to offer, for these four ends: first, in acknowledgment of the supreme dominion God has over all things; second, in satisfaction for faults committed; third, in thanksgiving for benefits received; fourth, to obtain the graces and help we need.

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[1] Ps. 23:1; 1 Cor. 10:26.

[2] Mark 12:31.

[3] Matt. 28:20.

[4] Luke 22:19.

Point XI. The Mass

You know already, dearest children, that all the faithful who have the use of reason are bound to hear Mass, whole and devoutly, on all Sundays, feast days and "days of the cross". So it stands in the canon *Omnes fideles*. And besides this general law, which binds all the faithful of the world, there is a particular one, as stands in the Synodal Constitutions of this Archdiocese, whose book 2, title 1, constitution 4, orders the following: "It is certain that the precept of hearing Mass binds all the Christian faithful, free and slave alike, unless they are sick or have a just impediment; and because We are informed that those who live outside the cities, towns and villages of this Bishopric do not fulfil this precept, We order that all free men, and the masters of slaves, who are not more than a league distant from the towns go to hear Mass on Sundays and feast days at their parishes and churches, and send their slaves; unless, at the distance where they are, there is a hermitage or chapel nearer than the cities, towns or villages, where they can hear it."

And in the same Synodal Constitutions, book 2, title 1, constitution 6, the following is likewise laid down: "Since those who live in the countryside have no Mass for many leagues from the place where they live, they lack the comfort of hearing it and many spiritual goods. And this holy Synod, wishing to provide some

remedy and give them this comfort, and that they may in part fulfil this precept of holy Mother Church of hearing Mass on Sundays and feast days, to which they are bound, and may acknowledge that they are Christians and commend themselves to God, We exhort, require and command all the Christian faithful, free and slave, who live more than one league from the towns, up to two or three, to hear Mass at least every fortnight wherever there is one; those who live further, up to eight or ten leagues, to hear it every month; those at twenty leagues, every two months; those at thirty leagues, every three months; those at forty leagues and beyond, every six months; and those at sixty and seventy leagues, at least once a year. Let them keep and fulfil this, so that God may grant them His favours; for though it costs some labour and hardship, it is very little for the great spiritual and temporal goods that are gained."

And the Edict of Good Government says in its first article: *Sundays and feasts of precept shall be kept as our holy mother Church prescribes; that is, by abstaining from bodily work and doing good works, especially by hearing holy Mass.* We do not hesitate to promise Ourselves from your obedience, faith and Religion that you will take care to hear it; and We are sure that you will not let yourselves be overcome by sloth, idleness and slackness, nor be deceived by the common enemy, who will suggest to you that you ought not to go to hear holy Mass because you have not the proper clothes. Ah, my children, God does not ask clothes or finery of His faithful, but persons adorned with virtues. No doubt He will take special pleasure in seeing you in poor and ragged clothing, because you have no other, so long as you come humble and fervent. And even if this were not so, look at the image of the Lord nailed to the cross, and that alone is enough to stop the mouth of every excuse. Perhaps someone will say that he does not attend Mass, not for want of will and devotion, but because he has no hat, or she no mantilla, to cover the head. Ah, let them look at the Lord, who instead of these things has a crown of thorns! You will say you have no shoes; but look at Jesus, who instead of shoes has a hard nail piercing His feet. You will say you lack clothing; look then at Jesus, naked from head to foot. You will say that if they see you go poorly dressed they will mock you and laugh at you. Do not believe it; do not think so ill of your neighbours. This is suggested by your self-love; for experience teaches that seeing one's neighbour poorly dressed moves people to pity and compassion rather than mockery. But if there should be anyone so ill-bred and so devoid of Christian feeling as to mock you, think that Christ our Lord was mocked too; and that if they laugh now, a day will come when they will weep, as Jesus Christ Himself says.

The rich should attend holy Mass to thank God for the benefits they have received, and so show themselves grateful and not ungrateful, so that He may preserve their riches to them; and the poor should attend too, so that He may give them all they need and that is good for them; and all of us should attend to give worship to God and fulfil this most sacred act of our Religion. Not attending Mass ordinarily comes from one of two things, lust or ignorance, and sometimes from both together. The first is lust, because this brutish sin breeds hatred for all good and spiritual things; and experience teaches that the lustful person, from slackness and sloth, gives up Mass and finds prayers and other devotions repugnant. The other reason some Christians miss Mass on days of precept is ignorance: ignorance of the precept, or of the natural obligation they have to offer sacrifice, or of the goods and benefits that come to them from the Mass. For it seems to Us impossible that any Christian would miss Mass if he knew that there is a precept binding under pain of mortal sin and of being damned for all eternity. It would be impossible for a Christian to fail to attend Mass if he knew the natural obligation he has to offer sacrifice to God. Ever since the world has existed, men have always offered sacrifices to God, taking from their estates, or buying with their money, the cattle, rams and lambs they had to sacrifice as victims. And will Christians, who have nothing to take from their estates and nothing to draw from their pockets in order to attend the sacrifice they are to offer to God, not attend? Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world; and will they pay no heed? God so loved the inhabitants of this world, says St. John, that He gave us His divine Son,[1] who is the eternal Word, who became flesh for us, was born for us and was given to us, Son of the eternal Father and Son of man, so that, He being God and man, we might have a divine victim worthy of God and most effective to obtain all that we men need. That is why

this most holy sacrifice is called the Mass, from the verb *mitto*, to send: because the eternal Father sends us the victim we are to sacrifice and offer to Him; and also because, making the gift our own by receiving it, we send it to the eternal Father to pay the four debts we owe Him, which are of homage, of satisfaction, of thanksgiving and of petition. What would any of you do if, being deeply in debt, you were told that if you came to Mass you would be given so great a sum that you would not only have enough to pay your debts, but there would be some left over to buy more besides? Such is holy Mass. With the merits of Jesus Christ offered in the Mass, which are of infinite value, the debts we owe to God are satisfied, and we obtain from the eternal Father all that we ask Him in the name of His most holy Son, as the Son Himself assures us.

And to preserve and increase your faith, piety and devotion further, We tell you that holy Mass is *the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ*, immolated from the beginning of the world through the promises made by God and through the faith of the just, who applied its fruits to themselves in advance. It was prefigured under the natural law by the offerings of Abel, Abraham and Melchisedech, and under the written law of Moses by the paschal lamb and the other victims offered to God. For all these sacrifices, besides prefiguring the sacrifice Jesus Christ was to make of Himself on the cross, were a kind of earnest or pledge offered to the eternal Father, promising to pay their infinite debts with the infinite merits and treasures of Jesus; so that each of them could say quite properly to the eternal Father the words of the debtor the Gospel tells us of: *Patientiam habe in me, et omnia reddam tibi*:[2] have a little patience and I will pay you everything, as soon as Jesus has consummated His sacrifice on the cross. So all the just of old obtained and enjoyed the graces and mercies of God, like those merchants who take goods on credit and enjoy them on their bare word and promise to pay in due time.

But we who live under the law of grace have in the very sacrifice of the cross, which continues and will continue in holy Mass until the consummation of the world, the same divine treasures to pay in cash. Those of the old law were waiting for it, and we of the law of grace already have it; and both they and we all rest upon Jesus Christ. He is the cornerstone that joins the two walls of the Old and New Testaments. That is why He died on the cross with His arms open, to take with one hand the old law and with the other the law of grace, and join them in Himself.

Those of the old law foretold the sacrifice of the cross by the sacrifice of the lamb; and we in the sacrifice of the Mass recall and continue the same sacrifice of the cross and offer Jesus, who for His meekness and patience is called the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. For the exercise of our faith and other virtues He instituted this sacrifice of the Mass under the appearances of bread and wine. That is, by virtue of the words of Jesus Christ, which the priest pronounces, the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of His body and blood, while the appearances or accidents of bread and wine remain, which are the colour, the smell, the taste. And so we not only exercise faith, but learn other virtues, such as charity; for just as food is united with the one who receives it, so Jesus is united with us by grace, charity and merits.

Jesus instituted this sacrament of love and gives Himself as the victim of this sacrifice under the species of bread and wine, which are man’s food and preserve his life, so that we might understand that He Himself is the author of our life and the one who preserves it. He also teaches us the charity and love we owe one another; for just as bread is made of many grains of wheat, and wine of many little grapes, so, though we are many different individuals, we are to have but one heart or will, one faith and way of thinking: *cor unum et anima una* \[one heart and one soul\].[3] Holy Mass contains many other virtues and mysteries, which We would gladly explain if We did not fear to be too long.

This word Mass also means dismissal, because after the reading of the Gospel the unbelievers, catechumens and penitents were dismissed. To all these the deacon said in a loud voice: *Withdraw; holy things are for the holy.* So that only those who had received and kept the grace of baptism, or had recovered it by penance, were worthy to attend this holy sacrifice of the Mass.

But since the Church our mother considers all of you worthy to attend Mass, take care to hear it on all feast days and days of precept, whole, from beginning to end, with attention, silence and devotion, recollected in your powers and senses, only praying and meditating. For this you may use one of those little books that have the prayers for each step or mystery of the Mass, for example the *Camino recto* or another book of the same kind; and you may also use other books of meditation on the life, passion and death of the Lord. You may likewise use the most holy Rosary, or whatever way most draws your attention and devotion. So you will fulfil this precept by hearing it well, and not merely by being present in the church without praying or meditating, perhaps talking or thinking of things that are not at all good. And We hope from your faith and Religion that you will hear it not only on days of precept, as is your duty, but also on other days out of devotion, especially those of you who live in town, without failing in your particular duties. For with time well distributed there is room for everything and nothing is left undone; it is well known that he who wills can and does more than he who merely can. St. Francis de Sales says, and We know it by long experience, that devotion does not hinder the fulfilment of one's obligations; on the contrary, it helps it very much. Devotion may be compared to the wheels of a cart and the wings of a bird. No doubt, if we weighed on a scale a cart with wheels and a bird with wings, the cart would weigh more with its wheels than without them, and the bird less without its wings than with them. But you know well that this weight is no burden; rather it helps greatly to carry and lighten the load. And in truth a cart with wheels carries more and goes more lightly than without them, and a bird flies faster and further with wings than without them, for without them it could not fly. No doubt duties together with devotions are greater in number; but devotions do not hinder the fulfilment of duties; rather they help it, when they are ruled and governed by prudence and discretion, as We suppose. One who is truly devout does all the things of his duty faithfully, punctually and exactly, as much when his superiors are absent as when they are present, because he always walks in the presence of God. And indeed he who walks continually in the divine presence, as the truly devout must strive to do, does all things with all the perfection he ought. Here is the reason why St. Francis de Sales used to say that masters lost nothing by letting their dependants and servants hear Mass, receive the holy sacraments and perform some other devotions; rather they gained much, because so they were faithful and fulfilled their duties promptly and cheerfully.

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[1] John 3:16.

[2] Matt. 18:26, 29.

[3] Acts 4:32.

Point XII. The Sacrament of Penance

There are three chief precepts, dearest children, that the Christian, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Religion, the only true one, lays on its faithful followers. These precepts are: first, to hear Mass whole and devoutly on all Sundays, feasts and days of the cross, as We have already explained; second, to confess once a year; and third, to communicate at Easter. Of the others We shall speak on another occasion. As to the precept of confession, We must tell you that before the incarnation of the Son of God sinners went to God to obtain the pardon of their sins; but now they must go to the sacrament of Penance, instituted by Jesus Christ, true God and true man. On this sacrament of penance St. Thomas of Villanova reasons thus: When God was not man, it was not necessary to confess to a man; but since the Son of God became man, the eternal Father no longer judges anyone, but has given all power of judging to the Son who became man, as He Himself says: *Data est mihi omnis potestas in coelo, et in terra,* All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.[1] And from then on the sinner has been handed over by God to the court of Christ. But since Christ ascended into heaven and is not in this world by visible bodily presence (though He is here sacramentally), so that man might give Him an account of his sins and obtain pardon for them all, before leaving the earth He entrusted and left His powers to priests, delegating to them His faculties of hearing, judging and absolving sins, saying to them: *As*

the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.[2]

Nor is it enough to say that the priest is a man like others. For though in himself he is a man like the rest, by reason of his ministry he is very different; just as a judge, a general or any other person set in authority, without ceasing to be a subject like anyone else, exercises authority over others by virtue of the faculties of his office. It seems that God Himself wished to make it understood that there was as much difference between a man and a priest as between clay and a man. For when He had formed the figure of Adam from clay, He breathed into it the breath of life, and it became a man: *Et factus est homo* \[and man became a living soul\] (Gen. 2:7). When He made men ministers of the sacrament of Penance, He breathed on them too and communicated to them the Holy Ghost: *Insufflavit, et dixit eis: Accipite Spiritum Sanctum: quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt* (John 20:22–23).

And We have explained to you quite clearly, not only by word of mouth in the course of the missions held throughout the diocese and in the pastoral visitation, but also in writing, in the various little works We have published and put into your hands for more leisurely and deeper instruction in so delicate a matter, how sacramental confession was instituted by Jesus Christ, promulgated by St. James, practised by the other Apostles, continued to our own day, and will continue to the end of the world. It seems incredible, dearest children, that when the sacrament of Penance is so necessary, useful, easy and profitable to all Christians who have had the frailty to sin, they should be so slack and negligent in receiving it. For naturally we see that he who has soiled himself wishes to wash; he who has fallen sick wishes to be cured and buys medicines for the purpose; the prisoner wishes for liberty; and the shipwrecked man clings to a plank to save his life. But the unhappy sinner is so irrational and inconsistent that, finding himself dirty with sin, he does not seek, but rather flees, the waters of this sacramental pool. He is sick, and he loathes this heavenly medicine prescribed for him by Jesus Christ the physician. He is a prisoner bound with the chains of sin and is walking the road to the punishment of hell; and though Jesus offers him liberty, the foolish sinner rejects confession, by which he could be set free. Finally the sinner, like a shipwrecked man who is the plaything of the waves, goes on sinking into the sea of death and despises the plank of the sacrament of Penance that can save him. Now, therefore, the Church our mother, seeing that some of her children are like water, which naturally runs down and only rises by artifice, has used the precept of confession as an artifice, so that sinners may thus rise to heaven cleansed and pardoned of their faults. Her other faithful and fervent children, who are like the flame that rises of itself with no need of a precept, take care of themselves to receive the sacrament of Penance, not once but many times a year. Holy Church, then, desiring that all her children, the faithful, be saved, since this is the will of God, as St. Paul says, *Deus vult omnes homines salvos fieri*;[3] and so that those who are dead through sin may obtain the life of grace by means of this sacrament of Penance, and that those who live the life of grace may have it increased by sharing in this sacrament with a second grace, as the theologians teach; for this reason, I repeat, she wisely laid down in the sacred Council of the Lateran, presided over by Innocent III, that all the faithful, as soon as they reach the use of reason, are bound to confess all their sins at least once a year. So it stands in the chapter *Omnis*.[4] But since the common enemy, allied with heretics and Protestants, aimed all his batteries against this sacrament, which delivered so many souls from eternal damnation, holy Church, gathered again in the sacred Council of Trent, laid down several canons on this sacrament. So as not to weary you We do not give them all, but only the following, for your benefit and profit:

“If anyone says that in the Catholic Church Penance is not truly and properly a Sacrament instituted by Christ our Lord for reconciling the faithful to God as often as they fall into sin after Baptism, let him be anathema” (Session 14, canon 1).

“If anyone says that those words of our Lord and Saviour, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained*, are not to be understood

of the power of forgiving and retaining sins in the sacrament of Penance, as the Catholic Church has always understood them from the beginning… let him be anathema" (canon 3).

"If anyone says that the confession of all sins, such as the Church observes, is impossible and a human tradition that pious people ought to abolish; or that all and each of the Christian faithful of either sex are not bound to it once a year, according to the constitution of the great Council of the Lateran; and that for this reason the faithful are to be persuaded not to confess in Lent, let him be anathema" (Session 14, canon 8).[5]

On what the canon says about confessing in Lent, and in another place (Session 13, canon 9) where it commands communion at Easter, which runs from Palm Sunday to Low Sunday: let no one be alarmed or think it impossible to fulfil the precept in the short space of a fortnight, especially here in America, where there are so many people and so few parish priests, and the parishes are so vast. For your comfort We shall tell you what St. Liguori says on both precepts. *However*, he says, *bishops may, by privilege or custom, extend this time, as they are accustomed to do.* Therefore We tell you and command you to take care every year to confess in Lent; and if it is not possible for you to do so in that time of Lent, do so as soon as you can, but always within the year, so that you never let any year pass without receiving the sacrament of Penance. And you must know that this disposition given by the Council of Trent binds all the Catholics of America in the same way as the inhabitants of other parts of the world, as the supreme Pontiff Paul III declared. Moreover it is laid down in the Synodal Constitutions of this Archdiocese in these words: "Canon law and the sacred canons have, after mature deliberation, ordered that the Christian faithful receive each year the sacraments of Confession and Communion from the hand of their parish priests" (this "from the hand of their parish priests" refers to Communion, for Confession may be made to any approved priest), "and so that this holy ordinance may be kept and fulfilled, and since it is so just and reasonable that parishioners should acknowledge the mother in whom they were reborn by the holy sacrament of baptism, We command all the parish priests and beneficed clergy of this whole Our bishopric, under pain of major excommunication and of ten ducats of Castile, not to give leave to any of their parishioners, of whatever state and condition, to fulfil the annual precept of holy Communion in churches other than the parish churches. And if the newly arrived negroes and the other servants of the sugar mills, cattle ranches and farms cannot go to their parishes because of the difficulties and losses their owners have represented to Us, We reserve to Ourselves and Our successors, and, when the see is vacant, to the provisors and vicars general, the providing of a suitable remedy" (Synodal Constitutions, constitution 5, title 7, book 1).

We have already explained to you by word of mouth, and by means of the Catechisms and other spiritual books, the things necessary for receiving the holy sacrament of Confession or Penance well and with profit, and so We shall omit them here.

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[1] Matt. 28:18.

[2] John 20:21–23.

[3] 1 Tim. 2:4.

[4] Fourth Lateran Council (1215), constitution 21, *Omnis utriusque sexus* (Denzinger–Schönmetzer 812).

[5] Council of Trent, Session XIV (1551), canons on Penance 1, 3 and 8.

Point XIII. The Sacrament of the Eucharist, or Communion

We have already explained to you, dearest children, the obligation we have of receiving the sacrament of Penance; and now We shall speak of the sacrament and precept of Easter communion. This precept is divine, as appears from these words of the Lord according to St. John, 6:54: *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.* And it is also ecclesiastical, according to the canon *Omnis*, which says: *Receiving reverently at least at Easter the sacrament of the Eucharist.* The sacred Council of Trent defined that if anyone denies that all and each of the Christian faithful of both sexes, when

they have reached the full use of reason, are bound to communicate every year at least at Easter, according to the precept of our holy mother the Church, let him be anathema (Session 13, canon 9). And the Synodal Constitutions of this Archdiocese, constitution 5, title 7, book 1, command the same.

Nor can We excuse Ourselves from reminding you, dearest children, that in the first ages of the Church the faithful communicated almost every day, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles;[1] and this holy custom lasted many years. So it was that, fed daily with this bread of angels, they had such strength and vigour to overcome persecutions, prisons, torments and even death itself with constancy and joy. Then there was no precept, because, according to Suárez, the devotion of the faithful supplied it or made it unnecessary, as We told you in speaking of confession. But in the course of time they took to communicating only every eight days, then less often, until, seeing this lukewarmness, Pope St. Fabian commanded that they communicate at least three times a year, at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. Finally, that fervour having grown colder and colder, the Lateran Council commanded the faithful to communicate once a year, and that at Easter, as We have said. But the Church's desire is that the faithful communicate very often, as the Council of Trent says plainly in these words: *The holy Council would wish that at every Mass the faithful present should communicate.*[2] Just as a mother is very glad when she sees her children have an appetite and eat with relish, and on the contrary grieves if she notices they have none, and in that case urges them to make an effort to take food, and begs them with tears if they will not, because she fears they will die of starvation; so our mother the Church is greatly pleased when she sees all her children hungry and thirsty for this divine table, and Jesus Christ satisfying them. But if she sees some without appetite and careless, she says to them in her affliction: My children, if you do not eat of this Eucharistic bread, this bread of life, you will not live the life of grace, but will fall into sin and die an eternal death.

We, who by God's mercy are moved by these same sentiments, cannot hide from you the joy Our heart has felt to see, in the course of the missions and pastoral visitation We have just made, the very great numbers that have always come to the holy table; and that if some did not communicate, it was because they had not been able to confess, though not only We, but also Our household and other zealous priests were hearing confessions morning and afternoon. What matters now is that you continue the same frequenting of the sacraments that you have so happily begun; and We do not doubt it will be so, for We have very clear and convincing proofs that you will be constant in receiving the holy sacraments. So you will finish overcoming your old inclinations, and by means of this most holy manna you will make a happy journey to the promised land, which is heaven. Your understanding will be enlightened, your heart set aglow, and all of you turned into seraphim of the love of God.

And indeed, dearest children, there is nothing that makes one advance so much in perfection and holiness as devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Seek it, then: by receiving it often, as We have said; by attending the functions of the Minerva; by visiting it at the expositions of the Forty Hours' Jubilee and other functions; and by paying court to it, whether exposed or enclosed in the tabernacle. A most powerful means of preserving and increasing this devotion is to recall the passion and death of the same Lord. That is why holy Church, as soon as she has finished giving communion to the people, says: *O sacrum convivium…* O sacred banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us! For this purpose you may say the Our Father and Hail Mary six times, using the little book entitled *Camino recto y seguro para llegar al cielo*. You may also make the Way of the Cross, which you will also find in the same book; or you may occupy yourselves in some other meditations, as occasion serves. But We urge meditating more than reciting prayers, if you wish, as is to be desired, that divine love should take hold in you. And you will see clearly the difference between the one and the other by this comparison. If you hold your hand still over the flame of a candle, it will certainly burn you; but you will hardly feel the heat if you move the same hand quickly over the same candle. The same will happen in your prayers and devotions. If you stop to think and meditate on the very thing you are praying, it

will be like a flame that will kindle your heart; whereas hurrying through these adorable mysteries of love will make no impression, even if you pray all day. That is why the masters of the spiritual life say that true prayer does not consist in reciting much or speaking much, but in meditating with the understanding and knowing what is good and what is evil: how good God is, how much He loves us and what He has done for our good. The understanding then tells this to the will; and the will, the instant it knows it, is enamoured of God, responds with love and strives to do all it knows to be His pleasure and liking; and at the same time it hates all it knows to be an offence and injury to God, such as sins, faults and imperfections. It is in meditation that the fire of divine love is kindled. It is in this fire of meditation that the soul is purified of its defects and imperfections. With this fire we are to offer to the eternal Father the Victim of expiation for our sins, who is Jesus Christ; with this fire we are to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; and in this sacred fire the incense of prayer is to be burned, which, like a column of the most fragrant perfume, is to rise to the throne of the Most High. And so, kindled with this fire, we shall be able to intone with the Seraphim the most holy Trisagion to the most blessed Trinity, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory. Glory to the Father, glory to the Son, glory to the Holy Ghost. Amen.

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[1] Cf. Acts 2:42, 46.

[2] Council of Trent, Session XXII, ch. 6.

Point XIV. Devotion to Mary Most Holy and the Other Saints

We have explained, dearest children, the necessity we are under of professing the virtue of Religion, paying God, as to our supreme King and Lord, the tribute of love, honour and homage we owe Him. And since He is Lord of our interior and exterior, of body and soul and all we have, we must pay Him this tribute with interior and exterior acts of Religion. Just as that steward, tenant farmer or lodger would be unjust, and would incur the indignation of his master, who did not pay the rent or the share of the fruits he owes; so too that Christian will be unjust, and will incur the indignation of God, who does not pay God this tribute of Religion, which is devotion and prayer; who does not offer sacrifice, or does not attend Mass on days of precept, or does not receive the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist at least once each year, or perform other acts of this virtue of Religion. But since We consider you disposed, resolved and determined to follow and practise this holy Christian Religion, We tell you that you are to venerate not only God and Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, but also Mary most holy and the other Saints, as the Council of Trent charges us in these words: “The holy Council commands all Bishops and others who have the office and charge of teaching that they instruct the faithful diligently, above all, concerning the intercession and invocation of the Saints… teaching them that the Saints, who reign together with Christ, offer up their prayers to God for men; that it is good and useful to invoke them humbly and to have recourse to their prayers, intercession and help for obtaining benefits from God through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who alone is our Redeemer and Saviour” (Trent, Session 25).[1]

We have two motives for going to the Saints and trusting in them. One is that they are friends of God; and, as the proverb says, *qui amat me amat et canem meum* \[love me, love my dog\]; and if we love God we cannot but love and honour the Saints. The other motive is that, since they honoured Jesus Christ by following Him, imitating Him and accompanying Him in their battles in the world, they now reign with Christ in heaven and are His dear friends and companions; and they need only ask for Jesus Christ to be pleased to grant them those graces, either Himself, or because He acts as advocate with His eternal Father, as St. John says.[2]

If We say this of the Saints in general, what can We say of Mary most holy in particular? It is enough to say that she is Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son and Spouse of God the Holy Ghost; and consequently the whole Most Holy Trinity is pleased that she be honoured, venerated and invoked by all

generations. Mary is the mother of grace and the dispenser of all mercies. So much so, says St. Bernard, *that this is the will of God, who wills that all graces should pass through the hands of Mary.*[3] We shall not stop now to list and explain the very many and powerful reasons we have for all being very devoted to Mary most holy; We spoke enough of this matter in the days of the missions and pastoral visitation. And since your hearts were like well-prepared ground, We do not doubt that this heavenly seed will bear fruit a hundredfold. We remind you of only one thing: that there are two kinds of devotion to Mary most holy. One is false, and is like that of the Philistines, who put the ark beside the idol Dagon.[4] So too some Christians want to join devotion to Mary most holy, the living ark of the law of grace, with the idol Dagon of the sin in which they are settled: drunkenness, gambling, concubinage or other filthiness. This devotion is false.

True devotion to Mary most holy consists in abstaining from all sin, in imitating her virtues, in offering her some acts of homage, in frequenting the holy sacraments, and in performing well, willingly and perseveringly, the devotions and other things of her service. And indeed the true devotee not only abstains from all sin, but strives to imitate her virtues, according to the proverb *amor aut parem facit, aut invenit*: love either finds or makes the lover like the beloved.

So the devotee of Mary always strives to make himself like Mary. He knows that Mary was so humble, and at once he strives with all his might to be humble, to imitate Mary. The devotee knows that Mary was never idle, and at once he strives to be always occupied, both to imitate so great a Lady and Mistress and because he knows that idleness is not just one sin but a fountain of vices. The true devotee knows that Mary most holy was a virgin and a lover of purity and chastity, and at once, in honour of Mary, he strives to be chaste. The devotee of Mary knows that Mary was most patient and Queen of Martyrs, and this is enough for him to have patience and restrain all fierceness; and so with the other virtues.

Moreover, the true devotee loves to frequent the holy sacraments in her honour; and in truth this is one of the acts of homage Mary most holy likes best. That is why that great devotee Paolo Segneri the younger so urged people to offer Mary most holy twelve communions in memory of the twelve stars with which St. John saw her crowned, or of her twelve chief virtues. These twelve communions are spread over the twelve months of the year, one each month. Besides this homage of communions, others may be offered her, as they will find them in the Novena of the Heart of Mary.

Mary is Queen of the Angels and the Saints. Be devoted, then, and loving towards her subjects; celebrate their feasts and solemnities; imitate their virtues. For this purpose it is a great help in preserving Religion and increasing devotion to read the lives of Jesus, of Mary most holy and of the other Saints. But you are to read not only these books, but also the other good books of Religion and devotion that We have had brought in and printed in such abundance that up to now they amount to 98,217 copies. And We know, and it is clear to Us, how fond and eager you have been to obtain them as soon as you learned how freely We gave them out: sometimes free, sometimes in exchange for bad books, sometimes by giving them to the hospitals and other charitable establishments, so that those who could afford them might obtain them and the poor might benefit from the proceeds.

And thanks be to God and to your fervour, these books have produced and are producing the happiest results, which would be thought incredible if they were not seen. Like fruits in proportion have been produced by the 89,500 holy pictures, the 20,663 rosaries and the 9,831 medals We have distributed free during the holy Missions. We have the pleasure of knowing how much you have valued and do value these seeds of devotion, as St. Bernard calls them; and We have had the comfort of seeing the ripe fruits these heavenly seeds have produced in your hearts, and of hearing the sweet accents of praise to God, to Mary and to the other Saints, now with the Trisagion, now with the Rosary, now with other prayers, as your fervour prompts and your occupations allow.

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[1] Council of Trent, Session XXV (1563), decree on the invocation of saints.

[2] 1 John 2:1.

[3] the saying is from St. Bernard's sermon on the Nativity of Mary ("the Aqueduct").

[4] 1 Kings 5:3 (1 Sam. 5:3).

Point XV. Authority

We have told you, dearest children, that the four foundations of public happiness are Religion, authority, property and family; and since up to here We have spoken to you of Religion, in this point We shall say a word or two about authority. There is no doubt that we all have one Father in heaven, who is God; we all have one Redeemer, who is Jesus Christ; we are all descendants of Adam and Eve, and we are all created for one and the same end. But though it is true that for these reasons we must all look upon and love one another as brothers, nevertheless there are some who, by nature or by condition or by the election of men, God so disposing it, are set over others; and these are those we call authorities, public, private or domestic according to their subjects. For the present We shall speak to you only of public authorities, who are, as it were, the head of the body of society. And just as the head is placed above the other members, so authority is placed above other men. In the head are the eyes to see, the ears to hear and the tongue to speak and dispose all things for the good of the body; and the other members and the whole body must obey what the head disposes. So too every man set in authority, as head, must have eyes to see how he will bring about the happiness of his subjects, ears to listen to their petitions and complaints, and a tongue to command what he ought. And the other members of this moral body owe their head, the authorities, honour, respect, obedience, services, fidelity and taxes. The Apostle St. Paul teaches us that it is necessary to be subject to the prince and obey his orders, not only for fear of the punishment he can impose on the rebellious, but also out of respect and affection, loving and honouring them as superiors whom God has set over us. It seems fitting to Us to repeat here the very words in which he speaks in the letter to the Romans, chapter 13, verses 1 to 5. He says: *Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation. For princes are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good: and thou shalt have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to thee, for good. But if thou do that which is evil, fear: for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is God's minister: an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.*

And this same Apostle judged the obligation of obeying the prince to be so essential and so strict that, not content with having taught this doctrine himself, he charges the bishop Titus, his disciple, to do the same with his subjects. *Admonish them*, he tells him, *to be subject to princes and powers, to obey at a word.*[1] The Apostle St. Peter has charged us with the same in the second chapter of his first epistle. These two Apostles likewise make us understand that we owe honour, respect and obedience to the governors and magistrates sent by the prince to punish evildoers and to deal favourably with those who do well.

The Christians of the first centuries were so persuaded of their obligation to obey the emperors that on every occasion they gave them proofs of their obedience, fidelity and love. The bishops took care to instruct them in these obligations, and urged them very earnestly not to fail in them; for it is an order of God, they told them, which it is not lawful to resist. On this point what St. Justin, Tertullian and St. Augustine say is admirable.

Besides obedience, we must also pray to God for the princes and authorities to whom we are subject. St. Paul conjures us to do so, and not in any fashion, but with fervour;[2] a practice the Church has always observed. Tertullian assures us that although the Roman emperors were pagans and practised every kind of cruelty against the Christians, prayers were said in the Church for their preservation, their health, their peace and the prosperity of their empire.

You see, then, dearest children, the doctrine regarding authorities that is contained in the Holy Scriptures, that the holy Fathers have taught and that all good Christians have practised since the first days of the Church founded by Jesus Christ, a doctrine He Himself preached and practised. We have spoken these words to you about the obedience and prayer you owe the authorities not as a politician, for We have never at any time meddled in political affairs, but as a prelate; because it is the duty of a prelate, as St. Paul says, to teach and exhort in this way the faithful the Lord has entrusted to him.[3] And in trying to fulfil Our duty We could not leave out speaking of this second foundation of public happiness.

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[1] Tit. 3:1.

[2] 1 Tim. 2:1–3.

[3] 2 Tim. 4:2.

Point XVI. Property

There is no doubt, dearest children, that God has created all things for all; but it is also true that, by the law of nations, approved by God Himself, there exists the right of property, which must be respected and kept. And it will be respected and kept if this natural principle is observed: to treat others as we would wish to be treated, and not to do to others what we would not wish done to us. From this principle are born peace, justice, happiness and brotherly love, with many other virtues. But at the same time we must not let in the wild beast of avarice, for it is so destructive that it spoils everything. It tears the most sacred rights to pieces and tramples on all principles of humanity and morality.

So that you may keep this right of property perfectly, We shall tell you what the monstrous beast of avarice is that destroys it. Avarice consists in a disordered appetite for riches, whether by keeping in a disordered way those lawfully acquired, or by desiring and seeking unlawfully those of others. The first kind offends against charity, and the second against justice. Nothing is more wicked than the covetous man, says the Holy Ghost;[1] and St. Valerian says that there is no evil that covetousness does not conceive, bring into the open or feed. Segneri adds that if Christians either are not, or do not look like, Christians, blame avarice and you will not be wrong. If Christians are deprived of the spirit of the Gospel; if you see that they do not attend holy Mass and the other practices of Religion; if you see that they do not come to hear the divine word or to receive the holy sacraments; think that it is avarice that has perverted them, so much that they have lost the faith and become idolaters, for their God, whom they adore and serve, is self-interest. That is why Jesus Christ said that no one can serve two masters, God and mammon;[2] for the covetous man self-interest is his only God, to whom he sacrifices his conscience, his soul and his temporal and eternal happiness.

The covetous man, says an author, has no compassion for the poor and does not help the wretched, because he pities no one. He offends God, his neighbour and himself: God, because he does not render Him what he owes; his neighbour, because he does not give him what he needs, but rather robs him, if he can, of what he has, and if he cannot rob him, covets it; and finally he offends himself, because he makes himself the slave of self-interest and of the spirit of darkness.

But if covetousness and pride come together in the covetous man, as ordinarily happens, so great is the multitude of sins they beget, like children, that they cannot be numbered. For the Holy Ghost says that avarice is the root of all evils, and pride the beginning of all sin;[3] and, as the angelic doctor St. Thomas explains, pride is the beginning of all evils in the order of intention, and avarice the beginning of all evils in the order of execution. Pride is like the architect who draws the plan of the building of iniquity, of the house of an unhappy eternity; and avarice is like the master builder who provides the means, the materials and the ways to carry it out. And so you will see that the covetous man comes to commit all sins and break all the commandments. The covetous man does not love God, but his money; and that is why St. Paul calls him an idolater, because his self-interest is his only God,[4] as We have told you. The covetous man is a perjurer, and

makes others swear falsely, so as to obtain and win his lawsuits and get away with his frauds. He is a blasphemer at gaming and when he loses his money. He profanes feast days in his desire for gain. He does not help his superiors, equals and inferiors. By the lawsuits he brings he sows disunion in families, breaks the oldest friendships and severs the most sacred bonds of kinship. With money he assails the chaste woman, and she, for money, often yields. In a word, from avarice come treacheries, frauds, deceits, perjuries, restlessness and violence, as St. Gregory says.

But the worst thing about this detestable vice of avarice is that, while it rules many, as God Himself says through Jeremias, *A minore usque ad majorem omnes avaritiae student* (Jer. 6:13), from the least even to the greatest all are given to covetousness, and all deal deceitfully…, yet no one considers himself avaricious, or covetous, or a thief. But We, believing God and not the specious excuses and pretexts of the covetous, tell you to respect property, never to take or desire what belongs to others; otherwise We should say to you with the Apostle that you would not enter the kingdom of heaven.[5] Ah, how happy you would be if covetousness could be banished from the country! Injustice would be banished; there would be an end of the usurers who with their unlawful and disguised interest squeeze the blood out of so many unhappy people; there would be an end of lawsuits, and the pettifoggers who cause so many misfortunes in families and estates would disappear.

Since you are Christians and profess to be servants of the true God, who is a God of peace and not of discord, you must never entangle yourselves in lawsuits, unless you are compelled by some very considerable public or private need, or by some obligation of piety or justice; for otherwise you would offend the Lord, as St. Paul teaches, writing to the Corinthians in his first letter, chapter 6, verse 7: *Already indeed there is plainly a fault among you, that you have lawsuits one with another. Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do you not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* You should act so as Christians, as far as lies in you, with every kind of person, according to the counsel of the same Apostle; for you are most strictly bound to maintain charity, and consequently to avoid all that can offend it. Since, then, it is very difficult to keep peace while going to law with one another, the Holy Ghost warns us to avoid lawsuits and disputes, and so we shall lessen the number of sins. That is why the Saviour ordered His disciples to let their coat and cloak be taken rather than go to law to recover them.[6] We must always be ready to lose everything rather than lose the charity we owe our neighbour.

And not only, dearest children, must you abstain from stealing and coveting what belongs to others, respecting property; you must also take care not to possess with too much greed and covetousness even what you have, though it is your own and lawfully acquired. Think that you brought nothing into this world; that all you have is a gift of God, and that He will take it from you when He pleases, either by death or by other means or adversities before you die. Think too that God is the owner of all you have, and that you are like mere stewards to whom He has entrusted His riches so that you may make good use of them and exercise yourselves in works of charity and piety. Woe to you if you forget these sacred duties! For it will happen to you as to the rich glutton, of whom Jesus Christ tells us in His holy Gospel that, being a rich and well-to-do man, he was clothed in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day, without helping poor Lazarus; but at the hour he least expected he died and was damned.[7] And you must note that of this rich man we do not read that what he had was ill acquired, or that he stole, or carried on unjust lawsuits; we know only that he did not help the beggar with the goods God had granted him. And the same Jesus Christ who tells us this of the rich glutton in His holy Gospel tells us that on the day of the last judgment He will say to the good: *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom of heaven; for you gave me to eat, to drink and to be clothed in the person of the poor.*[8] But those who, being able, have not done such works of charity He says He will condemn, saying to them: *Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, for you did not do works of charity when you could.*

Therefore, dearest children, you are not only to respect property by abstaining from robbery, deceit and unjust lawsuits; but also, if you possess riches, do not let your heart cling to them, and make good use of them. With this you will please God, and He will go on entrusting you with His goods, and will preserve them to you, and perhaps increase them, as He tells us in His Gospel of the man to whom He had entrusted five talents: because he made good use of them, He ordered that the talent taken from the one who had kept it idle should be given to him as well.[9] And He will not only preserve and perhaps increase your temporal goods and riches, but He will give you the eternal goods of glory, which We wish for all.

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[1] Ecclus. 10:9.

[2] Matt. 6:24.

[3] Ecclus. 10:15; cf. 1 Tim. 6:10.

[4] Eph. 5:5.

[5] Eph. 5:5.

[6] Matt. 5:40.

[7] Luke 16:19–31.

[8] Matt. 25:34–36.

[9] Matt. 25:28.

Point XVII. The Family

We have told you that the fourth foundation of public happiness was the family, by which word is meant the people who live in one house under the rule of its master. If this point were fulfilled, it may well be said that the whole world would be happy, as far as is possible in this valley of tears. For the world is made up of kingdoms or states, so to speak; kingdoms of provinces; provinces of towns; and towns of houses or families. So if all families lived well, everything would go in order. An author says that to secure happiness and order in families there must be fidelity in marriage; education, watchfulness and correction of children and servants; and their respect and obedience towards their parents and superiors. This is most in keeping with Holy Scripture, with reason and with daily experience.

God our Lord, author, preserver and lover of good order, is the one who lays the first stone of the happy house in the paradise of pleasure, in marriage; and that is why He Himself institutes marriage, as we read in the sacred book of Genesis, chapter 1, verses 27–28: *And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them. And God blessed them*; and He made them masters of all created things and gave them to them as a dowry, so that they might be a happy and blessed married couple for ever. Therefore He said: *Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh* (Gen. 2:24). God not only instituted marriage, as you have just heard, but also confirmed it. But as men multiplied on the earth they also began to be perverted and corrupted: *Omnis quippe caro corruperat viam suam* (Gen. 6:12), for all flesh, that is, all peoples, had corrupted their way of begetting, which is marriage instituted by God, as We have said. They began to leave the way God had marked out, falling in love at their whim. And just as a river that breaks its banks overflows and floods the land, so those peoples were not content within the bounds of the channel of marriage marked out by God, but through their indecency spread in every direction and flooded the earth with sins of the flesh. That is why St. Ambrose says: *Diluvium carnis peperisse diluvium aquarum*: the flood of carnal sins gave birth to the flood of waters.

As sacred history relates (Gen. 6:3), *God said: My spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh.* And in verses 5, 6 and 7 we read: *And God seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times, it repented him that he had made man on the earth. And being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, he said: I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, from man even to beasts, from the creeping thing even to the fowls of the*

air, for it repenteth me that I have made them. And He sent the flood, raining in torrents forty days and forty nights without ceasing, so that the rivers swelled and overflowed, bursting their banks; and the seas, rising over their bounds, came rushing with giant waves to help the rivers that were flooding the fields. The terrified people, seeing themselves surrounded by the waters of rivers and seas and not thinking themselves safe in their houses, fled to the mountains. But the waters reached there too and drowned the creatures in the crags, caves and hiding places. Perhaps some climbed the trees and hid among the branches; but the waters stretched out their waves and snatched those strange and outlandish fruits and devoured them at one mouthful, burying them before they died. All were drowned except eight just and married persons, namely Noe and his three sons, each with his own wife, living as God's law commands. After the flood God blessed Noe and his married sons; that is, God Himself confirmed the marriage He had instituted from the beginning of the world.

Not only, dearest children, was marriage instituted and confirmed by God; it was also sanctified by Jesus Christ, true God and true man. Jesus Himself said that He had come not to destroy the law but to perfect it;[1] and so He did not destroy the law of marriage, but perfected it, sanctifying it with His real presence by attending the wedding at Cana of Galilee;[2] and finally Jesus Himself consecrated marriage by raising it to one of the seven sacraments of the Church. And, as St. Paul says, marriage is a great sacrament and signifies the union of Jesus Christ with His spouse the Church.[3] And an author says that besides this it signifies the union of God with human nature by the incarnation, and in some way also signifies the union of God with man's soul by sanctifying grace; so that all the good works a man does in this state are living works, born of this spiritual marriage; and for this reason we call Jesus the Spouse of our souls, and he who sins is said to commit spiritual adultery.

Perhaps you would like Us to explain a little the ends of this great sacrament of marriage. To satisfy your desire, and in fulfilment of Our duty, We shall tell you that they are chiefly three, namely: first, companionship; second, the procreation of children and the preservation of the human race; and third, the remedy of concupiscence.

We have said that the first end of marriage is companionship, as we read in Genesis, chapter 2, verse 18: *And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself.* Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and while he was asleep He took one of his ribs, filled up flesh for it, and from it formed a woman, whom He brought to Adam. And Adam cried out: *This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh.*[4] But We must point out to you in passing that the Lord took the woman neither from the man's head nor from his feet, as if to make it understood that she is to be neither the mistress nor the slave of the man, but his companion; and therefore they must love one another as consorts and as two bones of one body. And so that this love might be finer and more intense, He formed her from the bone nearest the heart, as from the hearth of love.

In passing, dearest children, you should note the great mystery marriage contains. Note it well. While Adam slept, God took one of his ribs and formed from it his wife Eve. This signifies that while Jesus slept in death on the cross, they opened His side with the lance, and from it came blood and water, from which His spouse the Church was formed, adorned with all seven sacraments and enriched with all graces; and He lives so united to her and loves her so much that He will never hate or abandon her. From this great mystery that the sacrament of marriage contains and signifies, let married people learn the love they must have for each other, the union and peace in which they must live for ever, in imitation of Jesus with His spouse the Church, and the fidelity they must keep to each other. Moreover, since the sacrament of marriage is regarded as, and is, a fellowship of wills and a union of affections by which a man and a woman give each other the help they need, marriage is permitted to persons of advanced age; for if it is not a remedy against concupiscence for them, it is a relief for the weakness of their age, as St. Augustine says.

The second end of marriage is the procreation of children and the preservation of the human race; and this truly requires of married parents a holy beginning, a virtuous way of life and perpetual cohabitation. It is indispensable that the parents make a good beginning, for, as the Apostle says, if the root be holy, so are the trunk and the branches;[5] but if the root is diseased, what will become of the rest? If the parents are sanctified by the sacrament of marriage and take care to prepare themselves to receive the graces it causes in those who receive it well disposed, it is to be thought and hoped that the offspring or children will be good. That is why it is very fitting that those who wish to marry should live chastely and virtuously, if they are to obtain the graces of marriage; for this sacrament, like the others, causes grace according to the preparation and disposition of the one who receives it, as the Council of Trent says. Therefore, before marrying, it is not lawful to allow oneself any liberty, not even with a promise of marriage; which, according to the author of the *Conferences of Angers*, would be a still greater sin. For they offend God; they insult the sacrament they intend to receive; they make themselves slaves of the devil by the sin they commit before they are the matter and ministers of the sacrament they wish and hope to receive; they offer and consecrate their virginity to the devil, and their corruption to God. Besides, if through some obstacle the marriage does not take place, the unhappy woman is left dishonoured and abandoned, as has happened to many in punishment of their sin. That is why it is very fitting that young people of both sexes who intend to marry should use prayer, find out beforehand everything it is proper to know so as not to make a mistake, and listen to the advice of their parents, avoiding those courtships which, going on a long time with frequent visits, always result in sins so opposed to the dispositions with which they ought to prepare for the celebration of marriage.

They must also live virtuously before and after marriage, loving each other and keeping faith with each other. That is why it is very fitting that those contracting marriage should not be related, because then the love is brotherly and not conjugal, the two being very different, and it is the cause of great and irreparable evils, both in the spouses and in the children, if they have any, as We proved at greater length in the Edict We published on 27 July of last year. And now We again exhort fathers of families to take care that their children do not fall in love with their relations, because, We repeat, such marriages are ordinarily very disastrous.

They will keep faith with each other, for otherwise they would incur the most grievous wickedness of adultery. This is so great a sin that God already begins to punish it in this world. It is the cause of great quarrels, divisions and separations; through it married people, instead of being the model and good example of their children, become their scandal. Moreover, married people and fathers of families must live together for ever: both by reason of the sacrament, for, as We have said, just as Jesus Christ will never separate Himself from His spouse the Church, so neither will the husband ever separate himself from his wife, nor she from him; and also by reason of bringing up the children, which requires the care and union of both spouses so that all the good effects that should be hoped for may follow, as St. Thomas admirably proves by comparison and contrast with nature.

Lastly, the third end and good that marriage brings is to be a remedy against impurity. There is no doubt that virginal chastity is better than conjugal chastity; but if anyone cannot keep himself chaste, let him marry rather than fall into the wickedness of impurity. That is why St. Paul said: *It is better to marry than to be burnt*;[6] and in the history of the first Christians we read that many, both men and women, kept themselves chaste and virgins; but fathers of families were exhorted, if they saw that their children were inclined and called to marriage, to marry them off as soon as possible to preserve them from impurity. For if they fall into that fatal vice they become libertines and bad sons, and in time they will be bad husbands. Bad sons, We say, because the indecent and dissolute young man becomes so brutal, so insolent and bold that he comes to be the greatest torment of his parents, whose patrimony he squanders before its time, as did the prodigal son of the Gospel, who, living riotously and wasting his substance on harlots, came to be what Jesus Christ says.[7] The lustful and dissolute young man, when he marries, becomes a bad husband, as a modern French philosopher, guided by reason and taught by experience, admirably proves. He says: How is it possible for a

libertine to be a good husband? For he will not look upon his wife or love her as a faithful friend, as an inseparable help and companion, as a wife given by God; nor will he respect her or hold her as a vessel of sanctification, as St. Paul says.[8] For he is used to looking upon woman as a vessel of filth which, once his need is satisfied, he loathes; as an object of his brutal passions and lascivious pleasures which, once they are satisfied, he despises. How will he love her with a virtuous love who is used to loving her with a lustful love? How will he love her with a constant love who has left no meadow where his lust has not roamed? How is it possible for him to love his wife with a steady, faithful and persevering love, like the chaste turtledove, who, like a night bird, like a bat, has gone about eagerly, wrapped in filth, in every direction since his early years? Lastly, the libertine before marriage is the ruin of women, and after marriage the executioner of the one who has the misfortune to be his wife, as experience teaches. That is why We exhort fathers of families to marry their children in good time, not to allow them dissoluteness, and to watch over them constantly so that they do not live in illicit relations, "postponed" or in concubinage. So they will be good children while they are single, and afterwards good husbands and wives.

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[1] Matt. 5:17.

[2] Cf. John 2:1–12.

[3] Eph. 5:32.

[4] Gen. 2:23–24.

[5] Rom. 11:16.

[6] 1 Cor. 7:9.

[7] Luke 15:14–17.

[8] 1 Thess. 4:4.

Point XVIII. Concubinage

We cannot fail, dearest children, to give most heartfelt thanks to God and to your docility because the vice We found so common, so detestable and so widespread when We arrived in this diocese, living together unmarried, or concubinage, is now disappearing from among you. Knowing its malice and its fatal consequences, and since it is the prelate's duty to root out this wickedness, We at once set to work, using all the means that zeal, prudence and charity dictated to Us; for charity is the only thing that binds, moves and urges Us: *Charitas Christi urget nos*,[1] words of St. Paul that We chose even as the motto of Our seal, and that fit so well the thought that rules all Our ideas and governs Our heart. And We repeat Our thanks to God and to your docility, because in the space of two years that We have so far spent in the missions and pastoral visitation of the whole archdiocese, We have taken care to note all its happy results, and We can assure you that no fewer than nine thousand men, and as many women, who used to live in sin have been married; so that in this one branch alone eighteen thousand souls can be counted converted. Praised for ever be the mercies of God! These souls, who were once a stone of scandal and slaves of Satan, now live in the grace of God with the greatest peace, happiness and joy. And very many of these married people, to show their gratitude, have come to Us, thrown themselves at Our feet, bathing their cheeks with tears, and thanked Us more with sobs than with words. Many married people were living apart and in disorder, and We have had the comfort of reuniting two hundred and twenty-five couples, who now live in union, peace and love, having forgiven each other and forgotten all the past.

Besides this, as the effect and consequence of these marriages, more than forty thousand natural children have been legitimated; and those who used to live as though forgotten, and scandalized by their own parents, now receive from them good example, upbringing and education. In this matter We have tried to fit Our conduct to the zeal of St. John the Baptist, who, knowing that Herod was living in concubinage with his married sister-in-law, said to him: *Non licet tibi habere eam*,[2] it is not lawful for thee to have her; it is not lawful for thee to live so. But We, since We have had the good fortune to deal not with Herod but with

Christians, have found that though some imitated him in his scandalous life, they have not followed him in his obstinacy, but have promised Us to separate; and We believe they have carried out all they offered and We had required of them. What We now ask and beg of all who have separated, been converted and confessed is that they persevere in good living, and that what St. Peter says in his second letter, chapter 2, verse 22, may not be fulfilled in them: *The dog is returned to his vomit: and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. Canis reversus ad suum vomitum: et sus lota in volutabro luti.* With God's help We have tried to imitate the zeal of Jesus Christ, who, though very tired and weary from the journey, knowing that a woman was living in concubinage in the city of Samaria, sought her like a lost sheep, found her by the well of Sichar, and said to her, among other things: *For thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband.*[3] And the moment the Samaritan woman heard the Lord's words she knew that Jesus was a Prophet sent by God. She was converted from her evil life; and she who before had been a stone of scandal became an apostle of the city, telling her fellow citizens what had happened to her and that they should come out and enjoy so great a happiness. So it has happened to Us. Notwithstanding the many and most weighty occupations of Our sacred ministry, We have sought out and called the women who, like the Samaritan woman, were living in sin; and as soon as they heard Our words, warnings and wholesome counsels, they understood Our mission, knew that God was sending Us for their salvation, and with the greatest promptness left their sin, received the sacrament of Penance and exhorted others to conversion. There have been others who did not wait to be called, but as soon as they heard the sermon at once recognized their fatal state, and of themselves came to Our feet in the sacrament of Penance and, more with tears than with words, made their general confession, imitating the Magdalen in everything. For if they had followed her in her evil life, they did not disdain to follow her steps and ways in her conversion; and We trust in the goodness and mercy of God that they will imitate her in perseverance and fervour.

So that none of those who have amended may turn back or fall again into so criminal a state, We shall tell you that this is the difference between the married and those living in concubinage: the married are in the sacrament of matrimony, but those living in concubinage are in the devil's contract, which ruins their souls and turns the ground into a hell, where, as Job says, *nullus est ordo* \[no order\].[4] Yes, my brethren, in the house of scandal there is no order, but perpetual disorder. And so that the wickedness of this offence may be seen more clearly, We shall tell you briefly that those living in concubinage: first, offend God; second, harm themselves; third, degrade their children; fourth, damage the public good. They offend God, first, for two reasons: the first, because they break His holy law in the sixth commandment; the second, because they despise marriage, which God instituted and confirmed and Jesus Christ sanctified and raised to a sacrament. Nevertheless they prefer concubinage, which the devil invented, to the sacrament of matrimony, which Jesus Christ instituted; so that they seem to imitate the Jews, who preferred Barabbas to Jesus Christ, for they prefer the Barabbas of their evil life to living as Christians in the state of matrimony.

They harm themselves as regards the grace of God, because they live continually in mortal sin, are unworthy of heaven, deserving of hell and slaves of Satan. They harm themselves in their honour, because honour consists in virtue, and they live settled in vice; therefore their way of life is without honour and without shame. They harm themselves in bodily health, for the bodily injuries and diseases impurity brings with it are beyond counting; that is why Cicero called it a deadly plague, and Seneca the greatest evil and the disease that claims the most victims.

They harm themselves in their interests. For to the man belongs the directing and industrious part, to earn, preserve and increase wealth; and to the woman the economic part, to spend with discretion what is necessary and save what is possible, as happens in the home of married people. That is why between the married and those living in concubinage this difference is seen: the married, that is, husband and wife, pull *together* (*a la una*), and those living in concubinage pull *claw against claw* (*a la uña*).[5] The reason is clear. The married have the guarantee of conjugal love and of lifelong companionship; and the woman especially,

to whom, as We have said, the economic part belongs, knows that whatever she saves and economizes is for her own good, her husband's and her family's. But the concubine, on the contrary, having no guarantee, fears, and with reason, that tomorrow her man will fall in love with another and abandon her, without giving her anything either for herself or perhaps for the children the two of them have had, as she knows and has seen by the experience of so many other women to whom this has happened. For this reason the concubine makes the most of her chance and saves nothing, neither in clothes, nor in food, nor in amusements; or if she does save, it is to gather all she can for herself and her children against the abandonment to which she may be reduced, as experience teaches. So we see so many poor people who through their vices and disorders have seen their estates ruined.

Parents who live in concubinage degrade their children, for their children are not legitimate but natural, when not adulterine. What dishonour! The first title of nobility of children is to descend from good, honourable and noble parents, which is worth more than all the riches, learning and everything in this world. For children can acquire learning by applying themselves to study; they can earn riches; but good birth they will never acquire. Even though such favours are sometimes granted by privilege or for some other cause,[6] it will always be true that the origin and birth of such persons was not according to law, or legitimate, but natural, or rather against the law of nature, as St. Thomas says. Those who are born, he says, not of marriage, *nascuntur secundum naturam, quae communis est homini et omnibus animalibus, tamen nascuntur contra legem naturae quae est propria hominibus; quia fornicatio et adulterium sunt contra legem naturae* \[are born according to nature, which is common to man and all the animals; yet they are born against the law of nature, which is proper to men; for fornication and adultery are against the law of nature\] (St. Thomas, *Summa*, Supplement, q. 68, a. 1, ad 1).[7] That is why the wise Solomon said that the glory of children is the honour of their parents.[8] What glory, then, can those living in concubinage give their children, when they make a profession of living without shame or honour, and are barred, because of their scandalous life, from being godparents at baptism and confirmation? And how can those children look without resentment on a father who, though himself free, has made them slaves, and though white, has had them born of an inferior class? Parents naturally love their children and seek every possible good for them; and only parents living in concubinage are the ones who cause their own so much harm and injury.

Finally, those living in concubinage damage the public good, both by the scandal they give and by their ill-bred children, who are commonly without fear of God, without love of neighbour, idlers, and, as Aristotle says, more harmful to the public good than wild beasts themselves. And though some natural parents may perhaps take pains to bring up their children well, this will be *per accidens* \[by accident\], as the theologians say; and in any case the bad example they have received or receive will always be a great obstacle to their good upbringing. Besides, they spring from a bad beginning: *erraverunt ab utero* \[they have gone astray from the womb\];[9] and therefore the children of sin, says St. Thomas, are always more inclined to wickedness, which they learn from their own parents, whose example they easily imitate. In this way children and parents harm the public good. For these and other reasons We omit, concubinage must never be tolerated among Christians. The pagans themselves, as Tacitus relates, established penalties to repress impurity, and also rewards for those who increased the number of citizens with the fruit of their lawful marriages. St. Augustine assures us that it has never been lawful for Christians to live in concubinage, nor ever will be: *Coram Deo et Angelis contestor atque denuntio ista mala et semper habuisse, et numquam ei placita fuisse, quia praecipue temporibus christianis concubinas habere numquam licebit* \[Before God and His angels I testify and declare that these evils have always existed and have never pleased Him; for above all in Christian times it will never be lawful to keep concubines\].

The holy Council of Trent, the rule all Catholics must follow, says: "It is a grave sin for unmarried men to have concubines (*whether they live under the same roof or in a different house, the essential malice is the same: it is distinguished only by this circumstance*); but it is much more grave, and committed in signal

contempt of this great sacrament of matrimony, that married men also should live in this state of damnation, and should dare to keep them, sometimes even in their own house, and even with their own wives. The holy Council, therefore, to meet so great an evil with fitting remedies, decrees that excommunication be pronounced against such concubinaries, whether unmarried or married, of whatever state, dignity or condition they may be, if, after being admonished three times on this matter by the Ordinary, even ex officio, they do not dismiss their concubines *and separate themselves from all intercourse with them*; and they may not be absolved from the excommunication until they have actually obeyed the correction given them. And if, despising the censures, they remain in concubinage for a year, the Ordinary shall proceed against them severely, according to the nature of their crime. Women, whether married or single, who live publicly with adulterers or concubinaries, if after three admonitions they do not obey, shall be punished ex officio by the Ordinaries of the places with a heavy penalty, according to their guilt, even though no one demands it, and shall be banished from the place or the diocese if the Ordinaries think fit, invoking the secular arm if need be; all the other penalties pronounced against adulterers and concubinaries remaining in full force" (Council of Trent, Session 24, *De reformatione matrimonii*, ch. 8).

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[1] 2 Cor. 5:14.

[2] Mark 6:18.

[3] John 4:18.

[4] Job 10:22.

[5] a play on *a la una* ("all at once, together") and *a la uña* ("by the claw", i.e. each grabbing for himself).

[6] *gracias al sacar*.

[7] the Spanish prints "q. 48". The passage is in the *Supplement* to the *Summa*, q. 68, a. 1, ad 1.

[8] Ecclus. 3:13.

[9] Ps. 57:4.

Point XIX. The Care of Children and Slaves

You see, then, dearest children, that for the family to be well ordered the parents must be married, and not adulterers or living in concubinage. Then the children will all be legitimate, and not natural, spurious or bastards. We shall have gained much if all children spring from a good beginning; but this is not enough to form a happy society. It is also indispensable to instruct these children so that they turn out well brought up and in time become good citizens. For this purpose they must know and fulfil their three essential obligations, which are towards God, towards themselves and towards their neighbours. They must keep the holy fear and love of God, observe His holy laws and perform the interior and exterior acts of the Christian Religion to which, by the mercy of God, they belong. Towards themselves they must be sober, chaste, cautious and prudent; and towards their neighbours they must be just, beneficent and charitable, treating them as they would wish to be treated, without doing to anyone what they would not wish done to them. These and other virtues are those that fathers of families must instil into their children, watching at the same time that the weeds of bad habits do not appear, such as vanity, pride, envy, lying, slander and other things which the enemy, as the Gospel says, will perhaps take care to sow.[1] That is why parents should be watchful and correct their children kindly, but without overlooking anything; for in time such indulgence would become their ruin. It is as when a house catches fire: at first it is easy to put out, but if the fire is allowed to grow, when one wants to put it out, one cannot. So it is with vices in the family: at first they are easily corrected and amended; but if they are allowed to grow unchecked, when one wants to put them out, it is too late.

And so that their instruction may be as wide as possible, let fathers and mothers of families take care not only to instruct their children themselves, but also, according to their means, to give their sons and daughters good masters and mistresses, who, while instructing them in virtue and Religion, will also instruct them in the

sciences or arts, so that in time they may be useful members of society and even to their own parents. For well-brought-up children are, according to the prophet, like the fruit tree planted by the running waters, which brings forth its fruit in due season.[2] And indeed experience teaches that from such well-brought-up children parents receive love, respect, obedience and help; so that parents who have taken good care of their children are the happiest and most blessed in this world and afterwards in the next for all eternity. Their children are their joy and their crown, as St. Paul said: *Vos estis gaudium meum, vos estis corona mea* \[you are my joy and my crown\].[3] That is why good children always give proofs of their goodness towards their parents while they live; and even after life, when they die, they have their funeral rites and suffrages offered for them.

On this matter of the death of parents and other relations, We wish to remind you of what St. Paul said to the faithful of Thessalonica: *And we will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope* (ch. 4, v. 12). The commentators say that Gentiles, pagans, heretics and unbelievers, when their parents, relations and friends die, weep, and must weep much, because they have not, nor can have, any hope of their eternal salvation. But Christians have this consoling hope of the salvation of their parents; and what good children ought to do is to offer prayers, sacrifices and alms for the repose of their parents' souls, which St. Augustine says has always been the practice of the Church. And We cannot but exhort you to the same as the Apostle. That you should feel some grief at the death of your parents is very reasonable; but you must console yourselves at once with this hope. No doubt, if you and your parents were pagans or heretics, We would say to you: Weep, cry out without consolation, and not for one day only, but for months, and even whole years; We would tell you, if you were Gentiles, that you should shut yourselves up in your houses and stay there groaning continually. But you and your parents are Christians; and to weep without consolation and cry out at their death shows ignorance of this most consoling truth. To shut oneself up at home for a long time, failing to fulfil the precept of hearing Mass because of mourning, is a sign of little faith, little instruction and less Religion; it gives it to be understood that he who does so is a Christian in name only, but in deeds a pagan. So, beloved children, at the death of your parents do not be disconsolate. We do not say by this that you should not feel some grief and sorrow, which is very natural; what We mean is that you should not give yourselves up to despair, nor cry out without measure, bursting out perhaps in blasphemous and heretical expressions against God, the Most Holy Virgin and the Saints; and that you should not omit attendance at holy Mass on days of precept. In some places We have seen, to the great comfort of Our heart, that when someone in the family dies, on the first day they can his relations go to church to hear holy Mass and receive the holy sacraments, which they offer in suffrage for the soul of the deceased, conforming themselves to the will of God, who has been pleased to take him to heaven to give him the reward of his virtues. Would that all Christians did so! For in this way they would give proof of being well instructed, of being devout and of being good children of the family.

Servants, men and women, and slaves, men and women, are part of the family;[4] and therefore, so that all may be well ordered, We shall say briefly what are the chief obligations of slaves. They come down to loving, respecting and obeying their masters, mistresses, overseers and other superiors.

In the first place, they must love them, as nature itself teaches. For if a little dog or other small domestic animal loves its master or owner who gives it food and shelter, with how much more reason should slaves, as rational creatures, show themselves grateful to their superiors who give them food, clothing and shelter?

In the second place, they must respect their superiors, reverence their persons and comply with their arrangements, without murmuring or complaining of what they command.

In the third place, they must obey and carry out what their masters and superiors command, as promptly as they can and as well as they know how, unless they know that what is commanded is a sin; for then they neither must nor can obey. But in everything else they must, as the law of God commands.

To every slave in this Our diocese We command that he keep well engraved on his heart this truth, which We have seen proved with Our own eyes: that if he is good, his master will be good; but if he is bad, he will find his masters bad. We have seen that servants who complain of their masters are ordinarily so because they are bad servants; for good servants who do their duty are much loved and very well treated by their masters, as We know and have seen. But though We have said that masters love and treat good servants or slaves well, and that if anyone is punished it is for correction and not out of cruelty or any other inhuman passion, nevertheless We would fail in Our duty as prelate if We did not say here a word about the duties of masters towards their slaves. What We mean to say will not be of Our own devising; it will only be to recall what is laid down and commanded in the Synodal Constitutions of this archdiocese, in the Laws of the Indies and in the Edict of Good Government.

First obligation. You must instruct your slaves, or have them instructed by suitable persons, in Christian doctrine and the maxims of the Christian Religion. So it is commanded by the Laws of the Indies (laws 12, 13 and 14, title 1, book 4; Edict of Good Government, articles 1 and 2 of the Slave Regulations; Synodal Constitutions, constitution 7, title 4, book 1): "We command, and on behalf of God Almighty affectionately ask, the masters, stewards and overseers, that on all sugar mills, cattle ranches, farms and other country estates, before beginning the day's work in the morning, all the slaves recite the Christian doctrine, being taught by whoever knows it best, and that unhurriedly, calling to account those who show themselves most careless in learning it; and let them not wait until after work, when, being tired, they cannot attend to what is said to them." As to the hour, you have just heard that the Synodal Constitutions say in the morning. The Edict says at night, and the laws say at the hour that least hinders the masters' service. And We say: let it be done at the hour you judge most suitable, provided it is done. "They shall take the greatest possible care and diligence to make them understand the obedience they owe the constituted authorities, the obligation to reverence Priests, to respect white persons, to behave well towards people of colour and to live in good harmony with their companions" (article 4, Slave Regulations).

Second obligation. You must see to it that every day they say the Holy Rosary or perform other devotions (article 2, Slave Regulations).

Third obligation. You must see to it that they keep holy the feast days. "On Sundays and feasts of both precepts, after fulfilling their religious practices, the owners or managers of estates may employ their workforce for two hours in cleaning the houses and workshops, but no longer, nor occupy them in the labours of the estate, unless it be at harvest time or in other tasks that admit of no delay; for in these cases they shall work as on working days" (article 3, Slave Regulations). "On Sundays and feasts of both precepts, and in the hours of rest on working days, slaves shall be allowed to employ themselves within the estate in handiwork or occupations for their own personal benefit and profit, so that they may acquire savings and obtain their freedom" (article 13, Slave Regulations).[5] "Sundays and feast days are so sacred that God has dedicated them so that men may remember their Creator and thank Him for the benefits they receive every day from His bounty, praise the Lord, abstain from servile works and rest from bodily labour; which many merchants, tradesmen and masters with their slaves do not do. Therefore We command all merchants and other persons who have shops not to open them on the said Sundays and feast days, and that tradesmen of any trade whatever not work on them under any pretext… Likewise We command the owners of sugar mills so to arrange the sugar tasks that no part of a feast day is caught up in them; and that they not make them twist ropes or *manjarrias*, repair fences, fill the troughs with water, wrap the sugar, bring it to the city or do the other tasks they are accustomed to, which consist of personal labour; nor set them to grinding from nightfall on a feast day; and that masters who hire out slaves, men and women, for wages not send them out to earn on those days nor take wages from them for those days" (Synodal Constitutions, constitution 3, title 1, book 2).

Fourth obligation. You must see to it that slaves receive the holy Sacraments, as is laid down in the Laws of the Indies, laws 19 and 20, title 1, book 1. And in the Edict of Good Government we read: "Masters shall

teach their slaves all that the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church requires for receiving the Sacraments; and those who fail in this duty shall pay a fine of fifty pesos if they have not done so within the space of time which, in the judgment of the authority, might have been sufficient, given the capacity and circumstances of the slave" (article 5, Edict of Good Government). The same Edict lays down that masters shall take care, on their own responsibility, that slaves already baptized who have reached the necessary age receive the Sacraments, as holy mother Church has laid down, or as necessary (article 4, Slave Regulations). And in the Synodal Constitutions (constitution 3, title 12, book 3): "All the Christian faithful are bound under mortal sin to receive the holy sacrament of the Eucharist not only at Easter time but also when they are in danger of death." And in another place the following is laid down: "We command the owners of cattle ranches and farms that, having any sick person on them, they notify the parish priests of the territory where he is, so that they may administer to him the holy sacrament of Extreme Unction and those of Penance and the Eucharist" (Synodal Constitutions, constitution 1, title 4, book 1).

Fifth obligation. You must see to it that slaves do not live unlawfully or in concubinage. Besides concubinage being forbidden by the Laws of the Indies, laws 5 and 8, title 8, book 7, the Edict of Good Government forbids it: "Owners of slaves shall prevent illicit dealings between the sexes, encouraging marriages; they shall not prevent them from marrying those of other owners, and shall provide that married couples live together under one roof" (article 29, Slave Regulations).

Sixth obligation. You must see to it that married slaves live together as husband and wife. "To achieve this reunion, and so that the spouses may fulfil the end of matrimony, the wife shall follow the husband, his owner buying her at the price agreed with her owner, or, failing agreement, at a fair valuation by experts for both parties and a third in case of disagreement; and if the husband's master does not agree to make the purchase, the wife's master shall have the right to buy the husband. In the event that neither owner is in a position to make the purchase incumbent on him, the married slave couple shall be sold together to a third party" (article 30, Slave Regulations).

Seventh obligation. You must take care to remove them from occasions of sin. "Masters shall take the greatest care to build for unmarried slaves spacious quarters on dry and airy ground, with separation for the two sexes, well closed and secured with a key, in which a light shall be kept burning high up all night; and, if their means allow, they shall build a separate dwelling for each married couple" (article 25, Slave Regulations).

Do not allow slaves, men or women, to go out at night; for experience has taught Us that the sins they commit on that occasion are many. Moreover it is forbidden by law 12 of the Indies, title 5, book 7, and by the Synodal Constitutions, constitution 9, title 2, book 1.

See to it also that your slaves, men and women, never lack suitable food and clothing. And at the same time you must forbid them, especially the women, excessive finery, for experience has taught Us that it is the cause and effect of many sins.

These are your chief obligations, masters and mistresses, towards your slaves, men and women, as laid down in the Laws, the Edict and the Synodal Constitutions. And lastly, as in summary, We shall say that these are the obligations God Himself marks out for you in the sacred book of Ecclesiasticus, chapter 33, verse 25, which says: *Fodder, and a wand, and a burden are for an ass: bread, and correction, and work for a slave. Cibaria, et virga, et onus asino; panis, et disciplina, et opus servo.*

And so that you may see that these obligations God speaks of, contained in these three words, *bread, discipline and work* for the servant, are the same as those wisely laid down and ordered in the Laws of the Indies, the Edict and the Synodal Constitutions, We shall tell you with Cornelius a Lapide and other commentators that by the word *bread* is meant that you must give your slaves instruction, food and clothing, and so you will keep them healthy and strong. *Discipline* means that you must instruct them in Religion and

the other Christian virtues, and correct them if necessary, and so they will be good both for themselves and for you. And lastly, *work* means that you are to keep them always occupied, and so you will have them not only healthy and virtuous, but also useful and profitable, as We know and have seen with Our own eyes.

You must remember, O masters, that you are called, and are, fathers of families. According to the author Festus, this word *familia* is taken from the word *famel*, which means slave; so the ancients said that the masters and lords of houses should be called fathers of families, so that they might remember the obligations they had not only to their children but also to their slaves, and that in everything they were to behave as good fathers. So the family will be well ordered, and the fourth foundation of public happiness will be secured.

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[1] Matt. 13:25.

[2] Ezech. 47:12; cf. Ps. 1:3.

[3] Phil. 4:1.

[4] *op. cit.*, pp. 539–548.

[5] *coartación*.

Point XX. Peace and Perseverance

Up to here, dearest children, We have spoken to you of the evils you must turn away from and the goods you must practise. We have told you by word of mouth and in writing to turn away from idleness and all its consequences, such as an evil tongue, impurity and gambling, and from everything that is evil, since it offends God, your soul and your honour. We have exhorted you to take heart and strive after what is good: the acts of Religion, the reception of the sacraments, devotion to the Most Holy Trinity, to the Lord in the Sacrament, to His most holy Passion, to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, to the Angels and Saints; and We said that for this it was good and very useful to love the reading of good books, always keeping away from the reading of bad ones. And besides, We have told you to honour authority, respect property and take good care of the family. So you will *turn away from evil and do good*.

But besides this the prophet tells you to seek peace; and this peace, according to the commentators, consists in having it with God, with oneself and with one's neighbours. You will have peace with God if you live free of sin, in divine grace; for sinners, according to the prophet, are those who have the audacity to declare war on God, becoming partisans of Lucifer. You will have peace with yourselves when you have conquered, overcome and subdued your passions; if the seat of reason is above them, and on it sit the holy fear and love of God; if you have attained the kingdom of God, which you ask for every day in the Lord's prayer when you say *thy kingdom come*; if God Himself, who is the King of peace, already reigns in your hearts. That is why another prophet tells us: *Non est pax impiis, dicit Dominus*:[1] God Himself says that the wicked shall have no peace. You will have peace with your neighbour if you strive to love one another as good brothers, not coveting one another's goods, but rather helping one another, bearing with one another's temper, ailments and annoyances, striving, as the Apostle says, as much as lies in you, to have peace with all men.[2]

Finally, you must love not only your own peace but also that of your neighbours, making peace between them when you see them at odds or quarrelling. And above all you must promote peace between God and men by seeking their amendment and correction; for, as We have said, sinners are those who have declared war on God, and to seek their conversion is to seek to make peace between God and men. Then you will be called children of God, as the Gospel says: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God;[3] and you will imitate the Son of God Himself, who came to make peace between God and men by converting sinners. You see, then, whether the conversion of sinners is an occupation worthy of a Christian. Counsel them, then, and exhort them; and when you know that someone is going astray or living badly, do not rest until you see him amended: now using good words and reflections, now making use of other persons, now commending them to God, and finally by good example.

And indeed to correct our neighbours is a grave obligation, founded on divine and natural law, and one that cannot be set aside whenever, having regard to the person, place and time, it may be hoped that it will be of profit to the neighbour; taking care, as to the manner of correcting, for the decorum and good name of the sinner. We say that this obligation of correcting one's neighbour is founded on divine law, as we read in the sacred book of Ecclesiasticus, chapter 17, verse 12: *God has charged each one with the care of his neighbour's spiritual health.* And indeed God is our Father who is in heaven and wills that we all be saved; that is why He created the whole universe, so that we might more easily attain our last end. He has commanded His angels to guard us and guide us along the roads that lead to heaven, where we shall be united with Him who is our Father. He commands all of us, as children of so good a Father, to love one another, to correct, assist and help one another as good brothers. And so that His will might be seen more clearly, and they might know how this precept was to be fulfilled, He sent us His most holy Son, who, becoming our brother, teaches us by His example and instructs us by His word when He says: *But if thy brother shall offend against thee* (before thee, or with thy knowledge), *go, and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother* (Matt. 18:15). In this way, by correction, that brother of ours who was lost through sin is gained for God. *And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more… And if he will not hear them, tell the church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.*

It is also of natural law to correct our brothers, and you will be able to understand it by these simple comparisons.

If you saw that your neighbour's house had caught fire, would you not try to put it out? Why, then, will you not try to put out the fire of hell, which is the vice or sin that has caught in your neighbour's heart? If a friend of yours were in bodily need, would you not help him? Why, then, do you not help the spiritual need he is in? If your neighbour were suffering from some disease that had brought him to the point of death, would you not seek some remedy for him, if you could? And if he were so ill that he had lost his reason and was delirious, insulting you perhaps because you made him take some medicine or remedy, instead of heeding all his abuse you would be moved the more to pity, and seek his relief by every possible means; and when you could not give it, you would call the physician and tell him all you knew about him, so that, being well informed, he might hit on the remedy. You must do as much for the spiritual good of your neighbour when he is living badly. Perhaps, like a madman, to use St. Augustine's expression, he will be angry with you; but think that the unhappy man is not in his right mind, that he is mad, according to the Scriptures. Afterwards he himself will thank you if you succeed in converting him.[4]

To encourage and strengthen your zeal and charity, We beg you, and by the wounds of Jesus and the sorrows of Mary most holy We ask you, and by the authority We have We exhort you: when you know that someone is living in concubinage under one roof, or has illicit relations even in a separate place, or gives some other scandal, warn him if possible; and if he pays no heed to your counsel, join with one or two others and try to persuade him to give up his evil life; but if he nevertheless persists obstinately in his evil life, inform the parish priest. You may omit these steps when you have not the courage to admonish the scandalous sinner, or expect no amendment from your counsel. But then you will go at once to the parish priest, whose office it is to admonish such scandalous persons, an obligation We have strongly charged him with, so much so that if he were negligent We would proceed against him. But We do not doubt that he will fulfil this duty, exhorting and using all the means his zeal may dictate; and if he cannot succeed by himself, let him ask help of the local authority; and if all these steps are useless, let him inform Us, so that We may exhaust the means Our authority affords Us to remove the bad leaven that may corrupt the whole mass. This is the way to obtain peace between God and men, and to have it within ourselves, by banishing vices and scandals. This correction is a work of very great charity: because of the good done to the neighbour, pouring, like another charitable Samaritan, the oil and wine of correction on the wounds of the scandalous man when we find him

half dead on the road of this world; because of the good done to the public, by removing from the midst of society the scandal that does it so much harm; and finally because in this way sin is destroyed, which is the only thing that makes us break peace with God. We do not doubt, dearest children, that you will strive with all earnestness to obtain so holy and glorious a peace, a peace which, before you reach heaven, while you are still living in this world, merits for you the most noble title of children of God;[5] and there in heaven the God of peace Himself will be your wage and reward. And what great praises will Jesus Christ give you on the day of judgment! For if the corporal works of mercy will be so praised and rewarded, much more will the spiritual ones be, such as correcting one's neighbour and procuring this peace, which prevents so many evils and causes so many goods to soul and body, in time and in eternity. But woe to those who, being able, do not do this work of mercy for their neighbours! For they will be judged by God without mercy, and perhaps in that terrible tribunal they will be charged with those sins which would not have been committed if they had corrected their neighbour in time.

You will have observed, dearest children, that according to the words of the text proposed, We have told you not only to seek peace, but to strive to attain it and keep it once you have obtained it. This means that you must persevere in the virtue you have taken up and in practising all We have told you by word of mouth and now in writing. This is what matters, my children: perseverance; for he who does not persevere loses everything. That is why Jesus Christ said: He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.[6] We repeat the same to you: if you persevere to the end, you will be saved. Perseverance is secured by the practices We have recommended to you for each day, each week, each year and always. We commend Our constant preaching to you. Go over the devout little books We have distributed to you, especially the *Manna* and the *Camino recto*; read and reread them attentively; practise with fervour and devotion all you learn there; and We give you Our word that you will be happy in this world, as far as may be, and afterwards will obtain the happiness of heaven, which We so desire for you.

And so that all We tell you in this Pastoral Letter may come to the knowledge of all, and be fulfilled and observed to the letter, We command all the Reverend parish priests and administrators to read, at the offertory of the Mass on Sundays, two points each Sunday in place of the Catechism, in addition to the acts of faith, as We commanded in the Letter We addressed to the clergy. And We shall take special pleasure in knowing that both the Reverend parish priests and all of you faithfully fulfil all We have ordered in the present Pastoral Letter, for the greater glory of God and the good of your souls. Meanwhile We give you Our pastoral blessing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Cuba, 25 March 1853.

ANTONY MARY, *Archbishop of Cuba.*

By command of His Excellency the Most Illustrious Archbishop, my Lord,\ FELIPE ROVIRA, *Priest, Secretary.*

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[1] Isa. 48:22.

[2] Rom. 12:18.

[3] Matt. 5:9.

[4] *Autobiography*, no. 208. *Spiritual Notes.*

[5] Matt. 5:9.

[6] Matt. 24:13.

Resolutions Made by a Fervent Christian, Devoted to Mary Most Holy, to Keep the Fruit and Grace of the Holy Mission

1. Every day I will say: God is looking at me, God sees me, God hears me; and shall I have the boldness to sin in His presence? Moreover, I will consider that life passes like a dream; that death is near me, calling me and telling me that the Lord is to judge me for all my thoughts, words and deeds; and that if He finds me in grace He will give me the eternal happiness of heaven, but if I am in mortal sin I shall go out from His tribunal condemned for ever to the fire of hell with the devils; and I cannot escape this judgment, do what I will.

2. Every day I will make the Christian's exercises morning and night, say a part of the rosary, a Hail Mary each time the clock strikes the hour, and ask the Lord's blessing before dinner and supper, giving Him thanks afterwards, all as it is in the *Camino recto y seguro para llegar al cielo*.

3. Every day I will spend at least a quarter of an hour in mental prayer and another quarter in spiritual reading. For this purpose, just as every craftsman needs tools to work and earn his living, so I, as a Christian, in order to practise good works well and earn heaven, will take care to have some spiritual books, such as the *Camino recto* already mentioned, the *Manna*, the *Catechism Explained* with pictures, Villacastín, the *Devout Life*[1] of St. Francis de Sales and others.

4. On all Sundays and feast days I will attend holy Mass and the other functions of the Church, especially the High Mass, and there in God's presence I will examine myself whether I have kept these resolutions. During the day I will occupy myself in reading devout books, in prayer and in works of Christian charity and piety.

5. At least once each month I will receive the holy sacraments of confession and communion.

6. Never out of human respect will I fail to practise what I ought out of obligation and devotion.

7. I will keep away from those persons, things and places that may give me occasion to sin, such as bad company, love affairs, games of dice, cards and cockfights, dances, theatres, taverns, roaming about at night, looking at provocative pictures and reading indecent and impious books.

8. I will take care to keep my senses recollected: my sight, by not looking at objects that may provoke me to sin; my hearing, by not listening to obscene songs, indecent conversation or gossip; and above all my tongue, taking care not to fail by the least word in the charity and respect due to my neighbour.

9. I will never utter bad words; and if ever any blasphemy, curse, indecency or other bad expression should come out of my mouth, at the first opportunity I will kneel down, make a cross on the ground with my tongue, kiss it and say a Hail Mary.

10. I will wish everyone well and no one ill. But if ever I feel moved to revenge for some injury received, I will say an Our Father and Hail Mary for that neighbour, forgiving him with all my heart and asking God to forgive him, as I wish to be forgiven myself.

11. I will treat my neighbours as I would wish to be treated, and will not do to others what I would not wish done to me. Therefore I will not speak ill of anyone, because I do not like others to speak ill of me. I will not steal what belongs to others, because I would not like to be robbed or harmed.

12. I will take care to be always decently and usefully occupied, and never idle, because I know that idleness is the mother and mistress of vices, of poverty and of unhappiness.

13. I will abstain from indecent thoughts, words and deeds, alone and with others; and to obtain the grace I need, I will say three Hail Marys to Mary most holy every day, invoking her besides with a Hail Mary each time I feel tempted.

14. If ever I should fall into mortal sin, which God forbid, I will rouse myself to acts of contrition, asking God's forgiveness, and I will go to confession as soon as I can.

These are the resolutions I have formed, written and signed, and desire to keep with the help of the Lord and with the grace I hope to obtain through the merits of Jesus Christ and the intercession of Mary most holy, the Saint my patron and my Guardian Angel. Amen.

N. N.

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[1] St. Francis de Sales, *Introducción a la vida devota* (Barcelona: Librería Religiosa, 1859).