St. John Vianney, Curé of Ars

SERMONS FOR THE SUNDAYS AND FEASTS OF THE YEAR

From the French of the Lecoffre edition (1883)

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 *Sermons du vénérable serviteur de Dieu Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney, curé d'Ars*, four tomes (Paris: Victor Lecoffre; Lyon: Ed. Ruban, 1883): the whole of the seventy-seven sermons in the order of the four tomes — Advent to Good Friday; Low Sunday to the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost; the twelfth to the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost; and the feasts with miscellaneous sermons. The editors' prefaces and notes are not included. Some of these sermons have been put into English before, in selections; the four tomes have not been translated whole.

French idioms that are hard to render are noted in square brackets after the English. Where the printed sermons break off (the editors' "…"), the translation breaks off with them. The sermon for the fourth Sunday of Lent on the death of the sinner is short because the French itself is unfinished (*inachevé*). The translation gives no page references to the French edition.

Tome I — Advent through Good Friday

1st Sunday of Advent — On the Last Judgment

Tune videbunt Filium hominis venientem cum potestate magna et majestate. Then they will see the Son of Man coming with great power and terrible majesty, surrounded by angels and saints. (Gospel according to St. Luke, xxi, 27.)

My brethren, it is no longer a God clothed in weakness, born in the darkness of a poor stable, lying in a manger, filled with reproaches, crushed under the heavy burden of his cross; he is a God clothed in all the splendor of his power and majesty, which announces his coming by the most frightening miracles, that is to say, by the eclipse of the sun, of the moon, by the fall of the stars, and by an entire upheaval of nature. It is no longer a Savior who comes with the gentleness of a lamb, to be judged of men and redeem them: he is a Judge justly angered, who judges men in all rigor of his justice. He is no longer a charitable Pastor who comes to seek out his lost sheep and forgive them: it is a vengeful God who comes to separate for ever [pour jamais] sinners from the righteous, overwhelm the wicked with his more terrible vengeance, and bury the righteous in a torrent of consolations. Terrible moment, dreadful moment, when will you arrive? unfortunate moment, alas! maybe in a few mornings we will hear the harbingers of this Judge so formidable to the sinner. O you sinners, come out of the tomb of your sins, come to the tribunal of God, come and learn the manner in which the sinner will be treated. The ungodly, in this world, seems to want to ignore the power of God, seeing sinners without punishment; he even goes to the point of saying: No, no, there is neither God nor hell; or good: God does not pay attention to what happens on the earth. But let us wait for the judgment, and in this great day, God will manifest his power and show everyone your nations that he has seen everything and counted everything. What a difference, my brethren, from these wonders that he wrought by creating the world! Let the waters, says the Lord, water and fertilize the earth; and, from the very moment, the waters covered the earth and gave it fertility. But when he comes to destroy the world, he will command the sea to cross its limits with a terrible impetuosity which will engulf the whole universe in his fury. When God created the sky, he ordered the stars to attach themselves to the firmament. In his voice, the sun lighted the day, and the moon ruled over the night. But in on this last day the sun will be darkened, and the moon and the stars will no longer give light. All these stars wonderful will fall with a terrible crash. What a difference, my brethren! God, in creating the world, spent six days; but to destroy it, a wink will suffice. To create the universe and everything it contains, God called no spectator of so many wonders; but to destroy it, all people will be present, all nations will confess that there is one God and how powerful he is, Come, you impious laughers, come, refined unbelievers, come and learn or recognize if there is a God, if he has seen everything you do, and if he is all-powerful! O my God! that the sinner will change his language in this moment! only regrets! oh! only repentance for having left such precious time! But it is no longer time, all is over for the sinner, all is hopeless! Oh! How terrible this moment will be! Saint Luke tells us that men will dry up with fear on the soles of their feet, thinking of the misfortunes that are prepared for them. Alas! My brethren, we can dry well of fear and to die of fright, waiting for a a misfortune infinitely less great than the one whose the sinner is threatened, and which will most certainly happen to him if he continues to live in sin. In this moment, my brethren, that I. disposes myself to you talk about the judgment, where we will all appear to give an account [rendre compte] of all the good and evil that we will have done, to receive our final sentence for the heaven or hell: if already an angel came to announce to you from God that in twenty-four hours, the whole universe will be burned by a rain of fire and sulfur, that you begin to hear the thunders rumbling, the fury of the storms overturning your houses, lightning so multiplied that the universe we were nothing more than a madman's globe, and hell was already vomiting all his reprobate whose cries and howls are make it heard to the corners of the world; that the only one way to avoid all these misfortunes was to leave sin and to do penance; could you, my brethren, hear- kill all these men without pouring torrents of blood mes and cry

for mercy. Wouldn't we see you throw them at the foot of altars to ask for mercy? 0 blindness, oh incomprehensible misfortune of man sinner I the evils that your pastor announces to you are even infinitely more terrible and worthy of arra- dear your tears, to tear your hearts. Alas, these terrible truths will be so many sentences which will pronounce your eternal condemnation. But the greatest of all misfortunes is that you are insensitive to it, and that you continue to live in sin, and do not recognize your folly only at the moment when you no longer have any remedies. Another moment, and this sinner, who lived in peace in sin, will be judged and condemned; one more moment, and he will carry his regrets into eternity. Yes, my brethren, we will be judged, nothing so certain; yes, we will be judged without mercy [sans miséricorde]; yes, we will eternally regret having sinned.

I. —We read in Holy Scripture, my brethren, that every time God wants to send some plague to world or to his Church, he always preceded some sign to begin to throw terror into the hearts and to lead them to bend his justice. Wanting destroy the universe with a flood, Noah's ark, which remained a hundred years to build, was a sign to carry (men) to penance, otherwise they all had to perish. The historian Josephus tells us that before the destruction from the city of Jerusalem, there appeared for a long time a comet in the shape of a cutlass, which caused consternation in the world. Everyone said to themselves: Alas, what does that mean? this sign? perhaps it is some great misfortune that God will send us. The moon remained eight nights without give light; people already seemed to no longer be able to live. all of a sudden [Tout à coup], there appeared an unknown man, who, for three years, did nothing else what to shout through the streets of. Jerusalem, day and night: Woe to Jerusalem! Woe to Jerusalem! We takes, they beat him with rods to prevent him from screaming, nothing stops him. After three years, he exclaims: Ah! woe to Jerusalem; ah! woe (to me.) A stone thrown by a machine falls on him, and crushes him right now. So, all the evils of which this stranger had threatened Jerusalem fell to him. The famine was so great, that mothers went so far as to slit the throats of their children to use as food. The inhabitants, without knowing why, they slit each other's throats; there the city was taken and almost destroyed; the streets and places were all covered with corpses; the blood flowed like rivers; the few who saved their lives were sold as slaves. But, as the day of judgment will be the most terrible and the scariest that has ever been, it will be preceded by signs so frightening that they will throw terror to the bottom of the abyss. Our Lord tells us that, in this unfortunate moment for the sinner, the sun will no longer give light, that the moon will be like a mass of blood, and the stars will fall from sky. The air will be so full of lightning that it will be all in fire, and thunder will be heard, the noise of which will be so great that men will dry up with fear on the soles of their feet. The winds will be so fierce that nothing will be able to resist them. The trees and the houses, will be dragged into the chaos of the sea; the sea itself even will be so agitated by storms that its waves will rise up to four cubits (above) the highest mountains, and will descend so low that Ton will see the horrors of the hell; all creatures, even inanimate, will seem to want to annihilate themselves to avoid the presence of their Creator by seeing how the crimes of 3 men have defiled and disfigured the earth. The waters of the seas and rivers will boil like oils in the braziers; trees and plants will vomit torrents of blood; the tremors of earth will be so large that we will see the earth opening up all sides; most trees and beasts will be damaged, the men who remain will be like fools; the rocks, the mountains will collapse with a terrible fury. After all these horrors, the fire will be lit in the four corners of the world, but a fire so violent that it will burn stones, rocks and earth, like a straw that is thrown into a furnace. The whole universe will be reduced to ashes; this must land that has been stained by so many crimes be purified by the fire which will be kindled by the wrath of the Lord, of a God precisely (irritated.) Afterwards, my brethren, this earth covered with so many crimes will be cleansed, God will send his angels who will sound their trumpets to the four corners of the world, who will say to all the dead: Rise up, dead, come out your tombs, come and appear at the judgment. So all the dead, good and bad, righteous and sinners will return to the same forms they once had, the sea will vomit out all the corpses that are contained in its chaos, the earth will reject all bodies together velis for so many centuries in its bosom. After this revolution, all the souls of the saints will descend from heaven all radiant with glory, each soul will approach his body giving him a

thousand and a thousand blessings. Come, she will say to him, come, the compa- gnot of my sufferings; if you worked to please to God; if you have made your happiness consist in the sufferings and the struggles, oh! what good things we are reserved. It has already been more than a thousand (years) since I enjoy this happiness; Oh! what a joy for me to come announce to you so many goods which are prepared for us for eternity. Come, blessed eyes, who so often you are closed to the sight of impure objects, fear of losing grace of your God, come to heaven where you will only see beauties that one would never see in this world. Come, my ears, which have abhorred impure and slanderous words and speeches; come, and you will hear this celestial music in the sky, which will throw you into continual rapture. Come, my feet and my hands which, so often, you are employed to relieve the unfortunate; let's spend our eternity in this beautiful sky where we will see our kind and charitable Savior who loved us so much. Ah! you there see Him who, so many times, came to rest in your heart. Ah there we will see this hand still tinted with blood of our divine Savior, by which he has merited for us so much joy. Finally, the body and soul of the saints will give a thousand and a thousand blessings, and this for all eternity. After all the saints have resumed their bodies all radiant with glory, all there, according to the good works and the penances that they have done, will wait with pleasure the moment when God will reveal in the face of [à la face de] the whole universe, all the tears, all the penances, all the good that they will have accomplished during their life without even leave only one, nor one, all already happy with the happiness of God himself. Wait, tell them Jesus Christ himself, wait", I want the whole universe to see how much pleasure you have worked. hardened sinners, the unbelievers said that I was indifferent to everything you did for me; but I will show them today that I saw and counted all the tears that you shed in the depths of the deserts; I'm going to show them today that I was next of you on the scaffolds. Come all of you, and appear before these sinners who have despised and insulted me, who have dared to deny that I existed, that I saw them. Come, my children, come my beloved and you will see how much I have been good, how great my love has been for you. Let us contemplate, my brethren, for a moment, this infinite number of righteous souls returning to their bodies which they return similar to beautiful suns. You will see all these martyrs, palm in hand. Do you see all these virgins, the crown of virginity on the head. See you all these apostles, all these priests; as much as they saved (of souls), so many rays of glory with which they are embellished read. My brethren, all will say to Mary, this Virgin Mother: Al- let us join Him who is in heaven to give a new shine to your beauties. But no, a moment of patience; you were mis- prized, slandered and persecuted by the wicked, he is righteous, before entering this eternal kingdom, may sinners come to you make public amends [faire amende honorable]. But, terrible and frightening revolution, I hear the same trumpet which cries to the reprobate to come out of hells. Come, sinners, executioners and tyrants, God will say who wanted to save you all, come, appear at the tribunal of the Son of Man, to him of whom you have so often dared to persuade you that he neither saw you nor heard you! Come and appear, for all you you have ever committed will be manifested in front of the whole universe. Then the angel will cry: Abysses of hell, open your doors I vomit out all these reprobate I judge them calls. Oh terrible moment! all these unfortunate people reprobate souls, horrible as demons, will come out abysses, will go, like desperate people, to seek their bodies. Ah! cruel moment! in the moment when the soul enters his body, this body will experience all the rigors of hell. Ah! this cursed body, these cursed souls will give themselves a thousand and a thousand curses. Ah! cursed body, will say the soul to its body which rolled and dragged in the mire of its impurities; there are already more than a thousand years that I suffer and burn in hell. Come, cursed eyes, which so many times took pleasure in making dishonest looks at you or others, come to hell to contemplate the most horrible monsters. Come, cursed ears, which have taken so much pleasure in these words, in these impure speeches, come forever hear the cries, the howls and the roars of demons. Come, cursed tongue and cursed mouth, which so many times you gave kisses impure and who have spared nothing to please your sensuality and your gluttony; come to hell where you will only have the gall of dragons for food. Come, cursed body, which I tried so hard to satisfy; come, you will lie for eternity in a lake of fire and sulfur, kindled by the power and wrath of God! Ah! who will be able to understand and tell us the curses that body and soul will vomit during all eternity. Yes, my brethren, here are all the righteous and the reprobate who

have returned to their old form, that is to say their bodies as we see them now, awaiting their judge, but a just judge and without compassion, for deny or reward, according to the good and evil we will have done. There he comes, seated on a throne, bursting with glory, surrounded by all the angels, the standard of his cross, who will go before him. The damned seeing their judge; ah! what am I saying [que dis-je]? seeing the one they saw only to give them the happiness of paradise, and who, despite himself, have damned themselves: Mountains, they will cry, crush us, tear us from the face of our judge; rocks, fall on us; ah! of grace, throw us into hell! No, no, sinner, move forward and come give an account [rendre compte] with all your life. Advance, unhappy, who so despised such a good God. Ah! my judge, my father, my creator, where are my father, my mother who damned me? ah! I want to see them; ah! I I want to ask them for heaven, which they let me lose. My father and my mother, it is you who damned me; it is you who are the cause of my misfortune. No, no, advance towards the tribunal of your God, all is lost [tout est perdu] to you. Ah! my judge, this young girl will cry, where is this libertine who stole heaven from me? No, no, advance there is no more help,... — you are damned! no more hope for you: yes, you are lost! yes, all is lost [tout est perdu],

1st r SUNDAY OF Ï/ADVENT. he since you have lost your soul and your God. Ah! who will be able to understand the misfortune of a damned person who sees with regard to [vis-à-vis de] him, that is to say on the side of the saints, a father or mother all radiant with glory and for heaven, and see yourself reserved for hell I Mountains, these reprobates will say, tear us away; ah! Please, fall on us! Ah! doors of the abyss, open to hide us! No, sinner, you have always despised my commandments: but today I want show you that I am your master. Appear before me with all your crimes of which life is only a tissue. Ah! it's then, the prophet Ezekiel tells us, may the Lord will take this large miraculous sheet, where are written and recorded all the crimes of men. How many sins which have never appeared before the eyes of the universe and which will appear. Ah! tremble, you who, perhaps for fifteen or twenty years, have accumulated sins on sins. Ah, woe to you! Then Jesus Christ, the book of consciences in his hand, will call all sinners to convince them of all the sins they have committed throughout their lives, in a tone of terrible thunder. Come, you shameless ones, he will say to them, come near and read day by day; here it is all those thoughts that have soiled your imagination, all those shameful desires that have corrupted your heart; read and count your adulteries, this is the place, the time when you committed them, this is the person with whom you have sinned. Read all your lewdness and lewdness, read and count how much you have lost of souls that had cost me so dear. There were more than a thousand years that your body was rotten and your soul in hell, that your libertinage still led to souls in hell. Do you see this woman that you lost due, see this husband, these children and these neighbors! all now demand vengeance, everyone accuses you that you have lost and that without you they would be for heaven. Come, worldly girls, instruments of Satan, come and read all these cares and times that you have taken bent on adorning you; count the number of bad ones evil thoughts and desires that you have given to those who saw you. Do you see all the souls who shout that it's you who lost them. Come on, me- saying, sowers of false reports, come and read, behold where are marked all your slanders, your taunts and your darkness; here are all the divisions that you have caused; here are all the problems you have gives birth, all the losses and all the evils that your cursed tongue was the first cause. Come on, unfortunately- rous, hear in hell the terrible cries and howls of demons. Come, cursed misers, read > and count this money and these perishable goods to which you have set your heart in contempt of your God, and for which you sacrificed your soul. Do you have forgot your harshness for the poor? There it is, read, and count it. Here's your gold and silver, ask them now for help, tell them they're pulling you out my hands. Go, cursed, cry famine [crier famine] to the hell. Come vindictive, read and see all you have done to harm your neighbor, count all these injustices, count all these thoughts of hatred and revenge that you have nourished in your heart; come on, unhappy, in hell. (You have been) rebels: my ministers have said (you) a thousand times that if you did not love not your neighbor like yourself, (there was) no forgiveness for you. Get away from me, bad- say, go to hell, where you (will be) the victim of my eternal wrath, where you will learn that vengeance is only for God alone. Come, come, drunkard, look, there's even a glass of wine, even a piece of bread that you took from the mouth of your wife

and your children; here are all your excesses, do you recognize them? are- Is this yours, or those of your neighbor? This is the number of nights, of days that you spent in cabarets, Sundays and holidays; there you go, down to just one, the pa- dishonest roles you said in your drunkenness; here it is all the swears, all the imprecations that you have crumbs; here are all the scandals that you gave to your wife, your children and your neighbors. Yes, I wrote everything and everything counted. Go, poor wretch, get drunk in the fetters from the gall of my anger. Come, merchants, workers, of whatever state you are; come, give me back count down to a penny of everything you bought and sold; come, let's see together if your measurements and Are your accounts consistent with mine? This, merchants, is the day you deceived this child. This is what day when you charged the same thing twice. Come, profaners of the sacraments, here are all your sacrileges, all your hypocrisies. Come, fathers and mothers, give me an account of these souls that I have entrusted to you; give me an account of everything your children have done, your servants; that's all the times you've had them given permission to go to places and companies where they sinned. That's all the bad bad thoughts and desires that your daughter has given; here are all the kisses and other infamous actions; these are all these impure words that your son has spoken. But, Lord, fathers and mothers will say, I do not I didn't order him. No matter, their judge will tell them, Your children's sins are yours. Where are the virtues what did you make them practice? where are the good examples that you gave them or the good works that you gave them did you do it? Alas! what will become of these fathers and mothers who see that their children, some are going off to dance, the others in games and cabarets, and who live quiet. O my God, what blindness! Oh! that of crimes with which they will be burdened in these territories funny moments! Oh! what hidden sins that go be manifested in the face of [à la face de] the whole universe! Oh the abyss depths of hell, open yourselves to engulf these crowds of reprobate who lived only to outrage God and damn yourself. But, you will tell me, all the good works that what we have done will therefore be of no use to us? These fasts, these penances, these alms, these communions, will these confessions therefore be without reward? No, you will say Jesus Christ, all your prayers were only routine, your fasts only hypocrisies, your alms only vain glory; your work had no other aim than avarice and greed, your sufferings were accompanied only by complaints and murmurs; in what you did, I had nothing to do with it. Besides I have you rewarded with temporal goods, I blessed your work, I gave fertility to your fields, enriched your children; the little good you have done, I I gave all the reward you could for it wait. But, he will tell us, your sins still live, they will live forever before me; Come on, cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for all those who despised me during their life. A terrible sentence, but infinitely fair. What's more fair! A sinner who, all his life, has done nothing but rolling in crime, despite the graces that the good God constantly presented him with a way out of it. 1 Do you see these impious people who mocked their pastor, who despised the word of life, who ridiculed what their pastor told them? Do you see these sinners who gloried in having no religion, who mocked those who practiced it? do you see them bad Christians who so often had in their mouths these horrible blasphemies, who (said that they) found still the bread was very good and they didn't need it of confession? Do you see these unbelievers who said that when we died, everything was over? Do you see their despair, do you hear them confess their impiety? do you hear them cry for mercy? But everything is united, you only have hell to share. Do you see this proud man who mocked and despised everything the world? Do you see him damaged in his heart, condemned for eternity under the feet of demons? Do you see this unbeliever who said that there is no God, nor hell? Do you see him confessing in the face of [à la face de] to the whole universe that there is a God who judges him and a hell where he goes be rushed and never come out? It is true that God will give freedom to all sinners to give their reasons and their excuses to justify themselves, if they can. But, alas, what can a criminal say who sees only crime and ingratitude? Alas! everything that can a sinner say in this unfortunate moment will only serve to further show his impiety and his ingratitude. This, my brethren, is undoubtedly what will be most frightening in this terrible moment; it will be when we we will see that God spared nothing to save us; that he shared with us the infinite merits of his death on the cross; that he gave birth to us in the womb of his

Church; that he gave us pastors to show us and teach us everything we had to do to be happy. He gave us the sacraments to make us recover his friendship every time we lost the plane, he did not put limits on the number sins that he wanted to forgive us; if our return was sincere, we are sure of our forgiveness. He waited for us many years although we only lived to insult him; he didn't want to lose us or rather he absolutely wanted to save us; and we we didn't (want)! It is we ourselves who force it by our sins to make him bear a sentence of reproach eternal bation: Come on, cursed children, go find the one you imitated: for my part, I do not recognize you, except to crush you with all the fury of my eternal anger. Come, the Lord tells us through one of his prophets, come, men, women, rich and poor, sinners whoever you are, whatever state and condition you you be, say all together, say your reasons and I (I will say) mine. Let us enter into judgment, let us weigh all to the weight of the sanctuary. Ah terrible time for a sinner, who from whatever side he considers his life, sees only sin and no good. My God! what is he going to become! In this world, the sinner always has something excuse to allege for all the sins he has committed; he even carries his pride to the tribunal of penitence, where he should only appear to accuse himself and condemn himself. Some are ignorance; the others, temptations that are too violent; finally others, occasions and bad examples: there you go, every day, the reasons that sinners give for hiding the darkness of their crimes. Come, you proud sinners, let's see if your apologies will be well received on the day of judgment, and explain yourself to the one who has the torch by the hand, which has seen everything, and counted everything, and weighed everything. You didn't know, you say, that this was a sin! Ah! unhappy, Jesus Christ will tell you, if you were born among the idolatrous nations who have never heard talk about the true God, you could still a little apologize for your ignorance; but you, Christian, who you had the happiness of being born in the bosom of my Church, (to be) raised to the center of the light, you to whom we talk about your eternal happiness? From your childhood, we taught you everything that needed to be done for you procure it, you who never ceased to be instructed, to urge and reprove, you dare to apologize on your ignorance! Ah! unhappy, if you lived in ignorance was good because you didn't want to educate you; it was good because you didn't have wanted to take advantage of the instructions or that you had them leaks. Come on, unhappy! Come on, your excuses won't work make it even more worthy of curses! Come on, cursed child, in hell burn there with your igno- rancid. But, another will say, my passions were very strong and my weakness was very great. But, he will tell them Lord, since God was so good as to make you know your weakness, and that your pastors tell you know that you had to continually watch over yourself- even mortify yourself if you wanted to tame them; why were you doing the complete opposite? why did you take so much care to satisfy your body and your pleasures? God made you know your weakness and you were falling every moment? Why didn't you you therefore do not resort to God to ask him for his thanks? why didn't you listen to your pastors who kept urging you to ask for graces and the strengths you needed to defeat the demon? Why did you have so much indifference and of contempt for the sacraments, where you had so much graces, by force, to do good and avoid evil? why have you so often despised the word of God who would have guided you in the path that you had to take to get to him? Ah! ungrateful sinners and blind, all these goods were at your disposal, you could use it like so many others. What did- have you done to prevent yourself from falling into the sin? And you only prayed out of routine or habit. Come on, unhappy! The more you had known your weakness, the more you had to resort to God who would have supported you and helped to bring about your salvation. Come on, cursed, you are even more criminal. But, there are so many opportunities to sin, he will still say another. My friend, I know three kinds of opportunities which can lead us to sin. All states have their dangers. I say that there are three (kinds): those where we are necessarily exposed by the duties of our state, those which we encounter without seek them, and those in which we engage without necessity. If those in which we commit ourselves without necessity will not serve as excuses for us, let us not seek not to excuse one sin with another sin. You have heard a bad song sung, you say; you heard a slander or slander, and why did you go to that house or company? why do you hang out with these people without religion? Don't you know that he who exposes himself to danger is guilty and will perish there? The one who falls without exposing himself gets up immediately and his fall makes him still more vigilant and wiser. But don't you see that God who promised us his help in our

temptations did not promise it to us when we have the temerity to expose ourselves. Come on, unhappy, you you yourself tried to get lost; you deserve hell which is reserved for sinners like you. But, you will tell me, we continually have bad examples before our eyes. You have bad examples, what a frivolous excuse! If you have any bad, don't you also have good ones? Why have you not rather followed the good than the bad? When you saw this young girl go to church, the holy table, why don't you rather follow it than the one who went to the dances? When this young man came to church to worship Jesus Christ in his holy tabernacle, why did you not rather follow his traces than those of the one who went to the cabaret? Say rather, sinner, that you had preferred to follow the broad path which led you into this misfortune where you you find, that in the path that the Son of God traced itself. The real cause of your falls and your disapproval therefore comes neither from bad examples, nor opportunities, nor your weaknesses, nor the graces that missed you; but only the bad dispositions of your heart that you did not want to repress. If you have done evil, it is because you have it well-intentioned. Your loss therefore only comes of you. But, you will tell me, we had always been told that God was good. It is true that he is good, but he is fair; his goodness and mercy are passed for you: there is nothing left but his justice and his vengeance. Alas!

My brethren, we who have so much repugnance for ourselves confess, if, five minutes before this great day, God gave us priests to confess our sins, so that they were erased, alas! with what alacrity Wouldn't we benefit from it? what will not be to us never granted in this moment of despair. King Bo- goris was much wiser than us. Having been taught by a missionary of the Catholic religion, but restrained again by the false pleasures of the world, by an effect of providence of God, a Christian painter to whom he had given the commission to paint hunting in his palace the most terrible to the fierce boxes; painted him at the con- milk the last judgment, the world all on fire, Jesus Christ in the midst of thunder and lightning, hell already opened to engulf the damned, with figures so terrible that the king remained motionless. Returned to himself, he remembered what the missionary told him had said to avoid the horrors of that moment when the sinner can only share despair, and immediately renouncing all his pleasures, he spent the rest of his life in penance and tears. Alas! My brethren, if this prince had not converted, he would also have died, he would have left all his possessions and its pleasures, it is true, a little later; but, dying, for many centuries, they would have spent others. It would be in hell that would burn for ever [pour jamais], while he is in heaven for an eternity and he is happy, we are waiting for this big day, to see that everyone his sins are forgiven him and that they will not reappear never, neither in the eyes of God, nor in the eyes of men. It was this thought well meditated by Saint Jerome, which brought him to so much rigor on his body and to so much shed tears. Ah! he cried in this vast solitude,

1st r AVfiNT SUNDAY. 2t it seems to me that I hear, at every moment, this trumpet which must awaken all the dead, calling me to the tribunal of my Judge. This same thought made me tremble a David on his throne, an Augustine in the middle of his pleasures, despite all the efforts he made to stifle this thought, that one day he would be judged. He said time in time to his friend Alipe: Ah! dear friend, one day comes- dra that we will all appear before the tribunal of God to receive the reward of good or (punishment) of the evil we will have done during our life; let's leave, my dear friend, he said to him, the road to crime for that which all the saints followed. Let's prepare for this day from the present time. Saint John Climacus tells us that a solitary left his monastery to move to another to do more penance there. The first night he was cited at the tribunal of God who showed him that he was indebted towards his justice of a hundred pounds of gold. Alas! Lord, he cried, “what am I going to do to acquit them? He remained in this monastery for three years, where God allowed him to was despised and poorly treated by everyone else, to the point that it seemed no one could stand it. Our Lord appeared to him a second time saying that he had still only paid off a quarter of his debt. Ah! Lord, he cried, what must I do? to justify myself? He counterfeited the fool for thirteen years, doing whatever one wanted; he was treated harshly like a beast of burden. The good Lord appeared to him a third time telling him that he had half. Ah! Lord, since I wanted it, I must suffer to be able to pay your justice. Ah! my God! do not wait for my sins to be punished after the judgment. Saint John Climacus tells us a story

which makes you shudder. There was, he told us, a solitary who, for forty years, had been mourning his sins deep down of a wood. The day before his death, all of a sudden [tout à coup], beside himself- even, opening your eyes, looking to the right and to the left from his bed, as if he had seen someone asking him accounted for his life, he responded in a trembling voice. blante: Yes, I committed this sin, but I confessed it and I did penance for it for so many years, until what the good Lord has forgiven me. You also committed this sin, this voice told him. No, he replied. lonely, I didn't commit it. Before we die we heard him cry: My God, my God, take away, Take away, if he please, my sins before my eyes, I cannot no longer hold on to it. Alas I what will become of us, if the demon reproaches even the sins that we have not committed, we, who are completely covered with sins and (who have) done no penance; Alas! what can we expect at this terrible moment? if the saints are at barely reassured, what would become of us? What should we conclude from all this, my brethren? The here: We must never lose sight of the fact that we will be judged one day without mercy [sans miséricorde], and that all our sins will appear before the eyes of the whole universe; and, that after this judgment, if we find ourselves in these sins, we will go to mourn them in hell without being able to erase them or forget them. Oh! that we are blind, my brethren, if we do not take advantage of the little time we have left to live to secure heaven. If we are sinners, we have the hope of forgiveness; instead if we wait then, there will be no more resources. My God! give me the grace of never lose the memory of this terrible moment, especially when I am tempted, so as not to let myself succumb; so that on this day we hear these sweet words from the mouth of the Savior: “Come, you blessed of my Father, to possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. »

1st Sunday of Advent — On the Eternal Truths

Memorare novissima tua, et in aeternum non peccabis. Remember your final ends, and you will not will never poach. (EccL, seen, 40.)

My brethren, let these truths be very powerful and very salutary; since the Holy Spirit assures us that, if we meditate on them seriously, we will never sin. This is not not very difficult to understand. Indeed, my brethren, who is he who could attach himself to the goods of this world thinking that in a short time he will no longer be there; that from Adam until now, no one has taken anything away and that he will do the same? Who is the one who could do so much? take care of earthly things, being well convinced that the time he spends on earth is only given to him to work to gain heaven? Who is the one who would like to engrave in his head, even better in his heart, that the life of a Christian should only be a life of tears and penance, and could still indulge to the pleasures and crazy joys of the world? Which one is who, being fully convinced that he could die at any moment, would not always be ready? But, you will ask me, why is it that these truths, which have so much converted sinners, make so little impression on us? Alas! My brethren, it is that we do not meditate on them seriously; it is that our heart being occupied with objects sensitive who can satisfy his inclinations; it's that our mind being filled only with temporal affairs: we lose sight of these great truths which alone should be our entire occupation in this world. If you ask me why the Holy Spirit strongly recommends never losing sight of them, here is the reason: there is nothing that is more capable of detaching us from ourselves and from the goods of this world, nothing so powerful to make us bear the miseries of life in a spirit of penitence, and, if I said better, that these truths detach us from all things created to attach us only to God alone. Ah! My brethren, let us never forget these great truths, that is to say: that our life is only a dream; that death pursues us very close and that soon it will reach us; that we will one day be judged very rigorously, and that afterwards this judgment our fate will be fixed for ever [pour jamais]. See, my brethren, how much Jesus Christ desires of us save; sometimes he presents himself to us as a poor man child in his crib, lying on a handful of straw that he waters with his tears; sometimes like a criminal, bound, garroted, crowned with thorns, scourged, falling under the weight of his cross, finally. dying in torture for the love of us. If it is not able to touch us, to attract us to himself, then he makes us announce that he will come one day, clothed in all the brilliance of his glory and the majesty of his Father, to judge us without grace and without

mercy [sans miséricorde]; where he will unveil in the face of [à la face de] the whole uni- towards the good and the evil that we will have done during all moments of our lives. Tell me, my brethren, if we think- let's drink all cola, do we need more for us? to live and die as saints? But Jesus Christ, to make us clearly understand this what we must do to go to heaven, tells us in the Gospel, that the people of the world lead a life in- entirely opposed to that of those who are his all the same good. Good Christians, he tells us, make their happiness in tears, penance and contempt; but the people of the world make their happiness consist of the pleasures, joy and honors of the earth, and flee everything else; so, Jesus Christ tells us, that their life is entirely opposed to each other and that never they will not agree in their way of acting and think. Which is quite easy to understand. I say that there are four things that make a person happy good Christian, these are: the brevity of life, the thought of death, judgment and eternity. And we see that these same four things make a bad person despair Christian, that is to say a person who forgets his ends last to deal only with present things, and no to come. I therefore say 1° that the brevity of life consoles a good Christian in that he represents to himself that his sorrows, his sorrows, his persecutions, his temptations, his separation from his God, will not be long. What joy for us, my brethren, when we think that in a short time we will leave this world where we are so exposed to offending the good God, who is a Savior so charitable, who suffered so much for our sake Alas! My brethren, with this thought could we attach ourselves to the life that is filled with so much misery? Happy news, cried Saint Jerome, when they came to tell him that he was going to die, happy news which will reunite me with my God for ever [pour jamais]. And indeed, my brethren, since death is the instrument that the good Lord uses to deliver us. 2° I say that the judgment, far from [bien loin de] throw it into despair only consoles him. He will find no a harsh judge, but his father and his savior. Yes, its father who waits for him to open the depths of his mercy to him, in order to receive him into his paternal bosom; which will, I say, manifest in the face of [à la face de] the whole universe all his tears, his penances and all the good works that he did during all the days of his life. 3° The thought of eternity puts the height of his joy. If his happiness is infinite in its sweetness and its grandeur, eternity assures him that it will never end. What this thought, my brethren, must encourage us to serve us well the good Lord and to bear with patience all the miseries of life, since, once in heaven, we do not will never go out. Alas! My brethren, all the miseries of this world passes, all this only lasts a moment, instead that the reward will last forever. Courage! tells us Saint Paul, soon we will be at the end of the road. But for a Christian, my brethren, who has lost sight of the thought of its final ends, it is no longer the same; the brevity of life is a sorrow and bitterness which troubles him and gnaws him even in the midst of his pleasures; he does everything he can to keep this thought away from the dead. Everything that reminds him of it frightens him; remedies and doctors, everything is called to his aid slightest warning that death is approaching. He believes always that he will be able to find happiness here below; but no, he is wrong. This poor wretch leaving the good Lord, leave what could provide him with it; he will be forced to admit, at the hour of death, that he spent his life searching for a good that he could not find. Outside of God, alas! many sorrows, many suffering, and no consolation, and no reward think. Before his departure, he will cry out in vain, like this king of whom the Scriptures of the Old Testament speak to us, seeing himself on the verge of leaving life and all its goods: “Ah! So I must die! that I leave all these great possessions, my flowerbeds and my beautiful gardens, to go to a country where I know no one. » Alas! death which is the consolation of the righteous, becomes his despair; you have to die and there is no even thought! Ah! sad thought, we must go and give back God counts on a life which is only a chain of sins, and no good works which can reassure him. He sees clearly in the moment of his departure that the good God had only put him on earth to serve him and save his poor soul, and he only outraged the good God and losing this beautiful soul. He sees, he understands well, at that moment, that the good Lord did not want there lose, but absolutely save him; and that these are his sins which force him to condemn him. He sees that in a few minutes, he will be thrown into hell. My God, what despair! But if the thought of eternity consoles so much a Christian, in that his happiness will never end, this same thought completes the despair of this poor man unhappy. Ah! a desperate thought, one must begin one's hell to never end it. He sees, we enter, an unfortunate Cain who burns from the beginni of the world and who is not more advanced than him who

does not than to enter. So the very demons that carried him to sin with so much fury will put him before the eyes, in order to make his torture even more violent, all the graces that the good Lord had deserved for him by his death and his holy Passion. He sees how much, even by running away, he would have been happier. He sees how- well Jesus Christ was good to those who wanted to help him- Wed. But despite all these reflections which for him will be like so many hells, we will have to resolve to drink throughout eternity, with full mouth, the gall of the fury of the one who was to be all his happiness, if he had wanted to love her. Ah! sad meditation that this Christian will do throughout eternity, saying to himself himself: a despised time, a reprobate soul, a Lost God, a rejected heaven and an eternity of suffering. Ah! Heaven! what a misfortune! This, my brethren, is what the one who loses sight of his ultimate ends. But, you might say, you are saying that there is an unhappy eternity for the sinner; but it would therefore be necessary to show it to us. It would be very easy, my brethren, but that would be an affront to Christians. It would be much better for you if I could convince you to the need you have to do everything you have to do to avoid the torments. If you want, I I will tell you a few words about it in passing: since you are so ignorant or so blind as to have any doubt about that. Listen to me carefully. Here's what we're told the Holy Spirit through the mouth of the prophet Daniel: there is two kinds of men; there are some who are just, there are who are sinners; some die in the grace of God, others in his hatred. All will appear one day before the good Lord, all will wake up from the sleep of death; all will be judged and receive a sentence without appeal, after which some will have nothing more to to fear and others nothing to hope for. But the difference whoever is found between them will be good big: because some will wake up to go and enjoy with eternal glory, others to be covered of reproaches, damaged in all kinds of evils, and that throughout all eternity. The Holy Spirit tells us everywhere what will be the fate of the sinner in the other life; he us said: “The Lord will pour fire on their flesh so that may they burn and be eternally devoured. » The holy king David said: “may the sinner who has despised his God during his lifetime will be thrown into hell. » If you go further, Saint John the Baptist, preaching to the Jews the baptism of penance to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah, teaches them again what will be the fate of the sinner in the other world, telling them that Jesus Christ There will come a day when he will separate the good grain from the bad grain and chaff. The good grains which are the righteous, the Eternal Father will put them in his garner which is the sky; the bad grains and the chaff which are the sinners, will be bound in boots and will be thrown into the fire which is hell; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus Christ tells us in the Gospel that the bad rich man dies and hell is his tomb, where he suffers infinite evils. Lazarus is transported by the angels in the bosom of Abraham, that is to say in heaven. In another place he tells us, speaking of the sinner: “Go, cursed, to the fire that has been prepared for demons and to those who imitated them. » Saint Augustine tells us in speaking of the sinner: “Go, cursed, you have despised your God and his graces during life; go cursed, you will be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone for all eternity. » No, my brethren, no, all this is useless; there is no need to go to such great proofs to show you that there is a happy or unhappy life, depending on whether we have lived well or badly. Open only- your catechism and you will find everything there that you must believe, know and do. Indeed, my brethren, what was the first request someone made of you when you came to the Church to be taught? Is she not the one who created you and preserved you until what now? Didn't you just answer? what is God? And why? you were told. It is, you repeated, to know him, love him, serve him, and by this means acquire eternal life. So that's all the occupation of a good Christian and all his happiness. He must learn to know God, that is, to know the surest means he must use to please to the good Lord, avoid evil and do good. I say, my brethren, that we must love the good God. Alas! My brethren, let us not be mistaken; if we do not love the good God in this world, we will never have the happiness of loving him in the next. Have we not not said, when you came to catechism, that if you did not save your soul, everything was lost for you? that even if you cried for all eternity, you would make no progress? Have we not said by making you distinguish good from evil, that a single mortal sin could ruin you for ever [pour jamais]? that sin is the only evil you have fear, since only he has the power to separate ourselves from God for all eternity, by throwing ourselves into hell? Didn't we tell you that we will die one day, and that each day is perhaps the last for us? Have you not been reminded that at the moment

where we die, we will be judged rigorously, and that everything we have done during our life good and evil will accompany us to the judgment seat of God? Wasn't I right to tell you that we didn't have than to know what our catechism contains, and we • have all the science necessary to save ourselves. When- that you came here as a child, did you-:

have we not said that after this time which will soon end, there another will come which will never end, which will contain all kinds of good or evil, depending on whether we will have done well or badly. Tell me? My brethren, if all these truths were engraved in our hearts, could we live without loving the good God and without doing everything that depends on us to avoid all these misfortunes? Alas! My brethren, that these truths have made people tremble saints, and converted great sinners, and pushed penitents to use rigor in their penances and their macerations! We read in history, that holy Àmbroise writing to the Emperor Theodosius, who had committed a sin rather by surprise than by malice: “I saw,” says Saint Ambrose, “in a vision where the good God showed me that, seeing you come to church, he ordered me from you shut the door [fermer la porte]; that your sin had made you unworthy to enter. » After the reading this letter the emperor began to spread tears in abundance; however he goes according to his color you present yourself at the door of the church, in hope that the bishop would let himself be touched by his tears and his repentance. But the bishop, far from [bien loin de], let himself be relented like these cowardly and complacent ministers, seeing him approach the church, said to him, according to the order he had received from God, to stop, that he was unworthy of enter the house of Him whom he had dared to outrage, and to begin to atone for his sin. It's true, he said the emperor, that I am a sinner and unworthy to enter into the temple of the Lord, but the good Lord sees my repentance. David sinned well, and the Lord forgave you well. Well, Saint Ambrose told him, if you have imitated David in his sin, imitate him in his penance. The emperor, without replying to these words, withdrew; tears flow from his eyes, his heart breaks from pain, he tears off his royal clothes, takes poor and torn ones, throws himself face down on the ground, delivers to all the bitterness of pain: it resounds his palace of the most heartbreaking cries. His subjects seeing in such great desolation do not have the courage neither to see him, nor to say the slightest thing to him for console, they are content to mix their tears with those of their master; his palace is changed into a place of mourning, tears and penances. He was not satisfied to confess one's sin in the court of penitence, he admitted it publicly, so that this humiliation brought upon him the mercies of God. He was inconsolable when he saw that his subjects were going to church and that he himself was deprived of it. If he was allowed to attend a public prayer, he would appear in the manner the most humiliating; he was neither standing nor on one's knees [à genoux] like the others, but with their face prostrated against the earth that he soaked with his tears. He pulled out his hair to show the greatness of his pain; he took stones with which he bruised his chest shouting: Mercy! He retained the memory of his sin all his life; his eyes continually shed tears. But if you ask me what was the cause of so many tears, such great pain and sorrow 2 nity so extraordinary? Alas! My brethren-, the only thought that one day God would summon him before his tribunal with his sin, where he would be judged without mercy [sans miséricorde]. Alas! My brethren, if these great truths were indeed great ved in our hearts, could we live without work continually strive to appease the justice of God our sins have angered. Indeed, my brethren, who is he who, thinking that he is only in this world to save his soul, could still seek to deceive, to harm his next? Who is he who, being well convinced that all these goods that he collects at the expense of the salvation of his soul, in some time he will leave them to heirs, perhaps to ungrateful people who will dissipate them in debauchery, without perhaps making the slightest prayer for the rest of his soul? But even if they made good works, if you have left your soul in the sin, they will not get you out of hell. What is the one who could still indulge in the amusements of world which are so short and so fatal to our salvation by losing sight of the great matter of our salvation? Who is he who, being well convinced that a single mortal sin can damn him, would have the courage to commit it? or who, having the misfortune of having committed it, could still remain in such a deplorable state where the hand of God can strike him at any moment, and we would not rush to quickly have recourse to the sacrament of penance, which is the only remedy that the good God offers us in his mercy?

Which one is it, my brethren, who, thinking that he could die at any moment, would not always live trembling on the edge from the abyss? Who is the one who would cling so strongly to the life thinking that perhaps domain it will no longer be there. Who is he, my brethren, who, being very assured that at the moment he goes to appear before his God he will be judged rigorously, would not always fear to undergo a judgment so formidable, even to the most just? Who is he, my brethren, who, being very assured that after this perishable life we will have another happy one or unhappy, depending on whether we have good or bad lived, would not put all his care into meriting the goods that the good Lord prepares for those who loved him. Ah! My brethren, let's say even better, who is it who, meditating well on these great truths, would not live and would not die a saint? 0 my soul, cried a penitent saint, remember your sins and these great truths. Never forget where you come from, where you are going, who you received being, to whom you must give your heart, what you brought when you came into the world and what you will win when you come out of your exile. Alas! My brethren, we have hardly thought about all this until now; Alas! we wait to think about it until our tears and our penances be without fruit. That we would be happy, my brethren, if these great truths could dissipate the darkness which blinds us on the matter of our salvation; if we had the happiness of well-being convinced that we have been nothing but pure nothingness and miserable earthworms; that we are only sinners and guilty; that we will one day be eternally happy if we avoid sin, and eternally unhappy if we follow our inclinations. Alas! My brethren, to prepare ourselves for the terrible passage, we have not maybe just a few moments. Let's return to our hearts, my brethren, to concern ourselves only with these great truths, the only ones worthy of occupying us, the only ones capable to convert us. Let us let pass, my brethren, what passes and perishes with it

We; let us cling to what is eternal and permanent. Di- sounds to all things here below, like all the saints: nol nol you are nothing to me anymore, since, perhaps that tomorrow, you or I will no longer be; let me take advantage of the little time I have left to try if the Good God will forgive me. Ah no, no, I no longer want to live except for God, despising the perishable goods. Ah! that these saints understood well these great truths, and we can say that they have done all their work! We read in history of the Church that a large number of saints, imbued with nothingness of this world and the grandeur of eternal truths, have despised it and abandoned it to go and lock themselves up in monasteries or bury themselves in the depths of forests to have the means to meditate on them with more leisure. And there, in dark and obscure caverns, separated from the noise and tumult of the world, they were concerned only with these immutable truths; and penetrated these great feelings, they exerted on their bodies all the rigors of penance that their love for God could inspire them. Prayer, fasting and discipline reduced their bodies to a state worthy of the most great compassion. A large part did not eat only a few roots that they found while stirring the land; if they ate a few pieces, they soaked them with their tears, seeing themselves forced to relieve a body that was as dead as it was alive. So did they spend their lives which was nothing but a continual martyrdom. And when after twenty, thirty, forty or eighty years of penance, they arrived at the end of their course, still very frightened, they cried out to each other trembling: Do you think, my friends, that God will have pity our ballot boxes again and he will relent?

that he will still want to grant us forgiveness for our sins? Do you think we can still find grace before this judge who will then be without mercy [sans miséricorde]? Ah! who will pray for us, to soften the severity of our judge. Ah I can we still hope to have one day share in the happiness of the children of God? Yes, my brethren, we see that the penitent saints, after having had the happiness of knowing what it is sin, and how rigorously the good Lord punishes it in the other life, put no limits on their penances. Saint Jerome tells us that a lady Roman, having left her husband because of the vices of what he indulged in, believed that being separated by the laws, she could, without sin, remarry to another legitimate- ment. Saint Jerome tells us that having made known to him her sin, she was filled with such great pain, covered with such confusion, that she left immediately took off his worldly clothes and put on sackcloth. His disheveled hair, dirty face, dirty hands, his head covered with ashes and dust, his clothes all torn, mouth closed. In this sad equi- page, she will throw herself at the feet of the Holy Father. The Holy Father and all those who witnessed this spectacle

seemed to no longer be able to live seeing the state where this Roman lady had committed an igno- rancid. Rome, said this holy Father, resounded its pregnant with tears and the most heartbreaking cries, and seemed to want to share the pains of this great penitent. She confessed her sin publicly and always with torrents of tears. She wore her clothes of penance all his life; his pain, his penance followed to the tomb. Not satisfied with all this, she sold all her possessions which were immense, in order to

to live and die in extreme poverty. But, do you think, who was the cause of all this? Alas I the only thought that one day she would be summoned to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ with his sin. She asked for grace from God to extend a few more days of his life to give him time to do penance. Alas! she cried every moment, he I have to go and appear before the good Lord, what will I do? become if my sin is not erased by my tears and my penance? 0 happy penance! 0 tears hello- shut up! come to my aid: it is you alone that I want for all the days of my life. Alas! My brethren, says the great Saint John Climacus to us, if the thought of eternity has led so many saints to do such extraordinary penances, what will be our what happens to us, being so sinners, and no penance? My Dioul, your justice will be terrible for these poor sinners who will have nothing to lean on! “AliI my friends,” he told us, “I have seen penitents in a place that we cannot see or even think about without shed tears [verser des larmes]; in a place, I say, devoid of all human help", of all human consolation. This was only darkness, stench, and filth. Everything there was so terrible that one could not see them without crying with compassion. These illustrious and holy penitents do not saw in this place neither fire nor wine, only a few roots and a few pieces of hard, black bread that they watered with their tears. When I arrived, we said Saint John Climacus, in this place of penitence that it was rightly called: “the stay of tears and tears, "I truly live, if I dare say, what the eye of one who neglects his salvation has never seen, and what the ear of him who is slothful in his thoughts see has never heard, and what the heart of him who walk cowardly in the path of virtue has never could understand; because I assure you that I live on actions and I heard words capable of expressing it well. Some spent entire nights, standing on the at the tips of their feet and this in the rigor of winter, and, when their poor body was falling from weariness and weakness: Ah! cursed, they said to themselves, since you had the misfortune of so outraged the good Lord, you must whether you suffer either in this world or in the next. Choose the side you want to take; the sufferings of this world are only of a moment, instead of those of the other life are eternal. I saw others whose eyes always raised towards the sky, uttered the loudest cries heartbreaking asking for mercy. Others, who tied the hands, even the fingers during their prayer, like criminals and considering themselves unworthy of stare at the sky. They were so penetrated by their misery and from their nothingness that they didn't know where to start their prayer. They offered themselves to God as victims ready to be immolated. We saw others, dressed from a sack, covered with ashes, lying on the floor beating their foreheads against the stones; others who cried with so many tears that they formed streams. I saw some who were so covered with ulcers, that an infection came out capable of causing death those who were near them. They took so little care of them, that their body looked like an armful of bones covered with skin. Whichever way you turned, you could only hear cries and sobs that tore your insides and made your bones flow tears. Their most ordinary cries were these; Ah! woe to us who have sinned! Some wore their rigor so far that they only drank water to prevent oneself from dying; others when they put what- that piece of bread in their mouth, immediately rejected it saying that they were unworthy to eat the bread of children of God after having insulted him. They all had- days the image of death presents to their minds and before eyes; they said to each other: alas! my friends, what will become of us? do you believe what we let's move forward a little on the road to penance? oh what our wounds are deep and our debts are great! what will we do to pay them? Let's do, they say to themselves, like the Ninevites. • Alas! what do we know if the good Lord will not still have pity on us? do everything we we can try if the Lord still wants to let touch; let us run in the career of penance without sparing this poché body which is only an abyss of corruption: let's kill this cursed body as he wanted kill our poor souls. It was their ordinary language, it It was enough, Saint John Climacus tells us, to look at them to cry bitterly: their eyes were dejected, buried in

the head, they no longer had hair on their eyelids: their cheeks were so withdrawn that it seemed as if the fire had roasted them, so much so was it ordinary of weep bitter tears [pleurer à chaudes larmes]; their face was so disfigured and so pale that they looked like dead people who had remained two days in the tomb; there are who bruised their chests so much with blows of stones, that several of them could see blood coming out through the mouth; several asked their superior to put irons on their necks and hands and fetters on their feet: a part kept them until the tomb. They were so humble, they loved the good so much God, they had so much pain from their sins, when that they saw themselves on the point of appearing before their judge, that they prayed for mercy to their superior not to bury them; but to throw them into some river or in some woods to serve as fodder for wolves and to wild beasts. This, Saint John tells us, is way in which holy and innocent souls lived. When I returned, the same saint continued, and that the superior saw that I was so defeated, and that barely could he recognize me, and that I no longer seemed to be able to see live: Well my father, he said to me, have you seen the work and battles of our generous soldiers? I don't could only respond to him with tears and sobs, so this kind of life had frightened me in human bodies. » Alas! My brethren, where are we? what would be our fate and our eternity if God asked as much us? Ah no, no, my brethren, never heaven for us if it were necessary as much l Ah! if at least, without doing these great and terrible penances, we only had the happiness of ceasing to sin and beginning today to love the good Lord, we could still hope for the same happiness. My God, that we are blind to our eternal happiness! Alas, my brethren, these great saints whom we admire without having the courage to imitate them, tell me, did they have another Gospel to follow? did they have another religion to practice? did they have another God to serve, another eternity to fear or to hope for? No, undoubtedly, my brethren, but they had the faith that we don't have, that we have almost extinguished by the multitude of our sins: it is that they thought seriously about the salvation of their poor urn, while we leave this poor thing aside soul who is so poor and who has cost Jesus Christ so much, and that it is indifferent to us whether we save or damn.

It is because they constantly meditated on these great and terrible truths of the other life, the loss of a God, the greatness of sin, a happy or unhappy eternity reuse, the uncertainty of death, the fearsome abysses judgments of God and the consequences of a happy future or unhappy, depending on whether we have lived well or badly, while we don't even think about it. Not being busy that of the things of this world we leave our soul and the sky aside. in a word [En un mot] is that they lived in penitents and saints, while we live as worldlings, in sin and the pleasures of the world, and not of penance. 0 blindness of man, how great you are! Who will I ever be able to understand you? To be in this world only to love the good God and save our soul, and not live only to offend him and make our soul unhappy throughout eternity! Indeed, my brethren, what has been our life until now? what have we been thinking about since we are on earth? to whom have we given our heart? what have we done for God, our first and final ending? What zeal, what ardor, did we have for the glory of God and the salvation of our poor soul which cost Jesus Christ so much suffering! How much, on the contrary, don't we have any reproaches to make of ourselves? Alas! far from having spent our entire lives bring the glory of God and assure us happiness eternal, maybe we didn't even think about it just one day, as a Christian must do all his life life. Ah! ungrateful, is that why the good Lord created and placed on earth? Isn't it on the contrary to only take care of him and dedicate to him all the movements of our heart? We should only live for him, and perhaps we have not yet experienced a

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only day that we can say is everything to him and for him alone. Alas! My brethren, soon we will have to go him give an account [rendre compte] of all our actions. What do we have to present to him? what will we have to re- answer all his questions when he shows us will be, on one side, all the graces that he has granted to us throughout our lives, and on the other, the little profit or rather the contempt we have made of it? Is he good possible that, having in our hands so many graces if precious, we are still so lukewarm, so cowardly and so languishing in the service of God? Ah! My brethren, if idolaters and pagans had received so much

good that wouldn't they have become great saints? How many great sinners, my brethren, if they had been filled with so many blessings as us, would they not have not done penance, like the Ninevites, under the ashes and the hair shirt? Let us remember, my brethren, all that good God has done for us since we were born world. How many of you died without having had the happiness of receiving holy Baptism? how many others who, after a single mortal sin have been struck with sudden death [mort subite] and fell into hell! Oh! how many dangers, even bodily ones, of which God, in his mercy, preserved us, preferentially to so many others who have died in an extraordinary way. But how many times after having had the misfortune of sinning, the good Lord did he not pursue us with remorse of conscience, good thoughts? How many instructions, how many good examples which seemed to reproach us for our indifference to our salvation! Tell me, my brethren, after so many expressions of the mercy of the good God, what will we have to answer him when he asks us to account for the benefit we have received from it?

did we do? 0 sad thought, my brethren, for a sinner who who despised everything, and who knew how to benefit from nothing. Well I ungrateful people, will Jesus Christ tell us, do the virtues that I ordered from you were too difficult? don't couldn't you practice them as well as so many others? in what state do you appear before me? Did you not know that a day would come when I would ask you to account for everything I have done for you? Well there miserable, give me an account of all that my misery rope did it for you! Alas! My brethren, what are we going to answer, or rather what confusion for us! Let us prevent, my brethren, this unfortunate moment for the sinner, now taking advantage of the graces that the goodness of God is willing to grant us again today. I say today, since perhaps tomorrow, or the good Lord will have abandoned us, or we will no longer be in this world. Do you know, my brethren, the language that we will hold in this moment? here it is: Ah! shall we say, I knew very well that I was only on earth for one a short time, and yet I only lived for the world. In losing eternal life, I knew that a few years would finish my course, and that a thousand years would not be too long to prepare me for this sad and terrible passage from this world to eternity into which I could enter every moment; and this little time I didn't use it than to the affairs of the time, to amusements and nothing. This is this precious time that God had not given me that to assure me an eternal happiness which will disappear in my eyes, and the eternity which will begin for never end. Will she be happy or unhappy? Alas! What did I do to deserve her happiness? oh time lost! O forgotten eternity! oh what a mistake! that you throw away to hell! oh blindness of man, who can understand you, four days to spend in this world and an entire eternity in the other: and these four days have did all my work, and I did everything I could to erase you from my memory! O my God! where is so our faith? where is our reason? to live like we live. What should we conclude from all this, my brethren? It's that, despite having despised so many graces, if we want to benefit from those that the good Lord wants grant us in his mercy, not only us we can redeem the time spent, but we can obtain infinite happiness in the other life. If the good Lord us preserved life despite so many sins, it is only because he wanted to spread on us the greatness of his mercies; the more sinners we are, the more desires our salvation, that we may be as many of instruments to publish throughout all eternity the greatness of his mercies for sinners. Yes, my brethren, he awaits us with open arms; he us opens the wound of his divine heart to hide us from severity of his Father's justice; he introduces us all the merits of his death and passion, in order to pay for our sins. If our feedback is sincere, he will take care of to answer for us at the judgment seat of his Father, when we will be questioned to give an account [rendre compte] of our life. Happy is he who obeys the voice of his God who call him! Happy, my brethren, he who will never have lost of view that his life is very short, that he can die at every moment, and who never lost his thoughts that after this life he will be judged, for an eternity of happiness or misfortune, for heaven or hell. O my God! if we constantly thought about our ultimate ends could we live well in sin, could we

well forget this time to come which, once begun will never end. Tell me, my brethren, do you believe in this eternity, you who for perhaps ten or twenty years have been in hatred of God? Do you believe in eternity, my

brethren, you who have the property of others? Ah no, no, if you believed, you could not live as you live. Tell me, wretch, who for so many years have hidden sins in your confessions, who are guilty of as many sacrileges as you have made communions; alas, if you believed it a little, wouldn't you die? no horror of yourself, thinking at any time that you are exposed to going give an account [rendre compte] of all these turpitudes before a judge who will be without mercy [sans miséricorde]. Yes, my brethren, if we had the happiness to meditate well on what awaits us after this world which is so short, it would be impossible not to work all your life in trembling in fear of failing to save our poor soul. Happy, my brethren, is he who will stand always ready! What I wish for you...

2nd Sunday of Advent — On Human Respect

Beatus qui non fuerit scandalizatus in me. Blessed is he who will not take from me a subject of scandal. (S. Matth., xi, 6.)

Nothing, my brethren, is more glorious and more honourable for a Christian to wear the sublime name of child of God, brother of Jesus Christ. But also nothing is more infamous than being ashamed to show it as many times as the opportunity presents itself. No, my brethren, let us not be surprised to see hypocrites show as much as they can an exterior of piety to attract esteem and the praises of men, while their poor hearts are devoured by the most infamous sin. They would like, these blind people, to enjoy the honors which are inseparable from virtue, without having the trouble of practicing it. But let us be even less surprised to see good Christians hide their good works from the eyes of the world as much as they can, for fear that vain glory slips into their hearts and the vain applause of men makes them lose the merit and the reward. But, my brethren, where do we find a more criminal and a more detestable abomination that, professing to believe in Jesus Christ; that, having committed ourselves by the most sacred oaths to follow in his footsteps, to support his interests and his glory, even at the expense of our life, we are so cowards, that at the first opportunity we violate the promises we made to him on the sacred font of Baptism. Ah! unhappy, what do we do? Who is The one we deny? Alas! we abandon our God, our Savior, to place us among the slaves of the demon who deceives us and who only seeks our loss and our eternal misfortune. Oh! cursed respect human! that you drag so many souls into hell! But to better make you feel its baseness, I o will show: I How much human respect, that is to say the shame of doing good outrages the good Lord. 2° How much the one who commits it announces a weak spirit and limited.

I. — We will not speak, my brethren, of all these impious of the first class who use their time, their science and their poor life to destroy our holy religion if they could. These unfortunate people only seem to live to annihilate the sufferings, the merits of death and passion of Jesus Christ. They used your ones strength, others their knowledge to break this stone on which Jesus Christ built his Church. But these fools will break against this stone of the Church, which is our holy religion, and will always exist despite all their efforts. Indeed, my brethren, what results in all the fury of the persecutors of the Church, Nero, Maximian, Diocletian, and so many others who believed that, by force with their weapons, they would succeed in making her disappear- rise from the earth. It is quite the opposite, the blood of so many martyrs only served, as Tertullian says, to make religion flourish more than ever, and their blood seemed like a seed that produced a hundred to one. Unhappy 1 what this beautiful and holy religion has done to you to persecute her so much, since she alone can make happy man on earth. Alas! what tears! and what cries they now raise in hell, where they clearly recognize that this religion, against which they raged, would have led them in heaven. But useless and superfluous regrets! See again these other impious people who have done all this that they could to destroy our holy religion by their writings, such as Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a Diderot, a D'Àlembert, a Volney and so many others, who have spent their lives only vomiting through their writings all what the demon could inspire in them. Alas! they have good does harm, it is true; they have lost souls, have well trained with them in the hell; but they could not destroy religion as they believed; they were

broken against this stone. But they didn't break the stone on which Jesus Christ built his Church and which must last until the end of the world. Where are these now? impious poor people? Alas! to hell, where they mourn their misfortune and that of all those they dragged with it them. Let us not say anything yet, my brethren, about these impious, who, without openly showing themselves enemies do religion because they still practice some external points, but despite this you hear from time to time make little jokes about virtue or piety of those they do not have the courage to imitate. Tell me, my friend, what has this religion done to you? SlînMONS. — Volume T. 3 that you hold from your ancestors who practiced it if faithfully before your eyes, which have so many times said that she alone could make man happy the earth, and that by abandoning it, we could not be that unhappy? And where do you think, my friend, that you will your little impiety lead? Alas! my friend, in hell, to make you cry for your blindness. Let us say nothing yet about these Christians who are not Christians only in name; who do their duty as Christians in such a miserable way that they would make you die of compassion. See one, during his prayer made with boredom, dissipation, without respect. See them in church, without devotion: the office always begins too early, and always ends too late; the priest is not yet ash from the altar that they are already outside. For the frequency tation of the Sacraments, we must not talk to them about it: if they sometimes approach it, it is with a certain indifference which announces that they have no knowledge what they do. Everything related to the service of God is done with appalling disgust. My Dioul that of souls lost for eternity! O my God! that the number of those who will enter the kingdom of heaven is small, since there are so few who do what they must to deserve it. But, will you tell me now: Who are those who are guilty of human respect? My brethren, Listen to me for a moment, and you will find out. First, I will tell you with Saint Bernard, that from some side that we consider human respect, which is shame to fulfill his religious duties because of the world, everything shows us its contempt and blindness. I say, my brethren, that the shame of doing good, for fear to be scorned or mocked by some unfortunate impious people, or of a few ignorant people, is a contempt terrible that we make of the presence of the good God before whom we are and who could at this very moment throw us into hell. Why is it, my brethren, that these bad Christians mock and ridicule you your devotion? Alas! My brethren, here is the real reason- M his: it's that not having the strength to do what you do, you awaken the remorse of their conscience; but, be sure that in the heart, they will not do not despise you, on the contrary, they esteem you very much. If they have good advice to take, or to ask for thanks to the good Lord, it is not for those who like them to whom they will have recourse, but to those whom they mocked at least in words. You are ashamed, my friend, to serve the good Lord for fear of being despised? But, my friend, look at Him who died on this cross, ask him if he was ashamed of being despised, and to die in the most shameful way on this infamous cross. Ah! ungrateful as we are towards God, who seems to find his glory in publishing from century to century century that he chose us for his children. 0 my God! that man is blind and contemptible for fearing a wretch, what will people say, and not to fear offending such a good God. Secondly: I say that the human respect makes us despise all the graces that the good Lord merited us by his death and his passion. Yes, my brethren, through human respect we annihilate all the graces that the good Lord had intended for us to save us. Oh the cursed human respect, that you drag souls to hell! Thirdly: I say that human respect contains the most blindness deplorable. Alas I we do not pay attention to what we lose. Ah! My brethren, what misfortune for us! we we will lose our God, whom no one can ever replace. We are losing heaven with all its goods and pleasures! But another misfortune is that we take the demon for our father, and hell with all its torments for our inheritance and our reward. We change our sweetness and our eternal joys against suffering and tears. Ah! my friend, what are you thinking? which will be your regrets throughout eternity! Ah! my God, can we think about it and still live as a slave to world? It is true, you will tell me, that he who fears world to fulfill its religious duties is very unfortunate, since the good Lord has told us that he who will be ashamed to serve him before men, he will not want not recognize him before his Father on the day of judge- ment. But my God! fear the world, why then? since we know that we absolutely must be despised of the world to please God. If you feared the world, you shouldn't have made yourself a Christian. You knew well that on the sacred font of baptism, you took an oath in the presence of Jesus Christ himself; that you renounce to the demon and the world; that you commit to

following Jesus Christ carrying his cross, loaded with reproaches and contempt. If you fear the world, well! give up your baptism and give yourself to this world to whom you fear so much of displeasing. But, you will tell me, when do we act out of human respect? my friend, listen to me carefully. It's one day when you were at the fair, or in an inn where meat was eaten on a forbidden day and you were asked to eat it; that, contenting yourself with look down and blush, instead of saying that you were a Christian, your religion forbade you to do so, you ate like the others, saying: If I do not not like the others, people will make fun of me. We will scoff, my friend. Ah! Of course, it's a shame! Ah! you will tell me, I will do much more harm, by being the because of all the bad reasons that we will say against religion, that the harm I will do by eating meat. Tell me, my friend, will you do more harm? If the martyrs had feared all these blasphemies, all these oaths, then they would all have renounced their religion? it's too bad for those who do wrong. Alas! My brethren, let's say better, it is not enough that the other unfortunate people have crucified Jesus Christ by their bad life; you still have to unite with them to do suffer Jesus Christ more? You fear being mocked? Ah! unhappy, look at Jesus Christ on the cross, and you will see what he has done for you. You don't don't know when you denied Jesus Christ? It's a day that being with two or three people, it seemed that you had no hands, or that you did not know not make the sign of the cross, and you see if eyes were on you, and you were content to say your Benediction or your graces in your heart, or you go to a corner to say. It was when, passing towards a cross, you made pretend not to see it, or say that it is not for us that the good Lord is dead. You don't know when you had human respect? It's a day that, finding yourself in a society where people said to dirty words against the holy virtue of purity, or against religion, you dared not rebuke anyone, and much more, in fear of being laughed at, you you smiled. But, you will tell me, we are very forced, otherwise. You would be mocked too often. You fear, my friend, to be mocked? It was also the fear that led Saint Peter to deny his divine Master; but, the fear did not prevent him from committing a great sin, from cried all his life. You don't know when you have had human respect? it's a day that the good Lord gave the thought of going to confession, and that you felt that you really needed it, that you thought that people would make fun of you, that people would treat you of devotee. It was once that you had the thought of going at Holy Mass during the week, and that you could go there; you said to yourself that people would make fun of you and say: it's only for those who have nothing to do, who have enough to live on from their annuities. How many times has this cursed human respect unable to attend catechism, evening prayer? How many times, being at home and doing some prayers or some devotional readings, have you hidden seeing someone coming. How many times has human respect made you violate the law of fasting or abstinence, and thereby not daring to say that you were fasting, or that you weren't fat? How many times have you not dared to say your Angelus in front of the world, or did you just say it in your heart, or did you come out to say it outside? How many times have you not prayed in the morning or in the evening, because you found yourself with people who did not do any; and all this for fear that we made fun of you. Come on, poor slaves of the world, wait for hell where you will be thrown; you will have time to regret the good that the world gives you prevented from doing.

Ah! my God, what a sad life leads whoever wants please the world and the good Lord! No, my friend, you you are wrong. Besides the fact that you will always live unhappily you will never be able to please the world and to the good Lord; it is as impossible for you as end eternity. Here is the advice I have for you give, and you will be less unhappy: or give you all to the good Lord, or everything in the world; don't look- at, and only follow a master, and once after him don't leave it. So you don't remember what Jesus Christ tells you in the Gospel? You don't can serve God and the world, that is to say, you cannot follow the world with its pleasures, and Jesus Christ with his cross. Aren't you good grace of being sometimes to God and sometimes to the world! Let's talk more clearly: it would be necessary that your conscience, that your heart allowed you to be at the holy table in the morning and in the evening at the dance; part of the day at church and the rest in cabarets or games; a moment talk about the good Lord, and another moment talk dirty- ties, or even slander against the neighbor; once, do good to your neighbor, and another moment to do wrong; that is to say, with the good ones you will do the well, you will speak of the good God, with the wicked you will do evil. Ah!

My brethren, that the company of the wicked makes us do harm! how many sins we would avoid if we We had the pleasure of fleeing people without religion. Holy Augustine tells us that several times having found himself with the bad guys, he was ashamed of not having as much malice as them, and, so that they would not blame him, he said even evil that he had not done. Poor blind man! that you are to be pitied! what a sad life!... Oh! cursed human respect, that you drag souls into hell. Oh, how many crimes you are the cause of. Ah! that he is big the contempt that we make of the graces that the good Lord wants to grant us to save us J Alas! how much who began their reprobation with human respect, because, as they despised the graces that the good Lord wanted to give them, faith was extinguished in them, and, little by little [peu à peu], they felt less the greatness of sin, the pearl of heaven, the outrages they did to God speaks sin. They ended up falling into paralysis, that is to say, they no longer experienced the unhappy state of their poor soul; they remain in sin, and the most most of them perish there. We read in the Gospel that Jesus Christ, in his missions, filled with all kinds of graces the places where he was passing. Sometimes it was a blind man to whom he returned the view; sometimes it was deaf people whom he made heard; here, it is a leper whom he heals, there it is a (dead) to whom he gives life. However, we see that there are very few who publish the benefits they have just received, they do it only when they are at the feet of Jesus Christ. And where does this come from, my brethren? is that they feared the Jews, because they had to be enemies or Jews or Jesus Christ; when they were near Jesus Christ they recognized him, and when they were with the Jews, they seemed to approve of them by their silence. This is precisely what we do; when we are my only ones, that we reflect on all the benefits that we have received from the good Lord, we cannot prevent us from showing our gratitude to him to be born Christians, confirmed; but, when we are- My with the libertines, we seem to be of their sentiment- lies by applauding with our smiles or our silence to their impieties. Oh! what an unworthy preference, exclaims Saint Maximus; ah I cursed human respect, how many souls you drag you to hell! Alas! My brethren, what torment does one experience will not be a person who wants to please and live like this, as we have a beautiful example in the Gospel- We read there that King Herod fell in love with a love profane for Herodias. This barbaric courtesan had a girl who danced in front of him with so much grace that he promised half of his kingdom. But the unfortunate woman was careful not to ask him, it wasn't enough; being went to his mother to get advice on what he had to tell the king; the mother, more infamous than her daughter, he presented a dish: “Go,” she said to him, “and ask the king that he put the head of John the Baptist in it so that you can show it to me doors; » and this because Saint John the Baptist reproaches him hides his bad life. The king, at this request, was seized of fear; because, on the one hand, he esteemed Saint John Bap- tist, he regretted the death of a man who was so worthy to live. What will he do? what side will he take? ah! bad- says human respect, what are you going to do? He wouldn't want put Saint John the Baptist to death; but, on the other hand, he is afraid that people will make fun of him, because being king, he doesn't keep his word. Come on, said this unfortunate king to a executioner, go cut off the head of John the Baptist, I like better to let my conscience cry out, than if we made fun of it of me. But what a horror! when the head appeared in the room, his eyes and his mouth, although closed, seem reproach him for his crime, and threaten him with the punishments more terrible. At this sight, he shuddered and turned pale. Alas! that he who allows himself to be led by human respect is to be pitied! It is still true that human respect does not does not always prevent one from doing good works. But how many good works whose human respect we loses merit. How many good works we would not do if we did not hope to be praised for it and esteemed by the world! How many people who don't come go to church only out of human respect, thinking that, as soon as a person no longer practices religion, less outside, we no longer have confidence in it: where it there is no religion, there is no conscience. How many mothers who seem to take care of their children children only to be esteemed in the eyes of the world! How many are reconciled with their enemies because that they fear that we will lose the good esteem that you have of them. How many people who wouldn't be so good what they (are) if they did not know how to be praised world. How many are more reserved in their speech and more modest in church because of the world! Oh! cursed human respect, that you spoil good works which would lead so many Christians to heaven, and which will only push them into hell. But, you will tell me, there is plenty to do to

that the world does not interfere in anything that we done. But, my brethren, we do not expect our reward from the world, but from God alone: if I am praised, I know very well that I do not deserve it, being so sinful; if people despise me, there is nothing extraordinary for a sinner like me who have so many times despised the good God through my sins; I deserve more. Besides, did not Jesus Christ say to us: Blessed those who will be despised and persecuted! Besides, who are those who despise you? Alas! some poor people sinners who do not have the courage to do what you made, who, to hide a little their shame, would like that you do like them; it is a poor blind man who, far from [bien loin de] despise you, should spend his life crying- regret his misfortune. His taunts show you how much he is to be pitied and worthy of compassion. He acts like a person who has lost his mind, who runs through the forests, who rolls on the ground, throwing himself into the precipices shouting to everyone who sees her to do like her; No matter how much she screams, you let her do it, and you please her. gnez, because she does not know her misfortune. From even, my brethren, let these poor unfortunates cry and mock good Christians; let's leave the fools in their dementia; let us leave the blind in their darkness; let us listen to the cries and howls of the reprobate; but let us not fear anything, let us follow our path; they hurt themselves a lot, without worrying about it, let's pity them and let's walk as usual. But, you will tell me, there is still plenty to do. Do you know why you are being mocked? it’s that they see that you fear them and that nothing makes you blush. This It is not your piety that they mock, but only your inconstancy and your cowardice in following your leader. See the people of the world: with what audacity they follow their leader; do they not glory in being libertines, drunkards, clever, vindictive? See a shameless man, he fears vomit your filth in front of the world? why is this? My brethren, it's because they are forced to follow their master who is the world; they only think and seek to please him; No matter how much they suffer, nothing can stop them. This, my brethren, is what you would do if you wanted to make as much. You would not fear the world or the devil; you would only seek and want what could please your Master, who is God himself. Agree with me, that the worldly are much more constant in all the sacrifices they make to please their

master, who is the world, than us, to do what we must do to please our Master, who is our God.

IL — But, now, let's start again with another way. Tell me, my friend, why do you mock those who profess piety? or, if you don't do not understand well, those who pray more longer than yours, who frequent the sacraments than you do it yourself and which flee the applause of the world? Of three things one, my brethren, or you look at these people as hypocrites, or you mock piety itself, or finally, you are angry because they are better than you. 1° To treat them as hypocrites, you must have read their hearts, and be perfectly convinced that all their devotion is false. Eh what My brethren, does it not seem natural that, when we see someone doing some good works, we let us believe that their hearts are good and sincere. According to this, see how your language and your judgment are ridiculous. You see a good exterior in your neighbor, and you say or think that his interior is not worth nothing. This, they say, is good fruit; certainly, the tree whoever wears it is of a good sort, and you judge well. And if it comes to judging good people, you will say everything the opposite: this is good fruit; but the tree that bears it worthless! no My brethren, no, you are neither so blind nor so foolish as to be unreasonable in this way. Secondly, we say that you mock the piety itself: I am wrong; you are not joking this person because he prays long or often and with respect: no, it's not for that, because you also pray, (at least if you don't, you fail in one of your first duties.) This is because that she frequents the sacraments? But you are not come until this time without approaching the sacred ments, we saw you clearly at the court of penance, we saw you sit down at the holy table. You don't therefore do not despise this person because he fulfills better at his religious duties than you; being perfectly convinced of the danger we are in from ourselves lose, and therefore the need we have to have frequent recourse to prayer and the sacraments to persevere in the grace of the good God, because after this world there are no more resources: good or evil you will have to stay there for all eternity. No, my brethren, it is not all this that tires

us in the person of our neighbor: it is that, not having the courage to imitate him, we would not want to have the ashamed of our cowardice; but drag it into our disorders or into our indifferent life. How many times let's not say: what are all these grimaces for, to what is the point of staying so much in church, of going there so early, and the rest? Alas! My brethren, it is only the life of a person of piety which is serious is the condemnation of our cowardly and indifferent life. It is very easy to understand that their humility and the contempt they have for themselves condemns our proud life, which does not want to suffer anything, which would like everyone to love us and us rent; there is no doubt that their gentleness and goodness for everyone shames our outbursts and our anger; it is very true that their modesty, their reserve in all their actions condemns our life worldly and full of scandals. Isn't that alone who torments us in the person of our neighbor? doesn't it make us angry when we hear say good things about other people whose work we publish good deeds? Yes, undoubtedly their devotion, their respect for the Church condemns us, and overshadows our life all evaporated and to our indifference for our salvation. As we are naturally inclined to excuse in others the faults that we ourselves have, in the same way we are always inclined to disapprove in others the virtues that we do not have the courage to practice: this is what we all see days. A libertine is happy to find a libertine who will applaud him in his disorders; far from [bien loin de] divert him, he encourages him. A vindictive person will be happy to be with another vindictive person to consult together, in order to find a way to take revenge on their enemies. But, put a wise person with a libertine, a person who is always ready to forgive with a vindictiveness: straight away, you see the bad guys unleashed against the good ones and fall on them. Why is this? My brethren, otherwise because they do not have the strength to do what they do, they would like to be able to train them on their own, so that their holy life may not be a continual censure of theirs. But, if you want to understand the blindness of those who mock people who fulfill their Christian duty better than them, listen to me for a moment. How about a poor person who would carry envy a rich person, if this poor person is not rich because that he does not want it; wouldn't you say to him: my friend, why do you say bad things about this person because How rich is she? it is only up to you to be and even more so if you want it. Likewise, my brethren, why are we inclined to blame those who are wiser? 11 only binds us to being and even more so, if we want. People who practice religion, who do more than us, don't stop us from being too wise and even more, if we want. Thirdly, I say that people without religion who despise those who make a profession of it, I am wrong, they do not despise them, they only pretend (to despise them), because deep down in their hearts they are full of esteem for them; do you want proof of this? here it is. Who will a person go to, even without piety, to find some consolation in his sorrows, or some softening in his sorrows or his sufferings? Do you think it was with another person without religion like her? No, my friend, no. She knows well that a person without religion cannot console you, or give you good advice. But she will go even find the people she taunted in a time. She is too well convinced that there is only one wise and God-fearing person who can comfort us and ease our sorrows a little. Indeed, my brethren-, how of times having found ourselves lost in sorrow or other misery, we went to find some wise people, and after a quarter of an hour of conversation we felt completely changed and we we are withdrawn saying: Let those who love Good Lord are happy and those who are around! I sorry, I was only crying, I was in despair. For a little moment that I was with this person, I felt completely consoled. It's very true everything she told me that the good Lord had only allowed this to my good, and that all the saints had good endured more than me, and that it was much better to suffer in this world and in the next. We end up saying: as soon as I have some difficulty, I will quickly return there to console me. Oh! beautiful religion, that those who practice you practice in good earnest [tout de bon] are happy, and that the sweets and the consolations you give us are great and precious!... Well! My brethren, you see then that you mock those who do not deserve it; you must, on the contrary, infinite- thank the good Lord for having among you some good souls to appease the anger of God, otherwise, we would soon be crushed by the justice of God. But, all things considered, a person who prays well, who only seeks to please the good Lord, who loves to to serve others, who knows how to give up to their necessary to help him, who readily forgives those who insult him, you cannot say that this one hurts, on the contrary. She is only very worthy to be praised and esteemed by everyone. It is however that person you are

tearing apart; isn't that you didn't mean what you were saying? It's very true, think within yourselves; she is happier than us. Here, my friend, listen to me, and I will tell you what you should do: is that, far from [bien loin de] blame them and mock them, you should make all your efforts to imitate them; is to unite yourself, every morning, with their prayers and all the actions they will do during the day. But to do what they do, there are too many violence to be done and too many sacrifices to make. There has much to do!... Not as much as you say; it's very difficult to say your prayers well in the morning and evening? Is it very difficult to listen to the word of God with respect, asking the good Lord for the grace to use it well? fiter? Is it really difficult not to go outside for the instructions? do not work on the holy day of Sunday? do not eat meat on (days)

defended, scorning the worldly people who absolutely want to get lost? If you fear that you lack courage, look to the Cross where Jesus Christ died, and you will see that you will not lack courage. See these crowds of martyrs who suffered everything that you will never be able to understand, fear of losing their souls. Are they angry, my brethren, now, to have despised the world, and its what will people say about it. Let us conclude, my brethren, by saying how few there are sounds that truly serve the good Lord. Some try to destroy religion, if they could, by force with their weapons, as kings and emperors did pagans; the others with their impious cries wanted to degrade him and make it lose if they could; others mock her in those who practice it; and finally others would like practice it well; but they are afraid to do it in front of the world. Alas! My brethren, that the number of those who are for heaven is small, since there are only those who continually and vigorously fight the demon and their inclinations, and who despise the world with all his taunts! Since, my brethren, we do not wait for our reward and our happiness only from God, why (love) the world we promised with an oath to hate and despise to follow only Jesus Christ, carrying (his cross) all the days of our lives? Happy the one, my brethren, who seeks only God alone and who despises everything else. It's happiness...

4th Sunday of Advent — On Satisfaction / Penance

Easy ergo fruclus dignos poenitentiae. Therefore produce worthy fruits of penance. (5. Luke, m, 8.)

»-Jr cursor of the Savior held on to all those who ve- were born to find him in his desert, in order to learn from him what had to be done to have eternal life. Produce, he told them, worthy fruits of penance so that your sins may be forgiven you; that is to say, whoever among you has sinned has no other remedy than penance, even those who are already forgiven; so that our sins remitted into the judgment seat of penance still leaves us with pain to endure or in this world, which are the sorrows and all the miseries of life, or in the flames of purgatory. There has this difference, my brethren, between the sacrament of baptism and that of penance. In that of baptism God only listens to his mercy, that is to say, he forgives us without demanding anything from us, instead of, in of penance, God does not forgive us our sins and does not gives us grace only on the condition that we will undergo a temporal punishment, or in this world, or in, the flames from purgatory; in order to punish the sinner with contempt and the abuse of his graces. If God wants us to do penance so that our sins are forgiven us, it is still to protect us from falling back into the sin, so that, remembering what we have endured for those we have already confessed, we let's not have the courage to go back there. God wants we unite our penances to his, and that we considered how much he suffered to return the our meritorious ones. AlasI My brethren, let us not be mistaken not; without the sufferings of Jesus Christ, all that we could have done could never have satisfied for the least of our sins. Ah! my God, that we you are indebted for this great act of mercy towards ungrateful wretches! So I will show you, my brethren,: 1° That although our sins are forgiven us, we are not exempt from doing penance. 2° What are the works by which we can satisfy the justice of God, or to speak to you more clearly, I will show you what satisfaction is, which is the fourth disposition that we must bring to worthily receive the sacrament of penance.

I. — You all know, my brethren, that the sacrament of penance is a sacrament which was instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ to remit sins committed after baptism. It is mainly in this sacrament that the Savior of the world shows us the greatness of his mercy since there are no sins other than this sacrament do not erase, however great their number and however dreadful their darkness; so that everything sinner is sure of his forgiveness and of regaining the friendship of his God, if, for his part, he brings the provisions that ask for this sacrament. The first provision is to know your sins well, their number and their circumstances which can either increase them or change them the species: and, this knowledge will not be given to us only after asking the Holy Spirit. Anyone who, in their examination, does not ask for the light of the Holy Spirit can only make one confession. sacrilege. If this has happened to you, retrace your steps, because you are very sure that your confessions have no been nothing but bad confessions. The second condition is to properly declare your sins as your catechism tells you, without artifice and disguise, that is to say as you know them yourselves, this accusation will not be made as it It is necessary that as much as you have asked for strength from good God: without this it is impossible for you to declare them as you must to receive forgiveness. You must therefore examine yourself before the good Lord if, every time you wanted to confess, you asked him for this strength; if you missed it, come back to your confessions, because you are good sure they are worthless. The third condition, which this sacrament requires to grant you forgiveness of your sins, it is the contrition, that is to say regret for having committed them, with the sincere resolution not to commit them again, and to be in a true desire to flee everything that can make it fall back into it. This contrition comes from heaven, and it is only given to us through prayer and tears, in thinking that this lack of contrition is the one that damns the most people. We accuse our sins; but

IV E SUNDAY OF? often the heart has nothing to do with it. We recount our sins as you would tell an indifferent story, because that we do not have this contrition, since we do not let's not change our lives. We have every year, every six months, every month or three weeks, or every eight days, if you like, same sin, same fault; we always walk the same path: period change in our way of living. Where can all these misfortunes come from that precipitate so many souls? in hell, if not for the lack of contrition: and how can we hope to have it, since we often let us not ask it only of God, or that we we ask for it without almost wanting to have it. If you see no change in your conduct, that is to say, if you are not better after so many confessions and communions, retrace your steps before that you do not recognize your misfortune when there is no will have more remedy. It is necessary, my brethren, to give us the hope that our confessions are made with good dispositions, we must, in confessing, we convert: without this everything we do does not that we prepare all kinds of misfortunes for the other life. But after knowing our sins well by grace of the Holy Spirit; after having clearly declared them as it we must have the pain of our sins, we still have yet a fourth condition, so that the other three bear the fruits that we must expect, this is the satisfaction that we owe to God and to our neighbor. I tell God, to repair the injuries that sin has done to him done, and to the next, to repair the wrong that we have done in his soul or in his body. First, I will tell you that from the beginning of the world, we see everywhere that God by forgiving sin has always wanted temporal satisfaction, which is a right that his justice demands. His mercy forgive us; but his justice wants to be satisfied in something small, so that after having sinned, after we have been forgiven we must take revenge on ourselves by making our body suffer who sinned. But tell me, my brethren, what are the penances that we do, in comparison to what our sins have merited us, which is an eternity of torment. O my God, how good you are to con- to try so few things! If the penances given to you seem to you hard and painful to do for the large number of your mortal sins, go through the lives of the saints and you will see the penances they have done, although several were sure of their forgiveness. See Adam to whom the Lord himself said that his sin was forgiven: and who, despite this, did penance for more than nine hundred years, penance that makes one tremble. See David at which the prophet JNathan comes to say from God that his sin is forgiven him, and who performs penance so rigorous that his feet could no longer carry him; he made his palace resound with cries and sobs, moved through the pain of his sins. He himself says that he will go down to the tomb weeping; that the pain will

only leave him when his life ends; her tears flow with such abundance, that he himself tells us let him dip his bread with his tears and water his bed of her tears. See again Saint Peter, for a sin that fear made him commit, the Lord forgive him. He mourns his sin all his life so of abundance that her tears hollow her face. What did Saint Magdelaine after the death of the Savior? She will bury herself in a desert where she cries and becomes a penitentiary tenancy all his life: however, God had given him given, since he told the Pharisees that many sins were forgiven her because she had a lot loved. But without going so far, my brethren, see the penitenements that were given in the early days of the Church. See if those of now have any benefit portion with those of that time. For having sworn holy name of God, without thinking about it, alas! what is so common, even to children who may not know not one of their prayers, they were condemned to fast seven days on bread and water. For having consulted the diviners, seven years of penance. For having worked a little moment on Sunday, it was necessary to do penance three days. To have spoken during Holy Mass, it was necessary fast for ten days on bread and water. If in Lent one had missed a day of fasting, one had to fast seven days. For dancing in front of a church one day Sunday or holiday, one was sentenced to seven years of penance. For having violated the Four-Time Fast, it was necessary to fast for forty days on bread and water. For having made fun of a bishop or his pastor, by turning their instructions into ridicule, one had to do penance for forty days. For letting it die a child without baptism, three years of penance. For having dressed in carnival, three years of penance. For a young person, boy or girl, who would have danced, three years of penance, and, if they returned there, they would be threatened to excommunicate them. Those who made trips on Sundays or holidays without necessity, seven days of penance. A girl who committed a sin against purity with a married man, ten years of penance.

Well, my brethren, tell me, what are the penances imposed on us if we compare them to those of which did we just talk? However, God's justice is the same; our sins are no less terrible eyes of God, and deserve no less to be punished. Should we not be covered with confusion, do so little as we do, while the first Christians did penances and so harsh and long? But, you will ask me, what are the works by which we can satisfy the justice of God for our sins? If you want to accomplish them, nothing so easy to do, as you will see. The first is the penance that the confessor imposes on you which is part of the sacrament of penance. If we did not intend to accomplish it with all his heart as best as one can, the confession would only be sacrilege; the second is prayer; the third is fasting; the fourth is alms; and the fifth, the indulgences which are (the works) easiest to accomplished and most effective. I say: 1° Penance that the confessor imposes on us before giving us absolution, we must receive it with joy and gratitude, and accomplish it as well as we are able, otherwise we must greatly fear make a sacrilegious confession. If we thought therefore not being able to do it, we would have to humbly represent to the confessor our reasons: if he finds them good, he will change it. But there are penances that the priest does not can and should not change. The penances that go to correction of the sinner, as, for example, forbidding cabaret for a drunkard, dancing for girls, or for a boy the company of a person who carries you to evil; oblige to repair some injustice that has been done, to confess often because we have lived for some time in neglect for his salvation. You will agree with me that a priest cannot, nor must, change these penances. But if you had some reasons to do change his penance, it would have to be the same priest who would change it, unless it was completely impossible, because another confessor does not know why it was given to you. You will find your penances long or difficult, my brethren.; but you don't think about it. So compare them to those of the hell that you have deserved by your sins. Alas! with what joy would a poor damned person not receive, until the end of the world, the penances that we offer you gives and still much more rigorous, if, at this price, could he finish his torture? What happiness for him! but which will never be given to him. Well! My brethren, receiving our penance with joy, with a real desire to accomplish it as well as we can, we deliver ourselves from hell, as if the good God grant to the damned what I come from you say. O my God how little the sinner knows his good- hour! I say: 1° That we must perform penance that the confessor gives us, and that to fail would be a big sin. It is only on this condition that God returns his grace to the sinner and that the priest, in his name, forgives him his sins. Tell me, my brethren, would it not be an

impiety of not doing penance and hoping in- core forgiveness? This goes against reason; it's wanting the reward without cost. What should we think, my brethren, of those who do not make their peni- tension? For me, this is what I think about it. If they don't have yet received absolution, these are people who have not not just the desire to convert, since they re- come up with the means that must be taken for this, and when return to confession, the priest must refuse them serve absolution a second time. But if the penitent has received absolution and neglected his penance, it is a mortal sin, if the sins he confessed were mortals; he must fear that his confession will be sacrilege by the lack of a sincere desire to satisfy to God for his sins. But I'm only talking about those here who would have omitted all their penance or part considerable, and not of those who have forgotten it or who could not have done it at the prescribed time. Then, I say that one must complete one's penance whole in marked time and devotion. I say: entirely. We must not leave anything of all that we gave us; on the contrary, we must add to that that the confessor imposed on us. Saint Cypricn tells us that the penance must equal the fault, that the remedy must not be less than evil. But tell me, my brethren, what are the penances given? Alas, a few rosaries, a few litanies, some alms, small mortifications. Tell me, do all these things have any proportion to our sins which deserve torments that will never end? There are some who do their penance whether walking or sitting, this is not to be do. Your penance, you must do it on one's knees [à genoux], at unless the priest tells you that you can do or walk, or sit. If this has happened to you you must confess to it and not return to it again. In secondly, I say that it must be done in time marked, otherwise you sin, unless you cannot do otherwise, and tell your confessor when you go back. For example, he will have you ordered to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament after the offices, because he knows that you go to compa- geniuses who will not bring you to the good Lord. He will have commanded to mortify you in something in your meals, because you are prone to gluttony; of make an act of contrition if you have the misfortune of fall back into the sin you have already confessed. Or well when other times you wait to make your penance the moment when you are ready to go to confession; you understand as well as I do that, in in all these cases, you are very guilty, and you do not must not fail to accuse yourself of it and to stop return. Thirdly, I say that you must make your penance devoutly, that is to say with piety, in a sincere willingness to leave sin. Do it with piety, my brethren, is to do it with attention on the side of the mind and devotion of the heart. If you did your penance with voluntary distractions, you would not have it not done, you would have to do it again. Fulfill it with piety is to do it with great confidence that the good Lord will forgive you our sins through merits of Jesus Christ who satisfied for us by his suffering and death on the cross. We must do with joy, delighted to be able to satisfy God that we offended and found ways so easy to be able to (erase) our sins which deserve us make you suffer for all eternity. One thing that you must never forget is that every time as you do your penance you must say to God: My God! I unite this light penance to that which Jesus Christ my Savior offered you for my sins; this will make your penance meritorious and pleasant to God. I still say that we must fulfill our penance with a true desire to leave sin altogether fact, whatever it costs us, even if we had to suffer the dead. If we were not in these arrangements, well far from satisfying God's justice, we would outrage it again, which would make us even more guilty. I said that we must not be satisfied with penance that the confessor imposes on us, because it is nothing, or almost nothing, if we compare it to this what our sins deserve. If the confessor spares us so strong it is only in the fear he has of disgusting us ter to work for our salvation. If you have real- your salvation to heart, you must impose on yourself penances yourself. Here are the ones that suit you- best. If you had the misfortune of giving scandal, you must make sure (so vigilant) that your next cannot see anything in you that does not lead you to good; he you must show by your conduct that your life is truly Christian. And if you had the misfortune to sin against the holy virtue of purity, we must mortify this miserable body by fasting, giving it only what it needs so as not to take its life, and that it can fulfill his duty; and do it from time to time sleep rough. If you find yourself having something to eat that satisfies your sweet tooth, you should deny it to your body and despise it as much as you do loved him: he wanted to lose your soul, you have to you punished him. It is often necessary that your heart which has thought of impure things, carry your thoughts into hell, which is the place reserved for the immoral. If you are attached to the earth, you must give alms as much that you can to punish your avarice, in you depriving

you of everything that is not absolutely necessary for life. Have we been negligent in the

service of God, let us impose ourselves, to do penance, to attend all the exercises of piety which are done in in our parish. I mean, at Mass, at Ve- near, to catechism, to prayer, to the rosary, so that God, seeing our eagerness, please help us give up all our negligence: if we have any time between services let's do some devotional reading, what will nourish our soul, especially reading some lives of saints where we see what they did to sanctify themselves tify; it will encourage us; let's do something small visit to the Blessed Sacrament to ask forgiveness of sins we committed during the week. If we feel guilty of some fault, let's go deliver us from it, so that our prayers and all our good works are more pleasing to God and more taggers to our soul. Are we used to swearing, to take us away? let's put on one's knees [à genoux] to say again this holy prayer: My God, may your holy name be blessed for ever and ever; my God, purify my heart, purify my lips so that they never speak words that insult you and separate me from you. Every time you fall back into this sin, we must, immediately, either make an act of contrition, or give a few pennies to the poor. Do you have worked on Sunday? Did you sell or buy during this holy day without necessity? Give to the poor an alms which will surpass the profit you have made. Did you drink or eat to excess? it is necessary that, in every meal you deprived yourself of something. These, my brethren, are penances which not only can satisfy the justice of God, if they are united with those of Jesus Christ, but which can still protect you from falling back into your sins. If you want you behave in this way you are sure to correct yourself manage with the grace of the good Lord. Yes, my brethren, we must chastise and punish ourselves whereby we have done evil, this will be the true means to avoid the penances and punishments of the other life. It is true that it costs money; but we can't exempt us from it while we are still in life and that God is satisfied with so little. If we wait until after our death, there will no longer be time, my brethren, everything will be finished; we will only be left with the regret of not having done it. Let us feel some repugnance, my brethren, for penance, let us cast our eyes on our kind Savior; let's see what he did, what he suffered fert to satisfy his father for our sins. Ani- let us show ourselves by the example of so many illustrious martyrs who delivered their bodies to the executioners with so much joy. Let us liven up again, my brethren, by the thought of the flames devouring purgatory that poor souls suffer condemned for perhaps lesser sins than the ours. If it costs you, my brethren, to do penance, you will also have the eternal reward that these penances will merit for you. We have said that we can satisfy the justice of God by prayer, not only vocal prayer or mental, but also by the offering of all our actions, raising our hearts from time to time to the good God during the day, saying: My God, you know that it is for you that I work; you me there have condemned to satisfy your justice for my sins. My God, have mercy on me who am only one such a miserable sinner, who has rebelled so many times against you who were my Savior and my God. I desires that all my thoughts, all my desires (have than an object, and) that all my actions are done only with the aim of pleasing you. Which might please ble to God, is to often think of our final ends, that is to say, to death, to judgment, to hell which is made for the abode of sinners. 3° I say that we can satisfy God's justice by fasting. We understand takes under the name of fasting, everything that can mortify body and mind, like renouncing one's own will, which is so pleasing to God that it disappoints us. rite more than thirty days of penance; to suffer for the love of God the repugnances, the insults, the contempt, the confusions that we do not believe we deserve; to deprive ourselves of a few visits, such as going to see our parents, our friends, our lands and others similar things which would give us some pleasure; to hold us on one's knees [à genoux] a little longer, so that the body that has sinned suffers in some way. I also said that we can satisfy justice of God through alms as the prophet said to Nebuchadnezzar: “Redeem your sins with alms. » (Dan. iv, 2i). There are several kinds of alms: those which look at the body, like giving food to those who have no bread; to clothe those who do not have what to wear; to go see the sick; of their give money; to make their bed; to keep them company; to prepare their remedies for them: that is what look at the body. But here are those who look at the soul which are still much more precious than those which have not relationship only to the body. But, you will tell me, how do we give spiritual alms? Here it is: it is

when you are going to console a person who is in some sorrow, who has just experienced some loss; you console her with your words full of goodness and charity, by making it remember the great reward that the good Lord promised to those who suffer for his love; that the sorrows of the world are but a moment, while that the reward will be eternal. Spiritual alms, it is to instruct the ignorant, who are these poor people sounds that will be lost if someone does not have compass- sion of them. Alas! how many of these people do not know what it takes to be saved; who ignore the principal mysteries of our holy religion; who, despite all their sorrows and other good works will be damned. Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, where are your homework? Do you know them a little? No, I don't believe it not. If you knew them a little, what would your eagerness to see if your children have everything what religion is needed to not be lost! How much you would seek every possible means of their learn what your duty as father and mother is to you oblige! My God! how many children lost through ignorance! and this through the fault of their parents who, perhaps, did not unable to instruct them by themselves, not only had the heart to entrust them to those who could do, leaving them to live in this state and perish for eternity. Masters and mistresses, what charity do you give to these poor servants, most of whom know nothing about their religion? My God! how many souls are lost, including the masters and mistresses will report in broad daylight! I pay him his wages, you will tell me, it's up to him to make I only take it to work; he doesn't win not just what I give him. You are wrong: the good Lord has entrusted this poor child to you, not only ment to help you work, but also so that you were teaching him how to save his soul. Alas! a master and a mistress can they live peacefully in seeing their servants in a state of damnation? My God! how little the loss of a soul matters to them! Alas! how many times mistresses will witness that their servants do not pray, neither in the morning nor in the evening; perhaps do not even take holy water, and do not will tell them nothing, or will be content to think: here is a servant who has no great religion! But without going further, provided that he does your work well, you are happy. O my God! what blindness who can never understand it? I say that a master braid should have as much care and take as much precautions for instructing or having their servants instructed ticks that their children, all the time they will be at their service. God will ask you for it as well as your children and nothing less. You take their place as father and mother; it's you who God will take care of it. Alas! if so many poor servants who have no religion, this misfortune comes in great part of which they are not educated. If you had the charity to instruct them, making them know what they must do to save themselves: the duties they have to fulfill ply towards God, towards their neighbor and towards themselves, what are the truths of our holy religion that it you absolutely have to know, you would make them open one's eyes [ouvrir les yeux] about their misfortune. Alas! what thanks they give you would do throughout eternity, telling you that after God, it is to you to whom they are indebted for their eternal happiness. My God! can we let souls perish so precious which cost Jesus Christ so much for redeem! But, you will tell me, that is good to say. If we wants to talk to them about religion, there are some who don't tell you 4 don't just listen or they'll make fun of you. This is only too true. There are a few who are unfortunate enough to not want open one's eyes [ouvrir les yeux] on their misfortune; but that's not all: there are also some who are very happy to be educated. You have to take them gently, remembering that when you believe that it will be of no use to them, you will be just as much rewarded only if you had made them saints. But don't make no mistake. Sooner or later they will remember this that you taught them; a day will come that they will benefit from it will do and that they will pray to the good Lord for you. You still owe them the alms of your prayers. A master or a mistress who has servants must not pass one day without praying to God for them. I am convinced that there are some who have perhaps never prayed to the good Lord for their servants. But, you will tell me, far away for praying for them, I never even thought about it. Ah! My brethren, I don't believe that. If you had lived in a ignorance so great towards your duties, you would be well to be pitied and worthy of the last compassion. If a servant should not fail to pray for his masters, a master, a mistress owes him the same thing, and even more, because the servant is not responsible for the soul of his master, instead of the master being responsible for the souls of his servants. My God! how many people who do not know their duty; which, therefore, do not fulfill it, and which will be lost for eternity. Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, do not forget not this spiritual

alms that you owe to your children and to your servants. You still owe them alms of your good examples which will serve as a guide for them go to heaven. This, my brethren, is what I believe is most capable of satisfying th IV SUNDAY FROM l / A WIND.

do to God's justice for your confessed sins and forgive. You can still satisfy the justice of God, bearing with patience all the miseries that you will be forced to suffer in spite of yourself, as are illnesses, infirmities, afflictions, poverty, the fatigue you will have while working, the cold, the hot, the accidents that happen to us, the need to die. See the goodness of God who has given us the grace of make all our actions meritorious, and worthy of removing all the sorrows of the other life. But, unfortunately, my brethren, it is not in this spirit that we let us suffer these evils that God sends us, as much of graces he gives us; alas! being blinded, to the last point, about our good, we go so far as to murmur and to curse the hand of such a good Father who changes the eternal punishments in others which are only a few minutes. Is it up to us, my brethren, to be so blinded on our happiness? Let us put everything to good use: illnesses, adversities, afflictions, all these things are goods that we collect for heaven, or rather which will exempt us from going to suffer very rigorous torments in the other life. Let us unite all our sorrows to those of Jesus Christ, in order to make them meritorious and worthy of satisfying the justice of God. Finally the great way to to satisfy God's justice is to love him well, to have deep regret for our sins, because Jesus Christ tells us, that much is forgiven to him who loves much, and to him who loves less, fewer sins are for him handed over. 4° We have said that indulgences are very effective means to satisfy the justice of God, that is to say to make us avoid the penalties of purga-

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tory. These indulgences are composed of surreal merits bonds of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, which makes an inexhaustible treasure in which the good God gives us the power to draw. For better make you understand it, it's as if you have to twenty or thirty coins to a rich person who wants to be paid; you have nothing, at least it will take you an infinite time to pay off your debt. A rich us said: “you do not have enough to satisfy your debts; take from my chest what you need to pay what you owe. » This is precisely what God tells us done. We are powerless to satisfy its justice, he opens to us the treasure of indulgences from which we can take everything we need to satisfy the justice of God. There are partial indulgences which only remit part of our sorrows and not all, as are those that we gain by saying the litanies of the holy name of Jesus, and for which there has 200 days of indulgences; saying those of the saint Virgo, there are 400 days, as well as many others. There is indulgences when we say Ave Maria, the Angelus, the three acts of faith, hope and charity; going see a sick person, instructing the ignorant. But there plenary indulgences are the remission of all penalties that we had to suffer in purgatory; so that after having confessed ourselves of many sins, after which, although they are forgiven, we still have another almost infinite number of years of purgatory. t

If we gain these plenary indulgences in their entirety, we will be as exempt from purgatory as a child who dies after baptism or a martyr who just gave his life for God. These indulgences can be earned, if one is of the brotherhood of Saint Ro- sary, every first Sunday of the month, when we have the happiness of confessing and receiving communion, and all the feasts of the Blessed Virgin; every third Sunday ches, if we are of the brotherhood of the Blessed Sacrament. Oh! My brethren, how easy it is to remove the sorrows of the other life for a Christian who benefits from the graces that the Good Lord presents it to him. But I also have to tell you that to gain so many goods, one must be in a state of grace, having confessed and having received communion, and doing the prayers that the Holy Father prescribes; there is only the way of the cross for which one does not need to confess nor to take communion. But one must always be free from mortal sin; to have great regret for all one's sins venial and be in a true resolution of no longer commit it. If you make these provisions, you can earn them for yourself or for the souls of the pure gatory. Nothing, my brethren, is as easy as satisfying the justice of God since we have so many means to this, so that if we go to purgatory it will be well our fault. Oh! if a Christian was educated and that he would like to take advantage of everything that

the good Lord presents, what treasures he would collect for heaven! My God! If we are so poor, it is because we didn't want to get rich, but that's not all yet. After having satisfied God we must still satisfy our neighbor for the wrong we have done to him, either to the body or to his soul. I say that you are wrong in his body, that is to say in his person, by insulting him sometimes with insulting or contemptuous words, sometimes by mistreatment. If we have had the misfortune of insulting him with insulting words, he must apologize and reconcile with him. If we had him

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wrong by hitting his animals, which can happen when that we find them doing some damage to our harvests, you are obliged to give him everything you are the cause that they lost: you could have pay and not mistreat these animals; if you did what- wrong, you are obliged to repair it as soon as you can, otherwise you are greatly guilty. If you neglect to do this, you have sinned and you you must blame yourself for it. If you have wronged your next in his honor, as if it were by medi- sance, you are obliged to tell good information as much as bad as you could give, in saying all the good you can know, hiding the faults it might have, which you are not obliged to reveal. If you have slandered him, you must go find the people with whom you have say false things about your neighbor and tell them that everything you said is not true: that you are very angry, that you beg them not to believe them. But if you wronged him in his soul, it's still good more difficult to repair, however it must be done as much that we can, otherwise the good Lord will never forgive us. You must examine yourself carefully if you have not given of scandal to your children or your neighbors. How many fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses who scandalize their children and their servants by not doing anything prayer, neither in the morning nor in the evening, or who will do them while getting dressed, or lying on a chair, who will not even do a sign of the cross before and after eating. How much often they hear them swear and perhaps even blaspheme. How many times have they seen you work the Sunday morning, even before Holy Mass. It is necessary still check whether you sang bad songs sounds, if you brought bad books, if you have given bad advice, such as telling someone to take revenge, to pay with their own hands or to say insults to others. You still need to check whether you have borrowed items from your neighbor whom you neglected to return; if you have neglected to give you any alms had ordered or some refunds from your poor dead parents - To have happiness you must may your sins be forgiven, may you have nothing of the good of your neighbor which you owe and can render to him; that if you have blackened his reputation, you must did everything you could to repair it; he you must be reconciled with your enemies, talk to them as if they had only done us good all your life, keeping nothing in your heart but charity that a good Christian must have for everyone. It is necessary receive your penance with a willing heart [de bon cœur], with a true desire to accomplish it as well as you can, and the do on one's knees [à genoux] with piety and gratitude, thinking how good is the good Lord to be satisfied with so little of thing, and ensure that the sorrows that you experience in your state serves you as penances; earn indulgences as much as we can, in order to that after death we have the happiness of having satisfied to God for our sins, and to our neighbor for wrongs what we have done to him and that we may all appear with confidence at the tribunal of God. It's happiness that...

Christmas Day — On the Mystery (First Sermon)

Evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum: natus is vobis Hodie Salvator. I have come to bring you happy news; it's that a Savior has been born to you today. (S. Luke, n, 10.)

My brethren, to tell a dying man who is extremely attached to life that a skillful doctor will take him from the gates of death, and restore him to perfect health, could we give happier news? But infinitely happier, my brethren, is that which the angel brings today to all men, in the person of shepherds. Yes, my brethren, the devil had caused, through sin, the most cruel and deadly wounds to our poor souls. He had planted the three passions there the most disastrous, from which flow all the others which are pride, avarice, sensuality.

Having become the slaves of these shameful passions, we were all like so many desperate sick people who were not waiting that eternal death, if Jesus Christ our true no doctor came to our aid. But, no, touched of our misfortune, he left his Father's bosom, he came to the world in humiliation, in poverty, and in suffering, in order to destroy the work of the devil and to apply effective remedies to cruel wounds that this ancient serpent had done to us. Yes, my brethren, this tender Savior comes to heal us from all these spiritual evils and merit the grace of lead a humble, poor and mortified life, and in order to better to carry us there, he himself wants to give us the example. This is what we see in an admirable way in his birth. O We see that he prepares for us, through his humiliations and his obedience, a remedy for our pride; by its extreme poverty, a remedy for our love for the goods of this world, and by his state of suffering and mortification a remedy for our love for pleasures of the senses. By this means, my brethren, he makes us the spiritual life that Adam's sin had stolen from us. And if we say even better, he comes to open the way for us door to heaven that sin had closed to us. According to all this, my brethren, I leave you to think what must to be the joy and gratitude of a Christian at the sight so many benefits! Do we need more My brethren, for make us love this tender and lovable Jesus who comes take charge of all our sins and who will satisfy the justice of his Father for us all! O my God! can a good Christian think about all this without die of love and gratitude!

I. I say therefore, my brethren, that the first wound that sin has made in our hearts is pride, this passion so dangerous, which consists of a background of love and O time of ourselves which makes I that we love de- hang from anyone, nor to obey; 2° that we do not fear nothing so much as to see ourselves humiliated in the eyes of men mes; 3° that we seek everything that can help us rise in the minds of men. Well! My brethren, here you go what Jesus Christ comes to fight in his birth through the deepest humility. Not only does he want to depend on his heavenly Father and obey him in everything; but he still wants to obey men and depend in some way on their will. Indeed, the Emperor Augustus, out of vanity, out of caprice or out of interest, orders a count to be made of all its subjects, and that each subject is included register in the place where he was born. We see that at barely this ordinance published, the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph sets out on his way, and Jesus Christ although in his mother's womb, obeys with choice and knowledge to this order. Tell me, my brethren, can we find a greater example of humility and more capable of make us practice this virtue with love and eagerness? What, my brethren, a God obeys his creatures and wants to depend on them, and we, miserable sinners, who should, in view of our spiritual miseries, we hide in the dust we could search a thousand pretexts to excuse us from obeying the commandments of God and his Church, to our superiors who, in this, hold the place of God himself! What Shame on us, my brethren, if we compare our conduct to that of Jesus Christ! Another lesson in humility that Jesus Christ gives us is that after a journey more than forty leagues, Mary and Joseph arrived at Bethlehem. With what honor should we not receive the one we've been waiting for for four thousand years! But, as he came to heal us of our pride and teach us humility, it allows everyone puts him off and no one wants to house him. So here it is, my brethren, the master of the universe, the king of heaven and earth, despised, rejected of men, for whom he comes give his life in order to save them I It is therefore necessary that this tender Savior be reduced to borrowing a dwelling, even animals. O my God! what humility and what annihilation for a God! without doubt, my brethren, that nothing is more sensitive to us than slights, contempt and rejection. But if we want to consider those where Jesus Christ was reduced, however great they may be ours, could we ever dare to complain? What happiness for us, my brethren, to have such a beautiful model before our eyes that we can follow without fear of making mistakes. I say Jesus Christ, far from [bien loin de] look for this who could raise it in the minds of men, on the contrary, wants to be born in obscurity and oblivion; he wants poor shepherds to be secretly informed of his birth by an angel, so that the first adorations he would receive would be done to him by the smallest among men. He leaves in the rest and abundance the great and happy of the century to send his ambassadors to the poor in order to to console them in their state by seeing in a manger, lying on a handful of straw, their God and their Savior. The rich are only called for long afterwards to make us understand that ordinarily the riches and comforts distance us from the good God; can we, my brethren, according to such an example,

have ambition, keep a heart swollen with pride and filled with vanity? Can we still seek esteem and the praises of men, casting their eyes into this nursery? don't we seem to hear this tender and kind Jesus tell us all: learn from me how meek and humble of heart I am. According to this, my brethren, let us love to live in forgetfulness and contempt of world; let us not fear anything so much, Saint Augustine tells us, than the honors and riches of this world, since, if it were permitted to love them, He who became man for the love of us would have loved them himself. If he flees and despises all this we "must do the same if we want to love what he loved and despise what he despised: this, my brethren, is the lesson that Jesus Christ gives us gives by coming into the world, and here is at the same time the remedy that he applies to our first wound, which is pride. But we have a second one which is not no less dangerous is avarice.

II. We say, my brethren, that the second plague that the sin has done in the heart of man, is greed, that is that is to say, an unregulated love of the riches and goods of this world. Alas! My brethren, how this passion wreaks havoc in the world! Saint Paul is therefore right about us say that it is the source of all evil. Isn't it indeed from this cursed interest that injustices come, envy, hatred, perjury, lawsuits, quarrels, animosities and harshness towards the poor? From this, my brethren, can we be surprised that Jesus Christ, who only comes to earth to heal the passions of men, wish to be born in the greatest poverty and deprivation of all amenities which seem so necessary to the life of men? And we see for this that he begins to choose a Mother poor, and he wants to pass for the son of a poor craftsman, and as the prophets had announced that he would be born from the royal family of David, in order to reconcile this noble origin with his great love for poverty, he per- shows that, at the time of his birth, this illustrious family fell into poverty and went even further. Mary and Joseph, although very poor, still had a small house in Nazareth. It was still too much for him: he does not want to be born in a place that belongs to him, and for this he forces Mary, his holy mother, to do the journey from Bethlehem to the precise time when she was to give birth to him. But at least in Bethlehem, which was the homeland of his father David, will he not find no parents to receive it at home? But no, the Gospel tells us, no one wants to receive it; everything the world sends him away under the pretext that he is poor. Tell me, my brethren, where will this tender Savior go, if no one does not want to receive it to protect it from the insults of bad weather? However, there still remains a resource; it's to enter some inn. Joseph and Mary indeed introduce themselves. But Jesus, who had planned everything, allowed that the competition was so great that they did not find of space. Oh! My brethren, where will our loving Savior go? Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin seek to on all sides, they see an old hovel where the beasts retreated in bad weather. 0 sky! be in astonishment! a God in a stable! He could choose the most magnificent palace; but the one who loves as poverty will not do it. A stable will be his palace, a manger his cradle, a little straw will make up his bed, miserable swaddling clothes will be all his ornaments, and poor shepherds will form his court. Tell me, could he teach us in a better way effective, the contempt that we should do goods and of the riches of this world, and at the same time, the esteem that we must have for poverty and for the poor yours? Come, wretches, Saint Bernard tells us, come, all of you who set your hearts on the goods of this world, listen to what this stable, this cradle and these swaddling clothes which wrap your Savior I Ah! misfortune to you who love the goods of this world! Ah! that he is It’s hard for the rich to run away! Why? you will tell me; why, my brethren, here it is: 1° Because ordinary- ly a person who is rich is filled with pride; he everyone must bow to her; it is necessary that all the wills of others are subject to his own. 2° Because riches attach our hearts to life present, that we see every day that a rich man fears greatly death. 3° That riches ruin love of God and that they extinguish all the feelings of compassion for the poor, or, if we put it better, riches are an instrument that makes everything work other passions. Alas! My brethren, if we had the eyes of the soul open, how much we would fear that our heart was not attached to the things of this world! Ah! if the poor could well understand how much their state brings them close to the good God, and opens to them the heaven, how much they would bless the good Lord for having put them in a position that brings them so close to their Savior. But if you ask me who are these poor people J.-C. cherishes so much? My brethren, here they are: they are those who suffer their poverty in the spirit of penitence, without murmuring and without complaining. Without

this, their poverty would only serve to make them even more guilty than the rich. But the rich, you will ask me, what do they owe What can we do to imitate a God so poor and so despised? Here it is: it is not to set their hearts on possessions that they possess, to do good works as much that they can; to thank the good Lord for having them given such an easy way to atone for their sins by their alms; to never despise those who are poor; on the contrary, to respect them well in what they have a great resemblance to Jesus Christ. It is therefore, my brethren, through this great poverty that Jesus Christ gives us learns to fight the attachment we have for the goods of this world; this is how he heals us from the second wound that sin has done to us. But this tender Savior still wants to heal one other than the sin made us, which is sensuality.

III. — This passion consists of the uncontrolled love of pleasures that we taste through the senses. This fatal passion arises from excess drinking and eating, in the excessive love of rest, of the comforts and conveniences of life, of spectacles, of profane assemblies: in a word [en un mot], of all the pleasures we can taste by the senses. What does Jesus Christ do, my brethren, for us cure this dangerous disease? Here it is: he is born in sufferings, tears and mortification; he is born, during the night, in the most rigorous season of the year. He was barely born when he was lying on a handful of straw in a stable. O my God! what state for a God! when the Eternal Father created Adam, he placed in a garden of delights: when his son is born, he places it on a handful of straw; oh my God! what state, my brethren, He who beautifies heaven and earth; the one who brings all the happiness of angels and saints wants to be born and to live and to die in suffering. Can he show us in a stronger way the contempt that we have to do with our body and how much we have to treat him harshly, lest he lose our soul. O my God! what a contradiction! a God suffers for us, a God sheds tears over our sins, and we we would not like to suffer anything, to have all our ease!... But also, my brethren, that the tears and the sufferings of this divine Child make us terrible threats. Woe to you, he tells us, who spend your life laughing, because that a day will come when you will shed tears that will never end. The kingdom of heaven, he tells us, is suffering violence, it is only for those who continually do it to themselves. Yes, my brethren, if we approach with confidence the cradle of Jesus Christ, if we mingle our tears with those of our tender Savior, at the hour of death, we will hear these happy words: Blessed are those who wept because they will be comforted. Here then, my brethren, is this third plague which Jesus Christ comes to heal by coming into the world, which is sensuality, that is to say, this accursed sin of impurity. With what ardor, my brethren, must we not cherish, love and seek everything that can provide or preserve for us virtue which makes one so pleasing to God. Yes, my brethren, before the birth of Jesus Christ, there was too much distance between God and us so that we can dare to pray to him. But the Son of. God, by becoming man, wants to bring us greatly closer to him, and force us to love him to the point of tenderness. How, my brethren, seeing a God in this state of a child, we could refuse to love him all our heart? He himself wants to be our Mediator, it is he who is responsible for asking everything from his Father for us; he calls us his brothers and his children: could he take names that inspire us more great confidence? So let's go to him with great trust whenever we have sinned; he asks- will himself receive our forgiveness, and will obtain for us the good happy to persevere. But, my brethren, to deserve this great and precious thanks, we must walk in the footsteps of our be a model; that following his example we loved poverty, contempt and purity; that our life responds to the great love of our quality as children and brothers of a God made man. No, my brethren, we cannot consider the conduct of the Jews without being seized with astonishment. This little- ple had been waiting for him for four thousand years, he had prayed so much by the desire he had to receive him; and when he comes, there is no one to lend him a small accommodation: he needs, all-powerful and all God that he is, borrowing a home from animals. However, my brethren, I find in the conduct of the Jews criminal as she is, not a subject of excuse for this people, but a reason for condemnation for the most Christians. We see that the Jews had formed an idea of their liberator which did not agree with the state of humiliation in which he appeared; they seemed not to to be able to convince themselves that he was the one who should be their liberator: since Saint Paul tells us very well that if the Jews had known him to be God, they would not have never killed. Here's a little excuse for Jews. But for us, my brethren, what excuse can we have in our coldness and our contempt for

Jesus Christ? Yes, without doubt, my brethren, we truly believe that Jesus Christ appeared on earth, that he given the most convincing proofs of his divinity: this is what is the subject of our solemnity. This same God wants to take, through the outpouring of his grace, a spiritual birth in our hearts. These are the reasons our trust. We glory, and we have good reason to recognize Jesus Christ as our God, our Savior and our model. This is the basis of our faith. But, tell me, with all this what a tribute do we give back to him? what more do we do for him than if we don't believe all this? Tell me, my brethren, our Does our behavior correspond to our beliefs? Let's see this one a little closer, and we will see that we are miserable people, that we are even more guilty than the Jews in their blindness and hardness. IV. — First of all, my brethren, we will not talk about those who, after having lost their faith, no longer profess it externally laughingly: but let us speak, my brethren, of those who believe everything that the Church teaches us, and which however does not do nothing or almost nothing of what Religion commands us. Let us make here, my brethren, some particular reflections, specific to the time in which we live. We blame to the Jews for having refused asylum to Jesus Christ although they did not know him. Well! My brethren, have we well reflected that we did the same affront to him every times we neglect to receive him in our hearts through holy communion? We blame the Jews for having crucified him, although he had only done them good; and tell me, my brethren, what harm has he done to us, or rather what good has he not done us? And we, my brethren, do not do we not commit the same outrage every time we have the audacity to indulge in sin? And our Are not sins even more painful at this point? good heart than what the Jews made him suffer? We we can only read with horror all the persecutions that the Jews made him suffer, although they thought they were doing something pleasing to God. But don't we ourselves to the holiness of the Gospel a thousand wars times more cruel by the disorder of our morals? Alas! My brethren, we only hold to Christianity through a dead faith; and we don't seem to believe in Jesus- Christ only to outrage him further, and dishonor him by a life so miserable in the eyes of God. Judge for- Besides, my brethren, what the Jews must think of us and all the enemies of our holy religion. When they examine the morals of most Christians, they find a crowd who live almost as if they had never been Christians, I don't want to enter in this detail which would be immense. I limit myself to two essential points, which are the external worship of our holy religion and duties beyond Christian charity. No, my brethren, nothing should be more humiliating and more bitter to us than these reproaches with which the enemies of our faith charge us in this regard; because all this only tends to show us how much our conduct is in contradiction with our beliefs. You boast, they tell us, of possessing body and soul the person of this same Jesus Christ, who once lived on earth, and whom you worship as your God and Savior; you believe he comes down to your altars, and he rests in your tabernacles, and you believe that his flesh is truly yours. food and his blood your drink. But if your faith is such, then it is you who are impious, for you appear in your churches with less respect, of restraint and decency, that you would appear in the house of an honest man to whom you would return visit. The pagans certainly would not have allowed that were committed in their temples and in the presence of their idols, while sacrifices were being offered, the immodesties that you commit in the presence of Jesus Christ in the moment when you tell us that he is coming down on your altars. If you really believe what you tell us that you believe, you should be seized with a holy trembling. Alas! My brethren, these reproaches do not are all too true. What can we think when we see the way most Christians behave in our churches? Some have their minds on their own business temporal, others, to their pleasures; this one is sleeping and the other, time lasts; the oo turns his head, Ton yawns, you scratch yourself, you leaf through your book, you see if the holy services will be over soon. The presence of Jesus Christ is a martyr, while we will pass from five to six hours in the rooms, in a cabaret, hunting, without finding this time too long; and we see that during this time that we give to world and its pleasures we think neither of sleeping nor of yawn, or get bored. Is it really possible that the presence of Jesus Christ is so painful for Christians? who should make all their future happiness consist keep such a good father company for a moment? Tell me what Jesus Christ himself must think of us who does not made himself present in our tabernacles only out of love for us, and who sees that his holy presence, which should make all our happiness or rather our paradise in this world, seems to be a torture and a martyrdom for us? Are we not right to believe that these Christians

will never go to heaven where we should stay all eternity in the presence of this same Savior; time would have been enough to last them!... Ah! My brethren, you don't know your happiness when you are so happy to come and introduce you in front of your father who loves you more than himself, and who calls you at the foot of his altars, as formerly he called the shepherds, to fill you with all kinds of good facts. If we were well aware of this, with what love, with what eagerness would we surrender not here like the Magi, to give him a present of everything we have, that is, our hearts and of our souls? Wouldn't the fathers and mothers come with more eagerness offer him their whole family, so that he would bless her and give her the graces of sanctification? With what pleasure would the rich not come offer him part of their property in the person of poor? My God, how much our little faith causes us to lose goods for eternity! Listen again to the enemies of our holy religion: we say nothing, they tell us, about your sacraments to with respect to which your conduct is as far from your belief that the sky is from the earth, following the principles of your faith. You become by your baptism like so many gods, which elevates you to a degree of honor that we cannot understand, since we suppose that there is only God who surpasses you. But what can we think of you when we see the biggest number who engage in crimes that put you below reasonless brutes. You become, through the sacrament of Confirmation, like so many soldiers of Jesus Christ who walk boldly under the standard of the cross, who must never blush humiliations and opprobriums of their Master, who, on all occasions, must bear witness to the truth of the Gospel! But who would dare to tell you? We find among you I don't know how many Christians that the human respect prevents them from publicly making their works of piety; who, perhaps, would not dare to have a crucifix in their room and holy water next to their bed; who would be ashamed to make the sign of the cross before and after their meal, or who hide for the do. Do you see how far you are from living as your religion commands you. You us say, concerning confession and communion, things which are very beautiful, it is true, and very consoling. But how do you approach it? how the do you receive? for some it is just a habit, only a routine and a game; in others it is a sup- plice, we have to drag them there so to speak [pour ainsi dire]. See- you how you need your ministers to urge you and are asking you to bring you closer to this court of penance where you receive, you say, the forgiveness of your sins; from this table, where you think you eat bread angels, who is your Savior. If you believe what you tell us, wouldn't we rather be obliged to you remember, seeing how great is your happiness to receive your God, who must be your consolation in this world and your glory in the next. All this which, according to your faith, is called a source of grace and sanctification, is, in fact, for the majority of you, than an occasion for irreverence, contempt, profanation and sacrilege. Either you are impious, or your religion is false, because if you were well persuaded that your religion is holy, you would not behave not in this way in everything she commands you. Besides Sunday, you have festivals which, you say, are established each to honor what you call upon the mysteries of your religion; the dens to celebrate the memory of your apostles, the virtues of your martyrs, to whom it cost so much to establish your religion. But tell us, these holidays, these di- sleeves how do you celebrate them? Isn't it prin- mainly all these days that you choose for indulge in all kinds of disorder, debauchery and libertinism? Don't you do more harm in these days that you say are so holy that in all other times? Your offices, which you tell us are a meeting with the saints who are in heaven, where you start to taste the same happiness, see the case that you do. One part almost never goes there: the others are there more or less like the criminals at the question- tion; what could one think of your mysteries and your saints, if we want to judge by the way in which you celebrate their holidays? But let's leave it for a moment external cult, which, by a singular oddity and by an inconsistency full of irreligion, confess your faith and at the same time denies it. Where do we find among you this fraternal charity, which, in the principles of your belief, is based on motives so sublime and so di- wines? Touch this a little closely, and we'll see if these criticisms are well founded. How beautiful your religion is, Jews and even pagans tell us, if you did what she commands you! Not only are you brothers, but what is most beautiful: you all do not together as one body with Jesus Christ, whose flesh and blood serves you as food every day; you you are all members of one another. We must agree; this article of your faith is admirable, it has some divine thing. If you acted on your belief you would be able to attract all other nations to your religion, it is so beautiful and consoling, and you promises

so many good things for the next life. But what makes believe in all nations that your religion is not as you say, your conduct is everything completely opposed to what your religion commands you. If you questioned your pastors, and they were allowed to reveal what is most secret, they would show us the quarrels, the enmities, the revenge, the jealousies, backbiting, false reports, lawsuits and so many other vices that horrify all people whose religion you say is so far from yours for holiness. The corruption of morals that reigns among you, keep back those who are not of your religion to embrace it; because if you were good convinced that it is good and divine, you would behave well in another way. Alas! My brethren, what a shame for us, that the enemies of our holy religion hold us such language! and are they not right to hold it? By examining our conduct ourselves, we see positively that we do nothing that it does to us. command. On the contrary, we only seem to belong to such a holy religion to dishonor it and turn away those who would want to embrace it: a religion which defends us from the sin that we take so much pleasure in committing and towards which we we carry with such fury, that we do not seem live only to multiply it; a religion which exposes every day Jesus Christ is in our eyes, like a good father who showers us with blessings; but we are fleeing from it holy presence, or if we come there, it is only to despise it and make us much more guilty; a religion which offers us forgiveness of our sins through ministry of its ministers, far from [bien loin de] want to benefit fiter, or we desecrate them, or we flee from them; a religion which makes us see so many goods for the other life, and which shows us such clear and so easy to win them, and we don't seem to know all this only to make it a kind of contempt and taunt; a religion that portrays us in one way so terrible the torments of the other life. so that we to avoid, and we never seem to have done enough evil to deserve them. My God, in what abyss blindness are we reduced to a religion which never ceases to warn us that we must continually work to correct our faults, to repress our inclinations towards evil, and, far from [bien loin de] to do so, we seem to look for anything that can ignite our passions; a religion which warns us that we must act only for the good Lord and always with a view to please him, and we have no avoDS in what we do only human views; we always want the world witnesses it, praises us, congratulates us. IlelasI my God, what blindness and what poverty! And we could collect so many goods for the heaven, if we wanted to behave according to the rules that gives us our holy religion! But, listen again to the enemies of our saint and divine religion how they overwhelm us with reproaches: You tell us that your Jesus Christ, that you believe to be your Savior, assures you that he would consider as done to himself everything that you would do to your brother, that is one of your beliefs, and certainly it is very beautiful. But if this is so that you tell us, you therefore only believe it to insult Jesus Christ himself? You don't believe it therefore only to tear him apart and to insult him, and finally, to mistreat him in the most cruel way in the person of your neighbor? The slightest mistakes against charity must be considered, according to your principles

5' cipes, like so many outrages done to Jesus Christ. But say, Christians, what name should we give to all this backbiting, these slanders, these revenges and to these hatreds with which you devour each other others? you are therefore a thousand times more guilty towards the person of Jesus Christ that the Jews themselves who you blame for his deathl No, my brethren, the actions of the most barbaric peoples against humanity, are not so nothing compared to what we all do days against the principles of Christian charity. This, my brethren, is part of the reproaches that the enemies of our holy religion. I do not have, my brethren, the strength to go further, as this is sad and dishonorable for our holy reli- region which is so beautiful, so consoling, so capable of make us happy even in this world, by preparing for us such great happiness for eternity. You will agree with me, my brethren, that if these reproaches have already something so humiliating for a Christian, although they are made only from the mouths of men, I leave you to think (what they will be) when we have the misfortune of hearing them from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself, when we appear before him for him give an account [rendre compte] works that our faith would have had to produce in us. Wretched Christian, Jesus Christ will tell us, where are the fruits of this faith of which I had enriched your soul? of this faith in which you have lived and whose Creed you recite every day? You took me for your Savior and your model. Here it is my tears and my penances; where are yours? What fruit did you remove from my adorable blood

that I made flow over you with my sacraments? What did you served this cross before which you professed dull so many times? What similarity is there between you and me? What do your penances have in common? and mine? between your life and mine? Ah! bet- rable, give me an account of all the good that this faith would have produced in you if you had had the happiness of make it bear fruit! Come, cowardly and unfaithful trustee, give me an account of this precious and inestimable faith which could and should have made you produce wealth eternal. You unworthily allied her with a life all carnal and all pagan. There you are, wretch, my Gospel, and there is your faith. This is my humility and my annihilation, and there is your pride. See, unhappy man, what resemblance there is between you and me! Here is your ambition and your vanity. This is my Gospel, and here it is your faith. Here is your greed with my detachment things of this world. This is your hardness for poor people and the contempt you have shown them. This is my charity and my love for them. Here are all your intemperances with my fasts and my mortifications. Here it is all your coldness and all your irreverence in the holy place with the respect that I made appear in the temple of my Father. Here are all your profanations, all your sacrileges and all the scandals that you have given to my children. Here are all the works that you have lost with all my sufferings and torments that I endured to save them! If you have caused my enemies to blaspheme my saint Name, I will know how to punish them. But, for you, I want make you experience everything my justice can have more rigorous. Yes, Jesus Christ tells us, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah will be treated with less severity than these unfortunate people to whom I so full of graces and to whom my lights, my graces and all my benefits have been useless, and who has not repaid me than by the blackest ingratitude. Yes, my brethren, the bad will eternally curse the day on which they received holy baptism, the pastors who instructed them, the sacraments which were given to them administered. AlasI what am I saying [que dis-je]! this confessional, this holy table, these sacred fonts, this pulpit, this altar, this cross, this gospel, or to make it better for you understand, everything that was the object of his faith will be the object of his imprecations, of his curses, of his blasphemies and his eternal despair. 0 my Dicul what a shame and what a misfortune for a Christian of having only been a Christian to better damn oneself and to better make a God who only wanted his eternal happiness, who has spared nothing for this, who has left the bosom of his father, who came to earth put on our flesh and spent his entire life in the suffering and tears, and who died on a cross for me. He never stopped pursuing me with so many good thoughts, so many instructions from my pastors, so much remorse in my conscience. After having sin, he gave himself to serve as an example for me, What more could he do to get me heaven? Nothing, no, nothing more, if I had wanted, all this would have served me to gain the heaven that I will never have. Let us return, my brethren, from our errors, and try better do than we have done so far.

Christmas Day — On the Mystery (Second Sermon)

(Second Sermon) (1).

On the Mystery.

Evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum; natus is vobis Hodie Salvator. I have come to bring you some happy news; it's that today your Savior was born to you. (S. Luke, u, 11.)

To tell a dying man that a skillful doctor will take him from the gates of death, and give him back perfect health, what happy news, my brethren! But infinitely happier is the news that the angel brings to all men in the person shepherds. The demon had made through sin mortal wounds to our soul. He put three fatal passions, from which all others flow: that is to say, pride, avarice and sensuality. Yes, my brethren, we were all under these shameful passions, like desperate patients who are just waiting for eternal death, if Jesus Christ had not come to us relief. But this tender Savior comes into the world in (i) This sermon is, on several points, similar to the previous one.

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humiliation, in poverty, in suffering, to destroy this work of the devil and to apply effective remedies for the cruel wounds that we had made this ancient serpent. Yes, my brethren, it is this tender Savior full of charity who comes to heal us and merit the grace of a humble, poor and mortified life; and to excite us more effectively in the practice of He himself wants to give us an example of these virtues. This is what we see admirably in his birth. He prepares us with his humiliations and his obedience a remedy for our pride; by his extreme poverty, a remedy for our love for goods of this world; by his state of suffering and of mortification, a remedy for our love for pleasures of the senses, and thereby restores spiritual life to us and opens the door to heaven. precious grace My brethren, but not known to the majority of Christians. This Messiah, my brethren, this tender Savior, comes to world to save it. However, the Gospel tells us, no one wants to receive it; he is obliged to be born in a stable on a handful of straw. No, my brethren, we cannot help but blame the conduct of Jews towards this divine Jesus. But, unfortunately, the conduct that we hold towards him is even more cruel, since the Jews did not know him for the Messiah, instead of knowing Him truly for our God. I will therefore, my brethren, show you 1° the great although this birth provides us, 2° that it is our role model in everything we have to do.

I. — To understand, my brethren, the greatness of the goods that the birth of Jesus Christ has given us, we should to be able to understand the unhappy state where Adam's sin had rushed us, which we will never be able to do. I say then that the first wound of our heart: it is gold guile. This passion, my brethren, so dangerous, which con- rests in a depth of love and self-esteem, which is 1° that we do not like to depend on anyone, 2° that we fear nothing so much as being humiliated eyes of men and 3° that we seek everything that can lift us up in their spirit. These, my brethren, are the fatal passions that Jesus Christ comes to combat in his birth through the deepest humility. Not only, he wants to depend on his father and obey him in everything; he wants still obey men and depend in some way of their will. Indeed, the Emperor Augustus, either by vanity, whether out of interest or caprice, ordered that a count was made of all his subjects, and that each family in particular was registered in the place where it originated from. But the obedience of Jesus was so great that as soon as the edict had been published, the Holy Virgin and Saint Joseph set out on their way. What lesson, my brethren, God obeys his creatures and wants to depend on them! Alas! that we are far from it! That vain pretexts do we not seek for ourselves exempt from obeying the commandments of God, or the orders of those who hold his place towards us! What shame for us, or rather, my brethren, what pride not to never want to obey; but always order, believe that we are always right and never wrong! But, let us go further, my brethren, we will see something something more. After a journey of more than forty leagues, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. Tell me, when this city received its God, its Savior, should it set limits to the honors it paid him? Should we not say in this moment as in his entry into Jerusalem: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, glory be to him in the highest cicux! " But no. This tender Savior only came to suffer. He wanted to start when he was born. All the the world rejects them; no one wants to house them. So here it is where is reduced the master of the universe, the king of heaven and the earth, despised, rejected by men, reduced to borrowing animals a home. My God, what a humiliation! What annihilation! No, my brethren, nothing is for us so sensitive as the slights, the contempt and the rejections. But, if we want to consider those whom the Savior receives when we are born, will we have the courage to complain, seeing the Son of God reduced to such humiliation? Let us learn, my brethren, to suffer everything that can happen to us, with patience, and in a spirit of penitence. What happiness for a Christian to be able to imitate in something his God and his Savior! Let us go further and we will see that Jesus Christ, well far from wanting to look for what could raise him to the eyes of men wants, on the contrary, to be born in obscurity, in oblivion. He only wants poor people shepherds be informed of his birth by an angel who comes to tell them this happy news. Tell me, my brethren, after such an example which of us could still maintain a swollen, animated heart, filled with vanity; and desire the esteem, the praise, the consideration of the world? See, my brethren, and contemplate this tender child; see it already shedding tears of love, who weeps for our sins, our ills. Ah! My brethren, what an example of poverty, of humility, of detachment from the goods of life! Let's

workMy brethren, to become humble, contemptible in our eyes, we says Saint Augustine, if a God has so despised everything created, how could we love them? If he had been

FOR CHRISTMAS DAY » 113 allowed to love them, He who became man to We would have ordered it. This, my brethren, is the remedy that the divine Savior applies to our first wound, which is pride. But we have a second one which no less dangerous is avarice. This second wound that sin has made in the heart of man, it is avarice; I mean unregulated love riches and goods of this life. Alas! that this passion wreaks havoc in the world! Saint Paul who knew even better than us, says that she is the source of all kinds of vices. Isn't it in fact from this accursed interest come injustices, envy, hatred, perjury, lawsuits, quarrels, animosities, and harshness for the poor? According to that, my brethren, may we be astonished that Jesus Christ, who comes to earth to heal the passions of men, is born in the greatest poverty, in the deprivations of all the amenities which seem so necessary for man. First we see that he chooses a poor mother. He wants to pass as the son of a poor craftsman. As the prophets announced that he would be born from the royal family of David, in order to reconcile this noble origin with his love for poverty, he allows that at the time of his birth, this illustrious family fell into poverty. He didn't stick not there, Mary and Joseph, although very poor, had a puny house in Nazareth; it's too much for him, he does not want to be born in a place that belonged to them; and for this he obliges his holy Mother to make the journey of Bethlehem at the time when she had to bring him to world. However, in Bethlehem which was the homeland of David his father, it seems to us that he would have found to find some resource, especially among his parents. But no, no one wants to recognize it, no one wants lend him accommodation. For him, there is nothing. Tell me where will this divine Savior go to take shelter insults of the time, since all the places are taken? Joseph and Mary appear in several places banks; But no! they are poor, and for them there is no no space! Ah I kind Savior, in what state of contempt and abandonment don't I see you reduced I Joseph and Mary hasten to look for everyone sides. Finally, they see a stable where the animals withdraw in bad times; it's in winter, it was all open, almost as open as in the streets. Eh what! My brethren, a stable for the dwelling of a God! Yes, my brethren, yes, this is where God wants to be born. He only wanted to him to be born in the most magnificent palaces; but no, his love for poverty would not be satisfied; a stable will be his palace, a manger his cradle, a little straw will make up its entire bed, miserable swaddling clothes will be all its ornaments, and poor shepherds will form his court. Tell me, my brethren, could he give a more beautiful lesson of the contempt that we must to make goods and riches of this world? Could he make us better understand the love we owe have for poverty and contempt? Come, my brethren, you who are so attached to the things of the earth, flow away the lesson that this divine Savior gives you, and if you do not don't hear him speak yet, Saint Bernard tells us, listen to this stable, drain its cradle, and the swaddling clothes which envelop it! What does all this tell us? What Jesus Christ will say to you one day himself: “Woe to you, rich people of the century. » Oh how difficult it is for those who attach their hearts to the goods of this world to save themselves. But, you will ask me, why is it so difficult for those who are rich in heart to save themselves? It is, my brethren, that rich people, if they do not have a detached heart of their possessions, are filled with pride, despise the poor, cling to the present life, are destitute of love of God: let us say better, riches are the instrument of all passions. Ah! woe to the rich since it is so difficult for them to save yourself. Let us therefore pray, my brethren, this child lying on a handful of straw, deprived of everything necessary, even to the life of man. Let us be careful, my brethren. to never attach our hearts to such vile things and so contemptible, since if we have the misfortune of not not knowing how to use them well, they will be the loss of our poor soul. Let our hearts be poor, so that we can take part in the birth of this Savior. You see that he only calls the poor, and the rich only come a long time later, to teach us that the riches distance us from God, almost without us we saw it. We can agree that this state of the Savior must be very consoling for the poor, since they have a God for their father, their role model and their friend. But the poor people must, if they want to receive the reward promised to the poor, which is the kingdom of heaven; they must imitate their Savior, endure, bear their poverty in the spirit of penitence, do not murmur, do not do not envy the rich, but on the contrary, the complain, because they are in great danger for their hi; they should

not slander against them, but follow the example of Jesus Christ, which is reduced to the last misery, although very voluntary. He does not complain, at least on the contrary, he sheds tears over the misfortune of the rich; spoke, my brethren, he healed the two wounds that sin made us. He goes further, he still wants to heal the third wound that sin has made us, which is the suality. Sensuality consists of the unregulated love of pleasures sirs that we taste through sounds. It is from this fatal passion that is born from excess in drinking and eating, the love of one's comforts, of the conveniences of soft life, and impurity; in a word [en un mot], whatever the law of God has released us. What does our Sau- worm to cure us of this dangerous disease and of this vice? He is born, my brethren, in sufferings, tears and mortifications. He is born, during the night, in the harshest season of the year. Barely was he born, that he is lying on a handful of straw and in a poor open stable. Ah! man sensual, greedy, immodest, enter this closet of misery, and you will see what a God does for you cure (1). Do you believe, my brethren, that this is your God, your Savior, your tender Redeemer? Yes, tell me- rez you. But, if you believe him, you must imitate him. Alas! how far our life is from his! Alas! you see him, my brethren, he suffers, and you want nothing suffer. He sacrifices himself for your salvation, and you don't want to do anything to earn him. Alas! how you do you behave in his service? Everything repels you, everything bothers you; we barely see you doing your Easter; your prayers are either missed, or poorly done; We hardly see you attending holy offices, still, my brethren, how do you behave there? Ah! that the tears, that the sufferings of this divine Child, you (1) Flagellation of Jesus Christ, example of the libertine in the tomb. Pore ■■the Younger, t. XII, p. 210. (Note of the Venerable.)

are terrible threats. Woe to you Ah! badly- happy to you who laugh now, because one day will come dra where you will shed tears; and these tears will be all the more stinging because they will never dry up. The kingdom of heaven, he tells us, suffers violence; he is only for those who do it continually. Uh- happy, this tender Savior tells us, happy are those who cry in this world, because one day they will be solés. Whoever takes Jesus Christ as his model from his cradle to the cross is happy! May he something to be encouraged about! what he has to imitate! that powerful weapons to repel the demon! Let's say better: the life of imitation of Jesus Christ is a life of saint. History provides us with a fine example of this; we are there let us see that a widow who had little property, but who had virtue and zeal for the salvation of his children, had a daughter aged ten, named Dorothée. This little girl was lively, given to dissipation; the mother feared that this child would get lost with her little ones companions; she boarded her with a mistress very virtuous to train her in virtue. She made admirable progress in piety and retained in his heart all the good advice that his good mistress had given him given; but above all to offer Jesus Christ to model in all its perfections. When she was returned to her mother, she was the example and consolation of his whole family. She never complained about anything, she was patient, gentle, obedient, always content, in an even mood in her work and in the cross that came to him, chaste, enemy of all vanity, respecting everyone, speaking badly of no one, loving to be of service, always united with God.

Such conduct soon made her an object of esteem to the whole parish; but, as usual, the fakes wise men who are blind and proud were angry, because without knowing it, they are virtuous and wise only because everyone esteems them; they cannot bear it fry others, fear that we will no longer pay attention to them, and that all esteem is not turned to their side. It's what happened to this young girl. Some companions envious people undertook to blacken her reputation, treating her They looked like hypocrites and false devotees. But, Dorothy received this without complaint; she suffered it for the sake of it died of Jesus Christ and did not leave always well love those who slandered her. But, his innocence was known, and everyone was even more excited about it. time. The parish priest, admiring her happiness two effects of grace and the fruit that this young girl among those who frequented her, said to him one day: “Dorothea, please tell me in confidence, how- how you live, how you behave with your companions? » — “Sir,” she replied, “he seems that I do little, compared to what I should do. I always remembered a notice that my mistress gave me when I was only twelve years old. She told me several times to offer myself Jesus Christ as a model in all my actions and in all my sorrows. This is what I tried to do. Here's how I do it: When I wake up and I get up, I imagine the

Child Jesus who, at his waking up, offered himself to God his Father as a sacrifice; to imitate him, I offer myself as a sacrifice to God, devoting my day, and all my labors, and all my thoughts. When I pray, I picture Jesus praying to his Father in the Garden of Olives face down, and, in my heart, I unite myself to this divine disposition. When I works, I think that Jesus Christ, also tired, works is worth for my salvation, and, far from complaining, I unite with love and with resignation my labors to his. When someone orders me something, I remember feel Jesus Christ who was submissive, obedient to the holy Virgin and to Saint Joseph, and, in this moment, I unite my obedience to his. If I am ordered what- what a hard and painful thing, I immediately think that Jesus Christ submitted to the death of the cross for us save; then, I accept with a willing heart [de bon cœur] whatever we commands me, however difficult it may be. If we talk about me, if someone says harsh things and insults to me, I don't answer nothing, I suffer in patience, remembering that Jesus Christ suffered in silence and without complaint humiliations, slanders, torments, and the cruelest opprobrium; I think then that Jesus was innocent and did not deserve what was made to suffer, instead of me being a sinner, and I deserve it more than I can be made to suffer. When I take my meals, I imagine Jesus taking the his own with modesty and frugality to work at the glory of his Father, If I eat something disgusting, I immediately think of the gall that Jesus Christ tasted on the cross, and I make the sacrifice of my sensuality to him. When I'm hungry, or I don't have anything to eat satiate, I can't stop being content, by remembering that Jesus Christ spent forty days and forty nights, and suffered a cruel hunger for my love and to atone for the intemperances of men. When I take a few moments of recreation, when I am talking with someone, I imagine how gentle, affable Jesus Christ was with all. If I hear bad speeches, or see do some sin, I immediately ask forgiveness from God, by representing to me how much Jesus Christ had his heart pierced with pain, when he saw his Father offended. When I think of the numberless sins that we commit in the world, how God is outraged on earth, I groan, sighing; I unite with provisions of Jesus Christ, who said to his Father in speaking of man: “Ah! my Father, the world doesn't know you. » When I go to confession, I represents Jesus who weeps for my sins in the garden of Olive trees and on the cross. 'If I attend Holy Mass, I immediately unite my mind and my heart to the holy intentions of Jesus, who sacrificed himself on the altar for glory of his Father, for the expiation of the sins of men and for the salvation of all. When I hear sing some hymn and I hear the praises of God, I rejoice in God, I imagine this glorious song and this happy evening that Jesus Christ passed with his apostles, after the institution of the adorable sacrament. When I go to take my rest, I imagine Jesus Christ who did not take the his own, only to gain new strength for the glory of his Father, or else I imagine that my bed is very different from the cross on which Jesus Christ lay down like a lamb, offering his spirit and his life to God; then I fall asleep saying these words of Jesus Christ on the cross: “My Father, I commend my mind in your hands. » The priest, unable to tired of admiring so much light in a young villa- geoise, said to her: c 0 Dorothée, how happy you are! what consolations you have in your state! » — “It is true that I have consolations in the service of

God; but I admit to you that I have many battles ahead support: I have to do great violence, to endure the taunts of those who mock me, and to overcome my passions which are very strong.'If the good Lord gives me graces, he also allows me to have many temptations. Sometimes I am in sorrow; sometimes, the disgust for prayer overwhelms me. » — “What are you doing,” said the priest, “to overcome your repugnance, pt your temptations? » — “When I am,” she said to him, “in the tortures of the spirit, I imagine the Savior in garden of Olives, slaughtered, tortured and afflicted until the death; or else I imagine him, abandoned and without consolation on the cross, and, uniting myself with him, I immediately say these words which he himself pronounced in the garden des Olives: “My God, let your will be done. » As for my temptations, when I feel some attraction to go to certain companies, to vigils, in dangerous dances and entertainments, or well when I have violent temptations to consent to whatever sin, I imagine Jesus Christ who said these words: Eh! what, my daughter, do you want me leave, to surrender yourself to the world and its pleasures? do you want to take your heart back from me to give it to vanity and to the demon? Aren't there already enough people who offend me? do you want to side with them and abandon my service? Immediately, I answer him from the

bottom from the heart: No, my God, I will never abandon you, I will be faithful to you until death! WHERE WILL GO I, Lord, in leaving you, since you have the words of eternal life. These words fill me in the moment of strength and courage. » — “In the conversations you have with your companions, he said the priest, what are you talking about? » — “I discussions of the same things from which I took the liberty to talk to you, I tell them to offer themselves Jesus- Christ to modulate in all their actions, to remember in their prayers, in their meals, in work, in conversations, in the sorrows of life life, as Jesus Christ himself would behave in these occasions, and to always unite with his divine intentions tions; I tell them that I use this holy practice and that I feel good about it, that there is nothing more great and nobler than wanting to follow and imitate Jesus Christ, and that there is nothing sweeter than serve such a good Master. » Oh! happy, my brethren, the soul who took Jesus Christ for his guide, his model and his beloved graces, what consolations which are never found in the service of the world! Here, my brethren, are the consolations that you would have if you wanted to take the trouble to raise your children well and inspire them, not vanity and love of worldly pleasures, but to take Jesus Christ as their model in everything they do. Oh! happy blinkers! Oh! God's beloved parents

II. — Yes, my brethren, it is not only for us redeem that Jesus Christ has come, but still for To serve as an example to us, he tells us: “I came to seek and save that which was lost; » and in another place, he said to us: “I gave you an example, so that that you do what you see that I have done. » When Saint John baptized Jesus Christ in the Jordan, he heard the Eternal Father who said: “Behold, my beloved Son, listen to him. » He wants us to listen to his words, and imitate his virtues. He only practiced them to show us what we had to do.

Since Christians are children of God, they must follow in the footsteps of their master who is Jesus Christ himself. Saint Augustine tells us that a Christian who does not want to imitate Jesus Christ does not deserve not to bear the name of Christian. He tells us in a another place: Man is created to imitate Jesus Christ who became man, in order to make himself visible and that we can imitate him. On the day of judgment we will be examined to see if our life has been consistent to that of Jesus Christ, from his birth until his dead. All the saints who have entered heaven, entered only because they imitated Jesus Christ. A good Christian must imitate his charity, which is a virtue which leads us to love God with all our hearts and neighbor as ourselves. Jesus Christ loves his father from the moment of his conception until his death, in saying: I always do my father's pleasure. He did not just say it, but he gave his life to repair the outrages that sin had caused him done. He loves his neighbor, not only as himself, but more than himself, since he has given his blood and his life to bring us out of hell. We must, following the example of Jesus Christ, love the good God with all our heart; prefer it to everything, love nothing than in relation to him. We must love our neighbor like ourselves, that is to say, wishing him all the that we would like to be wished for ourselves, to do everything that depends on us to help him to save his poor soul. Secondly: we must imitate his poverty and his detachment from the things of life- You see, my brethren, that he was born poor, that he lived poor, and that he died poor, since before dying, he allowed people to tore off all his clothes. Throughout his life he never had anything in particular about him. Ah! good example of contempt for earthly things! Third: we must imitate his gentleness. He tells us: “Learn from me, that I am meek and humble of heart. » Saint Bernard tells us that he has gentleness in his name which is that of Jesus. When the apostles brought down fire from heaven on a city of Sa- Mary, who did not want to receive the Savior: you be still, said his disciples, that we may tell the fire from heaven to descend on this city? Our Lord replied: “You don’t know what you’re asking. dez; the Son of Man did not come to earth to to lose souls, but to save them. » Let's imitate her heart towards God, receiving with meekness everything that will come to us from him, sorrows, sorrows and others evils. Let us be good to our neighbor, do not let ourselves be angry with him; but treat it with kindness, with charity. Let us also be gentle towards of ourselves; never act on a whim, out of anger; if we fall into any fault, we must not take against ourselves; but humble ourselves deeply before God and, without tormenting ourselves too much, continue our religious practices. Blessed we says Jesus Christ, those who are gentle in heart because they will possess the earth, that is to say the hearts of men. Fourth: we must imitate his humility. He himself tells us:

“Learn from me that I am humble of heart. » His humility was so great that, although he was king of everyone, he wanted to pass as the last of all men! See how he practices humility, by being born in a stable, abandoning

FOR CHRISTMAS DAY » 125 given from everyone. He wanted to be circumcised, that's- that is, to pass for a sinner, he who was holiness even, incapable of ever sinning; he suffered that we called him sorcerer, magician, seducer; he always has that- ché what could make him esteemed in the eyes of men. He wanted to wash the feet of his apostles, and even of the traitor to be Judas, although he knew well that he had to betray him; finally, he wanted to be sold like a vile slave, dragged rope around his neck through the streets of Jerusalem, as if he had been the most criminal in the world. Try, my brethren, to imitate his great humility by hiding the good that you do, suffering with patience the insults and the contempt, and all the persecutions that you can do against you, following the example of Jesus Christ. We must still imitate his patience. That he was patient to remain nine months confined in the breast of his mother, he whom heaven and earth cannot contain What patience to converse among men whose Most of them were hardened and charged with crimes. patience during all his passion! We take it, we take it bind him, cover him with stones, flog him, tie him up on the cross, they put him to death, without him having said a single word to complain. Let us imitate, my brethren, this patience when we are despised and wrongly persecuted. Let us again imitate his prayer. He prayed with tears of blood. Ah! My brethren, what happiness for us that the birth of this divine Savior 1 We only have to follow in his footsteps; we just have to do what he did it himself. What glory for Christians to have in Jesus Christ a model of all the virtues that we we must practice, to please him and save our soul! Pores and mothers train your children on this beautiful model, often offer them the virtues of Jesus Christ to example (1). Happy news that the angel announces to us from heaven in the person of the shepherds, since with her we we have everything: heaven, the salvation of our soul, and our God. What I...

(1) Saint Rose of Lima. Apostolic Pastor, t. H, p. 38. (Note of the Venerable.)

First Sunday of the Year

Domine, dimitte illam et hoc anno. Lord, leave him one more year on earth. (5. Luke, xni, 8.)

A man, says the Saviour of the world to us, had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and ve- not looking for fruit there, he found none point. Then he addressed the winegrower and said to him: It's already been three years since I came to look for fruit at this fig tree without finding one; cut it off, why does it still occupy the earth? The winegrower answered him: Lord, leave it again this year, I will plow around it, I will put dung in it, perhaps it will bear fruit, otherwise you will cut it and throw it into the fire. No, my brethren, no, this parable needs no explanation. It is precisely we who are this fig tree that God planted in the bosom of his Church, and from whom he had the right to expect good works; but so far we have disappointed his hope. Indignant at our behavior, he wanted to remove us from this world and punish us; but Jesus Christ, who is our true vinedresser, who cultivates our souls with so much care and who is already our mediator, has asked, in grace, his Father to let us still this year on earth, promising his Father that he would redouble his care and that he would do all that he could to convert us. My Father, this tender Savior said to him, again this year, do not punish them so soon; I them will continue continually, sometimes through remorse of the conscience which will devour them, sometimes by good examples, sometimes by good inspirations. I will load my ministers to announce to them that I am always ready have received; that my mercy is infinite. But if, despite all this, they don't want to love you, well far from defending them against your justice, I myself I will turn against them, begging you to remove them from this world and to punish them. Let us warn, my brethren, such a great woe, and let us profit from this mercy which is infinite! My brethren, let us spend the year that we are about to begin in a holy way: and, for that, let us avoid all these disorders which have made our past years so criminal in the eyes of God. This is what I'm going to show you in one way simple and familiar, so that, understanding it well, you can enjoy it.

I. Why, my brethren, is our life filled with so much misery? If we consider the life of man is nothing other than a chain of evils: illnesses, sorrows, persecutions, or finally losses of property constantly fall on us; so that, on whatever side earthly man is turns or considers himself, he finds only crosses and afflictions. Come on, ask from the smallest to the most big, everyone will speak the same language to you. Finally, my brethren, man on earth, unless he turns on the side of God, can only be unhappy. Do you know you why, my brethren.? No, you will tell me. Well! my friend, here is the real reason. It is because God, do not let us having brought into this world as in a place of exile and banishment, he wants to force us with so many evils not to attach our heart to it and to sigh for goods greater, purer and more durable than those that can be found in this life. To make us better feel the need to direct our sights towards external goods nels, God has given our hearts desires so vast and so extensive that nothing created is capable of being able to satisfy him: it is at this point that he hopes to find something pleasure in attaching oneself to created objects, barely possessing what he desired with so much ardor, he barely got it tasted, he turns in another direction, hoping to find something better. He is therefore constrained and forced to admit, through one's own experience, that it is unnecessarily that he wants to find his happiness here on earth in the things laughable. If he hopes to have any consolation in this world, it will only be by despising things which are so transient and of such a short duration, and tending towards noble and happy end for which God created him. You- Can you be happy, my friend? Look at the sky: it is where your heart will find something to be fully satisfied. To prove this to you, my brethren, I would only have to question a child and ask him for what reason God created and brought him into the world; he would answer me: for know him, love him, serve him, and by this means gain eternal life. But what should you do with these goods, these pleasures, these honors? He would tell me again: all this exists only to be despised, and every Christian who is faithful to the commitments he made with God on the sacred font of baptism, despises them and tramples them underfoot. But, you will tell me again,

So what should we do? in what way should we conduct ourselves to achieve the happy ending for which we are created in the midst of so much misery? Ehl my friends, nothing could be easier, all the ailments you experience are the true means to lead you there: I will show it to you way clear as the day at noon. First, I will tell you that Jesus Christ through his sufferings and his death has made all our acts meritorious, so that for a good Christian, there is not a movement of our heart and our body which is not rewarded if we do it for him. Perhaps you are still thinking: this is not clear enough. Well if that doesn't not enough, let's start the subject. Follow me for a moment, and you will know the way to make all your meritorious deeds for eternal life, without anything change the way you act. All you need is everything to do with a view to pleasing God, and I will add that instead to make your actions more painful by doing them for God, on the contrary they will only be sweeter and lighter. In the morning, when you wake up, think immediately to God, and make the sign of the cross in him saying: My God, I give you my heart, and since you are so good as to give me one more day, give me the grace that everything I do will only be for your glory and the salvation of my soul. Alas I must we say within ourselves, how much that, since yesterday fell into hell, who, perhaps, were less guilty than me: I must therefore do better than I haven't done so far. From this moment on, you must offer all your actions to God of the day saying to him: Receive, O my God, all the thoughts, all the actions that I will do in union with what you have endured during your life deadly for my sake. This is what you don't must never forget; because, so that our actions are meritorious for heaven, we must have offered them to the good Lord, without which they will be without reward. When it's time to get up, get up promptly: be careful not to listen to the demon who will tempt you to stay a while longer in bed, in order to make you miss your prayer, or to make you do it absent-mindedly, through the thought that you are expected, or your work is urgent. When you dress, do so with modesty, think that God has his eyes fixed on you, and that your good guardian angel is next to you, as you cannot doubt. Put yourself immediately on one's knees [à genoux], don't listen yet to the demon who tells you to put it back your prayer at another time, in order to make you offend God in the morning; on the contrary, do your prayer with as much respect and modesty as you can. After your prayer, plan for opportunities that you might have to offend God during the day, in order to avoid it. Then

make some resolution that you will endeavor to carry out from the first moment: like, for example, doing your job in a spirit of penitence, to avoid impatience, murmurs, swearing, hold your tongue. The evening, you will examine whether you have been faithful to it; if you have failed in this, some penance must be imposed on you to punish you for your infidelities, and you are sure that, if you use this practice, you will soon come to the end of correcting all your defects. When you go to work, instead of busying yourself of the conduct of one and the other, take care of some good thoughts, as of death: while thinking knowing that soon you will leave this world; you will examine what good you have done there since you are there; you will especially lament the days lost for the heaven, which will lead you to redouble your good works, your penances, your tears; or else, judgment; that maybe, before the day is over, you will give an account [rendre compte] of your whole life, and that this moment will decide your fate, or eternally unhappy, or eternally blessed; or to the fires of hell, in which burns those who have lived in sin, or to the happiness of paradise, which is the reward of those who have been faithful in serving God; or, if you want, talk about the ugliness of sin which separates us from God, who makes us slaves of the devil by throwing us into an abyss of eternal evil. But, you will tell me, we cannot do all these meditations. Well! see the goodness of God, you don't know how to meditate on these great truths? Well! say a few prayers, say your rosary. If you are a father or mother, say so for your children, so that the good Lord gives them the grace to be good Christians who will be your consolation in this world and your glory in the other! And children must say it for their fathers and mothers, so that God preserve them and raise them well Christianly. Or well pray for the conversion of sinners, so that they have the happiness of returning to God. And then you you will avoid an infinite number of useless words, or perhaps even comments which are often not the most innocent. You must, my brethren, accustom yourself to good hour to use time holyly. Remember that we cannot save ourselves without thinking about it, and that, if there is a matter worth thinking about, it is indeed the matter of our salvation, since God does not put on earth only for this. It is necessary, my brethren, before beginning your work, never fail to make the sign of the cross, and not imitate these people without religion who do not dare because that they are in company. Simply offer your sorrows to the good Lord, and renew from time to time this offering, through this, you will have the happiness of attracting Heaven's blessing on you and on all that you will do. See, my brethren, how many acts of virtue you can You can practice behaving in this way, without nothing to change what you do. If you work in view of pleasing God, of obeying his commandments which order you to earn your bread by the sweat of your forehead: this is an act of obedience. If it's to atone your sins, you are doing an act of penance. If it is in order to obtain some grace for you or for others: this is an act of trust and charity. 0 how many, my brethren, we can deserve heaven every day by only doing what we do; but, doing so for God and the salvation of our soul Who prevents you, when you hear the hours strike, to think of the brevity of time and to say to yourself: the hours pass and death approaches, I run towards eternity. Am I ready to appear in court? of God? Am I not in a state of sin? And, my brethren, if you had this misfortune, quickly make an act of contrition to show God your regret, and then quickly resolve to go to confession to two reasons. The first is that, if you came to die in this state, you would be damned outright, and all the good works that you have done are would be lost to heaven. Besides, my brethren, would you have you have the courage to remain in a state which makes the enemy of your God who loves you so much? When you rest from your fatigue, throw away the eyes towards this beautiful sky which is prepared for you, if you have the happiness of serving God as you should, saying to yourself: 0 beautiful sky, when will I the joy of owning you! However, my brethren, it is true to say that the demon does not don't stop doing everything he can to bring us to sin, since Saint Peter tells us: “let him wander without pod around us like a lion to devour us. » You must therefore expect, my brethren, that as long as you are on earth you will have temptations. But what should do you when you feel the demon who would like you bring harm? here it is. Quickly have recourse to God in him saying: “My God, come to my aid! Holy Virgin » help me, please! or: My holy angel » guardian, fight for me the enemy of my salvation! » Quickly reflect on these things: at the hour of death, would I like to have done this? No, probably. Well! it is necessary therefore resist this temptation. I could now hide myself from the eyes of the world; but God sees me. When he judges me, what will I answer him, if I had the

misfortune of committing this sin? This is heaven or hell, which of the two do I want to choose? Believe me, my brethren, make these little reflections all the times you are tempted, and you will see that the temptation will diminish as you resist it, and you will emerge victorious. Then you will experience yourself that, if it costs you to resist, you are well then compensated by the joy and consolations that one experiences after casting out the demon. I'm sure that many of you say within yourself that this is very true. Fathers and mothers must accustom their children early to resist temptation, because we can tell so many fathers and mothers that there are children who are fifteen and sixteen years old, and who don't know what it is than to resist a temptation, who let themselves be taken to the traps of the devil like birds in nets! Where does this come from, if not ignorance or negligence? parents. But perhaps, you will ask me, how do you expect us to teach this to our children when we didn't know that? But, if you're not enough learned, why then have you entered into the state of marriage, where you knew, or at least you should have known, that if the good Lord gave you children, you were obliged, under penalty of damnation, to instruct them of the way in which they should behave to go to the sky. My friend, was it not enough that your ignorance lost you without losing others with you? If less, being perfectly convinced that you have no not enough lights, why don't you do be instructed in your duties by those charged with them? But, you will tell me, how dare you say to a pastor that I am poorly educated? he will make fun of me. He will laugh at you, my brethren, you are wrong, he will make a pleasure in teaching you what you need to know, and therefore to your children. You still owe them learn to sanctify their work, that is to say, to do it, neither to become rich, nor to be esteemed by world, but to please God who commands us to atone for our sins; through this, you will have the consolation of seeing them become wise and obedient children, who will be your consolation in this world and your glory in the other. You will have the pleasure of seeing them fearful God and masters of their passions. No, my brethren, my des- breast is not today to show to fathers and mothers the magnitude of their obligations: they are so great and so terrible that they deserve full instruction whole. I will only tell them in passing that they must all do their best to inspire fear in them and the love of God; that their souls are the deposit that God has entrusted to them, of which one day it will be necessary to render a very rigorous account. Finally, one must end the day with his prayer of evening, that we must do together as much as possible sible: for, my brethren, nothing is more advantageous than this practice of piety, because Jesus Christ tells us same as “if two or three people unite together)> seems to pray on my behalf, I will be in the middle. » On the other hand, what could be more consoling for a father of family must see their entire house prostrated every day at the feet of God to adore him and thank him with his benefits received during the day, and, at the same time, to moan about his past faults? Is there not reason to hope that everyone will spend the night in good faith? The one who praying should not go too quickly, so that the others can follow him, nor too slowly, which would give distractions to others, but keep a happy medium. To this evening prayer, we must add a joint examination, that is to say, stopping for a moment to rerricttro his sins before his eyes. This is the advantage of this examination: it brings us to the pain of our sins, he inspires us with the resolution not to think of them again fall and when we go to confession, we have much easier to remember. Finally, if death struck us, we would appear with more confidence before the tribunal of God; since Saint Paul tells us that if we judge ourselves, God will spare us in his judgments. He would still be wish, that before going to bed, you would do a little devotional reading, at least during the winter: this would give you some good thoughts that would occupy you when you go to bed and when you get up, and through that, you would more perfectly engrave the truths of your salvation in your heart. In houses where we don't know not read, well we can say the rosary, which would attract the protection of the Blessed Virgin. Yes, my brethren, when we have spent the day like this, we can take our rest in peace and fall asleep in the Lord. If, during the night, we wake up, we profile this moment for praise and worship God. This, my brethren, is the plan of life that you must follow, and the good order you must establish in your families.

IL Let us now look at the most common and dangerous disorders that must be avoided, and then the obligations of each state in particular. I say first that the most common sins and disorders are the vigils, the

swearing, the words and the songs dishonest. I first say the nights before, yes, my brethren, yes, these nocturnal assemblies are usually the school where young people lose all the virtues of their age, and learn all kinds of vices. Indeed, my brethren, what are the virtues of youth? isn't it the love of prayer, attendance at the sacraments, submission to their parents, diligence in their work, an admirable purity of conscience, a keen horror of sin ashamed? These, my brethren, are the virtues that young people people must strive to acquire. Well, my brethren, me I will tell you that no matter how strong a young person is man or girl in these virtues, if they have the misfortune to attend certain vigils, or certain companies, they will soon have lost them all. Say me, my brethren, you who are witnesses, what do we hear, if not the dirtiest and most shameful words? what do we see there, if not familiarities between young people people who make modesty blush, and I dare say that if they were infidels, they would not do it in- advantage. And fathers and mothers witness it, and say nothing about it, and masters and mistresses delight in silence! A false human respect shuts them out mouth! And you are Christians, you have religion, and you hope to go to heaven one day! O my God, what blindness! Can we conceive it well? Yes, poor blind you will go; but it will be in hell: this is where you will be thrown away. What, you complain that your animals are perishing? You have probably forgotten all these crimes which committed during five or six months of winter in your stables? You have forgotten what the Holy Spirit says: “that wherever sin is committed, the curse of Lord will fall. » Alas! how many young people who would still have their innocence if they had not been certain vigils and which, perhaps, will never return to God. Isn't it still, when we get out of here, what will running around young people who form connections, who, the more often, end in scandal and loss of reputation of a young girl? Isn't that where these young people libertines, after having sold their soul to the demon, will still lose those of others? Yes, my brethren, the evils that result are incalculable. If you are Christians, and that you desire to save your souls and those of your children and your servants, you must never hold vigils at home, unless you are there, you, one of the heads of the house, to prevent God be not offended. When you have all entered, you must shut the door [fermer la porte] and not let anyone in. Begin your vigil by reciting one or two sayings zaines of your rosary to attract the protection of the Holy Virgin, what you can by working. In- next ban all these lascivious or evil songs vessels: they desecrate your heart and your mouth which are the temples of the Holy Spirit; as well as all these tales which are only lies, and which, most ordinarily, are against people consecrated to God, which makes them more criminal. And you must never let your children go to other vigils. Why are they running away from you, if not to be freer? If you are faithful to fulfill your duties, God will less offended, and you, less guilty. There is still more deplorable disorder What is more common is free speech. No, my brethren, nothing more abominable, more terrible than these words. Indeed, my brethren, what could be more contrary to the holiness of our religion than these impure words? They outrage God, they scandalize their neighbor; but to put it more clearly, they lose everything. It often takes only one dishonest word to cause a thousand bad thoughts, a thousand shameful desires, perhaps even to make one fall into a number infinite other infamies, and to teach souls innocent the evil that they had the good fortune to ignore. Well, my brethren, can a Christian allow his mind to be occupied with such horrors, a Christian who is the temple of the Holy Spirit; a Christian who was sanctified by the touch of the adorable body and by the precious blood of Jesus Christ! O my God, that we know little about what we do while fishing! If our Lord tells you that you can know a tree by its fruit, judge by the language of some people what must be the corruption of their hearts, and yet nothing more common. What is the conversation of young guys? Isn’t this cursed sin! Do they have other something in your mouth? Come in, dare I say it with saint Jean Chrysostôme, enter these cabarets, that is to say say, in these dens of impurity; what does the conversation, even among people of a certain age? Do they not go so far as to glorify themselves to him who will say the most! Isn't their mouth similar? to a pipe that hell uses to vomit out all the or- hard of its impurities on the earth, and lead to the souls to him? What are these bad Christians doing, or rather these sent from the abyss? Are they happy? instead to sing the praises of God, these are the songs the most shameful ones which should (make) a Christian die of horror. Ah! great God! who would not shudder thinking of the judgment that God will bring about it. If, like Jesus Christ himself assures us, a single word useless will not remain (without) punishment, alas! what will be therefore the

punishment of these licentious speeches, of these indecent remarks, of these infamous horrors which make one draw up the hair? Do you want to conceive the blindness of these poor wretches, listen to these words: “I have no no bad intention, they still tell you; it's just for fun, it's just trifles and nonsense that doesn't accomplish anything. » What! My brethren, a sin too dreadful in the eyes of God, a sin, I say, that the sacrilege alone can surpass I it is a trifle for you! Oh! is that your heart is spoiled and rotten by this odious vice. Oh no! no, we can't laugh and joke about what we should flee with more horror than a monster who pursues us to destroy us devour. Besides, my brethren, what a crime to love what God wants us to hate sovereignly! You meditate that you have no bad intention; but tell me also, poor and miserable victim of abysses, will those who hear you have less evil thoughts and criminal desires? will your intention stop their imagination and their hearts? Speak more clearly saying you are the cause of their loss and eternal damnation. Oh I what this sin throws souls into hell! The Holy Spirit tells us that this cursed sin of impurity has covered the surface of the earth. No, my brethren, no, I am not going any further in this matter; I will come back to this in an instruction, where I will try to portray it to you again with much more of horror. So I say that fathers and mothers must be very vigilant towards their children or servants, never do or say anything that could undermine this beautiful virtue of purity. How much of children and servants who have not indulged in this vice that since their fathers and mothers gave them given the example I 0 how many children and servants lost by the bad (examples) of their fathers and mothers, or of their masters and mistresses! Ah! it would have been much better for them if someone stuck a dagger in their breast!... At least, they would have had the happiness of being in a state of grace, they would have gone to heaven, instead of throwing them into hell. Masters must be very vigilant towards their do- mosliques. If there are some who are libertines in words, charity must carry them back two or three times kindly; but, if they continue, you must chase them out of your home, otherwise your children will not will soon become like them. Let's even say, a do- mestic of this species is capable of attracting all kinds of curses on a house. Another disorder that reigns in households and between the workers, there are impatience, murmurs ripe, swearing. Well! My brethren, what do you gain by your impatience and your murmurings? Your business in Are they better? do you suffer less from it? Isn't it quite the opposite? You suffer more, and what it there's even more unfortunate thing, it's that you lose some all credit to heaven. But, you may say to me, this is very good for those who have nothing to endure; If you were in my place, you might still do worse. I agree with all this, my brethren, if we were not Christians, if we had no other hope than the goods and pleasures that we can taste in this world. If, I say, we were the first who suffered; but, from Adam until now, all the saints had something to suffer, and the most large part, much more than us; but they have suffered with patience, always subject to the will of God, and now their sorrows are over, their happiness which has begun will never end. Ah! My brethren, let's look at this beautiful sky, think of the happiness that God prepares us for it, and we will endure all the evils of the life, in a spirit of penitence, with the hope of an eternal reward. If you had the happiness, in the evening, to be able to say that your day is all for good God!

I say that the workers, if they want to reach heaven, must suffer with patience the rigor of the seasons, the bad mood of those who make them work; avoid these murmurs and swearing so common between them and faithfully fulfill their duty. Husbands and wives must live in peace in their union, edifying each other ment, pray for each other, bear their faults with patience, encourage each other to virtue by their good examples and follow the holy and sacred rules of their state, thinking that they are the children of the saints, and that, therefore, they should not behave like pagans who do not have the happiness of knowing the truth (God). Masters must take the same care their servants than their children, remembering what Saint Paul says: that if they do not take care of their servants, they are worse than pagans, they will be punished more severely on the day of judgment. The servants are to serve you and be faithful to you, and you must treat (them) not as slaves, but like your children and your brothers. Servants must regard their masters as taking the place of Jesus Christ on earth. Their duty is to serve them with joy, to obey them with good grace, without murmuring, and look after their property as their own. Servants must avoid these extreme acts among

themselves. familiars which are so dangerous and so fatal to innocence. If you are unfortunate enough to find yourself in one of these occasions, you must leave it, no matter what costs you: this is precisely where you need to follow the advice that Jesus Christ gives you, in you saying that if your right eye, or your right hand are an occasion of sin, pluck them up and throw them away of you, because it is better to go to heaven with one eye or one hand less, than to be cast into hell with your whole body; that is to say that, however advantageous the condition you are in, it must be leave without delay [sans délai], otherwise you will never save yourself. Prefer, Jesus Christ tells us, your salvation, because it's the only thing you have to have heart. Alas! My brethren, how rare are these Christians who are ready to suffer anything rather than expose the salvation of their soul. Yes, my brethren, you have just seen in summary everything that you must do to sanctify yourself in your state; Alas! what sins do we not have to reproach ourselves for? so far. Let us judge ourselves, my brethren, according to these rules, Let us try to conform our conduct to it from now on. And why, my brethren, should we not do all that we could we please our God who loves us so much? Ah! if we took the trouble to cast our eyes on the goodness of God towards us! Indeed, my brethren, all God's feelings towards the sinner are only feelings of kindness and mercy. Although a sinner, he still loves her. He hates sin, it is true; but he loves the sinner, who, although a sinner, does not let to be his work created in his likeness, and to be the object of his most tender sighs for all eternity. It's for him that he created heaven and earth; it is for him that he left the angels and the saints; it is for him that, on the earth, he suffered so much for thirty-three years; and it is for him that he established this beautiful religion so worthy of a God, so (capable) of making happy whoever has the happiness of following her! Do you want me, my brethren, to show you how much God loves us, even though we are sinners. Listen to your Spirit- Saint who tells us that God behaves towards us as David behaved towards his son Absajon, who raised an army of villains to dethrone and remove life to such a good father, in order to be able to reign in his place. David is forced to flee and leave his palace to put his life in safety, being pursued by his denatured wire. And although this crime must have been good odious to David, yet the Holy Spirit tells us that his love for this ungrateful son was boundless, and that it even seemed that as this wicked son armed his fury, this good father felt a new love for him. Seeing himself forced to walk at the head of a army to arrest this unfortunate son, his first aid was, before engaging in combat, to recommend to his officers and his soldiers to save his son. This criminal and barbaric son wants to take his life, and it's for him let this father pray. He perishes by visible permission from above, and David, far from [bien loin de] rejoice at the defeat of this rebel, and to see himself in safety, on the contrary, when he learned of the defeat, he seems to forget his life and his kingdom, to think only of mourning the death of the one who only sought to lose him. His pain was so great and his tears so abundant that he covered the face so as not to see the day; he withdrew in the darkness of his palace and there he gave way to all the bitterness of his heart. Her screams were so piercing and his tears so bitter and so abundant that he caused consternation even among his troops, reproaching himself for himself because he had not had the happiness of dying to save his son's life. At every moment he could be heard exclaiming: “AhI my dear child, Absalon, ah! that » didn't I die in your place! ah! who will take my life » give it back to you. —Ah! Would to God that I had died at your » place! » He no longer wanted to receive any consolation;

his pain and his tears accompanied him until the tomb. Tell me, my brethren, could you ever have thought that your loss caused so many tears and pain to our divine Savior? Ah! who would not be touched?... A God who mourns the loss of a soul with so many tears, who keeps shouting to him: My friend, my friend, where are you going lose your soul and your God? stop stop! Ah! look my tears, my blood still flowing: must I die a second time to save yourself? Here I am. Oh! angels from heaven, come down to earth, come and cry with me the loss of this soul! Oh! that a Christian is unhappy if he still perseveres in running towards the depths me, despite the voice that his God makes him hear constantly! But you will tell me, no one is holding out on us this year- pledge. Oh! my friend, if you didn't want to block your ears, you would constantly hear the voice of your God who pursues you. Tell me, my friend, what are so these rcipords of conscience when you fell in sin? Why then these troubles, these storms who agitate you? Why then this fear and this fright where

you are, where you seem to be constantly ready to be crushed by the thunderbolts of heaven? How many times have you not felt, even while sinning, a hand invisible who seemed to push you away by telling you: Unhappy-, what are you doing? Unhappy, where are you going? Ah! my son, why do you want to damn yourself?... Will you not agree with me that a Christian who despises so many graces, deserves to be abandoned and reprobated, because that he did not convey the voice of God, nor profit from his graces? But no, my brethren, it is God alone that this soul I n g r a t e despises and whose life she seems to want to take.

And all creatures seek vengeance, and it is precisely God alone who wants to save her, and opposes anything that could harm it, ensuring its conservation as if it were alone in the world, and that his happiness depended on his. While the sinner plants the dagger in his breast, God extends a hand to tell him that he wants to forgive him. The thunders and lightnings of the sky seem to throw at the foot of the throne of God, to pray to him in grace to allow them to crush it. Ah! no, no, told them this divine Savior, this soul cost me too dear, I still loves her, although she is a sinner. But, Lord, these thunderbolts return, she only lives to outrage you? No matter, I want to keep it, because I know that one day she will love me; that's why I want to ensure its conservation. Ah! My brethren, would you be so hard as not to be touched by so much goodness from our God? Sh good! My brethren, let's go further. You will see a another show of God's love for his creatures and especially for a converted sinner. The Lord us speaks through the mouth of the prophet Hosea. 11 will even to the point of still wanting to hide our sins, telling us that God treats the sinner who insults Him, as a mother treats a child devoid of reason. You see, he tells us, this child deprived of reason, sometimes he is in a bad mood, sometimes he gets impatient, he shouts, he gets irritated, he goes so far as to hit him with his little hands breast of the mother who carries it; he strives to satisfy his weak anger. Well! he tells us, what revenge do you believe that this mother will draw temerity from this child? Here it is; she will squeeze him and squeeze him even more tenderly on her heart: she redoubles her caresses;

she flatters him, she presents him with her breast and her milk, to try to appease his little mood: that's all his revenge. Well! this prophet tells us, if this child had the knowledge of what he does, what should he think when seeing so much gentleness on the part of this mother! Let us give him for a moment the language of reason that nature refused him. What will he think and what will he judge of all this, when he has recovered from his anger? It is true that he will be astonished at the temerity he has had to get angry with the one who held him in her arms, who only had to open their hand to let it fall on the ground and crush it. But at the same time, will he fear that this good mother refuses to forgive these little furies? Will he not see, on the contrary, that they are already forgiven, since she caresses him more tenderly and that she could take revenge so well? Yes, this prophet tells us, this is the way in which God treats the sinner even in the midst of its greatest disorders. Yes, tells us this holy prophet, the Lord loves you so much, although sinner, may he carry you in his hands even into your old age. No, no, he said, when a mother would have the courage to abandon your child, for me I do not could never abandon one of my creatures. Alas! My brethren, nothing could be easier to conceive. God does not Doesn't it seem close one's eyes [fermer les yeux] about our sins? Don't see Every day we don't have sinners who don't seem live only to outrage him, and who make all their efforts to ruin others, either by their bad examples, either by their taunts or by their dishonorable words stupid. Doesn't it seem like hell sent them to snatch these souls from the hands of God himself to throw them into hell! You all agree with me. Well! Doesn't God take care of these misfortunes?

two who live only to make him suffer and delight him souls? Doesn't he do for them everything he does for the fairest? Does he not command the sun to to enlighten, to the earth to nourish them. Some, to the anim- ills, to feed them, others, to clothe them, or to relieve in their work? Does he not command all men to love them as themselves? Yes, my brethren, it seems that God, for his part, exhausts himself do us good to win our love, and with a on the other hand, it seems that the sinner uses all who is in him to make war against him and despise him l 0 my God! that man is blind! that he knows little what he does by sinning, by rebelling against a good father, such a charitable friend! In deploring our blindness, what must we conclude from all

this, Christians? This is because, if God is so good as to give us hope of a new year, we must do everything we can to spend it holy, and that, during this year, we can still win the friendship of our Dieii, repair the harm we have done, not only this year which has just passed; but of all our life, and ensure an eternity of happiness, joy and glory. Oh! if next year we had the happiness of being able to say that this year has been quite for the good Lord; what treasure we would have amassed This is what I

Epiphany

Vidimus stellam ejus, et venimus adorare cum. We saw his star, and we came adore him. (S. Math., ir, 2.)

OUR happy for us, my brethren, day for evermore [à jamais] memorable, where the mercy of the Savior us from the darkness of idolatry to call us to the knowledge of faith, in the person Magi, who come from the East to adore and recognize the Messiah as their God and their Savior in our name. Yes, my brethren, they are our fathers and our models in faith. Happy if we are faithful to imitate them and follow them! Oh! cried out with transports of love and recognition of Saint Leo, Pope: “Angels of the city heavenly, lend us your flames of love to thank God for the mercies of our vocation to Christianity and eternal salvation. » Let us celebrate, my brethren, we said this great saint, with joy, the beginnings of our happy hopes. But, like the example of Magi, let us be faithful to our vocation, otherwise let us tremble lest God make us suffer the same punishment. than to the Jews, who were his chosen people. Since Abraham until his coming, he led them as by the hand, and everywhere, had shown himself his protector and his deliverer; and then he rejected them and pushed them back because of the contempt they had made of his graces. Yes, my brethren, this precious faith will be taken from us and will be trans- carried in other countries, if we do not practice it the works. Well! My brethren, do we want to keep among us this precious deposit? let us faithfully follow the traces of our fathers in the faith. To give us a faint idea of the magnitude of the benefit of our vocation to Christianity, we do not have than to consider what our ancestors were before the coming of the Messiah, their God, their Savior, their light and their hope. They were given up to all kinds of cries- my and disorders, enemies of God himself, slaves of the demon, victims devoted to eternal vengeance. May we, my brethren, ah! can we think carefully- chir on such a deplorable state without thanking this God for goodness with all the fullness of our heart, for having us kindly call to the knowledge of the true religion and for doing everything he did to save us? 0 favor, oh inestimable grace, so precious, and so little known naked in the unfortunate century in which we live, where most are Christians in name only! Well! My brethren, what have we done to God to have been preferred over so many others who have perished, and who still perish every day days, in ignorance and sin? Alas! what am I saying [que dis-je]? We are perhaps even more unworthy of this happiness than these unfortunate people, if we were born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, while so many others perish outside, it is by an effect of his goodness to us: could we ever thank the Lord for a such happiness? However, my brethren, all our gratitude must not end there; we still need, if we we want to preserve it, practice its works by example Magi. Yes, their fidelity to grace was prompt, generous and persevering. These are the qualities that must have nôlro.. We say first that their vocation to faith was prompt. In fact, they had barely seen the miraculous star when, without examining anything, they left for to seek their Savior, so eager, so burning with desire to arrive at the end where the grace represented by the star calls them, that nothing can hold them back. Alas! My brethren, how far we are from imitating them! since how long years has God called us by his grace, in us giving the thought of leaving sin, of being reconciled bond with him? But still we are insensitive and rebels. Oh! when will that happy day arrive when we will do like the Magi who left and abandoned everything to give yourself to God! Secondly, my brethren, we say that their faithfulness their vocation was generous, since they overcame all the difficulties and obstacles that stand in the way know, to follow the star. Alas, what sacrifices don't they have to do? We must abandon their country, their home, their family, their kingdom, or for better say, we must move away from everything they hold most dear in the world, one must expect to endure the fatigues of long and difficult journeys, and this, in the most rigorous season of the year: everything seemed to oppose their purpose. How many taunts did they have to endure

from their equals as well as from the people! But no! nothing is capable of stopping them in a such an important step. And this is precisely, my brethren, in what does the merit of faith consist, of renouncing everything, and to sacrifice what we hold most dear to obey the voice of grace that calls us.

Alas, my brethren, if we had to do, to win the M heaven, sacrifices like those of the Magi, that the name r bre of the elected would be small! But no, my brethren, let us only do what we do for temporal matters, and we are sure of reaching heaven. See: a miser will work night and day to collect or earn money. See a drunkard, he will become exhausted and suffer pain. whole week to have some money to drink Sunday. See these young people having fun! They will travel two or three leagues with the intention of finding some bland pleasure mixed with bitterness. They will come at night, in bad weather. Arrived at their home, instead of being pitied, they will be scolded, at least if the parents have not yet lost the memory that God will one day demand an account of their souls. And you see yourself that in all this, there are many sacrifices to be made; and yet nothing repels you, and you come at the end of everything; some by fraud, others by trickery, everything is done. But alas! My brethren, when it is for this who sees our salvation, what do we do? Almost everything seems impractical to us. Let us admit, my brethren, that our M blindness is very deplorable, to do everything that we do for this miserable world and do nothing want to do to ensure our eternal happiness. 3° Let us see again, my brethren, to what extent the Magi carry their generosity. Arrived in Jerusalem, the star which had led them on their journey disappeared from the front them. They believed, no doubt, that they were in the place where born the Savior whom they came to adore, and thought that all Jerusalem was at the height of the greatest joy, the birth of his deliverer. What a surprise! what surprise for them, my brethren.! Not only does Jerusalem gives no sign of joy, she doesn't even know that her 7 liberator is born. The Jews are also surprised to see come the Magi to worship the Messiah that the Magi are surprised that such an event was announced to them. What •hope for their foil Was more needed for the make them give up their approach and return as quickly as possible strictly possible in their country, for fear of serving of fable to all Jerusalem? Alas! My brethren, this is what many of us would have done if our faith had been put to a similar test. It was not without mystery- ter that the star disappeared: it was to awaken faith Jews who turned a blind eye to such an event; it was necessary for strangers to come and reproach them their blindness. But all this, far from [bien loin de] shakes them, does not, at the very least, on the contrary, that strengthen them in their resolution. Aban- given the appearance of this light, will be put off they our holy kings, my brethren.? Are they going to leave everything? Oh! no, my brethren,: if it was us, yes; no doubt it is necessary would even be much less. They turn around from another side: they will consult the doctors they knew they had in their hands the prophecies which pointed out to them the place and time where the Messiah would be born, and ask them in which place the new Iloi of the Jews should be born. Trampling on all human respect, they enter into Herodc's palace, and ask him west this newly born king, declaring to him, without any fear, that they came to worship him. Let the king take care of this language, nothing is capable of stopping them in a such an important step: they want to find their God whatever the price. What courage, my brethren, what firmness! Oh! My brethren, where are we who fear a little mockery? A qiien we will be told prevents us from fulfilling our religious and fre- query the sacraments. How many times have we not ashamed to make the sign of the cross before and after our meal? How many times has human respect failed us? not made to transgress the laws of abstinence and fasting, in fear of being noticed and being thought of as a good Christian? Where are we, my brethren? Oh what a shame, when, on the day of judgment, the Savior will confront our conduct with that of the Magi, our fathers in the faith, who left everything and sacrificed everything rather than re- respond to the voice of grace which called them. See again how great their perseverance was. The doctors of the law tell them that all the prophets They announced that the Messiah was to be born in Beth- lehem and that the time had arrived. They barely received the answer, that they leave for this city. Shouldn't They didn't expect that what happened to them would happen to them. the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph? that the competition would be so big that they couldn't find its place? For- will they even doubt that the Jews who, for four a thousand years, waiting for the Messiah did not run in crowds throw yourself at the feet of this manger, to

recognize it for their God and their deliverer? But no, my brethren, no one makes the slightest movement; they are into darkness and they stay there. Beautiful image of the sinner, who never ceases to hear the voice of God which tells him cries, through the voice of his pastors, to leave his sin to give herself to him, and remains all the more guilty and more hardened (1). But let us return to the holy Magi, my brethren, They leave Jerusalem alone; how exact they are! Oh! what faith! Will God leave them without reward? No, (1) The four final endings, death, judgment, hell and paradise. [Xote of the Venerable.)

no doubt. They had barely left the city when torch, that is to say this miraculous star reappears in front of them, seems to take them by the hand to arrive in this poor place of misery and poverty. She stops and seems to say to them: This is the one I went to announce you. This is the one that is expected. Yes, enter: you will see it. He is the one begotten of all eternity and who has just been born, that is to say who has just take a human body that he must sacrifice to save his people. May this device of misery not put you off point. He is bound with strips; but it's him- even who throws lightning from the highest peaks. Its sight makes hell shudder because it sees its conqueror. These holy kings feel, in this moment, their hearts so burning with love that they throw themselves at the feet of their Savior and water this straw with their tears. What a spectacle for dos rois, to recognize for their God and Savior a child lying in a manger between two vile animals! Oh! that faith is something precious! Not only does this state of poverty not repel them; but they are even more touched and edified. Their eyes seemed to be unable to be satisfied to consider the Savior of the world, the King of heaven and the earth, the Master of the whole universe, in this state. The delights with which their hearts were flooded were so abundant that they gave to their God all that they had, and everything they could give him. From this moment they consecrate their persons to God, not wanting to be masters, even of their persons. No happy with this offering, they still offer all their kingdom. Following the custom of the Orientals, who never approached the great princes without making gifts, they offered Jesus the richest productions of their country, that is to say: gold, incense and myrrh, and, by these gifts, they perfectly expressed- ment the ideas they had conceived of the Savior, recognizing his divinity, his sovereignty and his humanity. His divinity, through incense which is due to God alone; sound humanity, through myrrh which is used to embalm bodies; its sovereignty, through gold which is the ordinary tribute of which we use it to pay sovereigns. But this offering expressed the feelings of their hearts much better: their ardent charity was manifested by the gold of which it is the symbol; their tender devotion was represented by incense; the sacrifices they made to God, from a heart mortified, were represented by myrrh. What virtue, my brethren, in these three orientals! God, seeing the disposition of their hearts, should not say from then on what he says in the rest of time: that he had not seen a more lively faith in all Israel! Indeed, the Jews had the Messiah in their midst, and they did not were not paying attention; the Magi, although very distant, came to seek him out and recognize him for their God. The Jews subsequently treated him as the most criminal that the earth had ever borne, and end up with the crucify at the same time as he gave evidence so evident of his divinity; while the Magi see him lying on straw, reduced to the vilest condition, throw down at his feet to worship him and recognize him for their God, their Savior and their deliverer. Oh! that the Faith is something precious! If we had the good fortune to understand it well, what care would we not have not to keep it within us! Which do we imitate, my brethren, the Jews or the Magi? What do we see in most Christians? Alas! a faith weak and languid; and how many who do not even have the faith of demons who believe that there is a God and who tremble bleat in his presence! It is very easy to be convinced of this. See, my brethren, if we believe that God resides in our churches when we talk there, when we turn our heads from side to side, and that we do not stand alone on one's knees [à genoux] while he shows us the excess of his love, that is to say during communion and even the blessing. Do we believe there is a God? Oh! no, my brethren, or, if we believe it, it is only for the outrage- ger. What use, my brethren, do we flee from the precious gift of faith and the means of salvation that we find in the within the Catholic Church? what resemblance between our life and the holiness of our religion? Can we say, my brethren, that our profession conforms to the maxims mes of the Gospel, to the examples that Jesus Christ gave us given? Let us esteem ourselves, let us practice everything

that Je- sus-Clirist esteem and practice? that is to say we love poverty, humiliation and contempt? Let us prefer the quality of Christians to all honors and everything what we can possess and desire on earth? Do we have for the sacraments this respect, this desire and this eagerness to benefit from the graces that the Lord lavish us there? This, my brethren, is what each of us must examine itself. Alas! how great and bitter are they not reproaches that we have to make about these different points? In view of so much infidelity and ingratitude, must we not tremble that Jesus Christ takes away from us this precious gift of faith as to the Jews to transport it to other kingdoms where it would be better use? Why did the Jews cease to be God's people? Is it not because of the contempt they have made of his graces? Take care, Saint Paul tells us, if you do not remain firm in the faith, you will be like the Jews, rejected and repulsed. Alas! My brethren, who would not tremble if this misfortune did not happens to us, considering how little faith there is on the earth. Indeed, my brethren, what faith do we see among the young people who should (dedicate) the spring of their days to the Lord, to thank him for having them enriched with this precious deposit? Do we not see them busy, on the contrary, some in satisfying their vanity, others others to be content with pleasures? Aren't they forced to admit that they should be taught that they have a soul. It seems that God only gave it to them to lose it. What faith will we find among those who have reached middle age, who are beginning to be disillusioned with the follies of youth? But aren't they all busy, night and day, increasing their fortune? They think of saving their poor soul, whose faith tells them that if they lose it, all is lost [tout est perdu] for them? No, my brethren, no, it matters little to them whether it is lost or saved, provided let them increase their wealth! — Finally, what faith do we see among the old men who, in a few minutes, will be summoned to appear before God to render account of their life which, perhaps, was only a fabric of sins? Do they think to take advantage of the little time that God, in his mercy, still wishes to grant them, and who should only be devoted to mourning their faults? Don't we see them, won't we hear them, so many once they find the opportunity, do with joy, noise pleasures that they tasted in the follies of their youth? Alas! My brethren we will therefore be forced to confess M that faith is almost extinct, or rather this is the reasoning of all those who have not yet given up their soul to the tyranny of the devil, this is only too true. Indeed, my brethren, what faith can we hope for find in a Christian who will remain three, four and six months without attending the sacraments. Ilelas! how many who remain for whole years, and many more, three or four years! Let us fear, my brethren, let us fear to experience the same punishments that God made so many others feel nations which, perhaps, had less deserved them than us, from where the faith was transported elsewhere, or in made better use of it than we who had been put to the place of the Jews. And what must we do, my brethren, to have the right- happy to never be deprived of it? We will have to do like the Magi who worked continually to restore faith more lively. See, my brethren, how much the Magi are attached dear to God by faith! When they are at the feet of the nursery, they no longer think of leaving their God. They acted like a child who is about to separate from a good father, who always delays and hesitates to look for pretexts, in order to prolong his happiness. As the time approaches, tears flow, heart breaks. Likewise the holy Kings. When you have to leave the nursery, they cried bitterly, they seemed to be linked by chains. On the one hand, they were pressed by the charity to go and announce this happiness to their entire kingdom; on the other, they were obliged to separate from the one they had come looking from so far away, and that they had found after so many difficulties. They looked at each other others to see who would leave first. But the angel told them that they had to leave, go and announce this happy news to the people of their kingdoms, but not to return to Herod: that, if Herod had said to take so many precautions, to be so well informed to indicate to him the place of his birth, this was only to make him die; but that it was necessary to go through another path. Beautiful figure of a converted sinner who has left sin to give himself to God, he must no longer reappear in the place where he was going before. These words of the angel seized them with the deepest pain. In the fear of having the misfortune of being the cause of his death. After taking leave of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, they leave as secretly as possible, do not follow the high road, for fear of giving rise to some suspicion. Instead of going to sleep in inns, they spend nights at the foot of the trees, at the corner of the rocks, and make about thirty leagues in this way. Barely had they arrived in their country when they announced to all their principalities their intention to leave and

abandon everything they owned, not being able to resolve to own something, after having seen their God in such great poverty; and they value themselves infinitely happy to be able to imitate him in this at least. The nights are spent in prayer, and the days in running townhouses in town, to let everyone know about happiness they had, from everything they had seen in this stable, tears that this nascent God already had poured out to mourn their sins. They exercised rigorous penances on their bodies; they looked like to three angels who roamed the provinces of their country to prepare the ways of the Lord; they could not speak of the sweet Savior without continual shed tears [verser des larmes], and each time they spoke together of this happy moment when they were in this stable, he seemed to them to be dying of love. Oh! couldn't they, my brethren, say to each other like the disciples of Emmaus: “Our Didn't our hearts seem all burning with love, when we were prostrate at his feet in this poor reduced from misery? » Ah! if they had had the happiness that we now have to win in their hearts, don't would they not have exclaimed with the same transports of a- died that in the following Saint Francis: “Oh Lord, diminish your love, or increase my strength, I I can't hold on to it any longer! " Oh! with what great care would they not have preserved if he had told them that only one sin would make them lose it, wouldn't they have preferred a hundred times death than bringing such misfortune upon oneself! Oh! what their? lives were pure and edifying during the eighty- fourteen years that they survived the birth of the Sau- worm! Saint Thomas, we are told, after the Ascension of the Savior, went to announce the Gospel in their country. He them found all three. Since they left Tetable, they had continued to spread the faith in their country. Saint Thomas, delighted with joy to see them so full of the spirit of God and already raised to such high holiness, found all hearts already disposed to receive grace of salvation, through the care taken by the holy Kings. He told them all that the Savior had done and endured since they had the pleasure of seeing him in the manger, that he had lived to the age of thirty, worked in obscurity, that he was subject to the holy Virgin and to Saint Joseph, whom they had lived next to him, and that Saint Joseph had died a long time (before) him; but that the Blessed Virgin still lived, that it was a disciples of Jesus who took care of it. But that, for the Savior, he had suffered during the last three years of his life everything that could have been made to suffer to the greatest criminal in the world: that when he went announce that he had come to save them, that he was the Messiah awaited for so many centuries, let him teach them born what had to be done to benefit from the graces that he brought to them, they chased him from the assemblies with blows stones. He had traveled many countries healing the sick that were brought to him, resurrecting the dead and delivering those possessed by the demon. The cause of his death was one of those he had chosen to announce cer the Gospel, which, being dominated by avarice sold it thirty denarii. He was bound (like) a criminal, attacked ched to a column, where he had been beaten in a manner so cruel that he was no longer recognizable. He had been dragged through the streets of Jerusalem, loaded with a cross who made him fall at every step; his blood watered the stones where he passed, and, as he fell, the executioners lifted him up with kicks and sticks; that they ended up crucifying him, and that, far from [bien loin de] to avenge so many outrages, he had never ceased to pray for them; that he had expired on this cross, where passers-by and the Jews loaded him with curses. Then, three days afterwards, he was resurrected, as he himself had predicted; and immediately he ascended to heaven. Thomas in had been a witness, as were the Apostles who followed Jesus in his mission. At the story of all that the Savior had suffered, the holy Kings seemed to be unable to live any longer. We did it die, this tender Savior, they said! Ah! do we have it right could have been so cruel? And he still forgave them! Oh! how good it is! Oh! how merciful he is! And they don't could (hold back) neither their tears nor their sobs, so much they were filled with pain. Saint Thomas baptized them, ordained them priests, and consecrated them bishops, in order to that they would have more power to extend the faith after their consecration. They were so animated by the love of God, let them shout to everyone they met:

Come. My brethren, come, we will tell you what suffered this Messiah that we (you) said (to have) seen in this nursery. It seemed that at every moment they were thrilled to heaven, so much did the love of God inflame their hearts. Their whole life was nothing but a series of miracles and conversions. As they had been united during their life in such an intimate way, God allowed them to be buried in the same tomb. The first to

die was placed on the right side; but on the death of the second, as we put him next to the other, the one who was buried on first gave his place to the other; finally when the turn of the last, the two ancient dead moved aside to make room for him in the middle, as having more glory of having worked longer for the Savior. They had been so filled with the humility of their Master, that they published it even after their death. Since their vocation to the faith, they had always increased in virtues and in love of God. Oh how happy we would be, my brethren, if we followed in the footsteps of our fathers in faith, who believed that everything they did was nothing. And, what must we do, my brethren, to testify to God our gratitude for having given us (ways) so easy to save us? We must be to him grateful. If, in the world, the slightest service is not reciprocated, we are inclined to murmur; what judgment must our God make of our ingratitude? Moses, before dying, brings together all the Jewish people around him, and tells him all the blessings with which the Lord had never ceased to fill him, adding that if he was not grateful, he must tend to the greatest punishment; and that's what he is precisely happened, since he was abandoned by God! Alas! My brethren, the blessings with which God has showered us are even more precious than those of the Jews. Oh! if you could question your ancestors and understand by what path you came to baptism, by what path Providence led you to this happy moment when you are clothed with the gift precious of your faith! After removing all dangers and the accidents that could have suffocated you, like so many others, in the womb of your mothers, the Lord, barely had you seen the day, received you in his arms, saying to you: You are my beloved son. From this moment, he no longer lost sight of you. As your reason has developed, your fathers, your mothers and your pastors have never stopped announcing to you the benefits that the Savior promises us if we serve Him. He doesn't have ceased to watch over your preservation as on the apple of his eye. The Holy Spirit tells us that when the Lord brought his people out of Egypt and led into the Promised Land, he compares himself to a eagle that flies- around its young to excite them to fly, takes them and carries them on his wings: this, my brethren, is precisely what Jesus Christ does for us. He spreads its wings, that is to say its arms in a cross, for us receive and to excite us by its lessons and examples to detach ourselves from this world, and to elevate ourselves to sky with him. Holy Scripture tells us that the Israelites were established by God, by a singular favor of his goodness, in the land of Canaan to suck honey there if excellent that they found in the hole of the stones, for to feed on the purest flower of wheat, and to drink the most exquisite wine. Yes, it's all just a weak image of the spiritual goods of which we can be satisfied satier in the bosom of the Church. Isn't it in the wounds of Jesus Christ, which we find most great consolations? Isn't it in the sacraments that we have our fill of this delicious wine whose gentleness and strength intoxicate our souls? What more could God do for you? When the prophet Nathan was sent to David to rebuking him of his sin, he said to him: Listen, prince, this is what the Lord says: I have saved you from the hands of Saiil to make you reign in his place; I have you given all the goods and all the wealth of the house of Judah and Israel, and, if you count that as little, he added, I am ready to give you a lot more more. But for us, my brethren, what can he do for us? give more, when he shared with us all his very go out? My brethren, what is our gratitude, or rather, what contempt, what abuse do we not make of it? which case, what use do we make of the word of God that we announce so often? Oh! how many unfortunate people who do not know Jesus Christ? to whom this holy word has not never been announced, and which would become great saints if they only had the crumbs of this sacred bread that we never stop lavishing you and that you let lose? What use do we make of confession where God shows us how great his mercy is, where he it is enough to make known the wounds of his poor soul to be cured? Alas! most despise this remedy, and others only approach it as rarely as they can. What use do we make of Holy Communion? and the Holy Mass? If there were only one church in the Christian world where this august mystery was celebrated, where it was consecrated and where it was permitted to visit and receive the precious body and blood of Jesus Christ, we would, without doubt, my brethren, have a holy desire to those who would be at the doors of this church, who would would visit it and receive it whenever they want. would sire. Yes, my brethren, we are this chosen people; we are at the door of this place so holy, so pure where God sacrifices himself every day. What use, my brethren do- M us of this happiness? When God comes to judge the world, a Jew, a idolater, a Mohammedan will be able to say: Oh I if I had had the happiness of living in the bosom

of the Catholic Church, if I had been a Christian, if I had received the graces that this chosen people, I would have lived differently. Yes, my brethren, we have these graces and these favorite favors. But, once again, what use do we make of it, where is our gratitude? No, my brethren, no, our ingratitude will not go unpunished, God will tear us away, in his anger, these goods of which we make so little case, or rather, that we despise and that we make even serve sin. I am not saying, my brethren, that the droughts, floods, hail, storms, diseases and all the plagues of his righteousness will come fall on us: all this is nothing, although all this or part of the punishment for our ingratitude. But a time will come when God, seeing the contempt that we let us make the precious gift which has been transmitted to us by our fathers in faith, it will be taken from us to be given to others. Alas! My brethren, have we not been ready to lose it in this unfortunate time that we come to see it pass. Is this not a warning by which God seemed to tell us that if we do not better use, it would be taken away from us. This one thought, my brethren, should it not make us tremble and redouble our prayers and our good works, so that

Dieu ne nous prive pas de ce bonheur; shouldn't we not, like the Magi, be ready for any sacrifice rather que de perdre ce trésor? Oui, Mes frères., imitons les Mages. C'est par eux que Dieu nous a transmis la foi; it's in them that we will find the most complete model, d'une foi vive, généreuse et persévérante. United in spirit and with heart to the holy Magi, my brethren, let us go to Jesus Christ, and let us adore him as our God; let's love it like our Savior, let us cling to him as to our King. Présentons-lui l'encens d'une prière fervente, the myrrh of a penitent and mortified life, the gold of pure charity; ou plutôt, faisons-lui, comme les Mages, a universal offering of all we have and everything we are; et non-seulement Dieu nous will preserve this precious deposit of faith, but we will make it even more lively, and, by this means, we will please to God and we will ensure a happiness that will never end jamais, c'est ce que je vous souhaite (1).

(1) Quote the Holy Innocents. (Note of the Venerable.).

2nd Sunday after Epiphany — On Marriage

Vocatus is Jesus ad nuptias. Jésus fut invité aux noces. (S. John, u, 2.)

How happy Christians would be if they had the happiness of doing like these two faithful spouses- those who went to pray to Jesus Christ to come and assist at their weddings, in order to be able to bless them and give them the necessary graces to be able to sanctify themselves; but no, my brethren, very few do what they must do to encourage Jesus Christ to come to their wedding in order to bless them: on the contrary, it seems that we take all means to prevent it. Alas, so many people damned for not having invited Jesus Christ to their wedding, how many people begin their hell in this world. Alas! que de chrétiens qui entrent dans cet état with the same dispositions as the pagans and perhaps even more criminal. Disons, Mes frères., en gémissant, que, of all the sacraments, there is none that is so desecrated. Il semble qu'on ne reçoit ce grand sacrement que pour commettre un sacrilège. Alas! if we see so many make bad marriages, so many unhappy people, so many who, through the curses they vomit upon themselves against each other, really begin their hell in this world, let's not look for any other reason que la profanation do ce sacrement. Alas! if of all thirty marriages there were three who had received all the graces, that would already be a lot. But also what follows from all these profanations, sinon une génération de réprouvés. My God, can we think about it carefully, and not tremble at seeing so many pau- your people who only enter this state to fall in hell. Quel est mon dessein, Mes frères.? here it is. It is from show those who have entered this state the faults what they have done, and to those who think of entering into it, the dispositions qu'ils doivent y apporter. No one doubts, my brethren, that we can save in all the states that God has created, (if it is the one that God has destined for us;) if we bring the provisions that God asks of us; so that if we we lose in our state, it is because we are not there pas entrés avec de bonnes dispositions. But it's true that there are some which contain many more difficulties than others. Nous savons quel est celui qui en renferme le plus, c'est celui du mariage; and yet we let us see that it is the one that we receive with worse dispositions. When we want to receive the sacrament of

confirmation, we make a retreat, we try to be well educated to make oneself worthy of grâces qui y sont attachées; mais pour celui du mariage, on which happiness or unhappiness usually depends eternal of the one who receives it, far from [bien loin de] prepare for it by a retirement or some other good deed, it seems that we will never have enough crimes upon crimes to receive it, it seems that they will never have enough evil to deserve the curse of the good God [la malédiction du bon Dieu], so as to be unhappy all their life, preparing for themselves a hell for eternity. When one wants to enter the state ecclésiastique, ou dans un monastère, ou même rester in celibacy, we consult, we pray, we make bonnes œuvres afin de bien demander à Dieu la grâce de know your vocation; although in the religious order everything brings us to the good God, everything keeps us away from evil, despite this, many precautions are taken; but for marriage, where it is so difficult to save oneself, or, to put it better, where there are so many who damn themselves, where are the preparations one makes to ask God the grace of meriting the help of heaven which is so necessary to be able to sanctify ourselves there? Almost per- sonne (ne s'y prépare), ou on le fait d'une manière si weak that the heart has nothing to do with it. As soon as a young man or girl begins to want to think à s'établir, ils commencent à s'éloigner de Dieu en aban- giving religion, prayer and the sacraments. The adornments and pleasures take the place of religion, and the most shameful crimes take the place of the sacraments. They continue this route until the moment they enter marriage, where most consummate their eternal woe by committing three sacrileges in two or three days; I mean, by profaning the sacrament of penance, that of the Eucharist and that of marriage, if the priest is unfortunate enough to administer them both premiers, je dis du moins pour la plupart, si ce n'est pas all. The greatest number of Christians bring un cœur mille fois plus pourri par le vice infâme de impurity, that a large number of pagans, who would not even dare to do what most Christians do. A girl who wants to have a young man has no no more reserve than the foulest beast.

HélasI c'est qu'elle abandonne le bon Dieu, et le bon God in turn abandons him; she throws herself into body lost in all that is most infamous. Alas! que peuvent être et devenir ces pauvres personnes qui reçoivent le sacrement de mariage dans un pareil state, and how many of these unfortunate people who will not say it not even in confession. O my God! avec quelle horreur le ciel peut et doit-il bien regarder de tels mariages. Mais aussi que deviennent ces personnes malheureuses? hélas 1 le scandale d'une paroisse et une source de malheurs pour les pauvres enfants qui naîtront d'eux. What do we hear in this house? nothing else, except swearing, blasphemies, imprecations and curses. This young fille croyait que si elle pouvait avoir ce jeune homme, ou ce jeune homme cette fille, rien ne leur manquerait; but, alas! after having started housekeeping, what changement, que de larmes, que de repentir et que de groans l But all this is of no use. We are malheureux et il faut y rester jusqu'à la mort, il faut vivre avec une personne que, le plus souvent, l'on ne can neither see nor smell; let's say better, my brethren, they begin their hell in this world to continue it throughout all eternity. Alas! that the number of these marriages, which are thus unhappy, is great, and yet all this only comes from the profanation of this sacrament. Ah! if we thought about what you are going to do in entering the state of marriage, the charges that there are to to complete and the difficulties that one will find there to save, oh my God, that we would behave much more wisely! But the misfortune of the majority is that they have already lost their faith when they enter it. From a on the other hand, the demon does everything he can for make them unworthy of the graces that God would grant them if they were well prepared. The demon, not only hopes to have them, but still that the children who are born Many of them will be its victims. Oh! that those whom God do not call to this state are happy. Oh! what actions of thanks they must render to God to exempt them from so many dangers of getting lost, not to mention that they will be much closer to God in heaven, than all their actions tions will be much more pleasing to God, and that their life will be sweeter, and their eternity happier. My God! who can understand this well? Alas! almost no one, because everyone follows, not their vocation, but the slope of his passions. However, my brethren, although it is so difficult to save oneself in the state of marriage, and the majority, without suspecting a single moment, will be damned, those that God calls there can save themselves there if they have the happiness of bringing the provisions that God asks of them to grant them the graces promised to them by his sacraments. Everyone must enter where

God calls him and we can say that the greatest number of Christians damn themselves because they do not follow their vocation, either by not asking God for it or by making it unworthy to know it by their bad life. To show you that we can be saved in marriage, if it is God who calls us, listen to what we says Saint Francis de Sales who, being in the college, spoke one day with one of his companions about the state they would enter. Saint Francis said to him: I believe that the good Lord calls me to be a priest, I find so much means of sanctifying myself there and winning souls to God, that thinking about it makes my heart fill with joy; how happy I would find myself if I could convert sinners to God, throughout all eternity, I

I would hear them singing the praises of God in the sky. The other said to him: I believe that God calls me into the state of marriage and that I will have children and that I will make good Christians, and that I myself will sanctify myself there. Both followed a very different vocation, since one was priest and bishop, and the other was in the marriage, yet both are holy. The one who maria had boys and girls; one do his boys was an archbishop who was a saint; one, religious; a another, president in a room, who made his house almost a monastery. He got up every day at four in the morning, at five o'clock, prayed with all his servants, instructed them every day. Several of his daughters were nuns, so we are told Saint Francis do Sales, may all, in this family, were models of virtue in the country where they were placed. You see, however, that although it is good difficult and very difficult to save themselves in the state of marriage, those who are called to it by God, if they bring good dispositions, they can hope to sanctify themselves there. But let us treat in a more direct manner what concerns this sacrament. If I asked a child what the sacrament of marriage is, he would answer me: it is a sacrament which was instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gives the necessary graces to sanctify those who marry according to the laws of Church and State. But what are the arrangements for receiving the graces that God communicates to us through this sacrament? here they are: 1° It is to be in a state of grace, that is to say to have done a good confession of all his sins with a true desire not to commit them again. If you ask me why do you have to be in a state of grace to get married? I th II SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 175

I will answer you: 1° Because it is a sacrament of vi- vants, that is to say that our soul must be exempt of sins; 2° failing to be in a state of grace, he commits a sacrilege, unless it is, for lack of being sufficient well educated. Those who want to receive with dignity this sacrament must be instructed sufficiently to know their homework and to teach their children what they must do to live happily. If a person who gets married does not know what the sacrament is that she will receive, who instituted it, and what graces it grants us, and what are the provisions that we must bring to it, it is quite certain that it cannot commit only sacrilege. Alas! what sacrilege in reception of this great sacrament, and how many people who marry without even knowing the main mysteries res; that is to say, which of the three people became man. They wouldn't just know how to answer you that it was the second person who took a body and a soul in the womb of the Blessed Virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and it is March 25; that it is the December 25 that he came into the world at midnight, and that he was born as a man and not as God, since like God he is from all eternity. How many who do not know that it is on Maundy Thursday that Jesus Christ instituted the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, taking bread, blessing it and changing it into his body; and then he took wine and changed it into his blood and he said to his apostles: As often as you pronounce these same words you will do the same miracle. How many don't know it's Thursday holy that Jesus Christ instituted the priests, by these words, saying to them: Do this in remembrance of me. Every time you say the same words you will change like me, the bread in my body, the wine in my blood. Perhaps some even ignore the day that the good Lord died, that he rose again and that he is ascended to heaven. This surprises you, alas! there are more than two who do not know how much, who do not know how God suffered and how he died; that is to say, who do not know that God suffered and died like man and not like God, since like God he does not could neither suffer nor die. How many who believe that the three persons of the Holy Trinity suffered and are dead. How many do not know that Jesus Christ as a man, is younger than the Blessed Virgin; and that like God he is from all eternity. How much would have been very embarrassed if, before getting married, we asked them: who instituted the

sacraments and what are the effects of each sacrament in particular, and what are the provisions that each sacrament requires? How many believe that it is the Blessed Virgin or the apostles who instituted the sacraments, and who do not truly know that it is Jesus Christ, and that he only he could institute them and communicate to them the graces that we receive there; that is to say that the baptism cleanses us from the sin we bring into coming into the world, it is the first sacrament that a Christian can receive, and that the waters for baptism have were sanctified when Saint John baptized Jesus Christ in the Jordan, which Jesus Christ instituted by saying to his apostles: Go, teach all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, etc., etc. How many don't know what the Holy Spirit is? which they receive in the sacrament of Confirmation, and that this sacrament can only be given by bishops, and that one must be in a state of grace to receive it. Com- th II SUNDAY AFTER I/ well do not know when they receive the sacrament of Penance, and do not know that it is when they confess and are given absolution, and not every time they confess; how much do not know that in the sacrament of the Eucharist, they receive the body, blood and soul of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and they receive neither the angels nor the saints; how many don't know the difference between the sacrament of the Eucharistand the others, that is to say that they do not know that in the sacrament of the Eucha- ristie they receive the adorable body and the precious blood of Jesus Christ, instead of in the others we do not let us that the application of the merits of his blood pre- heavens. How many do not know what the sacraments of the living and the sacraments of the dead, and why they are given these names; they don't know that Baptism, Penance and sometimes Extreme Anointing are the sacraments of the dead because they restore life to the grace we have lost through sin, and the rest are called alive, because he We must have no sins on our conscience. How many others do not know what they receive when anointing is done to their senses, and what grace this sacrament of Extreme Unction grants to the sick who receive it with dignity, that is to say that they do not know that this sacrament purifies them from all the sins they committed through their senses, i.e. speak eyes, mouth and ears, etc., etc., finally how many others have ignored the grace given by sacrament of marriage. How many others who don't know not that the.... only had their effect after Pentecost. Alas! what sacrileges, alas! how many married people damned! However, if you ignore these things, you 8 can well count that all the sacraments that you you received are almost sacrilege. A second reason which must be carefully prepared prepare to receive all the graces granted to us this great sacrament is that there are many miseries to be found there suffer. How many poor women who are forced to spend their lives with husbands, some of whom are hotheaded men, who are made (angry) by nothing; like lions, they are always after; argue with them and often even mistreat them; who cannot see them eat. They die of grief, it's good rare if they go a day without shed tears [verser des larmes] (1); others have husbands who eat everything they have in cabarets, while a poor woman perishes misery with her children in the house. (What) I say about husbands I say the same about wives. How many husbands who have wives who never say a word to them word of good grace, who despise them, who abandon everything that is in the house, which only makes dispute from morning till night [du matin au soir]. You will agree with me that to suffer all this without murmuring so as to to make him meritorious for heaven requires extraordinary grace. Well! My brethren, if you had received all the graces that this sacrament gives us, you would have one ingenious treasure for heaven; the graces that God has for you prepared to save you, your vocation would make this bearable without complaining. But from where comes that this man cannot bear the faults that he sees in his wife, and that the woman curses her husband every moment because he is a drunkard I It's (1) Example of Saint Monica, and many others, etc.. (Note of the Venerable.)

that these people have not received the graces of the sacrament of marriage, they can therefore only be unhappy during during their lives and damned after their death. But an even greater misfortune is that, besides that, their children resemble them. AlasI who could recount the deplorable state of children who are born to such weddings? You almost see them living like beasts. First, the parents never knew their religion, therefore they cannot teach it to their children. Alas! children who are ten or eleven years old not only know their prayer, nor a word of their reli- gion, they already only have swear words and bad words in the mouth.

Alas, only married people and of damned children, at least if they were not married they would be damned alone. That the desecration of this sacrament populates hell! But, you will ask me, what must we do to enter this state in a holy way? My friend, here he is. Listen- keep it good, happy if you enjoy it. It is necessary that your marriage has nothing similar to those of the pagans. Here are the marriages of the pagans. When they want to stand blir, some take a wife to have children to whom they can leave their name and their property; others because they need a companion to help them with life care; this one for beauty and amenities, but very little for virtue. After in this way we take our security on both sides; we pass the contract and we celebrate the marriage which is accompanied of some religious ceremonies in their own way; we make a big feast and we indulge in all kinds of joy and excess. This, my brethren, is the way in which (proceed) the pagans, that is to say those who do not have like us the happiness of knowing the true God. If your marriages have nothing better, be sure that you have pro- faded this sacrament; and, from this, you solve to spend your eternity in hell. This is not therefore truly that the spirit of piety which (does) the ma- Christian prayer, it must therefore be done in the name of Jesus Christ, with a view to pleasing him and following his vocation; se offer the salvation of his soul and nothing else. This is not therefore neither interest nor desire to follow the inclination of his heart which should lead a Christian to marry; but that of following the voice of God who calls you in this state, to bring up Christianly the children that it pleases God for giving you. But in such an im- bearing, one must not do anything hastily and never fail to consult one's parents, and do nothing conclude without their consent. Neither do the parents. should never force their children to take in people they don't like, because they can't than being unhappy with each other. You must always choose people who have piety: you must prefer, even though they would have less good, because you are sure that God blesses your marriage. Instead of those who have no religion, their good will perish in a short time. We must not do like many who take a drunken and bad boy saying that when he is married, he will correct himself; it's quite the contrary, it will only become worse, and you will spend your life in a kind of hell. Alas! How thick these marriages are! It is in prayer and other works that you must ask God to make you know the one that God intends for you. It is said that in order for a marriage is well done, that is to say happy, it must be done in heaven before being on earth. First the th II SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 181 young people who want to deserve the graces that God prepares for those who hope to sanctify themselves there, must not not speak to each other alone neither day nor night, without the presence of their parents, and never allow themselves the slightest familiarity nor the slightest indecent word, without which they are sure to keep God away from their wedding, and if God don't attend, it will be the devil. Alas there is none one in every two hundred who observes this. We can well also say that there is not one in two hundred who is truly such that religion and peace reign there gnent, so that we can say that it is a house of the good Lord. On the contrary, (there are) who hang around for three or four years in dances, balls, comedies, cabarets, which pass three quarters of their nights alone, allowing themselves everything that the demon of impurity can inspire them. My God, are these many Christians who must bear under the veil of the sacrament a heart pure and free from all sins che. Alas! who can count the number of sins with which their hearts are covered and their poor souls rotten. Alas! how can we hope that the good God, almighty as he is, will be able to bless such marriages of people who live in impurity most infamous for perhaps how many years; who perhaps do not pray in the morning or in the evening; who have left the sacraments for several years, or, if they frequented them, it was only to desecrate them. Alas! how can it be that the adorable blood of May Jesus Christ come down to these weddings for sanctify, and make the sorrows of marriage sweet and mediocre rituals for heaven. Alas! what sacrileges, and what married people who will burn in the abyss! My God, that Christians know little of their misfortune and their eternal loss! Alas! they will not leave their crimes infamous after their wedding, always the same infamies, and always in the road to hell where. they will fall well- early. No, my brethren, let us not go into (the details) of the hor- errors that are committed in marriage, all this makes die of horror. Let us draw back the veil, which will not really lift table than on the great day of vengeance, when we will see all these turpitudes without fear of defiling our imagination. Married people, never lose sight that everything will be seen on the day of judgment, which will throw an infinity of people in astonishment, it is that Christians have (permitted)

similar infamies. Let's stop there. If you now ask me what conditions are necessary for a marriage to be good in God and before men. My friend, two things that here: it must be contracted according to the laws of the Church and the State; without which the marriage would be void, that is to say that people would live in sin like two people who get (together) without getting married before the Church. The Church made its laws, assisted, directed by the Holy Spirit. If you ask me what engagement is, here it is: it's the promise that two people make to each other each other to marry. Once two people have become engaged, they should not stay in the same house under penalty of great sin, because of dangers and temptations to which they will be exposed; because the demon does everything he can to make them unworthy of the blessing of the good God who is promised to them in the sacrament of marriage. It's why the Church forbids them from living under the same roof all the time of engagement.

I told you, my brethren, that there is no sacrament for which we take so many external precautions, that we receive with as much pomp as that of marriage. After the contract is signed, we publish three Sundays in a row for people who want to get married, and this for two reasons: the first, to invite all the faithful to pray for them, so that God grants them the graces which are necessary for them to enter holyly into this state. The second reason is to discover the obstacles which could obstruct at this wedding. The cases in which the Church defends marriage are called impediments; there are these impediments which make weddings void, so that people who married someone from impediments that we are going to see would not be married, their life would be only one of continuous fornication. Alas! that there are some of these unhappy marriages which make falling curses from heaven with sorrows everywhere where they are! Let us not doubt, my brethren, that the profanation of this sacrament, and the crimes committed in marriage are the cause of all the most great evils with which God overwhelms us, and we will recognize it on the day of judgment. We therefore say that there has impediments which are called dirimants; but here are the ones that meet most often. The first is kinship up to the fourth degree inclusive, that is to say which includes the fourth degree and no, the fifth, that is easily understood. When we announce the marriage if you think that the one who publishes does not know what the engaged couple is hiding from him; you are obliged to tell it to the person who published it, otherwise you commit a great mortal sin, since there are many who hide it as much as they can, for fear of request an exemption and it costs them something. 2° It is affinity, that is to say that a widower cannot marry the parents of his deceased until the fourth degree, nor the widow the parents of her deceased. 3° It is spiritual kinship, that is to say that one cannot to marry the child that one waved or held on the font of baptism, nor with the father or mother of this child. 4° It is public honesty, that is to say that, when a person has been engaged to a person rings, she cannot marry nor with the mother, neither with the daughter nor with the sister of the person with who she had been engaged to. There, my brethren, prevent them- ments that the faithful can know the most, and when that we publish a marriage that we know to be in which- some of these cases we are obliged to say, or else one commits a mortal sin and one puts oneself in the situation to be excommunicated, that is to say cut off from the bosom of the Church. You see, my brethren, how much you have to take dre be careful never to fail to say what you know. There are a few others that are less com- muns, some who are secret and infamous, like adultery and homicide; those who are guilty of it must notify their confessor. The laws of the Church who defend these kinds of marriage are very wise, they have all been dictated by the Holy Spirit. There is still the simple (vow) of chastity, of six months, a year, and the rest... There are, however, sometimes the Church gives dispensations by having something done alms to those who ask for them, but never forget that all the dispensations that we request, and where we do not does not say things as they are, is not worth nothing. The Holy Father only grants on condition that what what is said is true; so that if what we say th II SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 185 is not very true, that is to say, if you give reasons which are not true or if you increase them, your dispensations are worthless, therefore your marriage is zero. That is to say, you are not married and you have committed sacrilege by receiving the sacrament of marriage, as well as all the sacraments that you receive in the following. Alas! that the number is great and who sleep peacefully, while the demon digs an eternal hell. You must therefore never give reasons which are

not, and if your pastors do not do not find them good, take care not to hurry by telling them that you will put everything same together. Alas! what damned married people. But you will tell me, how should we pass the time an engagement? Here it is: This time is a sacred time which must happen in retreat, prayer, and to do all kinds of good works to merit that Jesus Christ makes you, like the spouses of Cana, in Galilee, attend your wedding to bless you, giving you the necessary graces to be able to sanctify yourselves there. It is very good and often very necessary to do a general confession, either to repair the bad that one could have done during one's life, or still for make oneself more worthy of receiving this sacrament, since the graces are abundant there in proportion to the dispositions that you bring there. Tell me, my brethren, is it good to this way that we spend such precious time that that of the engagement? Alas! do not you take, my brethren, the pagans as models, since they do not do all that that the greatest number of Christians today (se allow)! They are not happy to have dragged out most of their lives, or at least a good part of it, in crime and the blackest infamy; it seems that they don't didn't do enough on the first day of their engagement: dances, balls, cabarets and meat, if it is a lean day. Not content to do evil alone, as if they were afraid of not irritating the righteous enough wrath of God upon them, so that instead of blessing them he curse, there will be three or five people at a time; that is to say according to their fortune: those who have the means to thinking invites more, and those who have less invite less; but still as much as they have. There are some who perhaps will lose their souls, incur debts in passing three-quarters of the night, not counting the day, in cabarets, to indulge in all kinds of excesses; a part dragging itself along the paths, and perhaps even the wife. But, you will tell me, that does not concern you, It’s not your money, we don’t owe you anything. No, probably your money is none of my business, but your souls with which (God) has entrusted me, look at me. Well, my brethren, this is the beginning of the holy retirement of young people who have just gotten engaged, that's it their preparation to receive the sacrament of marriage. That's not all yet, the demon doesn't have any yet enough. After spending a few days in debauchery with the girl's parents they will spend everything else time running around the house to carry an engagement. In each house they will commit, perhaps, three or four big sins by the kisses they make or that they allow. But, you will tell me, it is the custom. Ah! your customs are those of the pagans; as you have followed the same path until now than that of the pagans, we must continue. Despite this what you say, that will not prevent that when you appear at the tribunal of God to give an account [rendre compte] your unhappy life, all the embraces that you will have given or received during these times of engagement, are sins and, most of them, mortal sins, Oh! I don't believe it. You don't believe it? it's that your eyes are a little cloudy; but don't worry not, the great judge will clarify them for you. Why don't boys give engagements to boys and girls to girls? I know it well: it’s that the demon does not find it so well. Time engagement takes place in this dissipation or rather in this chain of sins, not to mention everything that happens between women. AlasI my God, is it there Christians or pagans? alas! I know nothing about it; all I know are poor souls that the de- my drags and devours until it rushes them into the flames. The wedding time arrives, they only have three or four days, they will appear in court penance without regret and without desire even for better do. The proof is very clear: you will see the pleasures, the same dances, the excesses in drinking and eat; eat; they start families by indulging in everything what the devil can inspire them on their wedding day, and even worse if they can. They just received this great sacrament; ah! I'm wrong, they come from commit a horrible sacrilege, and they will put the sealed their disapproval in passing, perhaps one day or two in debauchery. My God, what to think of these poor Christians, will they become? alas, you have already abandoned them, because they have not forgotten anything to force you to curse and reprove them. But, you will tell me, it is permissible to rejoice on this day. Yes, undoubtedly, but it is permitted in the Lord. No matter how much you say what you want, you don't let will not give an account [rendre compte] even for a penny spent inu- tilely; no matter how much you make fun of it, it is such that I tell you. One day we will see it, take Make sure it's not too late for you. Everything This is very difficult to believe because if we did evil, the good Lord would punish us: since we let's see who are having a good time and who are still doing their business. My friend, this, far from being a good mark, is the greatest of all misfortunes. Do you know why does the good Lord behave this way? the behold: it is because he is just. He rewards you for everything

the good that you have done, so that after your death he just has to throw you into hell. This is the reason for-what it seems to bless you despite all the horrors that you committed in your engagement and your wedding, not to mention all the sins that those you invited have committed will be on your behalf, without them being themselves innocent. Alas I that death will find sins where many believe that there is none! What should a Christian do to worthily receive this sacrament? It would be to prepare for it with all your heart, to have made a good confession and to have passed holyly on the day of his engagement; and, what he would have was able to spend, give to the poor to attract blessings to him. On their wedding day let them go early in the morning to the church to beg for help and lights of the Holy Spirit, receiving the blessing bridal. May the blood of Jesus Christ flow on their souls. The day they were married, let them spend the day day in the presence of God, thinking what a misfortune it would be if they were to desecrate this very holy day. After their marriage, they have to go find a con- th II SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 189 spanker to be instructed, so that they do not get lost without knowing it, or rather, so that they can behave like true children of God. Alas! where are the Christians who behave this way? Alas! where are the married people also who will be saved? That there will be some lost I Those who bring good dispositions, there will be almost none. What conclude from this? here it is: This is because most of Christians enter marriage without asking God the graces that are necessary for them, they carry a heart and soul covered with a thousand and a thousand sins, and profane this sacrament: which is a source of misfortune for them in this world and in the next. Blessed are the Christians who enter and persevere to the end! This is what I wish you... (1).

(i) A dispensation obtained without legitimate reasons renders the marriage zero. (Instruction of Father Jean Gibert on marriage, page 335.) (Note of the Venerable.)

3rd Sunday after Epiphany — On the Prayer of a Sinner Who Will Not Leave Sin

who does not want to leave sin.

Cum descenclisset Jesus de monte, secutce sunt eum multi-turbm. And ecce leprosus veniens adorabat eum. Jesus having come down from the mountain, a great crowds of people followed him; and then a leper coming to him, adored him. (S. Mallh., vin. 1-2.)

N 4fe l i t s a û c e s words, my brethren, I imagine the j l day of a big celebration where people come in crowds a n s n o s hM churches, with Jesus Christ, no J? v descended from a mountain; but on our altars, where faith reveals it to us, like a king in the middle of his people, like a father surrounded by his children, and finally like a doctor surrounded by his patients. The some worship this God, of whom heaven and earth cannot contain the immensity, with pure consciousness, like a God reigning in their hearts; it is love alone that brought here to offer him a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, they are sure not to leave of this charitable God without being filled with all kinds of blessings. Others appear before this God if pure and so holy with a soul completely covered in sins;

111° SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 191 but, they returned to themselves, they opened eyes on their unfortunate state, they conceived the most vivid horror of their past disturbances and, well resolved to change their lives, they come to Jesus Christ full of confidence, throw themselves at the feet of the best of all fathers, by making him the sacrifice of a heart contrite and humiliated. Before leaving there, the sky will be opened and hell shut. But after these two kinds from worshipers there comes a third: that is to say, these Christians all covered in the filth of sin and asleep in evil, who have no thought of getting out of it, who, However, do like the others, come and worship him and pray to him, at least in appearance. I won't talk to you not of those who come with a pure and pleasant soul their God: I only have one thing to tell them, and that is to persevere. To the second ones, I will tell them to repeat their prayers, their tears and their penances; but that they think that, according to the promise of God himself, everything sinner who comes to him with a

contrite and humbled heart is sure to find forgiveness. They are sure, says Jesus Christ, of having regained the friendship of their God, and the right that their quality as children of God gives them in heaven. So I'm only going to talk to you today about these sinners who live, but who are already dead. Strange conduct, my brethren, on which I would not dare to say my thought if the Holy Spirit had not already said, from the beginning of the world and in its own words, that the prayer of a sinner who does not want to leave his sin, and doesn't do everything he needs to do to get out of it, is in execration in the eyes of the Lord. Let us add to this hardness, the contempt for all graces that heaven offers him. My intention is therefore to show you that the prayer of a sinner who does not want not getting out of sin, is nothing other than a ri- dicule, full of contradiction and lies, if we consider it, either in relation to the dispositions of the sinner who makes it, or if we consider it by relationship to Jesus Christ to whom it is addressed. Let's talk more clearly, saying that the prayer of a sinner who remaining in sin is nothing other than an action the most insulting and the most impious. Listen to me carefully moment, and you will unfortunately only be too convinced. My purpose, my brethren, is not to speak to you about the qualities that a prayer must have to be pleasing to God. and advantageous to him who makes it; I won't tell you anything still of his power; I will only tell you in passing that it is a sweet conversation of the soul with its God, which makes us recognize him as our creator, our sovereign good and our final end; it's a business from heaven with earth: we send our prayers and our good works in heaven, and heaven sends us graces which are necessary for us to sanctify ourselves. I will say again that it is prayer that elevates our soul and our heart to the sky, and makes us despise the world with all its pleasures. It is still prayer that brings God down to us; let's say even better: the prayer well done penetrates and crosses the vault of heaven and ascends to the throne of Jesus Christ himself, disarms the justice of his Father, excites and stirs his mercy, opens the treasures of the Lord's graces, delights them and takes away, if I dare say so, and returns loaded with all kinds of blessings to him who sent you. If he If I needed to prove this, I would only have to open the books of the Old and New Testaments. We would see that God could never refuse this

III th SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 193 that was asked of him through prayer made as required. Here I see thirty thousand men on whom God has resolved to unload the weight of his just wrath, for the destroyed as punishment for their crimes. Moses alone goes to ask for their grace, and prostrates himself before the Lord. Barely had his prayer begun when the Lord, who had resolved their loss, changes his judgment, gives them back his friendship, promising them his protection and all kinds of blessings, and this at the prayer of one man. There I see a Joshua who, finding that the sun descends too quickly, and fearing not having the time to take revenge on his enemies, bows his face against the ground praying to the Lord, command the sun to stop, and, by a miracle that had never happened and which perhaps will never arrive, the sun, I say, suspends its course to protect Joshua and give him time to pursue and destroy his enemy. Further, I see again Jonah whom the Lord sends to the great city of Nineveh, this city so sinful, since the Lord, who is justice and goodness itself, had resolved to punish and destroy it. Jonas while browsing this great city announces to him, from God himself, that its destruction is only forty days distant. A this sad and desolate news, everyone throws their faces against the ground, all resort to prayer. Immediately, the Lord revokes his judgment and looks upon them with kindness. far from [Bien loin de] punish them, he loves them and fills them with everything kinds of benefits. If I turn myself another way, I see the prophet Elijah who, to punish the sins of his people, pray to God not to give rain. During two and a half years in a row, the sky obeys him and the rain does not fell only when the same prophet asked God through prayer. SKRMO™. — Volume I. 9

If I move from the Old Testament to the New, we we see that prayer, far from [bien loin de] lose its strength, becomes even more powerful under the law of grace. See Magdeleino, as soon as she prays, throwing herself feet of the Savior; his sins are forgiven him and seven demons come out of his body. See Saint Peter, after having denied his God, he resorts to prayer; immediately the Savior looks upon him and forgives him. See the good thief again. If Judas, the traitor Judas, instead of despairing, had he prayed to God to forgive him his sin, the Lord would have forgiven him his fault. Yes, my brethren, the power of prayer well done is so

powerful that, when all hell, all creatures of heaven and earth would demand vengeance and that God himself would be armed with all his thunderbolts to crush the sinner, if that sinner throws himself at his feet begging him to have mercy on him with the regret of having offended him and the desire to love him, he is sure of his sorry. It is according to the promise that he himself made to us, telling us that he promises to grant us everything what we will ask of his Father in his name. My God! how sweet and consoling it is for a Christian to be sure of obtaining everything he asks of God through prayer! But, you might ask me, how should we that this prayer be made so that it has this power with God? My friend, without looking for any detour, here it is: our prayer so that it has this power, it it must be animated by a living faith, by a hope firm and constant, which leads us to believe that, by the merits of Jesus Christ, we are sure to obtain what we are going to ask, and more of a charity fiery. I say, first of all, that we must let us have a living faith. And why will you tell me? My friend, here it is: faith is the foundation and the basis of all our good works, and without this faith, all our actions, although good in themselves, are only works without merit. We must be as well penetrated beyond the presence of God, before whom we have happiness to be, than a sick person who has been brought down by a violent fever in delirium and who beats the countryside; his mind once attached to some object, although there is nothing visible, is so well convinced that he sees or touches, that although we tries to tell him the opposite, he doesn't want to believe it. Yes, my brethren, it was this violent faith, if I dare say so, with whom Saint Magdeleine sought the Savior not having found him in his tomb. She was so penetrated by the object she was looking for, that Jesus Christ for experiencing it, or rather no longer being able to hide from it love which had chained him, appeared to him in the form from a gardener who asked her why she was crying and who she was looking for. Without telling him that she is looking for the Savior, she exclaims: Ah! if it was you who took it, tell me where you put it so I can take it out. Its faith was so lively, so burning, if I dare say so, that when he would have been in his Father's bosom, she would have forced him to descend to earth. Yes, my brethren, this is the faith of which a Christian must be animated when he has the happiness of being in the presence of God, so that God can do nothing to him refuse. Secondly, I say that faith must be joined to hope, that is to say, a firm and constant hope that God can and wants to grant us what we give him ask. Do you want a model? here it is: See Chananea, his prayer was animated by such lively faith, with a hope so firm that the good Lord could grant what she asked, which she did not leave to pray, to press, or if I dare say, to do violence to Jesus Christ. We have rebulor, and even Jesus Christ; (no longer knowing how to go about it, she throw at his feet saying to him for all prayer: Sei- lord, help me! and these words spoken so of faith bind the will of God himself. The Savior all astonished exclaims: 0 woman, how great is your faith! Come on, everything is granted to you (1). Yes, my brethren, this faith, this hope makes us triumph- pher of all the obstacles that oppose our salvation. See the mother of Saint Symphorien, her son was going to martyrdom. Ah! my son, courage! one more moment of patience and heaven will be your reward! Tell me, my brethren, who supported all the holy martyrs in the midst of their torments? is this not this happy hope? See the calm that Saint Laurent enjoys on his fire grill. Who could support him? It is, you will tell me, grace. This is true, but is it not the hope of a reward eternal? See again Saint Vincent from whom we take away the entrails with iron hooks; who gave him the strength to suffer torments so extraordinary and so awful, isn't this happy hope? Well! My brethren, who must lead a Christian, who puts himself in the presence of God, to reject all these distractions that the demon strives to give him during his prayers and to overcome human respect? Is it not the thought that a God sees it, that if his prayer is well done he will be rewarded with eternal happiness?

(1) Stop bothering me. “My friend, give me some bread, one of » my friends have just come, I have nothing to receive it with. » (Note of the Venerable.)

Thirdly, I said that a Christian's prayer must have charity, that is, he must love the good God with all his heart and hate sin with all his strengths. And why, you ask me? My friend, here it is: is that a Christian sinner

who prays must always have regret for one's sins and the desire to love God more in addition. Saint Augustine gave us a good example sensitive. When he went to pray in the garden, he truly believes he is in the presence of God; he hopes that whatever great sinner he may be, God will have pity on him; he regrets his past life, promises the good Lord to change his life and that he will, with the help of his grace, everything he can to love her. Indeed, how can see loving God and sin? No, my brethren, no, never this will not be. A Christian who truly loves the good God loves what God loves, he hates what God hates; from this I conclude that the prayer of a sinner, who does not want not leave sin, has nothing of all that we come from to say. Now you will see with me that by considering the sinner's prayer in relation to his dispositions, it is nothing other than a ridiculous act, full of contradiction and lies. Let's follow him for a moment Christian sinner praying, I say for a moment, because ordinarily, his prayers have barely begun that they are already finished; let's listen to this poor blind man and this poor deaf man: I say blind about the goods he loses and the evils he prepares for himself, and deaf to the voice of his conscience which cries out, to the voice of God which calls it to loud cries. Let's get into it, I'm sure you want to know what the prayer of a sinner is who, neither wants to leave sin, nor is angry at having offended God. Listen: the first word he says in com- saying prayer is a lie, it contradicts diction with himself. “In the name of the Father and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. » My friend, stop for a moment. You say that you begin your prayer in the name of three persons of the Holy Trinity. But so you have forgot that only eight days ago you were in a company where they told you that when you died everything is over, and if that were the case, there would be neither God nor hell, nor paradise? Yes, my friend, in your hardness you believe it, you do not come to pray; but only for fun and entertainment. Ah! You might say, those who use this language are very rare. However, there are even some among those who listen to me and who don't forget to say a few prayers from time to time time. However I would show you if I wanted three-quarters of those who are here at church, although they do not say it with their mouth, often say it by their conduct and their way of living; because if a Christian really thought about what he said when pronouncing the (names of) the three persons of the Holy Trinity, would he not be seized with fear to the point of despair, considering in himself the image of the Father which he has disfigured in such a frightful manner, the image of the Son which is in his soul, dragged and rolled in the slime of vice, and the image of Holy Spirit, whose temple and tabernacle are his heart, and which he has filled with filth and filth. Yes, my brethren, these three words alone, if this sinner had the knowledge of what he says and what he is, could he pronounce them without dying of horror of himself. Listen to this liar: “My God! I firmly believe that you are here present. » What, my friend, do you think that you are in the presence of God before whom angels, who are without spot, tremble and dare not lift the eyes, before which they cover themselves with their wings, do not able to support the brilliance of the majesty that the sky and the earth cannot contain! And you, all covered in screams- my, you are there with one knee on the ground and the other the air. Do you dare to open the ladle to let out such an abomination? Rather say that you do like monkeys, you do what you see them doing to others, or rather that it is a moment of fun which you take while pretending to pray. A Christian who puts himself in the presence of his God, who feels what he says to the very author (of his existence), is it not he was not seized with fear when he saw, on the one hand, his indignity to appear before a God so great and so formidable, and, on the other, his ingratitude? Doesn't it seem to him, at every moment, that the earth will open under his feet to swallow it up? doesn't he look at himself between life and death [entre la vie et la mort]? is not his heart devoured with regret and full of gratitude? I say with regret, thinking how much he has was unhappy to have offended such a good God, and to gratitude by thinking how much God must be patient and charitable to suffer it in his holy presence, despite his ingratitude and all the outrages he suffered made guilty at all times. But, for you who pray and who does not want to leave sin, at least not again, tell me what difference do you put between the Church and a ball, if I dare make this awful comparison, since one is the dwelling of God, and the other, that of the demon (1)? If you don't know, I will learn it, here it is. When you go there, what do you take care of- (1) There is this difference that in a ball we would like not to go out and that, in a church, we are not there yet that we would like filter outside. (Note of the Venerable.)

YOU? These are probably the people you hope for find, (Your first care), upon entering it, is to look around (to see) if you will see them, it is to consider the way in which the room is constructed, the tapestries that decorate it, is to greet the people you know there, to quickly sit down and to talk about it. I don't go any further; I won't speak from all bad thoughts, bad desires, bad looks; let's put all this aside and tell me frankly you, my friend, you who should be without cease giving in to despair, knowing the terrible state in which you are, since you are laden with sins, are you not? the behavior you take when coming to the house of the Lord? I said that when a person of pleasure goes at a ball or a dance, she only cares about things indifferent, or of its pleasures and in no way of the good God? When you come to church, think about yourself before Who are you, and who are you going to talk to? You will agree with me that your conduct is precisely this. I said that on entering, their first care is to consider the way the room is decorated. Well isn't it what you do when you arrive in the house of the Lord! You look from top to bottom, from one corner of the church to the other 1). I say thirdly that their first care is to examine the people they know and greet them. Isn't that what you do, seeing a person or friend you didn't have seen for a few days? You don't have difficulty to speak to them, to greet them in this place, to wish them the good day in the presence of the good God who is in body and (1) A saint who had not looked at the roof of his cell for four years. (Note of the Venerable.)

th III SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 201 in soul on the altar, who loves you, who does not call you in his holy presence only to forgive you and fill with the greatest benefits. Another occupation of this type of people is to examine the way of which people and their beauty are arranged; and of there are born bad looks, bad thoughts, bad desires. Well! my friend, are you saying that This doesn't happen to you? Doesn't this happen even during Holy Mass, while a God immolates himself at the righteousness of his father to satisfy your sins? You look around to see how such or such such is arranged, and its beauty. Isn't that the cause that you give rise within yourself to an almost infinite number of thoughts you shouldn't have and bad desires? So open your eyes, my friend, and you will see that everything you say to God is nothing other than lies and deception. Let's go further. “My God,” you say, “I love and love you with all my heart [de tout mon cœur]. » You deceive, my friend, you must not say the good Lord, but your God, and what is your God? here it is: it is this young girl to whom you gave your heart, who you occupies continuously. And you, my sister, who is your God? Isn't this the young man to whom all your care have been to please, perhaps even in the church where you should only come to mourn your sins and ask to God your conversion. Is it not true that, during as you pray, the objects you love occupy your spirit, and present themselves before you to be worshiped instead of your God? Is it not true that sometimes it is the God of gluttony who appears before you to be adored, thinking of what you eat when you are home; or, another 9 times, the God of vanity, taking pleasure in you-even, considering yourself worthy of deserving the worship of men. Do you know what you say to God? here it is: Lord, you say, come down from your throne, give me your place. My God, what a horror reur, and what an abomination! And, yet, you say this all the Peas that you desire to please someone. Another time, it is the God of avarice, of vanity, pride, or even impudence which came before you to be adored and loved in place of true God. Do you want me to show it to you in a better way? clear, listen to me. During Holy Mass, or during your prayers, a thought of hatred comes to you or of revenge: if you love the good Lord better than you will expel these objects promptly; but, if you don't chase them away, you show that you prefer to God and that you put them in the place of God even for giving them your heart. It's as if you said to God, when these thoughts come to you: My God, come out of my presence and let your place this demon to give him the affections of my heart. You will therefore agree with me, my brethren, that it is almost never the good God that you adore in your prayers, but each of these inclinations, that is to say, these passions and nothing else. This, you will tell me, is a bit strong. Is that a bit strong, my friend? Well I'm going to show you that it's the truth in all its day. Tell me, my brother, or you, my sister, when you confess, does not your confessor say to you: If you leave these desires, these thoughts, or if you stop- Get rid of these bad habits, these cabarets, I give you will not be your God, you will have the happiness of receiving him see today in your heart? No, my father, he

U IU SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 203 you say, not yet, I don't feel the courage to make this sacrifice, that is to say, to leave these dances, these games, these bad companies. Isn't that you prefer that the demon reigns in your soul instead of place of the good Lord? The confessor will say to this vindictive person: My friend, if you do not forgive this person who has outraged you, you cannot have happiness to possess the God of Christians. No, my father, he you say, I prefer not to receive the good Lord. My friend, the confessor will again say to a miser, if you do not do not return this property which does not belong to you, you are unworthy to receive your God. My father, I don't have intending to return it so soon; and so on to all the others sins. This is so true that if what we love visibly appeared, everyone would have before them a branch of the seven deadly sins, and God would be for them angels alone. But let us go further, and we will see, and we will hear this charlatan and this lying Christian; let's see his faith and his hope. We say that it is faith which reveals to us the greatness of the majesty of God before which we have the happiness of being; it is this faith, joined to hope, which supported the martyrs in the midst of the most terrible torments. Tell me, this sinner can he have the thought, can he believe in beginning his prayer that she will be rewarded? What! A prayer filled with all kinds of things (except) from God alone; a prayer made while dressing or working, the heart busy with his work, perhaps even with hatred and revenge, what do I know, bad thoughts? a prayer made by shouting and swearing at your children or your servants? If that were the case, wouldn't we be forced to admit that (God) rewards evil?

I say that the sinner has no hope in doing his prayer, except that it will soon be over: that is what all his hope is limited. But, you will tell me, this sinner, sinner as he is, hopes for something thing? Well! I believe that a sinner does not believe nothing and hopes for nothing, because if he believed that there is a judgment, and therefore a God who must ask him counts every minute and half-minute of his life, and that this account will be made in the moment that he won't think about it; if he believed that a single mortal sin will make him judge worthy of an eternity of misfortune; if he thought that there is not a prayer in his life, not a desire, not an action, not a movement of his heart which is not written in the book of this sovereign judge; if he saw his conscience burdened with crimes, perhaps more awful; and that, perhaps in itself alone, it contains as many sins as it would take to condemn to fire devouring an entire city of a hundred thousand souls, could he well stay in this state? No, undoubtedly, if he believed truly that after this judgment there is an eternal hell for sinners, of which a single mortal sin will be cause, if he dies in this state; that the wrath of God will crush it for all eternity, and sinners there fall by the thousands continually; wouldn't he take no other precautions that he does not take to avoid this misfortune? If he truly believed that there was a sky, that is to say eternal happiness for all those who have faithfully practiced what religion commands them, could he behave as he does? No, no doubt. If, at the moment when he is ready to sin, he believed that God sees him, that he loses the sky and attracts all kinds of evils for this life and for the next, would he have the courage to do what the demon instilled in him?

th III SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 205 worse? No, my friend, no, that would be impossible for him. From this I conclude that a Christian who has sinned and remains in his sin, has entirely lost his faith; it's a poor man whose eyes the demons have shot out, who is suspended by a little rope over the most frightful abyss; they prevent him from seeing as much as they can, the horrors that are prepared for him. Let's say better, his wounds are so deep and his evil so inveterate that he does not feel plus his condition; he is a prisoner, condemned to lose life on the scaffold, which entertains itself while waiting for the time of execution; in vain we tell him that his sentence is pronounced, that in a short time he will not be no more of this world; to see him, and to the way in which he driven, you would say that we tell him that we have just make him his fortune. O my God, that the state of a sinner is therefore unhappy! As for the hope of a sinner, we must not speak of it, because the hope of an animal and his own are the same thing; examine the conduct of one and the conduct on the other, there is no difference. A beast does consist all one's happiness in drinking and eating and the pleasures of the flesh, and you find none others in a sinner who lives in sin. But you will tell me, he goes well to mass, he still does well some prayers. And why is this? It is neither the desire to please

God and to save his soul which leads him to this action is the habit and routine that he acquired from his youth. If Sundays didn't come that every year or every ten years, he would come there than every year and even less; he does it because the others do it. You can see the way in which he behaves in all this that it is not other thing; thing; or to make you better aware of what the hope of a Christian sinner, I tell you that he has no no other hope than that of a beast of burden; because we are perfectly convinced that an animal only hopes for what he can enjoy on earth. A pe- hardened soul who neither thinks (of leaving) pleasure, nor wants to escape from sin, has nothing else to hope for, since he says and thinks, or at least he does what he can to persuade, that everything is over after death. It's in vain [en vain], my God, that you would have died for these sinners! Ah! my friend, by believing you have wit, you are degrading yourself low, since you place yourself among the beasts and the most vile animals. We have also said that the prayer of a good Christian must be animated by charity, that is to say by love of God who leads him to love him with all his heart, and to hate and sovereignly detest sin as it greatest of all evils, with sincere desire not to commit it again; and finally to fight it and crush it wherever we find it, and love (nothing) than God and in relation to God. You see again that this is not found in the prayers of a sinner if he is not angry at having offended the good God, since he holds him nailed to the cross of his heart, and this as long as sin reigns there. Do you want listen to this liar for a moment again, see and hear him continue his act of contrition. If you have sometimes seen performing a comedy or theater play, you know everything they do is fake and lie? Well! lend your ears for a moment at the prayer of this sinner, and you will see that he does not and says nothing else: you will see that everything he fact is nothing but lies and falsity. It would be impossible for you to hear him say his act of contrition th III SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 207 without feeling moved by compassion. “My God,” he begins, “who sees my sins, sees also the pain of my heart. » O my God, can we pronounce correctly such an abomination! yes, without doubt, poor blind that he sees your sins well, and too much, unfortunately. But where is your pain? So say instead; “My God who sees my sins, also sees the pain of solitary saints in the woods, who spend the nights mourn their sins. » But, for you, I see clearly that you have none. Far from having the pain of your sins, you would not want to have any, since you remain in these sins, without wanting to leave them. “My God, continue this liar, I have extreme regret have offended you. » But is it really possible to utter such impieties and blasphemies! If you were well, extremely angry, could you stay a months, two, three maybe, ten or twenty years with sin in your heart? Again, if you were angry of having offended God, would it be necessary for the minister of the Lord be continually busy depicting the punishment that God reserves for sin, to give you horror of it? Would it be necessary to drag you, so to speak [pour ainsi dire], at the feet of your Savior for you to leave sin? “Forgive me, my God,” he said, “because you are infinitely good and infinitely lovable and sin displeases you. » Be quiet, my friend, you don't know what you are saying. Certainly he is good; if he had only listened to his justice, there is indeed long as you burn in hell. “My God, forgive my sins, he said, by the merits of death and passion of Jesus Christ your dear son. » Alas! my friend, all the sufferings that Jesus Christ had the charity to endure for you will not be able to touch your heart is too hardened. “Give me,” he said, “the grace to accomplish the resolution I make now to do penance and never offend you,” But, my friend, can you reason well in this way? where is this resolution that you have made to no longer offend the good Lord? Since you love sin and, well far from wanting to get out, you look for the place and the people who can take you there; say rather, my friend, that you would be very angry, if the good Lord granted you grace never to offend him again, since you take so much pleasure in roll in the rubbish of your vices. I believe, my friend, it would be much better for you not to say anything than to speak in this way. But let’s go further. We read in the Gospel that the soldiers who led Jesus Christ into the praetorium, and having all gathered around him, they stripped him of his clothes, threw a scarlet mantle over his shoulders, crowned him with thorns, struck him on the head with a reed, slapped him in the face, spat in his face, and after all this, bending one knee before They adored him. Could we find a more dreadful outrage? Well! it surprises you. This is truly the conduct of a Christian who is in sin, who neither thinks about getting out, and neither wants it; and I say further, that he alone does everything that the Jews did all together, since Saint Paul tells us that with each sin we we commit, we put to death the Savior of the world; that is, we do

whatever it takes to make him die, if he was still capable of dying once second time. As long as sin reigns in our hearts, we hold him nailed to the cross like the Jews; with them, we come to insult him by bending our knees before him, we pretend to pray to him.

But, you will tell me, that is not my intention, when I say my prayer, God forbid that I ever do these horrors. Nice excuse, my friend! The one who commits sin, does not intend to lose grace; however he does not stop losing it, is it less guilty? No, probably, because he knows very well that he cannot do a certain action or say a certain thing without to be guilty of a mortal sin. If you hold on, the intention of all the damned who now are burning, their intention was certainly not to damn; for this are they less guilty? No, without doubt, because they knew that they would damn themselves by living as they lived. A sinner who prays with the sin in one's heart without intention, does not intend of make a mockery of [se moquer de] Jesus Christ, nor to insult him; he doesn't is no less true that he makes fun of him, because he knows although one mocks God when one says to him: My God, I love you, while we love sin, or: I will confess to it. Instead listen to this lie don't even think about confessing or converting. But, tell me, what is your intention when you come to church or do what you call your prayer? It is, you will perhaps tell me, if you dare however say it, to perform an act of religion, to make to God the honor and glory that belong to him. 0 horror of blindness! oh impiety! want to honor God through lies, that is, wanting to honor him because what outrage! O abomination! have Jesus Christ to the mouth and hold him crucified in his heart; join what is holiest with what is most detestable, which is the service of the devil! Oh! what a horror! offering to God a soul that we have already prostituted to the devil a thousand times! O my God, how blind the sinner is, and all the more blind because he does not know himself, nor even Don't try to get to know yourself! Wasn't I quite right, in the beginning, about you say that the prayer of a sinner is nothing other than fabric of lies and contradictions? This is so true that the Holy Spirit himself tells us, that the prayer of one sinner who does not want to leave sin is in execration in the eyes of the Lord. This state, will you say with me, is very terrible and very worthy of compassion. Well! see how much sin blinds you! However (I say) without fear of lying, at least half of those who are here, who listen to me in this church, are of this number. Isn't it true that this doesn't affect you, or rather that it bores you, that time lasts for you? There you go, my friend, the unhappy abyss where sin leads one sinner. First you know that six months ago, xm year or the more you are in sin, isn't that are you calm? Yes, you will tell me. This is not not hard to believe, because sin has pulled your eyes; you no longer see anything, and it has hardened your heart, so that you no longer feel anything, and I am as sure that everything I told you will not make you do no thinking. O my God, in what abyss leads sin! But, you will tell me, we must no longer pray, since our prayers are only insults that we do to God. This is not what I wanted for you say by telling you that your prayers were only lies. But, instead of saying: My God, I love, say: My God, I do not love you, but give me the grace to love you well. Instead of telling him: My God, I am extremely sorry to have offended you, tell him: My God, I feel no regret for my sins, give me all the pain I owe have. far from [Bien loin de] say: I want to confess my sins, tell him instead: My God, I feel attached sinful souls, it seems to me that I would never want leave them; give me this horror that I must feel, so that I abhor them, detest them and confess them, so as never to take them back I O my God, please give us this eternal horror of sin, since he is your enemy, it is he who made you die, may he tear away your friendship from us, may he separate us of you! Ah I do, divine Savior, that every time that we will come to pray to you, we do it with a heart detached from sin, a heart that loves you, and which, in what he tells you, only tell the truth I This is the grace, my brethren, that I wish you.

3rd Sunday after Epiphany — On the Hell of Christians

Ubi erit fletus and stridor denlium. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (S. Matt., viu, 12.)

We read in the Gospel that, when the Saviour had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, saying to him: “Lord, my servant Viteur is ill in my house, with paralysis from which he suffers greatly. Well! told him

this good Savior, I will go and heal him. Ah! my Lord, he said the centurion, I am not worthy for you to enter in my house; but only say a word, and my servant will be healed. Since I am one man subject to commandments, yet I have soldiers under me, I said to one: go there, and he goes; to another: come here, and he comes; and to my servant: do this, he does it. » Jesus having heard him speak thus was delighted with admiration, and said to those who followed him: “I tell you the truth that I have not found such a lively faith in all Israel. This is why I declares that many will come from the East and from Toc- cident and will be placed with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, while the children of kingdom will be thrown out into darkness, and there there will have weeping and gnashing of teeth, » Who is the one among us, my brethren, who, willing to give himself the difficult to penetrate the meaning of these words, would not feel not penetrated and seized with fear to the point of despair, in thinking that these are truly bad Christians who are these unfortunate people, who will be driven out of the kingdom from the heavens and cast into outer darkness, that is- that is, my brethren, in hell, where there will be tears and gnashing of teeth: while idolaters and pagans, who have never had the happiness of knowing Jesus Christ, will open the eyes of the soul, will leave the path of perdition, will come to line up in the within the Church, and take the place that these bad Christians have lost through contempt for the graces they have received. But it is not yet enough, my brethren, The damned Christians will suffer torments in hell infinitely more rigorous than the infidels. The reason is that these foreigners will be damned in part because that they have never heard of Jesus Christ and of his religion; that they lived and died in ignorance: while the Christians (have seen,) from the age of reason, the torch of faith shine before them, like a beautiful sun which gave them lights more than necessary to know what they owed to God, to their neighbor and to themselves. 0 hell of Christians, that you will be terrible and rigorous. But I will tell you, my brethren, and will you be able to hear it without shudder? That as far as the sky is from the earth, so much the hell of the infidels will be far from that of the Christians. If you want to know the reason, my brethren, the here is. If God is just, as we cannot be doubt, he must punish a soul in hell in proportion of the graces she received and despised, of the knowledge she had to serve God. After that he It is therefore quite right that a damned Christian suffers infinitely more than an infidel in hell, because the graces, the means to save oneself were infinitely greater. To make us feel, my brethren, the necessity to take advantage of the graces that we receive in our holy religion, I will show you how much a damned Christian will be more tormented than an infidel. To make you understand, my brethren, the greatness torments which are reserved for bad Christians, one would have to be God himself, because there is no only he who understands it, and the damned alone feel, since God is infinite in his punishments as in his rewards. When the good Lord would give the power to drag here, in my place, an infamous Judas who committed a horrible sacrilege by receiving unworthy communion and selling his divine Master, what bad Christians so often do with their confessions and their unworthy communions, its only cry would be to say to myself: Oh! I'm suffering! Sad language that cannot express either the size or the length of their suffering. O hell of Christians, that you will be terrible! since Jesus Christ seems to exhaust his power, his anger and his fury to make these suffer bad Christians. O my God, can we well think of it, and feel part of this number, and live peacefully! My God, what misfortune is comparable to that of Christians! But, you will tell me, from this it would seem that there are several hells. - Well! My brethren, me, I will tell you that, if the sufferings and torments of damned were the same, God would not be just. I further say that there are as many hells as there are damned people, and that their sufferings are great in proportion to the greatness and number of sins they committed and graces that they despised. God, who is all-powerful health, makes us sensitive to our misfortune in proportion that the harm we have done is great. There are some damned like saints. They are all happy, it is true; yet there are some who are higher in glory, and that, according to penances and others, good works that they did during their lives. It is the same for damned: they are all unhappy, all deprived of seen from God, which is the greatest of all evils hours; because if a damned person had the happiness of seeing the good God, every thousand years once, and that for five minutes, his hell would cease to be hell. Yes, my brethren, the good Lord will make us sensitive to this deprivation and to other torments, according to the number, the magnitude, and the malice of the sins we have committed. Say I, my brethren, can we hear,

without shuddering, the language of those impious who tell you that they love so much to be damned for many as for jraw? Alas! unhappy, so you never thought that the more your sins are multiplied, the more they will be committed with malice, the more you will suffer in hell? From there I conclude, my brethren, that Christians who have sinned with more knowledge, which have been obliged so many times to do violence to stifle the remorse of conscience, which has despised all these holy inspirations and all those good desires that God gave them; he is therefore very just, I say, that the justice of God be done feel more rigorously on them than on these poor unbelievers who have sinned, in part, without knowing evil what they were doing, and without knowing who they were insulting, without knowing the goodness and love of a God for his creatures. If idolaters, the saints tell us, are damned for having transgressed the laws of God that they do not know or have not known, what will be therefore the punishment of Christians who feel evil so well what they do, the duties they have to fulfill; who understand how much they outrage God and the evils they prepare for eternity; and who, despite all this, do not stop sinning? No, no, my brethren, the power and the wrath of God seem (not) great enough and eternity long enough to punish these unfortunate people. Yes, my brethren, I seem to see these flames lit by the justice of God refusing to inflict these punishments on idolaters, and turn with terrible fury on these unfortunate reprobate Christians. Indeed, my brethren, who would not be moved with compassion by seeing it burn these foreign nations? Ah! must they exclaim, amid the flames that devour them: My God, why have you thrown us into these abysses of fire? we didn't know what to do to love you. If we have offended you, it is because we did not know you. Ah! Lord, if you had told us, like to Christians, everything you have done for us, how much you loved us, ah! no, we would never have had the misfortune of offending you, Ilelasl it seems that I see Jesus Christ who covers his ears to not to hear the cries of these poor unfortunates. No, my brethren, Jesus Christ is too good not to let it touch. If he hadn't told us that, without baptism and outside the Church, we cannot hope recreate the sky, could we really believe that these poor souls be damned without knowing what to do to save yourself? No, my brethren, it seems to me that Jesus Christ cannot look at these poor in- fortunate without being touched with compassion. But console yourself in your misfortunes: the evils that you are going to endure will be infinitely less rigorous than those of Christians. My God! why did you throw me into this fire? But, on the other hand, my brethren, listen to the cries, the screams of damned Christians. Alas, how I suffer! I do not see, I do not touch, and I do not smell, and I am only fire. Ah! if I am damned, it is indeed through my fault; I knew well everything that had to be done to save me, and I had all the means more than necessary for this. Alas! by sinning, I knew very well that I was losing my God, my soul and heaven, and that I condemned myself for ever [pour jamais] to burn in the hell! Alas! unfortunate! I am well (punished), because I wanted it. The good God who, so many times, has offered me my forgiveness and all the graces I needed for this, the good Lord gave me continued constantly with remorse of conscience who devoured me and who seemed to force me out of sin, and I would not, and I am damned. I don't am served with all the light that this beautiful religion provided me only to sin with more malice. Yes, my God, this Christian will say throughout eternity: punish me, it's only fair, because if you are incarnate, if you have suffered so many humiliations, so many torments, such a painful and shameful death, it was only to lead me to bring about the salvation of my soul. All this beautiful religion that you have established, where you pour your graces with so much abundance for sinners, was only for my salvation; yes, my God, I knew all that. SEHMONS. — Volume I. 10

Yes, my brethren, a damned Christian will, throughout eternity, before the eyes, all good thoughts, all good desires, LouLcs the good works that he has could have done and did not do, all the sacraments that he did not receive and that he could have received, all the missed prayers, all the masses he misheard due and which he could very well have heard correctly, co who would have greatly helped him save his soul. Yes, my brethren, this bad Christian will remember all the instructions he missed or disregarded and by which he could have known his duties so well. AliI say better, my brethren, all these memories will be like so many executioners who will devour us. Well! My brethren, of all this, the good Lord will have nothing to reproach the poor idolaters. No, my brethren, they do not knew what it was to think of the good Lord, nor of love him, nor the

means that had to be used to go in heaven; which made several saints say that everything that the good Lord could invent to make people suffer damned Christians will not be too rigorous for them, who knew so well what to do to go to heaven and please God. See, my brethren, if it is not right that we suffer in the other life more than the pagans. Listen with what malice the Christian sins on earth, with what audacity he revolted against God. Yes, Lord, he said to him, I know that you are my God, my creator, that it was you who suffered, who died for me, who loved me more than yourself, who stop calling me to you by your grace, by the remorse of my conscience and the voice of my pastors; well! I mock you and all your graces. You have given me commandments which you order to observe under pain of the most rigorous punishments: I

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I mock you, and your commandments, and your threats. You have given me all the light necessary to understand all the beauty of our saint. religion and the happiness it gives us: well! I will do the complete opposite of what she orders me to do. You threaten me that if I remain in sin I will perish: This is precisely why I don't want to leave it. I know very well that you have instituted sacraments by which we can so easily escape from this tyranny: and not only do I not want to take advantage of it; but (I want) to still despise and mock those who will resort to it to lead them to do like me. I know that you are truly present, in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, which should lead me not to appear before you only with great respect and holy trembling, especially being as sinner as I am: but I don't want to come to your churches and at the foot of your altars, only to despise you and make fun of you for my lack of respect and modesty. Yes, this worldly and lost girl will say, I want you delight in the honor that is given to you by my adornments and by my seductive appearance: I will take all possible means to delight your hearts; I will try to light in hearts, by my infernal ways, the fires impure, which will make them an object of horror to you. You want to love me? I will do everything I can to despise you. You tell me that I will be happy, if I want, throughout eternity, if I serve you faithfully; but if I do the opposite you will throw me into the abysses, where you will make me suffer endless evils: I makes fun of both of them. But, you think, we do not say this while sinning; we sin, it is true, but we do not hold not this language. My friend, your actions say it, all the times you sin, knowing the evil that you done. Do you doubt it, my brethren? Tell me, my brethren, when you work on the holy day of Sunday or you make fat on forbidden days, when you swear, or when you say dirty words, you know very well that you outrage the good Lord, that you lose your soul and heaven and you are preparing a hell for yourself? You know well that being in sin, if you have not recourse to the sacrament of penance you will never be saved. Come on, old hardened sinners, come on, quagmire of iniquity, foreign nations wait for you to show you that if you did wrong you knew it very good. According to this, my brethren, it is therefore very just that a Christian who sins with so much knowledge and malice will be punished more rigorously in the other life than a infidel who sinned, so to speak [pour ainsi dire], without knowing that he did evil. Tell me, my brethren, do you count yourself for nothing, all these traits with which the good Lord has favored you in preference to the pagans, and which you have despised? Ah! My brethren, how terrible are the torments that the good Lord prepares for Christians! May we, my brethren, hear without shuddering what Saint Augustine tells us, that there will be Christians who, alone, in hell, will suffer more than entire nations of pagans, because, he said, there are Christians who have received more graces alone, than whole nations of idolaters. No, my children, Saint John Chrysostom tells us, the sins of Christians are no longer sins, but sacrileges and the most horrible in comparison with the sins of idolaters. No, no, bad Christians, he said to them, it is no longer a question of sins among you, but of the most horrible sacrileges.

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But, you think, it is very strong 1 —My brethren, want some you the proof? Here it is: what is a sacrilege? It is, you will tell me, the desecration of a holy thing, consecrated to God, as are our Churches which are only intended for prayer; she's a profana- tion, when we appear there without respect, without motive destie, that we chat, laugh or sleep there. It is, you will tell me, a ciborium which is intended to contain (Jesus Christ)

under the species of bread. It's still a chalice which is sanctified by the touch of the body adorable of Jesus Christ and his precious blood. Well! Saint John Chrysostom tells us, our bodies are all this through holy baptism. The Holy Spirit actually his temple through holy communion; our hearts are similar to a ciborium which contains Jesus Christ. Our members are not the members of Jesus Christ? Is not the flesh of Jesus Christ mixed with the ours? Does not his adorable blood flow in our veins? Ah! unfortunate as we are, have we never made these reflections, that, each time we sin, we commit desecration and sacrilege awful. No, no, my brethren, we never stopped our thoughts on this, and if before sinning we were convinced, it would be impossible to sin. Alas! my God, how little the Christian knows what he done by sinning! But, you will tell me, if all these sins which are so common in the world, are desecrations and sacrileges so insulting to the good Lord, what name should we give to what we call sacrilege: and that we commit when we hide our sins or Do we disguise them out of fear or shame by confessing? Ah! My brethren, can we stop without dying of horror, at the thought of such a crime, which casts lation in heaven and on earth? Ah! My brethren, a Christian can he carry his fury to such excess, against his God and his Savior? A Christian, my brethren, who would have committed a single sacrilege in his life, could he still live? Oh! no, my brethren, there are no more terms nor expressions to depict the grandeur, the blackness- heart and horror of such a monster. A Christian, I say, who, in the tribunal of penitence, where a God brought the greatness of his mercy beyond what ever even the angels will be able to understand: ah! what am I saying [que dis-je], a Christian who, so many times, has felt the love of his God, could he be guilty of such an atrocity against such a good God? A Christian, I say, the holy table, will have the heart, the courage to tear away its God from the hands of the priest to drag him to demon? Ah! terrible misfortune I ah! incomprehensible misfortune! a Christian will have the barbaric courage to slay his God, his Savior, and his most kind! Ah! no, no, hell in all its fury, could never invent anything like this! 0 angels of heaven, come, come to the aid of your God who is bruised and slaughtered by his own children! Ah! no, no, never has hell been able to carry its fury to such excess! Ah! eternal father, how can you suffer from such horrors against your divine Son, who has given us so much loved, and who so willingly lost his life to repair the glory that sin had stolen from us A Christian who is guilty (of such a sin), for- would he even walk, without it seeming to him that the earth > at every moment, will open under his feet to en- to gulp into the hell? Ah! My brethren, if the thought of such crime does not make you shudder with horror and does not freeze you

111° SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 223 the blood in your veins, alas! you are lost! ah! no, no, no more heaven for you, heaven has rejected you. No, no, my brethren, there is no punishment enough great to punish such a crime, which astonishes the demons themselves. Come, unhappy man, come, old villain, Saint Bernard tells us, come executioners of Jesus Christ. What, unhappy! you have committed sacrilege, you on whom the adorable blood of Jesus Christ in the court of penance? Unfortunately- recious, he tells us, you have hidden your sins, you had the barbarity to go and sit at the holy table to receive your God there? stop! stop! ah! mons- be of iniquity, ah! Please spare your God! ah! no, no, never can hell bring its fury to one such excess. Ah! My brethren, if foreign nations suffer already such terrible torments in hell, what will be the greatness of the torments of Christians and Christians yours who, so many times during their lives, have committed sacrileges. Ah! no, no, my brethren, hell will never be- but rigorous enough, nor eternity long enough to punish these monsters of cruelty. Oh! what a spectacle, the great Salvian tells us, to see Christians in hell! alas, he tells us, what has become of these brilliant lights and all these beautiful qualities which seemed to make Christians almost like angels? 0 my God, can one imagine anything more frightening! a Christian in hell! a baptized person found among demons! a member of Jesus Christ in flames! devoured by infernal spirits! a child of God between the teeth of Lucifer! Come, foreign nations, come, unhappy peoples, who never knew the one you offended and who threw you into the flames. Come, it's just that you are the executioners of these reprobate Christians, who had so many means of loving God, of pleasing him, and to reach heaven, and who have only spent their lives doing suffer Jesus Christ, he who so desired to save them! Come listen to Jesus Christ himself, who tells us that at judgment, the Ninevites who were an unfaithful

nation, yes, he tells us, the Ninevites (will rise) against these ungrateful peoples and will condemn them. These Ninevites, the only preaching of Jonah, who was unknown to them, do penance and leave sin; and Christians to whom this holy word has been spoken so many times; yes, this divine word, which has never ceased to resound to their ears, but, alas! who did not strike their hearts in- hardened, these Christians did not convert. Alas! My brethren, if so many graces, so many instructions, so many sacraments had been given to poor idolaters, that how many saints, what penitents, who would have populated heaven! while all these goods will only serve to harden you more into crime. Ah! terrible moment when Jesus Christ will decide the different degrees of suffering we will endure in hell! Alas! My brethren, this will be done in proportion graces that we have received and despised. Yes, my brethren, as many graces received and despised and as many degrees deeper in hell. Yes, my brethren, only one grace would have been enough for a Christian to save him, if he had wanted to take advantage of it, and he will have received and despised a thousand and a thousand! Alas! My brethren, if every grace despised will be hell for a Christian, ah! my God, what eternal misfortune for these bad Christians! Alas! My brethren, we should be able to hear these reprobate Christians from the midst of the flames where the justice of God has them rushed! AliI if at least, they say, we had not never been Christians, although we were damned like these infidels, at least we could console, because we would not have (known) what he had to be done to save us! How many fewer graces that we would have received and that we would not have missed prized. But unfortunate as we are, we we were Christians, surrounded by lights and flooded of graces to lead us and help us to save ourselves. Alas! these sad pictures will constantly be before us me during eternity! Me, (whose name has) been written in the book of Saints, I who was at baptism all watered with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, I who can will at every moment leave sin and assure myself heaven, I who so many times have been made to hear the great love of God's justice for sinners and above all for reprobate Christians. Ah! if at least we had taken my life before I was born, I would never have been in heaven, it is true; but, at least I won't suffer not so much in hell. Ah! if God hadn't been so good and he had punished me from my first sin, I would be in hell, it is true; but I would be less deep and my torments would be less rigorous. Alas! I re- know well now that all my misfortune does not come than me. Yes, my brethren, every reprobate and every nation will have its picture before its eyes, and this for all eternity, without ever being able to undo it, nor turn away from it. Alas! these poor idolatrous nations will see throughout eternity that their ignorance was partly the cause of their loss. Ah! they will say to each other to others, ah! if the good Lord had done the same to us of graces and as much light as to these Christians! Ah! if we had had the good fortune to be educated like them! Ah! if we had had pastors to teach us 10 to know and love the good God who loved us so much and who suffered so much for us! Ah! if you had us said how much sin outraged Jesus Christ and that virtue were of such great value in the eyes of God, could we have committed sin, could we have despised a God so good? Would we not have preferred a thousand times death than to displease him? But, alas, we did not have not the happiness of knowing him; if we are damned, alas! it's that we didn't know what to do to save us. Yes, we had the misfortune of to be born, to live and to die in idolatry. Ah! if we had the good fortune of having Christian parents who had made us know the true religion, could we have prevented ourselves from loving the good God? If like Christians, we had witnessed so much of wonders that he wrought during his mortal life and let him continue until the end of the ages [jusqu'à la fin des siècles], he who, by dying, left them so many means of recovering from their falls when they had the misfortune of having sinned; if we had the adorable blood of Jesus Christ flowing every day on their altar, to ask for mercy for them! Oh! these happy Christians to whom we had so many times told of the mercy of God, which is infinite. Oh! Lord, why have you thrown us into hell? please, stop your justice, my God, if we We offended you because we didn't know you. Tell me, my brethren, can we not be touched by the torments of these poor idolaters? Poor unhappy, it is true that you are suffering and that you are separated from God, who would have made all your happiness; but console yourself, your torments will be infinitely less rigorous than those of Christians. But, my brethren, what will these Christians think and become when considering their table where will be marked all the graces that they will have received and despised? Alas! what am I saying [que dis-je], Christians who will see themselves blushed and blackened by

so many crimes and sacrileges: ah! it's enough to serve them hell. They would like to be able to turn their face away from other side to be less devoured by regret; but Jesus Christ will force them for ever [pour jamais], so that this sight alone would be enough to serve them as hell and executioner. What can they say to apologize and soften a little of their torments? Alas! My brethren, nothing at all, on the contrary, everything will contribute to increasing their despair; they will see that neither graces nor other means of salvation they were not lacking, on the contrary, everything was lavished on them; and they will see that all these goods; who would have saved so many poor savages, only served to damn. Ah! they will say to themselves, if at least we had remained in nothingness. Ah! what a misfortune for us to have been Christians! No, my brethren, we cannot think of what happened to these poor Egyptians without being touched with compassion. They all perished crossing the sea red, gulped water through their mouths and were all swallowed up; this sea, I say, which once gave so much of fertility to their countryside and made all the wealth of their city; this sea which, so many times, had carried them on its waters by such happy navigations, this sea became the very means of their torture and exposed them to the very laughing stock of their enemies, to whom she had just opened a free passage to save them from their hands. But, alas! My brethren, the spectacle presented to us by a reprobate Christian is much more distressing. Throughout eternity, we will see these damned Christians, we will see them return with their mouth all the graces they have received and despised throughout their lives. Alas! My brethren, Your will see these torrents of blood come out of these sacrilegious hearts divine that they received and horribly desecrated. But, we says Saint Bernard again, what will give yet another degree of torment to these damned Christians is that, throughout eternity, they will have before their eyes all that Jesus Christ suffered to save them, and that despite this they damned themselves. Yes, he tells us, they will have before their eyes all the tears that this divine Savior has poured out all the penances he has done, all his steps and all his sighs, and all this for the make it better. They will see Jesus Christ, as he was in this manger when he was born, and he was laid on a handful of straw; as it was in the garden of Olives where he cried so much for their sins, and even with tears of blood. He will show himself as in his agony, and when they dragged him through the streets of Jerusalem; they will think they hear him nailed to the cross and ask for mercy for them, and through this he will show them how much their salvation had cost him dear, and how much he suffered to deserve for them the sky that they lost with so much pleasure, and even mischief. Ah! My brethren, what regrets! Alas! what despair for these reprobate Christians! Ah! will they cry from the depths of the flames: farewell, beautiful sky, it is for us you were created and we will never see you! farewell, beautiful city which was our home eternal and which was to make all our happiness! Ah! if we lost you, it's our fault and our malice. Yes, my brethren, this is the sad meditation of a Christian throughout all eternity in hell. No, my brethren, the pagans will have almost none of this to reproach themselves with; they will not have to reject heaven since they do not know it don't know; they did not refuse and despise the means that was presented to them to save themselves, since they did not know what to do to achieve this happiness. But Christians, whom we have not ceased to instruct, to urge and ask not to get lost, and to whom we have presented so many times all the easiest ways to achieve the happy life they were for created? Yes, my brethren, a Christian will say to himself throughout eternity: Who was it who threw me into hell? Is it God? Ah! no, no. It's not Jesus Christ; on the contrary, he absolutely wanted to save us. Is it the demon? Oh no, no, I could well not obey him, like so many others did. So are these my inclinations? Ah! no, no, these are not my inclinations. Jesus Christ had me given empire over them, I could tame them with grace of God which would never have failed me. From where can so come my loss and my misfortune? Alas! all of this comes only from myself, and not from God, nor from the devil, nor from my inclinations. Yes, it is myself who am attracted to all these misfortunes; yes, it's me who followed me lost and reprobated of my own will; if I had wanted, I would have saved myself. But I damned myself! no more resource and no more hope; yes, it is my malice, my impiety and my libertinage which threw me into these torrents of flames from which I will never escape. Yes, my brethren, if the word of God deserves anything belief, I implore you to think seriously about this truth which has converted so many souls. And why is this that it would not produce the same effects on us? why wouldn't it turn to our happiness instead what to our

misfortune if we want to take advantage of it? Yes, my brethren, either change our lives, or we will be damned: because we know very well that our way of doing living cannot lead us to heaven. Alas! My brethren, it will happen to us like poor Joab who, to avoid death, fled into the temple and kissed the altar in the hope that he would be spared, because once he was David's favorite; it was, however, by his order that he was put to death. The one who was responsible for killing him shouted: Get out of there. No, answers poor Joab, if he I have to die, I prefer to die here. The soldier, seeing that he could not tear him from the altar, drew his dagger, plunged it into his bosom, and poor Joab bathed in it. the altar, received the blow of death and fell at the foot of the tabernacle, which he had taken for his defense and his asylum. This, my brethren, is precisely what will happen to us one day if we do not take advantage, or rather, if we continue let us despise the graces of salvation which are so much to us lavished. Now we are like Joab who was David's favorite and friend. 11 almost didn't happen not a day went by without experiencing some new benefit from the prince. It was preferred to all other subjects; but he had the misfortune of not knowing how to take advantage of it, and he was punished without mercy [sans miséricorde] by the very one from whom he had been showered with so many benefits. Yes, my brethren, there will be all the same from us who were preferred to so many unfaithful nations who live in darkness and who have no never had the happiness of knowing the truth, that is to say the true religion, and who perish in this sad state and unhappy. But also, my brethren, to what punishment should we not expect from Him himself who loved us so much and showered us with so many benefits, yes, like Joab, we had the misfortune of soaking our hands in the blood of Abnor, that is, of Jesus Christ, what we do every time we sin; but much more horribly when we are badly enough- happy than to profane the sacraments. O my God, can we think about it and not die of fright? 0 my God, how can a Christian dare to wear so far his cruelty and ingratitude? Ah, 1 unfortunate man, Saint Augustine tells us, you are going to crime after crime, always in the hope that you will stop teras! But will you not be afraid to put the seal on your misfortune? Oh! that the sacraments and all the help of the Church is of little use to these sinners who have lived in valuing the graces that our holy religion gives us! Yes, the time will come when perhaps you will receive your last rites with better provisions for eyes of the world; but by receiving them, it will happen to you like Joab. Jesus Christ, who is our prince and our Lord, will pronounce our sentence of reprobation. At instead of serving us as viaticum for heaven: it will not be something other than a mass of lead for us rush with greater speed into the abysses; we like Joab we will hold the altar; we will be like him, all covered with the adorable blood of Jesus Christ: with this we will fall into hell. Ah! My brethren, if we could only, once, understand what a damned Christian is and the torments that he endures, could we, my brethren, live in sin, in this state which constantly exposes us to all these misfortunes? No, no, my brethren, our life is not in no way the life that a Christian who wants avoid these tortures. What! My brethren, a Christian who is born in the bosom of the Church, who was raised in the school of Jesus Christ himself, who took a crucified God for his father and his model; a Christian, so many times nourished by her adorable body, watered with her precious blood, which should spend his life like an angel from heaven in action of grace: on the other hand, a God who, for him, is des- descended from heaven to come and teach him the means of be happy in loving him on earth; a Christian who is gifted with so many beautiful qualities and so much knowledge sessions to make him better understand the greatness of his destiny; and a God, I say, who loved him more than himself; a God who seems to have exhausted his love and his wisdom and all his riches to tell him communicate, and who, by his death, saves him from eternal death. nelle! Ah! My brethren, a Christian for whom God has done so much miracles! for whom God suffered so much, to see himself burned go to hell among the demons who will drag him for all eternity in flames. 0 horror!... 0 evil- terrible luck!... Oh! the frightening spectacle that to see a Christian who is all covered with the adorable blood of Jesus Christ! Alas! My brethren, who could think this without shuddering? However, this is the share of an infinite number of Christians who mock and despise everything what Jesus Christ did for them; and very unhappy are we, if we do not want to enjoy so much means we have to secure the sky, the foreign nations will open the eyes of the soul to the light of faith and will come to take the place that we let's lose. Alas! My brethren, we have reason to fear that the good God, as punishment for the contempt we make of all that Jesus Christ has done for us, do

not take away from us the faith of our heart, and let us fall into blindness; and we will perish there. O my God, what a misfortune for Christians who know so well what is needed do to save oneself, which, even by not doing it, we can be very unhappy with the remorse that gives them their conscience! Ah! My brethren, what despair, throughout eternity for a Christian who lacked nothing to avoid all the torments he endures! Ah! se he will say, I who have been told so many times that if I wanted, I could love the good God and save my soul and make me happy for eternity; me to whom we offered all the graces to escape from sin. Ah! if at least, I had not been a Christian. Ah! if at least I had never been told about the service of God and his religion? But no, I didn't miss anything, I had everything and I didn't know how to take advantage of anything. Everything had to go my way happiness, and through the contempt I made of it, everything turned to my misfortune, farewell beautiful sky... farewell eternity of delights the... farewell happy inhabitants of the sky..., everything is over for me... No more God, no more sky, no more happiness 1... Oh how many tears I will shed; oh that of cries I will push into these flames... But no more of hope!... Ah! sad thought that will tear a Christian apart for eternity!... Ah! let us not waste a moment to avoid this misfortune. It is the happiness that I wishes you.

4th Sunday after Epiphany — On the Enemies of Our Salvation

Motus tnagnus factus est in mari, ità ut navicula operirelur (luclibus. A great storm arose on the sea, so that the boat was completely covered with waves, (S. MaWu, vm, 24.)

OILA, my brethren, the figure or rather the life of a to u r e w P Christian on earth. Our soul, subject to its passions, faced a thousand temptations, is really similar to a covered boat of waves and exposed to shipwreck at any moment. According to this, my brethren, which of us will be able to live in peace seeing the dangers by which we are exposed to getting lost for ever [pour jamais]? Who among us, my brethren, will not feel the need to constantly watch over all the movements of his heart, that is to say, on all his thoughts, words and actions, to know if they are all made with a view to pleasing God, or the world. But, alas! My brethren, let us say it while moaning: a large part, in all co they do, only seek the world and not the good God. But also, what follows from this, my brethren? Alas! laugh something else, except that the demon leads us to

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I. Our real enemies are not those who blacken our reputation, who strip us of our goods, which even threaten our life: these are not only instruments which Providence uses to sanctify us, giving us the opportunity to practice humility, meekness, charity and patience. If we have the salvation of our soul at heart, far to hate them and complain, on the contrary, we we will love them more. It is true that it is a little hard for a Christian who has linked his heart to the earth, to see stripped of one's possessions; it is certain that he is a little sensitive to a proud person having his reputation blackened; there is no doubt that it is frightening to a man who lives almost as if he should not never die, from sense death approaching [sentir la mort] which surrounds it: however, my brethren, all this is not what we call our enemies; on the contrary, they are those who lead us to heaven, if we want to enjoy it Christianly. But if you now wish to know which are the enemies we have to fear, here they are:

My brethren, listen to it well and engrave it well in your heart. Our real enemies, my brethren, are those who work to strip our poor soul of its in- marriage, to rob her of the treasure of grace, to make her die before the good Lord and throw her into hell. Ah! My brethren, how formidable and terrifying such enemies are. ribles! However, my brethren, however dangerous they be, we will find them everywhere, or rather we we have

within ourselves: what should carry us to keep ourselves constantly on our guard, since there is no what will death be that will deliver us from it forever. Alas! My brethren, it is not in vain [en vain] that we say that the Christian's life is a continual struggle. However, my brethren, I will tell you that we do not have no enemies more to fear than those who are in- visible; and if you want to know them, let's go to them find: that is to say, let us descend into our hearts, and let's call them each by their names so that we don't We can't be wrong. You see, my brethren, this crazy love of ourselves, this secret complacency with which we are filled for ourselves. Do you see how we internally glory in our little merit, in our goods, our talents, our family; internally contemptuous of others; putting us above our equals, and at the level of those who are above us. “I’m worth that one,” we say; I'm worth it better than this one, he is not such a good worker as me; there is no work better done than mine. » Do you realize, my brethren, this invisible enemy who continually pursues and who hurts you so much? When your brother fails at something, Doesn't your little pride make you think that he doesn't have didn't know how to do it, and if you had been in his place, you would have gone about it in such a way: that it is not than a beast; that he understands nothing and that he does not follow than his head. Do you understand, my brethren, this little enemy who kills you without you realizing it what did you think? This little property that you have acquired, perhaps not too legitimately, this figure that you believe to be more pleasant than that of another, your clothes more rich or cleaner than your neighbor's, and a thousand Don't other things make your heart swell? and Doesn’t this swelling appear even in your dis- course, in your approach, in your posture? Do you see how proud you are? Barely will you speak to the poor, if he greets you when you get up his hat, curtsying to you; you will believe do much more than shake his head, or tell him yes or no. You will hardly look at him, as if he was of a different material than you. You see, my brethren, do you understand how much pride devours you? Do you still see how sensitive you are to the way Who are we talking to you about? Alas, a slightly wrong word, a little joke on your account, a welcome little cold, all this shocks you; you complain about it, you even go so far as to murmur, saying: “Ah! we know them well, they are not kings, nor princes! » You remember this good that you have done to them, you wish to find the opportunity pojir blame them for it. My God, what pride, what love of oneself I See this man: since he acquired some additional wealth of land, how he walking head up beginning to join those whom in the past he did not dare to frequent, believing them too au- above him! If your neighbor's business is successful better than yours, if he makes any profit than you you miss, see how sad your heart is and sorrow! But if, on the contrary, something happens to him accident which disturbs his affairs, or which humiliates him, Don't you feel in your heart a certain joy, an inner pleasure? You see, my brethren, do you not feel this jealousy and this envy which is chasing you follows everywhere? We can neither see nor feel this person who offended us, alas! perhaps without meaning to, we like to speak badly of it; we love it when others say bad things about it, we are happy when we find the opportunity to mortify them. You see, my brethren, do you feel this hatred and this vengeance, this animosity that undermines and devours you? Do you want to know, my brethren, how many we are attached to the life and goods of this world? Isn't it not that your mind is filled, night and day, with your temporal affairs, your occupations, your com- thank you? Aren't you continually busy thinking about your money, or how to collect it, or to talk about it? Alas! how many times the thought of your temporal affairs come to you even in your prayers, and even in the house of the good Lord, during the holy mass! How many times have you not thought about the measures you will take after the mass, to the trips you will make, to the people that you will see to succeed in your business, to make a deal? Alas! to earn five francs you would go three or four leagues; and you wouldn't only thirty steps to do a good work, to to do a favor for your neighbor or to hear a holy mass on weekdays? Snatch you one penny for the poor, alas! it's tearing your entrails. When it comes to winning or losing something, you no longer know Sundays, nor parties; there are no longer any commandments of God, nor commandments of the Church which hold you back. Am I not speaking the truth, my brethren, when I say that you did not dare, in defiance of the commandments, not contribute to the sin of others by refusing to give money or chickens, when the children of your parents got married? Don't you didn't dare tell them that you didn't want to go, or let your children go there? You see, my brethren, do you feel the human respect which blinds you and which loses you? So what

is this way again that you have to examine and always be ready to criticize the conduct and actions of your neighbor, by meddling in what does not concern you; telling you what you know, and what you don't know? Feel, my brethren, this intimate enemy who carries everywhere trouble and dissension in families; Do you want to understand what this intimate enemy is who wrong? Is it not that fornication controls you? are not your minds and imaginations filled continually dirty thoughts, representations and impure desires? See you, my brethren, feel this fire impure which burns and devours you. Well! My brethren, here are these enemies to whom we do not be careful. Do you know, my brethren, why we know them so little? Alas! it's that we close our eyes, and we plug our ears so as not to see them or know them. But to know them well, we only have to descend into our hearts; that's where they are hidden, where we will know them at least to a large extent. I just let you know only the most sensitive and the most ordinary. But the more you dig, the more you will find some. Alas! our miserable heart is similar to the chaos of the sea which contains a mul- infinite attitude of fish of all sizes and all species. Yes, my brethren, it is the same with our hearts. It contains and nourishes a host of bad inclinations. tions, some weaker, others stronger; but all equally capable of losing us if we we do not take great care to repress them. There you go, my brethren, the enemies that dwell within ourselves, including us we cannot escape the company and whose only re- medicine is to fight them. But, you might say to me to be, these are indeed our intimate enemies, but now who are our enemies from outside? My brethren, if you wish to know, here they are: listen to him well so that you can know them, fight them and overcome them with the grace of the good Lord. I will tell you first let those from outside come and join those from within in order to better exercise their fury on Christians. Yes, my brethren, all the creatures that the Lord has made for the use of man, serve or for his salvation or to his pearl according to the use he makes of it. If you want convince yourself of this, listen to me for a moment. See a poor man who, in his poverty, would so surely win the sky. But, alas! what does he do? what the bad thief did, who, from the cross descended into hell, instead of ascending to sky: it murmurs, it complains, it envy the rich, he speaks ill of them and calls them cruel, tyrants; the cross and afflictions, which are very great graces from the good Lord, lead him to despair. From a on the other hand, look at the rich and the healthy. At instead of thanking God for it, and making good use of it of the goods which he gave them by sharing them with the poor, in order to be able to atone for their sins, what do they do? Goods make them proud and lead them to live in complete forgetfulness of their salvation. Yes, my brethren, in whatever state we are in, we encounter everywhere enemies to fight. Here we hear bad speeches; There, these are bad examples that we see, let's say better, my brethren, whether we keep watch, whether we sleep, drink or eat, we have traps everywhere to avoid and temptations to fight in pleasures even the most innocent, in the company of even the most virtuous people we frequent, in our most holy works, even in our prayers. Alas! how many distractions, how many thoughts of pride! how many times we have preferred to others that we believed were less good than us. In our confessions, alas! how many detours to appear less guilty than we are! How many times have we had the thought of changing confessors to experience less confusion! Alas! that sacrileges in our communions. Alas! what views human! how often we are more modest and if we were alone, we would be less so. In our fasts, what hypocrisies! how often we do pretending to fast, and we eat alone. In our alms, how often have we sought the applause of men. Alas! My brethren, what traps to avoid! what temptations to fight! Yes, my brethren-, the demon who has sworn our doom rolls incessantly around us to make us fall into his nets. Yes, my brethren, he uses everything around us to carry us to evil. This is the way the devil tempts us: he will examine all the movements of our heart. The one who is subject to pride, he puts before his eyes or in the mind everything that is capable of giving it. He him makes people believe that everything they do is well done or well said; he makes him see that he is very skillful, very clean, very economical, very charitable; to the one who loves money, he makes him consider the happiness of those who are rich, how free they are from misery, what they can do what they want, that they are loved and respected by all the world; to him who is subject to the vice of impurity, he constantly puts in his mind the pleasures of the senses, of so that almost everything he sees reminds him of them; others whose hearts are sensitive, sometimes he brings them to pride, sometimes despair; to those who have something appearance of virtue, it makes them believe that we

subscribe opinion of them; they like it when we recommend each other to their prayers; they believe themselves capable and worthy of great things; they sometimes think that they can do well miracles. Alas! My brethren, that there are few who escape all these traps, and consequently, that there are few who will go to heaven. But, you might say to me, who can know all these artifices? Who will be able to know them? My brethren, here: those alone who feel them and who fight them and who resist them. Well! My brethren, here are some of the enemies of our salvation. Judge for yourselves, if they are fear. Judge of it, but even better by the evils that they have done to you until now and by the state in which they have reduced you. Go over in your mind all the years of your life, and see if since your youth you were not the victim, the slave and the misfortune- the devil's toy, that cursed Satan, and more world and your inclinations. Alas! My brethren, who could count all the bad thoughts that the demon tells you has data and all the images he has tried to dirty your imagination, and all the unregulated movements that it excited in yourselves? Yes, my brethren, if we wanted sincerely working for our salvation, we would feel truly table what Saint John tells us: that everything that is in the world is only the lust of the flesh, that lust of the eyes and pride of life; that by- everything we carry within ourselves the germ of all vices, and that each of us can be tempted and seduced by his evil inclination; that everything that envy us ronne can be an occasion of sin, and that the demon bent on our downfall sometimes uses our bad inclinations nations to make us abuse creatures, and sometimes creatures to excite our evil inclinations. Alas! My brethren, if we knew well the danger where we are constantly losing ourselves, we would be in continual fear. We would say well with Saint Paul: Ah! Lord, when will I have the happiness to be delivered from this miserable body which seems given to me only to torment and humiliate me and to be an instrument of a thousand miseries? We would still say with holy King David: Ah! Lord, my God! who will give me wings like a dove to fly and escape from this miserable world, where I encounter only traps and temptations of all kinds? Yes, my brethren, in everything we see, in everything what we hear, in everything we say and do, we feel inclined to evil. If we are at the table, it is sensuality, gluttony and intemperance; if we take some time for recreation tion is lightness and useless conversations; if we let's work, most of the time it's interest, greed or the envy that drives us, or even vanity; if we let us pray, it is neglect, distractions, disgust and boredom; if we are in some trouble or some affliction is complaints and murmurings; if we we are in prosperity, it is pride, self-esteem and contempt for neighbor; the praises fill us heart, insults lead us to anger. Well 1 My brethren, this is what made the greatest saints tremble, this is what has populated the deserts with so many solitary people, these are the reasons for so many tears, for so many prayers, so many penances. It is true that the saints who were hidden in the forests were not exempt of temptations; at least they were far away from so many bad examples with which we are continually surrounded and which lose so many souls. However, my brethren, we see in their lives that they watched, that they prayed and trembled incessantly; while we, poor blind people, are at peace in the midst of so many dangers of getting lost! Alas! My brethren, a part does not know not even what it is to be tempted, because we We almost never resist, at least very rarely. Alas! My brethren, according to this, which of us will escape all these dangers? which of us will be saved? No, my brethren, one no one who wanted to think about all this could no longer live, she would be so frightened! However, my brethren, what should console and reassure us is that we are dealing with a good father, who will never allow that our battles are beyond our strength and that every time we have recourse to him, he will will help you fight and win.

HE We said we would see ways that we had to use to defeat our enemies and emerge victorious from the fight. It is very certain, my brethren, that man in his origin was not as he is today a compound of good and may, of vices and of sins. His soul, coming pure from the hands of its Creator, was not subject to all these miseries. But the man having rebelled against his God, from that very moment, he was no longer master of himself: his flesh corrupted by sin rebelled against the spirit. From there came this mix of good and bad, good and bad inclinations that we each find within ourselves. Good things come from the good God, who is the father of our souls, and the bad ones come from the demon, the great enemy of the good God and of our souls. But, do you think perhaps in yourselves: what then should we do to surely defeat our enemies? My

brethren, you do not have only three things to do and here they are: “Watch, flee and pray. » If you are faithful to these three opinions, all hell unleashed against you, will be able to do nothing. But let's explain, my brethren, these three points so essential, because our salvation depends on it. I say first that we must watch; this is not not only me who tells you this, but it is Jesus Christ himself who tells you this. If the father of the family, he told us, knew what time the thieves must come he would not fall asleep; but he would watch, so as not to not allow your house to be pillaged; he would close all the doors, he would be very attentive to the slightest noise, he would not open to anyone without knowing them well, he would be continually on his guard. This, my brethren, is what Jesus Christ wants us to do in relation to our soul. This house that the good Lord wants us to keep, it is our soul: our thieves are the demons, the world and our inclinations; because we see and we let's feel ourselves that these thieves are always around of us, for us your 1st and to try to per- dre. We must therefore always be on our guard so that they can never surprise us. But, me you will say, how can we continually watch over lie about ourselves? My brethren, here it is: it is, if we let us be careful of all the thoughts that present themselves to us black spirit, to all the movements that rise in our heart, to all the words that come out of our mouth and all the speeches that strike our ears, to see and examine if, in all this, there is nothing that may displease the good Lord and hurt our poor soul. We watch over ourselves, my brethren, when in all our businesses, in all our actions, in all our steps we examine before the good God what are the motives and intentions that make people act: if it is pride, vanity, interest, hatred, revenge or very human intentions, all carnal or impure. Yes, my brethren, a person who watches over himself, a wise person, who is obliged to walk in a very narrow and slippery path bordered by precipices, see how she walks carefully, how she is careful where she steps, like she is careful with every step she takes. Take care, we says Saint Paul, in the way you walk in the way of salvation, that is to say in the way in which you speak and act, at the slightest of your thoughts, to the smallest of your desires, to the smallest of your actions. Take care of your eyes if objects on which they carry themselves, are not able to give death to your soul; take care of your tongue, fear that it will be a sword that will kill your poor soul. But, you will tell me, what are the per- Who are taking all these precautions? we are well all lost, if all these measures have to be taken. We are not, it is to be hoped, all lost; but it is still true to say that if there are so few who follow all this, there will also be very few who arrive will see in heaven. This, my brethren, is what we must do every morning after our prayer; it is necessary to foresee the opportunities that we will have to offend the good Lord, in order to be able to avoid them, and ask the good Lord for grace and the strength not to succumb; in the evening we need we take account [rendre compte] within ourselves to see if we we have been faithful to our resolutions; if we are fallen, we must, without being discouraged, groan before the good Lord, and ask him again for grace to be firmer in the future. No, my brethren, nothing more advantageous than this practice to give us the happiness of correcting ourselves, of making us realize our faults; it is only in this way that we will manage to give ourselves to the good Lord. How do you want us to know our sins and leave them if we do not return to ourselves, at least once or twice every day. Alas! My brethren, despite our vigilance, how many sins we will find at death that we have not seen for our life! From this, I leave you to think in what state will a poor person find himself in, who will have spent part of his life without retracing his steps. Alas! what astonishment and what fear, or rather what despair. Here, my brethren, see a man who wants maintain his health, see how much care he takes guarantees to ward off all dangers: he deprives himself of anything that can harm your health. And why, my brethren, do we not do the same for our poor souls? is it not even more precious than our body? Secondly, we said that with this remedy, which is to constantly watch over all movements from our heart, we must still flee with great care everything which can bring us to evil, or cool us in the service of God. Yes, my brethren, if we want to preserve ourselves for the sky, we must flee and avoid all opportunities neighbors of sin, that is to say the (dangerous) people, and the places where we ordinarily offend the good God; when we are there, we must not find ourselves there as much as we cannot better do. You go to a vigil, where almost the whole evening is spent slandering, slandering the neighbor, saying bad reasons, singing bad songs: and why, my brethren, are you going there? But, you will tell me, we have to go somewhere. This is very true; but not all vigils are the same: if you go voluntarily, on the day of judgment

you will find yourself guilty of all sins who committed themselves to your presence. You don't believe it not? But on the day of judgment you will see it. Alas! that you will be angry for having been guilty of so many sins, and this by your presence alone! How many times have you sought the company of a such a person who, by his manners or his presence, gave you bad thoughts, gave rise to you of evil desires. Since she is for you a occasion of sin, you must flee it; otherwise, you do wrong, because you expose yourself to temptation tion. You no longer have to rely on your resolutions, because you have failed so many times; besides your own experience has taught you much more than I could teach you and even more that I wouldn't dare tell you. It is true that often, which is an occasion of sin for some Don't Test for Others; it's up to each of us to examine our particular arrangements, in order to drive in such a way as not to kill our soul, but to preserve it for heaven. I will you show this in an even clearer way. I call bad company, my brethren, this man without religion which is not bothered by the commandments of God, nor those of the Church, which knows neither Lent, nor Easter, which almost never comes to church, or if he comes there, it is only to scandalize others by his very unreligious ways: you must flee otherwise you will soon become like him, even without you realizing it; he will teach you by his bad speeches, as well as by his bad examples, to despise the most holy things and to neglect your most sacred duties. He will start to to ridicule your piety, to make some joke about religion and its ministers; he you will spout some slander on the priests and on the confession, to the point that it will make you lose entirely the taste for frequenting the sacraments; he doesn't will speak of the instructions of your pastors only for ridicule, and you are sure that if you hang out for a while, you will see that without you see it, you will lose the taste for everything which relates to the salvation of your soul. I call bad company, my brethren, this young or this old evil- 11 mouthy person who only has dirty words in his mouth. Take care, my brethren, this person has the plague! if you frequent her, you are sure that she will like it for you will give and you will die, without a miracle of grace; the demon will use this wretch to dirty your imagination and rot your heart. I call bad company, my brethren, this gambler or this drunkard of profession: however sober and tidy you may be, he will soon have lost you by making you eat your money in games and cabarets; you will end up become the desolation of your family and the scandal of the entire parish. I call bad company, my brethren, this curious, worried and slanderous person who wants to know everything that is happening in the houses, who is always ready to judge what does not concern her. The Holy Spirit tells us that these people are not only hateful to everyone; but still they are cursed by the Lord. Flee from them, my brethren, otherwise you will do like them. You yourself will perish there: “Tell me who you’re seeing, I’ll tell you who you are.” » If bad company is so to be feared, my brethren, bad books are no less bad. It often only takes reading a bad book to lose a person. Alas! My brethren, how many people, poor wretches, who have songbooks at home bad, and who lend them to one and the other! Alas! what will be their judgment? what will they answer when the good Lord will show them that they have lost so much of souls by the bad songs they lent or plots they sang? Won't you agree with me, my brethren, that if we do not flee from all these kinds of people, we're pretty sure we lose us for eternity?

III. But here is the last step we must take- dre to defeat the enemy of our salvation, which is the prayer. Yes, my brethren, it is she who makes all the other means that we can take and which we have just spoken; without it, that is to say, without prayer, all our precautions will be of no use to us. It's what I am going to show you in a very sensitive way and this by example. We read in Holy Scripture that while Joshua fought in the plain against the Amalekites, Moses was praying on the mountain, having his arms stretched out and hands raised towards the sky. As long as his hands were thus raised towards heaven, the people of God defeated the enemies; but as soon as his tired arms weariness was falling, the enemies had the upper hand. We were obliged to support his arms until the end of the battle, and the Amalekites were defeated and cut into pieces, not by the valor of the combatants, but by the prayers of the servant of God. This example show, my brethren, that not only is prayer good effective; but still, of all necessity to overcome the enemies of our salvation. Besides, my brethren, see all the saints: they were not content to watch and fight to defeat the enemies of their salvation and flee everything that could serve as a temptation; but they spent their whole

lives praying not only to the day, but often the entire night. Yes, my brethren, in vain do we watch over ourselves, over all the movements of our hearts, we will have good flee, if we do not pray, if we do not continually resort to prayer, all our other means will be of no use to us, we will be defeated. We let's see that in the world there are many opportunities that we cannot escape: as for example, a child cannot escape the company of his parents rents, because of their bad examples; but he can pray, prayer will sustain him. But still let's assume that we can flee from the per- people who set bad examples, we we cannot run away from ourselves, who are our greatest enemy. Will we be able to? if the Lord does not watch over our conservation, all our measures will be of no use to us. No, my brethren, we do not find we will not see a sinner who has converted who has not not had (resort) to prayer, not one who persevered without having had much recourse to prayer, and you you will not find a damned Christian who has not started his disapproval through lack of prayer. We see also how much the devil fears him who prays, that there is no time when he tempts us more: he does everything he can to prevent us from pray. When the demon wants to lose a person, he begins by inspiring him with great disgust for the prayer; however good a Christian she may be, if he comes to end of doing him or doing badly, or neglecting his prayer, he is sure to have it. If you want to understand it even better, tell me, how long have you not resist more the temptations that the devil gives you, and you leave the door of your heart open to all the winds, haven't you since you left your prayers or that you only do them out of habit, out of routine only or to get rid of, and not to please the good Lord? Yes, my brethren, as soon as we leave them we are running with great strides towards hell: (do canvas sort) that we will never return to the good God, if we let us not resort to prayer. Yes, my brethren, with a prayer well done, we can command you to heaven and to the earth, everything will obey us. Listen to what Jesus Christ

IV° SUNDAY AFTER Epiphany. 253 tells us himself to show us the necessity of resort to prayer. Everything is possible with prayer, we he said, everything is promised to prayer well done. See them Apostles: with prayer, they made the paralytics walk, they made the deaf hear, the lame, see the blind, and raise the dead. Do we want, my brethren, not to be defeated by the devil, our cruel enemy, let us continually resort to prayer. But we must pray as we must, but our prayer starts from the bottom of our heart and not from the end lips, as we almost always do. He We must also be fully convinced that of ourselves we can neither fight nor conquer, and that we absolutely need the grace of God, and that this grace will only be given to us through prayer well done. But if we have the misfortune of being defeated by the demon, without being discouraged, we must return to fight and no longer count on our resolutions, like we have done perhaps so far; but all about the goodness of Jesus Christ, who will fight with us and who will help us overthrow our enemy. Let us conclude, my brethren, saying that whenever we have sinned, it is always because we have not looked after enough ourselves, not enough fleeing companies and places which could lead us to evil, or which we have not prayed, or we prayed wrongly. Happy, my brethren, he who, at the hour of death, will be able to say like Saint Paul: “I fought well, but with the thanks to God I have always resisted temptation; here I am at the end of my race, my fights are over, I wait with confidence the crown of righteousness which the Lord, if good as he is, promised to all those who fought and persevered until the end. » It is the happiness that I wishes you.

Sexagesima — On the Word of God

Beati qui audiunt verbum Dei, et custodiunt illud. Blessed is he who hears the word of God and who puts it into practice. (S. Luke, xi, 28.)

You read in the Gospel, my brethren, that the Savior of the world instructed the people, told them such wonderful and amazing things a woman in the middle of the crowd raised her voice and cried: “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nourished you; » but Jesus Christ continued immediately: “Much happier is he who listens to the word of God and who observes what it commands him. » It may surprise you, my brethren, that Jesus Christ tells us that he who hears the word of God with a true desire to profit by it is

more pleasing to God than the one who receives it in holy communion (1); yes without doubt, my brethren, we have never fully understood how much the word of God is a precious gift. Alas! My brethren, if we understood it well, with what respect, with what love we should hear it. My brethren, we are not mistaken: the word of God will necessarily produce fruits in us either good or bad; they will be good, if (1) See note M. ix at the end of the volume.

we bring good arrangements, that is to say, a real desire to profit by it and do everything it gives us will prescribe; they will be bad if we come to hear it with indifference, even disgust, perhaps with contempt; or this holy word will enlighten us, show us our duties, or will blind and harden us. But for better make it clear to you, I'll show you 1° how great are the advantages that we derive of the word of God, and 2° the dispositions that we must bring it to have the pleasure of enjoying it.

1. To make you understand how big the price of the word of God, I will tell you that all the establishment and progress of the Catholic religion are the work of the word joined to the grace that accompanies it always. Yes, my brethren, we can still say that after the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary, and the holy Baptism, there is no grace that we receive in our holy religion which can equal it: which is easy to understand. How many people who went to heaven without having received the sacrament of Penance? how much o others without having received that of the adorable Body and the Precious blood of Jesus Christ? and how many others who are in heaven who have received neither that of Confirmation nor that of Extreme Unction? But for the instruction which is the word of God, as soon as we are old enough to get educated, it is also difficult for us to go there without being instructed than without being baptized. Alas! My brethren, we will unfortunately see in the judgment that the most large number of damned Christians will have been so because that they did not know their religion. Go, my brethren, question all the reprobate Christians and ask them why they are in hell? Everyone will tell you that their evil- good luck comes or because they did not want to listen to the word of God or that they have despised it. But, you will tell me perhaps, what does this holy word do in us? Here it is: it is similar to this pillar of fire which led the Jews when they were in the desert, who showed them the path through which they should pass, which stopped when it was necessary for the people to stop and walk when he had to walk; so that this people had no only to be faithful to follow her and he was sure not to get lost in your approach. Yes, my brethren, she does same thing for us: she is a beautiful torch who shines before us, who leads us in all our thoughts, our purposes and our actions; she's the one who lights our faith, which strengthens our hope, which ignites our love for God and neighbor; it's her which makes us understand the greatness of God, the end happy for which we are created, the kindnesses of God, his love for us, the price of our soul, the greatness of the reward promised to us; yes it is she who depicts to us the greatness of sin, the the outrages he does to God, the evils he prepares for us for the other life; it is she who makes us shiver at the view of the judgment which is reserved for sinners by the frightening picture that she paints for us; yes, my brethren, it is this word which leads us to believe without examining anything all the truths of our holy religion where everything is mystery, and this by awakening our faith. Tell me, is it not after an instruction that we agree on everything that, when one feels one's heart moved and full of good resolutions..., that he who despises the word of God rejects and despises all means of salvation that the good God presents us to save us. Tell me, my brethren, what are the patriarchs and prophets used for,

Jesus Christ himself and all the apostles, as well as all those who assisted them to establish and increase our holy religion - is it not the word of God? See Jonah, when the Lord sent him to Nineveh; what did he do? nothing other than to announce to him the word of God telling him that in forty days they would perish! Is it not this holy word that changed hearts men of this great city, who, great sinners made them great penitents (1). What did Saint John the Baptist do to begin to make the Messiah known, the Savior of the world? is it not by announcing to them the word of God. What did Jesus Christ himself do? traveling through the towns and countryside, continually surrounded by crowds of people who followed him even into the desert; what means did he use to learn the religion he wanted to establish, if not from this holy word? Tell me, my

brethren, who carried all these great people of the world to leave their property, their parents and all their ease? is it not by hearing the word of God who made them open one's eyes [ouvrir les yeux] of the soul in their making them understand the short duration and the caducity of created things, by making them seek eternal goods, a Saint Anthony, a Saint Francis, a Saint Ignatius Tell me who can bring children to have a great respect for their father and mother, making them look at them as taking the place of God himself? isn't that the instructions that they received in catechisms, that their pastor made them, by showing the greatness of the reward that is attached to a wise and obedient child- health. Hey! who are the children, my brethren, who despise their parents? Alas! My brethren.; how many poor, ignorant children (1) In the margins: The destruction of Jerusalem.

rants and who from ignorance are led into impurity and libertinage and which often end up killing their poor parents, or do sorrow or another even worse way. Who can, my brethren, carry a neighbor to have great charity for his neighbor, if not an instruction that he will have heard or will have been given to him shown how charity is an action pleasant to God? Who brought so many sinners out of sin? is it not some instruction that they heard where we depicted to them the unhappy state of a sinner who falls in the hands of a vengeful God. If you want it proof, listen to me for a moment and you will be convinced. It is recorded in history that a former officer of cavalry passed in one of its journeys by a place where Father Bridaine gave a mission. Curious to hear a man whose reputation was so great and whom he did not know, he enters a church where Father Bridaine was doing the frightening painting of the state of a soul in sin, the blindness in which the sinner was to persevere in it, the easy way that the sinner had to come out of it with a good general confession. The soldier was so touched, his remorse of conscience were so strong, or rather became so unbearable to him, that at that very moment he formed the resolution to confess and make a lifelong confession. He waits for the missionary at the foot of the pulpit praying to him in grace to make him make a lifelong confession. Father Bridaine received him with great charity. My Father, said the soldier, I will stay as long as you want; I have just conceived a great desire to save my soul. He flees his confession with all the feelings of piety and pain that could be expected from a sinner who converts; he himself said that every time he accused a sin it seemed to him to remove an enormous weight from his conscience. When he had finished his confession, he withdrew from Father Bridaine, crying bitterly. People surprised to see this soldier pay so much tears, asked him what was the cause of his sorrow and his tears. Ah! my friends, how sweet it is to shed tears [verser des larmes] of love and recognition; me who have lived so long in hatred of my God. Alas I that man is blind not to love the good God and to live his enemy while he is so sweet to love him I This soldier goes to find Father Bridaine who was to the sacristy and there, being in the presence of all the others missionaries, he wanted to share his feelings with them: Gentlemen, he said to them, listen to me, and you Father Bridaine remember: I don't believe that in my life I have tasted so much pleasure and so pure and so sweet that that I have tasted since I had the happiness of being in a state of grace; no, I do not believe in truth that Louis XV, that I served for thirty-six years, may I be so happy than me. No, I do not believe that, despite all the pleasures which besiege it and all the splendor of the throne which surrounds it, he is so happy as I am now, since I laid down the horrible burden of my sins, in my pain and with the intention of doing penance. I would not now change my fate for all the pleasures and all the riches of the world. At these words he throws himself at the feet of Father Bridaine, shakes his hand: Ah! my Father, what thanksgiving can I give to the good God throughout my life, for leading me into this country as by hand! Alas! my Father, I had no thought of doing what you had the charity to make me do it. No, my Father, I will never be able to forget; I beg you in grace to ask the good Lord for me that my whole life is nothing more than a life of tears and penance. Father Bridaine and all other missionaries who witnessed this adventure burst into tears saying; Oh! that the good Lord (has graces) for those who have a heart docile to his voice Oh, how many souls are damned and who, if they had the happiness of being educated would be saved! What made that Father Bridaine asked the good Lord, before his conversations, that he so inflamed his heart that his words were like the devouring fire which burns with love the hearts of the most hardened and most hardened sinners. rebels against grace. Well

I My brethren, which was the cause of the conversion of this soldier? nothing other than the word of God that he heard and who found his heart docile to the voice of grace. Alas, how many Christians would convert if they had the good fortune to bring good dispositions to listen to the word of God! Only good thoughts and good desires it would give rise to in their hearts, that of good works she would do for heaven! Before going any further, my brethren, I must quote you a trait that happened to the same Father Bridaine making a mission to Aix en Provence; there is something in that quite singular. The missionary sat down at the table with a colleague when an officer eagerly knocked at the missionaries' accommodation: all out of breath, he asks the company leader with a changed face. Father Bridaine having approached: Father Bridaine, said the officer in his ear with a certain emotion and in a severe tone which showed how agitated his soul was. The missionary having entered with him, the officer closed the door, tears off his boots, throws his hat away he draws his sword. I confess to you, the Father then said

Bridaine to his companions, how all this frightened me: his silence, his wild eye, his handshake, his pre-precipitation and its confusion, made me judge that it was a man from whom I had torn the object of his passion, and that, to take revenge, he was surely coming to take my life; but I was soon undeceived when I saw this soldier throw myself to my knees, face pressed to the ground, pronounce saying these words with confidence: There is no question of me leave, my Father, nor to delay any longer, you see at your feet the greatest sinner that the earth has borne since the beginning of the world; I'm a monster. I have come from far away to confess to you, and to present; otherwise, I no longer know what becomes of me. The Father Bridaine said to him kindly: My friend, for a moment, I'll be right back. My Father, the soldier replied, weeping with hot tears, do you answer for my soul during this period; know, my Father, that I am in office for twenty-seven leagues; it's been a long time since I I can't live and my heart breaks, I can't hold on anymore, my life and hell seem to be the same thing; my torment has lasted since I heard you preach in such a place, where you portrayed so well the state of my soul that it was impossible for me not to believe that the good Lord only made you carry out this instruction for me alone; However, when I entered in this church where you preached, it was only by curiosity that I was there, and it is precisely there where the good God was waiting for me. How happy I am, Father, to be able to free myself from these remorse of conscience which devour me! take the time it takes to make my confession well, I will stay here as much as you want to; but you must relieve me at once, because my conscience is an executioner which does not let me rest neither day nor night; finally, my Father, I want convert me in good earnest [tout de bon], do you hear it, my Father, you will not leave here until I have unloaded you my heart. If you want to refuse me this, I believe that I will die at your feet of sorrow. But he says that, Father Bridaine tells us, in ver- with tears in abundance. I was so touched, we said Father Bridaine, in a scene as touching as I embrace him, I bless him, I mingle my tears with the his, I no longer thought about going to eat; I hear it raged as much as it was possible for me to hope for everything grace of the good God who had already shown himself to him particular way; I stayed four hours straight hear his confession; he seemed to be watering me with his tears, which made me unable to hold back the mine; I only left him to go announce the word of God. This generous soldier remained for some time with the Father Bridaine, to receive the advice given to him necessary to have the happiness of persevering. Before to leave Father Bridaine, he begged him to forgive him the alarms he had caused him: However, my Father, the soldier told him, yours were nothing in comparison of mine. I was shaking every day that death did not take me away in the state I was in, he seemed like the earth was going to open under my feet to swallow me alive in hell. You think, my Pig, when you have such enemies in your wake and we think about it seriously, we cannot remain calm, even if we still have a heart as hard as brass. Now, Father, I would like die, so much joy do I have at being well with the good God. He could no longer leave Father Bridaine, he kissed him hands, he kissed her. Father Bridaine, seeing a such a miracle of grace, could not, for his part, prevent himself of shed tears [verser des larmes]: their last goodbyes were flow the tears of all those who witnessed it. Farewell, Father, said the soldier to Father Bridaine, after the good Lord, it is to you to whom I owe heaven. Returning to his country, he could not be satisfied with publish how good God had been

to him, he ended his life in tears and penance and died into a saint, six months after his conversion. Well My brethren, which was the cause of the conversion of this soldier? Alas! My brethren, what you all hear Sundays to instructions, that's what he heard from the mouth of Father Bridaine, where he developed without doubt the terrible state of a sinner who appears before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ with a burdened conscience of sins. AlasI my God, how many times your didn't pastor paint you this desperate portrait; Who was more affected by it than yourself? And why Therefore, my brethren, has this not shaken you and converted you? Doesn't the word have the same power, my brethren.? No, my brethren, this is not the real cause of that you remained in sin; is it, my brethren, because this holy word is announced to you by one sinner that this has not touched you? No, my brethren, no, that is not yet the real reason; but the behold: it is because your hearts are too hardened, and it it has been too long that you have abused the graces that the good God gives you by his holy word; it is, my brethren, that sin has torn out your poor man's eyes soul and that it ended up making you lose sight of the goods and the evils of the other life. O my God! what a misfortune for a Christian to be banished from heaven for all eternity uity and to be insensitive to this loss; oh my God! what a frenzy to be ready to be thrown into the flames of hell and remain tranquil in a state which makes angels and saints tremble; oh my God! to what degree of misfortune is brought to him to whom the word of God I As soon as the word of God no longer touches us, everything is lost; there is no longer any resource, other than a great miracle, which very rarely happens. O my God! be insensible to so many misfortunes, who can ever understand it? however, without going any further, this is the state of almost everyone who listens to me. You know that the sin reigns in your hearts, you know that as long as sin is there, you have nothing else to wait for than all these misfortunes. O my God! this thought alone Shouldn't it scare us to death? Alas! the good Lord saw in advance how few would benefit of this word of life, when he tells us in the Gospel this parable. "A sower went out early in the morning to sow his wheat, and when he sowed it, some of it fell, on the side of the road, which was trodden under the feet of passers-by and eaten by the birds of the air; another part fell on the stones, which immediately dried; another fell among the thorns which choked him, and oaded a another fell into good soil and bore fruit a hundredfold. » You see, my brethren, that Jesus Christ gives us shows that of all the people who hear the word of God, there are only a quarter who benefit from it, still too happy if every four people there are had one that we took advantage of. That the number of good Christians Well, it would be bigger than it is! The apostles, astonished at this parable, said to him: Please explain to us what this means. Je-

Jesus said to them with his ordinary kindness, here it is: The the heart of man is like earth which will bear of the fruit according to whether it will be well or poorly cultivated; this seed, Jesus Christ said to them, is the word of God, the one who falls by the wayside, it is those who hear the word of God, but who neither want nor change their lives or make the sacrifices that God wants of them to make them good and pleasing to God. Some, this are those who do not want to leave bad companies or places where they have so many times offended the good God; these are still those who are held back by a false human respect, which makes them abandon all good resolutions that they made while listening to the word of God. She who falls into the thorns, these are those who hear the word of God with joy; but who does not cause them to do any good work: they love tender, but not to do what she commands. For the one who falls on the stones, it is those who have a hardened heart [cœur endurci] and obstinate, who only listen to it for the to despise or abuse it; finally the one who falls into the good earth, these are those who desire to hear it, who take all the means that the good Lord gives them inspire to enjoy it well, and it is in these hearts only that it bears fruit in abundance, and these fruits are the retrenchment of a worldly life and the virtues that a Christian must practice to please God and save to his soul. You see for yourselves, my brethren, according to the word of Jesus Christ, how few there are who profit from the word of God, since of four he there is only a quarter which yields this seed in the case to bear fruit, which is very easy to show you, as we will see later. But if now you ask me what Jesus Christ means by this sower who went out early in the morning to go and spread his seed in his field, my brethren, the sower is the good one God himself who began to work for our salvation from the beginning of

the world, and this by sending us his prophets to teach us what was necessary do to be saved before the coming of the Messiah; he doesn't didn't just send his servants, he came himself, he traced for us the path that we should take, he came to announce to us the holy word.

IL But let us rather examine, my brethren, who are those who provide a good disposition to hear this part life role. Alas! My brethren, you have just seen by the very words of Jesus Christ that very few bring the necessary arrangements to take full advantage of it. Do you know what a person is who is not fed? of this holy word or who abuses it: she is like a sick person without a doctor, a lost traveler and without a guide, to a poor man without resources, let's say better, my brethren, that it is quite impossible to love God and please him without being nourished by this divine word. Who can lead us to cling to Him? otherwise, because we know him. And who can make it known to us? with all its perfections, its beauties and its love for us? if not the word of God which teaches us everything he has done for us, the good things he prepares for us in the next life if we only seek him please. Who can lead us to leave, to mourn our sins, but the fearful painting that the Holy Spirit made to us in the Holy Scriptures; which can lead us to sacrifice everything that we hold dearest to world to have the happiness of preserving the goods of sky, if not the very pictures that the preachers. If you doubt it, my brethren, ask Saint Augustine which began to make him blush amidst these infamies: isn't this the frightening picture what did Saint Ambrose do in a sermon where he showed all the horror of the vice of impurity, how much it degraded man, and how much the outrage he did to God was awful? Who carried Saint Pelagia, who was a famous courtesan who, through her beauty and even more through the disruptions of her life, had lost so many souls....? A day that she was followed by a troop of young people eager to court him, having adorned themselves magnificently, but with an air that only breathed softness and voluptuousness, in this display of worldliness, is happens to pass near the door of a church where found several bishops who discussed the affairs of the Church. The holy prelates, indignant at this spectacle, turned away their sight; However one of them called Nonus stared at this actress and said moaning: Ah! that this woman who takes so much care to please men will be our condemnation, to us who take so little care to please the good God. The holy prelate having taken his deacon by the hand took him to his cell, when they arrived there, he threw his face to the ground and said, beating his chest and weeping bitterly: “0 Jesus Christ, my master, have pity on me; Is it necessary that throughout my life I have not taken so much care to adorn my soul which is so precious, which cost you so much, that this courtesan in a single day took it for her body and to please the world. » The next day, the holy bishop having mounted the pulpit, he painted in such a frightful manner the evils caused this courtesan, the number of souls that her bad life was hanging around in hell his speech was delivered with tears in abundance. Pélagie was precisely in the church which listened to the sermon given by the saint evoked; she was so touched, or rather frightened, that she immediately resolved to convert. She goes find the holy prelate without sparing herself any further, she throws himself at the feet of the saint evoked in the presence of all the assembly, asks him with so much insistence and tears at Baptism, which the bishop seeing her so well Pentant, not only administered Baptism to him, but also Confirmation and Communion. After this, Pélagie distributed all his goods to the poor, gave freedom to all his slaves, covered himself with a cilicc and secretly left the city of Antioch and went to hide in a cave on the Mount of Olives, near of Jerusalem. The deacon of the holy bishop wanted to go in Jerusalem on pilgrimage, his bishop told him before to leave to find out if there wasn't a hidden girl in a cave for four years. Indeed, when the deacon arrived in Jerusalem, he asked if anyone knew some girl recluse in a cave near the city for four years. The deacon found her on the mountain in a cell which only opened through a small window almost always closed. Penance what Pélagie was doing had changed her so much that the deacon could not recognize her; he tells her that he came to visit him on behalf of Bishop Nonus; she simply replied, shedding tears, that Bishop Nonus was a saint and that she recommended herself to his prayers, and closed the window immediately as etanL unworthy of seeing the light of day after having so offended the good God and lost so many souls. The solitary ones told him all that she exercised torments on her body, which made frighten the most austere solitary people. The deacon before leaving wanted to have happiness

once again to see her; but he found her dead. Well! My brethren, who pulled this poor unfortunate woman out of the midst of these infamies to make her such a great penitent? Alas! My brethren, a instruction alone made this change in her. But still, my brethren, where does this come from? It is, my brethren, that the word of God found his heart well disposed to receive this seed; it is because this word fell on good soil. Do you know, my brethren, what we are, this is it: we are those great ones of the world who are in abundance of all that their hearts can desire, who exhaust their knowledge to create new inventions to find new tastes in meats that are served to them, which despite this do not find nothing good. If a hungry person were witness to this, would she not say while crying: Ah! if I had what they despise so much, that I would be happy! Alas! My brethren, we can well say the same thing; if poor idolaters and pagans had half and a quarter of this word that is distributed to us if often and of which we pay so little attention or rather that we despise, that we hear with boredom and disgust, alas! what tears they would shed, how many penances, good works and virtues they would have the pleasure of practicing! Yes, my brethren, this holy word is lost for these sinners who are given over to dissipation, who have no rules of life, whose mind and heart are like a great path through which everyone passes, who do not know only what it's like to reject a bad one thought. A moment is a good thought or a good desire which occupies them; another moment, it's bad wrong thought and wrong desire; right now, you heard them singing the praises of God in the church, in another moment you will hear them singing the most infamous songs in cabarets; here you see them saying good things about their neighbor and then you see them with those who tear their reputation; a One day they will give good advice, tomorrow they will lead others to take revenge. Accordingly, my brethren, if they listen to the word of God, it is only out of habit and perhaps even with bad intentions to criticize the one who is so charitable as to announce it. But they listen to it like Von listens to a fable or something very indifferent. Alas! what can the word of God do in hearts so badly disposed, otherwise harden them more. My God, may your holy word which is given to us only to help us save ourselves, rush of souls into hell! I told you, at the beginning, that the word of God always bears fruit, good or bad, according to our provisions. This, my brethren, is the state of a person who does not who does not fight his inclinations, who does not seek to protect himself from his passions which control him: as the word of God falls, pride passes away, the crowd feet; the desire for revenge passes, crushes it; bad thoughts and bad desires come to sink it in the quagmire; after which, the demon who reigns in This poor heart, at the first opportunity, takes away the rest of the impression that the word of God has made on us. This, my brethren, is what the Gospel first tells us: I do not know if you have understood it well, but for me I tremble when I hear Saint Augustine who tells us that we are also guilty of not hearing the word without having a real desire to benefit from it that the Jews when they scourged Jesus Christ and rolled under their feet. Alas! My brethren, we do not have never thought that we commit a kind of sacrilege when we do not want to take advantage of this holy word. However, my brethren, this is not positively your disposition, at least for a large number: we still make beautiful resolutions to change life; when we hear preaching, we say in ourselves: we must in good earnest [tout de bon] do better. This is who is very good, but as soon as the good Lord sends us whatever trial, we forget our resolutions and we let's continue our same kind of life. We solved to be less attached to the goods of this world, but the least harm done to us, we seek to catch up; we say bad things (about people who have wrong) and we keep the hatred: we barely seeing these people, we no longer want to give them back service. We think that now we want well practice humility because we have heard in an instruction how humility is a beautiful virtue, how much it makes us pleasing to God; but at the first opportunity that presents itself, let us be scorned, we get angry, we say bad things about them, we let us reproach if we have done them any good. There you go, my brethren, what we do. Many times we have resolved to do well, but as soon as the good Lord gives the opportunity, we think no more about it and we continue our ordinary route. This is how our poor man passes life in resolutions and in continual falls, so that we always end up the same. Alas! My brethren, this seed is therefore lost to the greatest number of Christians and can only serve to their conviction. But, perhaps, you will tell me, that the word of God formerly was or more powerful, or those who announced it were more eloquent. No, my brethren, the word of the good God has as much power now as in other times and those who announced it were as simple as now. Listen to Saint

Peter in his preaching: “Listen to me carefully,” he said to them. holy apostle, the Messiah whom you made suffer, whom you caused to die, was resurrected for the happiness of all who believe that salvation comes from Him. » Barely he said, that all those present melted in tears and uttered loud cries saying: Ah! great Apostle, what shall we do to obtain our forgiveness? “My children,” said Saint Peter to them, “if you wish May your sins be forgiven, do penance, confess your sins, sin no more and the same Jesus Christ whom you crucified, who is resurrected, you will forgive. » In a single sermon three thousand gave to God and left their sin for ever [pour jamais]. In another, five thousand renounced their idolatry to attach themselves to a religion which requires only continual sacrifices; they courageously followed the route that Jesus Christ had marked out for them. In what way, my brethren, did the apostles use to change the world so to speak [pour ainsi dire] from the front, here it is. Do you want, said the apostles, to please God and save your soul. May he who indulges in the vice of impurity renounce and live in a way that is pure and pleasing to God; let him who has good from his neighbor return it; that he who wishes harm to his (neighbor) is reconciled with him. Listen to Saint Thomas: “I warn you from of Jesus Christ himself that men will undergo a judge- lies after their death, about the good and the bad that they will have fact, sinners will spend their eternity in the fire from hell to suffer there forever; but the one who has been faithful to observe the law of the Lord, his fate will be all opposite; at the end of this life, he will enter heaven to enjoy all kinds of delights and happiness there. » Listen to Saint John, the beloved disciple: “My children, love each other as Jesus Christ loved you, be charitable to one another like Jesus Christ was for us, He who suffered and died for your happiness; bear with one another; forgive your weaknesses as he forgives you all. » Tell me, can we find something more simple? Well, 1 My brethren, are they not telling you the same truths, are they not telling you like Saint Peter, that Jesus Christ died for you, that he is still ready for you? forgive if you want to repent and leave sin? However, it was these words that spread so much tears and converted so many pagans and sinners. Are you not also told, like Saint John the Baptist, that if you have the good of your neighbor you must return it, without which you will never enter into heaven; they tell you not also that if you indulge in the vice of impurity, it you must leave it and lead a pure life; don't we tell you although if you live and die in sin, you will you go to hell? And why then, my brethren, do these words not no longer produce the same effects, that is to say that this holy word does not convert us? Alas! My brethren, let's say it while groaning: it's not that she has less power than before, but that this divine seed falls into hardened and unrepentant hearts, only As soon as she fell there, the demon suffocated her. Like this divine word only speaks of sacrifices, of mortifications, of detachment from the world and from oneself and that, for its part, we do not want to do all that, we 12 remains in sin, we persevere in it and we die. Agree with me how hardened one must be to remain in sin, knowing full well that if we come to die in this state, we have only hell to share. We are constantly told this, and despite this, we remain sinners as we are, we await death with tranquility, although we let us be very certain that our fate can only be that of a reprobate. O my God! what an unfortunate state than that of a sinner who no longer has faith.

III. But, you will ask me, what must we do to take advantage of the word of God so that it helps us to convert us? What must be done, my brethren, is this: You only have to examine the conduct of these people who came to listen to Jesus Christ; he came from very far away, with a true desire to practice all that Jesus Christ would command him; they left everything behind temporal, they did not even think of the needs of the body, I am very convinced that the one who was going to feed their soul, which is the first good, would nourish their body well; they were a thousand times more eager to seek goods of heaven than those of earth; they forgot everything to only think about doing what Jesus Christ told them. See them, listening to Jesus Christ or the apostles, their eyes and their hearts are all about this: women no thought at all about their household, the merchant loses from the point of view of his trade, the plowman forgets his land, the young people trample their finery underfoot; they listen eagerly and do all they can to engrave them in their hearts. The most men sensual people abhor their infamous pleasures so as to no longer think only of making their body suffer, the holy word of

God does all their work; they think about it and they meditate, they like to talk about it and to hear about it. Well! My brethren, see if every time you hear the word of God you carry the same dispositions than these people. My brethren, have you come to listen to this holy word with eagerness, with joy and a true desire to enjoy it; being here have you forgotten all your temporal affairs, to think only of the needs of your soul; before hearing this holy word did you you asked the good Lord to understand it well, to engrave it in your hearts? Did you watch this moment as the happiest of your life, since Jesus Christ himself tells us that his holy word is preferable to Holy Communion (1)? Have you been ready to do everything she ordered you to do? Did you hear it with attention, with respect, no like the word of a man but of God himself? After the instruction, did you thank God of the grace he has given you to instruct you Himself through the mouth of His ministers? Alas! my God, if there are so few, my brethren, who bring these dispositions, let us not be surprised that this saint word produces so little fruit. Alas! how many who are here only with difficulty, with boredom, who sleep, who yawn, who will search a book, who will talk; and others who carry their impiety even further, who with a kind of contempt go outside contemptuously the holy word and the one who announces it. How many more who, even being outside, say that the weather has lasted and that they will not return, and finally others who far away, returning home, have to occupy themselves (1) See note M at the end of the volume.

of what they have heard and meditate on it well, forget it entirely and only think about it to say that it is never finished, or criticize the one who had charity to announce it. Who are those who, having arrived at them, inform those who could not come of what they have heard? who are the fathers and mothers who ask to their children what they have retained from the holy word that they have heard and explain to them what they have not not understood? But, alas, my brethren, we look at the word do God as such a little thing, that almost nothing accuse themselves of not having listened attentively. Alas! so many sins of which most Christians never accuse themselves. My God, what damned Christians! Who are those who said to themselves: May this The word is beautiful! How true it is! so many years ago that I hear it and that I am shown the state of my soul, and if death struck me, I would be lost! yet I still remain in sin. O my God! what graces are despised, what means of salvation of which I've been overdoing it so far! but it's done, I'm going change everything, I'm going to ask the good Lord the grace of never hearing this holy word without be well prepared for it. No, I no longer want to say in myself, as I have done until now, that this is for such and such; no, I would say that it is for me that it is announced, I will try to take advantage of it as much as I can. What to conclude from all this, my brethren, is this. It is that the word (divine) is one of the greatest gifts than good God can make us, since without instruction he is impossible to escape. That if we see so many im- magpies in the unfortunate times in which we live, it is not that because they do not know their religion, then- that a person who knows her, it is impossible not to not love it and practice what it commands us. When you see some impious person who despises religion, you can say: Here is an ignorant person who despises what he does not know, since, my brethren, this divine word has converted so many sinners. Let us try, my brethren, to always tender with all the greater pleasure that the salvation of our soul is attached to it and that we let's discover how happy our destiny is, well God is good, how much reward he gives us promise is great, since it lasts throughout the summer nity. It is the happiness that I...

1st Sunday of Lent — On Temptations

Ductus est Jesus in deserto a Spiritu Sanelo, ut len- tarelur a diabolo. Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit, to be tempted there by the devil. (S. Matth., rv, 1.)

That Jesus Christ, my brethren, should choose the desert to pray in should not surprise us, since solitude was his delight; that he was led there by the Holy Spirit, it must even less surprise us, because the Son of God could only have the Holy Spirit as his guide. But let him be tempted by the devil, let him be carried away several times by this spirit of darkness, which would dare to believe it, if it were not Jesus Christ himself who

tells us through the mouth of Saint Matthew? However, my brethren, far from [bien loin de] surprise us, on the contrary, we we must rejoice and thank it infinitely for this good Savior, who only wanted to be tempted for us deserve victory in our temptations. That we are happy, my brethren.! Since this tender Savior wanted being tempted, we only have to want to be victorious to win. These, my brethren, are the great advantages that we withdraw from the temptation of the Son of God.

What is my purpose, my brethren? here it is: it's from you show 1° that temptation is very necessary for us to to make us know what we are; 2° that we must greatly fear temptation, because the demon is very fine and very cunning and only one temptation can throw us into hell, if we have the misfortune of succumb; 3° that we must fight vigorously- lies until the end, because it is only at this con- saying that Heaven will be given to us. Wanting, my brethren, to prove to you that there are demons for tempt us: one would have to assume that I am speaking to idolaters tres or to pagans, or if you want, to Christians enveloped in the crassest and most half-hearted ignorance serable; that would convince me that you have never know your catechism. You were asked, as soon as you were fance, if all the angels remained faithful to God? You answered no; that a party revolted against God, was cast out of Heaven and thrown into hell. You have been asked again: What is the occupation of these rebellious angels? You said it was to try men, and to make every effort to carry them to evil; I have more advantageous evidence than you of all this. You know that it was the demon who tried our first parents in the earthly paradise, where he won his first victory: which (made him) so proud and so proud. It was the demon who tempted Cain, who led him to kill his brother Abel. We read in the Ancient Testament that the Lord said to Satan: Where do you come from? I have just, replied the demon, to go around the world. Very strong proof, my brethren, that the devil rolls on earth to tempt us. We read in the Gospel that Madeleine having confessed her sins to Jesus Christ, he took seven demons out of her body. We see yet in another place of the Gospel than the spirit unclean having come out of the body of a person, said: I will return with other, even more evil demons than me. All this, my brethren, is not what is right for you. more necessary to know, no one has the slightest doubt about it; but what is most advantageous for you to know is to make you clearly understand the way the devil can tempt you. To fully convince yourself of the need to repel temptation, ask all Christians reprobate, why did they go to hell, they who were created only for Heaven. Everyone will answer you that it is because being tempted, they succumbed to temptation. Go ask all the saints again who reign in Heaven, which gave them this happiness; all will tell you: Being tempted, we have, with grace of God, resisted temptation, and despised the tempter. But, you might ask me, what is it what should be tempted? My friend, here he is, listen to him carefully and you will see, you will understand. Every time that the devil tempts you, it is to do one thing that the Good Lord forbid you or not do what he tells you orders.or orders you. The good Lord wants you do your prayers well in the morning and evening, on one's knees [à genoux], with great respect. The good Lord wants you spend the holy day of Sunday holy in prayer, that is to say, to attend all services (1); that you don't were not working at all, any more than if you were in one's death agony [à l'agonie]. The good Lord wants children to respect greatly their fathers and mothers, the servants, their masters. The good Lord wants you to love everything the world, that you do good to everyone, without (1) See noe N at the end of the volume.

no preference (1), even to your enemies; that you never do fat on forbidden days; that you have a great zeal to instruct you in your duties; that you forgave with a willing heart [de bon cœur] those who made you some insult. The good Lord wants you not to say never swearing, backbiting, slander, dirty words, that you never (do) shameful actions: this is very easy to understand. If, despite the demon tempting you to do what the good Lord defends you, you don't do it, so you do not succumb to temptation; if you go do what he forbids you, then you will succumb to temptation. Or if you want to understand it even better: before consenting to what the demon wants inspire you to do, think if, at the hour of death, you would like to have done it and you will see that your conscience will cry out. Do you know, my brethren, why does the demon is so angry, to bring us to evil? here it is. It is that not being able to despise God by himself, he despises (him) by his creatures. But that we are happy, my brethren, what happiness for us to have a God for our model! Are we

poor? we we have a God who is born in a manger, lying on a handful of straw. Are we looked down upon? we have a God who walks before us, who has been crowned of thorns, clothed in a vile cloak of scarlet and treated like crazy. Are we suffering? we we have before our eyes a God all covered in wounds and who dies in the most painful way, that we will never be able to understand. Are we per- safe? well! My brethren, how can we dare (1) See note N at the end of the volume.

complain since (we) have a God who dies for his own executioners! But are we tempted by the demon? we have our kind Redeemer who was tempted by the demon, carried away twice (times) by this infernal spirit; so, my brethren, that in which state of suffering, pain or temptations that we we found, we have everywhere and always our God who walks before us, ensuring victory whenever we desire. This, my brethren, is what should greatly console a Christian, thinking that every time being tempted, he will have recourse to God, he is sure not to succumb to temptation.

I. We have said that temptation is necessary for us to make us feel that we are not nothing of ourselves. Saint Augustine tells us: that we must also thank the good God for sins from whom he has preserved us only from those for whom he had charity to forgive us. If we have the misfortune of falling so often in the traps of the devil, it is because we we rely too much on our resolutions and our promises, not enough on the good Lord. This is very true. When nothing bothers us, when everything goes according to our wishes desires, we dare to believe that nothing will be able to us to bring down; we forget our nothingness and our poverty weakness; we make the most beautiful protests, that we are ready to die rather than to let it conquer. We see a good example of this in Saint Peter, who said to the good Lord: “Even so everyone else would deny you, but for me, I won't will never do. » Alas I the good God, to show him how little man left to himself is, we did not use kings, nor princes, nor weapons; but only in the voice of a servant, who even seemed to speak to him in a very indifferent manner. Earlier, he was ready to die for him, and now he assures that he does not know him, that he does not know not who we want to talk to him about; to better insure them that he did not know him, he took an oath. My God, what we are capable of when left to our own devices! There are some who, by their language, seem to carry envy of the saints who have done great penances; they believe they could do the same. In reading the lives of some martyrs we would be, we say, ready to suffer all this for the good Lord. This moment has soon passed, we say, for an eternity of reward. But what does the good Lord do to a little to teach us to know ourselves, or rather, that we are nothing, here it is: it allows the demon to come a little closer to us. Listen this Christian, who, just now, was envious of the solitary people who live only on roots and herbs, who took the great resolution to treat so harshly his body; alasI a little headache, an injection pin makes him pitied as big as he is: he torment, he cries, just now he would have liked to do all the penances of the anchorites, and a little despair. See this other, who seems to want to give willingly all his life for the good Lord, may all torments are not able to stop: a small backbiting, slander, even a slightly cold air, a little injustice done to him, a favor paid of ingratitude immediately gives birth in his soul feelings of hatred, revenge, aversion, to the point often (of) no longer wanting to see (one's neighbor) or less, in a cold way, with an air that shows what is happening in his heart; and how many times as he fades away it is his first thought, which goes as far as prevent him from sleeping. Alas! My brethren, that we are little and that we must count on little all our beautiful resolutions! So you see that nothing is more necessary than temptation to keep (us) confined in our nothingness, and to prevent us from being dominated by pride. Listen to what Saint Philip of Neri tells us, who, considering how weak we are and danger of losing ourselves at every moment, said to the good God shedding tears: “My God, hold me Well, you know I'm a traitor, you know how bad I am: if you leave me an ins- So much, I fear betraying you. » But, perhaps you think, who are those who are the most tempted: they are undoubtedly the drunkards, the slanderers and the shameless who throw themselves headlong into in their garbage, a miser, who takes anyway? No, my brethren, no, they are not those; on the contrary, the demon despises them, or he retains them, fear that they won't do enough harm for long, because, the longer they live, the more their bad examples dragging souls to hell. Indeed, if the demon had strongly urged this old shameless man, that he shortened his days of fifteen or twenty years, he would

not have removed the flower of virginity to this young girl by plunging her in the most infamous quagmire of his impudence, he could not wouldn't have seduced this woman yet, or he wouldn't have taught evil to this young man, who perhaps continued it will die until death. If the demon had carried this thief to plunder in any encounter, for a long time it would have been led to the scaffold, he would not have carried his neighbor to do like him. If the demon had solicited this drunkard to constantly fill himself with wine, for a long time he would have perished in his villainy; instead of extending in his days he made many like him. If the demon had taken the life of this musician, this tenor of ball, to this tavern keeper in a beat or other occasions, how many who, without all these people, would not be damned and who will be. Saint Augustine teaches us that the devil does not torment these people much, on the contrary, he despises them and spits on them. But, you will tell me, who are those who are the more tempted? my friend, here it is, listen to it carefully. These are those who are ready, with the grace of God, to sacrifice everything for the salvation of their poor soul; who renounce everything what on earth we seek with such eagerness. It's not just a demon that tempts them, but millions falling on them to make them falling into their traps: here is a good example. He It is recorded in history that Saint Francis of Assisi was gathered with all his religious in a large field where small houses of rushes had been built. Saint Francis, seeing that they were doing penances so extraordinary, commands them to bring all their instruments of penance; they made them like heaps of straw. At that moment there was a young man to whom the good Lord gave the grace to give him back his visible guardian angel: on one side he saw all these good religious people who could not get enough of penances; on the other hand, his good guardian angel showed an assembly of eighteen thousand demons, who held counsel as to how they could overthrow these monks by temptation. There was one who said: You don't understand anything, these religious people are so humble, ah! beautiful virtue! so detached from themselves, so attached to God; they have a superior who leads them so much so that it is impossible to be able to overcome them; let's wait until the superior is dead, then we will try to introduce young people without a vocation who will carry relaxation, and by this means we will have them. A little further on, entering the city he saw a demon alone, who sat on the city gates to tempt those who were in it. This Saint asked his guardian angel, why was it that, to tempt all these religious people, there were so many thousands of demons, while for a whole city there was only one, even then it was sitting? His good angel answered him that the people of world didn't even need temptations, that they were willing enough to do evil themselves, while the religious people did well, despite all the traps that the demon could deliver to them. Here, my brethren, is the first temptation that the devil gives to a person who has begun to serve better the good Lord: it is human respect. She won't dare anymore appear, she hides from the people with whom she had formerly taken his pleasures; if we tell her that she has therefore changed a lot: she is ashamed of it! What will people say about it? is always in her head, so that she no longer has the strength to do good in front of the world. If the demon cannot win it through human respect, it gives birth in her an extraordinary fear: that her confessions are not good, unless her confessor knows her not, that whatever she does, she will still be damned: that she gains as much from leaving everything as from continue, because she has too many opportunities. Why is it, my brethren, that when a person does not think to save her soul, which lives in sin, she is not nothing attempted; but as soon as she wants to change her life, it's- that is to say that she desires it to give herself to the good God, all hell is falling on him? Listen to what holy Augustine will tell you: “This,” he tells us, “is the way how the demon behaves towards the sinner, he does like a jailer who has several prisoners locked up in his prison; but who, holding the key in his pocket, leaves them alone, convinced that they cannot not go out. This is his way of acting towards a sinner who does not think of leaving sin: he does not put himself hardly able to attempt it; he looks at this time as a time wasted, because not only does he not think to leave him, but he only makes his chains worse: it would therefore be useless to tempt him, he lets him live in peace, if one can be in peace in the sin. He hides from her, as much as possible, his state until death, where he tries to paint him the most frightening painting of his life to throw him into despair. But a person who has resolved to change of life to give oneself to the good God, it is very different thing. » As long as Saint Augustine lived in disorder, he noticed almost nothing of what it was like to be attempted. He thought he was at peace, as he tells it himself; but from the moment he

wanted to turn with our backs to the demon, we had to fight with the demon, until you lose your breath: and this for five years; he used the bitterest tears, the most austere penances. “I was struggling with him,” he said, in my chains. One day I thought I was victorious, the next day I was on the ground. This cruel war and stubborn lasted five years. However, he said, the good Lord gave me the grace of being victorious over the enemy demon. » See again the struggles that Saint Jerome experienced when he wanted to give himself to the good God, and he had the thought to visit the Holy Land. Being in Rome, he conceived a new desire for labor at one's salvation [travailler à son salut]. In leaving Rome, he will be buried in a terrible desert to indulge in everything that his love for good God could inspire him. Then the demon, who foresaw how many others this conversion would make, seemed die of despair. There was no kind of temptation that he did not deliver it to him. I don't believe there was a saint who was so strongly tempted as he. Here's how he wrote to one of his friends: “My dear friend, I have just share with you my affliction and the state where the demon wants to reduce me. How many times in this vast solitude that the heat of the sun makes unbearable, how often the pleasures of Rome are came to attack me; the pain and bitterness of which my soul is filled makes me shed, night and day, torrents of tears. I will hide in the places more apart to fight my temptations and cry there my sins. My body is all disfigured and covered of a rough cilico. I have no other bed than the earth naked, and for all food but raw roots and water, even in my illnesses. Despite all these rigors, my body still feels the thought of infamous pleasures with which Rome is infected; my mind is in the middle of these beautiful companies where I so offended the good Lord. In this desert where I am condemned myself to avoid hell, between these dark rocks, where I have no other company than scorpions and wild beasts, however, despite all these horrors with which I am surrounded and frightened, my spirit still burns with an impure fire my body, already dead before myself; the demon dares again offer him pleasures to taste. Seeing myself so humiliated by temptations of which the very thought makes me die of horror, no longer knowing what rigor I must exercise on my body to hold it to the good Lord, I throw myself on the ground at the foot of my crucifix, sprinkling it with my tears, and when I can cry no more, I take stones, I beat my chest until let the blood flow out of my mouth, crying for mercy, until the Lord have mercy on me. Who will be able to (understand) how miserable my state is, desiring so ardently to please the good Lord and to love only him alone. Seeing myself constantly carried to offend him, what pain for me! help me, my dear friend, for the help of your prayers, so that I may be stronger to repel the demon, who swore my ruin eternal. » These, my brethren, are the battles to which the good Lord allows his great saints to be exposed. IlelasI My brethren, what are we to complain about, if we are not strongly fought by the demon! To all appearances, we are the devil's friends: he leaves us living in false peace, he (put us to sleep under pretext that we said some good prayers, some alms, that we have done less harm than others. According to us, in fact, my brethren, if you ask this cabaret column if the devil is shearing it, he will simply tell you no; that nothing torment. Ask this girl of vanity, what are his struggles? she will answer you with a laugh, that she doesn't to the point that she doesn't even know what it is to be attempted. This, my brethren, is the most terrible temptation, which is not to be tempted: this is the state of those whom the demon save for hell. If I dared, I would tell you that he take care not to tempt them and torment them their past life, fear of making them open one's eyes [ouvrir les yeux] on their sins. I say therefore, my brethren, that the greatest of all misfortunes (for Christians) is not being tempted, since there is reason to believe that the demon is watching them as belonging to him, and that he only awaits death to drag them to hell, Hien is no longer easy to imagine. See a Christian who seeks just a little salvation of his soul, everything that surrounds him brings him to badly, he often can't even look up without to be tempted, despite all his prayers and penances; and an old sinner who, perhaps for twenty years, has been rolls and drags himself in his garbage, he will say that he is not not tried. Too bad, my friend, too bad! This is precisely what should make you tremble, is that you know not temptations; because, say that you are not tempted, it is as if you were saying that there is no more demon or that he has lost all his rage against the Christians. “If you have no temptations,” he tells us Saint Gregory, is that the demons are your friends, your leaders and your pastors; letting you pass quietly your poor life, at the pin of your days, they will drag you into the abyss. » Saint Augustine we says that the greatest temptation is not to have of temptation,

because it is to be a reprobate person, abandoned by the good God and delivered between the hands of his passions.

II. Secondly, we said that temptation is absolutely necessary to keep us in humility and distrust of ourselves, and to force us to have recourse to the good Lord. We read in history that a solitary being extremely tempted by the devil, his superior said to him: My friend, do you want me to ask the good Lord to deliver you from your temptations? No, my father, replied the solitary man, because that means that I almost never lose the presence of the good God, since I always need to have recourse to him to help me fight. However, my brethren, we can say that, although it is very humiliating to be tempted, This is the safest brand we are in the path to heaven. We only have one thing left, and that is to fight with courage, because temptation is a harvest time: here is a good example. We read in the story that a saint had for a long time been so tormented by the devil that she believed herself reprobate. The good Lord appeared to her to console her and said to her that she had won more than in all other times of his life. Saint Augustine tells us that, without temptations, everything we do would be of little merit; far from [bien loin de] torment us, on the contrary, we must thank the good Lord and fight with courage, because that we are sure of always being victorious, and that The good Lord will never allow the devil to tempt us beyond our strength. But what is certain, my brethren, we must expect to no longer be tempted only when we are dead; the demon being a spirit, he never tires: after having tempted us for a hundred thousand years, he is as strong, as furious as if it was the first time. We must not believe that we can (defeat) the demon, flee him, to no longer be tempted: since the great Origone tells us that the demons are so numerous that they surpass the atoms that are in the air, the drops of water that make up the seas, to show us that the number is infinite. Saint Peter tells us: “Watch without cease, for the devil prowls around you like a roaring lion, which seeks to devour someone (1). » Jesus Christ himself tells us: “Pray always for not succumb to temptation (2); » that is to say, the demon waits for us everywhere. Likewise, we must wait to be tempted, in some place and in whatever state we are in. See this holy man which was all covered in sores, or rather all rotten, the demon did not allow him to be tempted for seven years. Saint Mary Egyptian, for nineteen years; saint Paul, throughout his life, that is to say, from the ment that he gave himself to the good Lord. Saint Augustine, for comfort us, tells us that the demon is a big dog attached, who barks, who makes a lot of noise; but who does not only bites those who get too close. A saint priest found a young man who was very tormented; he asked him why he was so worried. Alas I My dear, he said to her, I fear being tempted and succumbing. Do you feel tempted, he said, (make) a sign of the cross, an elevation of your heart towards the good God; if the demon continues, (continue) too, and you are sure not to defile your soul. See this what did Saint Macarius do, who came to look for something to do mats, met on his way a demon with a scythe all on fire which runs at him as if for the kill and crush it. Saint Macarius, without being surprised, raised his heart towards God. The demon was so furious that he exclaimed: Ah! Macaire, that you make me suffer from not to be able to mistreat you; however everything you do, I do it as well as the law. If you watch, I don't

(1) I Petr., v, 8. (2) Matth., xxvi, 41.

sleep nothing; if you fast, I never eat; there is no There's just one thing you have that I don't have myself. The saint asked him what it was; he answered him: It is humility, and disappeared. Yes, my brethren, humility is a virtue formidable to the demon. Also we see that when Saint Anthony was tempted, he only humble oneself deeply, saying to God: My God, have pity on this great sinner; immediately the demon fled.

III. We said, thirdly, that the demon unleashes against people who really care their salvation and he continually pursues them, vigorously always in the hope of defeating them: in here is a good example. It is reported that a young solitary silence, already for several years, had left the world to think only of saving his soul. The demon was so furious, that it seemed to this poor young man that all hell was after him. Cassian, who reports this example tells us that this solitary being tormented of temptations of impurity, after many tears and penances, the thought came to him of going to find a former loner to console himself, hoping that

he would give him remedies to better defeat his enemy, especially to recommend himself to his prayers; but he It happened quite differently. This old man, who had passed his life almost without fights, far from [bien loin de] console this young man, showed him extreme surprise at account which he gave him of his temptations, rebuked him with bitterness, spoke harsh words to him, calling him infamous, unfortunate; telling him that he was unworthy to wear the solitary name, since similar things happened to him things. This poor young (man) went away so sorry that he believed himself lost and damned, and gave way to despair. He said to himself: Since I am damned, I must no longer resist or fight, I must abandon myself to whatever the demon wills; however the good God knows that I only left the world to love him and save my soul. Why, my God! he said in his despair, have you given me so little strength, since you know that I want to love you and that you don't give me the strength, that (I have) so much for fear and pain of displeasing you, and that you mo let it go? Since all is lost [tout est perdu] for me, that I no longer have the means to save myself, I am going to return to the world. As, in this despair, he was already coming out of his solitude, there was in the same deserted a holy abbot named Apollo who was one great reputation for holiness, to whom the good Lord made known the state of his soul; he went to meet him, seeing him so troubled, having approached him, he asked him with a lot of sweetness what he had and what was the because of his confusion and the sadness that seemed on his face. But this poor young man was so deeply buried in his thoughts, he answered nothing. Lo holy abbot, who saw the disorder of his soul, urged him so much to tell her what was agitating him the kind, where it came from that he came out of his solitude and what was the goal he set for himself on his path. Seeing that this very abbot discovered his condition, despite the fact that he hid it as much as he could, (this young man) we say, shedding our tears in abundance and pushing of the most touching sobs: “I am going back to the world, because I am damned; I no longer have any feelings hope of being able to save myself. Jo went (to find) a old man who was very scandalized by my life; since

I was so unhappy not to be able to please God, I resolved to abandon my solitude to return to the world where I will abandon myself to everything that demon will want. However, I shed a lot of tears so as not to offend the good Lord; I wanted to save, I had great pleasure in doing penance; but I don't have enough strength, I don't go any further. » The holy abbot hearing him speak and seeing him cry, he said, mixing her tears with his own: “Ah! my friend, you therefore do not see that, far from having offended the good Lord, on the contrary, it is precisely because you are very pleasing to him that you are tempted to sort. Console yourself, my dear friend, and take courage, the demon thought you vanquished; but on the contrary, you will defeat him; return to your cell at least until tomorrow. Don't lose heart, my friend, I myself am tempted every day to do the same thing way that you. It is not on our strength that we we must count, but on the mercy of the good God: I will help you overcome by praying with you. 0 my friend! he is too good to abandon us to fury of our enemies without giving us the strength to defeat; defeat; it is the good Lord, my dear friend, who sent me to console you and tell you not to get lost: you are going to be delivered. » This poor young man, already all consoled, returned to his solitude, throwing himself into the arms of God's mercy: I believed that you had withdrawn from me forever. Meanwhile, Apollo goes to the cell of this old man who had received this poor young man so badly man, prostrated himself with his face to the ground, saying: Lord, my God, you know our weaknesses, • please deliver this young man from his retaliations which discourage him; you see the tears he paid out of the pain he felt for having offended you! Give the same temptation to this old man, so that may he learn to have pity on those whom you allow to be tempted. Barely had he finished his prayer that he saw the demon in the shape of a hideous little negro who threw an arrow of impure fire at the cell of the old man, who no sooner felt the attack than the there he was in a terrible agitation which gave him no respite. He gets up, he goes out, he comes in. After having done the same thing for long enough, finally thinking that he would never be able to fight, he acts like the young loner, resolves to go away to the world since it could no longer resist the demon, he says goodbye to his cell and leaves. The holy abbot, who observed him without the other noticing it; (the good Lord made it known that the temptation of the young man had passed to the old man), having approached him, asked him where he goes and where he comes from, that he forgets the

gravity of his age, looking so agitated; that undoubtedly he had something worry about the salvation of his soul. The old man lives although the good Lord made him know what was happening passed within himself. Return, my friend, said to him io saint, do you call him although this temptation only happened to you in your old age so that you learned to sympathize with the infirmities of your brothers, and to console them in their infirmities. You had discouraged this poor jouno man who came to make you part of his sorrows; instead of consoling him, you were going throw him into despair; without extraordinary grace he would have been lost. Do you know, my pore, why the demon had waged such an obstinate and cruel war against this poor young man, (this is) what he saw in him great dispositions for virtue, which piqued him of a lively feeling of jealousy and envy, and that a virtue so firm could only be overcome after an attempt too strong and too violent. Learn to have compassion for others, to reach out to them so as not to let them fall. If the demon left you alone, despite so many years of solitude, he saw in you little good: instead of tempting you, he despises you. From this example we see that far from [bien loin de] discourage ourselves in temptations, on the contrary, we we must console ourselves and even rejoice, because only those whom the devil foresees, who their way of life will win them heaven. Besides, my brethren, we must be convinced that it is impossible to wanting to please the good Lord and save your soul without being attempted. See Jesus Christ: after having fasted forty days and forty nights he was sorely tempted and carried away two once by the devil, he who was holiness itself. I do not know, my brethren, if you understand well what it's just a temptation. It is not just a bad thought of impurity or hatred or revenge that we must reject, but these are all the troubles that we arrive: like an illness to which we are carried to complain about us, a slander that is made against us, an injustice done to us, a loss of property, of a father, mother, or child. If we do not willingly submit to the will of the good Lord, then we succumb to temptation, because the good Lord wants us to suffer this for his love; and a On the other hand, the devil does everything he can to make us murmur against the good Lord. But here are the temptations the most to fear, and who lose many more souls than we does not believe; it's these little thoughts of self-love, 13 these thoughts of self-esteem, these little applause on everything you do, on what you said about us: we go over all this in our sheet metal, we like to have the people to whom we have done some good, and it seems to us that they think about it, that they have good opinion of us; we like it when we recommend each other to our prayers; we hurry to know if what we asked the good Lord for them, they got it obtained. Yes, my brethren, this is one of the harshest temptations of the demon; there, jo. say that we must greatly watch on ourselves, because the demon is very cunning; which should lead us to ask the good Lord every morning the grace of knowing well every time that the devil will come to tempt us. Why does so often we do evil and we don't think about it what after? It's because we didn't ask for this thanks to the good Lord in the morning or that we have it in May requested. Finally we say, my brethren, that we must fight vigorously and not as we do: we say no to the demon and we extend our hand to him. Vovoz saint Bernard taking a trip, lying in a room, an unhappy As comes to find the night to solicit him to sin: he begins to cry out to the thief; c l i c came back up to three times, but he sent her away shamefully. See Saint Marlinicn, that a woman of bad life came to tempt, and the restaurant. See Saint Thomas Aquinas to whom a girl was sent to his room for Ukher to bring him to sin, he takes a brand and Shamefully kicks her out of her room. See what did Saint Benedict who, being tempted, went to throw himself into a pond frozen to the neck. Others rolled in the thorns. It is reported that there once was a saint who, being

1st r SUNDAY OF LENT » 299 tempted, went to a swamp where there was a quantity of wasps which came after him, returned his body similar to leprosy; being back, his superior only recognizing him by his voice, asked him why had he put himself in this state? It is, he told him, that my body wanted to lose my soul: that’s why I reduced it to this state. What should we conclude from all this, my brethren? the here: 1° It is not to believe that we will be delivered of temptations or in one way or another, as long as we will live; therefore, we must resolve to fight to the death. 2° As soon as we are tempted, to quickly have recourse to the good Lord, as long as that the temptation lasts, because if the demon perseveres to tempt us, it is always in the hope of us win. Thirdly, it is to flee from everything that is capable of giving us temptations, at least if we

can, and never lose sight of the fact that the angels were only tempted once, and from the temptation they fell into hell. You must have great humility, never believe that, of ourselves, we can not succumb; but only, aided by the grace of Good God, we won't fall. Happy, my brethren, he who, at the hour of death, will be able to say like Saint Paul: “I fought well, but with the grace of the good Lord, “I have conquered, that is why I await the crown “of glory that the good Lord gives to him who was “faithful unto death; » it's happiness

1st Sunday of Lent — On Indulgences

Cum immundus spiritus exierit de homine, says: Revertar in domum mcam unde exivu When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he says: I will return to my house from which I came. (S. Luke, xi, 24.)

I come to show you how furious the devil is against those who have driven him from their hearts by a good confession; these must keep watch continually on all the movements of their heart, fear that the devil does not make them fall back into their sin, this which would put them in a worse state than they were before their confession. It is precisely for protect ourselves from this misfortune that the Church imposes on us penances when we confess. They are for two ends: one to satisfy the justice of God for our confessed sins, and the other for us prevent falling back into sin. If we have the misfortune of not performing our penances, we we commit a mortal sin if the sins we we accused were mortal sins. However, my brethren, it must be admitted that, even though we do well our penances imposed in the holy tribunal, as they are in no way proportionate to our sins, there must necessarily remain to us sorrows to undergo either in this world or in the flames of purgatory. It is for this, my brethren, that the good Lord desires so much to obtain for us, immediately after our death” the happiness of going to enjoy his holy presence. He us grants, through the ministry of his Church, a means very easy and very effective in removing these penalties: these means, my brethren, are the indulgences that we can win while we are on earth. These indulgences are a reduction or an entire remission of the penances that were formerly imposed on sinners in order to satisfy almost as much as one believed to be necessary to avoid purgatory; but to make you appreciate them better, I will show you 1° what an indulgence is; 2° what they are composed; 3° what are the arrangements necessary to win them.

I. I do not want, my brethren, to amuse myself by proving to you that the Church has the power to apply indulgences to us, that would be a waste of my time; you know that Jesus Christ said to his apostles, and in their person to all their successors: “I give you the keys "from the kingdom of heaven, whatever you bind on "the earth will be bound in heaven and everything you “Whoever is loosed on earth will be loosed in heaven. » We let us see that the very apostles began to grant indulgences. Not only does the Church have the power to impose penances for the atonement of our sins, but it can still shorten the sorrows that we must suffer in purgatory. You know, my brethren, that there is two kinds of actual sins: that is, sin mortal and venial sin. Mortal sin deserves eternal punishment: for it is an article of faith that if we we have the misfortune of dying with mortal sin without having obtained forgiveness, we will be damned. Although bad Christians dare to say that the good God is not as bad as the priests say, it will not be otherwise. When we confessed our mortal sins, we still have to suffer in this world or, in the other life, sorrows to endure; because if we consider the greatness of our sins with the penances that we are given in the court of penance, there is no proportion. It is therefore necessary necessarily do something that can help us to satisfy the justice of God. It is true that all the miseries of life: illnesses, sorrows, slander, infirmities, loss of property, if we we have the happiness of offering them to the good Lord in expiation of our sins, help us to satisfy them. From the beginning of the Church, we gave penances as great and as long as we believed be able to satisfy (God’s) justice. When a sinner wanted to return to the good God, the penitent came to present himself before the bishop, publicly confessing his sins, having bare feet, clothes completely torn and the toto covered in ashes. They were made to go through the degrees of penance. The first was the one mourners, the second that of the listeners, the third that of the prostrate backs, the fourth that of the assistants. As soon as a sinner came to himself, he was forced to stay on one's knees [à genoux] outside the door of the church, as being unworthy to enter, and he

recommended himself to the prayers of the faithful who passed: it the first degree, which sometimes lasted a long time, and which was called degree of mourners. It was enough must see them to cry with them; they did not have ashamed to publicly confess their sins to excite the faithful to pray for them. After this degree of penance, they were made to pass to a place, near from the door of the church, where they had the pleasure of tender the instructions that were being given; but as soon as the instruction was over, they were made to withdraw without have the happiness of praying with the faithful; they withdraw would laugh with so much pain at seeing themselves deprived of praying with them, that their repentance alone converted others sinners, who were not ashamed to go and join the first to be reconciled with the good Lord. After this, these penitents were allowed to attend the holy mass until the gospel; then we took them out as being unworthy to participate in the holy mysteries ters. But before sending them back, we made differences fervent prayers upon them, being prostrated before all the world; that's where we saw the tears flowing with abundance. At the end of the third degree of penance, they were solemnly given absolution: then they had the pleasure of attending all the prayers and even at Holy Mass; but they didn't have the freedom to commune there for a certain time. We let us see that throughout their penance they were obliged to refrain from all entertainment, from all public functions; to keep the retreat, to fast at bread and water several times a week; to make alms in order to provide the means to satisfy the justice of God. For having sworn the holy Name of God, even without thinking about it, one had to fast for seven days at bread and water; and if we fell there a second time times, fifteen days. For having blasphemed against God, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, we had to stay on one's knees [à genoux] outside the church, without shoes, with a rope around your neck and fasting seven Fridays of bread and water, deprived all that time to enter the church. For having done some work holy day of Sunday, it was necessary to fast three days to bread and water; for traveling on Sunday without necessity, seven days of penance; to have danced in front of the door of a church, three years in prison tension. If a girl or a boy returned to dancing, they were threatened with excommunication. For having spoken to the church during the holy messo ten days of penance. For the Lenten fasts that were missed, it was necessary fast after Easter seven days for each day missed; for having violated the fasts of the Four Times, forty fasting days. For having disregarded the instructions of his bishop or his priest, forty days of penance. For having lived in hatred against someone, he had to fast for as long as one had left time passes when one wishes harm to one's neighbor. For sins of impurity, penances were great, according to the greatness of this sin which is committed in several ways. This, my brethren, is the way in which the Church conducted itself formerly towards Christians who wanted to save themselves. You see, my brethren, that now You no longer give these harsh penances, although our sins are neither less awful nor less outrageous to the good Lord. Do you see, my brethren, how good the good God is and how much he desires to save us: he presents us with indulgences, who can make up for the penances we do not have not the courage to do.

II. But what are these indulgences made of? bring us so much good? My brethren, listen to him well and hold it; because he who understands it well cannot not help but bless the good Lord and benefit from it as much as he can. What happiness for us, my brethren, who with a few prayers can we remove centuries of sorrow in the other life! I say that these indulgences are composed of the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ, beyond the Blessed Virgin and the saints, who suffered or did penance much more than they had of sins to atone for: which forms an inexhaustible treasure which the Church shares with her children who are Christians. I therefore say that indulgences are the remission of penalties which our sins, although forgiven in the tribunal of penitence, deserve to suffer. To make this more intelligible, we must distinguish the offense and the penalty: the offense is the insult that sin does to God, for which the sinner deserves to be punished throughout eternity; but this eternal sentence cannot be remitted than by the sacrament of Penance. It is to complete to purify ourselves from our sins, although we forgive in the sacrament, that we gain indulgences, because, after having confessed, we still have to do more penances than the confessor tells us imposes, if we want to exempt ourselves from the penalties of purgatory. We see that the saints, although they were sure of their forgiveness, God also imposed on them the obligation to punish themselves. See David, see Saint

Magdeleine, Saint Peter and so many others. In the past we gave long penances which lasted ten years, twenty years, and sometimes for life. You had to get up at night to to pray and to mourn one's sins; it was necessary to sleep on the hard way, cover yourself with a hair shirt, give lots of alms, You will see how the indulgences began. As at the beginning of the Church, it was almost always persecuted, the martyrs going to death, had their bishops told to shorten the penance of such a penitent by so many days, months or of years: thus their penance was shortened accordingly. This is what we call partial indulgences, which are forty days or two hundred, or three hundred. When the martyrs prayed to remove all penance: this is what we call indulgence plenary which is the remission of all the penalties that we had to suffer after our death. Here, my brethren, are the effects and benefits of indulgences: they help us to satisfy the justice of God, where they are the supplement of the penances which we had to do and which we let's not do. If you don't understand it well, listen to me. It's as if several people had debts, and were unable to be able to never pay, and a very rich person says to them: “You cannot pay me, take from my coffers to pay your debts. » This is what the indulgences towards the justice of God, because we we are unable to ever be able to satisfy to this justice, despite all the penances that we can do. What happiness for us, my brethren, to find a way so easy as that of indulgences, which exempt us sentences of purgatory which will seem so long to us and so hard! Yes, my brethren, a sinner who would have happiness to gain full indulgence in its entirety, would find himself fully acquitted before the good Lord. He would appear as pure and clear in the eyes of God as if he left the sacred font of Baptism, he would be in the same provisions, to be admitted into heaven, than the martyrs after their death. No, my brethren, there is no no difference between Baptism, martyrdom and a plenary indulgence gained in its entirety. 0 grace precious, but ignored by the greatest number of Christians, and despised by those who have the happiness of know! Alas! My brethren, that there are poor souls in purgatory for not wanting to take advantage of indulgences, and who, perhaps, will remain there until the end of the world! But in order to better make you feel the need that we let us earn the indulgences to help us to satisfy God's justice for our sins, let us consider, on the one hand, the number and enormity of our sins, and on the other, the penances that we do for the atone: let's compare our debts with what we have made to acquit them. Alas! My brethren, whole centuries would not be enough to atone for a single sin! Hey! My brethren, where are our penances which equal our sins? Let us agree, my brethren, where would we be if the Church was not coming to our aid? Still we would die converted, the justice of God would demand his rights, an avenging fire would punish us rigorously for many years. Alas! My brethren, who could understand our blindness to consent to go and burn so many years in the fires, and not to wanting to benefit from the graces that the good Lord wishes grant us? But when do indulgences cease, that is, when one can no longer earn them? It's as if the church of Fourvières was partly collapsed, likewise, a cross, a medal, a crucifix, would be broken, dented (1). A rosary, missing a part grains, or which would have completely disappeared: then the indulgences people would no longer be there; but as long as they don't lose not their form, when we renew them, they do not lose not indulgences. For parties that are postponed, Monsignor obtained from the Holy Father that indulgences would be carried with the feast: so that the indulgences are not on the day of the feast, but on the day it is celebrated. To gain indulgences it is necessary that the rosary be blessed for this; if he wasn't, although we pray a prayer very pleasing to God, we do not would not gain any indulgence. For those who are holy brotherhood of the Rosary, saying the three rosaries every week they gain all the indulgences that meet in all the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, and at major festivals, by confessing and receiving communion. A person who is from the Brotherhood of the Holy Rosary can earn several plenary indulgences. On time When death occurs, those around the sick person must be careful if the priest didn't think about it. There is plenary indulgence 1° when the patient receives the last sacraments; 2° when he receives the absolution of the Holy Rosary; 3° by saying with the mouth or from the bottom of the heart the name of JESUS; i° saying the Salve Regina and holding in his hand a blessed candle for the Holy Rosary. The crosses, medals, rosaries, cannot be given to others to gain indulgences, because indulgences can only be earned by those for who they were blessed, or to whom they were first given. But by lending a rosary, the indulgences are not lost to him who lends it, when he receives it back takes, he regains them.

(i) See note O at the end of the volume.

We will now show you what the indulgences. First I will tell you that, in all brotherhoods, there is a plenary indulgence on the day of crack: so that a person who would be several brotherhoods, confessing and making holy com- union, can gain all the plenary indulgences of all these parties: so, if there are four or five of you brotherhoods, you can earn a plenary indulgence for you, and all the others for the souls in purgatory. There are still other indulgences to be gained without being brotherhoods, as for those who have rosaries called Brigittains. This word Brigitain comes from the fact that Saint Brigitte had been the founder of the monastery to which the Holy Father had given power to grant these great indulgences. Those who have these rosaries gain on all grains a hundred days of indulgences. This is the difference between these rosaries and those of the Holy Rosary: through those of the Holy Rosary you only gain your indulgences in the the moment you finish it, instead of with the Brigittains, on each grain you earn your hundred days. But to earn these indulgences, one must have a rosary between the hands, and place the fingers on the grains from which one intends to gain indulgences. For all the rosaries, one can only gain indulgences after having said three rosaries: one for all the Church, one for the Holy Father and one for the one who blessed. One can earn indulgences when one is two and each responds his part. One says: Hello, Mary, and the other: Saint Mary. When we make the Path of the Cross there is plenary indulgence in each painting, that is to say fourteen: one for yourself and all the others for the souls in purgatory, and this as many times as we wants to do it in a day. There are three ways to do it

TO DO. There is no need to confess or receive communion to (gain the indulgence of) the Way, of the Cross. If we are not in a state of grace, we cannot not earn them for us; but, although we are in sin we can win them for our souls from purgatory (l). it is true that it is very rare that we let us gain the full indulgences in their entirety; but what is true is that we gain them in proportion to our dispositions. The more our arrangements are perfect, the closer we approach the end of their merit. When we offer our indulgences, we must not offer for all souls; but it is necessary to designate the souls for whom one intends to win them: for his father, his mother or others. For the indulgences which are attached to medals, crosses, crucifix,; if all these objects of piety have been indulged by the Holy Pore, or a priest who has received the power, there are plenary indulgences whenever, having on you or in a clean place in your house, getting on your knees, you say five Pater and five Hail Marys, according to the intention of the Church which is the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the just, etc., and this as many times as you want to do it. When All these objects were only indulged by the bishops, they only have forty days of indulgences. It is necessary notice that one can gain all indulgences who meet during the week; when there is no more than eight days since we (confessed). Those who confess and receive communion the day before the feast where there is indulgence, they can still win them without altering the next day. There is an indulgence gence of two years by respectfully kissing the cross of (1) See note 0 at the end of volww?.

her rosary which was blessed; there is an indulgence plenary when we come to worship Jesus Christ on Friday holy; there is a plenioro indulgence on the saint's day boss. — By genuflecting with respect, there a hundred days of indulgences; when you prepare well to hear Holy Mass; there is an indulgence, when we examine our conscience every evening. In saying an act of love of God on the perfections of Jesus Christ, that is to say by thinking of his wisdom, of his mercy, his goodness and the rest; there is a surrender of all our venial and even mortal faults, in danger of dead. It is true that there are many indulgences that we could win, but we don't know. Here it is what to do (do) every morning, you have to say five Pater and five Hail Marys according to the intention of the Church to gain all these indulgences that one can gain in the current of the day: when dreary we would not think of it not in the moment, we will win them all the same. There are still many other indulgences: as in saying the litanies of the Blessed Virgin, two hundred days; those of the holy name of Jesus, three hundred days; acts of Faith, Hope and Charity; there is a plenary indulgence each month by confessing and Communicating, we choose the day we want. There is another hundred days of

indulgences for those who instruct feels ignorant. There are seven years of indulgences all the times that fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses take their children or servants to church to hear the catechism. For those who accompany the Blessed Sacrament when it is taken to the sick, there is seven years and seven quarantines, that is to say seven times qua- rant days; those who accompany him without a torch earn only five years and five forties. When we cannot accompany him, saying a Pater and an Ave on one's knees [à genoux], a hundred days ago. There are three hundred days of indulgences for those who say: “Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart, my mind and my life; » for those who are of the brotherhood of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, there is a plenary indulgence on the day one is received, every first Friday of the month and every first Sunday of the month; and also once a month one's will if one has confessed, if one has taken communion and if you say five Fathers and five Hail Marys for the purposes of the Church. There are an infinite number of others, but I only talk about the ones you can best win. I don't know if you understood everything correctly. this. When you don't understand it, well! i] you have to ask me; it is not necessary that human respect holds you back. A priest is only to instruct you, teaching you what you don't know and who is necessary to help you save yourself. Alas! if we we lose or whether we will suffer number of years in purgatory, it will indeed be our fault, since we have so many means to obtain the sky. These, my brethren, are great treasures which are placed at our disposal.

III. But what should we do to benefit from it? It's what we are going to see. When a doctor saw the illness of his patient, he orders the remedies and then the way of taking them, because without that precaution, the remedies would be more harmful to him than beneficial. It is the same with regard to the means which we must use so that our souls may be strengthened. I know well that there are some who do not sell all this only with a kind of disdain and contempt; but let us pity them, they are poor blind people who believe in see clearly, while sin has strained their eyes. Since they want to get lost, despite so many graces that the good Lord does to them, let them do it, they will have good time to cry and tell us: That you have been happy to obey the grace that led you! Let us walk in the light of the torch of faith, let us seek and let us use all the means that the good Lord gives us provides to assure us of heaven. But, you think, what must we do to win all the indulgences we just talked about? My brethren, you will see: the first condition is to be in a state of grace, the second is to accomplish all the prayers which are commanded to us by the Holy Father or the bishop. This second condition is for us absolutely necessary. I say firstly, that we must be in a state of grace, because indulgences are graces that the good Lord only grants to the righteous who have sanctifying grace in them; also we see that the Church strongly recommends that we confess and take communion, and that we must renounce sin in good earnest [tout de bon]. Since it is necessary to be in a state of grace, we must therefore renounce sin with all our heart, because you know as well as I ever did the grace of the good God is not found with sin. Yes, my brethren, the good Lord can forgive sins without remit the sentence, but he will never remit the sentence of sin as long as the offense exists in the heart. He it is true that the good Lord is always ready for us fill with all kinds of goods, but he wants our heart detaches itself from sin to cling to it

without conditions and without reservation. Our heart must turns entirely to the side of the good God, and all his hatred on the side of sin. From this you feel as well as me, that until we have con- spanked our sins and we have not left them all well, we cannot win the favors of indulgences. Secondly, I say that to win the indulgences people, we must renounce all the sins we have clerk: it would be enough for us to have a charged conscience of a single mortal sin to give us back all these useless graces. I say, moreover, that when we do not laugh at attachment only to a single venial sin, we we could earn indulgences in all their extent. A venial sin that we have committed, if we have no true repentance for it, we cannot earn indulgences for it. Here it is the order of God, which is full of justice and which is not relax his rights, as for the penalty due to our sins, that as and in proportion as we detach ourselves of the offense. Third, we say that we must be truly repentant of our sins. The Holy Father says, in the indulgences he grants: If they are truly penitents; he doesn't just say

to confess your sins, but the sinner must be very sorry to have offended the good Lord, may he be resolved to embrace according to his strengths the rigors of penance; he has to cry his sins. But, you will tell me, we are always good angry at having done wrong. You are wrong: if you were angry at having outraged the good Lord with your sins, you wouldn't fall back as quickly as you do. Tell me, my brethren, if passing along a path, you M had been threatened with being killed, would you spend the next day there? No, undoubtedly, the thought of the danger that you ran would make you take other precautions; it would be the same if we were very angry at having offended the good Lord, we would not fall back so soon and maybe at the first opportunity. Alas I how many who fear sin more because we must blame ourselves for it than because he outrages the good Lord. My God, what bad confessions! Examine this, and you will see that the greater number of Christians fear more and are more angry about having done wrong because of humiliation that they have to accuse themselves of it, that in relation to the insult what he does to God. Alas, how many Christians damn themselves in this way, who confess their sins well, but who do not obtain forgiveness I This is clearly seen by all these relapses, which make you judge that all these confessions only result in sacrileges. We let us therefore say that to gain indulgences one must be in a state of grace and hating your sins well, without except for one, even the smallest veniel. The second condition is to perform all prayers that the Holy Father commands and within the prescribed time: they must be said by mouth; it's like penances given to us in the tribunal of penance, it we must not be content to say them only from the heart, we still have to pronounce the months, because we could not not thus perform our penance in such a way as to hope our forgiveness. We must say the prayers that Your order to gain indulgences in the spirit of penance, because they are only granted to us to make up for the penances that we cannot do. Here, my brethren, are all the works that must be done to gain indulgences: these are confession, communion and prayer. When indulgences carry that one must confess and take communion, one must always begin with confession, as we have just see him. If we had any sin on our conscience, we could not earn the indulgences. We must make this confession and this communion as if it were the last of our lives, since the effect of indulgences is to put us in a position to dispose ourselves to go and enjoy without delay [sans délai] the glory of God, immediately after our death. Secondly, we must commune holyly, because it is through holy communion that Jesus Christ comes to us and asks for grace for us. Thirdly, we must pray: that is to say, it must pray all the prayers that are ordered in the bull of the Holy Father to obtain this grace. And there you have it why we pray to gain indulgences; it is for the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the righteous. To gain all the indulgences when we don't have not designated the prayers, we can say five Paters and five Ave; when there are some good works, it is necessary do them with a true spirit of penitence, that is to say with a great desire to receive the grace we ask. We have to convince ourselves that we are winning indulgences in proportion to the dispositions that we let's bring it; so that the more perfect our dispositions are, the more graces we receive. Tell me, can we help ourselves to admire the goodness of God to us provide such easy ways to avoid the pains of purgatory; it is true that all these brotherhoods (to- which) are attached so many indulgences are some something very consoling for a Christian; but the end for which they are established is so valuable and so pro- ready to bring us to embrace them, that when we want to reflect on their end, we cannot understand that a Christian who desires so little to save himself and please God, may not worry. Let's just say a word on that. Why does the brotherhood of Blessed Sacrament is established? To thank God for instituted this great sacrament of love, to ask him forgiveness for the contempt that is made of his holy presence. That of the Holy Rosary, to honor the hidden life, the life suffering of Jesus Christ, his glorious life, to honor the glorious privileges of the Most Holy Virgin. The one of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to honor this adorable Heart who loved us so much and who loves us so much; that of Holy Scapular, to consecrate ourselves to the Blessed Virgin for life: it promises us to take care very particular of our souls and our bodies, it gives us assures that she will not lose sight of us for a single moment of our life. That of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, it is to honor the Blessed Virgin in the current of Passion of Jesus Christ where she shed so many tears. That of Holy Slavery, makes us place our person and all our actions in the hands of the Holy Virgo. I leave you to think, my brethren, how much all these brotherhoods are capable of helping us save ourselves, since there is

not a single moment in the day that You don't pray for us on earth. What prayers, what good works do our colleagues! In the sky, how many confreres are busy asking God for all the graces that are necessary for us; let's say better, he It is very difficult for a Christian, however bad he either, perish if he has the happiness of being of some brotherhood and if he prays: as we see in history, where so many sinners are converted from one miraculous way. When I see a Christian who is not of any brotherhood, I don't know what to rely on to hope for his forgiveness; but if a sinner has happiness to be of some brotherhood, I always have hope, although it is bad, sooner or later the prayers other confreres will obtain grace from the good Lord of his return. Let us conclude, my brethren, by saying that not only can we enrich ourselves by the part that we have the prayers of our confreres; but we let us, with the slightest effort we make, into a disposition which assures us of heaven; it's happiness that I wish you.

4th Sunday of Lent — On the Death of the Sinner

(Unfinished.)

Quaeretis me, et in peccato vestro moriemini. You will seek me, and you will die in your sin. (S. John, wine, 2i.)

TERRIBLE threat, my brethren, and all the more terrible because it must be followed by its effect. It is to the Jews, my brethren, that Jesus Christ speaks, to this dear people, filled with so many graces. Ah! ungrateful people, what have I not done for you? but one day will come that you will seek me, and you will not will not find, and I will run away from you, and you will die in your sin as you will have lived. Sad, but just punishment. What! a Christian filled with so much graces during his life, a Christian steels himself against the remorse of his conscience for sinningI A Christian, who is very convinced that each sin he commits deserves hell. A Christian who knows very well that, if he wants to return to God, God himself provides him with all the means. A Christian, I say, who has everything at his disposal: the ministers of the Lord who urge him, who beg him not to remain in this state, who pray for him, who offer him all the necessary remedies and very effective in healing the wounds that sin has made to his poor soul; and who, despite everything, perseveres, languishes and immerses itself every moment in new crimes! A Christian who makes a game of it, who will even to the point of despising charitable ministers who would like help pull his poor soul out of sin and hell. Ah! is it not justice that this sinner should perish in his sin, and may the good Lord abandon it, he who waited so long with so much kindness and patience, presenting to him at all times the merits of his pas- sion. Yes, it is right that this unfortunate man should perish in his sin and that, when he wants to return to God, he is right that Jesus Christ, whom he so despised, should flee from him and abandons him to his despair and to the power of demon. “Go, unhappy man,” said the prophet Amos to him, “go, unhappy, you will perish in your sin, since you do not don't want to leave it, when the Lord calls you..." 0 that the death of the sinner is therefore dreadful! And yet that the number has grown To (do) it for you fear and avoid, I will show you how much last moments of a sinner who did not want to convert, are desperate, both by the thought of his sins, than by that of the graces which he despised and torments prepared for him for eternity.

I. If you ask me what is meant by a bad death, I will answer you: when a a person dies in the prime of life, being married, enjoying good health, having abundant property, and she leaves desolate children and a wife, he There is no doubt that this death is very cruel. King Hezekiah said: “What, my God! do I have to die in the middle of my years, in the flower of my age. » And the King-Prophet asked God not to make him die in the middle of his years. Others say than die by the hands of the executioners, on a gallows, it's a bad death. Others, that dying of a sudden death [mort subite] is a bad death: like being crushed by a lightning strike, to be suffocated in water, to fall from the top of a house and stay there. Finally, others say it's dying of an unfortunate illness, such as dying from the plague or other contagious diseases. Well! I, my brethren, will tell you that all these deaths are not bad: provided that a person has lived well, that he dies in the flower of his age, his death will not fail to be precious in the eyes of Lord. We have so many saints who died the prime of

their age. It's not a bad one either. death, than to die at the hands of the executioners; all the martyrs died at the hands of the executioners. Die of a sudden death [mort subite] is not yet a bad death, provided one is ready; we have so many saints who died like this. Saint Simeon was killed by a lightning strike on his spine; Saint Francis de Sales died of apoplexy. Finally dying of the plague is not another disastrous death: Saint Roch, Saint Francis Xavier died from it. But what makes the death of unhappy sinner, it is sin. Ah! it's this cursed sin that tears him apart and devours him at this moment terrible. Alas! wherever this poor wretch turns his eyes, he sees only sin, he sees only despised graces. And, alas! if he raises eyes in the sky, he only sees an angry God, armed with all the fury of his righteousness which is ready for him melt on it. If he turns his gaze downward, alas!

he only sees hell and its furies, which already opens mouth to receive it. Alas! this poor sinner did not want to recognize the justice of God during his life; at this moment, not only does he see her, but he already feels it weighing on him. During his life, he always tried to hide his sins, or at least, to reduce them; but at this moment, everything is presented to him in broad daylight. Alas! he sees what he would have had to see, what he did not want to see; he wants to cry his sins, but it is no longer time. He despised the good God during his life, God in turn despises him and abandons him to his despair. Run away, you hardened sinners, who you roll with so much pleasure in the silt of your garbage, without having even the thought of getting out, who perhaps wouldn't think of it that when the good Lord has abandoned you as he has happened to so many others less guilty than you. Yes, the Holy Spirit tells us, sinners, in their last moments, will grind their teeth, will be seized with terrible fear, at the mere thought of their crimes; their iniquities will rise up against them and will accuse them. Alas! will they exclaim at this moment unhappy; unhappy; alas! what use has this pride been to us, this vain ostentation, and all these pleasures that we have tasted in sin? Everything has passed, and we have no trace of virtue in our wake, and we were convinced by our malice. This is precisely what happened to the unfortunate Antiochus, who, having fallen from his chariot, smashed everything the body. He felt such great pain in his insides that it seemed to him that they were being torn away from him. The worms ate everything alive, his body stank like a carrion; then they started at open one's eyes [ouvrir les yeux]; It is what sinners do, but too late. “Ah! cried- he, I recognize that these are the evils that I have done to Jerusalem which torment me and gnaw at my heart. » His body was devoured by terrible pain, and his mind with inconceivable sadness. He brought his friends, believing to find some consolation near them; but no, abandoned by God who gives consolation, he couldn't have any others. "Alas! my friends, their he said, I fell into a terrible affliction, the sleep has left me, I cannot rest for a single moment, my heart is pierced with pain. Alas! in what state of sadness and anguish am I reduced! it is therefore necessary that I am dying of sadness, and again in a foreign country. Ah! Lord, forgive me! I will fix all the bad what I have done, I will return everything I took from the temple of Jerusalem, I will give great gifts to this temple, I will become a Jew, I will observe the law of Moses, I will go everywhere publish the omnipotence of God. Ah! Lord, please have mercy! » But his illness increases, and the good Lord, whom he so despised during his life, no longer has ears to hear it; he must die and die in his sin. He was proud, a blasphemer, and despite his constant prayers, he was not listened to, he had to fall into hell. Sad, but just punishment of sinners who, after having despised all the graces that the good Lord gave them granted during their life, no longer find grace when they would like to benefit from it. Alas! that the number of those who die in this way (is great) to eyes of God! Alas! that there are some of these blind people in the world that only opens its eyes in the moment where there are no more remedies for their ills! Yes, my brethren, yes, life of sins and death of reprobate.

You are in sin, you don't want to come out? No, you will tell me. Well my friend, you will perish there you will see it in the death of Voltaire, 6th famous ungodly. Listen carefully, and you will see that if we despise always the good Lord, and if the good Lord awaits us during our life, often, through righteous judgment, he abandons us to death when we want to return to him. Living in sin, thinking we are we will come out one day, it is a trap of the devil who will lose as he has lost so many others. Voltaire, seeing sick, began to reflect on the state of a sinner who dies with a conscience burdened with sin. He wants to go into himself, and try if

the good Lord would like to forgive him for all the sins of his life which are in large numbers. He counts on mercy of God who is infinite, and, in these beautiful thoughts, he brought in one do these priests whom he had so outraged and so much slandered in his writings. He gets down on his knees and confesses to him his faults, and places in his hands the retraction of his impieties and his scandals. He already flattered to complete the great work of his reconciliation; but he was greatly mistaken; the good Lord had abandoned him: you will see him. Death advances the dorniors help. Alas! this impious poor man feels reborn in him all his fears. He cries: “Alas! am i therefore abandoned by God and men? » Yes, unfortunately- reux, you are. Already your sharing and your hope are hell. Listen to this impious man, he cries with this filthy mouth of so many sacrileges, of so many blasphemies against God, his religion and his ministers: “Ah! he exclaims, Jesus Christ, son of God, who died for all sinners without distinction, have pity on me! » But, alas! almost a century of impiety has worn out patience (of God), who has already reprobated you, there is now only one victim whom the wrath of God fattens for the flames eternal. The priests he had so despised, but that, at this moment, he desires so much, are not there. The this is what enters into the convulsions and horrors of despair: eyes wandering, pale and trembling with fear, he becomes agitated, he torments himself, he seems to want revenge of those ancient blasphemies of which his mouth had been so often soiled. His companions in impiety fearing that the Sacraments were brought to him, which would have seemed dishonor them, take him to a country house and there, abandoned to his despair

4th Sunday of Lent — Delay of Conversion

Conversion Time.

Ego vado et quaeretis me, cl in peccalo vostro moriemini I'm going, you will look for me, and you will die-rest in your sin. (S. John, wine, 21.)

It is a great misery for us to have been conceived in original sin, because we come into the world children of the curse; it's without doubt another greater misery of living in the sin; but to die there is the height of all misfortunes. It is true, my brethren, that we do not have was able to avoid the first sin which is that of Adam; but we can easily avoid the one where we fall If voluntarily, and after having fallen into it, we can withdraw from it with the grace of the good Lord. Alas! can we stay in a state that exposes us to so many misfortunes for eternity! Who among us, my brethren, would not tremble when hearing Jesus Christ tell us that one day the sinner will seek him; but he does not will not find, and will die in his sin. I suggests in what state a person is resting who lives peacefully in sin, death being so certain tain and the moment so uncertain. The Holy Spirit therefore right to tell us that sinners have gone astray in all their steps, that their hearts were blinded, their minds covered with darkness the thickest, and that their malice ended up deceive and lose them. They postponed their return to Lord, in a time that will not be granted to them, they hoped to have a good death, by living in sin; but they are deceived, because their death will be very bad in the eyes of the Lord. This, my brethren, is precisely the conduct of most Christians nowadays, who, living in sin, hope always have a good death, in the thought that they will leave sin, that they will do penance for it, and that they will will atone for the sins they committed before being judged. But the devil has deceived them, they will not escape from sin only to be cast into hell. For you better make people understand the blindness of the sinner, I will show you 1° that the more we delay going out from sin and returning to the good God, the more we are in danger of perishing there, because, if you want to know the reason, plus our bad habits are difficult to break; 2° to each grace that we we despise, the good Lord moves away from us, we become weaker and the devil gains more influence on us. From this I conclude that the more we stay in sin, the more we put ourselves in danger of never converting.

I. I, my brethren, speak of the unfortunate death of a sinner who dies in sin to Christians who have already felt so many times the happiness of loving a God so good, who know by the lights of faith the greatness of the good that Jesus Christ prepares for those who will keep their soul free from sin! This language would

only be suitable for pagans who do not know or God, nor the rewards he promises to his children. O my God! that man is blind from losing so much good and to attract so much evil by remaining in sin! If I asked a child: “Why did the good Lord create you and preserve you until present? » he would answer me: “To know him, love him, serve him and by this means acquire eternal life- nelle. » But if I said to him: “Why does Christians do not do what they must to deserve the sky? » “It’s,” he would tell me, “because they lost of sight the goods of heaven and that they believe to find their happiness in created things. » The demon deceived them and will deceive them again; they live in blindness and they will perish there, although they have the hope that one day they will come out of sin. Tell me, my brethren, do we not see people every day who live in sin, who despise all the graces that the good God sends them: good thoughts, good desires, remorse conscience, good examples, word of God? Always in the hope that the good Lord will receive them when they will want to come back, these blind people do not do not pay attention that, during this time, the demon reserves a place in hell. 0 blindness! that you have thrown some into hell, and that you will throw some to hell end of the world! Secondly, I say that this consideration must make a sinner who lives in sin, although with the hope of escaping from it. First, my brethren, you are not so little educated, so as not to know that a single mortal sin, if we come to die without having confessed it, without having obtained it our forgiveness, (makes) us lost for ever [pour jamais]. Thirdly, we know very well that Jesus. Christ tells us to always be ready, that he will take us out of this world at the moment when we least think about it; and if we don't leave sin before he leaves us, he will punish us without mercy [sans miséricorde]. O my God! can we live well in a state which exposed at every moment to falling into the abyss I If this, my brethren, is not capable of touching you, listen to me for a moment, or rather open the Gospel, and you see if you can live peacefully in sin as you do. Yes, my brethren, everything tells you that if you do not go out not quickly from sin you will perish: the oracles, the threats, the comparisons, the figures, the parables, the examples, all this tells you that, or you You won't be able to convert, or you won't want to. Listen to Jesus Christ himself who said to the sinner: Walk while the light of faith shines ahead you, fear that by despising this guide, you will misplace for ever [pour jamais]. In another place he tells us: Watch and keep watch always, because the enemy of our salvation only works to your downfall. And pray, pray without cease to attract the help of Heaven to you, because your enemies are very skillful and very powerful. Why having so much, he says, living so busy with temporary things real and your pleasures, since, in some instances so much, you will have abandoned everything. No, my brethren, nothing more frightening than the threat that Jesus Christ makes to sinners by telling them that if they do not want to return to Him when he offers them his grace, one day will come that they will seek him and ask him for mercy; but, that in turn he will despise them; and in fear to let ourselves be touched by their prayers and their tears, he will cover his ears and run away from them. 0 my God! what a misfortune of an abandoned otro of you Oh! My brethren, can we think about this well without dying of pain! Yes, my brethren, if you are insensitive to this word, you are already lost. Ah! poor soul, cry in advance the torments that we prepare for you for the next life! Let us go further, my brethren, let us listen to Jesus Christ himself and we will see if we are safe in remaining in sin. Yes, he told us, I will come as a night thief, who dares to surprise the master of the house, when he is most asleep; so, he tells us, death will come and cut the thread of the criminal life of the sinner in the very moment that her conscience will be charged with crimes, and that she will have made the most beautiful resolution to leave them without having done it. In another place he tells us that our life passes as quickly as a flash of lightning spear from the East to the West; likewise we see today the sinner full of life and health, the head filled with a thousand projects, and tomorrow the tears of her people will announce that he is no longer in this world, that he left without knowing why he was there, nor for what end. This fool lived blind, and died as he lived. Jesus Christ still tells us that death is the echo of life, to show us that he who lives in sin is almost sure to die there, unless one miracle of grace. This is so true that we read in the story that a man had made of his money, his god; when he was very ill, he had a full drawer of gold to have the pleasure of counting it, and when he no longer had the strength to count it, he milled his hand below until he died. Another to whom confessor presented a crucifix to take to the contrition for his sins, began to say: “If this Christ was made of gold, it would be worth so much... » Ah! no, my brethren, the heart of the

sinner does not leave so easily sin as we well believe. “Life of a sinner, death of reprobated. » What does Jesus Christ want to tell us, my brethren, by this parable of the wise virgins and the foolish virgins, of which some were so well received because they entered with the bridegroom, while the others found the door closed? This is because he wanted to show us the conduct of people of the world: the wise virgins represent to us the good Christians who are always ready to appear before the good Lord, whatever time he calls them; Foolish virgins are the figure of bad Christians, who believe that they will always have time to prepare and convert, leave sin, and do good works. This is how they spend their lives, death comes; but they have nothing but bad and nothing good. Death strikes them, Jesus Christ calls them to his court to make them give an account [rendre compte] of their lives; they would like to put their conscience in order, they torment themselves, they would like to leave sin; but, alas! they have neither the time nor the strength, and perhaps even the grace that is necessary. When they ask God to have pity on them, to show them mercy; he tells them he doesn't know them, shuts them up door: that is to say, throws them into hell. This, my brethren, is fate of a large number of sinners who live so tran- bowling in sin. Ah I poor soul, how bad you are- happy to live in this body which drags you with so much of fury in hell. Ah! my friend, why do you want lose this poor soul!., what harm has she done to you for condemn her to so many misfortunes!... O my God, how The man is blind!... Secondly, I say that we find in the conduct of Esau the true portrait of a man who loses by selling his property for a mess of pottage [pour un plat de lentilles]. For some time Esaii lived in the greatest insensitivity of his door, he only thought of having fun and to indulge in his pleasures; however the moment is coming where he remembers the fault he has made, he comes within himself- same; but the more he thinks, the more he discovers the great pain of his blindness. Very sorry for his misfortune, he also sees if he can repair it, he uses prayers, tears and sobs to try to touch the heart of his father; but too late: the father has given his blessing to another, his prayers are despised and his requests are not listened to. No matter how much he torments himself, he must surrender to remaining in his misery and perish. This, my brethren, is precisely what happens every days to the sinner: he sells his God and his soul, and place it has in the sky, for less than a plate of lentils, that is to say, for a moment's pleasure [plaisir d'un moment], for a thought of hatred, of revenge, for a look or dishonest touching of oneself or others, for a handful of earth or for a glass of wine. Ah! beautiful soul, that we give you for very little! Indeed, we see that these sinners live for some times as quiet, as at peace, at least in appearance, that if, all their lives, they had only done good works. Some think of their pleasures, others others to the goods of this world; but, like Esau, the moment arrives when they recognize their fault, they would like to be able to repair it, but too late. They they shed tears, they groan, they conjure the

Lord, restore to them the goods they sold, that is to say the sky; but the Lord does to them as the father of Esau, he told them that he gave their place to a other. Alas! this poor sinner may cry out and ask for mercy, but he must surrender to remaining in his misery and falling into hell. O my God! that the death of sinner is unhappy in the eyes of the Lord! Alas! how many (are there) who do like the unfortunate Sisara, whom a perfidious woman put to sleep, by making him drink a little milk, and during that time, she took his life, without him having the time to mourn his blindness in having confided in this perfidious woman. Likewise, how many sinners are taken away quickly by death, without give them time to mourn their blindness in having remained in sin. How many others who act like the impious Antiochus, who recognize their crimes, the cry and cry for mercy without being able to obtain anything, and descend into hell begging for mercy. Here it is however, my brethren, the end of many sinners. Without doubt, my brethren, not one of us would want to make a unfortunate death, and we are quite right; but this What saddens me is that you live in sin, that you put yourself so greatly at risk of perishing there. It's not only I who tell you this, but Jesus Christ himself who assures you. Isn't it, my friend, (that you think:) let's leave said the priest, let's go our usual train. — Do you know, my friend, what will happen to you if you let the priest say this? —And what do you want to happen to us? — My friend, here it is: you will be damned. — But I hope no, you think; there is time for everything. — My friend, we may well have time to cry and to suffer, but (not) to convert"; and for

To prove it to you, I will give you a frightening example. It is recorded in history that a man of the world, who had lived for a long time in the greatest disorder, having converted, he persevered for some time; but fell back and no longer thought of returning to the good Lord. His friends never stopped praying for him; but he despised everything we said to him. During this time, it was announced a retreat which was to take place soon. We believed favorable circumstance to engage this sinner to profit of the opportunity that the good Lord (gave him) to return in the path of salvation. After much prayer and urging from his friends, and much resistance and refusals of his, he consented, and gave his word that he would go to the retreat with the others. But, alas! My brethren, what happened? Oh! judgments of God that you are impenetrable and formidable I The very morning when we were waiting for him, where we were to begin the retreat, we announced that this man had been found dead in his house, without knowledge, without help and without sacraments. Let us once understand, my brethren, what it is than to remain in sin, in the hope that we will we come out of it one day? Alas! My brethren, we abuse time when we have it, we despise graces when the good Lord gives us offers them; but often the good Lord, to punish us, takes them away from us when we would like to benefit from them. If we let us not think now of doing well, when we we want to, maybe we won't be able to. Isn't it not that you think that one day you will confess, that you will leave sin, and that you will do penance? — That's my intention. — This is your intention, my friend, and I will (tell you) what you are drilling, and what you will be. You are now in the sin, you will not say no to me: well I after your dead, you will be damned. —And what do you know about it? think to yourself. —If I didn't know, I wouldn't tell you. Besides, I will prove to you- worm that by living in sin, although with hope that you will come out of it, you will not, even when you would like it with all your heart, and you will understand what it is to despise time and graces that the good Lord presents to us for the moment. He is recorded in history, that a certain stranger passing by Donzenac, (this foreigner was from Lorraine and a bookseller from profession), he turned to a priest to hear him in confession; but the priest refused it, I don't know why. From there he goes to a town called Brives. Having appeared before the king's prosecutor and told him: Sir, please put me in prison, because that I gave myself to the demon some time ago, and I always heard that he has no power on those who are in the hands of justice. — My friend, replied the king's prosecutor, you do not know what it is like to be in the hands of justice; when you're there once you don't come out the same way you wants. — It doesn't matter, sir, put me in prison. The prosecutor imagined that he was crazy, and that by putting him in prison, he would expose himself to the mockery of the world. if he even had more fun talking to her. He lives in even (time) pass a priest to the street he knew, who was the confessor of the Ursulines, he called him and he said: Sir, please take care of the soul of this man. My friend, he said to him, follow this good priest, and do whatever he tells you. This priest having spoke, thought, like the king's prosecutor, that his mind was broken; he begged him to go elsewhere, that for him he could not take charge of his conduct. This poor unhappy, not knowing what to become, went to two communities to ask for a priest who would be willing have the charity to confess it. In one place, we said that the Fathers had withdrawn, because they had to get up at midnight; and in the other, he is made to speak to a Father who sent him away until the next day. But this poor wretch began to cry, saying to him: Oh my Father, I am lost, if you do not have pity on me; I am given to the devil, and my time comes this night. Come on, my friend, said the Father, do you recommend yourself to the saint Virgo; he gave him a rosary and sent him away. Passerby by the place and crying because he had not been able to find a confessor among so many priests that there were in these two communities: as he was on the square, seeing several bourgeois who were talking together, he asked them if one of them would be kind enough to house? There was a butcher who told him that he could follow. Having taken him to his house, this poor wretch told him how unhappy he was to have given to the demon, he believed he had time to confess and leave sin and do penance, but that no priest had wanted to confess him. The butcher found it very extraordinary that these priests had so little charity. Alas! sir, I see clearly that it is the good Lord who allowed it to punish me for time and graces that I have despised. My friend, said the butcher, we must have recourse to the good Lord. Alas! sir, I am lost; it is this night that he must kill me and take away my soul. The butcher, to all appearances, had not gone to bed to find out whether this man had lost his mind or if that was

really true. Indeed, At midnight, he heard a terrible noise, screams terrible like two people, one of whom strangles the other. As the butcher ran, he saw that the demon was dragging this poor wretch to court. The butcher fled and locked himself in his house; and the next day we found this man hanging like half a sheep one nail from the butcher's shop. The demon had cut him piece of his coat, with which he had strangled him and hanged. Father Lejeune, who reports this in one of §his sermons, says he gets it from the one who saw him hanged. Do you see, my brethren, that often, by putting off our conversion, we expose ourselves to never converting. Isn't it that when you are sick, you did you bring a priest to confess to you, even with great fear of not making your confession well? have you not said yourself in your illness that we are very blind to wait until death to love the good God, and that, if he restores your health, you will do much better than you have done, you will be more wise? My friend, or you, my sister, if the good Lord restores your health... poor child! you don't do be careful that your repentance does not come from God, nor do the pain of your sins; but only fear from hell. You are like Antiochus, who mourned the punishments that his crimes brought upon him; his heart was not changed. Well my sister, the good Lord has restored the health that you had asked for so much eagerly, promising him that you would do better. Tell me, after regaining your health, did you become wiser? have you offended the good Lord less? you have you corrected any fault? do we see you anymore often attend the sacraments? Do you want me tell you what you are? here it is: before your illness you still confessed from time to time; SERMONS. — Volume T. 15 since the good Lord restored your health, you do more even your Easter. Alas I how many among those who listen again are among this number! But don't you don't worry, you will see that at the first illness, the good God will bring you out of this world; to talk to you more clearly, you will be thrown into hell. You see although remaining in sin, although with your beautiful hope that you will come out of it one day, you mo- what about the good Lord. Here, my brethren, see how good your grace is to believe that the good Lord will forgive you when you you would like to ask him for forgiveness. I will quote you one example like perhaps never example has been more consistent with our subject. It is reported that there was a bourgeois who was extremely good. He had a servant who almost never missed the opportunity to say insults to his master; his pleasure was (to do it) when there were a lot of people there. He stole several things from her quite considerable, he ended up poaching one of his young ladies; after this blow, he ran away from the house, fear of being caught by the law. After some time, he went to find a priest whom he knew had a great credit to this gentleman. The priest goes there to ask the bourgeois to forgive the faults of this servant. This gentleman had so much kindness, that he said to the priest: “I will drill whatever you want; but I want it to make at least some satisfaction, otherwise it would be giving free rein to all the scoundrels. » The priest full of joy goes to find the valet and he said: “Your master has had the charity to forgive you; but he wants some little satisfaction, like nothing is not so fair. » The servant said to him: “So what is the satisfaction that my master wants, and in what time? »

The priest said to him: “In his house, and now, to his knees and bare head. » “Ah! my master wants so much of honor! for me I only want to ask him by- donation; he wants it to be in his house, on one's knees [à genoux], the head naked, and I want to do it in my room and lying down in my bed. He wants it now, and I want it it will only be in ten years, when I will think and be ready to die. » What do you think, my brethren, of this valet, and what do you say? What advice would you have given to this gentleman? Would you not have said to him: Sir, your valet is a wretch, he deserves to be thrown into a dungeon, and to be taken out only to be led to the gallows. Well! My brethren, from this example, do you see the way in which you conduct yourself with good God, isn't this the same language you use Good God, when you say you still have the time, that there is no hurry, that you are not yet dead? Alas! only poor sinners who are blinded on the state of their poor amc; who hope to do this that they will no longer be able to do when they think they can do the... But let's go further, and we will see that the more you delay coming out of sin, the more you put yourself in the impossibility of getting out. Is it not true that some time ago, the word of God touched you, made you make some reflections, and that, several times, you had resolved to leave sin and give yourself to the good Lord? Is it not true that the thought of God's judgment and hell has made you shed tears [verser des

larmes], and that, now, all this no longer affects you, makes you no longer make the slightest thought? Why is this, my brethren.? Alas! is that your heart is hardened and the good Lord abandons you, so that the more you remain in sin, the further the good God moves away from you, and the more insensitive you become to your loss. Ah! if at least you had died from your first illness, at least you wouldn't be so deep in hell! — But, if I wanted to return to the good Lord now, the good God would welcome me again? — My friend, for I'm not telling you anything about that. If you haven't yet put the height of the number of sins that the good Lord has resolved to forgive you; if you haven't yet finished despising the graces that the good Lord gives you had destined, you can. But, if the measurement of sins and graces is full, all is lost [tout est perdu] for you; you will have no problem forming all your beautiful resolutions. Besides, you must see it by this example terrible that we have just reported. Ah! my God, can we think about all this well and not doing everything we can to try if the good Lord will want to have pity (on us). — But, think to yourself, there would be plenty to throw away in despair? —Ah! my friend, I wish I could lead to the brink of despair, so that, struck of the terrible state you are in, you at least take the means that the good Lord still presents to you today to get out. — But, you will tell me, there are many who were converted at the hour of death: the good Thief has converted well at the moment. — The good Thief, my brethren, first of all, he had never known the good God. From that he knew him, he gave himself to him, and still he is the only that Holy Scripture provides us so as not to have everything made us despair at this moment. — But there are to many others who have converted, although they have lived a long time in sin. — My friend, take care guard, I think you are wrong: you must tell me that many have repented, but converted, it is something else. This is precisely what you will do, and what you have already done in your illnesses: since z you called for a priest, because you were angry at being bad. Well! with your repentance, you are you converted for this? no doubt you are not become more hardened. Alas! My brethren, all these repentances don't mean much. Satil is well repented since he mourned his sins; however it is damned; Cain repented well, since he pushed horrible cries of having killed his brother, nevertheless he is in hell. Judas repented well, since he went to return his money and his pain was so great that he went to hang. If you ask me now where all these repentances led them? I will tell you... in hell. I will always come to my conclusion that if you live in sin, and die there, you will be damned; but I hope not: you won't come not there. Third, if we come further, I will show you that you have nothing that can reassure you in your way of living: on the contrary, everything must frighten you, as you will see. 1° You know that on your own you cannot escape of sin; you are perfectly convinced that it is necessary may the good Lord help you with his grace, since holy Paul tells us that we are not able to form a good thought without the grace of the good God. 2° You know well that you cannot obtain your forgiveness only from God himself. Think well, my brethren, about these two reflections, and you will see how blind you are, or, to speak more frankly, that you are lost, if you do not promptly leave the fishing. But, tell me, is it by despising the graces of the good Lord that you can hope to have more force to break your bad habits? Isn't it not quite the opposite? the more you go, the more you deserve May the good Lord withdraw from you and abandon you. From this I conclude that the more you delay returning to God, the more you put yourself in danger of never converting. We say that we can only obtain our forgiveness from God alone. Well tell me, is it by multiplying your sins that you hope that will the good Lord forgive you more easily? Come on, my friend, you are a blind man, you live in the sin to perish there and you will be damned. This is my friend, where your way of. praying and living will lead you; “the life of a sinner, the death of a reprobate. » But for better make you feel it, let's move forward until moment which is the last of life.

II. First of all, I know very well that you have resolved to make a good death, convert yourself and quiLtcr sin. Let us go, my brethren, to such a one, to a dying man, and we will find a person lying there, who all his life was like you, lived in sin; but always in the hope that she will come out before die. Examine her well, consider her repentance well? his pain, his confession and his death. Then see what you are: you will see what you will be a day. Let us not leave, my brethren, from the bed of this dying man, before his fate is determined for ever [pour jamais]. He always promised himself, although living in sin cl in pleasures, that he

would have a good death, and that he would repair all the harm he had done during his rape. Engrave this well in your heart, so that you do not never lose memory, and may you continually have before your eyes what your fate will be. First, I will tell you that, throughout his life, he was held by obstacles that he had thought insurmountable. The first, that he thought he couldn't leave his bad habits; the other, that he did not have enough strength or of grace. He understood very well, although in sin, how much it costs, how difficult it is to make a good confession and to repair a whole life which has been than a chain of crimes and horrors. However the time is coming and even it is pressing; we must start to do what he never wanted to do, you have to get off in this heart which is only an abyss of horrors, similar to the bush bristling with thorns so horrible that we doesn't know where to start and we (end up) leaving it as it is. But knowledge is lost from time to time time; however he does not want to die in this state. He wants to convert: that is to say, leave sin before die. I know very well that he will die; but to convert, I don't believe it: we should do now what should have been healthy. Unable to do so, with tears in his eyes, he makes the same promises which he has already done all the times he saw himself die; but the good Lord will no longer listen to these lies and these falsehoods. This would require destroying sin, which has grown roots so deep that it no longer has the force to tear it off, he would need an extraordinary grace- nary. But the good Lord, in punishment for the contempt he has made of all those he granted him during his life, refuses it to him and turns his back so as not to see him anymore; he covers your ears so as not to be softened by his cries and his sobs. Alas! you have to die and no conversion, even of knowledge; there he is who changes cele, it Answers one thing for the other. The priest complained, that he had to be picked up yesterday, that he didn't enough knowledge, that he cannot confess. My friend, you are wrong, he has all the knowledge which he must have before he dies; if you had come yesterday to confess it, the good Lord would have been the same to him his knowledge; he remained in sin by despising the time and the graces that the good Lord had given him, and according to the justice of God, he must die in sin. Be patient, you will soon see him trained in hell by the demons to whom he obeyed so well during his life; do not take your eyes off him, and you go see him vomit his cursed soul into hell. But before this terrible moment, let us consider, my brethren, the movements that he gives himself, ask him if he is willing to confess, if he is very angry at having offended the good Lord; he you will nod yes; that he would like to confess, but that he cannot. IlelasI we must die, and no point confession! and point of conversion, point of knowledge! Come closer, my friend, do you see this old hardened sinner, who despised everything, who mocked himself everything, who believed that when he died everything would be finished for him. Do you see this young libertine, there is no even for a fortnight he was making the cabarets of his most infamous songs, filling the games and the cabarets. Do you see this young socialite focused on the wings of vanity, which believed it could never stop or die. O my God! you must die! Alas! what change, you must die and be damned! Do you see these sparkling eyes, which announce that death is at the door; he sees everyone in a movement extraordinary, we look at it while crying. Do you know me? he was told. He just opens his horrible eyes, who strike fear into all those around him. We look at him trembling, we lower our heads: get out of there, let him die as he lived. No, I deceive, come., my brethren, you, who for how many years, have been putting off your confession to another time. Do you see her cold and trembling lips which do not can no longer move, who tell him that he must die and be damned. My friend, leave this place for a moment cabaret, come and look at these pale and livid cheeks, this hair bathed in the sweat of death. Do you see his hair standing up on his head. Alas! it seems that he already experiencing the horrors of death. Alas! everything is finished for him, he must die, and be damned. Come, my sister, leave this musician and this dance for a moment; come, and you will see what you will be one day. Do you see these demons who surround him, who throw him to the ground? despair? Do you see these terrible convulsions? No, no, my brethren, everything is hopeless; this soul must out of this body. O my God! where will this poor thing go? soul? Alas! hell alone is his abode. No, no, my brethren, a moment, he still has four minutes left of life to show him all his misfortune. Here she is approaches its end..., the assistants and the priest begin on one's knees [à genoux] to try if the good Lord will have mercy of this poor soul: “Christian soul,” said the priest, “ get out of this world! » — And where do you want her to go, since she only lived for the world, she did not think than in the world.

Besides, the way she lived, she thought she would never go out. You wish him heaven, my father, but she doesn't just know him. You you are wrong, my friend, tell him instead: “Get out of this world, criminal soul, will burn, because you have only worked all your life for this. » 15

— “Christian soul,” said the priest, “go and take your rest in heavenly Jerusalem. » What! my friend, you send to this beautiful city a soul all covered in sins, the number of which is greater than that hours of his life; a soul, whose whole life has been that a chain of impurities, you are going to place it with the angels, with Jesus Christ who is purity itself. Oh! horror! oh! abomination! we go to hell, to hell, since his place is marked there! “My God,” continues the priest, “ Creator of all things, recognize this soul as being the work of your hands. » What! my father, you dare to present to the good Lord, as being his work, a soul which is only a heap of crimes, a soul which is all rotten; stop, my friend, from addressing Heaven, turn your gaze towards the abysses and listen to the demons he calls to his aid; throw them this cursed soul, since it only worked for them. “My God,” the priest will perhaps say again, “receive this soul who loves you as its Creator and its Savior. » She loves the good Lord! my friend, where are we the brands? where are his good prayers, his good ones confessions and its good communions? Let's say again better, where are his Easter? Be quiet, listen to the demon who screams that she belongs to him, that for a long time she gave herself to him. They have changed; he gave her do the money, the means to take revenge, he got him the opportunities to satisfy his nefarious desires; no, no, my friend, don't talk to him about heaven anymore. Besides, she does not doesn't want it, she prefers to go and burn in the abyss being all covered in crimes, than to go to heaven, in present of such a pure God. Now let us pause for a moment, my brethren, before let the demon seize this reprobate; he doesn't remains of knowledge only as much as he needs to see the horrors of the past, present and future come, which are so many torrents of the fury of God who fall on him to complete his despair. The good God grant that this unfortunate man who has despised everything, the means he offered her to save her soul were all present, at that moment, in his mind; he sees that he needed everything that the good Lord had given him felt and which was of no use to him. The good Lord allows that, in this moment, he remembers even a single good thought that will have been given to him during his life; he sees how blind he was not to save himself. O my God! what despair at this moment to see that he could so well save himself, and be damned! AlasI the present and future complete his despair! He is very- convinced that in less than three minutes he will be in hell never to come out... The priest, seeing that there is no more remedies for confession, presents him with a crucifix to excite him to pain and confidence, in saying to him: “My dear friend, here is your God who is died to redeem yourself, take confidence in his great mercy which is infinite. » — Get out of there, my friend, don't you see that you only increase its despair. But do we think about it? A crowned God of thorns, in the hands of a fickle and worldly woman, who, all his life has only sought to adorn himself and please the world!.. A God stripped of everything, even his clothes, in the hands of a miser!.. O my God! what horror!.. A God covered in wounds in the hands of a shameless!.. A God who dies for his enemies enters the hands of a vindictive one!., O my God! can we think about it without dying of horror! Oh! no, no, don't present more this God nailed to a cross, everything is finished for him, his disapproval is assured. Alas, it is necessary to die and be damned, and to have had so many means of to save oneself! My God, what rage throughout eternity for this Christian 1 Alas! My brethren, listen to him say his sad goodbyes. This poor wretch sees that his parents and friends flee from him and abandon him, saying with tears: “It’s done, he’s dead…” It’s in vain [en vain] that he strives to to say his last goodbyes: Farewell, my father and my mother! farewell, my poor children, farewell forever! But, alas! he hasn't returned the last one yet sigh, that he sees himself separated from everything, and no one listens to him more. Alas! I die and I am damned... Ah! be wiser than me!.. Oh! they told him, you must have do during your life. Oh! sad consolation. But this It’s not these goodbyes that mean the most to him: he knew that one day he would leave all that; but before falling in hell he raises his dying eyes to the sky that he lost for ever [pour jamais]; Farewell, beautiful sky! farewell, beautiful de- die, which I lost for very little; farewell beautiful company of angels; farewell, my good guardian angel, whom the good Lord had only given me to help me to save myself, and despite you, I got

lost! Farewell, Holy Virgin and tender Mother, if I had wanted to implore your help you would have obtained my forgiveness! Farewell, Jesus Christ, Son of God, who suffered so much for save me, and I got lost; you who made me to be born into a religion so consoling, so easy to obtain server! Farewell, my pastor, to whom I have caused so much sorrow in you scorned you and all that your zeal.inspired to show me that we live as I lived I couldn't save myself, goodbye forever!.. Ah I at least those who are still on earth can avoid my misfortune; but for me it's all over, more God, more sky, more happiness!... always I will cry, always I will suffer, without hope of never end!... O my God! How terrible is your justice! Eternity that you make me shed tears and cry out..., I who have always lived in the hope that one day I would escape from sin and I would vertirt; Alas! death deceived me, I did not have the time!.. Ah! my brother, Saint Jerome tells us, will you stay in sin since you fear to perish there? One day, says this great saint to us, being called to go and see a poor dying man, seeing him all lost, I asked him asks what seemed to frighten him so much. Alas! my father, I'm damned! And, saying these words, he returned the last deny sigh. 0 terrible destiny than that of a sinner who lived in sin! Alas! that the demon dragged to hell with the hope that one day they would convert! Alas! My brethren, what must you think, you who listen to me tez, (who makes) neither prayer, nor confession, and who does not don't even think about converting? My God, can we well stay in a position that exposes us to each (instant) to fall into the abyss!.. My God, give us faith, which will make us know the greatness of our misfortune if we get lost, and who will put us in the impossibility of remaining in sin! It's happiness that I wish you.

Passion Sunday — On Contrition

Vae mihi, quia peccavi nimis in vita mea. Woe is me. pnrro that I thought a lot during- in my life. (From the Confcs. of S. Augustine, book II, c. 10.)

Such, my brethren, was the language of Saint Augustine,)\■K when he replayed the years of his life, where he had plunged with such fury into the vice of infamous impurity. “Ah! woe is me, because I sinned a lot during the days of my life. » And every time this thought came to him, he felt his heart devoured and torn by regret. “O my God! he cried, a life spent without you love! oh my God, how many years wasted! Ah! Lord, deign, I beseech you, to no longer recall my past faults! » Ah! precious tears, ali! salutary regrets which a great sinner has makes such a great saint. Oh! how soon a heart broken with sorrow has regained the friendship of its God! Ah! rather to God that every time we hand over our pecked before our eyes, we can say with as much do regret that Saint Augustine: Ah! woe is me, because I sinned a lot during the years of my rape My God, have mercy on me! Oh! that our tears would soon flow, and as our life does not would soon not seem the same! Yes, my brethren, let's agree, all of us, as many as we are, with as much pain what sincerity, that we are worthy criminals to carry all (the color) of a God justly irritated by our sins, which perhaps are more multiplied than the hair of our head. But, bless for evermore [à jamais] the mercy of God who opens to us in his treasures a resource for our misfortunes! Yes, my brethren, however great our sins, however disordered whatever our conduct may have been, we are sure of our sorry, if following the example of the prodigal son, we will throw ourselves down with a (broken) heart of pain in our feet of the best of all fathers. What is my purpose, my brethren.? Here it is: it is to show you that to obtain the forgiveness of our sins, our regret must contain four qualities: 1° the sinner must hate and sincerely hates his sins through contrition; 2° that he (has) made a firm intention not to fall into it again; 3° that he make a humble declaration to the minister of the Lord; and -4° that he repairs, as much as he can, the injury done to God and the harm to our neighbor.

L To help you understand what the contrition, that is, the sorrow we must have of our sins, we should be able to make you known, on the one hand, the horror that God himself had, the torments he endured to obtain forgiveness for us from his Father; and on the other, the goods that we lose when we sin and the evils that we let us attract for the other life, and this will never be given it is up to man to understand it. Where will I lead

you,

My brethren, to make it known to you? Could it be at the bottom deserts, where so many great saints spent twenty years, (annuity, forty, fifty and even eighty years to cry over faults, which according to the world are not any mistakes? Ah! no, no, your heart wouldn't touched again. Could it be at the gate of hell to hear the screams, howls and squeaks of teethcaused speaks only regret of their sin? Ah! Bitter molder, but fruitless pain and regrets and useless! Ah! no, no, my brethren, it is not there yet where you will learn to mourn your sins with pain and the regret you must have! Ah! it's at foot of this cross still stained with the precious blood of a God who only (spread) it to erase our sins. Ah! if I were allowed to lead you to this garden of sorrows where a God equal to his Father cries our sins, not with ordinary tears, but with all his blood flowing through every pore of his body, and where his pain was so violent that it threw him in an agony that seems to take her life as she tears his heart. Ah! if I could lead you to his suite, (show him) loaded with his cross in [the streets of Jerusalem: as many steps, as many falls and as many times kicked up. Ah! if I could bring you near this Calvary where a God die weeping for our sins! Ah! shall we say again: God would have to give us this ardent love which he had set ablaze the heart of the great Bernard to whom the just seeing the cross made shed tears [verser des larmes] with so much abundance! Ah! beautiful and precious contrition, that he who owns you is happy! But who am I going to tell about it, who is the one who meets it? firm in his heart? Alas! I don't know anything about it. Would it be this to this hardened sinner who perhaps for twenty years, thirty years abandoned his God and his soul. Ah! no, no, it would do the same function as the one which would like to soften a rock by throwing water on it, while it would only harden it more. Would it be to this Christian who despised missions, retreats and jubilee and all the instructions of its pastors? Ah! no, no, it would be like wanting to heat water by putting ice. Could it be these people who are happy to have their Easter, continuing their same kind of life, which every year has the same sins to tell? Ah! no, no, they are victims let the wrath of God become fat for food to the eternal flames. Ah! let's say better, they are like criminals who are blindfolded and who, while waiting to be executed, engage in all that that their spoiled hearts could desire. Would it still be these Christians who confess every three weeks or a month, which falls every day? Ah! no, no, they are blind people who don't know what they are doing nor what they should do. So who could I address? speech? alas! I don't know... O my God! where should we go to find it, who should we ask for it? Ah! Lord, I know where it (comes) from and who gives it; it comes from heaven, and it is you who give it. 0 my God! please give us this contrition which tears and devours our hearts. Ah! this beautiful contrition who disarms the justice of God, who changes our unhappy eternity into a blessed eternity! Ah! Lord, do not deny us this contrition which overthrows all the plans and artifices of the devil; this contrition which so promptly returns to us the friendship of God! Ah! beautiful virtue, that you are necessary, but that you are race! However, without it, there is no forgiveness, without olle, no sky; let's say more, without her, all is lost [tout est perdu] for us, penances, charity and alms and all co that we can do. But think to yourself, what is this means, this word of contrition, and by what mark can we know if we have it? — My friend, would you like the knowledge, here it is. Listen to me for a moment: you will see if you have it or not, and then the way to have it. Let's go into a very simple detail: If you ask me: What is contrition? I will tell you that it is a pain of the soul and a hatred of sins that one committed with firm resolve to don't fall into it again. Yes, my brethren, this provision is that which is the most necessary of all those that God requires in order to forgive the sinner; not only is she necessary, but I still add that nothing can help us dispense. A disease that robs us of the use of speech can exempt us from confession, a prompt death can exempt us from satisfaction, at least for this life; but it is not the same with contrition; without clicking it is impossible, and quite impossible to have forgiveness of his sins. Yes, my brethren, we can let's say we moan that it's this lack of contrition which is the cause of an infinite number of confessions and sacrilegious communions; but what there is still more deplorable is that we almost don't notice it never, and that one lives and dies in this unfortunate state. Yes, my brethren, nothing could be easier to understand. If we we had the misfortune of hiding a sin in our confessions, co crime is continually before our eyes like a monster that seems to devour us, which makes that it

is very rare, if we do not relieve ourselves of it one time or another. But for contrition there is none more of the same; we confess, our heart is not for nothing in the accusation that we make of our sins, we receive absolution, we (approach) the holy table with a heart as cold, as insensitive, as indifferent as if we had just done the telling of a story; we go day by day, from year to year, finally we arrive at death where we believe we have done some good; we do not find and let us see that crimes and sacrileges that our confessions have given birth to. O my God! how many bad confessions due to lack of contrition! O my God! than Christians who will only find at the hour of death unworthy confessions. But, without going any further, fear of disturbing you; I say trouble you. Ah! it's well now we should lead you with two fingers despair, so that, struck by your condition, you can repair it, without waiting for the moment when you will know it without being able to repair it. But come, my brethren, to the explanation, and you will see if, each time you you have confessed, you have had the necessary pain, and absolutely necessary to have the hope that your sins be forgiven. I say 1° contrition is a pain of the soul. It is absolutely necessary for the sinner to mourn his sins either in this world or in the next. In this world, you can erase them by the regret that you feel one, but not the other. 0 how much we should be grateful for the goodness of God, so that, instead of these eternal regrets and these the most heartbreaking pains that we deserve to suffer in the other life, that is to say in hell, God only happy that our hearts are touched with a true colorist, which will be followed by eternal joy! O my God! that you are satisfied with little 1° I say that this pain must have four qualities, if just one is missing, we can't get the forgiveness of our sins. Its first quality: it must being interior, that is to say in the depths of the heart. She therefore does not consist of tears, they are good and useful it is true; but they are not necessary. Indeed, when Saint Paul and the good thief met converted, it is not said that they wept and their pain was sincere. No, my brethren, no, it is not on the tears that must be counted: they themselves are often misleading, many people cry in court penance and at the first opportunity fall. But the pain that God asks of us, here it is. Listen what the prophet Joel tells us: “Have you had the misfortune to sin? Ah! my children, break and tear your hearts of regrets! » “If you have lost the Lord through your sins, Moses tells us, seek him in everything your heart in the affliction and bitterness of your heart. » Why, my brethren, does God want our hearts repents? It is because it is our heart which has sinned: it is from our heart, says the Lord, that all these bad thoughts, all these bad desires; it is therefore necessary absolutely that if our heart has done evil, it repents, without which God will never forgive us. 2° I say that the pain we owe must to feel for our sins is supernatural, that is to say let it be the Holy Spirit who excites it in us, and not natural causes. I distinguish: being afflicted with a- see, committed this or that sin, because it excludes us of paradise and that he deserves hell; these reasons are sur-natural, it is the Holy Spirit who is the author; this can lead us to true contrition. But to grieve because of (the) shame that sin necessarily brings with it, as well as the evils that they bring to us attract, like the shame of a young person who has lost his reputation, or of another person who has been caught stealing from your neighbor; it's all just a pain purely natural which does not deserve our forgiveness. From there it is easy to understand that the pain of our sins, that repentance for our sins can come or of the love we have for God or of the fear punishments. He who in his repentance does not consider that God has perfect contrition, a disposition so eminent that it purifies the sinner by itself before to have received the grace of absolution, provided that he is in the disposition to receive it if he can. But, for he who only repents of his sins because of punishments that his sins bring upon him, he has only an imperfect contrition which does not justify him, but it disposes only to receive his justification in the sacrament of Penance (1). Third condition of contrition: it must be sovereign, that is to say the greatest of all the theirs, greater, I say, than that which we experience losing our parents and our health, and generally everything we hold most dear in the world. If after having sinned you are not in this regret, tremble for your confessions. Alas! how many times, for the loss of an object worth nine or ten cents, we cry, we torments himself for how many days, until he can't eat, alas! and for sins and often sins mortals, we will neither shed a tear, nor we will push will be a sigh. O my God that man knows little (1) See note R at the end of the volume.

what he does when he sins! — But why is that, Do you think our pain must be so great? — My friend, here is the reason: It must be proportionate to the magnitude of the loss we suffer and to the misfortune into which sin throws us. From this judge what must our pain be, since sin brings us makes (lose) the sky with all its sweetness. Ah! that I say? he makes us lose our God with all his friendships and throws us into hell which is the greatest of all misfortunes. — But, do you think, how can we therefore recognize whether this true contrition (is) in us? Nothing could be easier. If you have it true, you will no longer act, you will no longer think the same, she will have totally (changed) you in your manner to live: you will hate what you have loved, and you will love what you have fled and despised; that is to say, that you have confessed to having or pride in your actions and in your words, you must now that you show in yourself goodness, charity for everyone. It doesn't have to be you who judged that you had made a good confession, because you could well be wrong; but it is necessary that the people who have seen and heard you before your confession, may you say: It is no longer the same; a great change has taken place in him. Alas! my God! where are these confessions which work this great good? Oh! that they are rare; but also that those which are do with all the provisions that God (requests) are too! Let us admit, my brethren, to our confusion, that if we seem so little affected, it can only come from our little of You and our little love that we have for God. Ah! if we had the happiness of understanding how good God is and how enormous the sin is, and how black (is) our ingratitude to outrage a so good Father, ah! no doubt we would appear otherwise distressed than we are. But, me you will say, I would like to have this contrition when I confess and I can't have it. But, what What did I tell you at the start? Didn't I have you said that it came from heaven, that it was God who was needed ask for it? What have the saints done, my friend, to deserve this happiness, to mourn their sins? They have to- appealed to God by fasting, prayer, by all kinds of penances and good works, because for your tears, you should not count on it in any way. I will tell you prove: open the holy books and you will be convinced. See Antiochus, how much he cries, how much he asks for mercy, however the Holy Spirit said that while weeping, he descended into hell. See Judas, he has conceived such great pain from his sin, he mourns for it with so much abundance that he ends up hanging himself. See Satil, he utters terrible cries at having had the misfortune of despise the Lord, yet he is in hell. See Cain, the tears he sheds for having sinned, yet he burns. Who among us, my brethren, who would have seen all his tears and his repentance, would not have believed that the good Lord would have forgive; yet none of them are forgiven; at place that as soon as David had said: “I have sinned; » immediately his sin was forgiven him, —And why is that? you? why this difference, that the first are not not forgiven, while David is? — My friend, here it is. This is because the former only repent and hate their sins because of the punishments and infamy that sin necessarily brings with it, and not in relation to God; whereas David wept for his sins, not because of the punishments that the Lord would make him suffer, but in view of the outrages that his fathers ches had (done) to God. His pain was so intense and so sincere that God could not refuse his forgiveness. Have you asked God for contrition before confessing? alas, perhaps you never did. Ah! tremble for your (confessions); ah! what sacrileges I O my God! how many damned Christians! i° Ello must be universal. It is reported in the life of the Saints, about the universal pain that we must have of our sins, that if we do not we do not all hate, they will not be forgiven nor one nor the other. It is reported that Saint Sebastian being in Rome and performing the most dazzling miracles which filled with admiration, the governor Chromos who, at that time, was overwhelmed with infirmities, ardently desired to see him, to ask him for healing of his ailments. When the saint was before him: There is indeed long as I groaned, covered in wounds, without having could find a man in the world to deliver me; Word is you get everything you want of your God; if you want to ask him for my healing, I promise you that I will become a Christian. Well! him said the saint, if you are in this resolution, I promots from the God whom I adore, who is the Creator of heaven and earth, that as soon as you have broken all your idols, you will be perfectly healed. The governor said to him: Not only am I ready to do this sacrifice, but even greater ones if necessary. having separated from each other, the governor begins to break his idols; the last one he took to break it, he appeared so respectable that he did not have the courage to de- sow; he convinced himself that this reserve did not prevent him- would not heal. But feeling her pain more violent as ever, all in fury, he will

find the saint by making him the most bloody reproaches, that after having broken his idols as he had commanded him, that far from being healed, he was still suffering more. But, said the saint to him, do you have them well? all broken without reserving a single one? Ilotas! does it governor crying, I only have a little left which for many years has been kept in our family; ah! it is too dear to me to destroy it! Eh Well, the saint said to him, is this what you promised me? go, break it and you will be healed. He takes it and the breeze, and immediately he was healed. There you go, my brethren, an example which shows us the behavior of a number almost infinite who repent of certain sins and not of all, and who, similar to this governor, far to heal the wounds that sin has made on their poor soul, they make deeper ones; and, as long as they have not done like him, broken this idol, that is to say broken this habit of certain sins, as long as they have not left this bad company, this pride, this desire to please, this attachment to the goods of the earth, all their confessions will only add crimes on crimes, sacrileges upon sacrileges. Ah! my God, what horror and what an abomination! And in this state they live quiet, while the demon digs a place for them in hell. We read in history an example which shows us be how the saints looked at this pain of our sins as necessary to obtain their forgiveness. A officer of the Pope having fallen ill, the Holy Father who esteemed him greatly for his virtue and his holiness, he sent one of his cardinals to show him the their illness caused him and at the same time apply plenary indulgences. Alas, I said the dying man to the cardinal, tell the Holy Father that I am infinitely grateful for the tenderness of his heart for me, but also tell him that I would be infinitely happier if he wanted to ask God for me contrition for my sins. IlelasI he cries, that will serve me all this if my heart does not break and tear with pain at having offended such a good God! My God! cries this poor dying man, “do, if possible, that the regret of my sins equals the outrages that I made you!... Oh! My brethren, that these pains are rare, seek: alas! they are as rare as good confessions. Yes, my brethren, a Christian who has sinned and who wants to obtain forgiveness must be willing to suffer all the most terrible cruelties rather than falling back into the sins he has just confessed. 1° I I will prove it to you with an example, and if, after we be confessed, we are not in these dispositions, no forgiveness... We read in the history of the fourth century, that Sapor, emperor of the Persians, being become the cruelest enemy of Christians, ordered that all the priests who do not worship the Sun and who who did not recognize him as God would be put to death. The first he had captured was the archbishop of Seleucia who was Saint Simeon. He started to try if he could seduce him with all kinds of promises. Unable to gain anything, in the hope of frightening him, he displayed before him all the torments that his cruelty could have invented to make Christians suffer, in telling him that if his stubbornness made him refuse what he commanded, he would make him go through such terrible and so rigorous (torments) that he would make him obey, and, moreover, that he would expel all the priests and all the Christians of his kingdom. But seeing him also firm that a rock in the middle of the storm-beaten seas, he had it taken to prison in the hope that the thought of the torments that were prepared for him, would make him change feelings. On the way he met an old man eunuch who was superintendent of the imperial palace. This one, touched with compassion to see a holy bishop treated so unworthily, prostrated himself before him to show him the respect he had for him. But the bishop, far from [bien loin de] appear sensitive to the testimony respectful of this eunuch, turned to the other side to reproach him for the crime of his apostasy, because that, formerly, he had been a Christian and a Catholic. This reproach which he did not expect was so sensitive to him, penetrated his heart so keenly, that at that very moment, he was no longer master of his tears or his sobs. The crime of his apostasy seemed so terrible to him that he tore off the white clothes he was wearing and took some of blacks, runs like a desperate person to throw himself (at the door of the palace, and there) indulges in all the bitterness of the the most heartbreaking pain. Ah! unhappy, what are you become? Alas I what punishments (do you) have to expect from Jesus Christ that you (have) renounced, if I am so sensitive to the reproach of a bishop who is only the minister of The one I so shamefully betrayed... But the emperor having learned everything that was happening, completely astonished at such a spectacle, asked him: “What is the cause of such pain and so many tears? » — Ah! rather to God, he cried, that all the disgraces and all the the misfortunes of the world were all upon me, rather than which is the cause of my pain. Ah! I cry what I'm not dead. Ah! could (I) again look at the sun that I had the misfortune to adore, fear to displease you. — The

emperor, who loved him because of his loyalty, tried if he could win him by promising him all kinds of goods and favors. —Ah! no, no, he cried; ah! too happy if I can by my death to repair the outrages that I have done to God, (to find) the sky that I lost. O my God and my Savior, will you still have pity on me? Ah! if at least I had a thousand lives to give to show you my regret and my return. — The emperor who heard him hold (this) language was dying of rage, and despairing of power (nothing) win, condemned him to die in torture. Ecoiitcz-lc going to torture: “Ah! Lord, what happiness to die for you; yes, my God, if I had the misfortune to renounce you, at least I will have the happiness do give my life for you. » Ah! sincere pain, powerful pain, which you so quickly regained the friendship of my God!... We read in the life of Saint Marguerite, that she had such great pain for a sin that she had understood put in her youth, that she mourned him all her life: being When she was about to die, she was asked what sin she had committed which had made him shed so many tears. “Alas! she cried, crying: how could I not not cry? Ah! or rather that I died before this sin! At the age of five or six, I had the misfortune of tell a lie to my father. » But, he was told, there is no there wasn't much to cry about. “Ah! can you please use such language! so you never designed this that it is sin, the outrage it does to God and the misfortunes that he brings to us? » Alas! My brethren, what are we going to become, if so many saints have made the rocks resound and the deserts of their groans, have formed, so say, back rivers of their tears for sins of which we play a game on ourselves, while we have committed mortal sins, perhaps more than we have hair on the head. And not a tear of pain and repentance! Ah! sad blindness where our disorders led. We read in the lives of the Desert Fathers that a thief named Jonathan, pursued by justice, ran hide near the column of Saint Simeon Stylite, hoping that the respect we would have for the saint would guarantee death. In fact, no one dared to touch him; the saint having started to pray to ask God his conversion; in that very moment he felt a pain so keen for his sins that for eight days he did nothing but cry. At the end of the eight days, he asked Saint Simeon for permission to leave him. The saint said to him: “My friend, you are going to return to the world, start your mess again. » — Ah! God me protects against such misfortune; but I ask you for go to heaven; I saw Jesus Christ who told me that all my sins were forgiven me by the great pain I felt. — “Come on, my son,” said the holy; go and sing in heaven the great mercies of God for you. » At this moment he falls dead, and the saint himself reports that he saw Jesus Christ who led his soul to heaven. 0 beautiful death, oh precious death to die of pain for having offended God! Ah! if less we don't die of pain like these great penitents, do we want, my brethren, to excite in ourselves a true contrition, let us imitate this saint evokes death lately, who every time he presented himself at the court of penance to have a sharp pain of his sins, made three stations. The first in hell, the second in heaven, the third on Calvary. First he brought his thoughts to these places of horror and in torments, he imagined seeing the damned who vomited torrents of flames from their mouths, who screamed and devoured each other; this thought made his blood run cold in his veins, he thought he would no longer to be able to live at the sight of such a spectacle, especially considering that his sins had deserved these a thousand times over. tortures. From there his spirit was transported to the sky and reviewed all these thrones of glory where were seated the blessed, he imagined the tears they had poured out and the penances they had done during their lives for such light sins and that he himself had committed so many and had not yet done anything to atone for them, which plunged him into such sadness deep that it seemed her tears could no longer dry up. Not content with any cola, he directed his steps from side of Calvary and there, as his eyes approached the cross where a God had died for him, his strength was failing him, he remained motionless, at the sight of the suffering that his sins had caused to his God. We heard him constantly repeating these words with sobs: “My God, my Dicul, can I still live considering the horrors that my sins have caused you?” This, my brethren, is what we can call for true contrition, because we let us see that he only considers his sins in relation to God.

II. — We said that true contrition must rtsnclose a good point, that is to say a firm resolution not to sin again in the future; we must will be determined and that it is not a weak one desire to correct oneself; You will never get forgiveness of your sins if you do not renounce them with all your heart. We must be in the same

feeling as the saint King-Prophet: “Yes, my God, I have promised you to be faithful in keeping your commandments; I will be there (faithful) with the help of your grace. » The Lord himself tells us: “Let the impious leave the path of his iniquities and his sin will be forgiven him. »There is therefore no mercy to hope that for him who renounces his sins with all his heart and for ever [pour jamais], because God only forgive us as much as our repentance is sincere and that we make all our efforts to no longer fall back into it. Besides, wouldn’t it be make a mockery of [se moquer de] God than to ask him for forgiveness for a sin that your would still like to commit. But, you will ask me, how (can) we know and distinguish a firm intention from a desire? weak and insufficient? if you wish to know, my brethren, listen to me for a moment, I'll show you, it's can know in three ways: 1° it is change of life; 2° it is the flight of the next opportunities of sin, and 3° it is to work with all one's power to correct and destroy bad habits. I say first of all that the first mark of a good remark, it is the change of life; it's this one that tells us shows most surely and who is least subject to us deceive. Let's come to the explanation: a mother will accuse herself of having often lost her temper with her children or her husband; after her confession, go visit her in inside his household: there is no longer any question of anger or curses; on the contrary, you see in her this gentleness, this goodness, this thoughtfulness even for his inferiors; crosses, sorrows and

Losses do not cause him to lose the peace of his soul. Do you know why this, my brethren? here it is: it’s that return to God was sincere, that her contrition was perfect and therefore she truly received forgiveness of (her) sins; finally, that grace has taken deep roots in his heart, and that it carries fruits in abundance. A young girl will come and accuse herself to have followed the pleasures of the world, the dances, the Vigils and other bad company. After his con- fession, if it is well done, go and ask for it in this vigil, or go look for it in this part of pleasure, what will we tell you? “It’s been some time we no longer see her; I think if you want it to find, you have to go either to church, or to your parents. » Indeed, if you want to go to her parents, you find it, and what is she busy with? is this talking about vanity as before or to contemplate oneself in front of a mirror glass, or to frolic with young people? Ah! no, my brethren, this is no longer her work, she has trampled on all this; you will see her reading ture of piety, relieve his mother in the work of her housekeeping, teaching her brothers and sisters, you will see her obedient and considerate towards her parents; she will like their company. If you can't find her at home, go in church, you will see her testifying to God her gratitude birth of having brought about such a great change in her: you see in her this modesty, this restraint, this thoughtfulness for everyone, as well as for poor than for the rich; modesty will be painted on his forehead, his mere presence brings you to God. Why is this, my brethren, you will tell me, that so many goods are in her? Why, my brethren, is that his pain was sincere and that she truly received forgiveness of her sins.

Another time it will be a young man who will accuse himself to have been in cabarets and games; now since he promised God to leave everything that would would displease him, as much as he loved cabarets and games, as much now he flees them. Before his confession heart was only concerned with earthly, bad things; now his thoughts are only for God, and the mis- took things from the world. All his pleasure is to to maintain with one's God and to think of ways to save his soul. These, my brethren, are the marks of true and sincere contrition; if after your confessions (you are like this), you can hope that your confessions have been good and your sins are forgiven you. But if you do the complete opposite of what I just said; if a few days after his confessions we see this girl who had promised God to leave the world and its pleasures to think only of pleasing her if I see her, I say, K as before in these worldly assemblies; if I see this mother as hotheaded and as neglectful towards her children and her servants, as quarrelsome with his neighbors than before his confession; if I find this young man again in games and cabarets, oh horror, oh abomination, oh monster of ingratitude what are you doing! O great God! what condition is this in? poor soul! oh horror! oh sacrilege! the torments of hell will they be long enough and rigorous enough to punish such an attack. 2° We say that the second mark of true contrition is the flight from the next opportunities of the sin. There are two kinds:

some take us there by themselves, like bad books, comedies, balls, dances, paintings, pictures and dishonest songs and attendance at 16 people of different sexes; the others are one occasion of sin only through bad dispositions of those who are there: like the innkeepers, the merchants who cheat or who sell on Sundays; a person in place who does not fulfill their duties either by human respect, or out of ignorance. What should a person who finds themselves in one of these positions? lo here it is: she must leave everything whatever it costs, otherwise point (of salvation). Jesus Christ tells us that if our eye or our hand (scandalizes) us, we must tear them off and throw them away from us, because, he tells us, it is worth much better go to heaven with one arm and one eye less than being thrown into hell with your whole body; that is to say, whatever it costs us, whatever loss we do, we must not stop but leave them; otherwise, point, point of forgiveness. 3° We say that the third mark of a good purpose is to work with all one's power to destroy his bad habits. We call habit the ease with which we fall back into our old sins. We must 1° watch carefully over ourselves, often do actions that are contrary: as if we are subject to pride, we must apply ourselves to practicing humility, being content to be despised, never seeking the esteem of the world, either in one's words or in his actions; always believe that what we do is poorly done; if we do well, imagine that we were unworthy of God using us, seeing us in the world as nothing more than a person who fact that he despises God during his life, and that we deserve much more than what can be said about us, in evil. Are we prone to anger? it is necessary to practice dou- heart, either in his words or in the way we behave towards our neighbor. If we are subject to sensuality, we must mortify ourselves either in drinking, whether in eating, in our words, in our looks, impose some penances on ourselves every time we let's fall back. And if you don't take these precautions, every time (you) commit the same crimes again ches, you will be able to conclude that all your confessions are worthless and you have only committed sacrilege, a crime so horrible that it would be impossible to be able to live, if you knew all the horror of it, the blackness heart and atrocities... Here is the conduct that we must follow, by making like the prodigal son, who, struck by the state where his disorders had plunged him, was ready for whatever his father demanded of him in order to have the happiness of cilier with him. First he left the country immediately where he had experienced so much evil, as well as the people which had been an occasion of sin for him; he doesn't did not even deign to look at them, although (convinced) that he would not have the happiness of reconciling with his father that as far as he would distance himself from them: so that after his sin, to show his father that his return was sincere, he only sought to please her by doing the complete opposite of what he had (done) until now. This is the model on which we must train our contrition: the knowledge we must have of our sins, the pain we must have for them, must put us in a position to sacrifice everything so as not to fall into our sins again. Oh! that they These contritions are rare! Alas I where are those who are ready to lose their very lives, rather than commit again the sins they have already confessed to? ah! I don't I don't know anything. Alas! how much on the contrary, saint tells us

Jean Chrysostôme, who only makes confessions of theater, who stop sinning for a few moments without leave sin entirely; who are, he tells us, similar to those actors who represent fights bloody and stubborn, and seem to pierce each other with blows mortals; You see someone knocked down, stretched out, losing his blood: it really seems that he lost his life, but wait until the canvas is lowered, you will see it rise up full of strength and health, he will be as he is was before the performance of the play. This is precisely, he tells us, the state where most of the people who appear before the penitentiary court. To see them sigh and groan over the sins of which they accuse each other, you would say that they really are no longer kids, that they will behave in a completely other than they have done so far. But, alas I wait, I'm not saying five days, but one or two days, you will find them the same as before their confession: same outbursts, same revenge, same gluttony, same negligence in their duties of religion. Alas! so many confessions and bad ones confessions. Ah! my children, Saint Bernard tells us, will you have true contrition for your sins? turn you on the side of this cross where your God was nailed out of love for you; ah! soon you will see it flow your. tears and your heart will break. Indeed, my brethren, (that) which made Saint Magdeleine shed so many tears when she was in her desert, the great Sal told us come...., it was nothing other than the sight of the cross. We read in his life

that after the Ascension of Jesus Christ, having retired into solitude, she asked to God the happiness of crying for your faults all your life of his youth. After his prayer, Saint Michael the Archangel appeared to him near his solitude, planted a cross at the door, she threw herself at the foot as she had done on the ordeal, she cried all her life with so much dance, that his two eyes were like two fountains. The great Ludolphe reports that a solitary one day asked God in who could be the most able to soften his heart to mourn his sins. In that moment God appeared to him as he was the tree of the cross, all covered with wounds, all trembling, loaded with a heavy cross, saying to him: “Look at me, were your heart harder than the rocks deserts, it will break and will no longer be able to live the sight of the pains that the sins of the human race caused me. » This apparition touched him so much that until his death, his life was only a life of tears and sobs. Sometimes he addressed the angels and the saints, (begging them) to come and weep with him over the torments that sins had caused to a God so good. We read in the story of Saint Dominic, that a religious person asking God for the grace to cry his sins, Jesus Christ appeared to him with his five wounds open, blood flowed in abundance. Our Lord after kissing him, told him to bring his mouth closer of the opening of his wounds; he felt so much happiness that he could not understand how his eyes could shed so many tears. Oh! that they were happy, my brethren, these great penitents, to find so many tears for mourn their sins, fear of going to mourn them in the other life! Oh! what a difference between them and the Christians of our day who have committed so many sins! And no regrets or tears!... Alas! what are we going to become? what will be our home? Oh! so many Christians lost because we must, or mourn our sins in this world or go cry for them in the abyss. 0 my God! give us this pain and this regret which regains your friendship! What should we conclude from this what we have just said, my brethren.? here it is: it is constantly ask God for this horror of sin, to flee the occasions of sin and never lose lest the damned burn and weep in hell only because they did not repent of their sins in this world and that they did not want them leave. No, however great the sacrifices what we have to do, they must not be able to hold us back; it is absolutely necessary to fight, to suffer and groan in this world, if we want to have the honor of going and singing the praises of God throughout eternity, it is the happiness that

Holy Thursday

Caro mea vere est cibus. My flesh is truly food. (S. John, vi, 56.)

Can we, my brethren, in all our holy religion, find a more precious moment, a happier circumstance than that of the moment when Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament adorable altars? No, my brethren, no, because this circumstance reminds us of the immense love of a God for his creatures. It is true that in everything that God has done, its perfections manifest themselves to infinity. By creating the world he makes manifest the greatness of his power. In governing this vast universe, he proves to us a wisdom incomprehensible, and even we can say with the thirteenth psalm: “Yes, my God, you are infinitely great in the smallest things, and in creation of the vilest insects. » But, in the institution of this great Sacrament of love, it is not only its power and wisdom, but the immense love of his heart for us. Knowing very well that his time was close to return to his Father, he could not bring himself to to leave us alone on earth, through so many enemies, all of whom only sought our downfall. Yes, before Jesus Christ instituted this Sacrament of love, he knew very well how much contempt, profanations, he was going to expose himself; but all this is not capable of stop it; he wants us to have the happiness of finding him whenever we want to look for it, and, by this great Sacrament, he undertakes to remain in the midst of us, and the day and the night; and in Him we will find a Savior God, who, every day, will offer himself for us to the righteousness of his Father. 0 happy nation! that has it never understood? To inspire us with respect and great love towards Jesus Christ in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, I will show you how much Jesus Christ loved us in the institution of this sacrament. 0 what happiness, my brethren, a creature receives its God! feed on it! and get fat! 0 infinite, immense and incomprehensible love!... Can a Christian think about it, and not die of love and fear at the view of its indignity!...

I. It is true that in all the sacraments which Jesus Christ has instituted, he shows us mercy infinite. In the sacrament of Baptism, he snatches us from the hands of Lucifer and makes us the children of God his Father; he opens to us the Heaven which was closed to us; he makes us partakers of all the treasures of his Church, and, if we are faithful to our commitments, eternal happiness is assured to us. In the sacrament of Penance, he shows us and shares with us his mercy to infinity; since he takes us out of hell, where our sins of malice had led us, and, again, applies to us the infinite merits of his death and his passion. In the sacrament of Confirmation, he gives us a spirit of light to con- lead in the path of virtue, which makes us known the good we must do, and the evil we must avoid; moreover, he gives us a spirit of strength to overcome anything that can prevent us from doing our hi. In the sacrament of Extreme Unction we let us see with the eyes of faith that Jesus Christ covers us of the merits of his death and his passion. In that of the Order, Jesus Christ gives all his powers to his priests; they bring it down into that of Marriage, we see that Jesus Christ sanctifies all our actions, even those where we seem to only follow the corrupt inclinations of nature. These, you will tell me, are mercies worthy of a God who is infinite in everything. But, in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, it goes further: all this, seems to be only an apprenticeship of his love for men; he wants, for the happiness of his creatures, that his body and his soul and his divinity are found in all corners of the world, so that every time we if you want, you can find it; and that with Him we find all kinds of happiness. If we are in the pains and sorrow, he will comfort us and relieve us. Are we sick? either he will heal us, or he will will give strength to suffer in such a way as to deserve the sky. If the devil, the world and our inclinations make us war, he will give us weapons to fight, to resist, and to achieve victory. If we are (poor), he will enrich us with all kinds of riches for time and eternity. It's quite enough please, you think. Oh! no, my brethren, his love is not yet satisfied. He still has other gifts to do to us, that his immense love found in his burning heart for the world, this thankless world, which does not seems to be filled with so many goods as to outrage his benefactor. But no, my brethren, let us leave ingratitude men for a moment, let's open the door to this Sacred and adorable heart, let us withdraw for a moment in his flames of love, where we will see what can a God who loves us. O my God! who can understand, and not die of love and pain, seeing, on one side, so much charity and, on the other, so much of contempt and ingratitude We read in the Gospel that Jesus Christ, knowing very well that the time when the Jews had to do it dying had happened, he told his Apostles that he wanted greatly celebrate Passover with them. This moment for evermore [à jamais] happy for us having arrived, he began to table, wanting to leave us a token of his love. He gets up from the table, takes off his clothes, takes a cloth around him; having put water in a vase, he begins to wash the feet of his Apostles and even of Judas, knowing very well that he was going to betray him. It's that he wanted to show us with what purity we had to approach him (1). Having returned to table, he took bread in his holy and venerable hands, raising his eyes to heaven to give (thanks) to his Father, in order to make us understand that this great gift came to us from heaven; he blessed it and distributed it to his Apostles, saying to them: “Eat of it all, this is truly my Body which will be delivered for you. » Having then taken the chalice, in which there was mixed wine with water he also blessed him, and presented him to them we said to them: “Drink of it all, this is my Blood, (l) To show us two things: purity and humility. (Note of the Venerable.)

which will be poured out for the remission of sins, and all them. every time you say the same words, you will perform the same miracle; that is to say, you will change the bread in my Body and wine in my Blood. » What love? for us, my brethren, than that of a God in the institution of the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist! Tell me, my brethren, with what feeling of respect would we not have been imbued with if we had been on earth, and had seen with our own eyes Jesus Christ when he instituted this great holy Sacrament of love. However, my brethren, this great miracle is done each time the priest celebrates the Holy Mass, where this divine Savior goes present on our altars. Ah! if we had this faith live, what respect would we not be imbued with? with what respect and trembling would we appear not before this great sacrifice, where a God shows us the greatness of his love and his power l He is true that you believe it; but you act like you didn't believe it. If we must make you clearly understand the greatness of this mystery, listen to me, and you will

see how much The respect that we must give to it should be great. We read in the story that a priest saying the holy mass in a church outside the town of Bolsène, and doubting, after having pronounced the words of consecration, the reality of the Body of Jesus Christ in the holy Host: that is to say, if the words of the consecration had really changed the bread to the Body of Jesus Christ and the wine to his Blood, at that very moment, the holy Host was completely covered in blood. Jesus Christ seemed want to reproach his minister for his infidelity, carry him to groan, to make him receive the faith he had just lose through doubt; and, at the same time, show us by this great miracle, how much we must be convinced of his holy presence in the holy Eucharist. This holy Host shed blood with such abundance that the corporal, the tablecloth and the altar itself were all covered. The Pope, to whom we informed of this miracle, ordered that this corporal be brought to him all bloody; he was taken to the town of Orviettc, where he was received with extraordinary pomp, and deposited in the church. Having then built a magnificent church to receive this precious deposit... Every year we carry in procession this precious relic, on the Feast of God. See, my brethren, how much this must strengthen the faith for those who have any doubts. But, my God, how can we doubt, after the words of Jesus Christ himself who said to his apostles, and in their person to all the priests: “As often as you pronounce these same words, you will perform the same miracle, that is to say, you will do like me: you will change bread in my Body and wine in my Blood. » What love! My brethren, what charity is that of Jesus Christ, to choose the day before (of the day) that we must do it die to institute a Sacrament by which he will remain among us, to be our Father, our Comforter and all our happiness! Even happier than those who lived during his mortal life, where he was only in a place, where it was necessary to do many leagues to have the pleasure of seeing him; today, we find it in all places of the world, and this happiness is promised to us until the end of the world. O immense love of a God for his creatures! No, my brethren, nothing can stop it, when it comes to us show the greatness of his love. In this moment happy for us, all Jerusalem is on fire, all furious populace, all conspire to destroy him; everyone wants spill this adorable blood; and it is precisely in this moment that he prepares for them the most ineffable pledge of his love. Men hatch the darkest plots against him, while he is only busy giving them all that he has most precious, which is himself. We only think of raising an infamous cross to do so die, and he only thinks of raising an altar to sacrifice himself every day for us. We are preparing to shed his Blood, Jesus Christ wants this same Blood be for us a drink of immortality for the consolation and happiness of our souls. Yes, my brethren, we can say that Jesus Christ loves us to the point of exhaustion the riches of his love, sacrificing himself in all that his wisdom and his power were able to inspire him. 0 love tender and generous of a God for vile creatures like us, who are so unworthy of it! Ah! My brethren, what respect should we not have for this great sacrament where a God made man makes himself present every day on our altars! Although we see that Jesus Christ is goodness itself, (he does not let) sometimes than to rigorously punish the contempt that we make of his holy presence, as we see in several places in history (1). It is reported that a priest from Fribourg, wearing the good God to a sick man, he happened to pass into a square, where there were a lot of people dancing. The musician, although without religion, stopped and said: “I hear the bell, we carry the good Lord to a ma- (i) Alas! how many who do not have the faith of the demons who tremble in his presence. Alas, we only have a languid and almost dead. (A'ote of the Venerable.)

lade, let's put ourselves on one's knees [à genoux]. » But in this company, there was found an impious woman inspired by the fury of hell: “Let us only continue,” she said, “there is bells hung around the necks of my father's cattle; when they pass, we neither stop nor stand not received on one's knees [à genoux]. » The whole company applauds this impiety, and everyone will continue to dance. In the At the same time, there came a storm so strong that all the people who were dancing were carried away without being able to never know what became of them. Alas! My brethren, all these wretches paid dearly for the contempt they made of the presence of Jesus Christ: what we owe Do you understand how much we must respect the saint presence of Jesus Christ, either in his temple or when we learn that it is taken to poor sick people.

II. We say that Jesus Christ, to operate this great miracle, chooses bread which is the food of all world, rich and poor, of those who are strong as one who is languishing, for us show that this heavenly food is for all Christians who want to preserve the life of grace and strength to fight the demon. We see that when Jesus Christ performed this great miracle, he raised his eyes to heaven to give thanks to its Pig, to show us how much this happy moment for us was desired by him and in order to prove to us the greatness of his love. Yes, my children, said this divine Savior to them, my Blood is eager to spread himself for you; my body burns with desire to be torn to heal your wounds; far from being frightened by the idea of the bitter sadness that the thought of my sufferings caused me in advance and of my death, on the contrary, it is for me the height of my pleasure. What causes this is that you will find in my sufferings and my death a remedy for all your evils. Oh! what love, my brethren, than that of a God for his creatures! Saint Paul tells us that in the mystery from the Incarnation, he hid his divinity; but that in that of the sacrament of the Eucharist, he went as far as hide his humanity. Alas! My brethren, there is only faith who can act in such an incomprehensible mystery. Yes, my brethren, wherever we are, let us turn with pleasure our thoughts, our desires, on the side where rests this adorable Body, to unite us with the angels who adore it with so much respect. Let us be careful to do like these impious people who have no respect in these temples that are so holy, so respectable and so sacred spoke of the presence of a God made (man), who, day and night, lives among us! Often we see that the Eternal Father rigorously punishes (those) who despise his divine Son. We we read in history, that a tailor having found himself in a house where the good Lord was brought to a sick person, those who were near the sick man told him to get down on one's knees [à genoux], he did not want to; but, with a horrible blasphemy: “I,” he said, “put myself on one's knees [à genoux], I respect much more a spider which is the vilest animal, that your Jesus Christ whom you want me to adore. » Alas! My brethren, what is he capable of who has lost his faith! But the good Lord did not let this horrible sin unpunished, at the same moment, a big spider all black detached itself from the paneling, and came to rest on the mouth of the blasphemer and pricked his (lips). Immediately he swelled and died immediately. See, my brethren, how guilty we are when we do not not this great respect for the presence of Jesus Christ. No, my brethren, let us not tire of contemplating this mystery of love where a God, equal to his Father, nourishes his children, not from ordinary food, nor from this manna with which the Jewish people were fed in the desert; but of his adorable Body and his precious Blood. Who could ever think so if it wasn't himself who tells us and does it at the same time? Oh! My brethren, that all these wonders are well worthy of our admiration and our love! A God, after having taken charge of our weaknesses, shares with us all these benefits! 0 nation of Christians, how happy you are to have a God so good and so rich... We read in Saint John that he saw an angel to whom the Eternal Father gave the vase of his fury to pour it out on all nations; but here we see quite the opposite. The Eternal Father gives in the hands of his Son the vessel of his mercy to be spread over all the nations of the earth. In speaking to us of his adorable Blood, he tells us how to his Apostles: “Drink from it all and you will find remission of your sins and eternal life. » 0 happiness ineffable!... oh happy source! who will prove until the end of the centuries as this belief was to do everything our happiness. Jesus Christ never stopped performing miracles to bring us to a living faith in his presence real. We see in history that there was a Christian woman, but very poor. Having borrowed from a Jew a small sum of money, she gave him to pledge the best of his clothes. The feto of Easter being near, she begged the Jew to return her one day the (dress) that she had given him. The Jew (told him) that not only did he want to give him his effects, but still his money, on condition only that she would bring the Holy Host when she had it received from the hand of the priest. The desire that this wretch had to have her effects, to not be obliged to return her money that she had borrowed, took her to a very horrible action. The next day, she went at his parish church. After she had received the saint Host on the tongue, she hastened to take it and put it in a tissue. She took it to this wretch Jew who had only made this request to exercise his fury against Jesus Christ. This abominable man treated Jesus Christ with terrible fury; and we see that Jesus Christ himself showed how these outrages that were done to him were sensitive to him. The Jew began by putting the Holy Host on a table, he slashed with his penknife as much as he was happy; but this unfortunate man immediately saw coming out of the holy Host of blood in abundance, which made

his child. Then having contemptuously removed it from above the table, he hung it by a nail against the wall and he whipped as much as he wanted. He pierced with a spear; Blood came out again. After all these cruelties, he threw her into a boiler of boiling water: immediately the water seemed to change into blood. The host then appeared in the form of Jesus Christ on the cross: which frightened him so much that he ran hide in a corner of his house. Meanwhile the children of this Jew, who saw the Christians going to the church, said to them: “Where are you going? since my father killed your God; he is dead, you will not find him more. » A woman who was listening to what these children were saying came into their house. And, indeed, she still lives the holy Host which was in the form of Jesus Christ crucified; but it soon resumed its ordinary form.

This woman having taken a vase which she presented, the Holy Host came to rest in it. This happy, very content woman immediately took her into the church of Saint-Jean en Grève, where it was placed in a place suitable to be worshiped there. For this unfortunate person, we offered him his forgiveness if he wanted to convert by becoming (a Christian); but he found himself so hardened that he loved better to let yourself be burned alive than to become a Christian. (However) his wife, his children, and many Jews were baptized. According to these miracles that Jesus Christ had just operated, and to never lose the memory of these wonders, the house was changed into a church where they established a community, so that there would continually be people for make public amends [faire amende honorable] to Jesus Christ, for the outrages that this unfortunate Jew had done to him facts. We cannot hear this, my brethren, without shudder. Well! My brethren, this is what Jesus Christ exposes himself to for the love of us, and to which he will be exposed until the end of the world. What love, AL F., from a God for wel to what excesses he carries it towards his creatures! We say that Jesus Christ holding the chalice between his holy hands, said to them: A little while longer and this precious Blood will be shed in a way bloody and visible, it is for you that it will be re- pandu, the ardor I have to pour it into your hearts made me use this method. It is true that jealousy of my enemies is indeed a cause of my death, but she is (not) one of the main ones; the accusations they have invented against me to ruin me, perfidy of the disciple who will betray me, the cowardice of the judge who will condemn me and the cruelty of the executioners who will make me die, are so many instruments with which I infinite love comes out to prove to you how much I loves you. Yes, my brethren, it is for the remission of our sins that this blood will be shed, and this sacrifice will be renewed every day for the remission of our sins. Do you see, my brethren, how much Jesus Christ loves us, since he sacrifices himself for us to the justice of his Father with such eagerness; and much more, he wants this sacrifice to be renewed every day and in all places in the world. What happiness for us, my brethren, to know that our sins, even before we have them committed, were expiated in this moment of the great sacrifice of the cross! Let us come often, my brethren, at the foot of our tabernacles, to comfort us in our sorrows, to strengthen us in our weaknesses. Do we have it great misfortune of having sinned? The adorable Blood will ask grace for us. Ah! My brethren, that the faith of the first Christians was much livelier than ours! In the early days, number of Christians crossed the seas to go visit the holy places where the mystery of our redemption. When we showed them the upper room where Jesus Christ had instituted this divine Sacrament which been devoted to nourishing our souls, when we made them see the place where he had watered the earth with his tears and of his Blood during his prayer and his agony, they could leave these holy places without shed tears [verser des larmes] in abundance. But when they were led to Calvary where he had endured so much torment for us, they seemed to be unable to live any longer; they were inconsolable, because these places recalled time, actions and the mysteries which have been wrought for us; they felt faith rekindled within them, their hearts burning with new fire. 0 happy places! they cried, where so much miracles were wrought to save us. But,

My brethren, without going so far and without giving us the trouble to cross the seas, to expose ourselves to many dangers gers; do we not have here Jesus Christ in the midst of us, (not only) as God, but in body and in soul? Are our churches not as worthy of respect as these holy places where these pilgrims went? Oh! My brethren, our happiness is too great; no, no, never we will not understand it. 0 happy nation than that Christians! to see everything being renewed every day the wonders that the omnipotence of God wrought

once on Calvary to save men. Why then, my brethren, do we not see this same love, this same recognition, this same respect, since the same miracles are performed every days before our eyes? Alas! it's that we have so much abused graces, that the good Lord, in punishment of our ingratitude, has taken away our faith; barely there let us feel and understand that we are in the presence of God. My God! what a misfortune for the one who has lost faith! Alas! My brethren, as soon as we have lost our faith, we have nothing but contempt for this august Sacrament, and how many who let themselves (go) to the point of impiety, mocking those who are so happy to come and draw the graces and strength necessary to save. Let us fear, my brethren, that the good Lord will not punish for the little respect we have for his adorable presence; Here is a most frightening example. Cardinal Baronius reports in his Annals that there had in the town of Lusignan, near Poitiers, a person who had great contempt for the person of Jesus Christ: she mocked and despised those who frequented the Sacraments; she ridiculed their votion. However, the good Lord, who loves the conversion of the sinner that his loss, gave him several times remorse of conscience, she saw clearly that she hurt, that those she mocked were more happy that she; but as soon as the opportunity presented itself she started again, and, by this means, from little by little [peu à peu], she ends up stifling the remorse that the good Lord gave him born. But to hide better, she tried to win the friendship of a religious saint, superior of the monastery of Bonneval which was very close. She often went there, even glorying in it, although impious, and wanted to believe she was good when she was with these good religious people. The superior, who saw more or less what was in soul, said to him several times: “My dear friend, you have no not enough respect for the presence of Jesus Christ in the adorable Sacrament of our altars; but I believe that if you want to convert, you will have to leave the world and retire to a monastery to do penance. You yourself know how many times you have profaned the Sacraments, you are covered with sacrileges; if you were to die you would be thrown into hell for all eternity. Believe me, remember to repair your profanations; how can you live in a so unhappy state? » This poor man seemed to listen to him and even benefit from his advice, because he felt good himself that his conscience was loaded with sacrileges; but he didn't want to make a few small sacrifices that he should, so that with all his thoughts he always remained the same; but the good Lord gets tired of his impiety and his sacrileges, abandoned him to himself; he fell ill. The abbot hastened to go see him, knowing how bad his poor soul was. This poor man seeing this good father, who was a saint and who came to see him, began to cry with joy > and perhaps in the hope that he would pray for him" to help him get his soul out of the quagmire of his sacrileges, he asked the abbot to stay a little long. The night having arrived, everyone retired, except the abbot who remained with the patient. This poor unfortunate man started to cry horribly: “Ah! my Father, help me! ah! my Father, come, come to my aid! » But, alas! it was no longer time, the good Lord had abandoned him as punishment for his sacrileges and his impieties. “Ah! my Father, here are two terrible lions who want carry me away. Ah! my Father, help me! » The abbot, all frightened, on one's knees [à genoux] threw himself to ask for mercy for him; but it was too late, the justice of God had delivered to the power of demons. The patient changes everything loudly and takes a stale tone; he got to him speak like a person who is not at all (sick) and who has all his wits: “My Pore,” he said to him, “these lions who were around me earlier have withdrawn; » but as they spoke together familiarly, the patient lost his speech and seemed to be dead. However although the monk believed he was dead, he wanted to see the unhappy end of it all; he spent the rest of the night with the patient. This poor unfortunate, after a few moments, came to himself, spoke again as before, said to the superior: “My Father, I have come to be cited at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, and my impieties and my sacrileges are the cause that I am condemned to burn in hell. » The superior, completely terrified, began to pray, to ask if there would still be any resource for the salvation of this unfortunate man; the dying, lo when he saw him praying, he said: “My Father, leave your prayer, the good Lord will never hear you regarding me, the demons are at my side; they are just waiting for the moment of (my) death, which will not delay, to drag me into hell to burn there for an eternity. » all of a sudden [Tout à coup] entered of fear: “Ah! my Father, the devil takes me away; farewell My Father, I have disregarded your advice and I am damned. » Saying this, he vomited his cursed soul into hell. The superior withdrew shedding tears over the fate of this unfortunate man who, from his bed, had fallen into hell. Alas! My brethren, how great the number

of these profane people is how many Christians have lost their faith through sacrifices light! Alas! My brethren, if we see so many Christians who no longer attend the sacraments or who do not frequent only very rarely, let's not look for them reasons other than sacrilege. Alas! how much others are torn by remorse of conscience, who feel guilty of sacrilege and who, in a state that makes heaven and earth tremble, await death. Ah! My brethren, go no further, you are not yet arrived at the same misfortune as this reprobate of whom we just talked. But what do you know if before death you will not be abandoned by God like him, and thrown away in the fire? O my God! how to live in such a frightening state? Ah! My brethren, there is still time, let's come back, let's throw ourselves at the feet of Jesus Christ who rests in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist. He will again offer the merit of his death and passion for us to his Father, and we (will be) sure to obtain mercy. Yes, my brethren, we are sure that if we have great respect for the presence of Jesus Christ in the adorable Sacrament of our altars, we will obtain whatever we want. Since, my brethren, these processions are all dedicated to worship Jesus Christ in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, for the to compensate for the outrages he receives there, let us follow him in our processions, let us walk in his wake with as many respect and devotion that the first Christians followed in his preaching, where he never passed in a place without spreading any kind of blessings (1). Yes, my brethren, we see in history (by) quantity of examples how the good Lord punishes those who desecrate the adorable presence of his Body and his Blood. It is reported that a thief having entered a church during the night, he removed all the sacred vessels where the holy hosts were contained, he took (them) away even in a place, that is to say, a place which was near Saint-Denis. Being there he wanted to see again the vases in order to know if he had still left some wafers. He found another one which, as soon as the vase was opened, flew into the air and fluttered after him; it was this miracle which caused the thief to be discovered by people who stopped him. The abbot of Saint-Denis was informed of this, and gave notice to the bishop of Paris. The holy Host remained miraculously suspended in the air. The bishop having come with all his priests and many others people in procession, the holy Host went to rest in the ciborium of the priest who had consecrated it. We took her to a church where a high mass was founded one day of each week in memory of this miracle. Tell me, my brethren, do we need more to inspire us with great respect for the presence of Jesus Christ, whether we are in our churches or whether we follow him in our processions? Let us come to Him with (1) See the prophet in the desert, Zacchaeus, the B. M. of Saint Peter, Magdelcine, the woman sick with an issue of blood, Lazarus resurrected. (Note of the Venerable.)

great confidence; he is good, he is merciful, he loves us, and, from this, we are sure of receiving everything we ask of him; but let us have humility, purity, love of God, contempt for life;... Let us be careful not to indulge in distractions. Let us love the good Lord, my brethren, with all our heart, and through this, we will have our paradise in this world..;

17

Good Friday — Sin Renews the Passion of Jesus Christ

Sin renews the passion of Jesus Christ.

Prolapsi sunt: rursum crucifigentes sibimetipsis Filium Dei. Those who sin crucify within themselves the Son of God again. (S. Paul to the Hebrews-, v i, 6.)

LET US OPOne can conceive no crime, my brethren, more horrible than that of the Jews when they put to death the Son of God whom they had been awaiting for four thousand years, he who had been the admiration of the prophets, the hope of the patriarchs, the consolation of righteous, the joy of heaven, the treasure of earth, happiness of the universe? A few days ago, they had received in triumph upon his entry into Jerusalem, demonstrating so clearly that they recognized him as the Savior of the world. Tell me, my brethren, is it possible that, despite all this, they want to make him die after having overwhelmed him do all kinds of outrages? What harm did they have? does this divine Savior? or rather, what good did he not do them by

coming to deliver them from the tyranny of the demon, to reconcile them with his Father, to open the door for them? from heaven that Adam's sin had closed to them? Ilelas 1 of

GOOD FRIDAY. what is not capable of the man who allows himself to be blinded by his passions! Pilate left the Jews the choice of their deliver or Jesus or Barabbas which was a badge of yours them. They deliver the thief charged with crimes; and Jesus, who was the very innocent, much more, their Re- destroyer, they want him to die I 0 my God! what an unworthy preference! This surprises you, my brethren, you are quite right; However, if I dared, I would say we make this preference every time that we sin. And to make you feel it better, I will show you how great is the outrage that we let us do in J.-C. by preferring the path of our inclinations in the way of God. Yes, my brethren, the malice of men made them find means to renew suffering and death by J. - C, not only in a manner as cruel as among the Jews; but still in a sacrilegious way and full of horror. J. - C, on earth, had only one life and that an ordeal where he was to be crucified; but, since dead, man through his sin causes him to find as much cross that there are hearts on earth. For you better to convince us, let’s take a closer look at this. What do we see in the passion of J.-C? Isn't this a God betrayed, abandoned even by his disciples; a God put in parallel with an infamous thief? a God exposed to fury of libertinism and treated like a theater king? finally, is this not a God crucified on a cross? Everything cola, you will agree, was very humiliating and very cruel in the death of J.-C However, my brethren, I do not don't be afraid to tell you that what happens every day among Christians, is still much more sensitive to Jesus Christ, than anything the Jews could have done to him suffer.

1° I know well that J.-C. was betrayed and abandoned by his apostles: this was perhaps even the most sensitive wound to his heart so good. But I say that through the malice of man and the devil, this painful wound is renewed every day, among an infinite number of bad Christians. If J. - C, my brethren, in the holy mass, left us the memory and the merit of his passion; he has allowed that there were still men, Christians bearing the character of his disciples, and who, nevertheless, betray him and abandon him as soon as the opportunity presents itself. They have no scruples about giving up at their baptism nor to deny their faith; and this, by fear of being mocked or scorned by some libertines or some little ignorant people. Of this number are three quarters of people today, who do not dare to show by their actions that they are Christians. Now, we abandon our God every time we let our prayers evening or morning, and we miss the Holy Mass, Vespers, or other exercises which do in the church. We have abandoned the good Lord since we no longer frequent the sacraments. Ah! Lord, where are those who are faithful to you, and who follow to Calvary?,.. Jesus Christ, in time of his passion, already foresaw how few Christians would follow him everywhere, how few, that neither the torments nor death could separate. Among all his disciples, there were only his holy Mother and Saint John, who had enough courage to accompany him until Calvary. As long as Our Lord filled his disciples with good fact, they were always ready to suffer. Such were Saint Peter, Saint Thomas; but the moment of the test 51 arrived, all fled, all abandoned him. Imago evident from so many Christians who do the most to God beautiful resolutions; but who, at the slightest test, leave and abandon it. They do not want to recognize or God nor his providence. A little slander, a little harm that will be done to them, a somewhat long illness, the fear of losing the friendship of a person from whom they have received or from whom they expect some good, then makes them regard religion as nothing. They put it aside, and even go so far as to lash out against those who practice. They turn everything into evil, cursing the people they believe to be the cause. Alas! my God, what deserters! that there are few Christians for you follow, like the Blessed Virgin, to Calvary!... But, you will ask me, how can we know that we follow J.-C? My brethren, nothing could be easier to know. It is when you faithfully keep the commandments. We are commanded to pray to God evening and morning with great respect: well! do you do it on one's knees [à genoux], before working, in the desire to please God and save your soul; or, on the contrary, do you out of habit, out of routine, without thinking of God, without thinking that you are in danger of getting lost, and that, by therefore, you need the graces of the good Lord so as not to damn yourself? God's commandments forbid you from working on the holy day of Sunday. Well I see if you are faithful to it, if you have passed holy this day, to pray, to confess your sins loved ones, fear that

death will surprise you in a state capable of leading you to hell. Examine the ma- last time you attended Holy Mass, for see if you have been fully impressed with the grandeur of this action, if you really thought it was J.-C. him- even as man and as God who was present at the altar. Did you come there with the provisions that the

Holy Virgin had on Calvary, since it is the same God and the same sacrifice? Did you testify to God, how angry you were for having offended him, and that with the help of his grace, you would like better die than sin in the future? Have you done everything do your best to make yourself worthy of the favors that the good Lord wanted to grant you? Have you asked him to give you the grace to take good advantage of the instructions that you have the pleasure of hearing, and of which the purpose was to instruct you on your duties towards him and your next one? The commandments of God forbid you from swearing. See what words came out of your mouth, consecrated to God by holy baptism; examine whether you have ever sworn the holy name of God, whether you have not said bad words, etc. The good God commands you by a commandment to love your fathers and your mothers, and the rest. You say you are child of the Church? see if you observe what she commands you... (cite the commandments). Yes, my brethren, if we are faithful to God like the Holy Virgin, we will fear neither the world nor the demon; we will be ready to sacrifice everything, even our life. Here is an example. The story goes that after the death of Saint Sixtus, all the riches of the Church were entrusted to Saint Lawrence. Emperor Valerian made come the saint, and ordered him to deliver to him all his treasures. Saint Laurent, without being moved, asked the prince a period of three days. During this time he gathered all that he could find of the blind, the lame, and others poor or sick, filled with infirmities or covered ulcers. The three days had passed, Saint Laurent showed them to the Emperor, telling him that there was all the treasure of the Church. Valerien, surprised and terrified to find himself in the presence of a crowd which seemed to bring together all the miseries of the earth, entered into fury, and, turning towards his soldiers, he ordered Laurent to be loaded with chains and in irons, reserving the pleasure of putting him to death a slow and cruel death. In fact, he had him beaten rods, made him tear his skin and undergo torments of all kinds. The saint made fun of all these tortures; also, Valérien not having any possessions, had a bed made up iron on which Laurent was laid. Then we lit under a small fire of coals, in order to roast it leisure, and thus make his death more cruel and slower. When the fire had consumed part of his body, Saint Laurent, still playing with torture, turned towards the emperor, his face laughing and glowing of light: “Don’t you see,” he said to him, “that my flesh is roasted enough on one side? So turn it the other way, so may it also be glorious in heaven. » On the orders of the tyrant, the executioners turned the martyr. Some time later, Saint Lawrence addressed the emperor: “My flesh is currently quite roasted, you can eat. » Do you not recognize there, my brethren, a Christian, who, imitating the Holy Virgin and Saint Magdeleine, knows how to follow his God to Calvary? Alas! My brethren, what will we become when the good Lord puts us face to face with these saints, who preferred to suffer everything, rather than betray their religion and their conscience? 2° We did not just give up Jesus Christ, like the apostles, who, after having been filled with his blessings, fled, while he had the no more need for consolation. But, alas! that the number is great among those who give preference to Barabbas, that is to say, who prefer to follow the world and their passions, that J.-C. carrying his cross! How many times have we- we received as in triumph in holy communion, and some time later, seduced by our passions, we we preferred to this King of glory sometimes a pleasure of a moment, sometimes a base interest, which we pursued despite the remorse of our conscience. How many times My brethren, have we not been divided between our conscience and our passions, and, in this fight, have we not not muffled the voice of God to listen only to that of our bad inclinations? If you doubt it, listen to me a moment, and you will understand it as clearly as it is possible. Our conscience, which is our judge, when we do something against the law of God, tells us internally: “What are you going to do? Here it is your pleasure on one side and your God on the other; you can't please both at the same time: for which of two do you want to declare yourself?... Renounce either your God or at your pleasure. » Alas, how often we act like the Jews; we give preference to Barabbas, that is to say, to our passions! how often have we not say: “I want my

pleasure. » Our conscience replied: “But what will become of your God? » — “Let it be with my God whatever it pleases him; resume our passions, I want to satisfy myself. » — “You know well, conscience tells us through the remorse it gives us makes you feel, that by taking these forbidden pleasures, you go and kill your God a second time. » — “That it matters to me, our passion responds, if my God is crucified, provided that I am content. » — “But what harm does your God, and what reason have you to abandon him? You know well that every time you despised him, you walked away repented, and that by following your evil inclinations, you lose your soul, heaven and your God! » — But passion, which burns with the desire to satisfy oneself: “My pleasure, that is my

GOOD FRIDAY » 401 reason. God is the enemy of my pleasure, believe it- cified! » — “Would you prefer a moment's pleasure [plaisir d'un instant] to your God? » — “Yes,” cries passion, “come what may.” of my soul and of my God, provided that I enjoy. » However, this, my brethren, is what we do every day. times we sin. It is true that we do not we do not always report so clearly; but we know very well that it is impossible for us to desire and to commit sin, without losing our God, heaven and our soul. Isn't it true that every time we are about to sin, we hear a voice interior that screams at us to stop; otherwise, we will lose us and put our God to death? Ah! we can well say, my brethren, the passion that the Jews made suffer at J. - C, was almost nothing compared to that which the Christians make him endure, by the outrages of mortal sin. The Jews preferred a thief to J.C. who had committed several murders; and what does the Christian sinner do?... He is not a man he prefers to her God is, let us say it with groans, a miserable thought of pride, hatred, revenge or impurity; it is an act of gluttony, a glass of wine, a miserable gain of barely five sous; it is a dishonest look or some infamous action: that is what he prefers to God of all holiness! Ah! unhappy, what do we do? what will not be our horror, when J. -C will show us what we preferred!... Ah! My brethren, can we carry our fury so far against a God who loved us so much!... Let us not be surprised if the saints, who knew the greatness of sin, preferred to suffer all that fury of tyrants could have invented, rather than committed. We see an admirable example of this in the person of Saint Marguerite. His father, an idolatrous priest and of great reputation, seeing her as a Christian, and not being able to make her renounce her religion; mistreated her in the most undignified manner, then kicked her out of her house. Marguerite was not put off, and despite the nobility of her origin, she went to lead a humble and obscure life with his nanny, who, from a young age, had inspired Christian virtues. A certain prefect of the pre- tory named Olybrius, in love with her beauty, fell in love with her. ner to make him deny his faith and marry him. To the first first questions the prefect asked her, she replied that she was a Christian, and that she would always remain the wife of the Christ. Olybrius, irritated by the saint's response, ordered the executioners to strip her of her clothes and to spread it out on the easel. There he had her beaten with rods with so much cruelty, that blood flowed from all his members. In the midst of these torments, he was told to sacrifice to the gods of the empire, in order not to lose one's beauty and life through his stubbornness. But in the middle of tortures she cried: “No, no, never for good perishable and a shameful pleasure, I will not leave my God. Jesus Christ who is my husband takes care of me, and he will not abandon me. » The judge seeing his courage which he called obstinacy, had her beaten so cruelly, that barbarian as he was, he was obliged to divert his looks. Fearing that she would die, he had her taken to prison. The demon appeared to the young virgin in the form of a horrible dragon who seemed to want engulf it. But the saint, having made the sign of the cross, he died at his feet. After this terrible fight, she experienced a beautiful cross like a globe of light, and a dove of admirable whiteness which hovered above. She felt very strengthened. Some time later, the unjust judge seeing that he could do nothing about her, despite the torture whose executioners themselves were terrified, he finally had the head cut off. Well! My brethren, let us be like Saint Marguerite, we who prefer a base interest to Jesus Christ? We who prefer to transgress the commandments of God or the Church than to displease the world; we who, to please an ungodly friend, let us eat meat forbidden days; we who, to be of service to a neighbor, we have no scruples about working or lending our beasts on the holy day of Sunday; finally we, who pass part of this day and even the time of services at gambling or at the cabaret, rather than displeasing some miserable friend? Alas!

My brethren, Christians who are willing to do like Saint Marguerite, to sacrifice everything, their goods and their lives rather than displeasing J.-C., are also rare than the elected, that is to say, only those who will go to sky. My God, how the world has changed 3° We said that J.-C. was exposed to insults of libertinage, and treated like a theater king by a troop of false worshippers. See this God that the sky and the earth cannot contain, who, if he wanted to, of a a single glance would destroy the world: we throw at him shoulders a vile scarlet cloak, a reed is placed on him in the hand and a crown of thorns on the head, he is delivered to an insolent cohort of soldiers. Alas! in what state he is reduced whom the angels adore only with trembling! We bend the knee before him in the bitterest derision, they pull out the reed he was holding in his hand, they hits the head. Oh what a show! Oh! what impiety!... But the charity of Jesus is so great that, despite so much of contempt and without making any complaint heard, he dies voluntarily to save us all. And yet,

My brethren, this spectacle that we can only consider in quivering, reoccurs every day in driving of a large number of Christians. Let us consider the way in which these unfortunate people behave worn during divine services; in the presence of a God who annihilated himself for us, who does not rest on our altars and in our tabernacles, that to fill us with all kinds of goods; what adoration do they give him? Is not Jesus Christ treated even more cruelly by Christians than by the Jews, who had not not, like us, the happiness of knowing him? See these sensual people: they barely bend a knee during the most formidable moments of the mystery; see these laughter, these words; these glances thrown from all share in the church, these signs that all these little impious and these little ignorant people make. And it's not yet than the exterior. If we could penetrate into the depths of hearts; alas! what thoughts of hatred, revenge, pride Dare I say it, what thoughts impure devour and corrupt these hearts! These poor Christians often have neither books nor rosaries during Holy Mass, and do not know what to occupy the time of offices; also listen to them complain and murmur about this that they are kept too long in the holy presence of God. 0 Lord! what outrage and what insult we makes you, at the very hour when you open with so much kindness and love the bowels of your mercy!... I do not surprise me, my brethren, that the Jews fulfilled J.-C. of opprobrium, looked upon him as a criminal, well more, believed they were doing a good work in this; because “if they had known him, Saint Paul tells us, they would never have kills the King of glory. » But, Christians who know very well that J.-C. himself is present on our altars, and how much their little respect offends him and their impiety despises him!... O my God I of Christians, if they had not lost faith, could they appear in your temples without trembling and bitterly crying their sins I How many spit in your face from too many care to beautify their heads; how many crown you with thorns through their pride; how much make you feel rough scourging by the impure actions of which they desecrate their body and soul; how much, alas! you cause death through their sacrileges; how many keep you nailed to the cross by remaining in sin!... 0 my God! that you find Jews among Christians I... 4°, We cannot think without shuddering about what is happening passed at the foot of the cross. It was there that the Eternal Father was waiting for her adorable Son to unload on him all the blows of his justice. We can also say that it is at the foot of the altars, that Jesus Christ receives the outrages the bloodiest. Alas, what contempt for the holy presence! what poorly made confessions! what bad masses heard! what sacrilegious communions! Ah! My brethren, Could I not say to you with Saint Bernard: “What do you think of your God, what idea do you have of him? Unfortunately, if you had the idea that you must have, would you come to his feet to insult him? » It is an insult to J.-C. to come to our churches, to the face of our altars, with a distracted mind and full of world affairs; it is insulting the majesty of God, that to stand in his presence with less modesty than in the house of the greats of the world. They insult him, these worldly women and girls, who never seem to come at the foot of the altars only to display their vanity, to attract looks, and steal the glory and adoration which are not due to God alone. God is patient, my brethren, but he will have his turn... Let eternity come I... If in the past God complained that his people were unfaithful, and profaned his holy name, what complaints Shouldn't it make us, now that, not content to outrage his holy name with oaths that would make hell shudder, we profane the adorable body of his Son and his precious blood!... O my God, where are you reduced to?... Formerly you had only one ordeal, and now you have as many as there are of these bad

ones Christians!... What can we conclude from all this, my brethren? except that we are very unfortunate to make our Savior suffer so much who loved us so much. No, let's not put J.-C to death again. through our sins, let us let him live in us, and we ourselves live by his grace. So we will have the fate of all those who have avoided sin and done good, in the sole intended to please him. This is what I wish you.

Tome II — Low Sunday through the 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Low Sunday (Quasimodo) — On the Easter Confession

Erat autem proximum Pascha, dies festus Judæorum. The feast of the Passover, which was the great feast of the Jews, was near. (John 6:4)

What a happy time, when so many Christians have left sin and the devil, and have torn their poor souls out of the claws of hell, to place themselves again under the loving yoke of the Savior! Ah! would to God that we had been born in the happy days of the first Christians, who looked forward to this moment with a holy gladness! O beautiful day! O day of salvation and of grace, what have you become? Where are those holy and heavenly joys that make the happiness of the children of God?

Yes, my dear brethren [mes frères], this time of grace will either turn to our salvation or to our ruin: it will be the cause of our happiness if we correspond to the graces offered us in this precious moment, or it will turn to our loss if we do not profit by them, or if we abuse them.

But, you will say to me, what does this word *Pascha*—Easter—mean? Do you not know it, my friend? Well then, listen, and you shall know. It means *passage*: that is to say, a going out from the death of sin and a passing over to the life of grace. With that in mind, you will see whether your Easter duties are well done, and whether you can be at peace—especially you, our "good people," who are content with fulfilling the Church's commandment by making only one confession and one Communion for Easter.

Why is it, my dear brethren, that the Church has established the holy season of Lent? It is, you will tell me, to prepare us to celebrate worthily the holy time of Easter—a time when the good God seems to redouble His graces, and stirs the remorse of our consciences to make us leave sin. That is very well, my friend; that is what your catechism teaches you. But if I asked a child what sin those commit who make no Easter duties, he would answer quite simply that it is a great mortal sin; and if I said to him: How many mortal sins does it take to be damned? he would say: A single one is enough, if one dies without having obtained pardon for it. Well then, my friend, what do you say to that? You have not made your Easter? — Ah no! you will tell me. — But since you have not made your Easter, and since to miss it is a mortal sin, you will therefore be damned. What do you think of that, my friend?

Is it not so? Does that not move you at all? — Ah! you are quite right, you say within yourselves; but if I am damned, I shall not be damned alone. — Very well then [à la bonne heure]: if that means nothing to you, if you would just as soon be damned as saved, one must needs console oneself about it; if you hope to soften your misery by flattering yourself that you will not be alone, then you need no longer torment yourself. Poor soul! what do you say of the language held by this body of sin in which you have the misfortune to dwell? Oh! what tears you will shed throughout eternity! Oh! what groanings! Oh! what howlings you will raise in the flames, with no hope of coming out! Oh! how unhappy you are to have cost Jesus Christ so much, and to have separated yourself from Him forever!

Why, my brother, have you not made your Easter? — It is, you will tell me, because I did not choose to. — But if you die in that state, you will be damned. — So much the worse! — Well then, tell me: do you believe that you have a soul? — Ah! I know well enough that I have a soul. — But perhaps you think that when you are dead, everything will be finished? Ah! you think within yourselves: I know well that our soul will be happy or unhappy, according as it has done well or ill. — And what can make it unhappy? — It is sin, you will tell me; you feel yourself guilty of sin; therefore I conclude that you are damned.

Is it not so, my friend? You did come to confession once or twice; but you stopped there. Why was that? It is that you would not correct yourself, and that you would just as soon live in sin and be damned as leave it in order to be saved. You wish to be damned? Well then, do not worry: you will be, sure enough. — Is it not so, my sister? You let Easter go by without confessing; you lived through Lent in sin, and through Easter as well; why was that? Here is the reason: it is that you no longer have any religion, that you have lost the faith, that you think of nothing but taking a little pleasure in the world while waiting to be cast into the flames. We shall see you, my sister—yes, we shall see you one day. Yes, we shall see your tears, your despair. I shall know you again, I think; you will have ruined yourself; you are quite mistress of that. Yes, my dear brethren, let us lift the bandage from our eyes [tirons le bandeau]; leave all these foul things hidden in the darkness until the day of judgment.

Let us now examine what the confession and Communion of those who are content with once a year really are, and we shall see whether they have reason to be at peace or not. My friend, if to make a good confession it were enough to ask God's pardon, to declare one's sins, and to do a little penance, sin—of which religion makes such a monster for us—would have nothing so frightening about it; nothing would be easier than to repair the loss of God's grace, and to follow the road that leads to heaven—which, according to Jesus Christ Himself, is so difficult. Listen to the language He holds to that young man who asked Him whether many would be saved, and whether the road that leads to heaven is very hard to follow. What does the Savior answer him? "Oh! how narrow that road is! Oh! how few there are who follow it! Oh! how among those who begin it, few go through to the end!"

Indeed, my dear brethren, after having lived a whole year without restraint, without constraint, occupied only with your temporal affairs, your goods, or even your pleasures, without taking the trouble to correct yourselves or to labor to acquire the virtues you lack—you will come only in Easter fortnight, always as late as you can, to tell your sins in the same way you would tell a story; you will read a few prayers from a book, or you will say a few others for a certain time. With that, everything will be done; you will go on in your ordinary way; you will do what you have done; you will live as usual: people have seen you in games and taverns, they will see you there again; people have found you in the dance and at balls, they will find you there again; and so with all the rest. Next Easter you will repeat the same thing. Thus you will carry on this trade until death: that is to say, the sacrament of Penance—where God seems to forget His justice in order to show only His mercy—will be for you nothing more than a game or an amusement. You feel very well, my friend, that if your confessions have nothing better about them, you may very well conclude that they are worth nothing—not to say something worse.

But to convince you still more, let us examine the matter more closely. To make a good confession that can reconcile us with God, we must detest our sins with all our heart—not because we are obliged to tell the priest things we would rather hide even from ourselves; but we must repent of having offended so good a God, of having remained so long in sin, of having despised all His graces by which He was urging us to leave it. That, my dear brethren, is what ought to make our tears flow and break our heart.

Tell me, my friend: if you had that true sorrow, would you not hasten to repair the evil that is its cause, and quickly return to God's grace? What would you say of a man who, having wrongly fallen out with someone, claimed it was all the same to him whether he were on good or bad terms with that person? The comparison is plain. The one who has had the misfortune to fall into sin, whether by weakness or surprise, or even by malice—if he has a true regret, can he remain long in that state? Will he not at once have recourse to the sacrament of Penance? But on the contrary, if he remains a year in sin, and does not even see the holy time of Easter come without reluctance, because he must go to confession; if, far from presenting himself at the tribunal of penance at the beginning of Lent, so as to have some time for doing penance and not to pass straight from sin to the holy table; if he will hear of confession only at Easter, and even then will try to put it off until the fortnight, when he will come forward with the same dispositions as a criminal being led to

death—what does that mean, my friend? Here it is. It means that if Easter were prolonged until Pentecost, you would confess only at Pentecost; or that if it came only once every ten years, you would confess only once every ten years; and finally, that if the Church did not make it a commandment for you, you would confess only at death. What do you think of that, my brother?

Is it not so, my friend, that it is neither regret for having offended God that makes you confess, nor the love of God that makes you do your Easter duties? — Ah! you will tell me, it is something after all; we do not do them without knowing why. — Ah! you know nothing at all about it; you do them by habit, so as to say that you have made your Easter—or, if you would tell the truth, you would say that you have added to your old sins a new sin. It is therefore neither the love of God, nor regret for having offended Him, that makes you confess and do your Easter duties, nor even the desire to lead a more Christian life. Here is the proof. If you loved the good God, could you consent to commit sin with so much ease and even with so much pleasure? If you had a horror of sin, as you ought to have, could you keep it a whole year on your conscience? If you had a true desire to lead a more Christian life, would one not see at least some little change in your way of living?

No, my dear brethren, I do not wish to speak to you today of those unhappy people who tell only half their sins, for fear of not making their Easter or of being sent away—perhaps even to cover their shameful life with the veil of virtue; and who, in that state, approach the holy table and go to consummate their reprobation, deliver their God to the devil, and cast their cursed soul into hell. No, I dare hope that does not concern you; but still I will go on to tell you that yearly confessions have nothing that can put you at ease.

— But, you will say to me, what must one do so that a confession may be good? — You wish to know, my friend; here it is; listen well, and you will see whether you are safe. For your confession to deserve pardon, it must be humble and sincere, accompanied by a true sorrow caused by regret for having offended God—and not because of the punishments that sin deserves—with a firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. From that I say that it is very difficult for all these dispositions to be found in those who confess only once a year: you are going to see it.

What is a Christian at the feet of the priest to whom he makes the avowal of his sins? He is a sinner who comes with sorrow in his heart, and throws himself at the feet of his God like a criminal before his judge, to accuse himself in order to ask for grace. How will he accuse himself? Here it is: I am a criminal unworthy to be called a child; I have lived until now in a manner altogether opposed to what my religion commanded me; I have had only disgust for everything that had to do with the service of God; the holy days of Sunday and feast days have been for me only days of pleasures and debauchery—or, to speak more truly, I have done nothing until now; I am lost and damned if God does not have pity on me. Those, my dear brethren, are the sentiments of a Christian who holds sin in horror.

But tell me: is it in that way that those accuse themselves who find that it is not enough to remain twelve months in sin, who find that Easter always comes too soon? Alas! my God, You see these yearly confessions that these poor wretches make, who make them only with a deadly disgust. Oh! no, no, my friend, it is no longer a criminal covered with shame and pierced with sorrow for having offended God, who humbles himself, who accuses himself, who asks a pardon of which he recognizes himself infinitely unworthy; but, alas! shall I dare to say it? it is a man who seems to be telling a story—and telling it badly—who tries to disguise himself and to appear as little guilty as he can. Listen to him: it is not he who committed that sin of impurity; it is another who solicited him—as if he had not been master of refusing to follow that advice. It is not he who flew into a rage; it is his neighbor who said a cutting word to him. He missed Mass, it is true; but it is company that is the cause. Once he ate meat on a forbidden day; if he had not been urged, he would not have done it. He spoke ill; it is the one who was standing near him who made him sin. Let us say it better: the husband accuses the wife, the wife the husband; the brother, the sister, and the sister, the brother; the master, the servant, and the servant tries as hard as he can to shift the blame onto his master [se décharger dessus son maître]. In saying their *Confiteor*, they accuse themselves, saying: It is through my fault; two minutes later,

they excuse themselves and accuse others. No humility, no sincerity, and no sorrow: those are precisely the dispositions of those who confess only once a year.

A poor pastor will see clearly that, from the way they accuse themselves, they have by no means the dispositions necessary to receive absolution. If he wishes to give them some time so as not to make them commit a sacrilege, what do they do? Listen to them: they murmur, saying they have no time to come back, and that another time they will be no better disposed; and they end by telling you that if you will not receive them, they will go to another who will not be so scrupulous, who will let them through easily [qui les passera bien]…. As if he could not live without them—poor blind people!… Judge from that what their dispositions are.

The priest sees clearly from the way they accuse themselves that they do not tell everything; he is obliged to ask them a thousand questions; they give neither the number nor the circumstances that change the species. There is a certain sin they would neither like to tell nor to hide. What do they do? They tell it by halves, as if the priest could know what is going on in their heart. People are content to recount their sins in bulk, without even distinguishing thoughts from desires. The priest will say to him: Have you never had thoughts of pride, of vanity, of vengeance, or of impurity? You know well that all these things are mortal sins when one dwells on them willingly. Have you committed any of these faults? — Perhaps so, he will say, but I do not remember. — But you must give the number approximately, otherwise your confessions are worth nothing. — Ah! Father, how do you expect me to recall all the thoughts I have had during the year? That is impossible for me. — Ah! my God, how many confessions—or rather, how many sacrileges!…

No, my dear brethren, almost never do people accuse themselves of the circumstances that aggravate the sin and that can make the sin mortal. Listen to how they accuse themselves: I got drunk, I calumniated my neighbor, I committed the sin against the holy virtue of purity, I quarreled, I took revenge; if the confessor asks no questions, there is nothing more. But the confessor will say to him: How many times has that happened to you? Have you committed these sins in church? Was it on a holy Sunday? Was it in the presence of your children, of your servants? Were there many people? Has your neighbor’s reputation suffered any damage from it? Did these thoughts of pride come to you in church, during holy Mass? Did you dwell on them a long time? Were these thoughts contrary to the holy virtue of purity accompanied by evil desires to commit the act? Was that other sin by surprise or by malice? Did you not add sin upon sin, thinking it would cost you no more to confess many than few?

There are some who are not content with giving no detail of their sins; they tell you they have nothing to reproach themselves with, that they have no time, that they must be going. You have no time, my friend—well then, go away. Whether you go or stay, one is as good as the other [l’un vaut autant que l’autre].

O my God! what dispositions! O my God! are these sinners who come to weep for their sins? One must admit, however, that there are some who do all they can to examine themselves well, and who tell their sins as best they can; but with such indifference, such coldness, and so great an insensibility that it tears the heart of a poor priest. No sighs, no groanings, no tears! not a single sign that announces the sorrow their sins give them! For the priest to give them absolution, he must be persuaded that they have better dispositions than they show. I know well that tears and sighs are not infallible marks of contrition or of conversion. It happens only too often that there are some who weep for their sins at the tribunal of penance, and who are no more Christian for it. But it is also very hard to recount with so much coldness and indifference what must necessarily sadden us and draw our tears.

If a man were sure of receiving his pardon by making the avowal of his crimes, I leave you to think whether he could even declare them without letting his tears flow, in the hope that his outward appearance would touch the heart of his judge, who would grant him pardon. See a sick man, when he uncovers his wounds to his physician: at once you hear his sighs and you see his tears flowing. See a friend who will tell you the

story of his troubles: his gestures, his tone of voice, his manner of expressing himself—everything about him depicts his grief and his sorrow. Why is it, my dear brethren, that nothing of all that appears when we accuse our sins? Is it not so, my friend—you know nothing about it? Often you are astonished at it. Well then! I am going to teach you: it is that your heart is no more touched than your words, and that your interior is like your exterior, that your sins give you no more sorrow than you show. That is easy enough to understand, since after your Easter you are so little Christian, and you are neither wiser nor less a sinner than before.

We have said that regret for having offended God, if it is true, must necessarily contain a sincere will to sin no more; that if this will is sincere, it will lead us to keep on our guard; to reject all those evil thoughts, whether of vengeance or of impurity, as soon as we perceive them; to flee the occasions that had led us into sin; or else to neglect nothing in order to correct ourselves of our bad habits. Well then, my friend, your will not to offend the good God any more has therefore not been sincere, since people have seen you in the taverns and still see you there; people found you in that company where you committed that sin, and you still appear there today. You will agree with me that you have made no effort to live better than you did during the year. Why is that, my friend? Why? Here it is: it is that you have no desire whatever to correct yourself; that your confession was only a lie and your contrition a phantom of penance [un fantôme de pénitence].

Do you want a second proof? Here it is. Of what did you accuse yourself last year? Of drunkenness, of impurity, of pride, of anger, of negligence in the service of God? And of what do you accuse yourself this year? Of the same thing. And of what will you accuse yourself next year if you are still alive? Again of the same thing. Why is that, my dear brethren? It is that you have no desire whatever to lead a more Christian life; but you confess only as a formality [par manière d'acquit] and so as to say that you have made your Easter; or, if you told the truth, you would say that you confess each year in order to add a new sin to your old ones: then, saying that, you would be saying what you do. Do you not see, then, that it is the devil who is deceiving you? If he proposed to you to give everything up, you who have the habit of confessing every year, you would have a horror of that; you would not want to believe it. But in order to have you one day, he is content to keep you always in your bad habits. Do you doubt what I tell you? Examine your conduct and see whether you have corrected yourselves of any sins in all the years you have been confessing every year; or if I said it better, each year sinks you deeper into the abyss.

But, you will say to me, all that is not very encouraging for making us do our Easter duties. — Quite so; but why deceive you? There is already enough of the devil who deceives you, without my putting myself with him as well. I tell you the truth as it is; afterward you will do with it what you will. I behave toward you like a physician in the midst of a great number of sick people: he begins by proposing to each of them the remedies suitable for restoring their health; those who despise these remedies, he leaves aside; but those who wish to take them, he instructs in the manner of taking them; he tells them the great good they will do them if they receive them with all the preparations he will indicate, and at the same time the harm these remedies will do them if they do not do all that he orders before making use of them.

Yes, my dear brethren, I do the same thing: I make you consider how great are the advantages the sacraments promise us; or, to speak more truly, that if we do not frequent the sacraments, we shall never see the face of God, and we are sure of being damned. For those who, whether through ignorance or through impiety, despise these salutary remedies alone capable of reconciling them with the good God, I do as that physician who leaves aside those who will not have his remedies. But to those who show the desire to take them, one must absolutely make known to them the dispositions that must be brought to them. I think, my dear brethren, that perhaps all I have just told you will give you some uneasiness about your past confessions: I desire it with all my heart, so that, being deeply touched by the grace of the good God and by your remorse of conscience, you may take the means God still offers you today to leave sin.

But, you will say to me, what must one do to repair all that? — Do you wish to know it and to do it, my friend? Here it is. It is to begin your confessions over again, from as far back as you can judge you made

them without contrition; you will accuse yourself of the number of confessions and Communions; and you will say clearly whether you disguised any sin, whether you made any efforts not to fall again. For your confessions to be able to console you, each confession must have worked some change in you; you must do as the Easter Gospel tells us, speaking of Jesus Christ—that once He had come out of the tomb, He entered it no more; likewise, having confessed your sins, you must not commit them again.

You must cause to be born in your heart sweetness, goodness, and charity, in place of that anger, that air of contempt you showed at the least injury done you. You used to miss your morning and evening prayers; people saw you say them without attention and without respect; now, if you have truly left sin, people will see you say your prayers every morning and every evening with that respect and that attention which the thought of God's presence ought to inspire in you. On the holy days of Sunday people often saw you come to church when the offices were already well advanced; now, if you have made your Easter well, people will see you early beginning to prepare yourself to assist holily at that great action. One will see that mother, instead of running from house to house, going over the conduct of one and another, occupied with her household, with instructing her children—or, to speak more truly, virtue will appear in everything she does.

She will do as that young girl did who, for some time, had given herself over to pleasures, even the most shameful; but having reflected on the frightful state into which she was plunging herself, having a horror of herself, she was converted. Some time afterward she met a young man with whom she had often run after pleasures; he began to speak to her in the same language as before. She looked at him with an air of contempt and indignation, remembering how much that wretched man had been the cause of her offending the good God. Quite astonished, he told her that no doubt she no longer knew him. "Ah! wretch, I have known you only too well! I see clearly that you are still the same, buried in the mire of crime; but as for me, thank God, I am no longer the same; I have left that cursed sin which had so disfigured my poor soul. Ah! no—rather a thousand times die than fall back into my old sins!" O beautiful model for a Christian who has had the misfortune to sin!

What must we conclude from all this? Here it is, my dear brethren. If you do not wish to be damned, you must not be content with confessing once a year; because every time you were in a state of sin you would run the risk of perishing in it and of being lost for eternity. If you have been so unhappy as to have hidden some sin through fear or shame, or have confessed your sins without contrition, without the desire of correcting yourselves; or even, if for so many years that you have been confessing you have known no change in your life: conclude from that that all your confessions are worth nothing, and consequently have been only sacrileges and abominations that will cast you into hell.

For those who make no Easter duties, I have nothing to say to them; since they absolutely wish to damn themselves, they are masters of that. Let us weep over their misfortune, let us pray for them: the charity we ought to have for one another obliges us to it. Let us ask of God not to fall into such blindness! Let us resist courageously the world and the devil! Let us sigh without ceasing after our true homeland, which is heaven—our glory, our reward, and our felicity. That is the happiness I wish you.

2nd Sunday after Easter — On Perseverance

Qui autem perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit. He who perseveres to the end shall be saved. (Matt. 10:22)

He, the Savior of the world tells us, who will fight and who will persevere to the end of his days without having been conquered—or who, having fallen, has risen again and perseveres—shall be crowned, that is to say, saved: words, my dear brethren, that ought to make us tremble and freeze us with dread [nous glacer d'effroi], if we consider on the one hand the dangers to which we are exposed, and on the other our weakness

and the number of enemies that surround us. Let us not be astonished if the greatest saints left their parents and their friends, their goods and their pleasures, some to bury themselves in the forests, others to weep among the rocks; still others to shut themselves between four walls to weep there for the rest of their days—so as to be freer and rid of all the world's bustle [débarassés de tous les tracas du monde], and occupied only with fighting the enemies of their salvation, well convinced that heaven would be granted only to their perseverance.

But, you will say to me, what is it to persevere? My friend, here it is. It is to be ready to sacrifice everything: one's goods, one's will, one's liberty, and even one's life, rather than displease God. But, you will say again, what is it *not* to persevere? Here it is. It is to fall back into the sins we have already confessed; to follow the bad companies that led us into evil—which is the greatest of all misfortunes, since thereby we have lost our God; we have turned all His anger against ourselves; we tear our soul from heaven; we drag it into hell. Would to God that Christians who have the happiness of being reconciled with God by the sacrament of Penance understood this well! And to give you an idea of it, I am going to show you the means you must take in order to persevere in the grace you have received in the holy time of Easter. I find three principal ones: prayer, flight from bad company, and finally the frequenting of the sacraments.

Truly today you will be able to say that everything you are going to hear does not concern you—at least a good third of you. I, speak to you of perseverance! But then I am a false pastor; I come only to work at your ruin [votre perte]! The devil will have to make use of me to hasten your reprobation! I am therefore going to do the very opposite of what the good God has commanded me to do: He sends me into your midst only to save you, and my occupation would be to lead you into the abyss! I, the cruel executioner of your poor souls! My God, what a misfortune! I, speak to you of perseverance!—but that language suits only those who have left sin for good [pour tout de bon], who are resolved to lose a thousand lives rather than commit sin again; but to tell a sinner to persevere in his disorders—O my God! would I not be the most unhappy creature the earth has ever borne? No, no, that is not the language I ought to hold. Ah! rather, cease, my friend—ah! cease persevering in your deplorable state, otherwise you are damned.

I, tell that man who for a number of years makes no Easter duties, or who makes them badly, to persevere! No, no, my friend: if you persevere, you are lost; never any heaven for you! I, tell that person who is content with making her Easter duties to persevere—but would that not be putting a bandage over her eyes [lui mettre un bandeau devant les yeux] and dragging her into hell? I, tell those fathers and mothers who make their Easter and yet give free rein to their children [lâchent la bride à leurs enfants] to persevere! Ah! no, no, I do not want to be the executioner of their poor soul. I, tell those young girls who have made their Easter with the thought and desire of returning to dances and pleasures to persevere! Oh, woe to me! O horror! O abomination! O chain of crimes and sacrileges! I, tell those persons who frequent the sacraments five or six times a year, who show no change in their way of living—same murmurings in their troubles, same outbursts of temper, same avarice, same hardness toward the poor; always as eager to calumniate and blacken their neighbor's reputation… O my God! how many Christians are blind and sold to iniquity! I, tell those persons who, without scruple, or through human respect, eat meat on forbidden days and who work without scruple on the holy day of Sunday to persevere! O my God, what a misfortune! To whom am I going to address myself? I do not know.

Ah! no, no, my dear brethren, it was not on perseverance in grace that I ought to have spoken to you today! Ah! rather, I ought to have depicted for you the frightful and despairing state of a sinner who has made no Easter duties, or who has made them badly, and who perseveres in that state. Ah! would to God that I were permitted to draw before your eyes the despair of a sinner summoned before the tribunal of his Judge, whose hands are armed with thunderbolts and lightning, and to make you hear those torrents of malediction. Go, cursed reprobate; go, hardened sinner; go weep over your criminal life and your sacrileges. Oh! it is not yet enough to have wallowed in them during your life… One would have to drag them to the very gate of hell,

before the devil hurls them in never to come out, and make them hear the cries, the howlings of those unhappy reprobates, and show each one the place assigned him. O my God! could they still live? A heaven lost… a hell… an eternity… They have despised, profaned the sufferings—ah! what am I saying?—the sufferings, the death of a God… That is the reward of perseverance in sin; yes, that is the subject I ought to have treated today. But to speak to you of perseverance, which presupposes a soul that fears sin more than death itself, that spends its days in the love of its God; a soul, I say, stripped of every earthly affection, whose desires are only for heaven… Well then! where do you want me to go? Where could I find that soul? Ah! where is it? Where is the land so happy as to possess it? Alas! I have found none, or at least I find almost none. O my God! perhaps You see some that I do not know. I am therefore going to speak as if I were sure that there were at least one or two, to show them the means they must use to continue the happy road they have begun. Listen to me well, holy souls—if indeed there are any among those who hear me—to what God will say to you by my mouth.

I say then, first, that the first means of persevering in the road that leads to heaven is to be faithful in following and profiting by the movements of grace that God is pleased to grant us. All the saints owe their happiness only to their fidelity in following the movements the Spirit has given them, and the damned can attribute their misfortune only to the contempt they have shown for them. That alone can suffice to make you feel all their worth and the necessity of being faithful to them. But, you will say to me, how, by what means, can we know that we are corresponding to what grace wants of us, or that we are resisting it? — If you do not know, listen to me a moment, and you will know the most essential part.

I say first that grace is a thought that makes us feel the necessity of avoiding evil and of doing good. Let us enter into some familiar details, to make you understand it better, and you will see when you resist it or when you are faithful to it. In the morning, when you wake, the good God suggests to you the thought of giving Him your heart, of offering Him your work, of saying your prayer at once and on your knees: if you do it at once, willingly, you follow the movement of grace; and if you do not, or if you do it badly, you do not follow it. You suddenly feel the desire to go to confession and to correct your faults, not to remain as you are; you think that if you came to die you would be damned. If you follow these good inspirations the good God gives you, you are faithful to grace. But you let that pass without doing anything. You have the thought of giving some alms, of doing some penance, of going to Mass on weekdays, of sending your servants there; you do not do it. That, my dear brethren, is what it is to follow grace or to resist it.

All this is what are called interior graces. As for those called exterior graces, they are, for example, a good reading, a conversation you have had with some wise persons, which make you feel the necessity of changing your life, of serving the good God better, the regret you will have at the hour of death; it is a good example before your eyes, which seems to torment you into converting yourself; it is, finally, an instruction that teaches you the means you must take to serve God and fulfill your duties toward Him, toward yourselves, and toward your neighbor. Your salvation or damnation depends on it; pay close attention. The saints have sanctified themselves only by their great attention in following all the good inspirations the good God sent them, and the damned have fallen into hell only because they despised them; you are going to see the proof.

We see in the Gospel that all the conversions Jesus Christ worked during His life were founded on perseverance. How do we know, my dear brethren, that Saint Peter was converted? It is indeed said that Jesus Christ looked at him, that Saint Peter wept for his sin; but what assures us of his conversion, if not that he persevered in grace and sinned no more? How was Saint Matthew converted? We know well that Jesus Christ, having seen him at his counting-table, told him to follow Him, and that he followed Him; but what assures us that his conversion was true is that he never returned to that counting-table, that he committed no more injustice; it is that after having begun to follow Jesus Christ, he never left Him. Perseverance in grace, renunciation of sin forever, were the very certain marks of his conversion.

Yes, my dear brethren, even if you had lived twenty or thirty years in virtue and in penance, if you do not persevere, all is lost for you. Yes, said a holy bishop to his people, even if you had given all your goods to the poor, even if you had torn your body, even if you had covered it with blood, even if you alone had suffered as much as all the martyrs together, even if you had been flayed like a Saint Bartholomew, sawn between two planks like the prophet Isaiah, burned over a slow fire like a Saint Lawrence—if, by misfortune, you lack perseverance, that is to say, if you fall back into the sin you have already confessed, all is lost for you if death surprises you in that state. Who among us will be saved? Is it the one who will have fought forty or sixty years? No, my dear brethren. Is it the one who will have whitened his hair in the service of God? No, my dear brethren, if he lacks perseverance—like a Solomon, of whom the Holy Spirit, speaking of him, says that he is the wisest of the kings of the earth, who seemed perfectly assured of his salvation, and who nevertheless leaves us in great uncertainty about his salvation. Saul presents us with a still more frightful image. Chosen by God Himself to reign over His people, loaded with so many benefits, he dies a reprobate. “Ah! unhappy man!” Saint John Chrysostom tells us, “take care, after having received the grace of your God, not to despise it. Ah! I tremble when I consider how easily the sinner falls back into his sin already confessed; how would he dare to ask for his pardon again?”

Yes, my dear brethren, it would be enough, with the help of grace, never to fall back into sin, to consider the unhappy state to which sin had reduced you together with the state in which grace has placed you. Yes, my dear brethren, a soul—a soul that falls back into sin—delivers its God to the devil, serves as His executioner, and crucifies Him on the cross of its heart; tears its soul from the hands of its God, drags it into hell, delivers it to all the fury and rage of the demons, shuts heaven against it, and turns to its condemnation all the sufferings of its God. Ah! my God, who could commit sin again, if one made all these reflections? Listen, my dear brethren, to these terrible words of the Savior: “He who has fought to the end shall be saved.” According to that, my dear brethren, let us tremble, we who fall at every moment. Never any heaven if we are not firmer than we have been until now; but that is not yet all. Are your confessions well made? for you can persevere in the practice of virtue and be damned. Have you taken all the precautions you ought to have taken to make both confession and Communion well? Have you well examined your conscience before approaching the tribunal of penance? Have you well declared all your sins, just as you thought them, without saying, perhaps, that it is not badly done, that it is nothing, or: I will say it another time? Have you that true contrition for your sins? Have you well asked it of God on leaving the confessional? Would you rather have preferred death than to commit again the sins you had just confessed? Are you well in the firm resolution never again to see the persons with whom you did evil? Do you testify to the good God that if you were still to offend Him, you would rather He make you die?

And yet, even if you were in all these dispositions, tremble always; live between a kind of despair and hope. You are today in the friendship of God; tremble lest tomorrow, perhaps, you be in His hatred and a reprobate. Listen to Saint Paul, that vessel of election, who had been chosen by God to bear His name before the princes and kings of the earth, who led so many souls to God, whose eyes at every moment were troubled by the abundance of tears he shed; he cried out at every moment: “Alas! I do not cease to treat my body harshly and to reduce it to servitude, for fear that after having preached to others and shown the means of going to heaven, I myself should be banished and reprobated.” In another place he seems to have a little more confidence; but on what is that confidence founded? “Yes, my God,” he cries, “I am like a victim ready to be immolated; soon my body and my soul will be separated; I see well that I shall not live long; but all my confidence is that I have always followed the movements that the grace of God has given me. Since I have had the happiness of being converted, I have led as many souls to God as I could; I have always fought; I have made a continual war on my body. Ah! how many times have I asked God for the grace to be rid of this miserable body that always tended toward evil; but thanks to my God, I am going to receive the reward of him who has fought and persevered to the end.” O my God! how few there are who persevere, and consequently how few are saved!

We read in the life of Saint Gregory that a Roman lady wrote to him to ask the help of his prayers, so that God might make known to her whether her sins had been pardoned, and whether one day she would receive the reward of her good works. “Ah! I tremble lest God have not pardoned me!” — “Alas!” Saint Gregory said to her, “you ask me a very difficult thing; yet I will tell you that you may hope that God will pardon you and that you will go to heaven if you persevere; but, despite all you have done, you will be damned if you do not persevere.” Alas! how many times do we not hold the same language, tormenting ourselves to know whether we shall be damned or saved! Useless thoughts, my dear brethren! Let us listen to a Moses who, being on the point of dying, had the twelve tribes of Israel assembled. “You know,” he said to them, “that I have tenderly loved you, that I have sought only your salvation and your good; now that I am going to render an account to God of all my actions, I must warn you, I must urge you never to forget this: serve the Lord faithfully; recall so many graces with which He has loaded you; whatever it costs you, never separate yourselves from Him. You will have enemies who will persecute you, and who will do what they can to make you abandon Him; but take courage, you are sure to conquer them if you are faithful to God.”

Alas! my dear brethren, the graces the good God grants us are still far more numerous, and the enemies that surround us are far more powerful. I say: the graces, because they had received only some temporal goods and the manna; and we, who have had the happiness of receiving the pardon of our sins, of tearing our soul from hell, and of being nourished, not with a manna, but with the adorable Body and Blood of Jesus Christ!… O my God! what happiness! We must therefore not keep returning to work continually at making ourselves lose this treasure. O how few persevere because they fear the combat!

We read in history that a holy priest one day met a Christian who was in continual apprehension of succumbing to temptation. “Why do you fear?” the priest said to him. “Alas! Father,” he said, “I fear being tempted, succumbing, and perishing. Ah!” he cries, weeping, “have I not reason to tremble, if so many millions of angels succumbed in heaven, if Adam and Eve were conquered in the earthly paradise, if Solomon, who passed for the wisest of kings, and who had reached the highest degree of perfection, stained his white hair with the most shameful and dishonoring crimes—if that man, after having been the admiration of the world, became its horror and its disgrace; when I consider a Judas, who succumbed in the very company of Jesus Christ; if so many brilliant lights have been extinguished, what am I to think of myself, who am only sin? Who could count the number of souls that are in hell, and that, without temptation, would be in heaven? O my God!” he cries, “who is he who does not tremble and who can hope to persevere?” — “But, my friend,” the holy priest said to him, “do you not know what Saint Augustine tells us, that the devil is like a big dog on a chain [un gros chien à l’attache]: he barks and makes a great noise; but he bites only the one who comes too near. Have confidence in God, flee the occasions of sin, and you will not succumb. If Eve had not listened to the devil, if she had taken flight as soon as he spoke to her of transgressing God’s commandments, she would not have succumbed. When you are tempted, reject the temptations at once, and, if you can, devoutly make the sign of the cross; think of the torments the reprobate endure for not having known how to resist temptation; lift your eyes toward heaven, and you will see the reward of him who fights; call your good angel to your help; throw yourself promptly into the arms of the Mother of God, claiming her protection; you are sure to be victorious over your enemies, and you will soon see them covered with confusion.”

If we succumb, my dear brethren, it comes only from this: that we will not take the means the good God offers us for fighting. We must above all be well convinced that of ourselves we can only lose ourselves; but that with a great confidence in God, we can do all things. See Saint Philip Neri: he often said to God: “Alas! Lord, hold me well; I am so bad that it seems to me that at every moment I am going to betray You; I am so little a thing that even when I go out to do a good work, I say to myself: You go out a Christian; perhaps you are going to come back like a pagan, after having denied your God.” One day, believing himself alone in a desert, he began to cry: “Alas! I am lost, I am damned!” Someone who heard him came to him saying: “My

friend, do you despair of the mercy of God? Is it not infinite?" — "Alas!" that great saint said to him, "I do not despair; on the contrary, I hope much; but I say that I am lost and damned if God abandons me to myself. When I consider how many persons who persevered to the end and whom a single temptation has ruined: that is what makes me tremble night and day, for fear of being among the number of those unhappy ones."

Alas! my dear brethren, if all the saints have trembled all their life for fear of not persevering, what then will it be of us who, without virtue, almost without confidence in God, ourselves loaded with sins, are not at all careful to take care not to let ourselves be caught in the snares the devil sets for us [nous laisser enfiler dans les pièges]; we who walk like blind people in the midst of the greatest dangers, who sleep peacefully among a crowd of enemies, the most bent on our ruin! But, you will say to me, what must one do then so as not to succumb? My friend, here it is: one must flee the occasions that have made us fall the other times; have continual recourse to prayer; and finally, frequent often and worthily the sacraments; if you do it, if you follow this road, you are sure to persevere; but if you do not take these precautions, you may do what you will and take all your measures—you will not fail to be lost [vous ne laisserez pas d'être perdu].

I say, first, that you must flee the world as much as you can; because its language and its way of living are entirely opposed to what a good Christian ought to do: that is to say, a person who seeks the surest means of going to heaven. Ask Saint Mary of Egypt, who left the world and spent her life in the depths of a frightful desert: she will tell you that it is impossible to be able to save one's soul and please God if one does not flee the world; for everywhere one finds only snares and ambushes; and, as it is opposed to God, one must absolutely despise it and leave it forever.

Where have you heard bad songs, the most infamous talk that give you an infinity of bad thoughts and bad desires? Is it not in that moment when you found yourself in that company of libertines? Who made you form rash judgments? Is it not by hearing talk of the neighbor in the company of that detractor? Who gave you the habit of casting abominable looks or making abominable touches upon yourself or upon others? Is it not since you have frequented that impure person? What is the cause that you no longer frequent the sacraments? Is it not since you go with that impious man, who has tried to make you lose the faith, by telling you that everything the priest told you was nonsense; that religion was only to hold young people in check; that one was an imbecile to go and tell what one had done to a man; that all those who are instructed laugh at all that—that is to say, until death; afterward they will admit that they were mistaken.

Well then, my friend, without that bad company, would you have had all these doubts? No, without doubt. Tell me, my sister, since when have you had so much taste for pleasures, dances, balls, rendezvous, worldly adornments? Is it not since the moment you frequented that worldly young girl, who is not yet content with having lost her poor soul and who has lost yours? Tell me, my friend, how long have you been frequenting the taverns, the games? Is it not since the instant you knew that debauchee? Tell me, since when does one hear you vomit every sort of oath and curse? Is it not since you have been in service with that master whose mouth and throat cry out and are nothing but a pipe of abomination [un tuyau d'abomination]? Yes, my dear brethren, on the day of judgment each libertine will see the other libertine demand of him his soul, his God, and his paradise. Ah! unhappy ones, they will say to one another, give me back my soul that you have ruined for me, and give me back the heaven you have snatched from me. Unhappy one, where is my soul? Tear it then from the hell into which you cast me. Ah! without you, I would not have committed this sin that damns me. No, no, I did not know it. No, no, never would I have had that thought; ah! that beautiful heaven you have made me lose! Farewell, beautiful heaven that you have snatched from me. Yes, each sinner will throw himself upon the one who gave him bad example, and who first led him into sin. Ah! would to God that I had never known you! Ah! if at least I had died before seeing you, I would be in heaven; and never shall I go… Farewell, beautiful heaven, I have lost you for very little!…

No, my dear brethren, no, never will you persevere in virtue if you do not flee the companies of the world; you may wish to save yourselves as you will—you will not fail to be damned. Either hell, or flight; no middle

way [point de milieu]. Choose which of the two you want to take. As soon as a young girl or a young man follows his pleasures—girl and young man reprobate… You may say that you do no harm, that perhaps I am scrupulous. I tell you that you will always come to that, that one day you will be in hell, if you do not change; not only will you see it, but moreover you will feel it. Let us draw the veil [tirons le voile], my dear brethren, and pass to another subject.

I have said, second, that prayer is absolutely necessary in order to have the happiness of persevering in the grace of God after having received it in the sacrament of Penance. With prayer you can do all things; you are, so to speak, masters of the wills of God, if I dare speak thus; and without prayer you are capable of nothing—and that alone suffices to show you the necessity of prayer and the power of prayer. All the saints began their conversion by prayer and persevered by prayer; and all the damned lost themselves by their neglect of prayer. I say then that prayer is absolutely necessary for us in order to persevere; but I distinguish: not a prayer made while sleeping, leaning on a chair, or lying against one's bed; not a prayer made while dressing and undressing, while walking; not a prayer made while pushing wood onto the fire, while shouting at one's children or servants; not a prayer made while turning one's hat or bonnet in one's hands; not a prayer made while kissing one's children, or arranging one's handkerchief or apron; not a prayer made while letting one's mind be occupied by a stranger; not a prayer that we make with precipitation like a thing that bores us, of which we see only the moment to be rid of it: all this is no longer a prayer, but an insult that we offer to God. Far from finding in it the means of guarding ourselves from falling into sin, this prayer itself is for us a cause of fall; because, instead of finding in it a new degree of grace, God withdraws from us that which He had given us, to punish the contempt we show for His presence. Instead of weakening our enemies there, we strengthen them; instead of snatching from them the arms they had to fight us, we give them new ones; instead of bending the justice of God, we irritate it still more! That, my dear brethren, is the profit we make and that we draw from our prayers.

But the prayer of which I speak to you, which is so powerful with God, which draws so many graces upon us, which seems even to bind the will of God, which seems, so to speak, to force Him to grant us what we ask of Him, is a prayer made in a kind of despair and of hope. I say despair, considering our unworthiness and the contempt we have shown for God and His graces, recognizing ourselves unworthy to appear before Him and to dare ask Him for our pardon—we who have so many times already received it, and have always paid Him with ingratitude—which ought to lead us, at every moment of our life, to believe that the earth is going to open under our feet, that all the thunderbolts of heaven are ready to strike us, and that all creatures cry vengeance at the sight of the outrages we have done to their Creator; and there, all trembling before Him, we wait to see whether God will launch His thunderbolt to crush us, or whether He will be willing to pardon us once more. Heart broken with regret for having offended so good a God, we let our tears of repentance and of gratitude flow; our heart and our mind are wholly sunk in the depth of our nothingness and of the greatness of Him whom we have outraged and who still leaves us the hope of our pardon. Far from regarding the time of prayer as a lost moment, we regard it as the happiest and most precious of our life, because a Christian sinner ought to have no other occupations in this world than to weep for his sins at the feet of his God; far from putting his temporal affairs first and preferring them to those of his salvation, he regards them as nothings, or rather as obstacles to his salvation; he gives them care and attention only insofar as God commands it of him, well convinced that if he does not do them, others will do them; but that, if he has not the happiness of obtaining his pardon and of making God favorable to him, all is lost for him—no one after him will do it. He leaves prayer only with the greatest pain; the moments he is in the presence of God are nothing, or rather pass like a flash of lightning; if his body leaves the presence of God, his heart and his mind are always there. During his prayer, there is no longer any question of work, nor of lying on a chair or against his bed…

I have said that a Christian ought to be between despair and hope. I say hope, by representing to himself the greatness of the mercy of God, the desire He has to make us happy, what He has done to merit heaven for us. Animated by so consoling a thought, we shall address ourselves to Him with a great confidence; we shall say like Saint Bernard: "My God, what I ask of You I have not merited, but You have merited it for me. If You grant it to me, it is only because You are good and merciful." In these sentiments, what does a Christian do? Here it is. Penetrated with the liveliest gratitude, he takes the firmest resolution never again to outrage his God, who has just granted him His grace. That, my dear brethren, is the prayer of which I wish to speak, which is absolutely necessary for us in order to have our pardon and the precious gift of perseverance.

In the third place, we have said that we must join to this the frequenting of the sacraments in order to have the happiness of preserving the grace of God. A Christian who makes a holy use of prayer and of the sacraments is as formidable to the devil as a dragoon mounted on a steed, armed with his breastplate, his saber, and his pistols, eyes flashing, in the presence of his unarmed enemy: his mere presence overthrows him head-on and puts him to flight. But let him come down from his horse and leave his arms: at once his enemy falls upon him, tramples him underfoot, and makes himself master of him; whereas, furnished with his arms, his mere presence seemed to annihilate that enemy. A plain image of a Christian who is furnished with the arms of prayer and of the sacraments. No, no, a Christian who prays, and who frequents the sacraments with the necessary dispositions, is more formidable to the devil than that dragoon of whom I have just spoken to you. What made Saint Anthony so terrible to the powers of hell, if not prayer? Listen to the language the devil held to him one day, asking him why he made him suffer so much, that he was his most cruel enemy. "Ah! how little a thing you are," Saint Anthony said to him; "I who am only a poor solitary, who cannot keep myself on my feet—with a single sign of the cross I put you all to flight." See again what the devil said to Saint Teresa: that by the great love she had for God, by the frequenting of the sacraments, he could not even breathe where she had passed. Why? It is that the sacraments give us so much strength to persevere in the grace of God, that never has one seen a saint withdraw from the sacraments and persevere in the friendship of God; and that in the sacraments they have found all the strength not to let themselves be conquered by the devil: here is the reason. When we pray, God gives us friends; He sends us sometimes a saint or an angel to console us—as He did to Hagar, the servant of Abraham, and to chaste Joseph when he was in his prison; likewise to Saint Peter…; He makes us feel His graces more abundantly to fortify us and encourage us. But in the sacraments, it is not a saint or an angel—it is Himself who comes with His thunderbolts to annihilate our enemy. The devil, seeing Him in our heart, hurls himself like a desperate man into the abyss; that is precisely why the devil does all he can to keep us away from them and make us profane them.

Yes, my dear brethren, as soon as a person frequents the sacraments, the devil loses all his power. Let us say, however, one must carefully distinguish: it is those who frequent them with the necessary dispositions, who truly hold sin in horror, who take all the means God gives us so as not to fall into it again and to profit by the graces He grants us. I do not wish to speak to you of those who confess today and who tomorrow fall back into their fault; I do not wish to speak of those who accuse themselves of their sins with as little regret and repentance as if they were telling a made-up story, nor of those who bring little or almost no preparation, who will come to confess without perhaps examining themselves, who will say whatever presents itself to their mind; they will approach the holy table without having sounded the folds of their heart, without having asked for the grace to know their sins and the sorrow they ought to have for them, without having taken any resolution to sin no more. No, no, all these work only at their own ruin. Instead of fighting against the devil, they turn to his side, and dig for themselves a hell. No, no, it is not of those that I wish to speak to you. If all those who frequent the sacraments were of that sort—though the number of the good is very small—there would be more saved than there will be. But I speak of those who leave, whether the tribunal of penance or the holy table, to appear with great confidence before the tribunal of God, without fear of being condemned for defects of preparation in their confessions or Communions. O my God! how rare they are! how many

Christians have been lost!

I say that in order to have the happiness of preserving the grace we have received in the sacrament of Penance, we must practice mortification: that is the road all the saints have held. Either chastise this body of sin, or you will not be long without falling. See the holy king David: to ask of the good God the grace to persevere, he chastised his body all his life. See Saint Paul who tells you that he treated his body like a horse. First, we must never pass a meal without depriving ourselves of something; so that at the end of each meal we may be able to offer some privation to God. In our sleep, from time to time, cut a little from it. In our itch to talk [démangeaison de parler], as soon as we have the thought of saying something, deprive ourselves of it for the good God. Well then, my dear brethren, who are those who take all these precautions whose importance I have just shown you? Where are they? Alas! I know nothing of it. How rare they are! and how small their number is! But also, where are those who, having received the pardon of their sins, persevere in the happy state in which the sacrament of penance has placed them? Alas! my God, where must one go to seek them? Are there among those who hear me any of these happy Christians? Alas! I know nothing of it.

What must we conclude from all this, my dear brethren? Here it is. If we fall again, as before, as soon as the occasions present themselves, it is that we do not take better resolutions, that we do not increase our penances, that we do not redouble our prayers and our mortifications. Let us tremble over our confessions, lest at the hour of death we find only sacrileges, and consequently our eternal ruin. Happy, and a thousand times happy, he who will persevere to the end, since heaven is only for those!…

3rd Sunday after Easter — On Afflictions

that there will be none. But I am speaking of those who come out, either from the tribunal of penitence or from the holy table, to appear with great confidence before the tribunal of God, without fear of being condemned for defects in preparation in their confessions or communions. 0 my God, how rare they are! how many Christians have been lost!

IV. I say that to have the happiness of preserving the grace that we have received in the sacrament of Penance, we must practice mortification: this is the path that all the saints have followed. Either punish this body of sin, or you will not be long without falling. See the holy King David: to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for the grace to persevere, he chastised his body all his life. See Saint Paul who tells you that he treated his body like a horse. First, we must never go through a meal without depriving ourselves of something; so that at the end of each meal we can offer some privation to God. In our sleep, from time to time, take away a little. In our itch to speak [démangeaison de parler], as soon as we have the thought of saying something, deprive ourselves of it for the good Lord. Well, my brethren, who are those who take all these precautions whose importance I have just shown you? Where are they? alas! I don't know anything about it. That they are rare and that their number is small! But also, where are those who, having received the forgiveness of their sins, persevere in the happy state into which the sacrament of penance has placed them? Alas, my God, where should we go to find them? Is there one among those

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who are listening to me, who are these happy Christians? Alas! I don't know anything about it. What should we conclude from all this, my brethren? here it is. If we fall back, as before, as soon as opportunities present themselves, (it is) because we do not make better resolutions, because we do not increase our penances, because we do not redouble our prayers and our mortifications. Let us tremble over our confessions, that at the hour of death we find only sacrileges, and consequently, our eternal loss. Happy, and a thousand times happy, he who perseveres to the end, since heaven is only for such!...

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

On Afflictions.

Amen, amen dico vobis: quia plorabitis et flebitis vos; mundus autem gaudebit. Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and groan, and the world will rejoice. (S. John, XVI, 20.)

Who could, my brethren, hear without astonishment the language that the Savior spoke to his disciples before ascending to heaven, telling them that their life would only be a series of tears, crosses and sufferings; while the people of the world would indulge and abandon themselves to [s'abandonner à] senseless joy and laugh like madmen? “It is not,” Saint Augustine tells us, “that the people of the world, that is to say, the wicked, do not also have their sorrows, since troubles and sorrows are the consequences of a criminal conscience, and a disordered heart finds its torment in its own disorder. » Alas! they are enveloped in the curse that Jesus Christ pronounces against those who think only of giving themselves over to pleasure and joy. The sharing of good Christians is very different: they must resolve to spend their lives suffering and moan; but, from their tears and their sufferings, they will pass to a joy and a pleasure infinite in its magnitude and its duration; instead of the people of the world, after a few moments of joy mixed with much bitterness, spending their eternity in the flames. Woe to you, Jesus Christ said to them, to you who only think of rejoicing, because your pleasures cause you infinite evils in the place of my justice. Ah! blessed, he then said to the good Christians, ah! blessed, you who spend your days in tears, because one day will come when I myself will console you. I will therefore show you, my brethren, that crosses, poverty, contempt and suffering are the share of a Christian who seeks to save his soul and to please God. (We must) either suffer in this world, or never hope to see God in heaven. Let's look at this a little closer.

I. I say 1° that from the moment we are admitted to the number of God's children, we take up a cross which must not leave us until death. Wherever Jesus Christ speaks to us from heaven, he never fails (to tell us) that it is only through crosses and suffering that we can merit it: “Take your cross,” Jesus Christ tells us, “and follow me, not for a day, a month, a year, but for your whole life. » Saint Augustine tells us: “Leave the pleasures and joy to the people of the world; but for you, who are the children of God, weep with the children of God. » Sufferings and persecutions are very advantageous to us in two respects. The first is, that we find there very effective means to atone for our past sins, since, or in this worl or the other, we must suffer the penalty. In this world, the punishments are infinite neither in their rigor nor in their duration: it is a merciful God who only punishes us because he has great designs of mercy on us; he makes us suffer for a moment, to make us happy for an eternity. However great our sorrows, it is only his little finger that touches [petit doigt qui nous touche] us; whereas in the other life, the tortures and torments that we will endure will be generated by his power and his fury. He will seem to take (the task) of exhausting himself to make us suffer. Our evils will be infinite in their duration and severity. In this world, our sorrows are further softened by the consolations and help which we find in our holy religion; but, in the other, there will be no consolation or softening: on the contrary, everything will be a matter of despair for us. Oh! happy is the Christian who spends his life in tears and suffering, since he will be able to avoid so many evils and obtain so many pleasures and eternal joys! The holy man Job tells us that man's life is only a series of miseries. Let’s get into some details. In fact, if we go from house to house, we find the cross of Jesus Christ planted everywhere; here, it is a loss of property, an injustice which has reduced a poor family to misery; there, it is an illness, which keeps this poor man on a bed of pain [lit de douleur], so that he spends his days in suffering; elsewhere it is a poor woman, who dips her bread in her tears, because of the sorrow she experiences at the hands of a brutal and religionless husband. In another place, they are poor old men rejected and mis- prized by their children, reduced to dying of sorrow and misery. If I turn to another, I see sadness painted on her forehead: if I ask her the reason, she will tell me that she is accused of things she never thought of. Finally, in another place, I hear a house ringing with cries caused by the loss of a father, mother or child. This in general, my brethren, is what makes man's life so sad and miserable, if we only consider all this humanly; but if we turn to the side of religion, we will see that we are infinitely unfortunate to desolate and complain, as we do. First,

I will begin to tell you that what makes you find yourself so unhappy is that you always look at those who are better than you. A poor man, in the miseries of his poverty, instead of thinking of the (criminals) who are loaded with iron, condemned to spend (their days) in prisons, or to waste their languid life on a stake; will carry his thoughts into the house of a great person in the world, which is full of goods and pleasures. —A sick man, far from spending the torments endured by the unfortunate reprobate who scream in the flames, who are crushed by the wrath of God, of whom an eternity of torments will not be able to erase the least of sins; he will cast his eyes on those whom illness and poverty have never touched. This, my brethren, is what makes us find our ailments unbearable. But what follows from this, my brethren, if not murmurs and complaints, which make us lose all the merit for heaven? For on the one hand, we suffer without consolation and without hope of being rewarded; from another side, instead of using them to atone for our sins, we only increase them by our murmuring and our lack of patience. Here is the proof: since you have spoken ill of this person who sought to harm you, have you moved any further? Has his hatred subsided? No, my brethren, no. For so many years that you have not stopped shouting at this husband who distresses you with his drunkenness, his debauchery and his crazy spending, has he become more reasonable? No, my sister, no. When, being overwhelmed by illness and (loss), you let yourself go into despair, almost to the point of wanting to destroy yourself, to the point of cursing those who gave you life; have your ills ceased, are your sorrows less bitter? No, my brethren, no. Is this child who made you shed so many tears resurrected? No, my brethren, no. Well! My brethren-, your impatience, your lack of submission to the will of God and your despair have therefore (served) only to make you more unhappy, you have therefore only added new sins to your old ones. Alas! My brethren, this is the unfortunate and despairing fate of a person who has lost sight of the end for which God sends him his crosses. But, you will tell me, we have heard this language a hundred times, they are words and not consolations; we say the same to those who are in pain. —Ah! my friend, look, look up; pull your heart out of the silt of the earth where you have immersed it, tear away these mists which hide from you the goods that your sorrows can procure for you. Ah! look up, consider the hand of a good father who destines you a happy place in his kingdom; a God strikes you to heal the wounds that sin has made on your poor (soul); a God makes you suffer to crown you with immortal glory!... Do you want to know, my brethren, how we must receive the crosses that come to us either from the hand of God or from that of creatures? Here it is. I mean, like the holy man Job, who after losing immense possessions and a large family, did not blame the fire from heaven which had burned part of his flocks, nor the thieves who had carried away the rest, nor the impetuous wind which, by overturning his house, had crushed his poor children; (but) he contented himself with saying: “Alas! the hand of the Lord is heavy on me. » When, lying for a year on a dunghill, covered with ulcers, without resources and without consolation, despised by some, abandoned by others, even persecuted by his wife who, instead of consoling him, mocked him, saying to him: “Ask God for death, in order to make these evils flee. Do you see your God, whom you serve so faithfully, do you see how he treats you? » “Be silent,” said the holy man, “if we have received the goods from his beneficent hand with thanksgiving, why should we not receive the evils with which he afflicts us? » But, you think, I cannot understand that it is God who afflicts us, he who is goodness itself, who loves us infinitely. Ask me also if it is possible for a good father to chastise his child, for a doctor to give bitter medicine to his patients. Would you think that it would be more appropriate to let this child live in licentiousness, rather than to punish him to make him live on the path of salvation and lead him to heaven? Would you believe that a doctor would do better to let his patient die, for fear of giving him re- e III SUNDAY AFTER EASTER bitter medes? How blind we are if we reason like this! The good God [le bon Dieu] must punish us, otherwise we would not be among his children; since Jesus Christ himself tells us that heaven will only be given to those who suffer and fight to the death. Do you think, my brethren, that Jesus Christ is not telling the truth? Well! examine the life that the saints led, see the path they took; as soon as they do not suffer, they believe themselves lost and abandoned by God. “My God, my God,” cried Saint Augustine, weeping, “do not spare me in this world, make me suffer greatly; provided you show me mercy in the other, I am happy. » “How happy I am,” said Saint Francis de Sales during his illnesses, “to find such an

easy way to atone for my faults! Oh! how much sweeter and more consoling it is to satisfy God's justice on a bed of pain [lit de douleur] than to satisfy it in the flames! » And I say, after all the saints, that suffering, persecution and other miseries are the most effective means to attract a soul to God. Indeed, we see that the greatest saints are those who suffered the most, God only distinguishes his friends by the crosses. See Saint Alexis who remained for fourteen years lying on one side all scratched, and, in this cruel situation, he was content to say: “My God, you are just, you punish me because I am a sinner and you love me. » See again Saint Liduvine, whose beauty was extraordinary, asking God, if her beauty could be a cause of fall and loss for her soul, to give him the grace to destroy it. From that very moment, she became completely covered with leprosy, which made her an object of horror to the eyes.

of the world, and this for thirty-eight years, that is to say until his death. And during this time, she did not even let out a word of complaint. How many, my brethren, who are in hell would now be in heaven, if God had given them the grace to have been ill for a long time. Listen to Saint Augustine: “My children, he tells us, in the sacrifices, encourage yourselves by the thought of the reward prepared for you. » It is recorded in history that a poor woman had been lying on a bed of pain [lit de douleur] for many years; he was asked what could give him so much courage to suffer with so much patience. “Alas! she said to them, I am so happy to be what God wants, that I would not change my state with all the empire of the world. When I think that God wants me to suffer, I am completely consoled. » Saint Thérèse tells us that one day Jesus Christ having appeared to her, said to him: “My child, do not be surprised by what you see; my faithful servants spend their lives in crosses, contempt; the more my Father loves someone, the more he sends them something to suffer. » Saint Bernard received the crosses with so much thanksgiving that one day he said to God while crying: “Ah! Lord, how happy I would be if I had the strength of all men, so that I could endure all the crosses of the universe! » Saint Elizabeth Queen of Hungary, having been chased from her palace by her own subjects and dragged through the mud, instead of thinking of punishing them, she ran to the church to have the Te Deum sung in thanksgiving. Saint John Chrysostom, this great lover of the cross, said that he preferred to suffer with Jesus Christ than to reign with him in heaven. Saint John of the Cross, after having suffered all the cruelty of his disciples, who th put him in prison, beat him with so much cruelty that he was covered in blood; what does he say to those who witnessed these horrors? “Alas, my friends, you weep over what I suffer, I have never had such a happy moment. » Jesus Christ having appeared to him said to him: “John, what do you want me to give you to reward you for all that you suffer for love of me? » “Ah! he cried, “Lord, make me suffer more and more! » Let us all agree, my brethren, that the saints understood much better than us the happiness of suffering for God. We hear many (of you) say when they are in trouble: But what have I done to the good Lord to have so much misery? — What evil have you done, my friend, for the good Lord to afflict you like this?... take all the commandments of God, one after the other, see if there is a single one against which you have not sinned. What wrong have you done?... go through all the years of your youth, review in your memory all the days of your miserable life; after that, ask what evil you have done for the good Lord to afflict you like this? So you count for nothing all the shameful habits in which you have languished for a long time? So you count for nothing this pride, which makes you believe that people must put themselves at your feet for a few pieces of land that you have more than the others and which, perhaps, will be the cause of your damnation? So you count for nothing this ambition which means that you are never satisfied, this self-esteem, this vanity which continually occupy you, these vivacities, these resentments, these intemperances, these jealousies? So you count this terrible negligence for nothing for the sacraments and everything that concerns the salvation of your poor soul: all this you have forgotten; but are you less guilty? Well, my friend, if you are guilty, is it not just that the good Lord should punish you? Tell me, my friend, what penance have you done to atone for so many sins? Where are your fasts, your mortifications and your good works? If after so many sins you have not shed a tear; if after so much avarice, you were only content to give some slight alms; if after so much pride, you do not want to suffer the slightest humiliations; if after having used your body so many times for sin, you do not want to hear about penance, heaven must

take justice since you do not want to do it yourself. Alas! how blind we are! we would like to do evil without being punished for it, or rather, we would like God not to be just. Well! Lord, let this sinner live in peace, do not weigh your hand on him, let him fatten like a victim destined for eternal vengeance, and in this fire, you will have time to make him satisfy your justice; spare him in this world, since he wants it; in the flames you will know how to make him do a useless, endless penance. 0 my God! May this misfortune never happen to us. " Oh! rather, cries Saint Augustine, multiply my afflictions and my sufferings as much as you please, provided that you show mercy in the other life! » But, another will say, all this is very good for those who have committed great sins; but for me, thanks be to God, I have not done much harm. Hey! so you believe that, because you think you don't have much done wrong, you must not suffer; and I will tell you: precisely because you have tried to do good, the good Lord afflicts you and he allows you to be made fun of, to be despised and your devotion to be ridiculed, and it is God himself who makes you experience sorrows and illnesses. Are you surprised by this, my friend? take a look at Jesus Christ, your true model, see if he spent a single moment without suffering something that man will never be able to understand. Tell me, why did the Pharisees persecute him, and constantly sought ways to surprise him and condemn him to death? Is it because he was guilty? No, undoubtedly; but here is the reason. It is because his miracles and his examples of humility and poverty were the condemnation of their pride and their bad actions. Let us say better, my brethren, if we would go through the holy Scriptures, we would see that, from the beginning of the world, suffering, contempt and mockery have been the share of the children of God: that is to say, of those who thought of pleasing God. Indeed, who can despise and mock a person who fulfills his religious duties, if not a poor unfortunate reprobate, whom hell has vomited on earth to make the good suffer, or try whether he can drag them into the abyss where he is already forever? Do you want proof? here it is. Why did Cain kill his brother Abel? Isn't it because he did better than him? Was it not because he could not lead him to evil that he took his life? What was the intention of Joseph's brothers when they threw him into a cistern, was it not because his holy life condemned their libertine life? Who brought so much persecution to the apostles who, at every moment "

so to speak, were thrown into prison, whipped, garotled, or rather, whose life since the death of Jesus Christ was only one of continual martyrdom; all ended their lives in the most cruel and painful way? Now, what evil did they do: since they only sought the glory of God and the salvation of souls? Are you despised, mocked and persecuted even though you say or do nothing to anyone? so much the better that you are despised, that you are mocked. If you had nothing to suffer, what would you have to offer to God at the hour of death? But, you will tell me, they offend (God); they lose themselves by making others suffer; if God wanted, he would prevent them. — Certainly he would prevent them, if he wanted to. Why did God suffer tyrants? It was as easy for him to punish them as to keep them; but he used their bad designs to test the good ones and hasten their happiness. There is no doubt that you must pity them and pray for them, not because they despise you and mock you, since God uses them to help you gain heaven [gagner le ciel]; but because of the harm they do to themselves. Indeed, we must agree that it is being very blind to despise someone because he serves the good God [le bon Dieu] (better) than us, because he seeks the path to heaven with more eagerness, and because he will do more good works or penances. Here it is a truly incomprehensible mystery. If you want to damn yourself: well, do it. Why are you mad that I'm going where you don't want to go? I want to go to heaven, if you don't go it's because you don't want to. Open your eyes, my friend, recognize your blindness: when you have prevented me from serving the good God [le bon Dieu], or this will be the cause that I will be damned, what more will you have, once again? Open your eyes and come back from your error. Try to imitate those you have despised until now, and you will find your happiness in this world as well as in the next. But, you will say to me, I do them no harm, why do they want to do me? — So much the better, my friend, that's a good mark, you are sure to be on the path that leads to heaven. Listen to Our Lord: “Take up your cross and follow me; they persecute me, they will persecute you; they despise me, they will despise you;

but, far from being discouraged, rejoice, because a great reward is promised to you in heaven. He who is not ready to suffer everything, even to the point of losing his life for the love of me, is not worthy of me. » Why did the holy man Tobias become blind? Isn't it because he was a good man? Listen to Jesus Christ speaking to Saint Peter, martyr, when he complained of an outrage done to him, although innocent. “And I, Peter,” Jesus Christ said to him, “what evil had I done when they put me to death? » Let us all agree together, my brethren, that we make beautiful promises to the good Lord as long as no one tells us anything, that everything goes according to our desires; but, the first little mockery, the first little contempt, or even the slightest joke that an impious person, who does not have the strength to do what you do, will make to you, you blush and abandon the service of God. Ah! ungrateful, you do not remember what your God suffered for love of you. Isn't it, my friend, because you were told that you were acting wise, that you were only a hypocrite, and that you were more wicked than those who never confess; you gave up

God to put you on the side of those who will be reprobate? Stop, my friend, go no further, recognize your folly and do not throw yourself into hell. Tell me, my brethren, what will we respond when God confronts our life with that of so many martyrs, some of whom were chopped into pieces by the executioners, others rotted in prisons, rather than betray their faith? No, my brethren, if we are good Christians, we will never complain about the mockery that will be made of us: on the contrary, the more we are despised, the more content we will be, and the more we will pray to the good God [le bon Dieu] for those (who persecute us); we will place all vengeance in the hands of God, and, if he finds it expedient for his glory and our salvation, he will do it. See Moses, overwhelmed with insults from his brother and sister, to all this contempt he opposed such great kindness and charity that God was touched. The Holy Spirit says that he was the meekest of men who were then on earth. The Lord struck his sister with a terrible leprosy to punish her for what she had murmured against (her) brother. Moses, seeing her punished, far from being happy about it, said to God: “Ah! Lord, why are you punishing my sister? you know well that I never asked for revenge, please heal, my sister. » God could not resist her goodness: he instantly healed her. 0 what happiness for us, my brethren, if, in the contempt and mockery that people make of us, we behaved in the same way! What treasures for heaven! No, my brethren, as long as we are not seen doing good to those who despise us, even preferring them to our friends, and only opposing their outrages with kindness and charity, we will not be among those whom God has destined th for the sky. Do you know what we are? here it is. We are like those soldiers who, as long as there is no danger, seem to be invincible, and who, at the first danger, take flight; in the same way, as long as we are flattered in the way we conduct ourselves, and our good works are praised, we believe that nothing can make us fall, and a nothing makes us fall and abandon everything. My God, how blind a man is when he believes himself capable of something, when he is only capable of betraying you and losing himself! And I say, my brethren, that nothing is more capable of converting those who destroy our reputation than gentleness and charity. They can't resist it. If they are too hardened, and have already put the stamp of their disapproval, they will be completely confused, they will go away like people in despair: here is the proof. It is reported that Saint Martin had a cleric since his childhood. Although he had done everything he could to raise him well in the service of God, he became a true libertine, a scandalous person; there was no sort of insult or outrage that he did not commit to his holy bishop. But Saint Martin, instead of driving him out of his home as he deserved, showed him such great charity that he seemed to multiply his care in proportion to the insults he received. Every moment he shed tears at the foot of his crucifix, to solicit his conversion. Suddenly, the young man opens his eyes; considering on the one hand, the charity of his bishop, on the other, the insults with which he had heaped upon him, he runs to throw himself at his feet to ask his forgiveness. The bishop kisses him and blesses the good Lord for having had pity on this poor soul. This young man was a model of virtue throughout his life and recognized as a saint. Before dying, he repeated several times that Martin's patience and charity had earned him the grace of his conversion. Yes, my brethren, this is what we would do if, instead of returning insult for insult, we had the good fortune to oppose it only with gentleness and charity. Alas! when the saints did not have the opportunity to be despised, they sought it: here is the

proof. We read in the life of Saint Alhanasius that a lady, wishing to work to gain heaven [gagner le ciel], went to the bishop and asked him for one of the poor people who were being fed with alms, to take care of in her home; because, she said, I would like my palicnee to be exercised a little. The holy bishop sent him a woman who was extremely humble, who could not (suffer) to be served by this lady. Every time she did him some service, she thanked him a thousand times. Not satisfied with all these thanks, the lady, very sad, went to find the bishop, saying to him: “Monseigneur, you have not served me well as I desired; you gave me

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a person who confuses me with his humility. At the slightest service I render her, she lowers herself to the ground; give me (one) another. The bishop, seeing his courage in suffering, gave him one who was of a proud, angry, contemptuous character. Each time this lady served her, she overwhelmed her with insults, telling her that she had asked for it, not to take care of her, but to make her suffer. She even went so far as to hit her, and what did she do? My brethren, here it is: the more she despised the lady, the more (the latter) served her with alacrity and without ceasing [sans relâche] (despite so much) trouble. From there what followed? except that, touched by so much charity, this woman converted and died like a saint. Oh! My brethren, how many souls, on the day of judgment, we re-

They will claim that if we had only opposed their insults with kindness and charity, they would be in heaven, while they will burn for an eternity. If we said, my brethren, at the beginning, that the crosses, as well as all the miseries of life, were given to us by God to satisfy his justice for our sins, we can also say that they are a preservative against sin. Why did God allow someone to do you wrong, for another to deceive you? Here is the reason. It is because God, who sees the future, has foreseen that your heart would become too attached to things on earth and that you would lose sight of heaven. He allows your reputation to be blackened, to be criticized: why is that, my brethren? if not because you are too proud, too jealous of your reputation; This is why he allowed you to be humiliated, otherwise you would have damned yourselves. So I say, my brethren, in closing, that there is nothing so unfortunate in crosses as a man without religion. Sometimes he accuses himself by saying: If I had taken these measures, this misfortune would not have happened to me. Sometimes he accuses others: It is this person who is the cause of my ills; I will never forgive him. He wishes death to himself, he wishes it (to him). He cursed the day of his birth; he will do a thousand base things that he thinks he is justified in order to get out of trouble; but, no, his cross, or rather his hell, will follow him. Such is the unhappy end of those who suffer without turning to God, who alone can console and relieve them. But look at a person who loves God, who desires to go and see him in heaven: 0 my God, (she said), how little my sufferings are compared to what my sins deserve to suffer- fry in the other life! You make me suffer for a little while in this world to make me happy for all eternity. How good you are, my God! make me suffer, let me be an object of contempt and horror in the eyes of the world, provided that I have the happiness of pleasing you, I want nothing else. Let us conclude from this that he who loves God is happy even in the midst of all the storms of this world. My God, make us always suffer so that after having imitated you here below, we can go with you to heaven!

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

On Prayer.

Amen, amen dico vobis: si quid petieritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis. Truly I tell you, whatever you ask my Father in my name, he will do it for you. [Saint John, x vi, 23.)

No, my brethren, nothing is more consoling for us than the promises that Jesus Christ makes to us in the Gospel, telling us that whatever we ask of his Father in his name, he will grant us. Not content with that, my brethren, not only does he allow us to ask him what we want; but he goes so far as to order it from us, he begs us to do so. He said to his Apostles: “I have been with you for three years and you ask me nothing. Ask me

therefore, that your joy may be full and perfect. » Which shows us that prayer is the source of all the good and all the happiness that we can hope for on earth. According to this" My brethren, if we are so poor, so devoid of enlightenment and the goods of grace; it is that we do not pray or that we pray badly. Alas! My brethren, let's say the while groaning: a large number do not even know what it is to pray, and others have only a great repugnance for an exercise which is so sweet and so consoling for a good Christian. However, we see some who pray, but who obtain nothing, this comes from the fact that they pray badly: that is to say, without preparation, and without even knowing what they are going to ask of the good Lord. But to better make you feel the greatness of the good that prayer attracts to us, my brethren, I will tell you that all the evils that overwhelm us on earth come only from the fact that we do not pray, or that we pray badly; and, if you want to know the reason, here it is. This is because if we had the happiness of praying to God as we should, it would be impossible for us to fall into sin; and if we were free from sin, we would find ourselves, so to speak, like Adam before his fall. To encourage you, my brethren, to pray often and to pray properly, I will show you 1° that without prayer, it is impossible to save us; 2° that prayer is all-powerful with God; 3° what are the qualities that a prayer must have to be pleasing to God and meritorious for the one who prays it.

I. To show you, my brethren, the power of prayer and the graces that it attracts to you from heaven, I will tell you that it is only through prayer that all the righteous have had the happiness of persevering. Prayer is to our soul what rain is to the earth. Smoke as much land as you want; if the rain fails, everything you do will be for nothing. 13th child, do good works as much as you want; if you do not pray often and properly, you will never

E will be saved; because prayer opens the eyes of our soul, makes it feel the greatness of its misery, the necessity of having recourse to God, it makes it fear its weakness. (The Christian) counts (for) everything on God alone, and nothing on himself. Yes, M-F., it is through prayer that all the righteous have persevered. Indeed, who led all these saints to make such great sacrifices as to abandon all their possessions, their parents, and all their comforts, to go and spend the rest of their lives in the forests, in order to mourn their sins? It is, my brethren, prayer, which inflamed their hearts with the thought of God, (with the desire) to please him, and to live only for him. See Magdeleine, what is her occupation after her conversion? Isn't that prayer? See Saint Peter; see again Saint Louis, king of France, who, in his travels, instead of spending the night in his bed, spent it in a church, to pray there, asking the good God [le bon Dieu] for the precious gift of persevering in his grace. But without going so far, my brethren, do we not see ourselves that as soon as we neglect our prayers, we immediately lose the taste for things in heaven: we only think of earth; and if we resume prayer, we feel reborn within us the thought and desire for the things of heaven. Yes, my brethren, if we have the happiness of being in the grace of God, either we will have recourse to prayer, or we are sure of not persevering for long on the path to heaven. Secondly, we say, my brethren, that all sinners owe their conversion, without an extraordinary miracle, which happens very rarely, to prayer. See Saint Monica, what she does to ask for the conversion of her son: sometimes, (she is) at the foot of her crucifix, who prays and cries; sometimes, from people who are wise, to ask for the help of their prayer. See Saint Augustine himself, when he seriously wanted to convert; see him in a garden, given over to prayer and tears, in order to touch the heart of God and change his own. Yes, my brethren, even though we are sinners, if we had recourse to prayer and if we prayed properly, we would be sure that the good God [le bon Dieu] would forgive us. Holas! My brethren, let us not be surprised that the devil does everything he can to make us miss our prayers, and to make them hurt; it is because he understands much better than us how terrible prayer is in hell, and that it is impossible for the good Lord to be able to refuse us what we ask of him through prayer. Oh! how many sinners would emerge from the poché, if they had the good fortune to have recourse to prayer! Thirdly, I say that all the damned have damned themselves because they did not pray or prayed badly. From this I conclude, my brethren, that without prayer, we can only lose ourselves for eternity, and that with prayer well done, we are sure to save ourselves. Yes, my brethren, all the saints were so convinced that prayer was absolutely necessary for them to save themselves, that they were not content to spend the days praying, but

also the entire nights. Why is it, my brethren, that we have so much repugnance for such a sweet and consoling exercise? Alas! My brethren, is that, doing it poorly, we have never felt the sweetness that the saints experienced there. See Saint Hilarion, who prayed for a hundred years without stopping, and these hundred years of prayers were so short that his life seemed to pass by like lightning. Indeed, Al. F.,

E a prayer well said is an embalmed oil which spreads throughout our soul, which already seems to make it feel the happiness enjoyed by the blessed in heaven. This is so true that we read in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi that, often when he prayed, he fell into rapture, to the point that he could not distinguish whether he was on earth or in heaven among the blessed. It was because he was ablaze with the divine fire that prayer kindled in his heart, (and which) communicated to him a natural warmth. One day while he was in church, he felt such violent love that he began to cry out loud: “My God, I can't hold on anymore. » But, think to yourself, this is very good for those who know how to pray well and (say) beautiful prayers. — my brethren, it is neither the long nor the beautiful prayers that the good Lord looks at; but those that are done from the bottom of the heart, with great respect and a true desire to please God. Here is a good example. It is reported in the life of Saint Bonaventure, who was a great doctor of the Church, that a very simple monk said to him: “My father, I who am little educated, do you think that I can pray to the good God [le bon Dieu] and love him? » Saint Bonaventure said to him: “Ah my friend, it is mainly those that the good Lord cherishes the most, and who are the most pleasing to him. » This good religious, astonished at such good news, went to the door of the monastery, saying to all those he saw passing: “Come, my friends, I have good news to give you; Doctor Bonaventure told me that we others, although ignorant, could love the good Lord as much as the learned. What happiness for us to be able to love God and please him, without knowing anything! » Based on this, my brethren, I will tell you that nothing is easier than praying to the good Lord, and that there is nothing more consoling. We say that prayer is an elevation of our heart towards God. Let us put it better, my brethren, it is a sweet conversation between a child and his father, a subject with his king, a servant with his master, a friend with his friend, in whose bosom he places his sorrows and his sorrows. To express this happiness even better: it is a vile creature that the good Lord receives in his arms to lavish on him all kinds of blessings. What else will I say to you, my brethren? it is the meeting of all that is vilest, with all that is greatest, most powerful, most perfect in all kinds of ways. Tell me, my brethren, do we need more to make us feel the happiness of prayer and the necessity of prayer? From this, my brethren, you see that prayer is absolutely necessary for us if we want to please God and save ourselves. On the other hand, we can only find our happiness on earth by loving God; and we can only love him by praying to him. We see that Jesus Christ, to encourage us to often have recourse to him through prayer, promises us never to refuse us anything if we pray to him properly. But, without going through great detours to show you that we must pray often, you only have to open your catechism, and you will see that the duty of a good Christian is to pray in the morning and in the evening and often during the day: that is to say, always. I say 1° that, in the morning, a Christian who desires to save his soul must, from the moment he wakes up, make the sign of the cross, give his heart to God, offer him all his actions, prepare to say his prayer. You should never work before doing it; but do it on your knees, after having taken holy water, and do it in front of his crucifix. Let us never lose sight, my brethren, that it is in the morning that the good Lord prepares for us all the graces that are necessary for us to spend the day in holiness; because the good Lord knows all the opportunities that we will have to sin, all the temptations that the devil will give us during the day; and, if we pray on our knees and as we should, he gives us all the graces we need to avoid succumbing. This is why the devil does everything he can to make us miss them or to make us hurt them; being very convinced, as he once confessed through the mouth of a man possessed, that if he can have the first moment of the day, he is sure to have everything else. Who among us, my brethren, could hear, without crying with compassion, these poor Christians who dare to tell you that they have no time! You don't have time! poor blind people; what is the most precious action, or to work to please God and to save your soul, or to go (give) food to your animals which are in the stable, or to call your children or your servants to send them to stir the earth or the dung? My God, how blind man is!... You don't

have time! but tell me, ungrateful people, if the good Lord had (made) you die last night, would you have worked? If the good Lord had sent you three or four months of illness, would you have worked? Come on, wretches, you deserve that the good Lord abandons you, to your blindness, that you perish. We find it too much to give him a few minutes to thank him for the graces he grants us each time.

moment! You want to do your work, you say. But, my friend, you are greatly mistaken, you have no other work than to please God and save your soul, everything else is not your work: if you do not do it, others will do it; but if you lose your soul [perdre son âme], who will save it? Come on, you are a fool: when you are in hell, you will learn what you should have done; but which, unfortunately, you did not do. But, you will ask me, what are the advantages that we receive through prayer, which we must pray so often? My brethren, here they are. Prayer makes our crosses less heavy, it softens our sorrows and we are less attached to life, it draws upon us the gaze of God's mercy, it strengthens our soul against sin, it makes us desire penance and makes us practice it with pleasure, it makes us feel and understand how much sin outrages the good God [le bon Dieu]. Let us say better: My brethren, through prayer we please God, we enrich our souls, and we assure ourselves eternal life. Tell me, my brethren, do we need more to lead us to make our life nothing but a continual prayer through our union with God? When you love someone, do you need to see them to think about them? No, probably. Likewise, my brethren, if we love the good Lord, prayer will be as familiar to us as breathing. However, my brethren, I will tell you that to pray in such a way that it can attract all these goods to us, it is not enough to use a moment hastily, that is to say, with precipitation. The good Lord wants us to spend a suitable time, that we at least have time to ask him for the graces that are necessary for us, to thank him for his

E V SUNDAY AFTER EASTER benefits, and to groan over our past faults, asking Him for forgiveness. But, you will ask me, how can we pray without ceasing [sans relâche]? — my brethren, nothing could be easier: it is to take care of the good Lord, from time to time, during our work; sometimes doing an act of love, to show him that we love him, because he is good and worthy of being loved; sometimes, an act of humility, recognizing us as unworthy of the graces with which he never ceases to fill us; sometimes, an act of trust, (because, although very miserable, we know that he loves us and that he wants to make us happy. Or else, we will think of the death and passion of Jesus Christ, (we will see him) in the Garden of Olives, carrying his cross; we will remember his crowning with thorns, his crucifixion; or, if you want, his incarnation, his flight into Egypt, his birth; or even, the thought of death, of judgment, of hell or heaven. We will say some prayers in honor of our holy guardian angel, and will never fail to say our Benedicite, our thanksgiving, our Angelus, Hail, Mary, when the hour strikes, which makes us remember our final ends, that soon we will no longer be on earth, and which leads us not to cling to it, and not to remain in sin, fearing that death will surprise us there. F.., how easy it is to pray without ceasing [sans relâche] while doing this, my brethren, this is how the saints always prayed.

II. The second reason which should lead us to resort to prayer is that all the advantage turns against us. The good Lord wants our happiness and he knows that it is only through prayer that we can get it. Besides, my brethren, what greater honor for a vile creature like us, that God would be willing to stoop to her, speaking with her as familiarly as a friend with his friend. See what kindness on his part in allowing us to share with him our sorrows, our sorrows. And this good Savior hastens to console us, to support us in trials, or, to put it better, he suffers for us. Tell me, my brethren, would it not be wanting to renounce our salvation and our happiness on earth if we did not pray: since, without prayer, we can only be unhappy, and with prayer we are sure of obtaining everything that is necessary for us for time and for eternity, as we will see. I say 1°, my brethren, that everything is promised to prayer, and 2° that prayer obtains everything when it is well done: this is a truth that Jesus Christ repeats to us almost on every page of Holy Scripture. The promise that Jesus Christ makes to us is formal: “Ask,” he tells us, “and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, it will be opened to you. Whatever you ask of my Father in my name, you will receive it if you do it in faith. » Jesus

Christ does not just tell us that prayer well done obtains everything. To convince us even better, he assures us with an oath: “Verily, truly I say to you, whatever you ask of my Father in my name, he will grant it to you. » According to the words of Jesus Christ himself, my brethren, it seems to me that it would be impossible to doubt the power of prayer. Besides, my brethren, where could our distrust come from? would this be our unworthiness? But, the good Lord knows well that we are sinners and guilty, and that we count (in) everything

Esur his goodness which is infinite, and that it is in his name that we pray. And is not our unworthiness covered, and as if hidden, by his merits? Is it because our sins are too terrible or too numerous? But is it not as easy for Him to forgive us a thousand sins as it is for one? Was it not mainly for sinners that he gave his life? Listen to what the holy King-Prophet tells us; Has anyone ever prayed to the Lord and his prayer was not answered? » “Yes,” he tells us, “all those who call on the Lord, and who have recourse to him, have experienced the effects of his mercy. » Let's see this through examples, which will be more sensitive to you. See Adam after his sin asking for mercy. Not only does the Lord forgive him, but also all his descendants; sends him his Son, who had to become incarnate, suffer and die to repair his sin. Look at the Ninevites who were so guilty, since the Lord sent them his prophet Jonah, to warn them that he was going to destroy them in the most terrible way: that is to say, by fire from heaven. They all devote themselves to prayer, and the Lord grants them all forgiveness. Even though the good Lord was ready to destroy the universe with a universal flood, if these sinners had resorted to prayer, they would have been sure that the Lord would have forgiven them. If you go further, see Moses on the mountain, while Joshua fights the enemies of God's people. As long as Moses prays, they are victorious; and as soon as he stops praying, they are defeated. See again this same Moses who goes to ask the Lord for forgiveness of thirty thousand guilty people whom the Lord had resolved to put to death: by his prayers, he forced, so to speak, the Lord

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gncur to forgive them. “No, Moses,” said the Lord to him, “do not ask for mercy for this people, I do not want to forgive them. » Moses continues, and the Lord is overcome by the prayers of his servant, and forgives them. What is Judith, my brethren, doing to deliver her homeland from this formidable enemy? she begins to pray, and, full of confidence in the one to whom she has just prayed, she goes to Holofernes, cuts off his head and saves her homeland. Look at the pious King Hezekiah, to whom the Lord sends his prophet to tell him to put his affairs in order because he is going to die. He prostrates himself before the Lord, begging Him not to remove him from this world again. The Lord, touched by his prayer, gave him fifteen more years of life. If you pass further, see the publican who, recognizing himself guilty, goes into the temple to pray to the Lord to forgive him. Jesus Christ himself tells us that his sins are forgiven. See the sinner who, prostrate at the feet of Jesus Christ, prays to him with tears. Did not Jesus Christ say to him: “Your sins are forgiven you. » The good thief prays on the cross, although covered with the most enormous crimes: not only does Jesus Christ forgive him; but, even more, promises him that on the same day, he will be in heaven with him. Yes, my brethren, if you had to cite all those who obtained their forgiveness through prayer, you would have to cite all the saints who were sinners; since it was only through prayer that they had the happiness of being reconciled with the good God [le bon Dieu], who allowed himself to be touched by their prayers.

III. But perhaps you think: Where can it come from that despite so much prayer, we are still sinners and no better at one time than the other? My friend,

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our misfortune comes from the fact that we do not pray properly, that is to say that (we pray) without preparation and without desire to convert, often even without knowing what we want to ask of the good God [le bon Dieu]. Nothing is so certain, my brethren, as that, since all the sinners who asked the good God [le bon Dieu] for their conversion have obtained it, and all the righteous who have asked God for perseverance

have persevered. But perhaps you will say to me: We are too tempted. — You are too tempted, my friend, you can pray and you are sure that prayer will give you the strength to resist temptation. Do you need grace? Well, prayer will get it for you. If you doubt this, listen to what Saint James tells us, that with prayer we have dominion over the world, over the devil and over our inclinations. Yes, my brethren, whatever sorrows we may be in, if we pray, we will have the happiness of enduring them with resignation to the will of God; and however violent our temptations may be, if we have recourse to prayer, we will overcome them. But what does the sinner do? here it is. He is very convinced that prayer is absolutely necessary for him to avoid evil and to do good, and to escape from sin when he has the misfortune of having fallen into it; but understand, if you can, his blindness: he does almost none or he does it badly. Isn't that true, my brethren? See the way in which a sinner prays, even if he prays, because most sinners do not pray, alas I see them get up and lie down like animals. But let us examine this sinner praying: see him lying down on a chair or against his bed, praying while dressing or undressing, walking or shouting, and perhaps even swearing at his

70 SERMONS» servants or their children. What preparation does he bring? unfortunately! point at all. Often and most of the time they finished their so-called prayer, not only without knowing what they said; but still without thinking who they were before and what they had come to do and ask. See them in the house of the good Lord, wouldn't that make you die of compassion? Do they think they are in the holy presence of God? No, probably: they watch who comes in and who goes out, they talk to each other, they yawn, they sleep, they are bored, perhaps they are even angry because the services are, according to them, too long. They have (the) devotion in taking the holy water much like when they take it from the bucket to drink. As soon as they put both knees on the ground, it seems to them that it is a lot to bow their heads a little during the Consecration or the Blessing. You see them wandering their eyes in the church, perhaps even on objects that could lead them to evil; They didn't even come in, but they would already like to be outside. When they come out you hear them screaming like people being taken out of a prison to set them free. Well, my brethren, here is the need of the sinner: you see that it is very great. From this, we must be surprised if a sinner always remains in his sin, and moreover, perseveres in it. We have said, in the third place, that the advantages of prayer are attached to the manner in which we discharge this duty, as you will see. 1° For a prayer to be pleasing to God and advantageous to the one who prays it, one must be in a state of grace or at least in a good resolution to leave sin quickly, because the prayer of a sinner who does not does not want to escape from sin is an insult to God. For a prayer to be good, we must be prepared for it. Any prayer that is prayed without preparation is a prayer poorly done, and this preparation is, at least, thinking about the good Lord for a moment before getting down on your knees, thinking about who you (are) going to speak to, what you are going to ask him. Alas, the number of those who prepare for it is small, and consequently there are few who pray as they should, that is to say, in order to be heard! Besides, my brethren, what do you want the good Lord to grant you, since you want nothing and desire nothing? Let us say even better: it is a poor person who does not want (no alms), it is a sick person who does not want healing, it is a blind person who wants to remain in his blindness; finally, he is a damned person who does not want heaven and who agrees to go to hell. Secondly, we said that prayer is the elevation of our heart towards God, it is a sweet and happy conversation of a creature with its God. It is therefore not, my brethren, praying to the good God [le bon Dieu] as we should, when we think of something else while we pray. As soon as we realize that our mind is wandering, we must quickly return to the presence of the good God [le bon Dieu], humble ourselves before Him, and never abandon our prayers because we feel no pleasure in praying. On the contrary, the more disgust we have, the more meritorious our prayer is in the eyes of God, if we always continue with the thought of pleasing God. It is recorded in history that one day a saint said to another saint: “Why is it that when we pray to the good God [le bon Dieu], our mind is filled with a thousand foreign thoughts and that, very often, if we were not not busy in prayer, one would not think of it. » The other replied: “My friend, this is not surprising: first, the devil foresees the abundant graces that we can obtain through prayer, and therefore, he despairs of winning a person who prays properly; then, the more fervently we pray, the more we

do it...,. » Another to whom the demon appeared, asked him why he was continually busy tempting Christians? The devil himself replied that he could not allow a Christian, who had sinned so many times, to still obtain his pardon, and that as long as there was a Christian on earth, he would tempt him. Then he asked him how he tempted them. The demon answered him, here he is: “Some I put my finger in their mouth to make them yawn; the others I put to sleep; and others, I transport their spirit from city to city. » Alas! My brethren, this is only too true; We experience these things every day, every time we are in the holy presence of God to pray to him. It is reported that the superior of a monastery seeing one of his monks who, before beginning his prayers, gave himself a certain movement and seemed to be speaking with someone, asked him what he was doing before beginning his prayers. “My father,” he said to him, “before beginning my prayers, I have the custom of calling all my thoughts and desires saying to them: Come all of you and we will worship Jesus Christ our God. » “Ah! My brethren, Cassicn tells us, how good it was to see the first faithful praying! They had such great respect in the presence of God, that it seemed as if they were dead, so great was the silence; we saw them in the Church all trembling; there were no chairs

Eni benches; they stood prostrate like criminals awaiting their sentence. But also, my brethren, how quickly the sky was populated and how good it was to live on earth! Ah! infinite happiness for those who lived in these happy times. In all the places where Jesus Christ promises us to grant everything to prayer, he always puts this condition: “If you do it with faith. » When someone asked him for healing or anything else, he never failed to say to them: “May it be done to you according to your faith. » Besides, my brethren, who could lead us to doubt, since our confidence is based on the omnipotence of God which is infinite, and on his mercy which is without limits, and on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. When we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, it is not us who pray, but it is Jesus Christ himself who prays to his Father for us. The Gospel gives us a beautiful example of the faith that we must have when praying, in the person of this woman who was suffering from an issue of blood. She said to herself: If I can only touch the edge of his coat, I am sure of being healed. » You see that she firmly believed that Jesus Christ could heal her; she awaited with great confidence a healing that she ardently desired. In fact, the Savior passing by her, she threw herself at the feet of Jesus Christ, touched his cloak, and immediately she was healed. Jesus Christ, seeing her faith, looked at her kindly, saying to her: “Go, your faith has saved you. » Yes, my brethren, it is to this faith and this confidence that everything is promised. n i We say that when we pray, we must have very pure intentions in everything we ask, and ask for nothing except what can contribute to the glory of God and our salvation. “You can,” Saint Augustine tells us, “(ask) for temporal things; but always in the thought that you will use it for the glory of God and the salvation of your soul, or for that of your neighbor; otherwise, your requests are only requests which are formed only by pride and ambition; and if, in this case, the good Lord refuses (to grant you what) you ask of Him; it’s because he doesn’t want to contribute to your downfall. But what do we do in our prayers, Saint Augustine still tells us? Alas! we ask for one thing, and we desire another. In reciting our Father, we say: “Our Pig, rest in heaven; that is to say: My God, detach us from this world; give us the grace to despise all things which are only for this present life; give me the grace that all my thoughts and all my desires be for heaven! » Alas! we would be very sorry if the good Lord gave us this grace; at least, a large number (1), We must pray often, my brethren, but we must redouble in trials and temptations. Here is a good example. We read in history that, in the time of Emperor Licinius, it was desired that all soldiers make sacrifices to the demon. Among the number there were forty who refused, saying that the sacrifices were due to God alone, and (1) Quote the rest of the Father... Example of the Shepherd. (Note of the Venerable.)

no to the devil. We made them all kinds of promises. Seeing that nothing could defeat them, they were condemned after many torments to be thrown naked into a pond of icy water, for one night, in the rigors of winter, in order to make them die by the rigor of the cold. The holy martyrs, seeing themselves thus condemned, said to one another: “My friends, what remains for us now, except to throw ourselves into the hands of Almighty God, from whom alone we must expect strength and victory. Let us resort to prayer, and pray constantly to attract the graces of Heaven upon us; let us ask God that all forty of us have the happiness

of persevering. » But to tempt them, a hot bath was placed nearby. Unfortunately, one of them, losing courage, leaves the fight and goes into the hot bath; but upon entering he lost his life. The one who guarded them seeing thirty-nine crowns descend from the sky, only one remained. “Ah! he cried, “it is this unfortunate man who has left the others!” He puts himself in his place, receives the fortieth and is baptized in his blood. The next day, as they were still breathing, the governor ordered them to be thrown into the fire. Having put them on a cart, except the youngest who we still hoped to be able to win; his mother, who witnessed it, exclaimed: “Ah! my son, courage! a moment of suffering will earn you an eternity of happiness. » And taking her son herself, she carries him on the cart with the others; full of joy, she leads him, as if in triumph, to the glory of martyrdom. They did not stop praying throughout their martyrdom, so convinced were they that prayer is the most powerful means of attracting help from Heaven to us. We see that Saint Augustine, after his conversion, retired for a long time into a small desert, to ask the good Lord for the grace to persevere in his good resolutions. Being a bishop, a good part of the night was occupied in prayer. Saint Vincent Francis, who converted so many souls, said that nothing was so powerful in converting sinners as prayer; that she was like a dart that pierces the heart of the sinner. Yes, my brethren, we can say that prayer does everything: it is it which makes us know our duties, it is it which makes us aware of the miserable state of our soul after sin, it is it which provides the dispositions which are necessary for us to receive the sacraments; it is she who makes us understand how little life and the goods of this world are, which leads us not to attach ourselves to them; it is she who vividly impresses the salutary fear of death, judgment, hell and the loss of heaven. Ah! My brethren, if we had the happiness of praying properly, how soon we would be penitent saints! We see that Saint Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, in his illness, could not be content (1) to say the “Our Father.” » He was told that this could contribute to an increase in his illness. “Oh no,” he replied, “on the contrary, it’s relieving. » We said, my brethren, that the third condition, so that our prayer is very pleasing to God, is perseverance. We often see that the good Lord does not always grant us immediately what we ask of Him; it is to make us desire it more, or to make us appreciate it better. This delay is not a refusal, but a test, which prepares us to receive (1) Getting tired.

with more abundance what we ask. See Saint Augustine who, for five years, asked God for the grace of his conversion. See Saint Mary Egyptian who, for nineteen years, asked the good God [le bon Dieu] for the grace to deliver her from dirty thoughts. But what did the saints do? Here it is. They always persevered in asking, and through their perseverance, they always obtained what they asked of the good Lord. For us, although covered in sin, if the good Lord does not immediately grant us what we ask of Him, we think that the Good God [le bon Dieu] does not want to grant us what we ask of Him, and immediately we leave the prayer. No, my brethren, this is not the conduct that the saints followed in perseverance: they always thought that they were unworthy of being heard, and that, if God granted it to them, they would only listen to his mercy and not to their merit. I therefore say that when we pray, although it seems that the good Lord does not listen to our prayers, we must not tire of praying; but always continue. If the good Lord does not grant us what we ask of Him, He grants us another grace which is more advantageous to us than that which we ask. We have an example of how we must persevere in prayer, in the person of this Chanaanite woman, who turns to Jesus Christ to ask him for the healing of her daughter. See his humility and perseverance, etc.. Here is another (example-

Rogations — Processions, Abstinence, and the Ember Days

ple) admirable of the power of prayer. We read in the history of the Fathers of the Desert, that the Catholics having gone to find a saint whose reputation extended far and wide, to ask him to come and confound a certain heretic, whose speeches seduced many people, (this saint) having entered into an argument with this evil- happy, without being able to lead him to admit that he was wrong, and that he was an unfortunate person who seemed to have been born only to destroy souls; always seeing that, through his detours, he wanted to make people believe that he was not wrong; the saint said to him: “Unfortunately, the kingdom of

God does not consist of words, but of works; let's go together, and with all these people who will be as many witnesses, let's go to the tomb: we will invoke (the good God [le bon Dieu]) on the first dead person we find, and our works will show our faith. » This heretic was completely taken aback by this proposition, he did not dare to accept the invitation; he asked the saint to wait until the next day; the saint consented. The next day, the people, who eagerly wanted to know what this would lead to, went in crowds (to the tomb). We waited until three o'clock in the evening; but the saint was told that his adversary had fled during the night and retired to Egypt. Then Saint Macarius led all these people who were awaiting the result of their conference, and especially those whom this unfortunate man had deceived, he led them to the cemetery. Having stopped at a tomb, there, in their presence, he knelt down, prayed for a while, and addressing the oldest corpse that was buried in that place, said to him: “0 man! listen to me: if this heretic had come here with me, and before him I had invoked the name of Jesus Christ my Savior, would you not have risen to bear witness to the truth of my faith? » Aces (words), the dead man gets up and in the presence of everyone, says that he would have done it immediately as he was doing it now. Saint Macarius said to him: “Who are you? and in what age of the world did you live? Do you know about Jesus Christ? The resurrected dead man replied that he had lived in the most ancient times.

Ancient kings; but that he had never heard the name of Jesus Christ. Then, Saint Macarius, seeing that everyone was perfectly convinced that this unfortunate (heretic) was a deceiver: “Sleep in peace until the general resurrection. » And everyone withdrew praising God, who had made the truth of our holy religion known so well. For Saint Macarius, he returned to his desert to continue doing penance. Do you see, my brethren, the power of prayer when it is done well? Would you not agree with me that if we do not obtain what we ask of the good Lord, it is because we do not pray with faith, with a pure enough heart, with great enough confidence, or because we do not persevere enough in prayer. No, my brethren, (God) has never refused and will not refuse anything to all those who ask him for some proper grace. Yes, my brethren, (it is) the only resource that remains for us to escape from sin, to persevere in grace, to touch the heart of God, and to attract to us all kinds of blessings from heaven, whether for the soul, or even for temporal things. From this, I conclude that if we remain in sin, if we do not convert, if we find ourselves so unhappy in the punishments that the good God [le bon Dieu] sends us, it is because we are not praying or we are praying badly. Without prayer, we cannot attend the sacraments worthily; without prayer, you will never know the state to which the good God [le bon Dieu] calls you. Without prayer, we can only go to hell. Without prayer, we will never taste the sweetness that we can taste by loving God. Without prayer, all our crosses are without merit. Oh, what pleasures, my brethren, we would have by praying, if we had the happiness of know how to pray properly. We therefore never pray without thinking carefully about who we are talking to and what we want to ask of the good Lord. Let us pray above all, my brethren, with humility and confidence, and through this, we will have the happiness of obtaining everything we desire, if our requests are according to God. What I wish for you...

ON ROGATIONS, PROCESSIONS, Abstinence and Four Times.

Surrexit David et abiit et universus populus, ut adducerent arcam Domini. David went with all his people to bring the ark of the Lord. (He Liv. of Kings, vi, 2.)

Let us open [the Scriptures], my brethren: can we find a ceremony more touching than to see the holy king, accompanied by all the priests and Levites, who were themselves followed by all the people, carrying the holy ark from the tabernacle of Shiloh to the place he had prepared for it in Jerusalem. The priests and the Levites exercised the functions of their ministry around her, and each tribe marched under her standard. We see in this: that is to say, in this triumph of the Jewish people leading the ark, a very natural figure of the pious competition of Christians who go in processions from one place to another, under the leadership of their pastor, having at their head the cross and the banners. Gathered together, they form a small body (army) formidable to the demon and powerful with God, to thank him for some graces, or to ask him for them. 4

It is therefore very necessary to make you understand why these processions have been established and how we must attend them. We will also say a word about abstinence, which is established for almost the same reasons: that is to say, to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] to preserve the harvests, to provide us with the means of satisfying his justice for our sins, and, at the same time, to protect us from committing new ones. It is therefore in your interest to listen carefully to this instruction, which will teach you the means to benefit from these goods that the Church presents to us.

I. I will tell you first, my brethren, that the first and oldest law that the good Lord has imposed on man is that of abstinence. As soon as Adam had been created, and the good Lord had placed him in the earthly paradise, giving him power over all creatures, he forbade him, at the same time, to touch the fruit of a certain tree which he marked for him. If Adam had been faithful to this law, we would not have needed the Church to impose new abstinences on us. But, speaking of sin, our flesh having risen against our spirit, it was necessary to subdue it by fasting and abstinence. This is why the Church commands its children, in addition to the fasts of Lent, those of the Vigils and Quatrc-Tcmps, and abstinence on Friday and Saturday. This, my brethren, is the general end that the Church proposes in ordering abstinence and fasting on certain days: it is to maintain in its children the spirit of penitence, which Jesus Christ did not dare to recommend when he was on earth, and which is like the summary of divine morality. Yes, my brethren, it is by mortifying our bodies that we weaken our passions, that we can atone for our past sins, and that we will find a remedy to protect us from committing new ones. Since, my brethrenwe have so many faults M to atone, we must therefore take advantage of such effective means to satisfy God's justice. Yes, my brethren, we all have passions to tame, and it is precisely by removing everything that can flatter us in taste that we will be able to overcome them. The Church, who knows the need we have and our reluctance to do so, comes to our aid, by making it a commandment, in order to more effectively determine our willingness to submit to it (1). But, in addition to this general law, it also has particular views: it also orders us to fast, on the eve of major festivals, to prepare us, through penance, to celebrate them with more piety and derive more fruit from them. As the Church dedicated Sunday to the memory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so she dedicated Friday to the memory of the death and passion of Jesus Christ. Is it not right that we devote these days to penance and mortification; since it was our sins that attached Jesus Christ to the cross? Is it not right that we share in his sufferings if we are to share in the grace of redemption? This is why, my brethren, that, in the first centuries of the Church, all Fridays were days of fasting. People also fasted on Saturday to honor the burial of Jesus Christ, and, at the same time, to prepare for the sanctification of Sunday. Since these days, my brethren, are days of grace and blessing, we must therefore prepare ourselves for them.

(i) R o d r i g u e z, t. IV, p.'SiO. (Note of the Venerable.)

adorn with mortification, if we wanted to receive in abundance the goods that the good God [le bon Dieu] wants to give us. Today, my brethren, as you see, this fast of Friday and Saturday, is reduced only to depriving oneself of eating meat, and the Church gives us a commandment: “On Friday flesh shall not eat nor on Saturday the same time. » Yes, my brethren, we must all submit to this law, even children, as soon as they can; it is only those who truly cannot, who are exempt from it (1). But, alas! into what miserable century have we come? We no longer know among Christians whether they are children of the Church, almost all seem to delight in violating the laws of abstinence. Alas! we no longer have any scruples about eating meat on Saturday or Friday; bad company makes you renounce your religion. Alas! what mortal sins! Do we see you making engagements on Saturday without eating (the) meat like pagans or idolaters? Alas! what a scandal for children, and what a source of curses for those who marry! — It's the habit. — Alas! my friend, if it is the custom to eat meat on Fridays, the good Lord will never get into the habit of putting in heaven those who despise his law. Religion is therefore lost among us, because we no longer pay attention to its laws. If Adam, my brethren, was lost by eating the forbidden fruit, so we are lost by eating (the) meat on forbidden days. Oh! sad thought of preferring to go burn in hell for an eternity, than to deprive oneself of eating meat.

— But, you will tell me, (Rodriguez, t. III, p. 39!). (Note of the Venerable.)

It’s the company. — Ah the company, my brethren you too! hey! what, company! does not force you to do so; You don't open your mouth to put meat in it. —Unfortunate, you will have plenty of time to repent... No, no, my brethren, may this accursed human respect never make you do an action so unworthy of a Christian and which shows such great ingratitude towards the good God [le bon Dieu]. Hey! what, my friend, you fear the world; but cast your eyes on this cross? see then if your God was ashamed to die there naked, in the sight of an immense crowd of people; Come on, unhappy, you are ungrateful; the good Lord awaits you before his tribunal, where you will pay dearly for your human respect. Are you afraid of being made fun of? Oh! certainly, you are such a beautiful relic, to be so afraid that people will make fun of you! Look, did your model, my brethren, fear the mockery that was made of him during his passion? if he had feared them, would he not have left us in slavery to the devil? Come on, wretch, go eat your meat, you will have plenty of time to regret it for eternity! No, my brethren, may this accursed human respect never make you betray your duty so cowardly (1). But let's move on to a second reflection on the Four Times fasts. We read in Holy Scripture that the Jews expelled from Jerusalem because of their infidelities, led into captivity in Babylon, removed from the temple of the Lord, recognizing that their sins had deserved them all these punishments, wanted to try to appease the anger of God, and for this, they ordered themselves to fast on (1) Rodriguez, volume 111, p. 521. (Note of the Venerable.)

fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth day of the month, and it is for this example that the Church has instituted the fasts of the Four Times, in order to make us expiate the sins that we continue to commit every day, and in order to attract upon us by this general penance, which is much more meritorious than if we imposed it on ourselves, to attract us, I say, the mercy and blessings of Heaven. You will agree with me that the three days of fasting that we practice each season: that is to say, every three months, have little proportion to the sins that we have the misfortune of committing every day. However, the Church, which is a good mother and who loves her children, is content with this little, if we do it well and with a good heart; that is to say, fasting and other good works that we can (do). To make us better aware of the need we have to fulfill these holy fasts well, she gives us a command: “Four Times, Vigiles will fast. » She wants, through these Four Times fasts, to remind us that, as there is no time when we do not have the misfortune of offending the good Lord, there are also no times when we do not do penance, in order to appease the anger of the good God [le bon Dieu] through the sacrifice of a contrite and humiliated heart. This is the first reason which led the Church to institute the Four Times. The second reason relates to our temporal needs. You know that there are Four-Time fasts in spring, because it is at this time that the return of the sun begins to revive nature, and to open the earth for the production of fruits. The Church warns us to ask God (may he be willing) to give fertility to the earth through his blessings. In in summer, as the harvest is exposed to a thousand unfortunate accidents, the intention of the Church is that we pray to the good Lord to preserve them and to grant us, out of mercy, what is necessary for us to survive during the year. I say, my brethren, out of mercy, it is because, being sinners as we are, we have no right to the goods even necessary for life. According to this we must therefore humbly ask the boa God for food, clothing, as an alms which he can refuse us without injustice, and receive them with much gratitude, as a completely gratuitous benefit which he spreads on us by his pure goodness. This is why in autumn, when we are busy harvesting, and in winter, when it is finished, the Church wants us to offer our fasts and our alms to God as a sacrifice of thanksgiving, for all the good things he grants us during the year. The third reason why the Church established the Four Times is to ask the good Lord for the grace to make good use of the goods he has given us, and to never lose sight of the One who gave them to us. But, unfortunately, that's not what we do! Alas! My brethren, who among us could not deplore the blindness of Christians, who, in harvest time, should thank the good God [le bon Dieu] for the goods he gives us, and who, far from it, seem to redouble their fury towards the good God [le bon Dieu] by the sins which are committed at the same time that they are gathering the goods that the good God [le bon Dieu] has given them. We must therefore conclude, my brethren, that if we are able to fast, and we do not do so, we sin

mortally, and that, if we cannot fast, we must always replace it.

cer by some good works: either by depriving ourselves of something in our meals, or by attending holy mass, or by saying some prayer more than on other days. We (must) excite ourselves to contrition for our sins, to groan because we cannot do penance, to unite ourselves with the Church, in order to satisfy the justice of God for our sins. The fourth reason which led the Church to institute fasting is to ask the good Lord that the bishops only ordain good priests; since it is through the ministry of the priest that the good God [le bon Dieu] enlightens us, guides us, distributes his graces to us and applies to us in the sacraments the price of the blood of Jesus Christ. A good pastor, a pastor after the heart of God: this is the greatest treasure that the good Lord can bestow on a parish, and one of the most precious gifts of divine mercy. On the contrary, a bad priest is one of the most terrible scourges of God's wrath; This is why the Church invites and commands everyone who is able to fast, in order to bring to the bishops the necessary light to know well those whom the good God [le bon Dieu] intends for his service, and so that he pours out his graces and his gifts on those who are going to be ordained. You see, my brethren, how much we are all interested in it, since it seems that our salvation depends on it; indeed, if you are led by a good priest, you can receive all kinds of blessings; either by the prayers he will make for you, or by the good advice he will give you.

II. Secondly, we said that we would talk about the different processions that take place during

Tanned, which each have a particular object. The purpose of the procession of the Blessed Sacrament is to celebrate the triumph that Jesus Christ has won for his Church over its enemies who deny the real presence in the adorable sacrament, and, at the same time, to make it pay the homage due to it in this sacrament of love. It is the most august of all trials, since Jesus Christ walks there in person. Oh! with what respect and what love should we not be imbued with this happy moment, if we had the happiness of understanding it well, since we have the same advantage as those who followed him when he was on earth! The Palm Sunday procession is done to honor the march, the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, five days before his death. That of Purification, to represent the journey that the Blessed Virgin made to the Temple, carrying Jesus Christ in her arms. That of the Assumption was instituted to celebrate the triumph of the Mother of God raised to heaven, and to renew the consecration of France to this august Queen, who gave us so much proof of her protection. On Sundays, before parish mass, there is a procession to honor the resurrected Jesus Christ, who went from Jerusalem to Galilee; because all Sundays are a continuation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We do this procession before Mass, to recall the journey that Jesus Christ made on his way to Calvary; since the holy sacrifice of the Mass is nothing other than a continuation of the sacrifice of the cross. Tell me, if you had thought carefully on Sundays that the procession that we do before Holy Mass was to honor the journey that Jesus Christ made by going to Calvary, with what eagerness would you go there?

you not to have the happiness of following in spirit Jesus Christ, who will immolate himself a second time for us? With what piety, my brethren, and with what respect, would you attend? Would you not seem to see the blood that this divine Savior shed on his way to Calvary? Alas! If we see so much indifference and so little respect, it is because we do not know what we are doing and the mysteries that these different ceremonies remind us of. Happy is the Christian who is instructed and who enters into the spirit of the Church! We see that, in times of public calamity, bishops order extraordinary processions to appease the anger of God, or to obtain some particular grace from his mercy. In these processions, we sometimes carry the relics of the saints, so that the good Lord, at the sight of this precious deposit, may be inclined in our favor. The Church has set four days in the year to carry out these penitential processions, which are: the day of Saint Mark and the three days of the Rogations. In these processions, a cross and banners are carried, on which the image of the Blessed Virgin and the patron of the parish is painted; it is to warn the faithful that they must always walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ crucified, and strive to imitate the saints whom the Church has given us as patrons, protectors and models. We must look at all the processions that we do as a kind of triumph where we accompany Jesus Christ and the saints. Jesus Christ delights in spreading blessings

in all the places where his image or that of the saints has passed: this is what was seen in a particular way in Rome, when the plague seemed to want to leave no one. The Pope seeing that neither penances, nor other good works, could not put an end to this scourge, ordered a general procession, where the image of the Blessed Virgin painted by Saint Luke was carried. As soon as we were on our way, wherever the image of the Blessed Virgin passed, the plague ceased, and angels were heard singing: “Regina cœli Lvtare, Alleluia. » Then the plague ceased entirely. This walk, which we do by following the cross, reminds us that our life must be nothing other than an imitation of that of Jesus Christ who gave himself to be (our) model, and at the same time our guide; and that whenever we leave it, we are sure to go astray. The cross and the banners, my brethren, which we see at the head of the processions, are for the true faithful a great cause of joy, because we make a small army body which is formidable to the devil and gives us the right to the graces of God, since there is nothing so powerful as the prayers which are said, all gathered together, under the guidance of the pastors (1). See, my brethren, what happened to the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua: they went around the walls of the city of Jericho with the ark for seven days, walking respectfully with the sacred ministers. The Canaanites mocked it from the top of their walls; but they soon changed their feelings. At the end of this strange procession, the fortifications fell to the mere sound of trumpets, and the Lord delivered their enemies into their hands with the same ease as lambs without any resistance. This, my brethren, is the victory that Jesus Christ makes us win over the enemies of our salvation, when we have the right (1) Rodriguez, volume IV, page l>20. (Xotc of the Venerable.)

happy to attend (these processions) with great religion and respect.

III. Thirdly, we say that the processions must make us think that we are only poor travelers on earth, that heaven is our true homeland, and that we have the lights and graces of Jesus Christ to get there. He himself is the path, since it is he who showed us everything we had to do to achieve it. The Church wants to inspire us through these processions that we must not attach ourselves to life; but to Jesus Christ, even unto death, since he is our reward for eternity. Yes, my brethren, these are the advantages that we find in processions, if we are fortunate enough to fully understand what we are doing. Alas, what contempt does Jesus Christ not receive in the processions we make? Some no longer know what is leading them there; (they go) as if laughing; the others talk as in an ordinary place, looking from one side to the other. Alas, if I dared to say it, how many look at objects which animate and inflame their passions and which, at the end of the procession, are much more criminal than at the moment when they entered among the faithful. My God, how many despised graces! how many sins are committed in such a precious moment to obtain the most abundant graces How many things to please the devil! If we appear there with good dispositions We must therefore make it a duty to attend the processions as much as we can; if absolutely we cannot attend, we must make up for it by saying all the prayers that those who have the good fortune to attend, (and we endeavor) to accompany them with the holy dispositions that the Church commands of us. The first provision is to understand what the Church wants to represent to us in each procession. Let us never lose sight, my brethren, that to please God, to merit his graces, we must adore him in spirit and in truth, and that we do like the Jews when we are content to be there only in body. But a good Christian must enter into his mind what the Church wants to represent to him in all the ceremonies that she performs. We must truly believe that we are in the presence of God, that we follow him as the first Christians did in the course of his mortal life,' and that we come in these processions only to ask for mercy and, consequently, to be sensibly grieved at having offended such a good God [bon Dieu]. The second disposition that the good Lord wants us to have in processions is to walk with great order: because there is enough of one person who is doing badly, to give how many distractions to the others; (The order) consists of walking with modesty without looking from one side to the other, without speaking, without laughing; because this would be contempt for the presence of God and holy things. The third provision is to join one's prayers to those that the Holy Church says during the procession; that is to say, you must unite with the priest by saying all the prayers that are said there. If you do not know how to read, well, you say your rosary, uniting your prayers with those of the priest and all the other faithful. (We must)

be careful not to let our mind be led astray by the different objects that we see before us; but we must lower our eyes a little so that the demon does not have so much opportunity to distract us. Before we begin, we must ask the good God [le bon Dieu] (forgiveness) from our pockets, so that he stops his mercy on us. Alas! for how many years have we been attending holy processions, and despite that we are no better for it? Do you know, my brethren, where this misfortune can come from? it is that we have never fully understood what we do, and that we have always done it out of habit, out of custom, and not out of a spirit of piety and love. Yes, my brethren, a good Christian must always attend prayers and all the exercises of religion with a new taste, always with a new desire to enjoy them better than he did. What kindness on the part of the good God [le bon Dieu] to suffer us in his holy presence, and to allow us to do what the saints do in heaven! That man would be better off on earth if he had the happiness of knowing the holy religion! But let us now see a word about what the procession of Saint Mark and that of the Rogations are. Listen carefully: this is quite interesting. You must know who instituted them, when they were instituted, and why they were instituted. In the year 44>2, the earthquakes were so great, and the inhabitants of the city of Vienne in Dauphiné were so frightened that they believed they were at the end of the world. What frightened them even more was the fire from the sky which fell on the town house, and reduced it to ashes along with several neighboring houses. The ferocious beasts came out of the forests and came to attack the men in the middle of the public squares. The clothes

The men, completely frightened, ran into the church with their bishop, to protect themselves from these monsters. Saint Mamcrt, who was their bishop, had many prayers and penances performed; and then, to ask God for the cessation of these evils, he ordered, three days before the Ascension, solemn processions and fasts to appease the wrath of God [apaiser la colère de Dieu]. The other churches of France, and several other churches (did the same), and then (these processions) took place throughout the Christian world. Nothing was more edifying than the way in which these processions were carried out at the time: people attended them barefoot, dressed in hair shirts and covered in ashes; a very rigorous fast was observed during the three days; it was forbidden to work, so that one would have more time for prayer, and all this time was used to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for forgiveness for sins, (to pray) for the preservation of the fruits of the earth and for the needs of the State. For the procession of Saint Mark, it was instituted by Pope Saint Gregory the Great, in 590, on the occasion of a horrible calamity which ravaged Rome. The waters having stagnated for a long time after a furious flood, they corrupted the air, which caused a cruel plague which caused the death of a considerable multitude of people, of all ages and all conditions. The procession that Saint Gregory the Great ordered was carried out with so much piety, fervor and tears that the plague ceased immediately. The Church, seeing how sin was multiplying on earth, seeing that the good God [le bon Dieu] was rigorously punishing us, ordered these holy processions to continue; in order to lead us to penance, to appease the justice of God and to preserve the fruits of the earth, which are exposed for nine months of the year to a thousand accidents.

teeth. These processions are called large and small Litanies, which means: prayer and supplication. The litanies were at the beginning only redoubled cries which were uttered towards the good God [le bon Dieu], asking for mercy with these two words: Kyrie eleison. We then added the names of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, to ask them to take an interest in us before the good Lord. The Church, after having invoked the name of God, claims the intercession of the saints, sets forth in these litanies the evils with which she feels pressed and the goods for which she feels the need; she conjures the goodness of God, through all the mysteries of Jesus Christ, and especially through his quality as Lamb and Victim of God for our sins, which is the title most capable of appeasing the anger of God. Yes, these litanies, these processions, and the Holy Mass, the abstinence that (the Church) prescribes to us on these days show us perfectly what her views are in all this. We must therefore, my brethren, to conform to his intention, regard these days as days devoted to prayer, penance and other good works; make great scruples about failing to do so; and appear there with a modest and collected exterior, with a contrite and profoundly humbled heart under the powerful hand of God,

by the sight of our sins and the chastisements that they lie. Being animated by these feelings, we must earnestly solicit, in the name of Jesus Christ, divine Mercy for us, for our brothers, for all the needs of the Church, for the needs of the State, and particularly for the conservation of the goods of the earth. But, unfortunately, duties so necessary and based on such interesting motives are almost entirely forgotten; while we see some

Ascension

people constantly in the vogttéS (1) of the world. What! If the Church prescribes prayers for us during these four days, we would take pains to attend them, since it is only to appease the anger of the good God [le bon Dieu] and to avert the evils that our sins deserve? Do you know, my brethren, what the Church invites us to do when it calls us to processions? here it is, my brethren It is to leave, for a few moments, the work of the earth, to occupy ourselves with that of our salvation. What happiness, what grace to force us in some way to save our soul! My God, how we seek heaven in these processions. Let us say again that we are doing, in this moment, what the saints have done all their lives. Tell me, my brethren, what did Jesus Christ do during his life? Nothing other than working to save ourselves. Well! My brethren, this is what we do during the days of Saint Mark and the Rogations. What a joy, my brethren, to work at this moment for the salvation of our soul! Alas! My brethren, how little the good Lord is satisfied with, if we compare what our sins deserve to what the saints have done! They were not content with a few days of fasting and a few devotional journeys, nor with a few days of abstinence; but, alas! how many years of tears and penances for far fewer sins than us! See a saint Hilarion, who wept for eighty years in a wood. See a Saint Arsenius, who spent the rest of his life between two rocks. See a Saint Clement, who endured a martyrdom that lasted thirty-two years. See again these crowds of martyrs, who gave their lives to ensure their salvation. We (1) See note E, at the end of the volume.

sees a very striking example in the person of Saint Felicity, (mother) of seven children, who lived under the Emperor Antoninus. The priests of idols, seeing how this saint knew how to bring people out of idolatry, said to the emperor: “We believe, Soigneur, (to) warn you that there is in Rome a widow with her seven children who, being of this impious sect which we call Christian, make sacrilegious vows which will make your gods implacable. » Immediately, the emperor told the prefect to bring this widow, to force her, by all kinds of torments, to sacrifice to his gods; and upon her refusal, to put her to death. The prefect having sent for her, kindly begged her to leave her impious religion, and to sacrifice to the gods of the empire; otherwise, the emperor had ordered her to be put to death. But Saint Felicity answered him with holy pride: “Do not hope, Publius, that you will win me over by your prayers or by your threats. You have the choice, either to let me live, or to make me die; but you are sure to be defeated by a woman. » — “But,” said the prefect to him, “if you want to die, die; but at least (at least) do not be the cause of children perishing. » — “My children would perish if they knew how to sacrifice to the demon, who are your gods; but if they die for the true God, they will live forever. » — But the prefect: “At least have pity on your children who are in the prime of their life. » — “Keep your compassion for others, we don't want it. » Then turning towards his children who were present: “You see, my children, this sky so beautiful and so lofty, it is there that Jesus Christ awaits you to reward you; fight generously, my children, for the great King of heaven and earth. » They had her beaten cruelly in the face. He brings in the first of his children named Janvier; not being able to win him, he had him cruelly whipped and taken to prison. Felix then presented himself, and replied: “No, prefect, you will not make us renounce our God to sacrifice to the devil, make us endure all the torments you want, we do not fear them. » Having put them before his tribunal without being able to gain anything, the last one (said) to him: “Ah! prefect, if you knew the fires that are prepared for you to burn you for all eternity. Ah! if you knew that God's justice is ready to strike you! Take advantage of the time that our God still leaves you for repentance. » Nothing could win him, he put them all to death; but during the execution, the mother urged them to suffer generously for Jesus Christ: “Courage, my children; see heaven, where Jesus Christ awaits to reward you. "

Well! here are saints who had only one soul to save, only one God to serve like us, and look what they did. Alas! My brethren, they were not content with a few prayers as we do during a few moments when the Church calls us to pray; but they courageously gave their lives (to save) their souls. Let us end, my brethren, by saying that we must take great pleasure, great joy in attending all these holy processions which take place during the year, and let us try to come there with a sincere desire, to ask for mercy. Let us ensure that human respect, nor the slightest inconvenience, is ever capable of making us transgress the law of abstinence and fasting. Happy, my brethren, if we fulfill all these little practices of piety, since the good Lord wants to be satisfied with them

FOR ASCENSION DAY.

Gaudcte, et exultate, quoniam merces vostra copiosa est in cælis. Rejoice, let your joy burst forth, because a great reward is promised to you in heaven. (S. Matih., v, 12.)

THESE were, my brethren, the consoling words that Jesus Christ addressed to his Apostles to console them and encourage them to courageously suffer the crosses and persecutions that were to happen to them. “Yes, my children,” this tender Father said to them, “you will become the object of the hatred and contempt of the wicked, you will be the victim of their fury, men will hate you, bring you before the princes of the earth, to be judged and condemned to the most frightful tortures, to the most cruel, most shameful death; but, far from being discouraged, rejoice because a great reward is reserved for you in heaven. » 0 beautiful heaven who would not love you, since so many good things are contained in you! Is it not, in fact, my brethren, the thought of this reward which made the Apostles tireless in their apostolic works, invincible against the persecutions which they had to suffer from their enemies?

Is it not the thought of this beautiful sky which made the martyrs appear before their judges with a courage which astonished the tyrants? Was it not the sight of such an object which extinguished the ardor of the flames destined to devour them, and which blunted the edge of the swords which struck them? Oh, how happy they were to sacrifice their goods, their lives, for their God, in the hope that they would move on to a better life, which would never end 1 0 happy inhabitants of the celestial city, how many tears you have shed and how many sufferings you have endured to acquire possession of your God! Oh! they cry to us, from the top of this throne of glory where they sit, oh! how God rewards us for the little good we have done! Yes, we will see him, this tender Father; yes, we will bless him, this amiable Savior; yes, we will thank this charitable Redeemer for endless years. 0 happy eternity! they exclaim, what sweetness and joy you are going to make us experience! Beautiful sky, when will we see you? oh happy moment when will you come (1)? No doubt, my brethren, that we all desire and sigh after such great goods; but to make you desire them (with) even (more) ardor, I (will) show you, as much as it is possible for me, the happiness with which the saints are intoxicated; then, the path you have to take to get there.

I. If I had to, my brethren, give you a sad and deplorable picture of the punishments endured by the reprobate in (t) It is certain that we are made to be happy: (everyone) from the poorest to the richest, seeks something that will satisfy them and fulfill their desires. (Note of the Venerable.)

the abysses, I would begin to prove to you the certainty of these penalties; then, I would display before your eyes with trembling, or better said, with a kind of despair, the magnitude and duration of the evils that they are suffering and that they will suffer eternally. This lamentable story would fill you with horror, and to make you understand it even better, I would show you the causes that can so keenly devour their souls with despair and horror. There are four, I would tell you, which are: the deprivation of the sight of God, the pain they feel, the certainty they have that it will never end, and the means they had, by which they could so easily exempt themselves from it: which will be like so many executioners who will devour them for an entire eternity. Indeed, when a damned person asks for a thousand eternities (if it were possible to have a thousand) with the most heartbreaking and touching cries for the happiness of seeing God for a single minute, it is certain that

this will never be granted to him. In the second place, I say that at every moment, he alone suffers more than all the martyrs ever suffered together, or, to put it better, he endures, at every minute of eternity, all the sufferings that he must suffer during eternity. The third cause of their torture is that, despite the severity of their sentences, they are assured that they will never end. But what will complete their torment, their despair, is that they will see so many easy ways, not only to avoid all these horrors, but also to be happy throughout eternity; they will constantly see all the graces that God has offered them to save themselves, which will be so many executioners who will devour them. From in the depths of the flames, they will see the blessed seated on thrones of glory, seized with an ardent and tender love that they will be in continual intoxication; (for them,) the thought of the graces that God has given them, the memory of the contempt they have shown them, will make them utter howls of rage and despair so terrible that the entire universe, if God allowed them to be heard, would lose its life and fall into nothingness. From there will follow the most horrible blasphemies that they will vomit against each other. A child will cry that he is only lost because his parents wanted him to be; he will invoke the wrath of God, and will ask him, with the most horrible cries, to grant him to be his father's executioner. A girl will tear out the eyes of her mother who, instead of leading her to heaven, pushed her, dragged her to hell by her bad examples, by words that only exuded worldliness, libertinage. (These children) will vomit horrible blasphemies against God for not having enough power and fury to make (their parents) suffer; they will run (into) the abysses like the desperate people they are, to snatch and drag the demons, to throw them on their fathers and mothers; in order to make people feel that they will never be so tormented as to have lost them, while they could so well have saved them. 0 unhappy eternity! O unhappy fathers and mothers! that the torments that are reserved for you are terrible. One more moment, and you will experience them, one more moment and you will burn in the flames!.. But no, my brethren, let's not go any further; this is not the time to talk about such a sad and (also) unfortunate subject; let us not disturb the joy that we felt in.... at the approach of a consecrated day to publish the happiness enjoyed by the elect in the celestial and permanent city. I told you, my brethren, that four things will overwhelm the reprobate in the flames with evil; memo, in relation to the blessed, I will tell you that four things come together to leave them nothing to be desired. These things are: 1° the sight and presence (of the Son) of God, who will manifest himself in all the splendor of his glory, his beauty and all his kindness: that is to say, as he is in the bosom of his Father; 2° it is this torrent of sweetness, of chaste pleasures, that they will feel, which will be similar to the overflowing of a sea agitated by the furies of a horrible storm; it transports them in its waves, and with such rapturous intoxication that they forget that they exist. The third cause of their happiness, in the midst of all these delights, is the assurance they will have that they will never end; and finally, what will completely drown them in these torrents of love is that all these goods are given to them as a reward for the virtues and penances they have performed. These holy souls will see that it is to their good works that they are indebted for the chaste embraces of their spouse. I say first of all that the first transport of love that will take hold of their hearts is the sight of the beauties that they will discover as they approach the presence of God. In this world, however beautiful and flattering an object presents itself to us, after an instant of pleasure, our mind gets tired and turns in another direction, if it finds something there to satisfy itself; he goes from one thing to (another) without being able to find anything to be satisfied with, but, in heaven, it is not the same; it is necessary, on the contrary, that God makes us participants of his forces" to be able to sustain the splendor of his beauties and things tender and ravishing which continually offer themselves to our eyes: which throws the souls of the elect into such an abyss of sweetness and love, that they cannot distinguish whether they live, or whether they are changed into love. 0 happy abode! 0 permanent happiness! which of us will one day taste you? Secondly, I say that however great and lovely these sweetnesses may be, we will continually hear the angels singing that they will last forever. I leave you to think what the blessed feel about all this. 3° In this world, if we enjoy some pleasures, we soon experience some pains which diminish their sweetness, either through the fear we have of losing them, or also through the care we must take to preserve them: which means that we are never perfectly happy. In heaven, it is not the same: we are in joy and delight, and assured that nothing can ever take them away or diminish them. Fourthly, I say that the

last trait of love with which our heart will be pierced is the picture that God will place before our eyes of all the tears that we will have shed and all the penances that we will have done during our life, without even letting escape a good thought, a good desire. Oh! what joy for a good Christian, who will see the contempt he has had for himself, the harshness he has exerted on his body, the pleasure he felt in seeing himself despised! He will see his fidelity in rejecting all his bad thoughts with which the demon had tried to (sully) his imagination; he will remember his preparations for his confessions, his eagerness to nourish his soul at the holy table; he will have before his eyes every time he stripped himself to cover his 5 poor and suffering brother. “0 my God! 0 my God! he will exclaim at every moment, what good things for so little! » But God, to inflame the elect with love and gratitude, will place his bloody cross in the middle of his court, and will give them a description of all the sufferings he endured to make them happy, guided (as he was) by his love alone. I leave you wondering what their transports of love and gratitude will be; what chaste embraces will they not lavish upon him throughout eternity, remembering that this cross is the instrument which God (used) to give them so many goods! The holy Fathers, in giving us the description of the punishments endured by the reprobate, tell us that each of their senses is tormented, according to the crimes they have committed and the pleasures they have tasted: a person who has had the misfortune of having given himself over to [s'abandonner à] vice (impure) will be covered with serpents and dragons who will devour her for eternity; his eyes which will have looked dishonestly, his ears which will have taken pleasure in impudent songs and speeches, his mouth which will have vomited these impudences, will be so many channels through which will emerge whirlwinds of flames which will devour them; their eyes will only see the most horrible objects. A miser will feel a hunger there to devour himself; a proud one will be trampled under the feet of the other damned, a vindictive one will be dragged by demons into the flames. No, my brethren, there will be no (part) of our body that will not suffer in proportion to the crimes it has committed. 0 horror! 0 terrible misfortune!... According to this, I say that, in relation to the happiness of the blessed in heaven, it will be the same: their happiness, their pleasures and their joys will be great in proportion to what they will have made their body suffer during their life. If we have a horror of infamous songs and speeches, we will hear, in heaven, only tender and ravishing canticles, with which the angels will make the vault of heaven resound; if we have been chaste in our gaze, our eyes will only be occupied in contemplating objects whose beauty will hold them in continual rapture without being able to tire of them: that is to say, we will always discover new beauties similar to a source of love which flows incessantly. Our heart, which will have groaned and cried during its exile [pendant son exil], will feel such an intoxication of sweetness that it will no longer be itself. The Holy Spirit tells us that chaste people will be like a person lying on a bed of roses, the scent of which keeps him in continual ecstasy. To put it better, they are only chaste and pure pleasures with which the saints will be nourished and intoxicated throughout eternity. But, think to yourself, when we are in heaven, we will all be happy the same. Yes, my friend, but there is something to distinguish. If the damned are unhappy, and suffer according to the crimes they have committed; likewise, there must be no doubt that the more penances the saints have done, the more brilliant their glory; and this is how it will be done. It is necessary, or rather, it is necessary, that God gives us strength proportionate to the state of glory with which he wants to surround us, so that he will give us strength in proportion to the sweetness he wants us to experience. To those who have done great penances without having committed sins, he will give sufficient strength to support the graces that he will communicate to them during toulo eternity. It is very true that we will all be very happy and all content, because we will find as many delights as we need to leave us nothing to desire. “0 my God! my God! cries Saint Francis de Sales, in a furious temptation he experiences, your judgments are terrible; but if I were so unfortunate as not to love you (in eternity), ah! at least, grant me the grace to love you as much as I can in this world. » Ah! if at least, poor sinners who do not want to return to your God, if at least, you had the same (desires) as this great saint, that you loved the good God [le bon Dieu] as much as you can in this life! 0 my God! how many Christians who listen to me will never see you. 0 beautiful sky! O beautiful home! when will we see you? 0 my God! How long will you let us languish in [croupir dans] this foreign land? in this banishment?... Ah! if you see the one my heart loves! Ah tell him that I am languishing in [croupir dans]

love, that I am no longer alive; but that I die at any hour!... Oh! who will give me wings like a dove to leave this exile and fly into the bosom of my beloved!... 0 happy city! from where all sorrows are banished and where one swims in a delicious torrent of eternal love!...

IT Well! my friend, would you be sorry to be among this number; while the damned will burn, and utter horrible cries without ever hoping for an end? - Oh! you will tell me, (non-)sculpture he would not be angry with me; but I would already like to be there. —I thought you were going to tell me that; but there is more than wanting it, you have to work to deserve it. -Well! so what should we do? “So you don’t know, my friend; well"

here it is: listen to it carefully and you will know. You should not be so attached to the goods of this world, have a little more charity for your wife, your children, your servants and your neighbors; have a slightly more tender heart for the unfortunate; instead of thinking only about collecting money, buying land, you should think about buying yourself a place in heaven; instead of working on Sunday, you should sanctify it well by coming to the house of (God) to mourn your sins, ask him not to fall into them again and to forgive you; far from not giving your children and your servants time to fulfill their religious duties, you should be the first to lead them to do so through your words and your good examples; instead of getting carried away at the slightest loss or contradiction that happens to you, you should consider that being a sinner, you deserve much more, and that God only behaves towards you in the safest way to make you happy one day. This, my friend, is what you should do to get to heaven, and you are not doing it. No, you will tell me. —And what will become of you, my brother, since you hold the path that leads to a place where people suffer such terrible illnesses? Be careful, if you do not leave this road, you will soon fall into it; make your thoughts on this, and then you will tell me what you have found, and I will tell you what to do. Is it not, my friend, that you envy these happy inhabitants of the celestial court? —Ah! I would like to be there already; at least I would be freed from all the miseries of this world. — And I too, I would like; but there is something else to do and think about. — So what should we do? I will. — Your thoughts are very good; well!

Listen for a moment and I'll show you. Don't sleep, please. You should, my sister, be a little more submissive to your husband, not let your blood rush to your head over nothing; you should warn him a little more, and when you see him returning to wine, or having (made) some bad deal, you should not lash out against him until you have made him go into a rage that he no longer possesses himself. Hence come blasphemies and curses without number against you, which scandalize your children and your servants; far from running around the house (to) report what your husband says to you or does, you should use this time in prayer to ask the good Lord to give you the patience and submission that you owe to your husband; ask that God touch his heart to change it. I know well what I still need to do to get to heaven: my mother, listen to him carefully and it will not be useless to you. It would be to give a little more time to instruct your children and your servants, to teach them what they must do to go to heaven; it would be to not buy them quite such beautiful (clothes), to have enough to give alms, and attract the blessings of God, and perhaps even give you enough to pay your debts; (we should) leave aside vanities and what not? There should be only good examples in your (conduct), this exactitude in saying your prayers, morning and evening, in preparing yourself for Holy Communion, in approaching the sacraments; (it would be necessary) this detachment from the goods of the world, a language which shows the contempt you have for all things here below and the esteem you have for the things of the other life. This (what) should be your occupations and all your cares; if you you behave otherwise, you are lost; think about it today, perhaps tomorrow there will no longer be time; do your examination on this, and then judge yourself; cry over your faults, and try to do better, otherwise you will never be in heaven. Don't you envy all these ravishing beauties with which the saints are intoxicated, my sister? — Ah! you will tell me, You would really want a happiness less great than this. — You are quite right, I would be, I believe, like you; but what worries me is that I have done nothing to deserve it; maybe you are like me? — Whatever needs to be done, you think, I would do it well if I knew it; what should we not do to obtain so many goods?

If it were necessary to leave everything and sacrifice everything, even to abandon the world, to spend the rest of one's days in a monastery, I would gladly do it. — This is very good: these thoughts are truly worthy of a good Christian woman; I did not believe that your courage was so great; but I will tell you that God does not ask as much. — Well, you think, say what must be done, and I will do it very willingly. — So I'm going to tell you and ask you to think about it carefully. It would be not taking care of your body as much, making it suffer a little more; not to fear so much that this beauty will be lost or diminished; not take quite so long, on Sunday morning, to arrange yourself, to consider yourself in front of a mirror, in order to have more time to give to the good Lord. It would only be (to have) a little more submission to your parents, remembering that after God it is to them that you owe your life, and that you must obey them with good heart and not we murmur. It would also be, instead of seeing you in pleasures, in dances and meetings, to see you in the house of the Lord, praying to him, purifying yourself from your sins and nourishing your soul with the bread of angels. It would also be to be a little more reserved in your words, a little more reserved in the conversations you have with people of a different sex. This is only what God asks of you; if you do, you will go to heaven. And you, my brother, what do you think of all this? Which side do you have (your) desires on? —Ah! say to yourself, I would much rather go to heaven, since (one) is so well there, (than) to be thrown into hell where one suffers so much and from all kinds of torments; but there is plenty to do to go there, it is because I (lack) the courage. If a single sin condemns us, a word which, at every moment, makes me angry, I do not even dare to undertake it! — You don't dare to take action? Will you listen to me for a moment, and I will show you very clearly that it is not as difficult as you think; and that you will have less difficulty in pleasing God and saving your soul than you have in obtaining pleasures and pleasing the world. Only turn your care and your sorrows that you have given to the world to the side of the good God [le bon Dieu], and you will see that he does not ask for it as much as the world asks for it from you. Your pleasures are always mixed with sadness and bitterness, and moreover, followed by repentance for having tasted them. How many times do you say (when) returning from spending part of the night in a cabaret or a dance: “I'm sorry to have been there; If I had known everything that was going on there, I wouldn't have been there. » But, on the contrary, if you had passed part of the night in prayer, far from being angry, you would feel within yourself a certain joy, a sweetness which would devour your heart with its traits of love. Full of joy, you would say like the holy King David: “0 my God! that one day spent in your temple is preferable to a thousand spent in the assemblies of the world. » The pleasures you enjoy for the world disgust you; almost every time (you) indulge in it, you make resolutions (not to) return there again; often you even give in to tears, almost to the point of despair because you cannot correct yourself; you curse the people who started to bother you; (you) complain every moment; you envy the happiness of those who quietly spend their days in the practice of virtue, in complete contempt for the pleasures of the world; how often your eyes even let tears flow when you see this peace, this joy which shines on the foreheads (of good Christians); what do I know? you envy even the people who have the pleasure of living under the same roof. I said, my friend, that when you have spent the nights in the excesses of vice, and in some other libertinage that I dare not name, you find after you only trouble, only troubles, only regrets and despair; However, you did everything you could to satisfy yourself, without being able to overcome it. Well! my friend, see how much sweeter it is to suffer for God than for the world. When we have spent a night or two in prayer, far from being angry about it, from repenting about it, from being envious of those who spend this time in sleep and weakness: on the contrary, we mourn their misfortune and their blindness; Your blessed a thousand times the Lord for having inspired us with the thought of providing us with so much sweetness and consolation; far from cursing the people who made us embrace such a type of life, we cannot see (them) without letting tears of gratitude flow, so happy (we) find ourselves; far from resolving not to return there again, we feel resolved to do more, and we have a holy envy of those who are only busy praising the good Lord. If you spent your money on your pleasures, the next day you cry for it; but a Christian who gave it to preserve the life of a poor man who could not live, a Christian who clothed an unfortunate man who was naked, far from regretting it, on the contrary, he continually seeks the means of doing more; he is ready, if necessary, to deny himself what is necessary, to

strip himself of everything, so much joy does he have in relieving Jesus Christ in the person of his poor. But, without going so far, my friend, it would cost you no more, when you are in church, to stand there with respect and modesty than to laugh and turn your head; you would just as well have both knees on the ground as hold one in the air; When you hear the word of God, would it be more painful for you to listen to it in the hope of benefiting from it, and to put it into practice as soon as you can, than to go outside to amuse yourself by talking about indifferent, perhaps bad things? Would you not be happier if your conscience did not reproach you for anything, (and if you) approached the sacraments from time to time, which would give you so much strength to bear with patience the miseries of life? If you doubt it, my brethren, ask those who had their Easter, how many there were conlent for some time: that is to say, as long as they had the happiness of being friends of the good Lord. Tell me, my friend, would it be as painful for you if your parents scolded you, because you stayed too long in church, as (if they reproached you) for having spent the night in debauchery? No, no, my friend, whatever way you look at what (you) do for the world, it costs you much more than to please God and save your soul. I will not speak to you of the difference that there is, at the hour of death, between a Christian who has served the good God [le bon Dieu] well, and the regrets and despair of one who has only followed his pleasures, who has only sought to satisfy the corrupt desires of his heart; for nothing is so beautiful as seeing a saint die: God himself takes the honor of being present there, as is reported in the lives of many. (Can we compare it) with the horrors that happen to that of the sinner, where the demons follow him so closely, and devour one and the other, to the one who will have the barbaric satisfaction of dragging him first into the abyss. But no, let's leave all that; and consider only the present life. Let us conclude that if you did for God what you do for the world, you would be saints. Oh! say to yourselves, you tell us that it is not difficult to go to heaven; it seems to me that there are still many sacrifices to be made. — This is not in doubt: there (are) sacrifices to be made, otherwise it would be falsely that Jesus Christ would have told us that the gate of heaven [porte du ciel] is narrow, that we must make efforts to enter it, that we must deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him, that there are many who will not be among the elect; also he promises us heaven as a reward that we will have deserved. See what the saints did to obtain it. Go, my Brother, into these caves in the depths of the deserts, enter the monasteries, explore these rocks, and ask all these troops of saints: why so many tears and penances? Climb the scaffolds, and find out what they claim to do. Everyone will tell you that it is to buy the sky. 0 my God, what tears these poor solitaries have shed for so many years! 0 my God, what penances and rigors have they not exercised on their bodies, all the illustrious anchorites! And I would not like to suffer anything, (I) who have the same hope as them, and the same judge who must examine me? 0 my God! how cowardly I am when it comes to working for heaven! How much your saints will serve as a condemnation to me, when they will show you so many sacrifices that they have made to please you! You say that it costs to go to heaven: tell me, my friend, did it not cost Saint Bartholomew anything to let himself be skinned alive to please God? Did it cost Saint Vincent nothing when his body was put on an easel and his body was burned with lighted torches until his entrails fell into the fire; when afterwards they took him to prison, and having (made) a bed for him of pieces of glass bottles, they laid him on it?' My friend, ask Saint Hilarion what he did for eighty years in his desert, crying night and day? Go, ask Saint Jerome, this great scholar: ask him why he beat his chest with stones until he was all bruised. Go to the rocks to find the great Saint Arsenius, and ask him why he left the pleasures of the world to come and mourn the rest of his days among the beasts

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wild. No other answer, my friend: “Ah! it is to gain the beautiful sky, yet we have it for nothing; Oh! how little these penances are, if we compare them to the happiness they prepare for us! » No, my brethren, the saints, there is no kind of torment that they were not prepared to endure to buy this beautiful sky. We read that in the time of the Emperor Nero, he committed such terrible cruelties against Christians that the very thought of it makes one shudder. Not knowing how to open his persecution against the Christians, he set fire

in the city, in order to make people believe that it was the Christians who had done it. Seeing himself applauded by all his subjects, he indulges in everything that his fury can inspire him. Like a furious tiger, which breathes only carnage, he had some sewn into animal skins and thrown into the fields to be eaten by the dogs; for the others, he had a robe coated with pitch and sulfur taken, and had them hung from the trees of the main roads to serve as torches to passers-by during the night; he himself had formed two avenues in his garden, and, at night, he set fire to them to have the barbaric pleasure of driving his chariot in the light of this sad and heartbreaking spectacle. His fury (not) still finding itself sufficiently satisfied, he invented another torture, here it is: he had masses of copper made like bulls, made them redden for several days, and all the Christians that could be caught were thrown into them, where he saw them mercilessly burn. It was in this same persecution that Saint Peter was put to death. Being in prison with Saint Paul who had his head cut off, Saint Peter found a way to escape the prison. On the way, Our Lord appeared to him and said to him: “Peter,

I am going to die a second time in Rome,” and he disappeared. Saint Peter knowing from this that he should not flee Jamort, returned to the prison, where he was condemned to die on the cross. When he heard his sentence pronounced; “0 grace! oh happiness! to die the death of my God! » But he asked his tormentors for a grace, which was to allow him to be crucified upside down: “because,” he said, “I do not deserve this happiness of dying in a manner similar to my God. " Well! my friend, did it not cost the saints anything to go to heaven? 0 beautiful sky! if you cost us as much as all these blessed ones, which of us will go? But no, my brethren, let us console ourselves, God does not ask so much of us. But, you think, what do you have to do to get there? —Ah! my friend, what must be done, I know well. Do you want to go there? - Oh! no doubt, you say, that is indeed all my desire; if I say prayers, if I do penances, it is to deserve this happiness. - Well! Listen to me for a moment, and you will find out. (What should I do)? it is not to miss your prayers in the morning or in the evening; do not work on Sunday; to attend the sacraments from time to time; not to listen to the devil when he tempts you, and quickly turn to the good Lord. — But think about it, there are many things we would do; but, to confess, that is not too convenient. — Isn't that very convenient, my friend? Do you therefore prefer to remain in the hands of the devil than to cast him out to return to the bosom of your God, who, so many times, has made you experience how good he is? Do you not consider it a most happy moment, then, when you have the happiness of receiving your God? 0 my God! if we love you but, how much we would sigh after this happy moment!... Courage! my friend, do not be discouraged; soon you will (be) at the end of your sorrows; look at the sky, this holy and permanent abode; open your eyes, and you will see your God who reaches out to you to draw you to himself. Yes, my friend, in a few moments he will do to you as was done to Mordecai, to publish the greatness of your victories over the world and over the devil. King Ahasuerus, to recognize the benefits of his general, wanted to have him ride on his triumphal chariot with a herald walking in front of him, shouting: “This is how the king rewards the services rendered to him. » My friend, if at this moment, God presented to our eyes one of these blessed ones in all the splendor of the glory with which he (is) clothed in heaven, let him show us these joys, these sweetnesses, these delights with which the saints are flooded in the celestial homeland, and let him cry out to us all; “0 men! why (do you) not love your God? Why don't you work to deserve such great good? 0 ambitious man, who have set your heart to the earth, what are the honors of this frivolous and perishable world, in comparison with the honors and glory that God prepares for us in his kingdom? 0 miserly men, who desire these perishable riches, how blind you are (not) to work to deserve them which will never end! The miser seeks (happiness) in his goods, the drunkard in his wine, the proud in his honors, and the immodest in the pleasures of the flesh. Ah! no, no, my friend, (you) are wrong, raise the eyes of your soul towards the sky, look towards this beautiful sky and you will find your perfect happiness, tread and despise the earth and you will find heaven! My brother, why do you immerse yourself in these shameful vices? Look at these torrents of delights that Jesus Christ is preparing for you in the celestial homeland. I agh sigh after this happy moment!..." Yes, my brethren, everything preaches it to us, everything urges us not to lose this treasure. The saints who are in this beautiful abode cry to us from the height of these thrones of glory: “Oh! if you could clearly understand the happiness

we enjoy, for a few moments, which we fought for. » But the damned tell us in a much more touching way: “0 you who are still on earth, oh how happy you are to be able to gain the heaven that we have lost! Oh! if we were in your place, we would be wiser (than) we have been; we have lost our God and we have lost him forever! 0 incomprehensible misfortune!., oh irreparable misfortune 1.. beautiful sky, we will never see you!..” Oh! My brethren, who among us does not sigh after such great happiness?

Incola ego sum in terra. I am like a stranger on earth. (Ps. cxviii, 19.) (E Swords, my brethren, show us all the edges of life, the contempt that we must read of created and perishable things, and the desire that we must feel to leave it to go to our true homeland, since this world is not ours. However, my brethren, let us console ourselves in our exile; we have there a God, a friend, a comforter and a redeemer, who can soften our sorrows, who, from this place of misery, makes us envisage great blessings; which should lead us to cry out, like the Bride of the canticles: “Have you seen my beloved, and if you have seen him, ah! tell him that I am no longer doing anything but languishing!” of you? » Yes, my brethren, happier than these saints of the Old Testament, not only do we possess him by the greatness of his immensity, which is found everywhere, but we also have him as he was;

laying nine months in Mary's womb, as on the cross. Even happier than the first Christians, who traveled fifty or sixty leagues to have the pleasure of seeing it, yes, my brethren, every parish has it; each parish can enjoy, as much as it wants, his sweet company. 0 happy nation! What is my purpose? here it is. It is to show you how good God [bon Dieu] is in the institution of the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, and the great advantages that we can draw from it.

I. I say that what makes a good Christian happy, makes a sinner unhappy. Do you want proof? here it is. Yes, my brethren, for a sinner, who does not want to escape from sin, the presence of God becomes his torment: he would like to be able to erase the thought that God sees him and will judge him; he hides, he flees the light of the sun, he sinks into darkness, he abhors everything that can give him the thought of it; a minister offends him, he hates him, he flees from him; every time he thinks that he has an immortal soul, that a God will reward or punish it for an eternity, according to what it has (done): all this is an executioner which devours him constantly. Ah! sad existence, that of a sinner who lives in his sin! In vain, my friend, would you like to hide it from the presence of God, you will never be able to! “Adam, Adam, where are you? » — “Ah! Lord, he cries, I have sinned, and I feared your presence. » Adam, trembling, runs to hide, and it is precisely at the moment when he believed that God did not see him, that his voice is heard. “Adam you will find me everywhere; you have sinned, and I have witnessed your crime; and my eyes were fixed on you. » “Cain, Cain, where is your brother I » Cain, hearing the voice of the Lord, fled like one in despair. But God pursues him with a sword at his waist. “Cain, your brother’s blood cries for vengeance. " Oh! that it is therefore very true that a sinner is in continual fear and despair. Sinner, what have you done? God will punish you. No, no, he cries, God has not seen me, there is no God [non est Deus]! Ah! unhappy, God sees it and will punish you. From this, I conclude that even if a sinner wants to reassure himself, erase his sins, (flee) the presence of God (and obtain) everything his heart can desire, he will only be unhappy; everywhere he will drag his chains and his hell, Ah! sad existence! No, my brethren, let's go no further, this thought is too despairing, this language in no way suits us today; let us leave these poor wretches in darkness, since they are willing to stay there; let them be damned, since they do not want to save themselves. “Come, my children,” said the holy King David, “come, I have great things to announce to you; come, and I will tell you how good the Lord is to those who love him. He has prepared for his children heavenly food that bears fruit for life. Everywhere we will find him, our God: if we go to heaven, he will be there; if we cross the seas, we will see him next to us; if we sink into the chaos of the sea, he will accompany us. » No, no, our God does not lose sight of us any more than a mother loses sight of her child who begins to move his foot. “Abraham, says the Lord, walk in my presence, and you will find it, see everywhere. " -" My God! cried Moses, “show me, please, your face; I will have everything I could want. » Ah! that a Christian is consoled, by this happy thought, that a God sees him, that a

God witnesses his sorrows and his struggles, that a God is at his side. Ah! let's say better, my brethren, a God, presses him tenderly against his breast! Ah! nation of Christians, how happy you are to enjoy so many advantages that so many other nations do not have! Ah! Was I not right to tell you that if the presence (of God) is a tyrant for the sinner, this same presence is an infinite happiness, an anticipated heaven for a good Christian. Yes, my brethren, all (this) is good (beautiful), it is true; but it is still (little) thing, if I dare say it, in comparison with the love that Jesus Christ bears to us in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist. If I were speaking to unbelievers or impics, who dare to doubt the presence of Jesus Christ in this adorable sacrament, I would begin by (giving) them proofs so clear and so convincing, that they would die of pain at having doubted a mystery supported by (reasons) so strong and so convincing; I would say to them: if Jesus Christ is true, this mystery also Tests, since, having taken bread in the presence of his Apostles, he said to them: “Here is bread, well! I will change it into my body; here is some wine, I will change it into my blood; this body is truly the same as that which will be crucified and this blood is the same as that which will be shed for the remission of sins; and each time you pronounce these same words, he said again to his Apostles, you will perform the same miracle; you will communicate this power to one another until the end of the centuries. » But here let us leave these proofs aside, this reasoning is useless to Christians, who have so many times tasted the sweetness that God communicates to them in the sacrament of love. Saint Bernard tells us that there are three mysteries to- which he cannot think without feeling his heart dying of love and pain. The first is that of the Incarnation, the second is that of the death and passion of Jesus Christ, and the third is that of the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist. When the Holy Spirit speaks to us about the mystery of the Incarnation, he uses terms which make it impossible for us to understand the extent of God's love for us, telling us: "This is how God loves the world," as if he were saying to us: I leave to your mind, to your imagination the freedom to form any ideas you wish; when you had all the knowledge of the prophets, all the light of the doctors and all the knowledge of the angels, it would be impossible for you to understand the love that Jesus Christ had for you in these mysteries. When Saint Paul speaks to us of the mysteries of the Passion of Jesus Christ, this is how he explains himself: “Although God is infinite in mercy and grace, he seems to have exhausted himself for love of us. We were dead, he gave us life. We were destined to be miserable for all eternity, and through his goodness and mercy he changed our fate. » Finally, when Saint John speaks to us of the charity that Jesus Christ had for us in instituting the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, he tells us “that he loved us to the end:” that is to say, that he loved man, throughout his life, with an unequaled love. Let's put it better, my brethren, he loves us as much as he could love us. 0 love how great you are! and little known! What! my friend, we would not love a God who has sighed throughout eternity for our happiness! A God!... Ah! a God, who wept so much for our sins, and who died to wipe them away! A God, who has good wanted to leave the angels of heaven where he is loved with a love so pure and perfect, to come to this world, although he knew very well how much he would be despised. He knew in advance the profanations he would receive in this sacrament of love. He knew that some would receive him without contrition; others, without desire to correct themselves; Alas! others perhaps, with crime in their hearts, and would put him to death. But no, all this could not stop his love, 0 happy nation that of the Christians!... “0 city of Zion, rejoice, make your joy burst forth, cries the Lord through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, because your God dwells among you. » Yes, my brethren.ce M what the prophet Isaiah said to his people, I can still tell you, it seems, with more truth. Christians, rejoice! your God will appear among you. Yes, my brethren, this tender Savior will visit your squares, your streets and your houses; everywhere he will pour out his most abundant blessings. 0 happy houses, before which he will pass I 0 happy paths, which will support his holy and sacred steps! Can we, my brethren, prevent ourselves from saying to ourselves when we return along this same road: This is where my God passed, this is the path he took when he spread his beneficial blessings in this parish. 0 how consoling this day is for us, my brethrenI Ah! if it is permitted to taste some consolations in this world, is it not in this happy moment? Yes, my brethren, let us forget, if possible, all the miseries. This foreign land will truly become the image of heavenly Jerusalem, the festivals and joys of heaven will descend to earth. Ah Isi my tongue can forget these benefits, let it attach itself to my palate!... Ah! if my eyes must still look upon

earthly things, may heaven deny them light! Yes, my brethren, if we consider everything that God has made: heaven and earth, this beautiful order which reigns in this vast universe, everything announces to us an infinite power which created everything, an admirable wisdom which governs everything, a supreme goodness which provides for everything with the same ease as if it were only occupied by a single being: so many prodigies can only fill us with astonishment and admiration. But, if we speak of the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, we can say that this is the prodigy of a God's love for us; it is here that his power, his grace and his goodness shine forth in a most extraordinary way. We can say with much truth that this is the bread that came down from heaven, the bread of angels, which is given to us as food for our souls. It is this bread of the strong that consoles us and softens our sorrows. This is truly the bread of travelers; let's say better, my brethren, it's the key that opened [la clef qui nous a ouvert] the sky to us. “He who receives me,” says the Savior, “will have eternal life; he who does not receive me will die. He, says the Savior, who will have recourse to this sacred banquet will give birth in him a spring which will flow back to eternal life. » But to better understand the excellence of this gift, we must examine to what extent Jesus Christ carried his love for us in this sacrament. No, my brethren, it is not enough for the Son of God to have become man for us; To satisfy his love, he had to give himself to each of us in particular. See, my brethren, how much he loves us. At the same time that his poor children were taking measures to put him to death, his love led him to perform a miracle, in order to stay among (them). Have we seen, can we see a love more generous and more liberal than that which he shows us in the sacrament of his love? Can we not say, like the Council of Trent, that it is there that his liberality and his generosity exhausted all his riches. Can we, in fact, find anything on earth, and even in heaven, which can be compared to it? Have we ever seen the tenderness of a father, the liberality of a king for his subjects, go so far as that of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of our altars? We see that parents, in their will, give their property to their children; but in the testament that Jesus Christ makes to us, these are not temporal goods, since we have..., but he gives us his adorable Body and his precious Blood. Oh! happiness of the Christian, how little you are tasted! No, no, my brethren, he could not carry his love further than by giving himself; since we receive it, we receive it with all its riches. Is this not, my brethren, a true lavishness of a God for his creatures? Yes, my brethren, if God had given us the freedom to ask him whatever we wanted, would we have dared to carry our hopes so far? “On the other hand, could God himself, God that he is, find something more precious to give us? » Saint Augustine tells us. Do you still know, my brethren, what led Jesus Christ to agree to stay night and day in our churches? Alas! My brethren, it is so that, every time we would like to see him, we can find him. Ah! fatherly tenderness, how great you are! What, my brethren, is more consoling for a Christian who feels that he adores a God present in body and soul! “Ah! Lord, cries the KingProphet, that a day spent with you is preferable rable to a thousand times in the assemblies of the world! » What makes our churches so holy and so respectable? Is this not the presence of Jesus Christ? Ah! happy nation than that of the Christians!

II. But, you will ask me, what must we do to show Jesus Christ our respect and our gratitude? Here he is, my brethren 1° We will only appear before him with the greatest respect, and we will follow him with heavenly joy, representing the great day of this procession which will take place after the general judgment. Yes, my brethren, it is enough for us to imbue ourselves with the deepest respect, to remember that we (are) sinners, who are unworthy of following a God so holy and so pure. He is a good father whom we have so many times despised and outraged, who still loves us, and who tells us that he is ready to grant us our grace. What does Jesus Christ, my brethren, do when we carry him in procession? here it is. (He is) like a good king among his subjects, like a good father surrounded by his children, and finally, like a good shepherd who visits his flocks. What is the thought, my brethren, that we must have as we walk following our God? here it is. We must follow him like the first faithful who followed him when he was on earth, doing good to all these people. Yes, if we have the happiness of accompanying him with a living faith, we are sure to obtain everything we ask of him. We read in the Gospel that two blind men, having found themselves on the path where the Savior was passing, began to cry: “0 Jesus! son of David, have mercy on us! » Seeing them, he

was touched with compassion, 6 asked them what they wanted. “Ah! Lord, they said to him, please let us see. » “Hey! well, see,” said this good Savior to them. A great sinner, named Zacchaeus, wishing to see him, climbs a tree; but Jesus Christ, who had only come to save sinners, cried to him: “Zacchaeus, come down, for it is with you that I want to stay today. " At your place! it is as if he had said to him: Zacchaeus, for a long time the port of your heart (has been closed) by your pride and your injustices; open to me today, I come to give you your forgiveness. At this very moment, Zacchaeus comes down, humbles himself deeply before his God, repairs all his injustices, and wants nothing but poverty and suffering as his share. 0 happy moment, which brought him an eternity of happiness! Another day when the Savior was passing through another street, a poor woman who had been suffering from an issue of blood for twelve years (followed him). “Ah! she said to herself, ah! If I had the good fortune to touch just the edge of the fringe of his coat, I am sure I would be cured. » Full of confidence, she runs to throw herself at the feet of the Savior; at that very moment she was delivered. Yes, my brethren, if we had the same faith, the same confidence, we would obtain the same grace; because it is the same God, the same Savior and the same father, animated by the same charity. “Come,” said the Prophet, “come, Lord, come out of your tabernacles; show yourself to your people who want you and love you. » Alas! My brethren, how many sick people need to be cured; How many blind people need to be restored to sight! How many Christians will follow Jesus Christ, and whose poor souls will all be covered with wounds! How many Christians are in darkness, and who do not see (not) that they are ready to fall into hell! My God! heal some and enlighten others! Poor souls, how unfortunate you are! Saint Paul tells us that while in Athens he found (written) on an altar: “Here resides the unknown, or at least forgotten, God. » But, alas! My brethren, I could well tell you the opposite: I come to announce to you a God that you do not adore, and that you know is your God, and that you despise. Alas! how many Christians who, on these holy days of Sunday, are embarrassed with their time; who do not only deign to come, for a few short moments, to visit their Savior who burns with the desire to see them near him, to tell them that he loves them, and that he wants to fill them with benefits. Oh! what a shame for us!... Is something new happening? we leave everything, and we run. As for our God, we only despise him and flee from him; time lasts us in his holy presence, everything we do is always long. Ah! what a difference between the first faithful and us! they considered it the happiest time of their life when they had the happiness of spending whole days and nights in churches singing the praises of the Lord, or weeping for their sins; but today it is no longer the same. He is abandoned, he is abandoned by us, (there are) even those who despise him; For the most part, we appear in our churches, these sacred places, without respect, without love of God, without even knowing what we are there to do. Some let their minds and hearts be occupied with a thousand earthly, and perhaps even criminal, things; the others (are there) with boredom and disgust; (there are) others who barely kneel, while a God pours out his precious blood for their forgiveness; finally others, as soon as they let the priest come down from the altar, they are already fleeing. My God, how little your children love you or rather despise you! Indeed, my brethren, what a spirit of lightness and dissipation you display. appear, when you are in the church? some sleep, others talk, and almost no one is busy with what he has to do. 2° I say, my brethren, that all men being made only for God, constantly filled with his most abundant benefits, we must all show him our gratitude, and be saddened to see him so outraged. We must act like a friend who is saddened by the misfortunes of his friend: this is how he shows him sincere friendship. However, my brethren, whatever services this friend may have rendered him, he will never do what God has done for us. But, you will say, who are those who must, it seems, have a greater and more ardent love in view of the outrages that Jesus Christ will receive from bad Christians? It is true that everyone must be saddened by the contempt that is shown (to him), and try to compensate him; but there are some, among Christians, who are bound to it in a very particular way, here they are: they are those who have the happiness of being of the brotherhood of the Blessed Sacrament. I say: “who have happiness. » Ah can we find a greater one than to be chosen to make reparation to Jesus Christ, for the outrages he receives in the sacrament of his love! But make no mistake, my brethren, you, as colleagues, are obliged to lead a much more perfect life than ordinary Christians. Your sins are much more sensitive to Jesus Christ,

No, my brethren, it is not enough to have a candle in our hand to show that we are one of those whom God has chosen; but our life must distinguish us, as our candle distinguishes us from those who do not have one. Why, my brethren, these glowing candles? otherwise, because your life must be a model of virtue, because you glory in being true children of God, and because you are ready to give your life to support the interests of your God, to whom you have dedicated your whole life. Yes, my brethren, hasten to adorn the churches and repositories: all these external marks are very good and laudable; but it's not enough. The Bethsamites, when the ark of the Lord passed through their land, showed the greatest eagerness and the most ardent zeal: as soon as they saw it, all the people came out in a crowd to meet him; everyone hastened to cut wood to make the sacrifices. However, fifty thousand were stricken with death; because their respect had not been great enough. Oh! My brethren, how this example must make us tremble! What did this ark contain, my brethren? Alas! a little manna, the tables of the Law; and because those who approach it are not sufficiently penetrated by its presence, the Lord strikes them with death. But tell me, who is he who, reflecting even a little on the presence of Jesus Christ, would not be seized with fear? How many, my brethren, who are unfortunate enough to attend the company of the Savior, with a heart all in haste. Ah! unhappy, you may bow your knees, while a (God) rises to bless his people; but his piercing gaze will not fail to see the horrors that are happening in your heart. But if our soul is truly pure, let us imagine ourselves following Jesus-

Christ as a great king, who leaves his capital city, to receive the homage of his subjects and shower them with benefits. We read in the Gospel that the two disciples of Emmaiis walked with the Savior without knowing him; when they recognized him, he disappeared. Delighted with their happiness, they said to each other: “How did we not know him? Is it not true that our hearts felt all aflame with love when he spoke to us and explained Holy Scripture to us? » A thousand times happier, my brethren, than these disciples, who walked with Jesus Christ without knowing him, for us, we know that it is our God and our Savior who walks before us, who will speak to the depths of our heart, who will give birth there to an infinite number of good thoughts, of good inspirations. “My son,” he will say, “why don’t you want to love me? Why not leave this cursed (sin) that puts a soft wall of separation between us? Ah! my son, can you abandon me? Will you have to force me to condemn you to eternal torture! My son, here is your forgiveness, do you want to repent? » But what does the sinner say to him: “No, no Lord, I would rather live under the tyranny of the devil, and be reprobate, than ask your forgiveness. »

2nd Sunday after Pentecost — On the Holy Mass

But, you will tell me, we do not say that to the good Lord. —And I tell you that you say it continually: every time God gives you the thought of converting. Ah! unhappy, the day will come when you will ask for what you refuse today, and which perhaps will not be granted to you. It is very certain, my brethren, that if we had the happiness of so many saints to whom God made himself seen, as to a Saint Thérèse, sometimes like a child in his manger, sometimes like on the cross, we would undoubtedly have much more respect and love for him; but we do not deserve it, and we would already believe ourselves to be saints, which would be a source of pride for us. But, although the good Lord does not grant us this grace, he is no less present, and ready to grant us whatever we ask. It is recorded in history that a priest doubting this truth, after having pronounced the words of consecration: "How," he said to himself, (is it possible) that the words of a man can work such a great miracle? » But Jesus Christ, to reproach him for his lack of faith, caused the holy Host to sweat blood so abundantly that we were obliged to scoop it up with a spoon. Listen to what the same author tells us: that the fire having started in a chapel, the whole building burned and was destroyed, and the Holy Host remained suspended in the air, without being supported on anything; (the priest) having come to receive her in a vase, she immediately went down into it. We see in ecclesiastical history that the servant of a Jew, out of pure kindness to her master, brought him the holy Host. After she had received it in her mouth, this unfortunate woman took it, put it in her handkerchief and gave it to her master. This monster, delighted with the joy of having Jesus Christ in his power, like his fathers before when they crucified him on the cross,

indulged in everything that fury could inspire him. Now, it seems that Jesus Christ (wanted) to show him how sensitive he was to the outrages he was doing to him. This unfortunate man having placed the Host on a table, gave it several blows with a penknife; she was completely covered in blood: which made his wife and children shudder, who were pre- feel this terrible spectacle. He takes her back, hangs her on a nail and gives her many lashes with a whip and a spear; the blood came out with (as much) abundance as the first time. He takes it back, for the third time, throws it into a cauldron of boiling water. Immediately the water was changed into blood; and, at this same moment, Jesus Christ resumes the form he had on the tree of the cross. In this state, it seems that Jesus Christ wanted to try if he could touch him. But this unfortunate man, similar to Judas, considered his crime too great, and despairing of his forgiveness, he was condemned to be burned alive. No, my brethren, we cannot hear these horrors without shuddering. Alas, only Christians treat him even more cruelly. But, you will ask me, how could anyone behave in this way? — Alas, my friend, please God that this misfortune never happens to you! Whenever you consent to sin (1): a thought of pride tramples it underfoot and gives it death; a thought of impurity will pierce his heart. Alas, we represent in this procession the Savior as going to Calvary: some kicked him, others charged him with insults and blasphemies... only a few holy souls followed him weeping and mingling their tears with his precious blood with which he sprinkled the pavement. Oh! how many Jews and executioners will follow Jesus Christ, and who will not only be content to put him to death once, but on as many calvaries as hearts! Ah! Is it really possible that a God who loves us so much is so despised and mistreated?

(l) See section G at the end of the volume.

Yes, my brethren, if we loved the good Lord, we would be happy and happy to come, every Sunday, to spend a few moments to adore him, to ask him for the grace to forgive us; we would look at these moments as the most beautiful of our lives. Ah! how sweet and consoling are the moments (spent) with this God of goodness! Are you in sorrow? come and throw yourself at his feet for a moment and you will feel completely consoled. Are you despised by the world? come here, and you will find a good friend who will never fail you in loyalty. Are you tempted? oh! this is where you will find strong and terrible weapons to defeat your enemy. Do you fear the tremendous judgment that has made the greatest saints tremble? take advantage of the time that your God is the God of mercy, and that it is so easy to have your grace. Are you oppressed by poverty? come here, you will find a God infinitely rich and who will tell you that all his goods are yours, not in this world, but in the next: It is there that I prepare infinite goods for you; go, despise these perishable goods, and you will have some that will never perish. Do we want to begin to taste the happiness of the saints? let's come here, and we will experience its happy beginnings. Ah! how good it is, my brethren, to enjoy the chaste embraces of the Savior 1 Ah! you have never tasted them! If you had had this happiness, you would never be able to escape from it. Let us no longer be surprised that so many holy souls have spent their lives in his house both day and night; they could no longer separate themselves from his presence. We read in history that a holy priest found so much sweetness and consolation in our churches, that he slept on the step of the altar to have the happiness, when he woke up, of finding himself near his God; and God, to reward him, allowed him to die at the foot of the altar. See Saint Louis, who, in his travels, instead of spending the night in a bed, spent it at the foot of the altars, near the sweet presence of his Savior. Why, my brethren, do we have so much indifference and disgust when it comes to coming here? Unfortunately, my brethren, we never felt these happy moments. What should we conclude from all this? here it is. It is considered the happiest moment of our life when we can come and keep such a good friend company. Let us walk after him with holy trembling; as a sinner, let us ask Him with tears and pain for forgiveness of our sins and we are sure to obtain it... Being reconciled, let us ask for the precious gift of perseverance. Ah! let us tell him that, if we have to offend him again, we would rather (better) die. No, my brethren, as long as you do not love your God, you will never be happy: everything will overwhelm you, everything will bore you, and as soon as you love him, you will spend a happy life; you will wait for death!... Ah! this happy death, which will reunite us with our God!... Ah! happiness! when will you come?... How long is this time!... Ah! come! you will provide

us with the greatest of all goods, which is the possession of God me!... What...

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On the Holy Mass.

In omni loco sacrificur et offerur nomini meo oblatio mxinda. A pure oblation is sacrificed and offered everywhere in my name. (Malach., i, 11.)

f It is certain, my brethren, that man, as a creature, owes to God the homage of all his TRE 9 and as a])JHI ® Sinner, he owes him a victim K § of expiation; This is why, in the ancient law, these multitudes of victims were offered to God every day in the temple. But these victims could not fully satisfy God for our sins; another was needed, holier and purer, which was to continue until the end of the world, and which was capable of paying what we owe to God. This holy victim is Jesus Christ himself, who is God like his Father, and man like us. He offers himself every day on our altars, as before on Calvary, and, through this pure and spotless oblation, he renders to God all the honors due to him, and he acquits himself, for man, of all that man owes to his Creator; he immolates himself every day; in order to recognize the sovereign domain that God has over his creatures, and the outrage that sin has done to God is fully repaired. Jesus Christ, being the mediator between [le médiateur] God and men, obtains for us, through this sacrifice, all the graces which are necessary for us; having made himself, in the same way, the victim of thanksgiving, he renders to God for men all the gratitude that they owe him. But, to have the happiness, my brethren, of receiving all these goods, we must also do something on our side. To make you feel it better, I am going to make you understand, at least as much as possible, 1° the greatness of the happiness we have in attending Holy Mass; 2° the dispositions with which we must attend; 3° how most Christians attend. I do not want, my brethren, to go into the explanation of what the ornaments with which the priest is adorned mean; I think you know it, or at least several of you do. When the priest goes to the sacristy to dress, this represents to us Jesus Christ who descends from heaven to incarnate in the womb of the most holy Virgin, taking a body like ours, in order to sacrifice it to his Father for our sins. When the priest takes the amict, which is the white cloth that he puts on his shoulders, it is to represent for us the moment when the Jews blindfolded Jesus Christ, punching him and saying to him: “Guess who hit you. » Dawn marks the white robe, which llerodo made him wear in mockery when he sent him back to Pilato. The belt represents the cords with which he was bound when they took him to the Garden of Olives, and the whips with which he was torn. The handle, which the priest places on his left arm, represents to us the ropes with which Jesus Christ was attached to the column to to be flogged; the handler places himself on the left arm because it is closer to the heart, which shows us that it is the excess of his love which made him suffer this cruel flagellation for our sins. For the stole, she shows us the rope that was thrown around his neck when he carried his cross. The chasuble reminds us of the purple dress, and its seamless dress that was cast by lot. The Introit represents the ardent desire that the patriarchs had for the coming of the Messiah, which is why it is repeated twice. When the priest says Gonfiteor, he represents Jesus Christ taking on our sins, in order to satisfy the justice of God his Father (1). The Kyrie eleison, which means: “Lord, have mercy on us,” represents the unhappy state we were in before the coming of Jesus Christ. I don't want to go any further. The Epistle means the doctrine of the Old Testament; the Gradual signifies the penance that the Jews did after the preaching of Saint John the Baptist; The Alleluia represents to us the joy of a soul which has obtained its grace; The Gospel reminds us of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The different signs of the cross that we make on the host and on the chalice remind us of all the suffering that Jesus Christ endured during his Passion. I can come back to this another time.

I. Before showing you the way of hearing the Holy Mass, I must tell you a word about what is meant by the word holy sacrifice of the Mass. You know that the holy sacrifice of the mass is the same as that of the cross, which was once offered on the (1) Rodriguez, t. III, p. 575. Saint Gregory. (Note of the Venerable.)

Calvary, Good Friday. All the difference there is is that, when Jesus Christ offered himself on Calvary, this sacrifice was visible, that is to say, it was seen with the eyes of the body; that (Jesus) was offered there to God, his Father, by the hands of his executioners, and that he shed his blood there; This is what we call blood sacrifice: this means that the blood came out of his veins, and that it was seen flowing to the ground. But, at Holy Mass, Jesus Christ offers himself to his Father in an invisible way; that is to say, we only see it with the eyes of the soul and not with those of the body. This, my brethren, in short, is what the holy sacrifice of the mass is. But, to give you an idea of the greatness of the merit of the Holy Mass, my brethren, it is enough for me to tell you with Saint John Chrysostom, that the Holy Mass rejoices the entire heavenly court, relieves all the poor souls from purgatory, attracts on earth all kinds of blessings, and gives more glory to God than all the sufferings of all the martyrs, than the penances of all the solitary ones, than all the tears that they have shed since the beginning. of the world and that everything they will do until the end of the centuries. If you ask me the reason, it is quite clear: all these actions are done by more or less guilty sinners; while (in) the holy sacrifice of the mass, it is a man-God equal to his Father who offers him the merit of his death and passion. You see, from this, my brethren, that the Holy Mass is of infinite value. Also, we see in the Gospel that, at the time of the death of Jesus Christ, many conversions took place: the good thief received the assurance of paradise, several Jews were converted and Gentiles beat their breasts, saying that he was truly the Son

E of God. The dead rose again, the rocks split and the earth shook. Yes, my brethren, if we had the good fortune to attend it with good intentions, even if we had the misfortune of being as obstinate as the Jews, more blind than the Gentiles, harder than the rocks that split, we would most certainly obtain our conversion. In. Indeed, Saint John Chrysostom tells us that there is no time more precious to negotiate with God about our salvation than that of the Holy Mass, where Jesus Christ offers himself as a sacrifice to God his father, to obtain for us all kinds of blessings and graces. “Are we in affliction? says this great saint, we find there all kinds of consolations; are we burdened with temptations? Let's go hear Holy Mass and there we will find the way to defeat the demon. » And, in passing, I will give you a good example. It is related by Pope Pius II, that a gentleman of the province of Ostia was continually overcome by a temptation of despair which led him to hang himself, and he had several times been on the point of doing so. Having gone to find a religious saint to discover the state of his soul and ask him for advice, the servant of God, after having consoled and strengthened him as best he could, advised him to have a priest in his house who would say holy mass to him every day. The gentleman told him he would do it willingly. At the same time, he went to retire to a castle he had; and every day a holy priest said holy mass to him, at which he attended as devoutly as he could. After having remained there in great peace of mind, it happened that the priest asked him to allow him to go and say holy mass in the neighborhood for a celebration particular; which he readily granted, with the intention of also going there to hear holy mass. But an affair which arose stopped him imperceptibly until midday. Then, full of fear at having lost the holy mass, which never happened to him, and already feeling tormented by his former temptation, he leaves his house and meets a peasant who asks him where he is going. “I am going,” replied the gentleman, “to hear holy mass. » — “But it's too late,” said the peasant, “they're all said. » This was such cruel news for him that he began to cry: “Alas! since I have lost the holy mass, I am lost. » The peasant who saw him in this state and who loved money, said to him: “If you want I will sell you the mass I heard and all the good I got from it. » The other, without thinking about anything, and so sad at having missed Holy Mass: “Well, here is my coat. » This man certainly could not sell him the Holy Mass without committing a great sin. Having separated, he nevertheless continued on his way to say his prayers at the church, and as he was returning home, after having said them, he found this poor, miserly peasant, hanging from a tree, in the same place where he had taken the cloak. The good Lord, as punishment for his avarice, allowed the temptation of the gentleman to pass to this miser. Struck by such a spectacle, this gentleman thanked (God) all his life for having delivered him from such a great punishment, and never failed to attend holy mass to thank the good Lord for having delivered him. At the hour of death, he confessed that since he

had had the happiness of attending holy mass every day, the demon had no longer tempted him to despair. Well, my brethren, didn't Saint John Chrysostom right to tell us that if we are tempted we must devoutly hear the Holy Mass, and we are sure that the good God [le bon Dieu] will deliver us. Yes, my brethren, if we had enough faith, the holy mass would be a remedy for all the ills that we could have during our life; in fact, is not Jesus Christ our doctor of the soul and the body?...

II. We have said that the Holy Mass is the sacrifice of the adorable Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which is offered only to God alone, and not to angels and saints. You know that the holy sacrifice of the Holy Mass was instituted on Maundy Thursday, when Jesus Christ took bread, changed it into his Body, then wine, and changed it into his Blood. At the same time, he gave to his apostles and to all their successors this power, which is what we call the sacrament of Orders. The Holy Mass consists of the words of consecration; and you know that the ministers of the Holy Mass are the priests and the people (1), who have the happiness of attending it, if they unite with them; from which I conclude, my brethren, that the best way to hear the holy mass is to unite with the priest in everything he says, to follow him in all his actions, as much as one can, and to try to imbue oneself with the most lively feelings of love and gratitude: (it is necessary) to maintain this method carefully. We can distinguish three parts in the holy sacrifice of the Holy Mass: the first part, from the beginning to the Offertory; the second, from the Offertory to the Consecration; the third, from the Consecration to the end. You need to be re- (1) See Note G (bis) at the end of the volume.

mark that if we were intentionally distracted during any of these games, we would be committing a mortal sin (1); which should lead us to be careful not to let our minds wander to foreign things, that is to say, which do not relate to the holy sacrifice of the Mass. I say, my brethren, that, from the beginning until the end, we must behave like penitents who are filled with the deepest pain for their sins. From the Offertory to the Consecration, we must conduct ourselves as ministers who must offer Jesus Christ to God his father, and make to him the sacrifice of all that we are: that is to say, (offer to him) our bodies, our souls, our goods, our life, and even our eternity. Since the Consecration, we must regard ourselves as people who must participate in the adorable Body and precious Blood of Jesus Christ; and we must, therefore, make all our efforts to make ourselves worthy of this happiness. To better make it clear to you, my brethren, I am going to offer you three examples taken from Holy Scripture, which will show you the way in which you must understand the Holy Mass: that is to say, what you must occupy yourself with during this happy moment for those who have the good fortune to understand it well. The first is that of the publican, who will teach you what you must do at the beginning of Holy Mass. The second is that of the good thief, who will teach you how you must behave during the Consecration. The third, the centurion, who will guide you during Holy Communion. We say 1° that the publican will teach us how to (I) When mass is obligatory.

We must conduct ourselves at the beginning of Holy Mass, which is an action so pleasing to God and so powerful to obtain for us all kinds of graces. We must therefore not wait until we are at church to prepare ourselves. No, my brethren, no, a good Christian begins to prepare himself by waking up, by not allowing his mind to be occupied with anything that does not relate to this happiness. We must imagine Jesus Christ in the Garden of Olives, who, prostrate with his face to the ground, prepares for the bloody sacrifice that he will endure on Calvary, and of the greatness of his charity, which will make him suffer the punishment that we should suffer for eternity. We must come there on an empty stomach, as much as we can; which is very pleasing to the good Lord. In the beginnings of the Church, all Christians went there on an empty stomach. In the morning, you must never allow your mind to be occupied with your temporal affairs; reminding you that having worked all week for your body, it is right that you give this day to the care of your soul, and to ask the good Lord for forgiveness for your sins. When you come to church, do not make conversation; think that you are following Jesus Christ carrying his cross to Calvary and that he will die to save you. We must always have a moment, before Holy Mass, to reflect a little; to lament over one's sins and ask the good Lord for forgiveness; to examine the graces that are most necessary to us, in order to ask for them during mass; and

take care never to miss the holy water, the Passion, or the processions, because these are holy actions which prepare you to hear mass well. When you enter the church, penetrate yourself with the greatness of your happiness by an act of (the) most living faith, and an act of contrition for your sins, which make you unworthy to approach a God so holy and so great. Think, at this moment, of the dispositions of the publican, when he entered the temple to offer to God the sacrifice of his prayer. Listen to Saint Luke: “The publican, he tells us, stood at the bottom of the temple, lowering his eyes to the ground, not daring to look at the altar and beating his breast, saying to God: Have mercy on me, Lord, because I am a great sinner. » So you see, my brethren, that he was not like those Christians who enter our churches with a proud and arrogant air, “who seem to want to approach God,” the prophet Isaiah tells us, “like people who have nothing on their conscience that could humiliate them before their Creator. » Indeed, if you want to take the trouble to have to enter these Christians, who perhaps have more sins on their conscience than they have hairs on their heads; you see them, I say, entering with an air of disdain, or rather, with a kind of contempt for the presence of God. They take holy water in much the same way as they take a basin of water to wash their hands after working; They do it, for the most part, without devotion and without thinking that holy water, taken with great respect, erases venial sins and prepares us to hear Holy Mass well. See our publican, who, believing himself unworthy to enter the temple, goes to place himself in the least visible place he can (find); he is so confused at the sight of his sins that he does not even dare to raise his eyes to heaven. He is therefore far removed from these nominal Christians, who are never well enough placed, who only kneel on a chair, who barely lower their heads

E during elevation, who lie on a chair or cross their legs. We say nothing about these people who should only come to church to weep for their sins, and who only come there to insult a God humiliated and despised, by their vain displays of vanity; with the intention of attracting the eyes of the world to it; and others, to keep alive the fire of their criminal passions. 0 my God with such dispositions can we dare to come and attend holy mass (1)? “But our publican,” Saint Augustine tells us, “strikes his heart, to show God the regret he feels for having offended him. » Alasl My brethren, if Christians had the happiness of attending Holy Mass with the same dispositions as the publican, what graces, what goods we would obtain. We would leave as laden with the goods of heaven as bees after having found more flowers than they wanted! Oh! If the good Lord gave us the grace that at the beginning of the Holy Mass we were fully imbued with the greatness of Jesus Christ before whom we appear and with the weight of our sins, that we would soon have obtained the forgiveness of our sins and the grace to persevere! Above all, we must hold ourselves in great feelings of humility during Holy Mass; this is what the priest must inspire us when he comes down from the altar to say the Confiteor with a deep bow, he who, taking the place of Jesus Christ himself, seems to take charge of all the sins of his parishioners. Alas! if the good Lord once made us understand clearly what the Holy Mass is, what graces, what (1) Saint Ambrose “Where are you going? — I go to church. — Go, unhappy, to cry there... » (Note of the Venerable.)

goods which we do not have and which we would have! What dangers, from which we would be preserved if we had a great devotion to the holy mass! To prove it to you, my brethren, I will give you a beautiful example, which will show you that the good Lord protects in a (visible) way those who have the good fortune to attend with devotion. We read in history that Saint Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal, and niece of Saint Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, was so charitable towards the poor that, although she had ordered her chaplain never to refuse them anything, she still gave continual alms with her own hands or those of her servants. She usually used a page, whose great piety she had recognized; seeing this, another page was jealous. One day he went to the king, and told him that such a page had criminal dealings with the queen. The king, without examining anything, immediately resolved to get rid of this page as secretly as possible. A moment later, having happened to pass by a place where lime was being cooked, he called the people who took care of tending the fire in the furnace, and told them that, the next morning, he would send them a page with whom he was displeased, who would ask them if they had carried out the orders (of the king); let them not fail to

take it and immediately throw it into the fire. After that, he returned and ordered the queen's page to go early the next day to carry out this errand. But you will see that the good Lord never abandons those who love him. The good Lord allowed him to pass by a church to go on his errand, and that, at that moment, he heard the bell ringing. He enters to worship Jesus Christ and hears the rest of the mass. Another

E begins, he hears it; a third begins after the second finishes, he still hears it. However, the king, impatient to know if you had carried out his orders, sent his page to ask them if they had done what he had ordered them. Believing it was the first, they took it and threw it into the fire. The other, who, during this time, had completed his devotions, goes to do his errand, telling them if they had done what the king had ordered them. They told him yes. He returned to answer the king, who was very surprised to see him return. All in fury at what had happened, quite the opposite of what he hoped, the king asked him where he had stayed so long?... The page told him that, passing near a church to go where he had ordered him, he had heard the bell of the Elevation, that this had forced him to enter, that he had remained there until the end of the mass, and, that another mass had then begun before this one ended and finally, a third, and that he had heard them all; because his father, before dying, after having given him his blessing, had recommended him never to leave a mass that had begun without waiting for it to be finished: that this brought us many graces and guaranteed us from many misfortunes. Then the king, coming to himself, understood well that this had only happened by a just judgment of God; that the queen was innocent and the page, a saint; that the other had only done this out of desire. You see that this poor young man would have been burned without his devotion, and that the good Lord inspired him to enter the church to protect him from death; while the other, who had no devotion to Jesus Christ in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, was thrown into the fire.

Saint Thomas tells us that one day during Holy Mass he saw Jesus Christ, his hands full of treasures, which he sought to distribute, and that, if we had the happiness of attending holy Mass holy and often, we would have many more graces than we have, to save our souls, and even for the temporal. Secondly, we said that the good thief would instruct us on how to conduct ourselves during the time of the Consecration and the Elevation of the holy host, which is the time when we must offer ourselves to God with Jesus Christ, as those who must participate in this august mystery. See, my brethren, how this happy penitent behaves at the very time of his torture; do you see how he opens the eyes of the soul to recognize his deliverer? But also, my brethren, what progress does he not make during the three hours he is in the company of his dying Savior? He is attached to the cross, all that remains is his heart and his free tongue, see with what eagerness he offers both to Jesus Christ: he gives him everything he can give him, he consecrates his heart to him by faith and hope, he humbly asks him for a place in paradise, that is to say, in his eternal kingdom. He dedicates his language to her by publishing her innocence and holiness. He said to his companion in torture: “It is right that we suffer; but, for him, he is innocent. » At a time when others are only busy insulting Jesus Christ with the most horrible blasphemies, he becomes his panegyrist; while even his disciples abandon him, he takes his side; and his charity is so great that he makes all his efforts to lead others to convert. No, my brethren, let us not be at all surprised if we discover so much virtue in this good thief, because there is nothing so capable of touching us as the sight of Jesus Christ dying; there is no time when grace is given to us with so much abundance, and yet we witness it every day. Alas! AL F., if, in this happy moment of Consecration, we had the happiness of being animated by a living faith, a single mass would be enough to free us from some bad vices in which we might be, and to make us true penitents, that is to say, perfect Christians. Why is it, you will ask me, that we attend so many masses and that we are always the same? Alas! My brethren, is that we are physically present there and that our spirit is not there at all, and that we rather come to complete our disapproval by the bad dispositions with which we attend. Alas, how many misheard masses, which, far from ensuring our salvation, harden us even more! Jesus Christ having appeared to Saint Mechtilde, said to her: “Know, my daughter, that the saints will attend the death of all those who have devoutly heard the holy mass, to help them die well, to defend them against the temptations of the deitfon and to present their souls to my Father. » What happiness for us, my brethren, to be assisted, in this formidable moment, by as many saints as

we have heard holy masses!... No, my brethren, let us never fear that the holy mass will delay us in our temporal affairs; it is quite the opposite: we are sure that everything will go better, and that even our affairs will succeed better than if we have the misfortune of not attending. Here is a 7 admirable example. It is reported from two craftsmen, who were of the same trade and who lived in the same town, that one of them, being responsible for a large number of children, never failed to hear holy mass every day and lived very comfortably in his profession; but the other, on the contrary, who had no children, worked part of the night and all day, and often on the holy day of Sunday, even though he had all the difficulties in the world to live. The latter, who saw the other's business succeeding so well, asked him, one day when he met him, where he could get enough to support a family as large as his; while he, who had only himself and his wife, and who worked constantly, was often deprived of all things. The other replied that, if he wanted, he would show him the next day where he got all his profit from. The other, very happy with such good news, only saw the time to arrive at the next day which would teach him how to make his fortune. In fact, the other did not fail to go and take it. Here he leaves with a good heart and follows him with great fidelity. The other took him to the church, where they heard holy mass. After they had returned: “My friend,” said the one who was at ease, “return to your work. » He did the same the next day; but, having gone to pick him up a third time for the same thing: “What,” said the other, “if I want to go to mass, I know the way without you taking the trouble to come and get me; that's not what I wanted to know; but the place where you find all this good that makes you live so comfortably (I wanted) to see if, doing like you, I could find my account there. » — “My friend,” replied the other, “I know of no other place than that of the church, and not no other way than to hear holy mass every day; and for me, I assure you that I have not used other means to obtain all the good that surprises you. But, have you not seen what Jesus Christ tells us in the Gospel, to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and that everything else will be added to us. » These words made this man understand the other's plan by leading him to holy mass, “Well! he said to him, you are right: he who only counts on his work is blind, and (I see) that the Holy Mass will never impoverish anyone. You are great proof of that. I want to do like you, and I hope that the good Lord will bless me. » Indeed, the next day he began and continued his whole life; and, in a short time, he was very comfortable. When he was asked why he no longer worked on Sundays or at night as before; that he went to mass every day and that he became richer; he said: “I followed my neighbor’s advice; go find him, and he will teach you to be well without working (more); (but hearing) mass every day. » This perhaps surprises you, my brethren? not me. This is what we see every day in homes where there is piety: those who often come to Holy Mass do their business much better than those whose little faith leads them to believe that they never have time. Alas! If we had put all our trust in God and counted nothing on our work, we would be happier than we are. — But, you will tell me, if we have nothing, we are given nothing. — What do you want the good Lord to give you, when you only rely on your work and for nothing about him? since you do not only give yourself time to say your prayers in the morning or in the evening, and (you are content) to come once a week to holy mass. Alas! you do not know the resources of the providence of the good God [le bon Dieu] for those who trust in him. Do you want very striking proof of this? (she ost) before your eyes: cast your eyes on your pastor, and examine this before the good Lord. - Oh! you will tell me, it is because it is given to you. — But who gives me, if not the providence of the good God [le bon Dieu]? this is where all my treasures are, and nowhere else. Alas! that man is blind to torment himself so much to damn himself and to be very unhappy in this world! If you had the good fortune to think carefully about your salvation and to attend holy mass, as much as you can, you would soon see the proof of what I am telling you. No, my brethren, there is no more precious moment to ask God for our conversion than that of Holy Mass, as you will see. A holy hermit named Paul saw a very well dressed young man entering a church, a number of demons accompanying him; but, after Holy Mass, he saw the young man come out accompanied by a troop of angels who walked alongside him. “O my God,” cried the saint, “how pleasant the holy mass must be to you! » The holy Council of Trent tells us that the Holy Mass appeases the anger of God, converts the sinner, rejoices in heaven, relieves souls from purgatory, gives glory to the good God [le bon Dieu] and attracts all kinds of blessings to the earth. Oh! My brethren, if we could understand well what the holy

sacrifice of the holy mass is, with what respect would we not be there?... The holy abbot Nilus tells us that his master

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Saint John Ghrysostom had told him one day, in confidence, that he saw, during Holy Mass, a troop of angels who descended from heaven to adore Jesus Christ on the altar, and that several went into the church to inspire in the faithful the respect and love that they should have for Jesus Christ present on the altar. Precious moment, happy moment for us, my brethren, that when Jesus Christ is present on our altars! Alas! if fathers and mothers understood it well and knew how to take advantage of it, their children would not be so miserable, so far from the path to heaven. My God, how many poor people are there next to such a great treasure. 1 3° We said that the centurion would serve as an example to us when we have the happiness of receiving communion, either spiritually or bodily. I say that we must commune spiritually out of a great desire to unite ourselves with Jesus Christ (1). The example of this centurion is so admirable that it seems that the Church takes pleasure in putting him before our eyes, every day, at Holy Mass. “Lord,” said this humble servant, “I am not worthy that you come into my house, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. » Ah! if the good Lord saw in us this same humility, this same knowledge of our nothingness, with what pleasure and with what abundance of graces would he not come into our hearts? What strength and courage to defeat the enemy of our salvation! Do we want, my brethren, to obtain our change of life: that is to say, (leave) sin to return to the good God [le bon Dieu]? Let us hear a few messages for this purpose, and (1) Saint Bonaventure... Rodriguez, t. III, p. 73. (Note dti Venerable.)

we are sure, if we listen to them devoutly, that the good Lord will help us escape from sin; here is an example. It is recorded in the story that a young girl, for several years, led a very miserable life with a young man. All, once, she felt struck with fear, considering the state in which her poor soul could be, leading the life that she

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led. Immediately, after Holy Mass, she goes to find a priest to ask him to help her escape from sin. The priest, who knew her life, asked her what had led her to such a change. “My father,” she said to him, during Holy Mass, which my mother, before she died, made me promise to hear every Saturday; I have conceived such a great horror of my state that I can no longer bear it. » — “0 my God!” cries the holy priest, here is a soul saved by the merit of the holy mass! » Ah! My brethren, how many souls would emerge from sin if they had the happiness of hearing Holy Mass with good dispositions! Let us not be surprised if the devil puts so many foreign thoughts into our heads. Alas! it is because he foresees, much better than you, the loss you are making, by attending to it with so little respect and devotion. Ah! My brethren, how much the Holy Mass protects us from accidents and sudden deaths! how many people who, for a holy mass that they have heard, the good Lord will protect from misfortune! Saint Antonin gives us a good example of this. He told us that one feast day, there were two young people who had gone hunting: one had heard holy mass, the other had not. While on the way, the weather became dark; they heard the most terrible thunders, and they saw lightnings so multiplied, th that it seemed to them that the sky was on fire. But what frightened them even more was that, among all these thunderbolts, they heard, at every moment, a voice which seemed to be in the air, and which shouted: “Strike these unfortunate people, strike them!” But as the weather calmed down a little, they began to reassure themselves. Continuing on their way, suddenly there came a clap of thunder which crushed the one who had not heard the holy mass. The other was seized with such great fear that he did not know whether he should go further or fall to the ground. As he was in this fright, he heard the voice shouting: “Strike, strike the unfortunate man!” which redoubled his fear all the more, as he had just seen his companion crushed at his feet. “Hit, hit this one again!” Thinking he was lost, he heard another voice saying: “No, don’t hit him, he heard holy mass this morning. » So that it was the holy mass that he had heard before

leaving, which preserved him from such a terrible death. Do you see, my brethren, how much grace the good Lord grants us and protects us from misfortunes, when we have the happiness of hearing (Holy Mass) as we should? Alas! what punishments must those who have no difficulty in missing Sundays expect! First of all, what is visible is that they almost all perish miserably; their goods go into decline, faith abandons their hearts, and, therefore, they are doubly unhappy. My God! that man is blind in all respects, for the soul and for the body!

III. Most people in the world only hear the Holy Mass as Pharisees, as a bad thief, as Judas. We have said that the Holy Mass is the come from the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary; this is why Jesus Christ wants that every time we celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass, we do it in memory of him. However, we can say with groans that, while we renew the memory of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, many of those present renew the crime of the Jews and the executioners who attached them to the cross. But, to let you know better if you have the misfortune of being among those who dishonor our holy mysteries in this way, (I am going to) point out to you, my brethren, that among those who witnessed the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, there were three types: some only passed in front of the cross, without stopping and without entering into feelings of true pain, more insensitive than the most inanimate creatures. Others approached the place of torture, and considered all the circumstances of the passion of Jesus Christ; but it was only to make fun of it, to make it a subject of mockery and to outrage it with the most horrible blasphemies. Finally, a small number shed bitter tears to see so much cruelty exercised on the body of their God and their Savior. Now see which people you are. I will not speak of those who rush to hear a mass in a parish where they have some business, nor of those who only come half the time; who, during this time, go find a neighbor to drink a bottle; let's leave them aside, because they are people who live as if they were sure of having no soul to save; they have lost their faith, and with that, all is lost. But let's just talk about those who usually come there.

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I say 1° that many come there only to see and be seen, with a completely dissipated air, as you would go to a market, to a fair and, if I dare say it, to a ball. You stand there without modesty: you barely put both knees on the ground during the Elevation or Communion. Do you pray, my brethren..? alas! No; it is because you lack faith. Tell me, when you go to some people who are above you, to ask them for some favor, you are occupied with it all along the way; you enter with modesty, you bow to them deeply, you stand uncovered before them, you do not even think of sitting down; you have your eyes downcast, you only think about how to express yourself well and in the highest terms. If they miss you, you quickly apologize for your lack of education... If these people receive you with kindness, you feel joy born in your heart. Well! tell me, my brethren, must this not confuse you, seeing that you take so many precautions for some temporal good? while you come to church with a kind of disdain, contempt, before a God who died to save us, and who sheds his blood every (day) to obtain grace for you with his Father. What an affront, my brethren, is it not for Jesus Christ to see himself insulted by vile creatures? Alas! how many who, during Holy Mass, commit more sins than during the whole week. Some do not only think of the good Lord, others speak, while their hearts and minds are drowned, some in pride or the desire to please, others in impurity. 0 great God! (can it be) that they dare to name Jesus Christ, who, with them, is so holy and so pure!... How many others let all the people in and out the thoughts and desires that the demon wants to give them. How many have no difficulty in looking, in turning their heads, in laughing and talking, in sleeping as in their own bed, and perhaps even better. Alas! How many Christians leave the church with perhaps more than thirty or fifty more mortal sins than when they entered it! But, you will tell me, it is much better not to attend. — Do you know what to do?... Attend it and attend it properly, by making three sacrifices to God, I mean: that of your body, your mind and your heart. I say: our body, which must honor Jesus Christ through religious modesty. Our spirit, upon hearing the Holy Mass, (must) penetrate our nothingness and our unworthiness; avoiding all kinds of dissipation, pushing distractions away from him. We must consecrate our heart to Him, which is the offering that is most

pleasing to Him, since it is our heart that He so earnestly asks of us: “My son,” he says to us, “give me your heart. » Let us conclude, my brethren, by saying how unhappy we are when we hear Holy Mass poorly, since we (find) our disapproval where others find their salvation. Heaven grant that whenever we can, we attend holy mass; since the graces are so abundant there; and that we always bring as good dispositions as we can! and that, through this, we attract to ourselves all kinds of blessings in this world and in others... This is what I wish you.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On the mercy of God.

Erant autem appropinqwntes eipublicani elpeccatores, ut audirent illum. Publicans and sinners stood near Jesus Christ to listen to him. (S. Luke, xv, 1.)

The conduct of Jesus Christ during his mortal life shows us the greatness of his mercy for sinners. We see that they all come to keep him company; and he, far from repelling them or at least distancing himself from them, on the contrary, he takes all possible means to find himself among them, in order to attract them to his Father. He seeks them out through remorse of conscience [remords de conscience], he brings them back through his grace and wins them over through his loving ways. He treats them with so much kindness that he even defends them against the scribes and Pharisees who want to blame them, and who seem not to want to suffer them near Jesus Christ. He goes even further, he wants to justify the conduct he takes towards them, with a parable which depicts to them, as one cannot better, the greatness of his love for sinners, by telling them: “A good shepherd who had a hundred sheep, having lost one, he leaves all the others to run after the one who has gone astray, and, having found her, he places her on his shoulders to spare him the trouble of the journey; then, having brought it back to his fold, he invites all his friends to rejoice with him, at having found the sheep that he thought was lost. » He also adds this parable of a woman who, having ten drachmas and having lost one, lights her lamp to look for it in every corner of her house, and having found it, she invites all her friends to rejoice. “It is thus,” he said to them, “that all heaven rejoices at the return of a sinner who converts and does penance. I did not come for the righteous, but for sinners; those who are healthy do not need a doctor, but those who are sick do. » We see that Jesus Christ applies to himself these vivid images of the greatness of his mercy towards sinners. Ah! My brethren, what happiness for us to know that the mercy of God is infinite! what violent desire must we not feel born within us, to go and throw ourselves at the feet of a God who will receive us with so much joy? And to give you an idea, today I am going to show you: 1° the greatness of God's mercy towards the sinner; 2° what we must do, for our part, to deserve this happiness.

I. Yes, my brethren, everything is consoling, everything is engaging in the conduct that God has towards us. Although very guilty, his patience awaits us, his

E love invites us to come out of sin to return to him, his mercy receives us in his arms. Through patience, the prophet Isaiah tells us that the Lord waits for us to show us mercy. We have no sooner sinned than we deserve to be punished: Nothing, he tells us, is more (due) to sin than punishment; as soon as man has rebelled against God, all creatures demand vengeance, saying: Lord, do you want us to put to death this sinner who has insulted you? Do you want me, the sea said to him, to swallow him up in my abysses? The earth said to him: Lord, let me open my bowels to bring him down alive into hell. The air said to him: Lord, will you allow me to suffocate him? The fire said to him: Ah! Please, Lord, let it burn for me. And so, all other creatures cry out for vengeance. Thunder and lightning go to the throne of Jesus Christ to ask him for the power to crush and devour it. But no, resume this good Jesus, leave him on earth until the moment that my Father has resolved; perhaps I will have the happiness of seeing him converted. If this sinner strays further, this tender Father sheds tears, and does not cease to pursue him by his grace, giving birth in him to violent remorse of conscience [remords de conscience]. “0 God of mercies,” cries Saint Augustine, “still a sinner, I was moving further and further away from you, my steps and all my steps were like so many new

falls into evil, my passions were becoming ever more kindled, and yet you were patient and waited for me. 0 patience of my God! It has been so many years since I offended you, and you have not yet punished me: where can this long delay come from? Alas! Lord, it is that you wanted me to convert, and return to you through penance-" Is it really possible, M-F., that, despite the desire of the good Lord to save us, we should lose ourselves so voluntarily? Yes, my brethren, if we want to travel through the different ages of the world, we see everywhere the earth covered with the mercies of the Lord, and men enveloped in his benefits. No, my brethren, it is not the sinner who returns to God to ask for forgiveness; but it is God himself who runs after the sinner and brings him back to himself. Do you want a good example? See how he behaved with Adam. After his sin, instead of punishing him, as he deserved, for this revolt against his Creator, who had granted him so many privileges, who (had) adorned him with so many graces, destined for such a happy end, which was to be his friend and never to die... Adam, after his sin, fled from the presence of (God); but the Lord, like a desolate father who has lost his child, runs to look for him and calls to him as if weeping: "Adam, Adam, where are you? why do you flee the presence of your Creator? » He has so much desire to forgive him, that he barely gives him time to ask for forgiveness, to tell him that he forgives him, and that he will send him his Son, who will be born of a Virgin, and will repair the loss that sin has caused to him and to all his descendants, and that this repair would be done in an admirable (manner). Indeed, my brethren, without Adam's sin, we would never have had the happiness of having Jesus Christ as our Savior, nor of receiving him in holy communion, nor even of possessing him (in) our churches. During so many centuries that the Eternal Father remained without sending his Son to earth, he never ceased to renew these consoling prophecies.

masses, through the mouth of its patriarchs and its prophets. 0 charity, how great you are for sinners! Do you see, my brethren, the goodness of God for the sinner? Can we still despair of our forgiveness? Since the Lord shows so much desire to forgive us; If we remain in sin, then it is our fault. See the way he behaved towards Cain, after he had killed his brother? He will find him to bring him within himself, in order to be able to forgive him; because we must necessarily ask his forgiveness (if we want) that he gives it to us.. Ah! My God, is this too much? "Gain, Cain, what have you done? ask me for forgiveness so that I can forgive you. » Cain does not want to, he despairs of his salvation, he hardens himself in his sin. However, we see that the good Lord left him on earth for a long time, in order to give him time to convert, if he had wanted to. See again his mercy towards the world, when the crimes of men had covered the earth and had soaked it with the juice of infamous passions: the Lord saw himself forced to punish them; but, before coming to the execution, what precautions, what warnings, what delays! He threatens them for a long time (before) punishing them, in order to touch them, and make them come to their senses. Seeing that their crimes were still increasing, he sent them Noah, to whom he commanded to build an ark, and to spend a hundred years in it, and to tell all those who asked why he was building this, that it was the Lord who was going to make (perish) the whole world by a universal flood; but that, if they wanted to convert and do penance, he would change his decision. But seeing that all these warnings were of no use, when his threats were mocked, he was forced to punish them. However, we see that the Lord said that he repented of having created them: which shows us the greatness of his mercy. It is as if he had said: I would rather not have created you than to see myself forced to punish you. Tell me, my brethren, all God that he is, could he extend his mercy further? My brethren, this is how he awaits sinners to penance, and how he invites them to do so through the interior movements of his grace and through the voice of his ministers. See again how he behaves towards Nineveh, this great sinful city. Before punishing the inhabitants, he commanded his prophet Jonas to go, on his behalf, and announce to them that, in forty days, he was going to punish them. Jonah, instead of going to Nineveh, fled elsewhere. He wants to cross the sea; but, far from leaving the Ninevites without warning (before) punishing them, God works a miracle to preserve his prophet, for three days and three nights in the womb of a whale, which, at the end of three days, vomits him onto the earth. Then the Lord said to Jonah, "Go and tell the great city of Nineveh that in forty days it will perish. » He gives them no conditions. The prophet having left, announced

to Nineveh that in forty days she would perish. In this new world, everyone devotes themselves to penance and tears, from the peasant to the king. “Who knows,” said the king to them, “whether the Lord will not yet have pity on us. » The Lord, seeing them resort to penance, seemed to rejoice in having the pleasure of forgiving them. Jonah, seeing that the time had expired to punish them, withdrew from the city to wait for fire from heaven to fall upon it. Seeing that he did not fall: “Ah! Lord,” cries Jonas, “are you going to make me pass for a false prophet? Rather make me die. Ah! I know very well that you are too good, you only ask to forgive 1” — “Hey what! Jonah, said the Lord to him, would you like me to destroy so many people who have humbled themselves before me? Oh! no, no, Jonas, I wouldn't have the courage; on the contrary, I will love them and keep them. » This is precisely, my brethren, the conduct that Jesus Christ maintains towards us; he sometimes seems to want to punish us without mercy; at the slightest repentance, he forgives us and returns his friendship. See what he did, when he wanted to bring down fire from heaven on Sodom, Gomorrah and the neighboring cities! he seemed not to be able to resolve it without consulting his servant Abraham, (as if to) know what he should do. “Abraham,” said the Lord to him, “the crimes of Sodom and Gomorrah have ascended to my throne, I can no longer endure them: I will destroy them with the fire of heaven. » — “But Lord,” said Abraham, “are you going to punish the righteous with the sinners? » — “Oh no, no,” said the Lord to him. " - " Well! Abraham said to him, if there were thirty righteous people in Sodom, would you punish her, Lord? » — “No,” he said, “if I find thirty, I pardon the whole city in favor of the righteous.” » He went up to ten. Alas! strange thing! in such a large city, there were not ten. You see that the Lord seemed to take pleasure in consulting his servant on what to do. Seeing himself forced to punish them, he quickly sent an angel to tell Lot to go out, him and all his family, so as not to punish them with the guilty. Ah! my God, what patience! what delays before getting to the execution! Do you want to know what is the sin that forced the

Healer to bring down so many punishments on the earth? Alas! it is this cursed sin of impurity with which the earth was completely covered. Do you want to see how (God) is slow to punish? see what he did to punish Jericho. He ordered Joshua to bring the ark of the covenant, which was an instrument that showed the greatness of the Lord's mercy. He wanted it to be carried by the priests, who are the depositaries of his mercies. He ordered them to go around the walls of the city for seven days, sounding the same trumpets that were used to announce the year of jubilee, which was a year of reconciliation and forgiveness. However, we see (that) these same trumpets who announced their forgiveness to them, brought down the walls of the city, to show us that if we do not want to benefit from the graces that the good God [le bon Dieu] is willing to grant us, we only become more guilty; but if we have the good fortune to convert, he experiences such great joy that he tells us that he comes more quickly to grant us our forgiveness than a mother rescues her child from the madman. We have just seen, AI. F., that from the beginning of the world, until the coming of the Messiah, there is only mercy, grace and benefits. However, we can say that, under the law of grace, the benefits with which he has filled the world are even more abundant and much more precious. What mercy in the person of the Eternal Father, to have only one Son and to consent to make him lose his life to save us all! Alas! My brethren, if we traveled through the whole passion of Jesus Christ with a grateful heart, how many tears would we not shed! Seeing the tender Jesus in his manger, and the rest...

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We see that the mercy of the Father cannot go further, since, having only one Son, he sacrifices him to save us, this Son, who is all that he holds most dear. But if we consider the love of the Son, what shall we say of it? He so willingly consents to suffer so many torments, and even death, to procure for us the happiness of heaven. Alas, my brethren, what did he not do for us during the days of his mortal life? Not content with calling us to himself by his grace, and providing us with all the means to sanctify ourselves, see how he runs after his lost sheep; see how he travels through the cities and countryside to seek them, and bring them back to the place of his mercy; see how he leaves his Apostles to go and wait for the Samaritan woman near

Jacob's well, where he knew she would come; he himself warns her, he begins to speak to her, so that his language full of gentleness, united with his grace, touches and consoles her; he asks her for water to drink, so that she herself asks him for something much more precious, which (is) his grace. He was so happy to have won this soul that (when) his Apostles asked him to take some food: “Oh no,” he said to them. » He seemed to be saying to them: “Ah! no, no, I don't think about the nourishment of the body, so much joy do I have at having won a soul for my Father! » See him in the house of Simon the leper; it’s not to eat there that he goes there; but he knew that a sinful Madeleine would come there: that, my brethren, is what brings him to this feast. Consider the joy he shows on his face when he sees Madeleine at his feet, who waters them with her tears and wipes them with her hair, throughout the meal.

But the Savior, for his part, repays it well; he empties his grace into his heart with full hands. See how he defends himself against those who are scandalized by it. He goes so far that not content with forgiving her all her sins, by casting out the seven demons she had in her heart, he still wants to choose her for one of his wives; (he wants) that she accompanies him throughout the course of his passion and that, in the world where this Gospel will be preached, people will tell what she has just done towards him; he does not want to speak of his sins, because they are already all forgiven by the application of his adorable blood, which he must shed. See him take the road to Capernaum to go (find) another sinner in his office; it was Saint Matthew, it is to make him a zealous apostle. Ask him why he is taking the road to Jericho, and he will tell you: that there is a man named Zacchaeus, who is considered a public sinner, and that he wants to go and see if he can save him. In order to make him a perfect penitent, he does like a good father who has lost his child, he calls him: “Zacchaeus,” he shouts to him, “come down; because it is with you that I want to stay today, I have come to grant you your grace. » It is as if he were saying to him: Zacchaeus, leave this pride and this attachment to the goods of this world; come down, that is, choose humility and poverty. To make this clear, he said to all those who were with him: “This house receives salvation today. » — 0 my God, how great is your mercy for sinners! Ask him again why he passed through this public square. “Ah! he will tell you, it is that I am waiting for this adulterous woman who must be brought to have her stoned; and I will defend him agains her enemies, touch her and convert her. » Do you see this tender Savior near this woman, how he behaves, how he defends her? Seeing her surrounded by this mob who were only waiting for the signal to knock her out, the Savior seemed to say to them: “For a moment, let me act, then you will act in your turn. » He lowers himself to the earth, he writes, not his sentence of condemnation, but of absolution. Getting up, he looks at them. Does he not seem to be saying to them: “Now that this woman is forgiven, she is no longer a sinner; but a penitent saint; Who among you is equal to her? If you are without sin, cast the first stone. » All these famous hypocrites, seeing that Jesus Christ was reading their conscience, the oldest, who undoubtedly were the most guilty, withdrew first, and so did the others. Jesus Christ seeing her alone, said to her kindly: “Woman, who are those who condemned you? » as if he had said to her: After I have forgiven you, who would be the one who would have dared to condemn you? “Ah! Lord, this sinner replied, no one. » — “Well! go and sin no more. » See again what he feels when he sees this woman who, for twelve years, had had an issue of blood. She humbly throws herself at his feet; “for,” she said, “if (I) can only touch the edge of his cloak, I am sure of being healed.” » Jesus Christ turning with an air of kindness: “Who is it that touches me? Come on, my child, have confidence, he said to her, you are healed in soul and body. » See him, how he takes compassion on the sorrow of this father who presents to him his son, possessed by the demon from his childhood... See him cry as he approaches the city of Jerusalem- lem, who was the figure of sinners who no longer want to let their hearts be touched. See how he sheds tears over his eternal loss. " Oh! how many times, ungrateful Jerusalem, have I wanted to bring you back into the bosom of my mercy, as a hen gathers her young under her wings; but you didn't want to. 0 ungrateful Jerusalem 1 who killed the prophets and put to death the servants of God! Oh! if, at least, you still wanted today to receive your grace that I have come to bring you! » Do you see, my brethren, how the good Lord mourns the loss of our souls when he sees that we do not want to convert? From all that we see that Jesus Christ (has done) to save us, how could we despair of

his mercy, since his greatest pleasure is to forgive us; so that as our sins are multiplied, if we will leave them and repent of them, we are sure of our forgiveness. When our faults equal the searches of the forests, we will be forgiven, if our heart is truly contrite. To convince you, here is a good example. We read in history that a young man, named Theophilus, who was a priest, was accused before his bishop, and deposed of a dignity with which he was endowed. This affront brought him to such fury that he called the demon to his aid. This evil spirit appeared to him in an ordinary form, promising to make him recover his dignity if he wanted to immediately renounce Jesus and Mary. He did so, being blinded by fury, and gave the demon a renunciation in a writing made by his own hand. The following day, the bishop having recognized his fault, called him into the church, asked his forgiveness for having believed too easily what had been said about him, and restored him.

in his dignity. At this he found himself in great embarrassment; he remained for a long time torn by the remorse of his conscience. It occurred to him (in thought) to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin, seeing that he was so unworthy to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for forgiveness himself. He went before an image of the Blessed Virgin, begging her to obtain forgiveness from her divine Son; and for this he fasted forty days and prayed continually. After forty days, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, telling him that she had obtained his forgiveness. (He was) well consoled by this grace; but he still had a very deep thorn to pull: it was this note that he had given to the demon. He thought that the good God [le bon Dieu] would not refuse this grace to his Mother; he continued to pray to her for three days, and when he awoke, he found his note on his chest. Full of gratitude, he goes to church, and, in front of everyone, he publishes the grace that the good God [le bon Dieu] had granted him through his holy Mother. Let us do the same: if we find ourselves too guilty to ask the good Lord for forgiveness, let us turn to the Blessed Virgin, and we are sure of our forgiveness. But, to encourage you to have great confidence in the mercy of God which is infinite, here is an example given to us by the Gospel and which shows us the mercy of God to the infinite: it is that of the prodigal son, who, after having asked his father for all the good that could come to him, went to a foreign country. He squandered all his wealth there by living like a libertine and a debauchee. His bad behavior reduced him to such misery that he found himself too happy to have the remains of the pigs, even though they did not give him as much as he wanted. Reflecting one day on the greatness of his misery, he said to his master, in whom he was to keep these swine: Give me at least what the dirtiest animals eat. What misery, my brethren, is comparable to this? however no one gave him any. Seeing himself forced to die of hunger, and deeply touched by his unfortunate state, he opened his eyes and remembered that he had such a good father who loved him so much. He resolves to return to his father's house, where the simplest servants had more bread than they needed. He said to himself: “I did a lot of harm by abandoning my father who loved me so much; I wasted all my good by leading a bad life; I'm all torn

3rd Sunday after Pentecost — Same Subject (2nd Sermon)

and all dirty, how will my father be able to recognize me as his son? But I will throw myself at his feet, I will water them with my tears; I will ask him to put me only among his servants. » There he gets up and leaves, completely occupied with the unhappy state to which his libertinage had reduced him. His father, who had been mourning his loss for a long time, seeing him coming from afar, forgot his great age and the bad life (of this son), he threw himself on his neck to kiss him. This poor child, astonished at his father's love for him: “Ah! my father,” he cries, “I have sinned against you and against the city. I no longer deserve to be called your son; just put me among your servants. » — “No, no, my son,” cries the father, full of joy at having the happiness of finding his son whom he thought lost; no, my son, everything is forgotten, we can only think of rejoicing. Let someone bring him his first robe to put it on, put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet; let them kill the fatted calf and rejoice; for my son was dead and is raised; he was lost and is found. »

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Beautiful figure, my brethren, of the greatness of God's mercy for the most miserable sinners! Indeed, as soon as we have the misfortune of sinning, we distance ourselves from God, and we reduce ourselves, by following our passions, to a state more miserable than the swine which are the dirtiest animals. Oh my God! that sin is something awful! how can it be committed? But miserable as we are, as soon as we make the resolution to convert, at the first proof of conversion, the bowels of his mercy are touched with compassion. This tender Savior runs, by his grace, in front of sinners, he embraces them, favoring them with the most delicious consolations. Indeed, a sinner never experiences more pleasure than in the moment when he leaves sin to give himself to the good God [le bon Dieu]; it seems to him that nothing can stop him; neither prayer, nor penance, nothing seems too hard to him. A delicious moment! how happy we would be if we had the good fortune to understand it! But, alas, we do not correspond to grace, and then these happy moments disappear. Jesus Christ said (to the sinner) through the mouth of his ministers: “Let this Christian who is converted be clothed with his first robe which is the grace of baptism which he has lost; let him be clothed with Jesus Christ, with his justice, with his virtues and with all his merits. » This, my brethren, is the way in which Jesus Christ treats us when we have the happiness of leaving sin to give ourselves to him. Ah! My brethren, what a source of confidence for a sinner, although very guilty, to know that God's mercy is infinite!
8

IL No, my brethren, it is not the greatness of our sins, nor their number, which should frighten us; but only the dispositions that we must have. Here, my brethren, here is another example which will show you that, even though we are guilty, we are sure of our forgiveness, if we want to ask the good Lord. We read in history that a great prince, in his last illness, was attacked by a terrible temptation to distrust the goodness and mercy of God. The priest who was assisting him at that moment, seeing that he was losing confidence, did everything he could to inspire him with great confidence, telling him that the good Lord has never refused forgiveness to anyone who asked him for it. “No, no,” said the sick man, “there is no more forgiveness for me, I have done too much harm. » The priest, seeing that there were no more resources, began to pray. At that moment, the good Lord put into his mouth these words that the holy King-Prophet uttered before dying. “Prince,” he said to him, “listen to the penitent prophet; you are a sinner like him, say sincerely with him: Lord, you will have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi], because my sins are very great, and it is precisely the greatness of my sins which will be the motive which will prompt you to forgive me. » These words, the prince returning as if from a deep sleep, stops for a moment transported with joy, and heaving a deep sigh: “Ah Lord, it is indeed for me that these words were pronounced! Yes, my God, it is precisely because I have done much evil that you will have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi]! » He confesses and receives all his sacraments while shedding torrents of tears; he joyfully makes the sacrifice of his life, and dies holding his crucifix in his hands which he waters with his tears. Indeed, my brethren, what are our sins, if we compare them to the mercy of God? it's a grain of grain in front of a mountain. 0 my God! how can we consent to be damned, since it costs so little to save ourselves and Jesus Christ so desires our salvation?... However, my brethren, if the good God [le bon Dieu] is so good in waiting for us and receiving us, we must not tire of his patience: if he calls us, if he invites us to come to him, we must go to meet him; if he receives us, we must remain faithful to him. Alas! My brethren, it has been perhaps more than five or six years since the good Lord called us; why do we remain in our sins? He is always present to offer us grace, why not leave sin? Indeed, my brethren, Saint Ambrose tells us: “The good God [le bon Dieu], all good and all merciful as he is, he never forgives us, if we do not ask him for forgiveness, if we do not unite our will to that of Jesus Christ. » But what will, my brethren, does God ask of us? Here it is. It is a will which corresponds to the holy eagerness of his mercy, which makes us say as to Saint Paul: “You have heard what my conduct and my actions were, before God gave me the grace to convert. I persecuted the Church of Jesus Christ with so much cruelty that I am horrified by it myself every time I think about it. Who could have believed that this was the moment that Jesus Christ chose to call me to himself? It was at this moment that I was completely surrounded by a light; I heard a voice saying to me: Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? » Alas! My

brethren, how many times has the good Lord not given us the same grace? how many times in the poached, or ready to sin, have we not heard an inner voice which shouted to us: “Ah! my son, why do you want to make me suffer and lose your soul [perdre son âme]? » Here is a good example. We read in the story that a child in anger killed his father. He felt such great regret that he continually seemed to hear a voice crying out to him: “Ah! my son, why did you kill me? » This was so sensitive to him that he himself went to the courts. Not only, my brethren, we must leave sin because the good God [le bon Dieu] is so good as to forgive us; but we must still cry with gratitude. We have a fine example of this in the person of young Tobit led and brought back by the angel; which shows us how much it pleases God when (we) thank him. We read in the Gospel that this woman who, for twelve years, had suffered from an issue of blood, having been healed by Jesus Christ, in gratitude, in order to show everyone the goodness of God towards her, had a beautiful statue placed near her house, representing a woman with Jesus Christ, who had healed her. Several authors tell us that there came an herb unknown to everyone, and that as soon as it rose to the fringe (of the dress) of the statue, it cured all kinds of illnesses. See Saint Matthew: in order to thank Jesus Christ for the grace he had given him, he invited him to his home and did him all the honors he could do him. See the Samaritan leper; seeing himself healed, he retraced his steps, throwing himself at the feet of Jesus Christ to thank him for the grace he had just given him. Saint Augustine tells us that the main action of thanksgiving is that your soul is sincerely grateful

Ehealth towards the goodness of God, by giving oneself to him with all one's affections. See the Savior, when He had healed the ten lepers, seeing that there was only one who returned to thank Him: “And the other nine,” Jesus Christ said to them, “were not they also healed?” as if he had said to them: Why don't the others come and thank me? Saint Bernard tells us that we must be very grateful to the good God [le bon Dieu], because this commits Him to granting us many other graces. Alas I My brethren, what thanks do we have to give to God for having created us, for having redeemed us by his death and passion, for having given birth to us in the bosom of his Church, while so many others (live and die) outside his bosom. Yes, my brethren, since the goodness and mercy (of God) are infinite, let us therefore try to take advantage of them, and, through this, we will have the happiness of pleasing him, and of preserving our souls in his grace: which will give us the happiness of going to enjoy his holy presence with all the blessed in heaven. This is what I wish you.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On the mercy of God towards the Sinner.

Erant autem appropinqwntes ci publicani et peccatores, ut audirent illum The publicans and sinners stood near Jesus Christ to listen to him. (S, Luke, xv, 1.)

Who could understand the greatness of the Lord's mercy towards these sinners? His grace will seek them out in the midst of their disorders, bringing them to his feet. He makes himself their protector against the Scribes and the Pharisees who cannot tolerate them, and he justifies his conduct towards them by the parable of a good shepherd who, of a hundred sheep, having lost one, abandons his whole flock to go look for the one that goes astray, and, having found her, the load on his shoulders, brings her back to the fold, where he no sooner arrives, than he invites his friends to come and share, with him, his joy at having found the sheep he thought was lost. He adds to this parable that of a woman who, with ten drachmas, having lost one, lights her lamp to look for it in the nearest place.

The darkness of his house, and who, having finally recovered it, testifies to the same joy as the good shepherd at having found his lost sheep. The Savior of the world, applying to himself these vivid images of his mercy for sinners, says that all heaven will rejoice in this way for a sinner who converts and does penance. If our conversion causes so much joy to the whole heavenly court, let us hasten to convert. However guilty we may be, however disordered our life may be, let us go sincerely to God, and we are sure

of our forgiveness. To engage you in this, I will show you how great is the mercy of God towards sinners, and then what the sinner must do to correspond to it.

I. Everything is engaging and consoling in the conduct that the mercy of God maintains towards sinners: it awaits them, it invites them and receives them to penance. “God,” the prophet Isaiah tells us, “waits for the sinner, and this, by a pure effect of his goodness, because the sinner, as soon as he has fallen into error, deserves to be punished. » Nothing is more due to sin than punishment. As soon as this miserable sinner has revolted against his God, all creatures demand revenge for his revolt. Lord, they say to him, like the servants of this father of the family, (allow) that we go and uproot from the field of your church this tare which spoils and dishonors the good grain. Do you want me, the sea said to him, to swallow him up in my abysses? The earth: that I open myself to bring it down alive into hell? The air: that I suffocate it? The fire: let me burn it. Water: let me drown him. But what does the Father of mercies answer? No, no, he said, these tares can become good grain; this sinner can be converted. Let this sinner go astray, he says nothing. If he moves away from him, if he rushes to his ruin, he suffers it. “0 Lord! O God of mercies! still a sinner, I drifted further and further away every day, says Saint Augustine; all my steps and all my steps were so many falls into new precipices, my passions were always kindled more and more; However, you had patience. 0 infinite patience of my God! It has been so many years since I offended you, and you have not yet punished me. Where does this come from? Ah! I know him now; it is because you wanted me to convert and return to you through penance. » Does this God of mercy want to punish men at the time of the flood because of the horrible crimes of which they were guilty? He only does it with regret, says the Scripture. This repentance that God testifies, says Saint Ambrose, shows us the enormity of the crimes with which men had stained the earth. However, he only says: “I will destroy them.” » Why speak as if it were something to come? did his wisdom lack means? No, undoubtedly; but he speaks of this punishment as something to come, in order to give the culprits time to disarm his anger. He warns them of the misfortune with which he threatens them one hundred and twenty years before it arrives, in order to give them time to avert it through penance. He sends Noah to them to preach this penance to them; to assure them that if they change their lives, he himself will change his resolution. The holy patriarch remains a hundred years building this ark; so that men, seeing this new building, ask the reason and come to themselves. How many delays! how many discounts I God awaits them

Epenance. Finally they wear out his patience. This is how God still awaits penance today for this miserable sinner, who constantly (sees) die before his eyes an infinite number of the most frightening deaths. Some are thrown into the waters, others crushed by lightning from heaven; others, kidnapped in the prime of their life; others, torn from the bosom of pleasures and a flourishing fortune. This God of goodness and tenderness, who eagerly desires the conversion of the sinner, allows these rumors to spread in different parts of the world, like a trumpet which announces to all sinners to be ready, that their turn will soon come, and that if they do not take advantage of these examples to come to their senses, alas! perhaps, alasI in a short time they will serve as an example to others. But these miserable sinners (are) similar to those men of whom Scripture speaks, who were in no way moved by the threats that God made to them through the mouth of the holy patriarch Noah. “Ah! sinner, cries a holy Father, why do you not surrender to the voice of your God who calls you? he stretches out his hand to snatch you from this abyss into which your sins have thrown you; come back, he promises you your forgiveness. » 0 how sad it is, my brethren, not to know his deplorable state! Let us therefore surrender to the voice of him who only calls us to heal us of these ills with which our poor soul is disfigured. 2° We say that God himself invites the sinner to penance. “0 Jerusalem, you have been an infidel, you have prostituted yourself to the impure love of creatures; nevertheless, return to me and I will receive you. »Thus spoke the Lord, through the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, to a sinner of the Old Testament. Let's listen to what we are told again this divine Savior. “Sinners, you have grown weary in the voice of iniquity, yet come to me and I will relieve you. Come and taste and experience how gentle the Lord (is), how light his yoke, how loving his commandments. » 0 the good Shepherd of our souls Inon content to call back his lost sheep, he goes looking for them. See him, overcome with weariness at Jacob's well,

pursuing one of his sheep, in the person of the Samaritan woman. See him in the house of Simon the leper, (pursuing her) in the person of Madeleine: for if she came to find the Savior in the house of this Pharisee, it was only by an attraction of grace which touched her heart and guided her steps. See it in Jericho, making Zacchaeus, a public sinner, a perfect penitent. See again his bowels moved over all sinners in general. “I want mercy and not sacrifice,” he said; I have come to call the sinner and not the righteous. » “How many times,” he cries, “O ungrateful Jerusalem, have I not wanted to gather your little ones under the wings of my mercy, as a hen gathers her little chicks under her own, and you were not willing. » Is it not still this same grace which, every day, urges and solicits the sinner to convert? 3° I say that if the sinner is happy enough to return to God, he will receive him in penance and forgive him without delay. Yes, my brethren, if this sinner leaves his crimes of iniquity and returns sincerely to God, (God) is ready to forgive him. Let us see it in the most consoling of all the examples that the Gospel offers us, which is that of the prodigal son. He had squandered all his wealth by living like a libertine and a debauchee. His bad life reduced him to such great misery

He was happy to feed on the remains of the pigs; however no one gave him any. Finally, deeply touched by his misery, he turns his eyes on his unhappy state: he resolves to return to his father's house, where the lowest of the slaves was infinitely better than him. Here he is leaving. He is still very far away when his father sees him. Seeing him, he is touched with compassion, forgets his great age, runs to meet him, throws himself around his neck and kisses him. “Ah my father, what are you doing? I have sinned against heaven and before you. I no longer deserve to be called yours (they, just put me among the number of your slaves." - "No, no, my son," said this good father, "I forget all the past. Let someone bring his first robe to put on him, let them put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, let them kill the calf, let them rejoice; my son was dead, he is resurrected; he was lost, he is found." That's it. figure, and this is the reality as soon as the sinner makes the resolution to return to God and to convert, at his first step, mercy is touched with compassion; it runs before him, by warning him by its grace, it kisses him, by favoring him with its spiritual consolations, it restores him to his first state, by forgiving him all his past disturbances. I only used it to offend you. No matter, this good Father will say, I want to give back to this converted sinner his first robe by clothing him with Jesus Christ, with his grace, with his virtues and with his merits.

sow, must we not return to God, when we have had the misfortune of abandoning Him by following the corrupt desires of our heart? Can we fear being repelled, after so many signs of tenderness and love for the greatest sinners? No, my brethren, let us no longer delay returning to God; the present and future times must make us tremble. First, the present tense; if unfortunately we are in a state of mortal sin, we are in imminent danger of dying there. The Holy Spirit tells us: “He who exposes himself to danger will perish. » Thus, by living in hatred of God, we have every reason to fear that death will surprise us. Since God offers you his grace today, why don't you take advantage of it? To say that there is no hurry, that you have time, is that not, my brethren, reasoning like madmen? See, what are you capable of when you are sick? Alas, nothing at all; you cannot even do the right act of contrition, because you are so absorbed in your sufferings that you do not think at all of your salvation. Well, my brethren, are we not too unfortunate to wait until death to convert? Do at least, for your poor soul, what you do for your body which is however only a heap of rottenness and which, in a few moments, will be the pasture of the vilest animals. When you are in danger-

4th Sunday after Pentecost — On Hope

seriously injured, do you wait six months or a year to apply the remedies that you believe are necessary to cure you? When you are attacked by a ferocious beast, do you wait until you are half devoured to cry for help? Do you not immediately implore the help of your neighbors? Why, my brethren, do you not act

Not the same, when you see your poor soul defiled and disfigured by sin, reduced under the tyranny of demons? Why do you not immediately employ the assistance of heaven, and do not resort to penance? Yes,

my brethren, whatever great sinners you may be, (you would) not want to die in sin. Well! since you want to leave sin one day, why don't you leave it today, since God gives you the time and the graces for this? Do you believe that in the future, God will be more willing to forgive you, and that your bad habits will be less difficult to break? No, no, my brethren, the more you delay your return to God, the more difficult your conversion will be. Time, which weakens everything, only strengthens our evil inclinations.

II. Maybe you reassure yourself about the future. Alas I My brethren, make no mistake: the judgments of God are so formidable that you cannot postpone your conversion for a single minute, without exposing yourself to being lost forever. The Holy Spirit tells us, through the mouth of the Sage, “that the Lord will surprise the sinner in his anger. » Jesus Christ himself tells us “that he will come like a thief in the night, who arrives at the moment when we do not think about it. » He also repeats these words to us: “Watch and pray continually, lest when I come I find you sleeping. » Jesus Christ wants to show us with these words that we must constantly ensure that our soul is not found in a state of sin, when death strikes us. Let us, my brethren, do like the wise virgins, who stocked up on oil to await the arrival of the bridegroom, so that they would be ready to leave when he called them. Likewise, let us make provision for good works, before God calls us before his tribunal. Let us not imitate those foolish virgins, who waited for the bridegroom to arrive to fetch oil; when they arrived, the door was closed; in vain they begged the bridegroom to open the door to them; he replied that he did not know them. Sad, but very sensitive figure, my brethren, of the sinner who postpones his return to God day by day. Arriving at death, he would still like to take advantage of this moment, but (it is) too late, there is no longer any remedy. Yes, my brethren, the mere uncertainty of the moment when God will summon us to appear before him, should make us tremble and commit us not to lose a single moment to ensure our salvation. Besides, my brethren, do we know the number of sins that God wants to suffer from us, the measure of the graces that he wants to grant us, and finally, how far his patience must go? Should we not fear that the first sin we commit will put the seal on our reprobation! Since we want to save ourselves, why delay any longer? how many angels and millions of men, who have committed only one mortal sinI However, this one sin will be the author that they will suffer throughout all eternity. No, my brethren, thieves are not punished equally; some grow old in banditry; others, at the first crime, are surprised and punished. Should we not fear that the same thing will happen to us? It is true that you reassure yourself that God does not punish you, although you continually offend Him. But also, perhaps it is the first sin you commit that he is waiting to strike you

And rush you into the abyss. See a blind man walking towards a precipice, the last step he takes is no greater than the first; however, it is this step that throws him into the precipice. No, my brethren, to fall into hell, it is not necessary to commit great crimes, it is enough to continue living away from the sacraments to be lost forever. Come, my brethren, let us not wear out God's patience any longer, let us hasten to correspond to his goodness, which only wants our happiness. But let us see, in an even more particular way, what we must do to correspond to the designs that God's mercy has for us. We say that if the mercy of God awaits the sinner in penitence, his patience must not be tired; she calls us, she invites us, we must go to meet her; she receives us and forgives us, we must remain faithful to her. These are duties of recognition that she asks of us. Yes, God waits and suffers the sinner. But, alas, how many sinners, instead of taking advantage of his patience, to return to themselves, add sin upon sin? For ten, twenty years, God has been waiting for this miserable sinner to penance; but, let him tremble, there is only a small net by which mercy suspends the execution of his vengeance Ah! miserable sinner, will you always despise the riches of his patience, his goodness and his long tolerance? Is it because God expects you to do penance that you will never do it? On the contrary, says the holy Apostle, is it not this divine goodness which should encourage you to no longer delay. Yet, he said, through the hardness and impenitence of your heart you lay up for yourself treasures do wrath for the day of the manifestation of the Lord. Indeed, what harshness is like that of a man who is not softened by the gentleness and tenderness of a God who, for so many years, has been waiting for him to penance? it is therefore the sinner alone who is the cause of his loss. Yes, God did everything he had to do for his salvation,

he gave him the grace to know him, he taught him to discern good from evil, he showed him the riches of his heart to attract him to himself, he even threatened him with the rigors of his judgment to encourage him to convert; If therefore the sinner dies in impenitence, he can only blame himself. Let us take advantage, my brethren, of the mercy that God gives us to expect penance. Ah Ine let's wear out his patience more with continual conversion delays. 2° We say that God's mercy calls us, we must go to meet it. God, says Saint Ambrose, undertakes to forgive us; but our will must be united with that of God; he wants to save us, we must want it too, because one of his wills only has its effect jointly united with the other: that of God begins the work, leads it and consummates it; and that of man must contribute to the accomplishment of his designs. We must be in the same disposition as Saint Paul at the beginning of his conversion, as he teaches us in his epistle to the Galatians. “You have heard of my criminal conduct and actions. Before God gave me the grace to convert, I persecuted the Church of God in such a cruel way that I am horrified every time I think about it; who would have believed that divine mercy would have chosen this moment to call me to it? It was for then that

I saw myself surrounded by a brilliant light, and I heard a voice saying to me: Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? I am your Savior and your God, against whom you turn your rage and your persecutions. » Yes, my brethren, we can say that what happened once, in such a striking way, to Saint Paul, still happens every day in favor of the sinner. His grace seeks him and pursues him, even when this wretch offends him. If he wants to confess the truth, he will be forced to admit that every time he is ready to do evil, the voice of God is heard in the depths of his heart, which seems to oppose his criminal designs. What should this sinner do? he must obey the voice of heaven, and say like the holy man Job, “Lord, you have numbered my steps in my errors; but here I come again to you, deign to have mercy on me. 3° We say that if God receives the sinner and forgives him, this sinner must remain faithful to Him. No more relapses into his disorders: he must completely renounce the sins which have been forgiven him; to no longer be a burden to divine mercy, which condemns fickle conversions as much as it rejoices in those which are solid and persevering; he must groan for the rest of his days, for having waited so long to give himself to God; he must continually bless the name of the Lord, for having manifested in him his infinite mercy, by snatching him from this abyss into which his sins had precipitated him. Such must be the feelings of a truly converted sinner. We have just seen how great is the mercy of God; so, whatever sinner we may be, let us never despair of our salvation, because the goodness of God infinitely surpasses our malice. But also let's not abuse it; “for,” says the Prophet, “divine mercy is for those who fear it and not for those who despise it. » The righteous must hope in the mercy of God; but he must persevere, so that she recovers his rights in him by rewarding his merits. The sinner must likewise hope in the mercy of God; but let him do penance. In order for our conversion to be sincere, we must join hope to penance: because to do penance without hoping is the share of demons, and to hope without doing penance is the presumption of the libertine. Happy, my brethren, if we correspond to the care, the eagerness and the graces that God never ceases to lavish on us to bring about our salvation! What I wish for you.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On Hope.

Diiiges Dominum Deum iuum. You will love the Lord your God. (S. Matthew, xxn, 37.)

§ It is true, my brethren, that Saint Augustine tells us that when there was no heaven to hope for, no hell to fear, he would (not only) allow us to love the good God [le bon Dieu], because he is infinitely lovable and deserves to be loved; However, the good Lord, to encourage us to attach ourselves to him and to love him above all things, promises us an eternal reward. If we fulfill with dignity such a beautiful function which brings all the happiness of man on earth, we (prepare) our happiness and our glory in heaven. If faith teaches us that God sees everything, and that he is witness to all that we do and suffer, the virtue of hope makes us endure (our sorrows) with complete submission to his holy will, with the thought that we will be rewarded

for it throughout eternity. We also see that it was this beautiful virtue which sustained the martyrs in the midst of their torments, the solitary ones in the guers of their penances and the infirm and sick saints in their illnesses. Yes, my brethren, if faith discovers God present to us everywhere, hope makes us do everything we do with the sole aim of pleasing the good God [le bon Dieu] with the happy thought of an eternal reward. Since, my brethren, this virtue softens our ills so much, let us all see together what this beautiful and precious virtue of hope consists of. If, my brethren, we have the happiness of knowing by faith, that there is a God who is our Creator, our Savior and our sovereign Good, who created us only to know him, love him, serve him and possess him; hope teaches us that, although unworthy of this happiness, we can hope for it through the merits of Jesus Christ. To make our actions worthy of being rewarded, my brethren, we need three things, as follows: faith, which makes us see God present; hope, which makes us do them with the sole aim of pleasing him, and love, which attaches us to him as to our sovereign Good. Yes, my brethren, we will never know the degree of glory that our action will bring us in heaven, if we do it purely for the good Lord; even the saints who are in heaven do not understand it. Here is a very striking example. We read in the life of Saint Augustine, that writing to Saint Jerome to ask him what expression should be used to better convey the greatness of the happiness which the saints enjoy in heaven; in the moment that he put, according to his custom, at the beginning of all his letters: “Hail in Jesus Christ our Lord,” his room was illuminated with an extraordinary light which was more beautiful than the sun at midday and very fragrant; he was so charmed by it that he almost died of pleasure. In

At the same moment, he heard a voice coming out of this light which said to him: “Ah! my dear friend Augustine, you believe I am still on earth, thanks to God, I am in heaven. You want to ask me what term you could use to better convey the happiness enjoyed by the saints, know, my dear friend, that this happiness is so great and so above all that a creature can think, that it would be easier for you to count all the stars that are in the firmament, to put the water of all the seas in a vial, and to hold the whole earth in your hand, than to be able to understand the happiness of the least of the blessed in the sky. What happened to the Queen of Sheba happened to me; she had conceived a great idea of ■■King Solomon from the rumor of his reputation; but after having seen for herself the beautiful order which reigned in her palace, the unparalleled magnificence, the knowledge and knowledge of this king, she was so astonished and so delighted, that she returned home saying that all that had been said to her was nothing compared to what she had seen herself. I did the same for the beauty of heaven and the happiness enjoyed by the saints, I believed I had understood something of these beauties which are contained in heaven and of the happiness which the saints enjoy there; despite all the most sublime thoughts that I have been able to produce, all this is nothing compared to this happiness which is the share of the blessed. » We read in the life of Saint Catherine of Siena, that the good God [le bon Dieu] made (her) see something of the beauty of heaven and its happiness. She was so delighted that she fell into ecstasy. Having come to herself, her confessor asked her what the good Lord had made her see. She told him that the good Lord had made him see what- what about the beauty of heaven and the happiness that the saints enjoy there; but that it was impossible to say the least thing about it, as it surpassed everything we can think of. Well! My brethren, this is where our good actions lead us if we do them with the aim of pleasing God; these are the goods that the virtue of hope makes us desire and expect. 2° We have said that the virtue of hope consoles us and supports us in the trials that the good God [le bon Dieu] sends us. We have a fine example of this in the person of the holy man Job, on his dunghill, covered in ulcers from his feet to his head. He had lost all his children, who had been crushed under the ruins of his house. He himself saw himself dragged from his bed onto a dunghill in the street corner, abandoned by everyone; his poor body was completely covered in rot, the worms were eating him alive, he was obliged to remove them with pieces of broken pots; insulted even by his wife who, instead of consoling him, overwhelmed him with insults, saying to him: “Do you see, your God, that he goes out with so much fidelity? do you see how he rewards you? therefore ask him for death, at least you will be freed from your ills. » His best friends only seemed to come to see him to increase his pain. However, despite this pitiful state to which he is reduced, he still has hope in

God. “No, my God,” he said, “I will never stop hoping in you, even if you took my life, I would still hope in you and have great confidence in your charity. Why, my God, would I want to become discouraged and abandon myself to despair? I will accuse before you my sins which are the cause (of my evils); but I hope that you yourself will be my Savior.

My hope is that you will one day reward me for the evils I endure for your love. » This, my brethren, is what we can call a true hope: since, despite the fact that it seemed to him that all the wrath of God had fallen on him, he still hoped in God. Without examining why he suffered so much, he is content only to say that it is his sins which are the cause. Do you see, my brethren, the great benefits that the virtue of hope provides us? Everyone finds him unhappy and he alone, on his dunghill, abandoned by his family and despised by others, finds himself happy because he puts all his trust in God. Ah! if, in our sorrows, our sorrows and our illnesses, we had this great confidence in God, what good things we would gather for heaven! Alas! how blind we are, my brethren! If instead of despairing in our miseries, we had this firm hope that the good God [le bon Dieu] sends us all this as so many means to make us deserve heaven, with what joy we would not suffer them! But, you will ask me, what does this word mean: hope? Here he is, my brethren. It's longing for something that should make us happy in the other life; it is to ardently desire deliverance from the evils of this life, and to desire the possession of all kinds of goods capable of fully satisfying us. When Adam had sinned and saw himself overwhelmed with so much misery, all his consolation was that not only would his sufferings merit the forgiveness of his sins; but also, would provide him with goods for heaven. What goodness of God, my brethren, to reward the smallest of our actions with so much good, and this, throughout all eternity!

But, to make us deserve this happiness, the good Lord wants us to have great confidence in him, like children in a good father. This is why we see in several places in Holy Scripture that he takes the name of Father, in order to inspire us with greater confidence. He wants us to have recourse to him in all our sorrows, whether of the soul or of the body. He promises to help us whenever we have recourse to him. If he takes the name of father, it is to inspire us with greater confidence in him. See how much he loves us: he tells us through his prophet Isaiah, that he carries us all in his bosom. “A mother,” he told us, “who carries her child in her womb cannot forget him, and even if she would be barbaric enough to do so, for my part, I will never forget the one who puts his trust in me. » He even complains that we don't have enough confidence in him; he warns us to no longer put our trust in kings and princes, because our hope will be deceived. He goes further, since he threatens us with his curse if we do not have great confidence in him; he tells us through his prophet Jeremiah: “Cursed is he who does not trust in his God! » and further, he tells us: “Blessed is he who trusts in the Lord. » See the parable of the Prodigal Son, which he quotes to us with so much pleasure, in order to inspire us with great confidence in him. “A father,” he told us, “had a child who asked him what could come to him from his inheritance. This good father gave him his property. This son abandons this good father, leaves for a foreign country, and there, indulges in all kinds of disorder. But, some time later, his debaucheries had reduced him to the greatest misery; without money and without any resources, he would have wanted to feed on

Pigs are left; but no one gave him any. Seeing himself overwhelmed with so many evils, he remembered that he had abandoned a good father, who had never ceased to shower him with all kinds of benefits all the time he had been with him; he said to himself: “I will rise and go, with tears in my eyes, to throw myself at my father’s feet; he is so good, I hope he will have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi] again. I will say to him: “My dear father, I have sinned” against you and against heaven, I no longer dare look at you or at heaven; I no longer deserve to be placed among your children; but I will be very happy if you will put me among your slaves. » But what is this good father doing? tells us Jesus Christ, who is himself this tender father; far from waiting for him to come and throw himself at his feet, from as far as he can see him, he runs to embrace him. The child wants to confess his sins; but the father doesn't want him to talk to him about it anymore. “No, no, my son

» there is no longer any question of sins, let us only think of rejoicing. » This good father invites the entire celestial court to thank the good God [le bon Dieu] that his son who was dead was resurrected, that he had lost him and found him. To show her how much he loves her, he returns all her possessions and his friendship. Well! My brethren, this is the way in which Jesus Christ receives the sinner every time he comes to himself: he forgives him and gives him back all the goods that sin had taken from him. According to this, my brethren, which of us will not have great confidence in the charity of the good God [le bon Dieu]? He goes further, since he tells us that when we have the happiness of leaving sin to love him, all of heaven rejoices. If you read further, see with what eagerness he runs to look for his lost sheep! Once he has found it, he is so happy that he even wants to take it 9 his shoulders to save him the trouble of traveling. See with what kindness he receives Madeleine at his feet, see with what tenderness he consoles her: not only does he console her; but again, he defends her against the insults of the Pharisees; see with what charity and what pleasure he forgives the adulterous woman: she offends him, and it is he himself who wants to be her protector and her savior. See his eagerness to run after the Samaritan woman; to save his soul he himself goes to wait for him near Jacob's well; he wants to speak to him first, in order to show him in advance how good he is; he pretends to ask him for water, to give him his grace and heaven. Tell me, my brethren, what excuses will we have to excuse ourselves when he shows us how good he was towards us, and how he would have received us if we had wanted to come back? With what pleasure he would have forgiven us and returned his grace! Will he not be able to tell us: “Ah, unhappy man, if you lived and died in sin, it is because you did not want to leave it; I who wanted so much to forgive you! See, my brethren, how much the good God [le bon Dieu] (wants) that we come to him with confidence in our spiritual ills. He tells us, through his prophet Micah, that when our sins are as numerous as the stars of the firmament and the drops of water in the sea, as the leaves of the forests and as the grains of sand that border the ocean, if we sincerely convert, he promises us to forget them all, and he tells us that when they have made our soul as black as coal, as red as scarlet, he will make it as white as snow. » He tells us that he casts our sins into the chaos of the sea, so that they will never appear again. What charity, my brethren, On the part of God, with what confidence should we we not address him? But what despair for a damned Christian to know how much the good Lord would have wanted to forgive him if he had wanted to ask for forgiveness! Tell me, my brethren, if we are damned it will be because we will have wanted it, since the good God [le bon Dieu] has told us so many times that he wants to forgive us. Alas, my brethren, how many remorse of conscience [remords de conscience], how many good thoughts, how many desires has this voice not given rise to in us? 0 my God, how unfortunate is man to damn himself, while he can so easily save himself. Alas! my brethren, to confirm us in all this, we only have to examine what he did for us, during the thirty-three years that he lived on earth. Second, I say that we must have great trust in God, even for our temporal needs. To excite us to approach him with great confidence in matters concerning the body, he assures us that he will take care of us; and we ourselves see how many miracles he has done, rather than letting us lack what is necessary. We see in Holy Scripture that he fed his people for forty years, in the desert, with manna that fell every day before the sun rose. During the forty years that they remained in the desert, their clothes did not wear out at all. He tells us in the Gospel not to worry about what (regards) food and clothing: “Consider,” he tells us, “the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap, nor put anything into the barns; see with what care your heavenly Father feeds them; are you not more than them? you are the children of God. People of little faith, therefore do not worry about what you will eat and what you will wear. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; and yet they neither plow nor spin, see how they are clothed; I tell you that Solomon, in all his glory, was never dressed like one of these. If then, concludes this divine Savior, the Lord takes so much care to clothe a herb which is today and which, tomorrow, is thrown into the oven, how much more will he take care of you, who are his children? Therefore seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and everything else will be given to you in abundance. » See again how much he wants us to have confidence: “When you pray to me, he tells us, do not say: My (God), but Our Father; because we see that a child has boundless trust in his father. » When he was resurrected and appeared to Saint Madeleine, he said to her; “Go to my brethren, and tell them that I am

going up to my Father, who is also your Father. » Tell me, my brethren, will you not agree with me that if we are so unhappy on earth, it can only come from the fact that we do not have enough confidence in God?.Thirdly, we say that we must have great confidence in God in our sorrows, sorrows and illnesses. It is necessary, my brethren, that this great hope of heaven supports and consoles us; this is what all the saints have done. We read in the life of Saint Symphoricn, that being led to martyrdom, his mother, who truly loved him for the good God [le bon Dieu], climbed on a wall to see him pass, and raising her voice as much as she could: “My son, my son,” she cried to him, “look at the sky; my son, courage! may the hope of heaven

Esoutienne! my son, courage! If the path to heaven is difficult, it is very short. » This child, animated by the language of his mother, endured torment and death with (great) intrepidity. Saint Francis de Sales had such great confidence in God that he seemed to be insensitive to the persecutions that were made against him; he said to himself: “Since nothing happens except by the permission of God, persecutions are therefore only for our good. » We read in his life, that once he was horribly slandered; despite this, he lost none of his ordinary tranquility. He wrote to one of his friends that he had just been warned that he was being torn apart in a beautiful way; but that he hoped that the good Lord would arrange all this for his glory and for the salvation of his soul. He just prayed for those (who slandered him). This, my brethren, is the confidence that we must have in God. When we are persecuted or despised, these are the signs (1) that we are truly Christians, that is to say, children of a despised and persecuted God. Fourthly, my brethren, I told you that, if we must have blind confidence in Jesus Christ, because we are sure that he will never fail to come to our aid in all our troubles, if we go to him like children to their father; I also say that we must have great confidence in his holy Mother who is so good, who so desires to help us in all our spiritual and temporal needs; but, above all, when we want to return to the good Lord. If we have any sin that gives us shame to accuse ourselves of, let's throw ourselves into its (1) Marks, evidence.

feet, we are sure that she will obtain for us the grace to confess it well, and, at the same time, she will not fail to ask our forgiveness. To prove it to you, here is an admirable example. It is recorded in history that a man, for a long time, had led a fairly Christian life, so as to hope for heaven. But the demon, who only works to destroy us, tempted him, so often and for so long, that he made him fall into serious sin. Having then returned to himself, he understood the full enormity of his sin, and his first thought was to resort to the salutary remedy of penance. But he was so ashamed of his sin that he could never bring himself to confess it. Overwhelmed by the remorse of his conscience, which did not leave him a moment of rest, he made the insane resolution to go and drown himself, hoping, by doing so, to put an end to his sorrows. But when he arrived at the edge of the river, he shuddered at the sight of the eternal misfortune into which he was about to plunge, and returned weeping bitterly, and begging the Lord to forgive him without him being obliged to confess. He believed he would regain peace of soul by visiting several churches, doing prayers and penances; but, despite all his prayers and penances, his remorse still pursued him. The good Lord only wanted to grant him forgiveness through the protection of his holy mother. One night when he (was) plunged into great sadness, he felt strongly inspired to go to confession, and, for this, he got up early in the morning and went to church; but when he was close to confession, he felt tormented more than ever by the shame of his sin, and never had the strength to do what the grace of the good God [le bon Dieu] had inspired him. Some time later, the same thing happened to him; he went to the same church; but he was again stopped by shame, and, in this moment of despair, he resolved to die rather than ever declare his sin to a confessor. However, it occurred to him to recommend himself to the Blessed Virgin. Before returning home, he went to prostrate himself at the foot of the altar of the Mother of God; he represented to her the great need he had of her help, and begged her with tears not to abandon him. What kindness on the part of the Mother of God, what eagerness to help him! As soon as he got down on his knees, all his sorrows disappeared, his heart was completely changed, he got up full of courage and confidence, went to find his confessor, declared to him all his sins and shedding torrents of tears. As he declared his sins, an enormous weight seemed to be lifted from his conscience. He then admitted that, when he received absolution, he felt more content than if he had been given all the gold in

the universe. Alas! My brethren, what a misfortune for this man if he had not had recourse to the Blessed Virgin! he would now burn in hell. Yes, my brethren, after the good Lord, in all our sorrows, whether of the soul or of the body, we need great confidence in the Blessed Virgin. Here is another example, which will inspire us with tender confidence in the Blessed Virgin, especially when we want to have a great horror of sin. Blessed Liguori reports that a great sinner called Helena, having entered a church, chance, or rather Providence, which disposes of everything for the good of its elect, wanted her to hear a sermon on devotion to the Holy Rosary. She was so struck by everything the preacher said about the excellence and admirable effects of this holy practice, that she wanted to have a rosary. She was Tachat after the sermon; but, for some time, she took care to hide it well, for fear that it would be seen and ridiculed. She then began to recite it, but without much devotion or pleasure. Some time later, the Blessed Virgin showed her so much devotion and pleasure that she could no longer tire of saying it; and, by this practice of piety, which is so pleasant to the Blessed Virgin, she deserved a look of compassion which made her conceive such a horror of her past life, that her conscience became a hell for her, giving her rest neither day nor night. Continually torn by her burning remorse, she could no longer resist the inner voice which told her that the sacrament of Penance was the only remedy to have the peace she so desired, which she sought everywhere and which she could not find; that the sacrament of Penance was the only remedy for the ills of his soul. Invited by this voice, led and urged by grace, she throws herself at the feet of the minister of the Lord, and confesses to him all the miseries of her soul, that is to say, all her sins; which she did with so much contrition and with such an abundance of tears, that the confessor was in an admirable astonishment, not knowing to what to attribute this miracle of grace. The confession being finished, Helene went to prostrate herself at the foot of an altar of the Blessed Virgin, and there, imbued with feelings of the most lively gratitude: “Ah! most holy Virgin, it is true that I have been a monster until now; but you, whose power is so great with God, please help me to correct myself; I want to spend the rest of my days doing penance." From that moment, she returned home, and

Broke forever (the bonds) of the fatal companies which had held her in her disorders; she gave all her possessions to the poor, and devoted herself to all the rigors of penance that her love for God and regret for her sins could inspire in her. The good Lord, to mark his recognition of the great trust that (this girl) had had towards her most holy Mother... in her last illness, they both appeared to her, (that is to say, the good Lord with the Blessed Virgin;) she returned into their hands her beautiful soul, which she had so well purified by penance and by tears, so that, after the good Lord, it is to the protection of the Blessed Virgin that this great penitent owed his salvation. Here is another example of trust in the Blessed Virgin which is no less. admirable, and which shows how favorable devotion to the Blessed Virgin is in helping us escape from sin. It is recorded in history that a young man, who had been well taught by his parents, had the misfortune to contract a criminal habit, which became for him the source of an infinity of sins. As he still had the fear of God and desired to renounce his disorders, he made from time to time some efforts to escape from them; but the weight of his bad habits still dragged him down. He hated his sin, and despite it, he fell back into it every moment. Seeing that he could not correct himself, he gave in to discouragement and resolved not to go to confession again. His confessor, who no longer saw him coming at the appointed time, wanted to make a new effort to bring this poor soul back to the good God [le bon Dieu]. He will find it at a time when he was alone working. This poor young man, seeing the priest coming, began to utter deep sighs and lamentable cries.

“What is the matter with you, my friend,” said the priest to him? " - " Oh! My pore, he said to him, I am damned, I see clearly that I will never correct myself and I have resolved to abandon everything. » — “What do you say, my dear friend, I know, on the contrary, that if you want to do what I am going to tell you, you will correct yourself and you will obtain your forgiveness. Go, from this moment, throw yourself at the feet of the Blessed Virgin to ask for your conversion, and then come and find me. » The young man will, at this moment, throw himself, that is to say, prostrate himself at the foot of an altar of the Blessed Virgin, and watering the pavement with his tears, he begs her to have pity on a soul which has cost all the blood of Jesus

Christ, her divine Son, and whom the demon wants to drag into hell. At that moment, he felt such great confidence arise within him that he got up and went to confession. He sincerely converted; all his bad (habits) were completely destroyed, and he served the good Lord all his life. Let us all agree that if we remain in sin, it is because we do not want to take the means that religion presents to us, nor to have recourse with confidence to this good Mother, who would have pity as much on us as on all those who prayed to her before us. Fifthly, we said that the virtue of hope makes us do all our actions with the sole aim of pleasing God, and not the world. We must, my brethren, begin to practice this beautiful virtue, by waking up, by giving our heart to the good Lord with love, with fervor, thinking how great the reward of our day will be if we do well everything we do with the sole aim of pleasing the good God [le bon Dieu]. Tell me, my brethren, if, in everything we do, we had the happiness of thinking about the great

E IV SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. 2he rewards that the good Lord attaches to each of our actions, with what feelings of respect and love for

5th Sunday after Pentecost — On the Second Commandment of God

the good Lord would we not be penetrated? See how pure our intentions would be in giving all our alms. — But, you will tell me, when I give some alms, it is for the good Lord and not for the world. — However, my brethren, we are very happy when people see us, when people praise us, we even like to tell others. In our hearts we like to think about it, we applaud ourselves within ourselves; but if we had this beautiful virtue in our souls, we would only seek God alone, the world would have nothing to do with it, nor ourselves. Let us not be surprised, my brethren, that we are doing our actions so poorly. This is because we do not really think about the reward that the good Lord attaches to them if we do them well to please him. When we render service to someone who, far from being grateful, pays us back with ingratitude, if we had this beautiful virtue of hope, we would be very happy, thinking that our reward will be much greater with the good Lord. Saint Francis de Sales tells us that if two people came to him to receive some benefit and he could only do service to one, he would choose the one he thought would be the least grateful to him, because the merit would be greater with the good God [le bon Dieu]. The holy King David said that when he did something, he always did it in the presence of God, as if he were to be judged immediately afterwards to receive the reward; which led him to do well everything he did to please God alone. Indeed, those who do not have this virtue of hope do everything they do for the world, or to make themselves loved.

and esteem, and thereby lose all the reward. We say that we must have great confidence in God in our illnesses and sorrows: this is precisely where the good Lord is waiting for us (to see) if we will show great confidence in Him. We read in the life of Saint Elzéard that the people of the world publicly mocked his devotion, and the libertines made a game of it. Saint Delphine told him one day that the contempt for his person reflected on his virtue. “Alas,” he said to him, weeping, “when I think of all that Jesus Christ suffered for me, I am so touched that, even if my eyes were gouged out, I would have no words to complain, thinking of the great reward of those who suffer for the love of God: this is all my hope and what sustains me in all my sorrows. » Which is very easy to understand. What can console a sick person in his ailments, if not the greatness of the reward that the good Lord promises him in the next life? We read in history that a preacher went to preach in a hospital and his sermon was about suffering. He showed how suffering acquires us great merits for heaven, and how a person who suffers with patience is pleasing to the good God [le bon Dieu]. In the same hospital, there was a poor patient who had been suffering a lot for many years; but, unfortunately, always complaining; he understood by his sermon how many goods he had lost for heaven, and, after the sermon, he began to cry and sob in an extraordinary way. A priest who saw him asked him why he gave himself up to such sorrow, if anyone had caused him any pain, (adding) that, his capacity as administrator, he could do him justice. This poor man said to him: “Oh! no, sir, no one has wronged me, but it is myself who have wronged myself greatly. " - " How? » the priest told him. — “Ah Sir, how much good I have lost in so

many years of suffering, when I would have deserved so much for heaven, if I had had the good fortune to suffer illnesses with patience. Alas! how unhappy I am, who thought I was so pitiable; If I had understood my condition correctly, I was the happiest in the world. » Alas, my brethren, how many people will speak the same language at the hour of death, and that their sorrows, if they had had the good fortune to suffer them well for the good Lord, would have led to heaven; instead of them only serving to lose them through the bad use they made of them." One day a poor woman who, for a long time, had been in a bed where she suffered from terrible ailments, and who, however, always seemed content, was asked what could sustain her in such a pitiful state, she replied: "When I think that the good God [le bon Dieu] is witness to my sufferings and that he will reward me for it for eternity, I have so many joy, I suffer with so much pleasure, that I would not change my state with all the empires of the world! » Agree with me, my brethren, that those who have the great happiness of having this beautiful virtue in their hearts, have soon changed their pain gently! my brethren, if we see so many unhappy people in the world, cursing their existence, and spending their poor lives in a kind of hell, by the sorrows and despair which unfortunately pursue them everywhere; 1 all these misfortunes only come from the fact that they do not put their trust in God and do not think to the great reward that awaits them in heaven. We read in the life of Saint Felicity that, fearing that the youngest of her children would not have the courage to suffer martyrdom, she cried out to him: “My son, look to heaven which will be your reward; a moment longer, and your sufferings will be over. » These words, coming from the mouth of a mother, strengthened this poor child so much that he surrendered, with incredible joy, his poor little body to all the torments that the executioners wanted to make him suffer. Saint Francis Xavier tells us that being among the Barbarians, he had to suffer, without receiving any consolation from anyone, everything that these idolaters could invent; but that he had placed his trust in God so much, that he had recognized that the good God [le bon Dieu] had always helped him in a visible way, Jesus Christ, to show us how much we must have confidence in him, and never fear to ask him for everything that is necessary for our soul and for the body, the Gospel tells us that a man went during the night to ask one of his friends for three loaves to give to a man who had come to see him; the other replied that he was lying with his children, that he should not be disturbed. But the first continued to pray to him, saying that he had no bread for his friend. The other gave him what he asked, not because he was his friend, but to free himself from his importunity. From there, Jesus Christ concludes, “Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you, and you are sure that whenever you ask of my Pig in my name, you will obtain. » In the sixth place, I say that our hope must be universal, that is to say, (we must) have recourse to the good

E God in everything that can happen to us. If we are sick, my brethren, let us have great confidence in him, since it is he himself who healed so many sick people while he was on earth, and if our health can contribute to his glory and the salvation of our soul, we are sure to obtain it; if, on the contrary, the illness is more advantageous to us, he will give us the strength to suffer it with patience, to give us the reward for eternity. If we find ourselves in any danger, let us imitate the three children whom the king had thrown into the furnace of Babylon; They put their trust in God so much that the fire only burned the cords that bound them, so that they walked quietly through the furnace as in a garden of delights. Are we tempted, my brethren? let us trust (in Jesus Christ), and we are sure not to succumb. He, this tender Savior, has merited victory in our temptations by allowing himself to be tempted. Are we, my brethren, immersed in some bad habit, afraid of not being able to get out of it? let us only trust in God; since it is he who has merited for us all kinds of graces to defeat the demon. This, my brethren, is enough to console us in our miseries which are inseparable from life. But here is what Saint John Chrysostom tells us: to deserve this happiness we must not have presumption, voluntarily exposing ourselves to the danger of sinning. The good Lord has only promised us his grace as long as, for our part, we will do everything we can to avoid the dangers of sin. We must also be careful not to abuse the patience of the good Lord by remaining in sin, under the pretext that the good God [le bon Dieu] will forgive us, even though we delay confessing. Let's take care

My brethren, as long as we are in sin, we are in great danger of falling into hell, and all the repentance that we have at death, when we have voluntarily remained in sin, hardly assures us of our salvation; because, being able to get out of it, we did not do it. Ah! unhappy that we are; how dare we remain in sin, since we do not have a minute of security for our life? Our Lord tells us that it will come in the moment that we least think of it. I say that if we should not hope too much, we should not despair of God's mercy, since it is infinite. Despair is a greater sin than all the sins we have committed; since we are sure that the good God [le bon Dieu] will never refuse our forgiveness, if we return to him with sincerity. It is not the greatness of our sins that should make us fear that we will not be able to obtain our forgiveness; since all our sins are less towards the mercy of God, than a grain of sand towards a mountain. If Cain, after killing his brother, had wanted to ask the good Lord for forgiveness, he was sure of his forgiveness. If Judas had thrown himself at the feet of Jesus Christ, to beg him to forgive him, Jesus Christ would have forgiven him his sin as (well) as to Saint Peter. But, in closing, do you want me to tell you why we remain in sin for so long, and why we torment ourselves so much at the moment that we have to accuse ourselves of it? It is, my brethren, that we are proud, and nothing else. If we had humility as our share, we would never remain in sin, nor would we be afraid to accuse them. Let us ask the good Lord, my brethren, for contempt of ourselves, we fear-

Let us eradicate sin and confess it as soon as we have committed it. I conclude by telling you that we must often ask the good Lord for this beautiful virtue of hope, which will make us do all our actions with the intention of pleasing God alone. Let us be careful in our illnesses, in our sorrows, never to despair. Let us think that all these things are goods that the good Lord sends us to be the material for our eternal reward. I wish it to you...

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On the second Commandment of God.

“God in vain will you swear or anything else like that. »

It is very surprising, my brethren, that the good Lord is obliged to give us a command to forbid us from profaning his holy name. Can we well conceive, my brethren, that Christians could give themselves over to the devil, to be an instrument which he uses to curse a God so good and so beneficent? Can we well conceive that a tongue, which was consecrated to the good God [le bon Dieu] by holy Baptism, and, so many times, watered by his adorable blood, would be used to curse its Creator? Could he do it, (he who) would truly believe that the good God [le bon Dieu] only gave it to him to bless him and sing his praises? You will agree with me that this is a terrible crime, which seems to force the good Lord to overwhelm us with all kinds of misfortunes, and to abandon us to the demon to whom we obey with so much zeal. This crime makes the hair stand on end in anyone who has not yet completely lost their faith. However, despite the

Greatness of this sin, its horribleness, and its darkness, is there a sin more common than swearing, blasphemies, imprecations and curses? Do we not have the pain of seeing these kinds of swearing come out even from the mouths of children, who barely know their Our Father, capable of bringing all kinds of misfortune to a parish? I will therefore, my brethren, show you what is meant by swearing, blasphemy, denials, imprecations and curses. Try (during this time) to sleep well; so that on the day of judgment you have done evil without knowing what you were doing, and you will be damned because your ignorance will be all (your) fault.

I. To make you understand the greatness of this sin, my brethren, we would have to be able to make you understand the greatness of the outrage it does to the good God [le bon Dieu]: something that will never be given to a mortal. No, my brethren, there is only hell, there is only the anger, the power and the fury of a God, all united on his infernal monsters, which can make us feel the grandeur of his atrocity; no, no, my brethren, let's not go any further, that requires eternal hell. Besides, this is not my intention: I am only going to let you know the difference between swearing, blasphemy, denials, imprecations, curses and foul words. A

good part confuses them, and takes one thing for the other; which is the cause that, almost never, you accuse yourself of your sins properly, which exposes you to making bad confessions, and, consequently, to damning yourself. The second commandment, which forbids us from making false and useless oaths and from not perjuring ourselves, is expressed in these words: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. » It is, as if the Lord were saying to us: “I order and command you to revere this name, because it is holy and adorable; I forbid you from profaning it, by using it to authorize lies, injustice, and even the truth, without sufficient reason; » and Jesus Christ tells us not to swear to him in any way. I say 1° that poorly educated people often confuse blasphemy with swearing. An unfortunate person, in a (moment) of anger, or rather fury, will say: “The good Lord is not just to make me suffer or lose this. » With these words, he denied the good God [le bon Dieu]; he will accuse himself by saying: “My father, I accuse myself of having sworn,” but it is not an oath, but a (blasphemy), that he uttered. A (person) will be falsely accused of a fault that he did not commit; she will say (to justify herself): “If I did that, I never want to see the face of God! » This is not an oath; but a horrible imprecation. These are sweet sins which are just as bad as swearing. Another, who tells his neighbor that he is a thief, a rascal, will accuse himself of “having sworn at his neighbor.” » This is not swearing, but it is insulting him. Another will say dirty and dishonest words, and will accuse himself of “having said the wrong reasons.” » You are wrong, it must be said that you said obscenities. Here, my brethren, is what swearing is: it is calling the good Lord to witness what we say or promise; and perjury is an oath which is false: that is to say, it is when one swears to a lie. The name of the good God [le bon Dieu] is so holy, so great and so adorable, that the angels and the saints, Saint John tells us,

They continually say in heaven: “Holy, holy, holy, is the great God of hosts; may his holy name be blessed for ever and ever! » When the Blessed Virgin went to visit her cousin Elisabeth, and this saint said to her: “How happy you are to have been chosen to be the mother of God! » The Blessed Virgin answered him: “He who is almighty, and whose name is holy, has done great things in me. » We will therefore have to,,my brethren, have great respect for the name of the good God [le bon Dieu], and we will only pronounce it with great veneration, and never in vain. Saint Thomas tells us that to pronounce the name of the good God [le bon Dieu] in vain is a great sin; that this sin is not like the others: in other sins, the lightness of the matter diminishes their darkness and malice, and, very often, what is mortal sin is only venial: like theft which is a mortal sin; but if it is a small thing, like one or three sous, it will only be a venial sin. Anger and gluttony are mortal sins; but a little anger, a little gluttony, are nothing more than venial sins. But for swearing, it is no longer the same: the lighter the material (1), the greater the profanation. The reason is that the lighter the material, the greater the contempt; as if a person were to beg the king to serve as his witness for a trifle, that would be to mock and despise him. The good Lord tells us that whoever swears his name will be rigorously punished. We read in Holy Scripture that in the days of Moses, (there were) gentle men, (of whom) one swore the holy name of God; they took him and took him to Moses, who asked the good Lord what should be done with him. The Lord told him to (1) See note J in the fia of the volume.

lead him into a field, and (order) all those who had witnessed this blasphemy to place their hand on his head and knock him to the ground, in order to remove the blasphemer from among his people. The Holy Spirit also tells us, that whoever swears, his house will be filled with iniquity, and the curse will not depart from his house until it is destroyed. Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, in the Gospel, not to swear either by heaven or by earth, because neither belongs to us. When you want to assure something, say: “It is, or it is not; yes or no; I did it, or I didn't do it; and whatever else you say comes only from the devil. » Besides, a person who has the habit of swearing is a hotheaded person, attached to his own feelings; and she always (swears), both for the lie and for (the truth). But, people will tell me, if I don't swear, (no one will believe me). — You are wrong; We never believe a person who swears, because that presupposes a person who has no religion, and a person without religion is not worthy of being believed. There are often some who do not know how to sell the slightest thing without swearing, as if their swearing improved their merchandise. If we see a merchant who swears while selling, we immediately think that this person has no faith, that we must be careful that he does

not deceive us. Her swearing is horrifying and we don't believe her. On the contrary, a person who does not swear, we will believe what he tells us. We read in history an example reported by Cardinal Bellarmine, which will show you that swearing advances nothing. There were, he told us, two merchants in Cologne, (who) seemed not to be able to sell (anything)

without swearing. Their pastor urged them to quit this bad habit, because, far from losing, they would gain a lot; they followed his advice. However, for a while they did not sell much. They went to their pastor, telling him that they were not (selling) as much as he had made them hope. The pastor said to them: “Have patience, my children, you are sure that the good God [le bon Dieu] will bless you. » Indeed, after a while, the competition was so great that it seemed as if the goods were being given away for nothing. They themselves saw that the good Lord blessed them in a special way. The same cardinal tells us that there was a good mother, who had a great habit of swearing; as she was told how unworthy these swearings were of a mother, and that she could only bring a curse on her house; having corrected herself, she herself admitted that since she had lost her bad habit, she saw that everything was successful with her, and that the good Lord blessed her in a special way. Do you want, my brethren, to be happy during your life, and may the good Lord bless your homes? take care never to swear, and you will see that everything will be fine with you. The good Lord tells us that in the house where swearing reigns, the curse of the Lord will fall there, and it will be destroyed. And why, my brethren, do you indulge in swearing, since the good Lord forbids it, under penalty of making us unhappy in this world and reproached in the next? Alas, we know little about what we are doing! We will know him; but too late. Secondly, we say that there is still a another much worse oath: it is when oaths of execration are added to the oath, which makes one tremble. Like the unfortunate people who say: “If what I say is not true, I will never see the face of God. » Ah! unhappy! you are only too likely to never see her!... Others say: "If it is not true, I want to lose my place in paradise! God damn me! or, let the demon take me away!..." Ah! hardened old man! the demon will only carry you away too much, without you giving yourself so far in advance to him. How many others who always have the devil in their mouths at the slightest thing that doesn't go their way? “Ah! the devil of a child, the devil of a beast or a work!... let you die once, you annoy me so much...." Alas, a person who so often has the name of the devil in her mouth, it is to be feared that she has it in her heart! How many others who are always after saying: “Oh! my faith, yes... oh! my goodness, no...; ah! you little child! » or even: "Pardi!... Tuesday!... on my conscience!... on the faith of Christians!..." There is another kind of swearing, of curses that we do not think about, these are the swearings that we make in our heart: there are some who believe that because they do not say it with their mouth, there is no harm: you are greatly mistaken, my friends. It has happened to you that someone has done some damage to your land, or elsewhere; you swear to them in your heart, and you curse them saying: “At least if the demon had taken them away!... that the thunder had crushed them!... or that these raves or these truffles (1)

(i) Truffles; potatoes.

They would have been poisoned by eating them... » And how long will you keep these thoughts in your heart, and you believe that, because you do not say them with your mouth, it is nothing: my friend, it is a great sin, you must be accused of it, otherwise you will be lost Alas! How few people there are who know the state of their poor soul, such as it is in the eyes of the good Lord! In the third place, we say that there are others, even more guilty, who not only swear for true things; but still for false things. If you could understand how much your impiety despises the good Lord, you would never have the courage to do it. You behave towards the good Lord like a vile slave saying to the king: “Sire, you must serve as a false witness for me; » Doesn't that horrify you, my brethren? The good Lord tells us in Holy Scripture: “Be holy, because I am holy [sancti estote, quia ego Sanctus sum]. Do not lie or deceive your neighbor, and do not perjure yourselves by taking the name of the Lord your God as a witness for a lie, and do not profane the name of the Lord. » Saint John Chrysostom tells us: “If it is already such a great crime to swear for a true thing, how great is the crime

of him who swears falsely, to assure a lie? » The Holy Spirit tells us that he who speaks lies will perish. The prophet Zechariah assures us that the curse will come into the house of him who swears to assure a lie, and that it will remain there until that house is overthrown and destroyed. Saint Augustine tells us that perjury is a great crime and a ferocious beast, which wreaks terrible havoc. Here is

10 which further increases this sin; It is because there are some who add to the false oath an oath of execration, saying: “If this is not true, I never want to see the face of God!... God damn me!... or: May the devil take me away!..." Ah unfortunate! if the good Lord took you at your word; where would you be? For how many years have you been burning in hell? Tell me, my brethren, can we really conceive that a Christian could be guilty of such a crime and such horror? 0 my God! an earthworm (pushes) barbarity to such excess! No, my brethren, no, that is not (conceivable) for a Christian. It is also necessary to examine whether you had resolved to swear or to make false oaths, and how many days you had had this thought: that is to say, how (long) you were disposed to do it. A good part of Christians do not even pay attention to it, although it is a big sin. — But, you will tell me, I thought about it, but I didn't do it. — You didn't do it; but your heart has done it, and, since you are in the disposition to do it, you are guilty in the eyes of the good Lord. Alas, poor religion, how little we know you! We see in history a striking example of the punishment of those who make false oaths. In the time of Saint Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, three young libertines, who abandoned themselves to [s'abandonner à] impurity, horribly slandered their holy bishop, accusing him of crimes of which they themselves were guilty, in the hope that he would not dare to reprove them. They went before the judges saying that the bishop had committed such a sin; and they assured their oaths with dreadful oaths. The first says: “If what I say

It's not true, I want to be suffocated. » The second: “If this is not the case, I want to be shined alive. » The third: “If this is not the case, I want to lose my eyes. » Alas, the justice of the good Lord was not long in punishing them: the first was suffocated and died miserably; the second, his house was set on fire by a flare from a bonfire that was being made in the town; he burned everyone alive; the third, although punished, was happier than the others: he recognized his fault, did penance for it, and cried so much that he lost his sight. Here is another example, which is no less striking. We read in history that Saint Edward (being) king of England, Count Gondevin, who was father-in-law of the king, was so jealous and so proud, that he did not want to suffer anyone near the king. The king told him one day that he had participated in the death of his brother. “If so,” said the count, “I want this piece to strangle me. » The king took this piece of bread, made the sign of the cross on it (without) suspecting (anything). The other ate it; but it stuck to his throat, strangled him, and he died immediately. You will agree with me, my brethren, from these terrible examples, how terrible this sin must be in the eyes of the good God [le bon Dieu] for (that he wants) to punish them in such a terrible way. There are still fathers and mothers and masters and mistresses who constantly have these words on their lips: “Ah! child carrion!... ah! stupid child!... ah! stupid child! that you die once, so much do you torment me!... I would like to be as far away as I am near!... The good Lord will not punish you once!..." and by pronouncing the b... and the f..., this has to do with curses: I tell you this while I think about it. Yes, my brethren-, there are pa- rcnts who have so little religion that they always have these words in their mouths. Alas, how many poor children are crippled and weak-minded, surly, vicious because of the curses their father and mother gave them! We read (in the story) that there was a mother who said to her child: “So you won't die, you torment me so much? » This poor child fell dead at his feet. Another who said to his son: “So the demon will not prevail? » The child disappeared without anyone knowing where he went. My God! what a misfortune! misfortune for the child and the mother! There was in the province of Vallerie a very respectable man for his good conduct. One day, returning from a trip, he called his servant in a rather careless manner, he said to him: “Come on, you devilish valet, come and take off my shoes!” » Immediately his shoe began to come undone without anyone pulling it. Terrified, he began to cry: “Get away, Satan, it is not you I am calling; but he is my valet,” so that the demon (flee) immediately, and his shoe remained half removed. This example proves to us, my brethren, how much the devil rolls around us to deceive us and ruin us as soon as

the opportunity presents itself. This is why we see that the first Christians had such horror of the devil that they did not even dare to pronounce its name. You must therefore be careful never to pronounce it, nor allow it to be uttered to your children and your servants: when you hear them, you must correct them, until you see that they are corrected. Not only, my brethren, is it wrong to swear, but also to make others swear. Saint Augustine we

Says that he who causes another person to swear falsely in court is more guilty than he who commits homicide, “because,” he tells us, “whoever kills a man only kills the body, whereas he who makes another swear falsely in court kills his soul. » To give you an idea of ■■the greatness of this sin, (I will show you) how guilty one is when one foresees that the people one calls to justice will swear falsely. We read in history that there was a bourgeois in the city of Hippo, who was a good man, but a little too attached to the land. He wanted to force a man who owed him something to go to court. This wretch swore falsely: that is to say, assured that he owed nothing. The following night, the one who had brought the other to justice to be paid, was himself presented before a court, where he saw a judge who spoke to him in a terrible and threatening voice, asking him why he had caused this man to perjure; if it were not better to lose one's debt than to damn this soul; that he gave him grace this time because of his works; but he condemned him to be whipped with rods. In fact, the next day, he saw his body covered in blood. — But, you will tell me, if I don't swear, I will lose what he owes me. — But then you would rather lose his soul [perdre son âme] and yours than lose your money? Besides, my brethren, be sure that if you make a sacrifice so as not to offend the good Lord, you will see that the good God [le bon Dieu] will not fail to reward you in another way. However this does not happen very often; but we must be careful never to give gifts, nor solicit those who must deposit against you are justified in not telling the truth: you would damn them and you too. If you had done this, and (someone) had been condemned who did not deserve it, because you told a lie, you would be obliged to repair all the harm that this has done and to compensate the person, either in his property or in his reputation and as much as you can, without which you will be damned. It is still necessary to see if you did not have the thought of swearing falsely, and how long this thought remained in your mind. There are some who believe that because they did not say it, there is no harm. My friend, although you have not said it, your sin is committed; since you are in a position to do so. See again if you have not given half-advice. A person will say to you: “I think I'm going to be called to court for so-and-so; what do you think? I don't want to say what I saw, so as not to have him condemned: the other has much more to pay for; However, I will hurt. » You will say to him: “Ah! the harm is not very great... You will cause him too much loss...” If according to this he swears falsely, you are obliged, if the one to whom you have advised does not have the means to compensate the other, to do it yourself. Do you want, my brethren, to know what you (must) do in court and elsewhere? listen to Jesus Christ himself, who tells us: “Rather than pleading, if someone asks you for your outer robe, give the lower one, because that is much more advantageous to you than pleading. » Alas! how many sins a trial causes! How many souls the trials damn with these false oaths, these hatreds, these deceptions and these revenges! But here, my brethren, are the oaths that are made most often, or rather, all the time. If we let's say something to someone, if they don't want to believe us, we even swear with an oath. Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses must be careful of this: often their children or their servants have made some mistake, they urge them to tell them, if it is them; and the children or the servants, afraid of being beaten or scolded, will swear how many times that it is not true, that they will not move from the place if it is. It is much better to say nothing and suffer the loss, (than) to have them damned. Besides, what are you saying? you all offend the good Lord, and then, that's all you have. What a regret, my brethren, if on the day of judgment, you see these poor children damned for a trifle and a trivial thing. There are still others who swear or promise to do or give something to another, without intending to do it. We must carefully consider before promising something whether we can do it. Before promising it, you must never say: “If I do not do this, I will never see the good Lord, never move from the place. » Be careful, my brethren, these are sins more horrible than you will ever be able to understand. If, for example, you have, in a fit of anger, (promised) to take revenge, it is quite

certain that you should not do it; but, on the contrary, ask the good Lord for forgiveness. The Holy Spirit tells us that whoever swears will be punished...

II. If you ask me what is meant by this word blasphemy... This sin, my brethren, is so horrible that it seems that Christians should not have the strength to utter it. Blasphemy is a (word) which means to curse and hate infinite beauty, which

232 SERMONS" indicates that this sin directly attacks the good God [le bon Dieu]. Saint Augustine tells us: "We blaspheme when we attribute to the good God [le bon Dieu] something that he does not have or that does not suit him, or that which is appropriate, or finally, when we attribute to ourselves what suits God, and which is due only to him. » I therefore say that we blaspheme: 1° when we say that the good Lord is not just to make some so rich and who have everything in abundance, while so many others are so miserable that they barely have bread to eat; 2° that it is not as good as people say; since he leaves so many people in contempt and infirmities, while others are loved and respected by everyone; 3° or by saying that the good Lord does not see everything, that he does not pay attention to what is happening on earth; 4° again by saying: "If the good Lord shows mercy to such and such, he is not just, he has done too much; » 5° or, when we make some loss, and we lose our temper against the good Lord, saying: "Ah! How unhappy I am! the good Lord cannot do more to me! I think he doesn't know me in the world, or if he does, it's only to make me suffer! » It is also blasphemy to mock the Blessed Virgin and the saints, saying: "Here is one who does not have much power: I have prayed so many prayers, I have never obtained anything. » Saint Thomas also tells us that blasphemy is an insulting, outrageous word against the good God [le bon Dieu] or against the saints: which is done in four ways. By affirmation, by saying: "The good Lord is cruel and unjust to allow me to suffer so many evils, to slander me in this way, to allow me to lose this money or this lawsuit. Ah! that I am unhappy- rcux Everything perishes at home, I can have nothing; while everything succeeds with others. » 2° We blaspheme by saying that the good Lord is not omnipotent, and that we can do something without him. It was this blasphemy that Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, uttered when he besieged the city of Jerusalem, saying that despite the good Lord he would take the city. He mocked God, saying that he was not powerful enough to prevent him from entering and setting everything ablaze. But the good Djieu, to punish this wretch for his blasphemy and show him that he was all-powerful, sent him an angel who, in a single night, killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. The king, the next day, seeing his entire army slaughtered, without knowing by whom, completely terrified, fled to Nineveh, where he himself was killed by his two children. 3 "We blaspheme when we attribute to a creature what is due only to God, like those wretches who will say to an infamous creature who will be the object of their passion: "I love you with all the tenderness of my heart... I am so attached to you, that I adore you" Crime which is horrifying, and yet very common, at least in action. 4° We blaspheme, saying: "Ah! S... N... of D..." This is horrifying! This sin is so great and so terrible in the eyes of God that it brings all kinds of misfortune to the earth. The Jews had such a horror of blasphemy that, when they heard someone blaspheming, they tore their clothes. They did not even dare to pronounce this word, they called it: Blessing. The holy man Job was so afraid that his children had blasphemed, that he offered sacrifices to the Lord in case they had blasphemed... Saint Augustine says that those who blaspheme

6th Sunday after Pentecost — On Holy Communion

(Jesus Christ) being in heaven, are more cruel (than those who crucified him) being on earth. The evil thief blasphemed Jesus Christ while on the cross, saying: "If he is Almighty, let him deliver himself and us too. » The prophet Nathan said to King David: "Because you have caused the name of the good God [le bon Dieu] to be blasphemed, your child will die, and punishment will not leave your house for the rest of your life. » The good Lord tells us: "Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord, I want him to be put to death. » We read in Holy Scripture that a man was brought to Moses who had blasphemed. Moses consulted the Lord, who told him that it was necessary to take him into a field and put him to death: that is to say, knock him out with

stones. We can say that blasphemy is truly the language of hell. Saint Louis, King of France, so abhorred this crime that he ordered that all blasphemers would be branded with a red hot iron on the forehead. Having brought him a bourgeois from Paris who had blasphemed, several wanted to request his pardon; but the king told them that he would die himself to destroy this accursed sin], and ordered that he be punished. The Emperor Justin had the tongues torn out of those who had had the misfortune to commit such a great crime. During the reign of King Robert, the kingdom of France was overwhelmed with all kinds of misfortunes, and the good Lord revealed to a saint that as long as the blasphemies lasted, the punishments would last. A law was passed, which condemned all those who blasphemed to have their tongues pierced with a hot iron for the first time, and (ordered) that, the second time, they would be put to death. Be careful, my brethren, that if blasphemy reigns in your homes, everything will perish. Saint Augustine tells us that blasphemy is a greater sin than perjury; because, he tells us, by perjury, we take the name of the good God [le bon Dieu] as witness to a false thing, instead of by blasphemy, we say a false thing about the good God [le bon Dieu]. What a crime! Who among us has ever been able to understand it? Saint Thomas also tells us that there is another kind of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which is committed in three ways: 1° by attributing the works of the good God [le bon Dieu] to the demon, as did the Jews, who said that Jesus Christ cast out demons in the name of the prince of demons; as did the tyrants and executioners, who attributed to magic and the devil the miracles that the saints performed. 2° We blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, Saint Augustine tells us, “when we die in final impenitence. » Impenitence is a spirit of blasphemy; since the remission of our sins is through charity, which is the Holy Spirit. 3° When we do actions which are directly opposed to the goodness of God, as when we despair of our salvation, and we do not want to take all the means to obtain it; as when we are angry that others receive (more graces) than us. Be careful never to indulge in these kinds of sins, because they are so dreadful. We treat the good God [le bon Dieu] as unjust, saying that he gives more to others than to us. Have you not blasphemed, my brethren, by saying that there is Providence only for the rich and the wicked? Have you not blasphemed, when some loss befalls you, by saying: “But what have I done to the good Lord that is more than anyone else, that I have suffered so much misfortune? » — What you have done, my friend, look up and you will see that you have crucified him. Don't you have blasphemed again by saying that you are too tempted, that you (can) not do otherwise, that this is your fate... Eh! what, my brethren, you don't think about it?... it's because the good Lord would have made you vicious, angry, hotheaded, fornicators, adulterers, blasphemers! You do not have the faith of original sin which degraded man from the state of righteousness and justice, in which we were first created. It is stronger than you... But, my friend, religion does not come to your aid to make you aware of all the original corruption? And you dare, wretch, to blaspheme again against the one who gave it to you as the greatest gift he could give you! Have you not yet blasphemed against the Blessed Virgin and the saints? have you not mocked their virtues, their penances, and their miracles? Alas! in this unhappy century, how many impious people do we find who carry their impiety to the point of despising the saints who are in heaven and the righteous who are on earth; number of people who mock the austerities that the saints have performed, and who want neither to serve the good God [le bon Dieu], nor to allow others to serve him. See again, my brethren, if you have not made the children repeat your swearing and blasphemy. Ah! unhappy, what are the punishments that await you in the other life! But, you will ask me, what difference is there between blasphemy and the denial of God? There is, my brethren, a big difference between blasphemies and denials of God. Speaking of denial, I do not mean those who deny the good God [le bon Dieu] by leaving the true religion: we call these people renegades, or apostates. But I want to talk about those who, in

Speaking, they have this accursed habit, out of anger and out of anger, of denying the holy name of God: like a person who loses in a deal he makes, or at a game, he loses his temper against God, as if wanting to make people believe that he is the cause. When this happens to you, the good Lord must wipe away all the fury of your anger, as if he were the cause of your loss, or of the accident that happened to you. Ah! unhappy, the one who took you from nothing, who preserves you and who continually fills you with good things, you still

dare to despise him, profane his holy name and deny him; whereas, if he had listened to his justice, you would have been lost in hell a long time ago! We usually see that a person who has the misfortune to commit these serious crimes comes to an unhappy end. It is recorded in the story that there was a man who was sick and reduced to poverty. A missionary having entered his home to (see) him and confess him, the sick man said to him: “Ah! my father, the good Lord punishes me for my anger, my outbursts, my blasphemies and my denials of God. I have been ill for a long time, I am extremely poor, all my good has come to a bad end; my children despise me and abandon me, they are worthless, because of the bad examples I gave them; I have been suffering on this poor pallet for a long time; my tongue is all rotten, I can't swallow anything without feeling incredible pain. Alas! my father, I fear that after having suffered a lot in this world, I will still have to suffer in the next life. » We see even today that these swearers and deniers of the holy name of God almost always end in unhappy endings. Be careful, my brethren, if you have this bad habit, (you must) quickly correct, fear that if you do not do penance in this world, you will do it in hell. Never lose sight of the fact that your tongue should only be used to pray to the good Lord and sing his praises. If you have (the) bad custom (of swearing), you must often pronounce the holy name of Jesus with great respect, to purify your lips. 4° If, now, you ask me what is meant by curse and by imprecation: it is, my brethren, in a moment of anger or despair, to curse a person, a thing or an animal; it is wanting to annihilate her or make her unhappy. The Holy Spirit tells us that he who often has a curse in his mouth must fear that the good Lord will grant him what he wishes. There are some who always have the devil in their mouth, who give him everything that annoys them. If an animal, while working, does not go as they want, they curse it, or give it to the devil. There are some who, when the weather is bad, say: “Cursed weather, cursed rain, cursed cold! ah! cursed children 1..." Never forget that the Holy Spirit tells us that a curse pronounced in vain and lightly, will fall on someone. Saint Thomas tells us that if we pronounce a curse against someone, it is a mortal sin, if we wish what we say. Saint Augustine tells us that a mother had cursed her children, who were seven in number; they were all possessed by the demon. We see that several children, having been cursed by their parents, had been crippled and miserable all their lives. We read that there was once a mother whose daughter had made her angry, she said to her: "I would like your arm to dry up." Indeed,

And this child's arm dried up almost immediately (1). Married people must take care never to curse each other. There are some who, if they are unhappy in their household, curse the wife, the children, the parents and those who interfered in the marriage. Alas! my friend, all your misfortune comes from the fact that you entered it with a conscience completely covered in sin. Think about this before the good Lord, and you will see that it is the truth. Workers must never curse their work, nor those who make them work; Besides, your curses do not make your affairs go better: on the contrary, if you had patience, (if you knew) how to offer all your sorrows to the good God [le bon Dieu], you (would gain a lot) for heaven. Have you not yet cursed the instruments you use to work, saying: “Cursed spade, cursed billhook, cursed plow! » and the rest. Here is my brethren, who brings all kinds of curses to your animals, your work and your land, which are often ravaged by hail, or rain and frost. Have you not cursed yourself: “Ah! if, at least, I had never seen the day!... if I had died while coming (to the world)!... Ah! if I were still in nothingness!..." Alas! what sins, a good part of which do not accuse themselves at all, and do not even think about them! I will tell you again that you must never curse your children, your animals, your work, or the weather, because in all of this, you curse because the good God [le bon Dieu] does his holy will. Children must take care never to give their parents occasion to curse them, which is the (î) There are still these disguised swearings by saying: S....di, it is as if you were saying: S...God. (Note of the Venerable.)

greatest of all misfortunes; often a child cursed by his parents is cursed by the good Lord. When someone does something to you that makes you angry, well! instead of giving it to the devil, would you not do better to say to him: “May the good Lord bless you!” Then you would truly be the good servants of the good God [le bon Dieu], who return good for evil. There would still be (to speak to you), on this commandment, vows that we make. We must be careful never to make wishes without consulting. There are people who, when

they are ill, devote themselves to all the saints, and then do not take the trouble to fulfill their vows. You still have to see if you have done them properly, that is to say, being in a state of grace, if you have them on Sundays, the holidays of obligation. Alas! how many sins are committed in these vows which, far from pleasing the good Lord, can only offend Him! If you asked me why there are so many now who swear, who make false oaths, who utter curses and dreadful imprecations and denials of God; I would tell you that those who indulge in these kinds of horrors are those who have neither faith, nor religion, nor conscience, nor virtue, they are people partly abandoned by the good Lord. How happier we would be if we had the happiness of using our language, which was consecrated to the good God [le bon Dieu] through holy Baptism, only to pray to a God so good, so beneficent, and to sing his praises! Since this is why the good Lord gave us a language, let us try, my brethren, to dedicate it to him; so that after this life, we will have the happiness of going to bless him throughout eternity in heaven. This is what I wish you.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On Communion.

Panis quem ego dabo, caro mea est pro mundivita. The bread that I will give you is my own flesh for the life of the world. (S. John, vi> 52.)

Which of us, my brethren, could ever have understood that Jesus Christ would have carried his love towards his creatures to the point of giving them his adorable Body and his precious Blood to serve as nourishment for our souls, if it were not he himself who tells us so? What! My brethren, a soul feeds on its Savior!... and this as many times as it desires!... 0 abyss of goodness and love of a God for his creatures!... Saint Paul tells us, my brethren, that the Savior, by clothing himself in our flesh, hid his divinity and carried humiliation to the point of annihilation. But, by instituting the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, he veiled his very humanity, he only revealed the depths of his mercy. Oh! My brethren, (see) what the love of a God for his creatures is capable of!... No, my brethren, of all the sacraments, there is none that can be compared to that of the Eucharist. In that of Baptism we receive, it is true, the quality of children of God and, therefore, we are partakers of his eternal kingdom; in that of Penance, the wounds of our soul are healed and the friendship with our God is restored to us; but in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, not only do we receive the application of his precious Blood; but still, the author of all grace. Saint John tells us that Jesus Christ, having loved men from the very beginning, found the way to ascend to heaven without leaving the earth: he took bread in his holy and venerable hands, blessed it and changed it into his Body; he took wine and changed it into his precious Blood, and gave to all the priests, in the person of his apostles, the power to perform the same miracle, whenever they pronounced the same words; so that through this miracle of love, he could stay with us, serve us as food, comfort us and keep us company. “He,” he tells us, “who eats my flesh and drinks my blood will live forever; but he who does not eat my flesh and drink my blood will not have life in him. " Oh! My brethren, what happiness for a Christian to aspire to such a great honor as to feed on the bread of angels!... But, alas! how few there are who understand it!... Ah! My brethren, if we understood the greatness of the happiness we have in receiving Jesus Christ, would we not continually work to deserve it? To give you an idea of ■■the greatness of this happiness, I will show you 1° how great is the happiness of the one who receives Jesus Christ in holy communion, and 2°, the fruits that we must draw from it.

I. You all know, my brethren, that the first disposition to receive this great sacrament worthily is

E to have carefully examined his conscience, after having implored the light of the Holy Spirit; and to have confessed his sins, with all the circumstances which can (make) them more serious or change their nature, making them known such as God will make them known to us when he judges us. It is to feel great pain at having committed them, and even to be ready to sacrifice everything we hold dear rather than commit them again. Finally, it is to have a great desire to unite ourselves to Jesus Christ. See the eagerness of the wise men to seek Jesus Christ in his manger; see the Blessed Virgin; see Saint Magdeleine (how) she hastens to seek

the risen Savior. I do not want, my brethren, to undertake to show you all the greatness of this sacrament, this is not given to a man; you would have to be God himself to tell you the grandeur of these wonders; for what will astonish us throughout all eternity is that we, being so miserable, should have received such a great God. However, my brethren, to give you an idea, I will show you that Jesus Christ never passed through a place, during his mortal life, without pouring out his most abundant blessings, and, consequently, how great and precious must be the goods received by those who are so happy to receive him in holy communion; or that, if we put it better, all our happiness in this world consists of receiving Jesus Christ in holy communion; which is very easy to understand: because holy communion is profitable, not only to our soul by nourishing it, but also to our body, as we will see. We read in the Gospel that Jesus Christ, entering in the house of Saint Elizabeth, although he was confined in his mother's womb, the mother and the child were filled with the Holy Spirit, and Saint John was even purified from original sin, and the mother cried out: “Ah! where does a happiness come from so great that the mother of my God deigns to come to me? » I leave you to think, my brethren, how much greater is the happiness of the one who receives Jesus Christ in holy communion, not in his house, like Elizabeth, but in the depths of his heart; master to keep him, no, six months, like Elisabeth, but all our lives. When the holy old man Simeon, who for so many years had been sighing for the happiness of (seeing) Jesus Christ, only received him into his hands; he was so transported with joy and so delighted that, no longer possessing himself, he cried out in his transports of love: "O Lord, what can I desire now on earth, since my eyes have seen the Savior of the world?... I can now die in peace" But once again, my brethren, what difference between receiving him in his arms, contemplating him for a few moments, and receiving him in his heart?... 0 my Dicul how little we know our happiness!... When Zacchaeus, hearing about Jesus Christ, greatly desired to see him, being prevented by the crowd of the world rushing from all sides, he climbed a tree. But the Lord, seeing him, said to him: “Zacchaeus, come down, because I want to go and stay with you today. » He hastens to go down and prepares everything he can to receive the Savior. Entering his house, he said: “Today this house received salvation. " Zacchaeus, seeing the great charity of Jesus Christ in having come to stay with him, said: "Lord, I will give half of my property to the poor, and I will repay double to all those to whom I have done any wrong. » So that, my brethren, the single visit of Jesus Christ, of a great sinner made him a great saint, since he had the happiness of persevering until death. We read in the Gospel that, when Jesus Christ entered the house of Saint Peter, he begged him to heal his little mother, who was suffering from a violent fever. Jesus Christ ordered the fever to leave her, and she was instantly healed, to the point that she served them at table. See again this woman, who was suffering from an issue of blood, she said to herself: “If I could, if I only had the good fortune to look at the hem of her dress, I would be cured; » and, in fact, when the Savior passed, she threw herself at his feet and was perfectly healed. Who was the cause that the Savior went to resurrect Lazarus, who had been dead for four days?... Was it not because he had often received him in his home that he showed such great attachment to him that he shed tears? Some asked for life, others for healing of their entire body; and no one withdrew without having obtained what he desired. I leave you to think if he is willing to grant everything we ask of him. What torrents of graces must he not grant, when it is he himself who comes into our hearts, to establish his abode there for the rest of our days? Oh! My brethren, what happiness for the one who receives Jesus Christ in holy communion, being well disposed! Ah! who will ever be able to understand the happiness of the Christian who receives Jesus Christ in his heart, who, thereby, becomes a little heaven; he alone is as rich as all the sky together. But, you will ask me, why do most

Are Christians so insensitive to this happiness that many even despise it, and mock those who are so happy to receive it? Alas, my God, what misfortune is comparable to this! It is because these poor unfortunates have never known or tasted the grandeur of this happiness. Indeed, my brethren, a mortal man, a creature, feeds himself, is satisfied with his God, makes him his daily bread!... oh miracle of miracles! O love of loves!... O happiness of happiness, which is not even known to the angels!... O my God! what joy for a Christian who has faith, who, upon rising from the Holy Table, departs with all heaven in his heart!... Ah! happy house

where these Christians live!... what respect should we not have for them, all day long. To have, in one's house, a second tabernacle where the good Lord truly resided in body and soul!... But, perhaps you will again tell me, if this happiness is so great, why then does the Church command us to receive communion once every year? — This commandment, my brethren, is not for good Christians, it is only for cowardly and indifferent Christians, for the salvation of their poor souls. From the beginning of the Church, the greatest punishment that could be imposed on Christians was to deprive them of this happiness; every time they had the happiness of attending holy mass, they had the happiness of receiving communion. My God! how can it be that Christians stay three, four or five and six months without giving this heavenly food to their poor loved one? They let her die of misery! My God! what misfortune and what blindness!... having so many remedies to cure it and food so capable of con-

Preserve health!... Alas! My brethren, let us say it with a sigh, You spare nothing for a body which sooner or later will be destroyed and eaten by worms; and a soul created in the image of God, a soul which is immortal, is despised and treated with the utmost cruelty!... The Church, already seeing - how much Christians lost sight of the salvation of their poor urns, hoping that the fear of sin would make them open their eyes, made them a command which would oblige them to receive communion three times each year, at Christmas, at Easter and at Pentecost. But, subsequently, seeing that Christians were becoming ever more insensitive to their misfortune, (the Church) ended up only requiring them to approach their God once a year. 0 my God! what misfortune and what blindness that a Christian is forced by laws to seek his happiness! So that, my brethren.when you M

If you had no other sins on your conscience than that of not celebrating your Easter, you would be damned. But tell me, my brethren, what profit can you find in leaving your soul in such an unhappy state?... You are peaceful and content, you say, if you are to be believed; but, tell me where you can find your peace and contentment? Is it because your soul is only waiting for the moment when death strikes it to be dragged to hell? Is it because the demon is master of us? My God! what blindness and what misfortune for those who have lost their faith! Why again, my brethren, has the Church established the use of blessed bread, which is distributed during Holy Mass, and which, by the blessing that the Church gives it, is distinguished from ordinary things? If you don't know, my brethren, I will (tell you). It's to console sinners, and at the same time to cover them with confusion. I say, it is to console sinners, because, at least, by taking this bread which is blessed, it allows them to have a share in the happiness of those who receive Jesus Christ, by uniting with them by a great desire to receive him and a very lively faith. But also, it is to cover them with confusion; in fact, what confusion (if their faith was not yet extinguished), to see a father or a mother, a brother or a sister, a neighbor or a neighbor, to the holy table, to feed on the adorable body of Jesus Christ, and to see oneself deprived of it! 0 my God what a misfortune, and all the greater because we do not understand!... Yes, my brethren, we receive all kinds of blessings for time and eternity; in fact, if I asked a child: “Should we want to receive communion?” “Yes,” he would reply. —And why? — Because of the excellent effects that holy communion produces in us. — But what are these effects? — He would say to me: holy communion unites us intimately to Jesus Christ, it weakens our inclination to evil, it increases in us the life of grace, it is for us the principle and the pledge of eternal life [le gage de la vie éternelle]. » I say 1° that holy communion unites us intimately with Jesus Christ; union so intimate, M F., that Jesus Christ himself tells us: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, abides in me and I (in him); my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink; so that, my brethren, through holy communion, the adorable blood of Jesus Christ truly flows in our veins, his flesh is truly mixed with ours; which makes Saint Paul say: “This

It is not me who acts, who thinks; but it is Jesus Christ who acts and thinks in me. It is not I, he tells us, who lives, but it is Jesus Christ who lives in me. » Saint Leo tells us that, when we have the great happiness of receiving communion, we truly contain the adorable body and the precious blood of Jesus Christ and his divinity within ourselves. Tell me, do you understand the greatness of this happiness? Ah! no, no, my

brethren, it will only be in heaven that we will understand it. 0 my God! a creature enriched with such a gift!... 2° I say that by receiving Jesus Christ in holy communion, we receive an increase in graces, which is easy to understand; since by receiving Jesus Christ we receive the source of all T kinds of spiritual blessings, which take birth in our souls. Indeed, my brethren, he who receives Jesus Christ feels, in him, faith being revived, we are more penetrated by the truths of our holy religion; we feel better the greatness of sin and its dangers; the thought of judgment frightens us more, the loss of God becomes more sensitive to us. By receiving Jesus Christ, our spirit is strengthened; we are firm in battle, our intentions are purer in everything we do, and our love burns more and more. The thought that we have Jesus Christ in our hearts, the pleasure we experience in this happy moment seems to unite and bind us so much to God, that our heart can only think and desire God alone. The thought of God's perfect possession fills us so much that our life seems long; we envy, not those who live long, but those who leave well hour to go and reunite with God forever. Everything that announces to us the destruction of our body rejoices us, Voila, RI. F., the first effect that holy communion produces in us, when we are so happy as to receive Jesus Christ worthily. 3° We say that holy communion weakens our inclination to evil, which is very easy to understand. The precious blood of Jesus Christ, which flows in our veins, and his adorable body which mingles with ours, can do no less than destroy or, at least, greatly weaken the inclination to may which the sin of Adam had given rise to. This is so true, my brethren, that when one has just received Jesus Christ, one feels a new taste for the things of heaven and a new contempt for created things. Tell me, my brethren, how do you expect pride to find entry into a heart which has just received a God, who, having descended into his kingdom, has humbled himself to the point of annihilation? Could he agree to believe that, in himself, he is something? On the contrary, will he be able to find enough to humiliate and despise himself? A heart which has just received a God who is so pure, who is holiness itself, does it not feel born within it the most execrable horror for every sin of impurity? Would he not rather be ready to let himself be cut into pieces than to consent, I am not saying to a bad (action), but to a bad thought? A heart which has just received, in holy communion, the One to whom everything belongs, and who spent his life in the greatest poverty; who had not remembered where to rest his holy head, if not on a handful of straw; who died naked on a cross; tell me, (this heart) could it well attach itself to the goods of the world by seeing the way in which th VI SUNDAY AT PIiÈS LA TENTECÔTE. 251

Did Jesus Christ behave? Could a tongue which, for a moment, has been so happy as to carry its Creator and its Savior dare to use dirty words, impure kisses? No, probably, she would never dare to do it. Eyes which, recently, so ardently desired to contemplate their Creator who is purer than the rays of the sun, could they, my brethren, after such happiness, fixate on impure objects: this seems not to be possible. Could a heart, which has just served as a throne for Jesus Christ, cast him out, to place sin there or rather, the devil himself? See even: a heart, which would once be seized by the chaste embraces of its savior, could find no other happiness than in him. Could a Christian who has just received Jesus Christ who died for his enemies be angry with those who have caused him some pain? No, undoubtedly; his pleasure will be to do them as much good as he can. Also Saint Bernard said to his religious: “My children, if you feel less inclined to evil, and more to good, thank Jesus Christ, who grants you this grace in holy communion. » 4° We say that holy communion is for us the pledge of eternal life [le gage de la vie éternelle], so that holy communion assures us of heaven; these are deposits that heaven sends to us to tell us that it will one day be our home; and, moreover, Jesus Christ will resurrect our (bodies all the more) glorious, in proportion as we have often and worthily received him. Oh! My brethren, if we could understand how much Jesus Christ loves to come into our heart!... Once he is there, he would never want to leave it, he can no longer separate himself from us, during our life or after our death!... We read in the life of Saint Thérèse, who appeared after her death to a nun, in the company of Our Lord; this nun, surprised to see Jesus Christ appear with (her), asked Jesus Christ why he appeared like that to her. The Savior himself replied that Thérèse, during her life, had been so united to him by holy communion that he could not separate himself from her. No, my brethren, we have no actions which beautify our bodies more for heaven than holy communion. Oh! My brethren, what glory will be had

by those who have received communion often and worthily during their life!,,. The adorable body of Jesus Christ and his precious blood, which will be spilled throughout our body, will be like a beautiful diamond in gauze, which, although hidden, only stands out better. If you doubt this, listen to the saint who tells us that he who receives Jesus Christ in holy communion is so united to him that they are like two pieces of wax that are melted and which end up becoming one, and which are so mixed and confused together that we can no longer disentangle them. Oh! My brethren, what happiness for a Christian who understands this!... Saint Catherine of Siena cried out in her transports of love: “0 my God, oh my Savior! ah! what excess of charity and goodness for creatures to give to you with such eagerness. And, by giving yourself, you give everything you have and everything you are! My tender Savior, she said to him, I beseech you, water my poor soul with your precious blood, nourish my body with your adorable body, so that my body and my soul are only for (you), and only aspire to please you and to possess you." Saint Magdclcine de Pazzi tells us that we must not

There would only be one communion, made with tender love and a very pure heart, to elevate us to the highest perfection. Blessed Victoire said to those she saw languishing on the path to heaven: “0 my children, why do you drag yourself along the paths of salvation? Why do you have so little courage to work, to deserve the great happiness of sitting at the Holy Table and eating the bread of angels which gives so much strength to the weak? Oh! if you knew how much this heavenly bread softens the miseries of life. Oh! if, once, you had tasted how good and beneficial Jesus Christ is for those who receive him in holy communion!... Go, my children, eat this bread of the strong, and you will return filled with joy and courage; you will no longer desire anything but suffering, torment and combat, to please Jesus Christ. » Saint Catherine of Genoa was so hungry for this heavenly bread, that she could not see it in the hands (of the priest) without feeling herself dying of love, so great was the desire she had to possess it; she exclaimed: “Ah! Lord, come into me! my God, come to me, I can't hold it any longer! Ah! my God, come, please, into the depths of my heart; no", my God, I can no longer hold on to it. You are all my joy, all my happiness and all the nourishment of my soul." Yes, my brethren, if we could conceive a little of the greatness of this happiness, we could only desire life as much as we would have the happiness of making Jesus Christ our daily bread. and our actions would not tend that to make ourselves more worthy every day (to receive it.) IL However, my brethren, if we have the happiness of receiving so many goods through holy communion, we must, to deserve all these gifts, also work, on our part, to make ourselves worthy of them; what we are going to see in a very sensitive way. If I asked a child what are the dispositions necessary to communicate well: that is to say, to worthily receive the adorable Body of Jesus Christ and his precious Blood, in order to receive the graces granted to all those who are well disposed, he would answer me: “There are (two kinds) of dispositions, some which concern the soul, others which concern the body. » As Jesus Christ comes both in our body and in our soul, we must therefore make them both worthy of such happiness. I say that the first disposition is ccllo which looks at the body; that is to say, being on an empty stomach, not having eaten or drunk anything, not having put anything in your mouth, not even..., since midnight. If you doubt that it was after midnight, you must postpone your communion to another day. There are some who take communion although they doubt whether it was after midnight; you expose yourself to committing a great sin, or at least, you expose yourself to not obtaining any fruit from your communion, which is a great misfortune, even if it were the last day of Easter, or of a jubilee or a great feto; that is to say, it should never be done, under any pretext whatsoever. There are women who taste their children's food, who put it in their mouths or who think they are not swallowing anything. You don't trust it any more; because it is very difficult to do these things without anything going down your throat.

2" Jo says that one must have clean clothing, I do not mean rich, but only one that is neither filthy nor torn: that is to say, washed and mended, unless one has no other. (There are some who do not have anything to change), or who, out of laziness, do not do it; do not change their linen, that is to say their shirt. For those who do not have any, there is no harm; but those who have them, do evil, since it is a lack of respect for Jesus Christ, who wants to come into their hearts. You must have your hair combed, your face and your hands

clean; you must never come to the Holy Table without having any stockings, good or bad. or a dance; I don't know how they can go and receive a humiliated and despised God with all their display of vanity. My God, my God, what a contradiction!... The third provision is the purity of the body, to show us that, to receive it worthily, we must approach the purity of the angels as much as we can. impure, must be careful not to go and eat the bread of angels, because the Lord would punish them. In the beginnings of the Church, a person who had sinned against the holy virtue of purity was condemned to remain three years without receiving communion; and, if he fell back into communion, he was deprived of it (for) seven years: which is easy to understand, since this sin defiles the body and the body.

which contains it, must be purer than the rays of the sun. Our entire exterior must announce to all those who see us that we are preparing for something great. You will agree with me that if, to communicate, the dispositions of the body are already so necessary, I leave you to think how those of the soul are even more so to merit the graces that Jesus Christ comes to bring to us by coming into us through holy communion. Yes, my brethren, when we go to the Holy Table, if we want to receive Jesus Christ with good dispositions, our conscience must not reproach us for anything; we must be convinced that we have taken all the time necessary to examine ourselves, in order to know our sins well; our conscience must not reproach us for the accusation we have made of our sins and we must have a true resolution to do, with the grace of God, everything that depends on us so as not to fall back; we must have a great desire to fulfill, as well as we can, the penance that has been given to us. To fully understand the grandeur of the action that we are going to do, we must begin by looking at the Holy Table as the tribunal of Jesus Christ, where we will be judged. If we have had the misfortune of not properly accusing our sins, of having diverted or disguised some of them; let us be fully convinced that it is not Jesus Christ that we are going to lodge, but the devil. Oh! My brethren, what a horror to place Jesus Christ even at the feet of the devil!,.. We read in the Gospel, that when Jesus Christ instituted the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, it was in an apartment

Very clean and well furnished building, to show us how much we must take care to embellish our soul with all kinds of virtues to receive Jesus Christ in holy communion. And, even more, before giving his adorable Body and his precious Blood, Jesus Christ got up from the table and went to wash the feet of his apostles, in order to make us understand how much we must be free from sins, even those

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lighter, that is, having no affection for venial sins. The perfect renunciation of ourselves, in everything that is not contrary to our conscience; make no difficulty in speaking to those who have caused us some pain, nor in seeing them, carrying them in the depths of our hearts... Let us say even better, my brethren, when we are going to receive the body of Jesus Christ in holy communion, we must feel able to die and to appear with confidence before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Saint Augustine tells us: “If you want to communicate in such a way as to please Jesus Christ, you must be detached from everything that can even slightly displease the good God [le bon Dieu]. » Saint John Chrysostom tells us: “When you have fallen into some mortal sin, you must confess it immediately; but you must stay some time without approaching the Holy Table to have time to do penance. Deplore, he tells us, the misfortune of those people who, after having confessed great mortal sins, immediately ask for holy communion, believing that confession alone is enough. We must still mourn our sins and do penance for them, before having the happiness of receiving Jesus Christ in our hearts. » Saint Paul tells us all “to purify our soul well from its sins before eating the bread of angels, which is the Body ado- rable of Jesus Christ and his precious Blood; because, if our soul were not very pure, we would attract all kinds of misfortune for this world and for the next. » Saint Bernard tells us: “To receive communion worthily, we must do like the serpent, when he wants to drink at his ease. In order for the water to benefit him, he leaves his venom. For us, we must do the same: when we want to receive Jesus Christ, we must leave our venom which is sin, which is the poison of our soul and of Jesus Christ; but, this great saint tells us, we

must leave him for good. Oh! my children, he tells us, do not poison Jesus Christ in your hearts! » Yes, my brethren, those who go to the Holy Table without having thoroughly purified their hearts, must greatly fear experiencing the same punishment as this servant who dared to sit at the table without wearing the nuptial robe. The master ordered his officers to take him, bind him hand and foot [pieds et poings liés], and throw him into darkness. Likewise, my brethren, Jesus Christ will say at the hour of death, to those who have the misfortune of receiving him into their hearts without being converted: “Why did you have the audacity to receive me into your heart, being stained with so many sins? » No, my brethren, let us never forget that to receive communion you must be converted and with a true resolution to persevere. We have seen that when Jesus Christ wanted to give his adorable Body and his precious Blood to his apostles, to show them how pure they had to be to receive it, he went so far as to wash their feet. This is because he wants to show us that we can never be sufficiently purified from our sins, even venial ones. It is true that venial sin does not make our communions unworthy; but it is because we benefit almost nothing from so much happiness.

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The proof is very clear, see how many communions we have made during our lives; well! Have we become better? — No, without a doubt, and the real cause of this is that we almost always keep our bad habits, and that we do not correct one more time than the other. We abhor these great sins which bring death to our soul; but for all these little impatience, these murmurs when some misery or some sorrow happens to us, some contradiction, these little detours in what we say: it hardly costs us. You agree with me that, despite so many confessions and communions, you are still the same kids, that your confessions for many years have been nothing other than a repetition (of the same sins) which, although venial, do not make you lose almost all the merit of your communions. We hear you say, with good reason, that you are not worth more at one time than at another; but who is stopping you from correcting your faults?... If you are always the same, it is because you do not want to make a few small efforts to correct yourself; you do not want to suffer anything and not be contradicted in anything; you would like everyone to like you and have a good opinion of you, which is very difficult. Let us try to work, my brethren, to destroy everything that can displease Jesus Christ even slightly, and we will see how our communions will make us take great steps towards heaven; and the more we do, the more we will feel detached from sin and carried to God. Saint Thomas tells us that the purity of Jesus Christ is so great that the slightest venial sin prevents him from uniting with us as intimately as he would like.

To receive Jesus Christ well, one must have great purity of intention in the mind and heart. There are some who think of the world, that they will either be esteemed or despised: that is worthless. Others, it's out of habit to go there on these days. These, my brethren, are poor communions, since they lack purity of intention. My brethren, what should lead us to approach the Holy Table: it is 1° because Jesus Christ commands us to do so under penalty of not having eternal life; 2° that we greatly need it to strengthen ourselves against the devil; 3° to detach ourselves from life and attach ourselves to God. We say that to have the great happiness of receiving Jesus Christ, a happiness so great that all the angels envy us (they can love and adore him like us, but they do not have the happiness of receiving him like us, which seems to elevate us above the angels) From this, my brethren, I leave you to think with what purity, with what love, we must present ourselves to Jesus Christ to receive him. We must commune to receive the graces we need. If we need humility, patience and purity; well! My brethren, we will find all this in holy communion, and all the virtues necessary for a Christian, 4° We must go to the Holy Table, to unite ourselves to Jesus Christ, so that he himself changes us into others, which happens in all those who receive him holyly. If we commune often and worthily, our thoughts, our desires and also all our actions and steps have the same end as those of Jesus Christ when he was on earth. We love God, we are touched by spiritual miseries and even temporarily

Concerned about our neighbor, we do not think at all of attaching ourselves to the earth; our heart and our mind no longer think and breathe anything other than the sky. Yes, my brethren, to make a good communion,

you must have a lively faith touching this great mystery; this sacrament being a mystery of faith, we must truly believe that Jesus Christ is truly present in the holy Eucharist, that he is alive and glorious there as in heaven. Formerly, my brethren, before giving Holy Communion, the priest, holding the Holy Eucharist between his fingers, said out loud: “Believe, my brethren, that the adorable Body and precious Blood of Jesus Christ is truly in this sacrament. » Then all the faithful replied: “Yes, we believe it. » 0 what happiness for a Christian to come and sit at the table of virgins and eat the bread of the strong!... No, my brethren, (there is nothing) which makes us so formidable to the devil as holy communion, and, what is more, it preserves for us not only the purity of the soul, but also that of the body. See Saint Teresa, who had become so pleasing to God through holy communion, which she did so often and so worthily, that one day Jesus Christ appeared to her, and told her that she pleased him so much that, when there was no heaven, he would create one for her alone. We see in her life that one Easter Sunday, after Holy Communion, she was so delighted in God that, having come to herself, she felt her mouth full of the adorable blood of Jesus Christ which seemed to issue from her veins; which communicated to her so much sweetness that she thought she was dying of love. “I saw,” she told us, “my divine Savior who said to me: “My daughter, I want this adorable blood which causes you so much love to be used to save you; never fear

May you miss my mercy. When I shed this precious blood, I felt only pain and bitterness; but, as a law, in receiving it, he will only communicate it with gentleness and love. » Several times, when she had the great happiness of receiving communion, the angels descended in crowds from heaven and seemed to delight in uniting together to praise the Savior whom she had the happiness of carrying in her heart. Many times we have seen Saint Teresa taken by the angels from the Holy Table, they carried her to a high tribune. Oh! My brethren, if we had once fully understood how great this happiness is, we would not need to be asked to come and share this happiness. Saint Gcrtrude one day asked Jesus Christ what it was necessary (to do) to receive him as worthily as possible. Jesus Christ answered him that he must have as much love as all the saints together, and that his only desire would be rewarded. Do you want to know, my brethren, how you should behave when you want to have the happiness of receiving the good Lord? do like this good Christian who took communion every eight days; he used three in thanksgiving and three in preparation. Well! which prevents you from doing the same in all your actions for this. During this time, connect with Jesus Christ, who reigns in your heart; think that he will come to the altar, and that from there he will come into your heart to visit your soul and enrich it with all kinds of goods and happiness. We must implore the Blessed Virgin, the angels and the saints, so that they pray to the good God [le bon Dieu] for us, that we receive him as worthily as possible. On this day you must come earlier to Holy Mass, and hear it even better than other times. We must

Our spirit and our heart are constantly at the feet of the tabernacle, may they continually sigh after this happy moment, our thoughts must no longer be of this world, but all for heaven, and we must be so lost in the thought of God that we seem to be dead to the world. You must (have) your Hours or your Rosary and say your actions with as much fervor as you can, to rekindle in you faith, hope and a great love for Jesus Christ who will, in a moment, make your heart his tabernacle, or, if you want, a little heaven. My God, what happiness and what honor for wretches like us! We must show him great respect. To be so miserable!... But we hope that he will still have pity on us. After having said your actions, you must offer your communion for yourself or for others; you get up to go to the Holy Table with great modesty, which announces that you are going to do something great; you get on your knees and you strive to rekindle in yourself the faith that makes you feel the greatness of your happiness. Your mind and your heart must be entirely God's. You are careful not to turn your head, you hold your eyes half closed, your hands clasped, and you say your: “I confess to God. » If you wait to receive communion, you must excite yourself to a great love for Jesus Christ, by humbly praying that he deigns to come into your poor and miserable heart. After you have had the great joy of receiving communion, you must get up with modesty, return to your place, get on your knees and do not immediately pick up a book or your rosary; you need to talk for a moment with Jesus Christ, that you have

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2M SERMONS. happiness to have in your heart, where, for a quarter of an hour, he is in body and in urn, as during his mortal life. 0 infinite happiness Who is the one who will ever be able to understand it!... Alas! almost no one understands it 1... After you have asked the good Lord for all the graces you desire for yourself and for others, you must resume your Hours and continue. Having said your actions after communion, you must invite the Blessed Virgin, all the angels and all the saints to thank the good God [le bon Dieu] for you. You must be careful not to spit, at least a good half hour after Holy Communion. You should not leave immediately after Holy Mass, but stay a moment to ask the good Lord to strengthen you in your good resolutions. When you leave the church, you must not stop talking; but, thinking of the happiness you have in containing Jesus Christ, you must go home. If you have a little time between services, you should use it to do a good reading or to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to thank the good God [le bon Dieu] for the grace he gave you in the morning, and to talk about the affairs of the world as much as you can. You must watch over all your thoughts, your words and your actions so much that you preserve the grace of the good God [le bon Dieu] all your life. What (should we) conclude from this, my brethren?... Nothing other, except that all our happiness consists in leading a life worthy of receiving Jesus Christ often, since it is through this that we can hope for heaven, which I wish for you...

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On false and true Virtue.

Afructibus eorum cognoscetis eos. You will know them by their fruits. (S. Matth, vn, 16.)

Could Jesus Christ, my brethren, give us clearer and more certain proofs to make us know and distinguish good Christians from bad ones, than by telling us that we will know them, not by their words, but by their works. “A good tree,” he tells us, “cannot bear bad fruit, just as a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. » Yes, my brethren, a Christian who has only a false devotion, an affected virtue and which is only external, despite all the precautions he takes to counterfeit himself, will not delay letting the disturbances of his heart appear from time to time, either in his words or in his actions. No, my brethren, nothing so common as these apparently virtues; that is to say, this hypocrisy. What is all the more deplorable is that almost no one wants to recognize it. Will it be necessary, my brethren, to leave them in such an unhappy state which will surely lead them to hell? No, my brethren, no, let's at least try to make them aware of it. — Volume II I. 12 see something. But, my Dicul, who are those who will recognize themselves guilty? Alas! almost no one! So this instruction will still be to blind them further? However, despite this, my brethren, I will speak to you as if you should all benefit from it. To make you aware of the unfortunate state of these poor Christians, who, perhaps, damn themselves by doing good, not knowing well how to do it, I will show you 1° what are the conditions for having true virtue; 2° what are the faults of one who only has appearance. Listen carefully to this instruction, which can greatly serve you in everything you do in relation to God.

I. If you ask me, my brethren, why are there so few Christians who act solely with the aim of pleasing God? Here is the pure reason. The fact is that the majority of Christians are buried in the most terrible ignorance, that they do everything they do humanly. So that if you compared their intentions with those of the pagans, you would find no difference. Hey! my God, what good works lost for heaven! Others, who have a little more enlightenment, only seek the esteem of men, and try to counterfeit themselves as much as they can: their exterior seems to be good, while their interior is full of filth and duplicity. Yes, my brethren, we will see in the judgment that the majority of Christians have only had a religion of caprice or humor: that is to say, of inclinations, and that very few have sought God alone in what they have done. We say, 1° that a Christian who sincerely wants to work for his salvation must not be content with th do good works; but he still needs to know for whom he is doing them and how he is to do them. Secondly, we say that it is not enough to appear virtuous in the eyes of the world, but that one must also be virtuous in the heart. If, now, my brethren, you

ask me how we can know that a virtue is true and that it will lead us to heaven, my brethren, here it is: listen to it carefully, engrave it well in your heart; so that every action you do you may know whether it will be rewarded for heaven. I say, 1° that for an action to please God, it must have three conditions: the first, that it be interior and perfect; the second, that it be humble and without turning back on itself; the third, that it be constant and persevering; if in everything you do you find these conditions, you are sure to work for the sky. We have said that it must be internal: it is therefore not enough that it appears externally. No, undoubtedly, my brethren, it must take birth in the heart, and charity alone must be its soul and principle, since Saint Gregory tells us that everything God asks of us must be based on the love we owe to him; our exterior must therefore only be like an instrument to manifest what is happening inside us. Also, my brethren, whenever our words and our actions are not produced by the movement of our heart, we are only hypocrites in the eyes of God. Thirdly, we say that our virtue must be perfect: that is to say, it is not enough to attach ourselves to the practice of some virtues, because our inclination leads us to them; but we must embrace all, that is to say, all those who are compatible with our state. Saint Paul tells us that we must make abundant provisions of all kinds of good works for our sanctification. Let us go further, my brethren, and we will see how many people err in doing good and walk towards hell. There are some who take reassurance in some of the virtues that they practice, because their inclination leads them to do so, as for example: a mother will rely on the fact that she gives some alms, that she is assiduous in saying her prayers, in frequenting the sacraments, in even doing devotional readings; but she sees, without sorrow, her children moving away from the sacraments. His children do not have Easter; but this mother gives them permission from time to time to go to pleasures, dances, weddings and sometimes evenings; she likes to show off her daughters, she believes that if they do not frequent these places of debauchery, they will be unknown, that they will not be able to find a place to settle down. Yes, without doubt, they will be unknown; but to libertines; yes, my brethren, they will not find a place to settle with people who will mistreat them like vile slaves. But this mother likes to see them well dressed; but this mother likes to see them in the company of some young people who are richer than them. After a few prayers and some good works that she does, she believes she is on the path to heaven. Come on, mother, you are only blind and a hypocrite, you only have an appearance of virtue. You reassure yourself that you make a few visits to the Blessed Sacrament: without doubt, this is good; but your daughter is at the dance; but she is at the cabaret with libertines, and there is no kind of filth that they do not vomit up; but your daughter,

At night, she is in places where she should not be. Go, blind and reprobate mother, go out and leave your prayer; Don't you see that you are doing like the Jews, who bowed their knees before Jesus Christ to pretend to adore him? Eli! what, you come to worship the good God [le bon Dieu], while your children are after crucifying him! Poor blind man, you do not know what you say or what you do; your prayer is only an insult that you do to God. Start going for your. girl who loses her soul [perdre son âme]: then you will return to ask God for your conversion. A father believes that it is enough to maintain good order in his house, he does not want anyone to swear or utter dirty words: that is very good; but he has no scruples about letting his boys in on games, fairs and pleasures. But this same father lets his workers work on Sunday, under the slightest pretext, or even so as not to upset his harvesters or threshers. However, you see him in church worshiping the good God [le bon Dieu], even when prostrated; he tries to dismiss the slightest distractions. Tell me, my friend, with what eye do you think that the good Lord can look at these people? Come on, my friend, you are blind; go and instruct yourself in your duties, and then you will come and present your prayers to God. Do you not see that you are performing the functions of Pilate, who recognizes Jesus Christ and who condemns him? You will see this neighbor who is charitable, who gives alms, who is touched by the misery of his neighbor: that is good enough; but he lets his children live in the greatest ignorance; perhaps they don't even know what to do to be saved. Come on, my friend, you are blind; your alms and your sensitivity lead you with great strides to hell. This one has quite a few good qualities, he happily likes to be of service to everyone; but he can no longer tolerate his poor wife or his poor children, whom he overwhelms with insults

and perhaps even ill-treatment. Come on, my friend, your religion is worthless. This one thinks he is wise enough because he is not a blasphemer, a thief, nor even an immodest person; but he does not find it difficult to correct himself from these thoughts of hatred, revenge, envy and jealousy which trouble him almost every day. My friend, your religion can only ruin you. We will see others, who are of all practices of piety, who have great scruples about leaving some prayers that they are in the habit of saying; they will think themselves lost not to receive communion on certain days when they are used to doing so; but a little thing makes them impatient, makes them murmur; a word that has not been said as they would like gives rise to coldness in them; they find it difficult to see (their neighbor) with good grace, they like to have nothing to do with you, under different pretexts they avoid your company, they will find that we act badly towards them. Go, poor hypocrites, go and convert; then you will have recourse to the sacraments, which, in this state, without knowing it, you are only profaning with your misunderstood devotion. It is undoubtedly commendable for a person to correct his children when they offend the good Lord; but can we praise him for not correcting himself for the vices he repeats in his children? No, undoubtedly; this father only has a false religion which casts him into blindness. We can only praise a master who reprimands his servants for their vices; but can we praise it when we

He hears him swearing and blaspheming himself in something unfortunate that happens to him? No, my brethren, no, he is a man who never knew his religion or his duties. He will make a wise, educated man, he will take up the faults he sees in his neighbor: this is good; but what will you think of him seeing many more faults in him than in the one he corrects? “Where does this behavior come from,” Saint Augustine tells us, “if not from the fact that he is only a hypocrite, who has no knowledge of his religion. » Come on, my friend, you are only a Pharisee, all your virtues are only false virtues; everything you do, that you believe is right, only serves to deceive you. We will still see this young man attending services and even, perhaps, the sacraments; but we also see him frequenting cabarets and games. This young girl will also appear well, from time to time, at the holy table; but it will also appear in dances and assemblies where good Christians are never found. Come on, poor hypocrite, come on, ghost of a Christian, a day will come when you will see that you have only worked to ruin yourself. A Christian, my brethren, who wants to save himself is not content to observe a commandment, to fulfill one or two of his obligations; but he observes all the commandments of God, and then he fulfills all the obligations of his state. Secondly, we said that our virtue must be humble, without turning back on ourselves. Jesus Christ tells us never to do our actions with the intention of being praised by men: if we want to receive the reward, we (must) hide as much as we can the good that he has placed in us, lest the demon of pride take away the merit of good from us.

that we do. — But, perhaps, you think, the good that we do, we do it for the good Lord and not for the world. — My friend, I don't know: there are many who are wrong about that; I think it would be easy to show you that you only have an external religion, and not in your soul. Tell me, wouldn't you feel less pain if it was known that you fast on the days prescribed by the Church than if it was known that you do not fast? Wouldn't you feel less upset if someone saw you doing Vaumône than if they saw you taking something from your neighbor? Let's put the scandal aside. (Isn't it) that you would rather be seen praying than to hear you swear, (let's suppose you have done both)? Wouldn't you rather be seen praying or giving good advice to your children than if you were heard advising them to take revenge on their enemies? — Yes, without doubt, you will tell me, it would not be as painful. —And why is that? if not because we only have a false religion, and we are only hypocrites and nothing else. However we see that the saints did just the opposite; why again? Otherwise because they knew their religion, and they only sought to humiliate themselves; in order to draw upon them the mercies of the Lord. Alas, there are only poor Christians who have only a religion of inclinations, caprices and habits, and nothing else! But, you will tell me, that is a bit strong. — Yes, no doubt, it's a little strong; but it is none the less the truth. To give you an infinite horror of this accursed sin of hypocrisy, I will show you where this unfortunate sin con-

Educated by an example that is well worthy of being engraved in your hearts. We read in history that Saint Palemon and Saint Pachomius lived in great holiness. One night while they were keeping watch and had made the fire, a solitary man appeared who wanted to stay with them. Having received him near them to unite together to pray to the good Lord, in the middle of their discourse, he said to them: “If you have faith, come forward boldly and stand on these burning coals, and slowly pronounce the Lord's Prayer. » These good saints, seeing that this solitary man was making such a proposition to them, and thinking that only a proud person or a hypocrite could say this: “My brother,” said Saint Palemon to him, “pray to God; you are tempted, be careful not to do this folly or ever suggest anything similar to us. Didn't our Savior tell us that we should never tempt God, and it is truly tempting Him to ask Him for a miracle in this way. » This poor blind man and this poor hypocrite, instead of taking advantage of this good advice, his spirit is further elevated by the vanity of his so-called good works; he advances boldly and stands on the fire without anyone commanding him, the demon cooperating with him, as being the enemy of men... The good God [le bon Dieu], whom his pride had made withdraw from him, allowed the demon, by a secret and terrible judgment, that he was protected from the fire, which blinded him even more, believing himself to be already perfect and a great saint. The next morning, he left the two solitaries, reproaching them for their lack of faith: “You have seen,” he said to them, “what he who has faith can do. » But, alas! shortly after, the demon, seeing that this man was 12 to him and fearing to lose him, wanted to secure his victim and make him put the seal to his disapproval. He took the form of a rich woman and knocked on her cell door, telling her that he was being pursued by his creditors, that he feared falling into some misfortune, not having the means to pay them, and that he had recourse to him as a charity. “I beg you,” she said, “to receive me into your cell, so that I may be protected from this danger. » This poor man, having abandoned the good Lord, the demon having pulled out his eyes from the soul, no longer saw the danger to which he was exposing himself; he received her in his cell. A moment later, he felt horribly tempted against the holy virtue of purity, and he stopped with these thoughts. He approached this so-called woman, who was nothing other than the demon, to speak to her more familiarly, and he even touched her. The demon fell on him, took him, dragged him along the path, where he beat him with so much force that his body was completely shattered. He left him on the pavement where he remained as if dead for a long time. A few days later, he regained a little strength, and repenting of his fault, he returned to the two saints to tell them of the misfortune that had befallen him. After telling them all this with many tears, he said to them: “Ah! my Fathers, I confess that everything only happened to me through my fault; it is indeed I who am the cause of my pearl, because I was only a proud person and a hypocrite, who wanted to pass for more sago than I was. I beg you, in grace, to assist me with the help of your prayers, for I fear that if the devil takes me back, he will tear me to pieces. While the three of them were crying together, suddenly the demon seized him and carried him away with rapid force.

Dreadful journey through the forests to the town of Panople, where there was a furnace. He threw him inside, where he was burned that very hour (1). Well! My brethren, where did this terrible punishment come from? Alas! it is that his heart lacked humility, it is true; but he was a hypocrite and did not know his religion. Alas! so many people who do many good works, and who never fail to be lost, because they do not know their religion. A certain number will pray well and even attend the sacraments often; but always maintain the same habits and end up becoming familiar with the good God [le bon Dieu] and with sin. Alas! how great the number! See this man who seems to be a good Christian, make him see that he has wronged someone, make him see his faults or some injustice of which he is guilty in his heart, immediately he goes up and can no longer see you. Hatred and resentment follow... Look at another: you will not see fit to bring him near the holy table, he will respond rudely to you and will retain hatred against you, as if you were the cause of his doing wrong. Others, if any distress happens to them, they immediately abandon the sacraments, the offices. If a resident has any difficulty with his pastor, who will have said something to him for the good of his soul; straight away, here comes hatred; he will speak badly of it, he will like to hear bad things said about it, he will turn everything that is said to him into evil. Where can all this come from, my brethren? Alas! it is that

this person only has false devotion and nothing else. Another time it will be a person to whom you have refused absolution or holy communion.

(1) From the Desert Fathers.

27l> SERMONS. nion; she rebels against her confessor, in her eyes you will be worse than a demon. However, in a time of peace, you see her serving God with fervor; she will speak to you about God like an angel clothed in a human body. And why, my brethren, this inconstancy? Alas! it is that she is only a hypocrite, who does not know herself, who perhaps will never know herself and who does not even want to be seen as such. We see others who, under the pretext that they have some appearance of virtue, if we recommend ourselves to their prayers to obtain some graces; as soon as they have said a few prayers, they will ask them if they have obtained what they asked for. If they have been answered, you see them redouble their prayers: they think that perhaps they can perform miracles. But, if they have not obtained what they asked for, you see them become discouraged, losing the taste for prayer. Come on, poor blind person, you never knew yourself, you are just a hypocrite. Another will speak of the good Lord with eagerness; if you applaud him, even tears will fall from his eyes; but if you say a word to her that stings her a little, you see her get angry; (she is afraid to show herself as she is), and she will keep a hatred for you in her heart, for how long. Why is this? if not because his religion is only a religion of caprice and inclination. You deceive the world, and you deceive yourself; but you will not deceive the good Lord, who, one day, will make you see that you have only been a hypocrite. Do you want to know what false virtue is? Here is a good example. We read in history that a solitary man having come to find Saint Serapion to recommend himself to his prayers, Saint Serapion said to him

Nde pray for him; but the other told him, with words that showed the deepest humility, that he did not deserve this happiness, that he was too sinful. The saint told him to sit next to him, but the other replied that he was unworthy. The saint, to know if this solitary man really was as he wanted to make him believe, said to him: “My friend, I think that you would do much better to remain in your solitude than to wander the desert. » This put him in a terrible rage. “My friend,” said the saint, “you told me earlier that you are such a great sinner that you do not even want to sit next to me, and now, because I speak to you a word full of charity, you become angry. Come on, my friend, you only have false virtue or, rather, you have none. » Alas! My brethren, how many are of this number! who seem, from their words, to be saints, and who, at the slightest word that does not suit them, lose their temper and make themselves known as they are in their souls. If we see that this sin is so bad, let us also see that the good Lord punishes it very rigorously, as you will see in an example. We read in Holy Scripture that King Jeroboam sent his wife to the prophet Abias, to consult him concerning the illness of his son, having had him disguised, with all the appearance of a person of piety. He used this artifice, fearing that the people would realize that he was consulting the prophet of the true God and that they would notice the little confidence he had in his idols. It is true that we can sometimes deceive men, but never the good Lord. When this woman entered the prophet's house, without him even seeing her, he cried to her: “Wife of Jeroboam, why do you pretend to be someone other than you are? come, you hypocrite, I will tell you bad news from the Lord. Yes, bad news, listen to it: the Lord has commanded me to tell you that he is going to bring all kinds of evil on the house of Jeroboam; he will destroy even animals; those of his house who die in the countryside will be eaten by birds, those who die in the city will be eaten by dogs. Go, wife of Jeroboam, go tell your husband this. And the moment you set foot in the city, your child will die. » All this happened as the prophet had said: not one escaped the vengeance of the Lord. You see, my brethren, how much the Lord punishes this cursed sin of hypocrisy. Alas! how many poor people the devil deceives on this score, who not only lose all the merit of the good they do, but also their actions become (for them) a subject of condemnation. However, I will tell you, my brethren, that it is not the greatness of the actions that gives them merit; but the purity of intention with which we make them. The Gospel gives us a good example of this. Saint Mark reports that Jesus Christ, having entered the temple, sat down opposite the trunk where

alms were thrown for the poor. He observed how the people threw this money there; he saw that several rich people were throwing a lot into it; At the same time he saw a poor widow who humbly approached the trunk and put only two coins into it. Then Jesus Christ called his apostles, and said to them: “There are many people who have given considerable alms in

This trunk, and now a poor widow has only put two mite into it; what do you think of this difference? Judging by appearances, you will perhaps believe that these rich people deserved more; and I tell you that this widow gave more than them, because these rich people gave only of their abundance and their superfluity, instead of this widow giving even of her necessities; most of the rich have only sought the esteem of men to make themselves believe better than they are, whereas this widow only gave with a view to pleasing God alone. » A fine example, my brethren, who teaches us with what purity of intention and with what humility we must carry out all our actions, if we want to receive the reward. It is true that God does not forbid us from doing our actions in front of men; but he wants the world to have nothing to do with it and for God alone to be the motive. Besides, my brethren, why would we want to appear better than we are, by wanting to show the good that is not in us? Alas! My brethren, is that we like to be applauded in what we do; we are jealous of this form of pride and we sacrifice everything to obtain it: that is to say,

7th Sunday after Pentecost — On Lying

we sacrifice our God, our soul and our eternal happiness. 0 my God, what blindness! Ah! cursed sin of hypocrisy, how many souls you drag to hell, with actions which, if well done, would lead them straight to heaven! Unfortunately, a good number of Christians do not know themselves and do not even seek to know themselves; we follow our routines, our habits, and we don't want to listen to reason; we are blind, and we walk blind. If a priest wants to let them know their condition, they will not listen to you, or if they pretend to listen to you, they don't do anything about it. This, my brethren, is the most unfortunate state that one can imagine and, perhaps, the most dangerous.

II. We have said that the third necessary condition for true virtue is perseverance in good. We must therefore not be content to do good for a while: that is to say, to pray, to mortify ourselves, to renounce our will, to suffer the faults of those around us, to fight the temptations of the devil, to suffer contempt, slander, to watch over all the movements of our heart; no, my brethrenM.

no, we must continue until death if we want to be saved. Saint Paul says that we must be firm and steadfast in the service of God, and that we must work all the days of our lives for the sanctification of our souls, knowing very well that our work will not be rewarded if we do not persevere to the end. “It is necessary,” he tells us, “that neither riches, nor poverty, nor health, nor illness, be capable of making us abandon the salvation of our soul and separate us from God; since we are sure that the good Lord will only crown the virtues which have persevered until death. » This is what we see in an admirable way in the Apocalypse and in the person of a bishop who seemed so holy that God himself praised him. “I know,” he said to him, “all the good works you have done, all the sorrows you have endured, the patience you have had; yes, I know that you cannot endure the wicked, and that you have endured all these things for the glory of my name; yes, I know all that, however, I have one reproach to make to you: it is

E that instead of persevering in all your good works, in all your virtues, you have relaxed, you have left your first fervor, you are no longer what you once were. Remember from whence you fell, resume your first fervor with prompt penance, otherwise I will reject you and punish you. » Tell me, my brethren, what fear should we not be seized by seeing the threats that God himself makes to this bishop, because he had relaxed a little? Alas, my brethren, what have become of us, even since our conversion? Instead of always increasing, alas, what cowardice and what indifference! No, the good Lord cannot tolerate this perpetual inconstancy where we pass from virtue to vice and from vice to virtue. Tell me, my brethren, is this not your behavior or your way of living? Is your poor life anything other than a series of sins and virtues? Is it not that you confess, and

the next day you confess again and, perhaps, the same day? Is it not that you promised not to return again to these people who led you to evil, and that at the first opportunity you received them? Didn't you confess to having worked on Sunday, and that you did it again? Is it not that you promised the good Lord not to return to dances, games, cabarets, and that you have fallen back into all these faults? Why is that, my brethren, if not because you only have a false religion, a religion of habit and inclination, and not a religion in the heart. Come on, my friend, you're just fickle. Come on, my brother, you only have false devotion; you are, in everything you do, only a hypocrite and nothing more: the good God [le bon Dieu] does not have first place in your heart;

but the world and the demon. Alas I My brethren, how many (people) who, for a certain time, seem to love the good God [le bon Dieu] completely, and then abandon him? What do you find hard and painful in the service of God, which has so greatly repelled you and made you turn towards the side of the world? However, in the moment when God made your condition known to you, you groaned, you recognized how wrong you were. Alas! if you persevered little, the reason for this misfortune is that the demon was very angry at having lost you; he has done so much that he has won you back, he now hopes to keep you completely. Alas! how many apostates, who have renounced their religion, and who are no longer Christians except in name! But, you will ask me, how can we know that we have religion in our hearts, this religion which never fails? My brethren, here it is: listen to him carefully, and you will understand if you have it as God wants it to lead you to heaven. A person who has true virtue, nothing is capable of making him change, he is like a rock in the middle of the sea and beaten by the weather. That people despise you, that they slander you, that they make fun of you, that they treat you as a hypocrite, as a false devotee: all this in no way takes away the peace of your soul; you love them as much as you loved them when they spoke well of you; you do not stop doing good to them and supporting them even when they say bad things; you say your prayers, your confessions, your communions, you go to holy mass, just as usual. To make it clearer to you, here is an example. It is reported that in one parish there was a young man who was a model of virtue. He was almost going every day at Holy Mass, he often took communion. It happened that another, jealous of the esteem in which this (young man) was held, one day when they were both in a company (with) a neighbor who had a beautiful gold snuff box, the (jealous) took it from his neighbor's pocket and put it in that of the young man without him noticing. After having done this, without pretending, he asks him to see his snuffbox, the other thinks he finds it in his pocket and is very surprised not to find it. No one is allowed to leave the room without searching everyone; we find it in the (pocket) of the young man who was a (model) of wisdom. Now everyone starts to cry thief and falls on their religion; to treat him as a hypocrite, a false devotee. This young (man) could not defend himself, seeing as it had been found in his pocket; he said nothing, he suffered all this as coming from the hand (of God). When he passed in the street, whether he was coming from church, mass or receiving communion, everyone who saw him pass mocked him by calling him a hypocrite, a false devotee and a thief. It lasted a long time. Despite all this, he still continued his religious exercises, his confessions, his communions and all his prayers, as if everyone had shown him the greatest respect. After a few years, the one who had been the cause of all this, having fallen ill, confessed in front of all those present, that it was he himself who had been the cause of all the evil that had been said about this young man who was a saint, and that, out of jealousy, in order to make him despise him, he had put this snuffbox in his pocket. Well! My brethren, here is a religion which is a true religion, which has taken root in the soul. Tell me, if all these poor Christians who profess to be religious gion were put to such trials, would they imitate this young man? Alas! My brethren.how many murmurs, what M.

of grudges, only thoughts of revenge; and slander and slander, and perhaps even go to court.... We rage against religion, we mock it, we despise it, we say bad things about it, We can no longer pray to the good God [le bon Dieu], We can no longer hear holy mass, we no longer know what we are doing, We talk about it, we try to say everything that is capable of justifying us, we pick up all the evil that this person has done, we tell it to others, we repeat it to all those we know to make them appear to be liars and slanderers. Why this

behavior, my brethren? except that we only have a religion of caprice, inclination and routine, and, if we put it better, because we are only hypocrites, who only serve the good God [le bon Dieu] when everything goes according to our whims. Alas! My brethren, all these virtues that we see appearing in the majority of Christians are only like these spring flowers, which a single gust of hot wind burns. We also say that our virtue, to be true, must be constant: that is to say, that we must be as attached to God and as fervent in crosses and contempt as in the time when nothing bothered us. This is what all the saints have done; see all these crowds of martyrs who endured everything that the rage of tyrants could invent, and who, far from relaxing, on the contrary, always united themselves more and more with God. Neither the torment, nor the contempt that was made of them could make them change. But, I believe that the most beautiful model I can

To give you is the holy man Job in the trials that the good God [le bon Dieu] sent him. The Lord one day said to Satan: “Where do you come from? » — “I have just,” replied the demon, “from traveling around the world. » — “Have you not seen my good man Job, who is without equal on earth for his simplicity and the uprightness of his heart? » The demon answered him: “It is not difficult that he serves you and loves you well: you fill him with all kinds of blessings; but test him a little, and you will see if he will always be faithful to you. » The Lord said to him: “I give you all power over him, except to take his life. » The demon, full of joy, in the hope of leading him to murmur against God, begins to destroy all his possessions which were immense. You will see the way in which the demon (took) to test him. In the hope of extracting from him a few blasphemies or at least a few complaints, he caused him, one after the other, all kinds of troubles, disgraces and misfortunes, so that he would not have time to breathe. One day, while he was in his quiet house, one of his servants suddenly arrived, very frightened. “Lord,” he said to him, “I have come to announce to you a great misfortune: all your beasts of burden and your animals used in plowing have just been kidnapped by bandits, who have killed all your young men; I alone was able to escape to come and tell you. » As he was still speaking, here was a new messenger, more frightened than the first: “Alas! Lord, a terrible storm has come to descend on us, the fire from heaven has devoured all your flocks and burned all your shepherds, I was the only one kept to come and announce it to you. » He did not finish until a third arrived, because the demon did not want to give him time to breathe and recognize yourself. This third said to him with an air of complete dismay: “We were attacked by thieves, who took away all your camels and all your servants, and the flight saved me alone from the carnage to come and inform you about it. » With these words, a fourth burst into tears: “Ah! Lord, he said to him, you no longer have children!... as they were all eating together, suddenly a furious storm overturned the house, and crushed them all under its ruins, as well as all your servants; I am alone saved by a miracle. » During the story of so many evils in the world, there is no doubt that his soul was moved with compassion for the death of his poor children. At that very moment, everyone turns their backs on him and abandons him: everyone flees on their own, he remains all alone with the demon who (was) in the hope that so many evils would lead him to despair, or, at least, to some complaints, to some impatience; because we must believe that virtue, however solid it may be, does not make us insensitive to the evils we experience; the saints do not have hearts of marble any more than we do. This saint receives, in a single moment, all the traits most sensitive to a great person in the world, to a rich man and a good father. In a single day, from being a prince and, therefore, the happiest of men, he becomes the most unhappy, overwhelmed with misfortunes, deprived of everything he held most dear in the world. Bursting into tears, he prostrates himself with his face to the ground; but what does he do? is he complaining? he murmurs? No, my brethren, no. Holy Scripture (tells us) that he adores and respects the hand that strikes him; he sacrifices his wealth and his family to the Lord; he does it with the most generous, the most perfect and the most complete resignation

Saying: “The Lord is the master of all my goods as he is the author of them; all this only happened in the way he wanted; may his holy name be blessed in all things! » What do you think, my brethren, of this example? Is this a solid, constant and persevering virtue? Do we believe, my brethren, that we have any virtue when at the first test we murmur and often abandon the service of God? But that's not all, the demon seeing that he had

gained nothing, attacked him himself; his body was nothing more than a wound, his flesh falling off in shreds. See again, if you wish, Saint Eustace, how constant he was in everything that the good God [le bon Dieu] sent him to test him! Alas! My brethren, that there would be few Christians who would not give way to sadness, to murmuring and perhaps even to despair, to curse their fate, to retain hatred against God, thinking: “What have we done to be treated in this way? » Alas! My brethren, how many virtues which only have the appearance, which are entirely external, and which, at the slightest test, are contradicted! Let us conclude, my brethren, by saying that our virtue, to be solid and pleasing to God, must be in the heart, relate everything to God, and hide his good works as much as we can. We must be careful not to relax in the service of God; on the contrary, we must always go on increasing, and it is through this that all the saints have assured themselves of their eternal happiness. This is what I wish for you [c'est ce que je vous souhaite]...

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On the Lie.

Expected to falsis prophesis. Beware of false prophets. (S, May th., VTI, 15.)

ARE YOU CAREFUL, Jesus Christ tells us, about nE? associate with anyone who uses deceit in their words and actions. Indeed, my brethren, we see that nothing is more unworthy of a Christian, who must be a faithful imitator of his God who is righteousness and truth itself, than to think one thing and say the other. Also Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, recommends that we never lie: “Say yes or no, it is or it is not. » Saint Peter tells us that “we must be like little children, who are simple and sincere, enemies of all lies and all dissimulation? Yes, my brethren, if we want to examine the fatal consequences of duplicity and lies, we see that they are the source of an infinity of evils which desolate the world. Let us stop for a moment, my brethren, at a morality that is so little known, and which is nevertheless so necessary. No, my brethren, there is no vice more widespread in the world than duplication.

th cited and lying: it is in this sense that we say that almost all men are liars. If we want, my brethren, to please God, we must greatly fear contracting such a bad habit, which is all the more dangerous because everything promotes and foments it. To give you as much horror as you must have, I will show you 1° what lies and duplicity are; 2° how much the good God [le bon Dieu] himself abhors him and 3° how much he punishes him, even in this world.

I. If I asked a child what it was to lie, he would answer me: “Monsieur priest, to lie is to speak against one's thoughts, it is to say one thing and think another. » But, you will say, in how many ways do we lie? Here he is, my brethren, listen to him carefully. We lie 1° out of pride, when we tell what we have done or said and when we increase it, when we say more than there is; 2° one lies to bring harm to one's neighbor, by speaking ill of one's person and one's goods, or when one says things which are false, and this, out of revenge; 3° we lie to please our neighbor: this happens when we hide certain faults that we should make known, as do servants or children who see people in the house stealing from their masters, and being questioned, maintain that this is not the case, that they have never seen them; or, it is when we are called to justice, and we do not tell the truth so as not to condemn the people we love; i° we lie to sell more expensively or to buy cheaper: which we do out of greed; 5° we lie to catch someone, or to make the company laugh and amuse; 0° we lie when we confess. These, my brethren, are the most ordinary lies and which we must explain well in our confessions, since you see that we have different feelings in each lie we tell. Yes, my brethren, from whatever side we consider lies and duplicity, they must seem infinitely odious to us. First, on the side of God, who is truth itself, enemy of all lies. Alas! My brethren, how little do we know what this sin is? how many lies which are mortal sins, and which, consequently, bring death to our soul and rob us of heaven for ever! Indeed, my brethren, lying out of pride is a mortal sin, by saying more than we have done or said to make ourselves esteemed. Lying in court is also a mortal sin if one hides the truth; lying out of revenge is one too; lying in confession is sacrilege. Ilelas! my God, how lies lead from urns to hell! But suppose, my

brethren, that your lies, or at least the majority of them, are only venial sins; have we correctly understood what venial sin is? Go through all the different circumstances of the death and passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ even on Calvary, examine all that he suffered, and then you will be able to get an idea of ■■the greatness of the lie and the outrage he does to God. You say that lying does not bring death to our soul, nor to Jesus Christ! Ah! unfortunate! So you count for nothing his agony in the Garden of Olives, when he was taken, bound and garroted by his enemies? So you count for little, my brethren, when he was crowned with thorns and betrothed gcllé, where his poor body was reduced to blood? Do you therefore count as little the torments he endured during that terrible night, where he was subjected to everything that neither men nor angels will ever be able to understand? So you count for nothing the horrors that he was made to endure while carrying his cross to Calvary? Well, my brethren, these are the torments that lying brings to Jesus Christ. That is to say, my brethren, that each lie that we tell, depending on whether it is more or less bad, leads Our Lord Jesus Christ to Calvary. Tell me, my brethren, would you believe that you have treated Jesus Christ, our tender Savior, in such an unworthy manner, every time you tell lies? Alas, how little he who sins knows what he is doing!

IL If we consider the lie in relation to ourselves, we see how much it distances us from God, how much it weakens in us the source of his graces, how much it leads the good Lord to diminish his benefits for us. Alas! how many Christians who began their damnation with these sins and who are now in hell! But, on the other hand, let us consider it in relation to our dignity as Christians: we, my brethren, who, through Baptism, have become the temples of the Holy Spirit who is enemy of all lies, alasI my brethren, as soon as we have the misfortune of lying, the Holy Spirit leaves and abandons us, and the demon takes his place and becomes our master. These, my brethren, are the sad effects and the terrible ravages that lies produce in those who are so blind as to commit them. However, my brethren, how common these sins are in the world! Look at these fathers and mothers who constantly vomit these sins all day long to their children, under pretext to amuse them and have peace. Alas! these poor wretches do not see that they bring a curse on their poor children, and that they chase the Holy Spirit from their hearts by also giving them the habit of lying. — But, these fathers and mothers who have never known their duty will tell me, it is to make them stay calm. They are always after us, that brings no loss to anyone. — Doesn't that bring loss to anyone? My friend, do you count for nothing in keeping the Holy Spirit away from you, in diminishing in you the source of graces for your salvation? do you count it for nothing to bring down the curse of heaven on your poor children? Do you count it nothing to take Jesus Christ himself and lead him to Calvary? My God! How little we know the devastation that sin wreaks on those who have the misfortune to commit it! But, however, it must be admitted that your most ordinary and pernicious lies are those that you tell in the sales and purchases that you make with each other: on which I find a beautiful expression from Holy Scripture. “A lie,” the Holy Spirit tells us, “is between the seller and the buyer like a piece of wood clamped between two stones; » that is to say, it is to the one who will have the most tricks and deceit and the least good faith, and will tell the most lies. Look at the buyer: there is no sort of lie he does not tell to demean as much as he can the merchandise he buys; he finds a thousand faults, large or small. Look at the seller: for his part, he invents all kinds of falsehoods to raise the price of his merchandise. Strange thing! My brethren, the one who just bought it a moment ago, who said about it

Being evil, who found a thousand faults in it, now that he is master of it, there is no lie that he does not tell to raise its price and make it worth more than it is worth; cl, to justify that this is true, what false oaths! what deception! what useless words! But where does all this come from, my brethren? from the desire to have good or money, which makes us prefer a perishable good to the salvation of our soul and the enjoyment of God. Alas! who can ever understand how miserable we are, to sell our soul, heaven and our God, for so little? But, you will tell me, it is indeed permissible to rent your goods. —Yes, undoubtedly, my friend, when we only tell the truth; but is it permissible to lie to deceive your neighbor? You know very well that no. If someone has cheated you in some deal, you quickly say that he is a knave, a clever person, that you would

never have said that about him; and you, at the first opportunity, deceive another if you can, and would you be a good man? Do you understand, my brethren, to what extent avarice blinds you? — But, you will ask me, when you sell something, are you obliged to make the defects known? — Yes, undoubtedly, when you sell something which has hidden defects, which the merchant can neither see nor know, you are obliged to make them known, otherwise you are as guilty, and even more, than if you took his money from his pocket; because he would distrust you, instead of confiding in you, and you deceive him. If this happened to you, you must pay back and repair the loss you caused. If it's at a fair, and you don't know the person or their parents, you have to give it away to the poor, so that the good Lord blesses that person with their goods to reward them for the wrong you have done to them. Do not believe, my brethren, that the good Lord lets all this pass; you will see that on the day of judgment, you will find all the injustices that you have committed in your sales and your purchases; and that" down to a penny. But, you will tell me, I have been deceived, and when I am deceived, you do not repay me; I do to others as you did to myself: too bad for the one who lets himself be caught. — Yes, without doubt, my brethren, that is the language of the world: that is to say, people without religion. But tell me, my brethren, are you convinced that when you appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, he will receive all these frivolous excuses? What will he tell you? "Wretches, is it because others hurt, damned themselves and made me suffer that I had to imitate them? » However, to hear you speak, your lies do not harm anyone. Are you saying this with much thought? Take all your markets and all your sales one after the other; go over in your memory all the lies you have told. Is it not true that you have never lied to your disadvantage? and that on the contrary, every time you have lied, it was to the disadvantage of your neighbor by deceiving him? How many times, my brethren, when selling your goods, or your animals, or something else, you said that you had found so many... when, most often, this was not true. If this has made you sell more, do not fail, my brethren, to examine yourself; cl if this has happened to you, to give back to the person, if you know them, or to the poor, if you do not know them.

not born. I know Lien that you won't; but I will always tell you what you must do, for I will not be damned because you have not done well; but only if I did not make you aware of your duties. — But, you will tell me, I do no more harm than the others, who deceive me when they can. — But if others are damned, you must not damn yourself for such a small thing. Let them get lost, since you cannot stop them; but, for your sake, try to save your poor soul; since Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that if we want to save ourselves, we must do the complete opposite of the world. I do like the others, you say; but if you see a person running into a precipice, because he is going to throw himself there, would you go (yourself)? No, probably. So say rather that you have no faith; that it doesn't matter to you to deceive your neighbors, as long as you find what you're looking for and something to satisfy your avarice. But, you will ask me, how should we behave when we sell or when we buy? - How? My brethren This is what you must do; but something you almost never do. It is to put yourself in the place of the one who sells when you buy, and in the place of the one who buys when you sell; and never take advantage of people's good faith or their ignorance to sell them more or buy cheaper. — But, you will tell me, despite all the precautions we take, we are often caught. — However, my brethren, I will tell you that if you desire heaven, even though you are deceived, you must not use this pretext to deceive others. — But, you will tell me, according to ma-

The way most people behave, I believe there will be very few saved. — This is very true; but, although it is true that there will be very few saved, we must try to be. (We should) prefer rather not to be so rich, to make some loss and not to catch anyone as much as we can, and to go to heaven.

III. Now, to give you, my brethren, a great horror of lies, we only have to go through the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and we will see there how great are the punishments that the good God [le bon Dieu] exercises, even from this life, on those who are guilty of this sin; and, at the same time, we will see how much the saints loved and preferred all kinds of torment, even the most severe and death, rather than telling a simple lie. The Holy Spirit tells us: "Never lie or deceive anyone. » The Prophet tells us "that the

Lord will destroy all those who dare to lie. » Yes, my brethren, the saints tell us that it would be better for everyone to fall into ruin than to tell a simple lie. They also tell us that when a single lie should deliver all the damned from their torments and lead them to heaven, we should not tell it. We read in the life of Saint Anthimus, that being sought by the emperor's archers, with orders to take his life, they having addressed himself without knowing him, he gave them good cheer. When they knew, from what he told them, that it was himself, they never had the courage to put him to death after so much kindness. “No,” they said to him, “we don’t have the courage to put you to death;

well received; stay there, we will tell the emperor that we did not find you. » — “No, my brethren,” said the saint to them, “it is never permitted to lie; I would rather die a thousand times better than if I cause you to tell a lie. » He leaves with them to suffer the cruelest death. We read in history that the emperor sent armed men to seize a man named Phocas, who was a gardener, with orders to put him to death; but as no one knew him, having met him himself, they asked him if he knew a man named Phocas who was a gardener, adding that they came from the emperor to put him to death. He answered them, in a confident and calm tone of voice, that yes, that he knew him well. He invited them to come to his house, saying to be in peace, that he would take care of that. While these people were eating well and eating, he made a pit in his garden. The next day he appeared before them and told them.: “It is I who am this Phocas that you are looking for. » But these soldiers, quite astonished at this, said to him: “Hey! how could we put you to death, after you have just treated us with (so much) kindness and liberality? No, we cannot; we will tell the emperor that, despite all our searches, we have not been able to find you.” —“No, my friends,” the saint said to them, “do not lie, I would rather die than if you tell a lie. » They cut off his head and buried him in his garden where he had made his own grave. Tell me, my brethren, did these saints understand, yes or no, the greatness of the evil that he who lies does? My God, how miserable is he who has lost his faith, since he does not know what a great misfortune sin is! M

The Holy Spirit tells us “every mouth that lies kills its soul.” » Our Lord told the Jews “that they were children of the devil, because the truth was not in them. » Why is that, my brethren? it is that the devil is the father of lies. We read in the life of the holy man Job, that the Lord asked Satan where he came from. “I have come,” replied the demon, “to travel around the world. » — “Have you not found,” said the Lord to him, “my good man Job, who is a simple man and acts with great righteousness of heart, fearing God, carefully avoiding evil, and who is an enemy of lies and all kinds of duplicity? » Do you see how the good Lord takes pleasure in praising a person who is simple and upright in all his actions? See what happened to Haman, favorite of King Ahasuerus, for having lied, making the Jews look like troublemakers. Having had a gallows erected to attach Mordocbee to, he himself was hanged there. See this page of Queen Elizabeth, who having lied against the other page, was burned in her place. We read in the Gospel that Saint John saw, in a vision, Our Lord seated on a throne bursting with glory, who said to him: “I will renew all things. » He showed him the celestial Jerusalem which was of inexplicable beauty, and told him that he who overcomes himself and conquers the world and the flesh will possess coito bolle Jerusalem; but as for those who are murderers, fornicators, adulterers and liars, (they) will be thrown into a lake of sulfur and madness, which is a second death. Our Lord tells us that the mounters will have the same punishment in hell as the fornicators. Tell me, my brethren, can we treat as little or as a slight fault what the good Lord punishes so rigorously, and even in this world?

E See what happened to Ananias and his wife Sapphire, who were struck by sudden death for having lied to Saint Peter. We read in Holy Scripture that having sold a piece of land, they wanted to keep part of the money and take the rest to the Apostles to distribute it to the poor, wanting to make people think that they were giving everything away. They wanted to appear poor and remain rich; but the good Lord made it known to Saint Peter that they were deceiving him. Saint Peter said to them: “How has the spirit of Satan filled your hearts to the point of making you lie to the Holy Spirit? It is not to men that you lie, but to God himself. »

When Ananias heard these words, he fell dead. Three hours later, Saphire, his wife, came without knowing what had happened to her husband, she presented herself before the Apostles. Saint Peter said to him: “Is it really true that you only sold the funds of your land? » She answered him: “Yes, we only sold him that; " then Saint Peter said to him: "Like your husband, you are willing to deceive the Spirit of the Lord; do you think you can impose on the Spirit of the Lord? You will be punished for your lie like your husband. Here are people who have just carried your husband to the ground, and now they are going to carry you there too." As soon as he had said this, she fell dead and was carried away by the same people. But nevertheless, my brethren, we can say that the The worst lies are those we tell when we confess: that is to say, in the tribunal of penance, not only us.

7th Sunday after Pentecost — On the Necessity of Doing Good Works

let us despise the commandment which commands us to be sincere, but still we profane the adorable blood of Jesus Christ. We change into deadly poison this who should restore the health of our poor soul, and we even outrage the good God [le bon Dieu] in the person of his ministers, who are placed on the throne of his mercy; we rejoice in hell by saddening all of heaven; we lie to Jesus Christ himself, who sees and has counted all the movements of our heart. You have no doubt, my brethren, that if you had lied my brethren, by confessing, and just accusing yourself that you lied, that would be worthless. I say again, my brethren, that we lie by our silence or by some sign which makes us believe the opposite of what we think. We read in history an example which shows us how rigorously the good Lord punishes liars. It is reported in the life of Saint James, bishop of Nisibis in Mesopotamia, who lived in the fourth century, that, passing through a town, there were poor people who came to ask him for money, telling him that their comrade had just died and that they had nothing to bury him with. These people, knowing that he was very charitable, had told one of them to pretend to be dead, and that they would go and ask this bishop for something to entertain themselves. In fact, the other lies on the ground as if he had truly been dead. The saint, full of charity, gave them what he could. Full of joy, returning to their companion to tell him what the bishop had given them, they found him truly dead. The holy bishop having begun to pray to ask for forgiveness for the sins of this poor man, while he was in prayer, he saw these two young people return who were all in tears at having been punished for their lie. (They) threw themselves at the feet of the saint, begging him to forgive them; that, if they had deceived him,

O it was poverty that had led them to this; they begged him, in grace, to pray to the good God [le bon Dieu] to resurrect (their companion.) The saint, instead of scolding them, imitated the charity of his divine Master; he willingly consented, prayed for him, and the good Lord restored life to him to whom the lie had given death. “My children,” the saint said to them, “why did you lie? You had to ask me; I would have given it to you, and the good Lord would not have been offended. » No, my brethren, it is not permitted to lie, as some ignorant and non-religious people believe, to avoid noise in a household, whether children towards father and mother, or towards servants. You will always do less harm by letting your husband or wife or neighbor scream than if you lie. Is it not better that you bear humiliation than if you make God himself bear it? We must not even lie to hide our good works. If someone asks you if you have done some good work, if you are obliged to speak, say yes, because your lie would outrage the good God [le bon Dieu] more than your good work would glorify him. Here is a good example. It is reported that a saint named John, having gone to visit a monastery, when the religious were gathered together, (there was a deacon there who, out of humility, fearing that people would have any regard for him, had never said what he was;) this saint asked them if there was no ecclesiastic among them. Everyone answered no; but the saint, turning towards this young man, said, taking him by the hand: “But here is one who is a deacon. » The superior replied: “My father, he told no one, except one. » Kissing his hand, the saint said to him: “My friend, keep you should disavow the grace that the good Lord has given you, so that you do not fall into misfortune, and that your humility does not cause you to fall (into) lies; for we must never lie, not only with bad intentions, but also under the pretext of good. » The deacon thanked him and no longer hid what he was. Saint Augustine tells us that it is never permitted to lie,

(not) sad when it would be a question of helping someone avoid death. He tells us that there was in the town of Tagaste in Africa, a bishop named Firmin; One day people came to him from the emperor, asking him for a man he was keeping hidden in his house. He replied to those who questioned him that he could neither lie nor tell them where he was. Then, seeing his refusal to tell them the place where the one they were looking for was, they took him and made him suffer all that their cruelty could inspire them. Then, having presented him to the emperor, the latter was so touched that, not only did he not put him to death, but also granted pardon to the one who was with him. Alas! My brethren,, if the good Lord put us through such trials, which of us would not succumb? How few would be the number of those who would do like this holy bishop, who preferred death rather than telling a lie to save his life and that of his friend! Alas! My brethren, is that this saint understood how much lying outrages the good Lord, and that it is much better to suffer everything, and even lose your life, than to commit it; while we, in our blindness, regard as nothing that which is very great in the eyes of God, and which he punishes very rigorously in the other life. Yes, my brethren, it would be much better to lose, if you want, your health, your property or your reputation and your very life, what about offending the good Lord and losing heaven. All goods are only for the present time, whereas the good God [le bon Dieu] and our soul are for eternity. If we have just seen how common lies and duplicity are in sales and purchases, they are no less found in conversation and in societies. If the good Lord made us see and discover the hearts of those who make up a society or a company, we would see that almost all thoughts are different from the words that come out of their mouths. We know how to combine language and all the trappings of esteem, benevolence and friendship with feelings of hatred and contempt that we have in our hearts, against those with whom we talk. If you enter a house, if you appear in a company where people are busy defaming your reputation, immediately all faces change; You receive you, you are welcomed with a gracious air and you are overwhelmed, so to speak, with politeness. Are you out? immediately the taunts and slander about you begin again. Tell me, my brethren, can we find anything more false and more unworthy of a Christian? Alas! My brethren, however nothing so common in the world. Alas! My brethren, this ungrateful world may deceive us, however much we may make a laughing stock of it, we love it and we find ourselves infinitely happy to be loved by it. 0 blindness of the human heart, how long will you allow yourself to be seduced? How long will you wait to turn to the side of your God, who has never deceived you, to leave this false and hypocritical mummy, who can only make you very unhappy, even in this life and even more in the next? Alas! My brethren, that this one there is madness, who rejoices in being applauded and loved, since this world is so false and so deceptive! Who will ever be able to count all the tricks and deceptions that are going on in the world? See again, my brethren, your language in relation to God. “My God,” said this miser when he said his prayer, “I love you above all things, I despise riches, they are only dirt compared to the goods that you promise us in the other life. » But, alas! My brethren, this same man, after leaving his prayer or a church, is no longer the same man; these goods which in his prayer were so vile, he prefers to his God and to his soul; he thinks neither of the poor nor the infirm, and, perhaps, he turns away from them, for fear that they will ask him something. Would you say, my brethren, that this is the same man who, just now, told the good Lord that he was all his? Apply, my brethren, the same reflection to the vindictive. “I love you, my God, and everyone,” he said in his act of charity; and just a stone's throw away, there's not a single bad thing he can say about his neighbor. Look at this ambitious man, who, in his prayer, said to God: “If I have the happiness of loving you, I am rich enough, I ask for nothing more; » and a moment later, if he sees anyone making whatever profit he could have made, he is like a desperate person. Listen to this shameless person who praises you so much for the holy vei;tu of purity; In a few moments, he will vomit up all kinds of dirt, or immerse himself in it. Look at this drunkard, who blames all those who indulge in wine, who lose their reason and spend their money inappropriately; in an hour, perhaps, with the first company, he will let himself be dragged into the cabarets and fill himself with wine. Let's say

Ede same, my brethren, of all those who join the external practice of religion with their vicious inclinations. In the church, with the good Lord, everyone is good Christian, at least in appearance; but, spread throughout

the world, they are no longer the same, we no longer recognize them. Let us open our eyes, my brethren, and recognize how unworthy all these lies and all these deceptions are of a child of God, who is charity and truth itself. Yes, my brethren, let us be sincere in everything we do for the good Lord and for our neighbor, do for others what we would like others to do for us, if we do not want to walk the path of perdition. Thirdly, we have said that oaths and curses are often added to lies, which happens almost every day. If someone doesn't want to believe you, you say: "If it's not true, I'll never move!" It is also true that the good Lord sees you, that this merchandise is good or that this beast has no defects. » Take great care, my brethren, never to add oaths to lies, even to assure something true. Jesus Christ forbids us: “When you want to assure something, say it is or it is not; yes or no; I either did it or I didn’t. Everything else you say comes from the devil. Be sure, my brethren, that it is neither your lies nor your swearing that make you sell more, nor that make people believe what you say; it's quite the opposite. See for yourselves if you are taken by all these oaths and these lies that those from whom you buy make and tell you. You say: “I know that lies and swearing cost them nothing, that is all they have in their mouths. » But here is the language of the world: “If I don't lie while selling, I won't sell as much as the others. » You are wrong; The more we see a person telling their lies while praising their merchandise, the more we hear them making their oaths, the less we believe them and the more we distrust them. But if, in selling or buying, you have the fear of God, you will sell as much and you will buy as cheaply as others, and you will have the happiness of saving your soul. Besides, my brethren, should we not prefer to lose something (rather) than to lose our soul [perdre son âme], our God and our paradise. When we die, what good will all these deceptions and duplicities that we used during our life be useful to us? What regrets to have lost the sky for so little! See what Cardinal Bellarmine tells you. There were, he told us, two merchants in Cologne who, in order to sell their goods, lied and swore almost every month they said. Their pastor advised them to quit this bad habit, because all these lies and swearing would bring them harm, and he believed that if they simply told the truth, the good Lord would bless them. They did not want to do it: however, to obey their pastor, they finally did it, and told all those who came to buy their merchandise that they wanted so much..., without lying or swearing. After some time, their pastor asked them if they had (done) what he had told them; they told him yes. He asked them if they were not selling as much as before; they said to him: “Sir, since we left this habit of lying and swearing, we sell more than before. We now see clearly that all these lies and all these swearings are only tricks of the devil to deceive and ruin the merchants. Now that people know that we don't lie or swear (anymore), we sell twice as much as before, we see that the good Lord blesses our house in a visible way and that everything is successful with us. » Ah! My brethren, if we had the good fortune to imitate these merchants in our sales and our purchases, how many fewer sins, how much less fear for when death comes, when we will have to give an account, as no one doubts; since Jesus Christ himself tells us that we will give account for a useless word. But no, we don't think about all that; (would) you only have to sell for a sol, you lie as soon as the opportunity presents itself; you fear neither of making the good Lord suffer, nor of losing your soul; as long as you earn two sols, you are happy, everything else is nothing. But, my brethren, above all (beware of) ever adding the oath to the lie. See what happened before Saint Edward, King of England. Being at table with Count Gondovin, his father-in-law, who was very proud and very jealous, to the point that he could not tolerate anyone near the king, the latter told him that he knew well that he had contributed to the death of his father; the count replied: “If this is true, I want this piece of bread that I am going to eat to strangle me. » Alas! barely had he put his piece of bread in his mouth when it stuck in his throat and strangled him. He fell dead next to the king. It is true that the good Lord does not always punish us in such a terrible way, but we are no less guilty in his eyes.

What should we conclude from all this? here it is, my brethren It is to never accustom ourselves to lying; because, once we have got into the habit of it, we can no longer correct ourselves; we must be sincere and true in everything we say and do. If people don't want to believe us, that's fine! let's leave it! Never force other people to lie; there are some who question you so much that they make you tell lies, or make you angry. They are even more guilty than (the one) who goes up, since, without them, one would not have lied. When

we want to confess, (we must) clearly declare what lies we have told; since you have seen that there are some which can be mortal sins, depending on our intention in saying them. Besides, my brethren-, how can we use (to lie) our tongue which has been watered with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, our mouth, which, so many times, has served as a tabernacle for the adorable body of Jesus Christ. 0 my God! If we thought about all this, would we have the courage? Happy, my brethren, is he who acts with simplicity and who always speaks the truth! This is happiness that I wish you.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On the necessity of doing good works.

Omnis arbor, quænon facit fructumbonum, esccidelur, el in ignem mille tur. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. (S. Matih., seen, 19.)

THIS parable, my brethren, is not difficult to understand. It is precisely we who are this tree that Jesus Christ planted in the womb: his church, which he cultivated by his care, his works and his sufferings: that is to say, he made us worthy, through his death and passion, to carry out works worthy of being rewarded throughout eternity. But he threatens to punish us in his anger and to throw us into hell, if we do not do good, which I can so easily by the merits of his death and passion, and by the institution of this holy religion, in which we have the great happiness of being born and nourished. So, my brethren, that the good Lord has the right to expect of us that we do works capable of glorifying him and giving him reason to reward us in the next life. We are in this world like this tree, of which the Psalmist speaks to us, saying that we must be “like a tree that is planted by the waters, which produces fruit in abundance and in its season, capable of rejoicing its master. » Yes, my brethren, every man whose actions are not good, even if they are not bad, is at least, in the eyes of God, a barren tree, which will be cut down and thrown into the eternal fire. Alas! and how many Christians are lost because they do not reflect well on this truth. Yes, my brethren, this is the life of Christians, or at least of the majority: some only spend their time doing evil works; others are content not to make bad ones, but do not make good ones; others (finally) do good ones, but which they should not do, or which did not suit them in the state in which they are; and very few do good works which please God and which will be rewarded throughout eternity. But, to make it clearer to you, my brethren, I will show you 1° the necessity we have to do good works if we want to save ourselves; 2° what are the good works that the good Lord wants from us, in general and in particular,

I. Wanting, my brethren, to convince you of the necessity we have to do good works, to practice the virtues which suit us in the state in which the good Lord has placed us: it is as if we wanted to prove to a servant the necessity of doing what his master expects of him in order to receive his pledge at the end of the year. Of course, my brethren, we know very well that (we) all, Christians and born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, we are on earth only to do what can glorify the good God [le bon Dieu] and give him reason to reward us.

E If you reproach these cowardly Christians for their indifference and their lukewarmness in the service of God, whether in their prayers or in their attendance at the sacraments, they answer you that they do no harm. You say that you (do) (no evil), which is very difficult to believe, and even so you would not do any evil, if you do no good, that is to say, good works; if you do not practice the virtues that are appropriate (to your state), you will continue to be damned. Listen to Saint Paul, who converted so many souls to Jesus Christ, after all he did to contribute to the glory of God, after an infinity of good works, since his whole life was a continuous chain of them: o Alas! I fear that after having taught others what to do to go to heaven, I myself will be reprobate. » Listen again to Saint Francis de Sales, this man whose virtues will be admired by all centuries: “Alas! he cries, when I think how I used this precious time that the good Lord had only given me to do good works, I tremble that he cannot give me his blessed eternity. » Let us say rather, my brethren, that it is the language of all the saints. And we, my brethren, who have neither piety nor religion, we dare to

rashly assure that we do no harm! My God, what blindness about our salvation! How many poor Christians are now burning, who, under the pretext that they did no harm, did not take the trouble to do good and got lost! Yes, my brethren, even if that were true, if you would not have these gross vices, which are unworthy of a Christian, and even of a reasonable creature; even if you would not be among the number of these misers who we lose no opportunity to gather good things, who have no scruples about working on the holy day of Sunday and deceiving their neighbor; when you would not be a drunkard, who, through wine, becomes less reasonable than a brute; and that you would not, either, be among the number of these dirty, infamous immodest old people, who drag themselves and roll in the mire and the joys of these dirty pleasures; if however, my brethren, despite this, you do not do good works, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven, because you know as (well) as I do, that to go to heaven, you must necessarily do two things well: avoid evil, and do good. To fulfill one of these obligations and fail (in the other) is to do nothing. Like, for example: if you do great penances; that you give a lot to the poor, that is very good; but if, with this, you do not avoid the evil that you can; if you harbor in your heart feelings of hatred, of vengeance against your neighbor; if you slander against him; if you judge him rashly; if you let the feelings of your heart drag on in dirty thoughts of impurity and pride, all your good works are nothing, because a single sin destroys all the merit of this good that you have just done. On the other hand, if you are well regulated in your morals, doing no wrong to anyone, avoiding evil as much as you can, if, with all this, you do not practice good, you are only doing half of what you should do, and, according to Jesus Christ himself, you will still be damned. But, my brethren, if you want to convince yourself, so as not to be able to doubt it, that, although we are not doing evil, if we do not do good,

We will still be lost; listen to Jesus Christ, who only judges the omission of good works that we should have done during our life. “Depart from me, you cursed ones? go into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and for those who imitate him. I was hungry and thirsty, you gave me neither food nor water; I have been sick and a prisoner, and you have not come to visit me; I have been naked, and you have not clothed me. » Saint Augustine tells us that it is as if Jesus Christ were saying to us: “No, no, unhappy sinners, it is not only for the subject that you believe that I condemn you, not even for having committed great crimes; for if you had done good works, you would thereby have blotted them out, and if you had redeemed your sins with alms, as you could have done, I would never have condemned you. But because you have neglected to do good works, and have not done the good that I wanted of you, I reprove you and condemn you to eternal flames. Come on, unhappy man, you have been living without doing any good, withdraw from me; you will never see Mafaco, who would have made you happy in the sky. » Do you want yet another proof which shows us, as we cannot do better, the necessity of doing good works to go to heaven, listen to Jesus Christ. “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I have been in prison and sick, and you have visited me; I was naked, and you had the charity to cover me. » What should we conclude from all this, my brethren? Nothing other, except that, if we do not do good works, even if we do no evil, we will still be lost. Also, we see that our divine Savior compares us, sometimes to a plowman who sows to reap, and who only gathers if he sows, and who reaps nothing, if he sows nothing; sometimes to a fig tree that the father of the family has planted in his vineyard: he prunes it, he cultivates it with care in the hope that it will bring (fruit); but seeing that he is not wearing any, although he is not wearing any bad one, he tears it off and throws it into the fire. Other times, Jesus Christ compares paradise to the salary given to a worker who has completed his task. Tell me, doesn't this clearly show us that Jesus Christ will only give his paradise to those who have deserved it through their good works? See Jesus Christ, who is our model: was there a moment of his life without working to do good works, to convert souls to his Father, and to suffer? And we, miserable as we are, would like it to cost us nothing? No, no, my brethren-, it won't be like that. Either we will do good works, or we will be damned, even if we do no evil. See now. My brethren, the good works you have done. Did you do them solely for God, (so) that the world had nothing to

do with it, and that you were never sorry to have done them because of these few returns of ingratitude that you received? Have you ever applauded yourself for the good you have done and given back to your neighbor? because, if all this has happened to you, either you have done nothing, or you must count everything as for nothing, because you have already lost the reward of it.

think. Do you know, my brethren, the course you have to take? If you have done nothing, or if what you have done is lost to any human sight, begin immediately, so that at death you may still find something to present to Jesus Christ so that he may give you eternal life. — But, you will say to me, perhaps, I have only done bad things throughout my life; I am just a bad tree that can no longer bear good fruit. — my brethren, it can still be done, and I'm going to teach you. Change the soil on this tree, water it with other water, manure it with other fertilizers, and you will see that you will bear good fruit, although you have borne very bad fruit until now. If this tree, which is you, has been fertile in pride, in avarice and in impurity, you can make, with the grace of the good God [le bon Dieu] (that its fruits) become abundant in humility, in charity and in purity. Make yourself like the earth, which, before the flood, drew water from its bosom to water itself, without having recourse to the clouds of heaven, to give it fertility. Likewise, my brethren, draw from your own heart this salutary water which will change its dispositions. You had watered it with the muddy water of your passions; well now, water it with the tears of repentance, of pain and of love, and you will see that you will cease to be a bad tree, and become one that will bear fruit for eternal life. To show you, my brethren, that this is very possible, here is an admirable example in the person of Saint Madeleine. See, according to Jesus Christ himself, how it was a bad tree, and then, how grace made it a good tree, which bore good fruit in abundance. Saint Luke tells us that she was a sinner, and known as such throughout the city of Jerusalem. Jo leaves you to think what these words, coming from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself, want to tell us. She was a young girl born with the liveliest passions, extraordinary beauty, great possessions: which is a fire which kindles the passions even more, which continually nourishes and fattens them. She had a great attraction for the pleasures of the world, an extreme taste for fashion and a great desire to please; so that his thoughts and all his care were employed in this. An unmodest look already announced in advance that his innocence would soon be wrecked. A vain idol of the world, she seeks as much as she can to please it, either in her looks inflamed by an impure fire that comes from the depths of her heart, or in all her actions and that effeminate look that appears on her forehead. All this announces a tree that can only bear very bad fruit. She receives the profane glances of worldly people with incredible complacency; she receives with self-esteem the insipid praise of men; she likes to perform, with a joy beyond what we can understand, in the assemblies of the great world. Being of great beauty, possessing great riches, young and well made; everyone, it seemed, only had a heart and eyes for her. The dances, the shows and the care to please everyone, are all his occupation. If she gathers among the faithful in places intended for prayer, she goes there eagerly, not to weep for her sins, as she should have done; but, much better, to place oneself there like an idol, to see there and, even more, to be seen and admired there. She seems, by this, to you-

Choosing to dispute hearts with God himself and the honor which is due only to him. Finally, it goes so far that it ends up being a subject of scandal to the entire city of Jerusalem. The interviews with young people, the embraces, the unmodest conversations, the corruptions in which she indulges end up making her look only like a girl of bad life. She ends up being shunned and despised by all good people. All the people in the city no longer call her anything other than the sinful and scandalous woman. You will agree with me that this is a very bad tree; if you have gone that far, there are hardly any who have passed it. Alas! my brethren, what fruit of pride has not borne this head embellished and decorated with so much care? Alas! what fruits of corruption has not produced this rotten heart and burned by impure fire? And so with all the other passions that dominated her. I believe, my brethren, that it is quite difficult to find a worse tree. Well! My brethren, you will see that if we want to lend ourselves to grace, which we will never lack more than Madeleine, however miserable we may be, we (can) change our tree, which until now has only borne bad fruit; we can bring good to him, if only we are willing to lend ourselves to the grace that comes to our aid. From bad

Christians, we can become good, and bear fruit worthy of eternal life, which we will see in the return of Madeleine. Saint Jerome tells us that, while Madeleine was thus abandoned to all her disorders, the rumor of so many miracles that the Savior performed in healing the sick and resurrecting the dead filled all of Judea with astonishment; everyone was eager to see such an extraordinary man. Madeleine, to her happiness, found herself among this number. The first words she heard come from the mouth of the Savior were the parable of the Prodigal Son and that of the Good Shepherd. She truly recognized herself (in) this prodigal son; and (recognized) the Savior as the Good Shepherd. The features of grace were too lively and too piercing for her not to feel their touch. Hearing these words, she felt moved and touched to the point of tears. If so many prodigies that she herself has seen and heard fill her with astonishment, grace completes her change by making a very bad tree into a very good one, which must bear excellent fruit. But what finally detached her from herself and from sin, by breaking everything that could hold her back, was this great (goodness) of God for sinners. Ah! My brethren, how powerful grace is when it finds a willing heart! Here she begins to no longer think or act in the same way, grace pursues her, the remorse of her conscience torments her, she feels her heart breaking with the pain of her sins; her eyes which, once upon a time, were so alight with impure fire, and which knew so well how to kindle it in the hearts of others, begin to shed bitter tears. As (her heart) was the first to taste the pleasures of the world, she also wants him to be the first to feel all the regret of having done wrong. From then on, this great world which, in the past, was the source of all her pleasure and happiness, now only annoys and disgusts her more and more. She only finds herself separated from the world and in retirement, where she can reflect and shed tears in complete freedom. Her heart always feels pierced more keenly, as she considers the life she has led thus far,

E the outrage she did to God, the number of souls she lost through an evil life. This love of herself, this proud complacency she had in her beauty, all these profane homages which flattered her: all this is nothing more than senseless vanity and a kind of idolatry. This immodest luxury, these worldly amusements, which she had always regarded as the privileges of her age and sex, are now in her eyes only a pagan life and a true apostasy from her religion. These passionate feelings, these indecent freedoms, these tender attachments, once so dear to his heart, and all these mysteries of iniquity (seem) to him now only crimes and abomination. She recognizes, shedding tears in abundance, that if the good Lord had adorned her with so many gifts, it was only so that she would be more pleasing to him. She only understands her ingratitude and her revolt all the more keenly. In these struggles, she learns that a distinguished Pharisee has the happiness of receiving the Savior into his home; she remembers everything she has heard from the Savior: “Yes,” she said to herself, “I can no longer doubt that he is this Shepherd who is so good and so charitable, and that I am this lost sheep. Ah! she exclaims, “he was angry with me when he spoke of this prodigal son!” yes, I will get up and go find him! » Indeed, no longer possessing herself, she gets up, tramples underfoot all her feathers and all her vanities; she runs, or rather the grace, with which her heart was already burning, carries her along; disregarding all human respect, she enters the banquet hall with a dejected air, her hair, once so well pulled and curled, all disheveled, her eyes downcast and bathed in tears, confusion and redness on her forehead; she throws herself at the feet of the Sau-

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vcur who was at the table. “Ah! Madeleine, Madeleine,” cries a Father of the Church, “what are you doing, and what have you become? where are these pleasures, this vanity and this profane love? » Ah! no, no, my brethren, no longer a sinner Magdalene, but a penitent Magdalene, and a faithful lover of the Savior. Yes, my brethren, it was at this moment that everything changed in her; if she had lost so many souls through such a scandalous life, she will, through her penitent life, gain even more than she lost. She has no human respect, she publicly accuses her sins before a large assembly, she kisses the feet of the Savior, she waters them with her tears, she wipes them with her hair. No, no, my brethren, Madeleine is no longer Madeleine, but a holy lover of the Savior. “No, no, my brethren,” Saint Augustine tells us, “in Madeleine, no more vanity, no more

pleasures, no more profane love, everything is holy and pure in her. Yes, my brethren, this great saint tells us, these perfumes so sought after that she had given everything to luxury, this hair so well adorned and decorated, these eyes animated by such a dangerous fire, all this is now purified in tears. Ah! My brethren, he tells us, who could let us know what is happening in his heart? Each of those who witnessed this act of generosity ridiculed her, called her foolish, blamed her and condemned her, except Jesus Christ himself, who knew well that it was his grace that did everything in her. » He is so touched by it that he does not speak to her at all about his sins; but he takes a singular pleasure in praising all the good she has done, and this in front of everyone: “Go,” the Savior said to her tenderly, “your sins are forgiven you, cry no more. »

We can also see that if the good Lord was so merciful to her, she was one of the most faithful to keep him company during his Passion; she can no longer leave him; she throws herself at the foot of the cross [au pied de la croix]; she mixes her tears with the adorable blood of Jesus Christ. After the death of the Savior, having returned to look for him in his tomb, not having found him, she attacks heaven and earth, angels and men; She has to find it, whatever the cost. The Savior, overcome by his love, can no longer hide from this great penitent saint. He showed himself to her first to tell her that he was resurrected as he had told them. After the Ascension of the Savior, (the Jews,) out of hatred because Jesus Christ loved her, took her, with her brother Lazarus and her sister Martha, exposed them in a bad ship without a rudder, in the hope of destroying them; but it was God himself who led him: they came to Marseille, where, after a while, Madeleine went to retire into solitude, to end her days in tears and penance. Well! My brethren, will you not agree with me that a tree which has borne very bad fruits, with the grace of God can bear very good ones, worthy of pleasing God and being rewarded for eternity? You, my brethren, who bore fruit as bad as Madeleine; who are deceived and given over to many sins; who, perhaps, in the life of the sinful Madeleine, recognize having done all this; alas! My brethren, so cry! What sins of pride, vanity, avarice, vengeance and impurity! Alas! my God! that we will see some in the great day of judgment, which have never appeared in the eyes of the world, but in the eyes of God from whom nothing is hidden. Hey! My brethren, if you have, 14 like Madeleine, born of bad fruit, which now prevents you from bearing good fruit? You have heard, like Madeleine, the story of the parable of the Prodigal Son, where you recognize yourself perfectly well as this sinner; you have heard, like Madeleine, the story of the parable of the Shepherd who runs after his lost sheep, you will not fail to say to yourself: it is myself that Jesus Christ seeks by his grace, which so often gives me the thought of converting. Why wouldn't you do like Madeleine, since you feel your conscience crying out, and the grace coming to your aid to make you change your way of living? Why again, after having reconciled yourself with the good God [le bon Dieu] through the grace of the sacrament of Penance, would you not do like Madeleine, who, not content with having left evil, attaches herself to the good God [le bon Dieu] with all her heart [de tout son cœur] and for all her life? Do you believe you lack grace? No, my brethren, no, your soul is as precious in the eyes of God as that of Madeleine, and, therefore, you are sure that you will never lack the grace to convert and persevere.

II In the second place, my brethren, we read in Holy Scripture that the Lord said to his people, speaking to them of the necessity of doing good works to please him and to be among the saints: “The things that I ask of you are not beyond your strength; to do them, it is not necessary to rise to the clouds, nor to cross the seas; everything I command you is, so to speak, under your hands, in your heart and around you. » I can, my brethren, repeat the same thing to you: it is true

8th Sunday after Pentecost — On the Particular Judgment

that we will never have the happiness of going to heaven if we do not do good works; but let us not be frightened, my brethren: what Jesus Christ asks of us are not extraordinary things, nor beyond our reach, he does not ask of us to be in church all day, nor even to do great penances: that is to say, to the point of ruining our health, nor even to give all our property to the poor (although it is very true that we are obliged to give to

the poor, as much as we can, what we must do to please (God) who commands us and to atone for our sins). It is still true that we must practice mortification in many things, taming our inclinations. There is no doubt that a person who lives without mortifying himself is a person who will never be able to save himself. There is no doubt that, although we cannot be in church all day, which would be a great happiness for us; However, we know very well that we must never fail in our prayers, at least on the evil day and in the evening. But, you will tell me, there are more than one who cannot fast, others who cannot give alms, others who are so busy that, often, they have difficulty saying their prayers in the morning and evening, how can they save themselves, since we must pray continually and we must necessarily do good works, to have heaven? Since all your good works are reduced to prayer, fasting and almsgiving, my brethren, we will easily be able to do all this, as you will see. Yes, my brethren, although we have poor health, and we are even infirm, there is a fast that we can do easily. Were we even okay

poor, we can still give alms, and, however great our occupations, we can pray to the good Lord without disturbing any of our affairs, pray evening and evening, and even all day, and this is how. We practice fasting which is very pleasing to God, every time we deprive ourselves of something that would give us pleasure to do, because fasting does not consist entirely in the deprivation of drinking and eating; but, of what flatters us most in our taste; some (can be mortified) in the way of making arrangements, others in the visits they want to make to the friends they like to see; others, in the words and speeches they like to make; he makes a great fast, and which is very pleasing to God, when he fights his self-esteem, his pride, his repugnance to do what he does not like to do, or by being with people who upset his character, his ways of acting. You could go in this certain company without even offending the good Lord; but you deprive yourself of it for the good God [le bon Dieu]: this is a fast that is very meritorious. Do you find yourself in an occasion where you could satisfy your sweet tooth? instead of doing so, you take without showing it what suits you least. When you buy furniture or clothing, you do not take what would suit you best: here is another fast, the reward of which awaits you at the port of heaven to help you enter. Yes, my brethren, if we wanted to do it well, not only would we find every day something to practice fasting; but still, every moment of the day. But tell me, is there any fast that is more pleasing to God than doing and suffering with

Are you impatient with certain things that often displease you greatly? Without speaking of illnesses, infirmities and so many other afflictions which are inseparable from our miserable life, how many opportunities do we not have to mortify ourselves by suffering what bothers and repels us? Sometimes it is a work that bores us; sometimes it’s a person we don’t like; other times, it is a humiliation that we have to suffer. Well! My brethren, if we suffer all this for the good God [le bon Dieu], and only to please him, these are the fasts most pleasing to God and the most meritorious. You are obliged, throughout the year, to work at very difficult work, which often seems to (make) you die, not even giving you time to breathe. Oh! My brethren,, what treasures you would gather for heaven, if you wanted, by only doing what you do; if, in the midst of your sorrows, you had the precaution to raise your heart towards the good God [le bon Dieu], saying to Him: “My good Jesus, I unite my sorrows to your sorrows, my sufferings to your sufferings; give me the grace that I am always content in the state in which you have placed me. I will bless your holy name in everything that happens to me! » Yes, my brethren, if you had the great happiness of behaving in this way, all your misery, all your labors would become like so many very precious fruits, which you would present to the good Lord at the hour of your death. This, my brethren, is how everyone, in their state, can practice a very meritorious type of fast which will be well counted for eternity. 2° We say that there is a kind of alms that everyone can give. So you see clearly that almsgiving does not only consist of feeding those who have

32G hunger and giving clothes to those who have none; but these are all the services that we render to our neighbor, either for the body or for the soul, when we do it in a spirit of charity. When we have little, ch good! we give little; and when we don't have, we lend if we can. He who cannot provide for the needs of the

sick, well! he can visit them, say a few words of consolation to them, pray for them, so that they make good use of their illness. Yes, my brethren, everything is great and precious in the eyes of the good Lord, when we act from a motive of religion and charity, because Jesus Christ told us that a glass of water would not be without reward. So you see, my brethren, that although we are very poor, we can easily give alms. 3° I say that, however great our occupations may be, there is a kind of prayer that we can pray continually, without even disturbing ourselves from our occupations, and this is how it is done. It is in everything that we do, to seek only to do the will of God. Tell me, my brethren, is it very difficult to seek only to do the will of God in all our actions, however small they may be? Yes, my brethren, with this prayer everything becomes meritorious for heaven, and, without this will, everything is lost. Alas! only goods without reward, which would help us so much to gain heaven [gagner le ciel] by only doing what we do. But, you will ask me, what are the fruits that a father and mother of a family must bear? My brethren, here they are. There are the good fruits that we should all bear in general, such as humility, charity, purity and so on all the other virtues that suit us all. 11 there are those who wish they could stay all day

And at night hide in a corner of their house and cry there for their sins, which, however, would be very good; but the most precious fruit for them is to instruct their children well, to make them know, with the grace of the good God [le bon Dieu], the end for which they are on earth; it is to teach them to pray to the good God [le bon Dieu] with attention, with respect; it is to never give them bad examples, to speak to them often of the sufferings that Jesus Christ endured to merit heaven for us, of the regret that we will have at the hour of death for having despised all this; it is to never speak badly of religion or of your neighbor in front of them; to make them feel a great contempt for the pleasures of the world and for all the things of the world, which are very little, since we remain so little on earth; it is to make them consider the service of the good God [le bon Dieu] as the only thing that can console us in this world and soften our sorrows; it is to make them well aware that, being on earth only for God alone, we will never be happy if we do not serve the good God [le bon Dieu] with zeal and with love. It is also to often do fasts and almsgiving, or other good works for one's children, especially when we see that they are far from God and that they live as if they had no souls to save. These, my brethren, are the fruits that a father and a mother must bear and which are the only ones that the good Lord asks of them. As masters and mistresses have the same obligations to fulfill towards their servants, they must bear the same fruits: that is, do everything that fathers and mothers are obliged to do towards their children. So that in doing this you pray continually, seeking only to do the will of

God in every action you have the joy of doing. A child, who, in all the duties he renders to his parents, has in view only to please God, who orders him to respect, to love his parents, to take care of them, to relieve them in their miseries, or to console them in their sorrows or illnesses, and to pray to the good God [le bon Dieu] for them; here, my brethren, are the precious fruits that the good Lord asks of him, and with which he will be rewarded throughout eternity. A plowman or a worker who puts up with the bad mood of those who occupy them, who offers their sorrows and the bad weather they endure, with the sole aim of pleasing God and saving their souls: this is good fruit, and a continual prayer that God will not leave without reward. Ah! My brethren, how many opportunities of merit we miss, and which would lead us with great strides to heaven, if we had the happiness of offering all our actions to God; if we prayed to him to bless our work, to regulate our procedures well and to preside over all that we do; if we took care to preserve and renew from time to time our intentions in our work. My brethren, we often say to God: “Have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi]! come to my aid; my God, I want to do nothing but what can please you. » You will agree with me that all these prayers will not disturb you in your work; all these fasts will in no way harm your health; you have seen that we can give alms without having gold or silver, and an infinity of good works which will only cost us a little vigilance and constraint. However, my brethren, I will tell you 1° that for these works to be meritorious for heaven, they must

Are done in a state of grace, because you know as well as I that all the good works that we do while in a state of sin are dead to heaven. It is true that they can merit our conversion, which is already a great happiness; but they will not be rewarded for heaven; it is a truth expressly marked in the Gospel, which should greatly make us careful never to remain in sin, since all the good that we do will not accompany us before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. Ah! unfortunate who, for so long, have languished in sin, only lost good works, which would have led you surely (to heaven). Alas! What use are all your ills and all the miseries of life to you, if not to lose yourself? 0 my God! how many lost Christians who, by only doing what they do, would save themselves so well t 2° We say that we must act from a supernatural motive: that is to say, out of love for God, with a view to our salvation; because, if you act from a purely natural motive, such as: if you only work to do your business well, earn your living, feed and support your children; there is nothing more perfect than (what the pagans do); in this there is no reward for heaven. If you only do service to your neighbor because he is your relative or your friend, because you are touched with compassion for the ills he experiences; but whether you have in view to please God and the salvation of your soul, your work and all your alms will be well rewarded in this world; but never for the sky. Alas! My brethren, what good works have been lost! How many among us, my brethren, who have done many good works, rendered good

services to their neighbors, who even made great sacrifices; but who, not having the thought of doing it to please God, will have no reward! Yes, my brethren-, if we want everything we do to be rewarded for heaven, we must have, in the morning, when we wake up, the thought of doing everything we do during the day with the sole aim of pleasing the good God [le bon Dieu] and for the salvation of our soul, and renew this offering, from time to time, during the day. The thought that displeases God must always accompany us everywhere, because everything we do, separated from this thought, is lost to heaven. Am I not quite right in telling you that ignorance will be the cause of the ruin of the greatest number of Christians? Alas! how many Christians, who are perhaps over fifty years old and who have never had the thought of pleasing God by doing their work, their prayers, their alms, and by rendering some service to their neighbor! Ah! My brethren, if we wanted!... What fruits we could bear for heaven, if we wanted to please God alone in everything we do; and much more, which we would make others wear! We have a fine example of this in the person of Saint Denis. Having arrived in Paris which was still immersed in idolatry, he did so much through his prayers, his instructions and his miracles, that all these people, who were only very bad trees and only bore very bad fruit, almost all became trees capable of bearing fruit for eternal life. The priests of the idols, seeing the number of people he was converting, went to the governor, telling him that a new preacher was showing great contempt for his gods, and that almost all

E (the inhabitants) became Christians. The governor became very angry with Saint Denis, had him taken and thrown into a dungeon, where he was subjected to everything that the rage of the tyrants could invent. His whole body was broken by rolling large pieces of stone over him. The tyrant, having brought him back before his tribunal, told him sharply that his thoughts had changed. The saint replied that the most horrible torments, and even death, would never make him change his feelings. The judge only responded to these words with a hail of whips, armed with iron points, which tore his body to the core. It was a spectacle worthy of angels, to see a good old man, who was over a hundred and six years old, singing the praises of God during this horrible butchery. The judge, seeing his courage, had him stretched out on an easel; they opened all his wounds with iron nails, then, having laid him on a grill, they roasted him over a slow fire, which he endured without letting a single complaint come out of his mouth. Then he was thrown into a fiery furnace, where the good Lord guaranteed him to be burned. After this he was attached to a cross, from where he preached to the people, as from a pulpit. The tyrant, seeing that nothing could defeat him, condemned him to have his head cut off; and it is a tradition as old as his death, that his body, having risen, took his head in his hands, walked nearly a league until he found a person whom he had converted, and he fell at his feet. After so

many miracles, prayers and instructions, almost everyone was converted. Tell me: is this not a tree that has borne good fruit and is giving it to others? Ah! My brethren, if we were good Christians ourselves, what fruit we would bear for eternal life! How much fruit our good examples would bring to others! Let us therefore be careful not to find ourselves among those to whom Jesus Christ will say: “Take away this tree, which has not borne good fruit; cut it and throw it into the fire. » But on the contrary, my brethren, let us try that everything we do or say is fruitful for heaven, through great purity of intention, and, through this, we will have the happiness of hearing from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself, these words: “Come, those blessed by my father, and take possession of the kingdom of heaven, because everything you have done, you have only done with a view to pleasing me. » This is what you wish...

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOSTE.

On the particular judgment.

Redde rationem villicationis tuœ. Give me an account of your administration. (S. Luke, x vi, 2.)

Can we well, my brethren, reflect on the severity of God, without feeling ourselves penetrated by the most lively fear? What! My brethren, the days of our life are all numbered; moreover, we do not know the hour and the moment when our sovereign Judge must summon us before his tribunal, and this moment will perhaps be the one to which we least think, where we will be least disposed to give this formidable account!... I assure you, my brethren, that, when we think about it well, there would be enough to throw us into despair, if religion did not teach us that we can soften this moment by a life which is always able to assure us the hope that the good God [le bon Dieu] will have mercy on us. Let us be careful, my brethren, not to find ourselves embarrassed when that moment comes, like this steward whose

334 SERMONS» Jesus Christ speaks to us in the Gospel. I will therefore, my brethren, show you 1° that there is a particular judgment, where we will give a very exact account of all the good and all the evil that we have done; 2° what are the means that we must take to prevent the rigor of this account.

I. We all know, my brethren, that we will be judged twice: once, in the great day of vengeance, that is to say, at the end of the world, in the presence of the whole universe, where all our actions, good or bad, will be manifested in the eyes of everyone. But, before this terrible and unhappy day for sinners, we will have suffered one, at the moment when we die, and as soon as we have breathed our last. Yes, my brethren, the entire condition of man is contained in these three words: live, die and be judged. It is a fixed and invariable law for all men. We are born to die, we die to be judged, and this judgment will decide our eternal happiness or unhappiness. The universal judgment to which we must all appear will only be the publication of the particular sentence which will have been pronounced at the hour of our death. You all know, my brethren, that God has numbered our years; and, in this number of years that he has resolved to grant us, he has marked one which will be the last for us; in this last year, a last month; in this last month, one last day; and finally, in this last day, a last hour, after which there will be no more time for us. Alas! What will become of this sinner and this impious person who always promises himself a longer life? Let them count, these poor unfortunates, as long as they please; after this last

Now, there will be no return, no more hope and no more resources! At the same moment, my brethren, listen carefully, you who are not afraid to spend your days in sin, see: at the same moment that your soul leaves your body, it will be judged. — But, you will tell me, we know that well. — Yes, but you don't believe it. Tell me, if you seriously believed it, how could you remain in a state that puts you in danger of continually falling into hell? No, no, my friend, you do not believe it; because if you believed it well, you would not expose yourself to such great misfortune. However, the time will come when the good Lord will apply the seal of his immortality and the stamp of his eternity on (your) debt, (at the point) where it will be at that moment; and this seal and seal shall never be broken. 0 terrible moment! but so little meditated on, so short and so long, which flows with such rapidity and which carries with it such a frightful succession of centuries.

What will happen to us, my brethren, at this moment so capable of frightening us? Alas! My brethren, is that we will all appear, each in particular, before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, to be judged there and to give an account of all the good and (all) the evil that we have done. The particular judgment, my brethren, is so certain that the good Lord, to convince us of it, has made (the signs) appear to many, even during their lifetime; so that we prepare for it (1). We see in the story, that a young libertine (was) given to all kinds of vices; but having been taught by a wise mother, one night following a day when (1) Saint Jerome. [Note from the Venerable.)

he had given in the greatest excesses, he had a dream during his sleep. He saw himself transported to the tribunal of God. We cannot say what was his shame, his confusion and the bitterness of his urn. When he woke up, he had a burning fever, he was sweating and beside himself, his hair had turned completely white, “Leave me alone,” he said, bursting into tears, “to those who first saw him in this state, “leave me alone, I have seen my Judge; oh how (terrible) he is! Sorry, my God! oh pardon! » His companions in debauchery, learning that their friend was ill and that he was distressed, came to see him to console him. “Get away from me,” he told them, “you are no longer my friends, I don’t want you (anymore) from now on. Ah! I saw my Judge. Ah! how terrible it is! What majesty! what glory (that) with which he is clothed! Ah! so many accusations and so many questions to which I could not answer anything. All my crimes are written, I have read them all. Ah! how great the number! It’s good now that I know the full enormity of it! Alas! I saw a troop of demons, who were only waiting for the signal to drag me into hell. Withdraw, false friends, no I will never see you! How happy I would be, if I could, through the rigors of penance, appease this terrible judge!... I devote myself to it for all my life. Alas! soon I will have to appear for good! Alas! perhaps it will be today!... My God, forgive me!... My God, have mercy on me!... Ah! please, don't lose me, have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi]!... I will do penance all my life. Oh! what sins I have committed!... Oh! what graces are despised.... Oii! What good things could I have done, and what I didn't do!... My God, don't throw me into hell! » But, my brethren, he did not stop there. He spent the rest

Ede his life to cry, to do penance. That this moment, my brethren, will be terrible for the one who has done no good and who has done a lot of harm. Yes, my brethren, we will give an account of all our good and bad actions: everything will appear before our Judge at the moment when our soul separates from our body. Yes, my brethren, the good Lord will make us account for all the goods we have received. I say 1° that there are the goods of nature, of fortune and of grace. All of these assets will come into play. The goods of nature concern the body and the soul; we will have to account for the use we have made of our bodies. He will ask if we have used our strength to be of service to our neighbors, to work to have enough to give alms, to do penance, to make trips to visit the places that the good Lord has favored, (like Notre-Dame de Fourvière, Saint François Régis, and elsewhere...). But, if, on the contrary, we have only used our health and our body in running around in games, in cabarets, in going to steal from our neighbor, in working on the holy day of Sunday, in making trips to these holy jouw, instead of employing them in praying, in loving the good God [le bon Dieu], in instructing the ignorant, in giving them good advice, in leading them to the good God [le bon Dieu] and turning them away from evil. Then he will examine whether we have not used our minds for evil: that is to say, to educate ourselves for bad (things). (If we have read) bad books, associated with the ungodly, taught others to do evil. (If we have used it) to deceive in sales and purchases, to testify falsely in court, to provoke lawsuits, to lead others to take revenge and to speak evil against religion, to teach them impieties about religion: S&nMr»Ns. — Volume II. the i

338 SEMIONS. like by trying to make them believe that religion is not good, that everything we say is not true, that priests say what they want! He will also examine whether we have not used our minds to compose bad songs against purity, against the reputation of our neighbor; if we do not communicate our bad knowledge to others. He will ask us if we have used our minds to teach ourselves, if we have taken pride in the beauty of our body, instead of admiring in ourselves the wisdom and power of God. If we have used it to

lead others to evil, like a person who adorns himself in such a way as to draw the eyes of the world to him. The good Lord will examine whether we have used our wealth well, reminding us that we are only thrifty, and that whatever we spend inappropriately will be attributed to us as sin. Then the good Lord will show these fathers and mothers all these vanities that they bought for their children, which only served to ruin their souls; he will show them all this money spent on games, cabarets, dances, and all other useless expenses. And then, everything that we let go to waste, and that we could have given to the poor. Alas! how many sins we will never have thought of, and which we now do not want to recognize; and that we will recognize at this moment, but too late! Let us now come, my brethren, to another outcome of account which will be much more terrible, that of grace. The good Lord will begin to show us the benefits he has granted us: 1° by giving us birth within the Catholic Church, while so many others were born and died outside of it. He will make us see

Eque, even among Christians, an infinite number, died without having received the grace of holy Baptism. He will show us how many years, months, weeks, days he has preserved our life, (being) in sin; and that if, at that moment, he had killed us, we would have been thrown into hell. He will put before our eyes all the good thoughts, all the good inspirations, the good desires that he has given us throughout our lives. Alas, so many despised graces! He will remind us of all the instructions we have received and heard during our life; all the catechisms, all the readings that were made available to us, in order to benefit from them. All our confessions, all our communions, and so many other graces from heaven that we have received. And how many Christians have not received the hundredth part of it, and have sanctified themselves! But, my brethren, what has become of all these benefits and all these graces, and what profit have we made of them? Sad moment for a Christian who despised everything and who benefited from nothing! Do you know, my brethren, what you....? see what Saint Gregory tells us. “Ah! my friend, look at this cross, and you will see what it cost a God to deserve us (life). » This is why, when Saint Augustine meditated on the return of account that one should give graces that one would have received and despised; he cried: “Alas! unhappy, what will become of me after so many graces received! Alas! I fear even more for the graces I have received than for the sins I have committed, although they are very numerous! My God, what will be my fate? » We read in the life of Saint Thérèse that, in her last illness, she was transported to the judgment of God; having come back to herself, she was asked what she feared, after having done so much penance. “Alas,” she said, “I fear very much. » She was asked if she was afraid of death? “No,” she said. What if it was hell? “No,” she replied. So what was making her tremble? “Alas! my life must be compared with that of Jesus Christ; ah! woe is me, if I have even the shadow of sin! » But what will we think, my brethren, when Jesus Christ reproaches us for the contempt and abuse that we have made of his precious Blood and of all his merits? Ah! ungrateful sinner, he will tell us, unfruitful vine, barren tree, what should I have done for your salvation that I did not do? had I not reason to expect that you would bear good fruit unto eternal life? Where are the good works that you have done? where are your good prayers which (have) given me pleasure, which have touched my heart? Where are your good confessions? The good communions which gave birth to me in your soul, which compensated me, in some way, for the torments I endured for your salvation? Where are the penances and the tears that you shed to erase the sins you committed? Where are the good works that you have done, for so many good thoughts, good desires and so many opportunities that I have given and provided you? Where are these well-heard masses, where you could have satisfied me for your sins? Go, unhappy one, you have only produced works of iniquity, you have only worked to renew the sufferings of my passion and my death. Go, get away from me, I curse him for eternity! Go, on the day of general judgment, I will manifest all the good that you could have done and that you did not (do), and all the graces that I have granted you and which you have despised. » Alas! que do rc-

So many sins and so many sins that we have never thought of! Alas! that this account will be terrible! Here is an example which will prove it to you. It is reported by Saint John Climacus that an anchorite, named Stephen, after having led a most austere and holy life, being already very old, fell ill with the disease from

which he died. The day before his death, suddenly finding himself beside himself, and nevertheless, having his eyes open, he looked to the right and left of his bed, as if he had seen some person who was making him account for his actions. A person could be heard questioning him, and the patient answered so loudly that everyone in the apartment could hear him. He was heard saying: “Yes, it is true, I committed this sin, but I fasted for this sin, for so many years. » Then the other voice said that he had committed such a sin, the dying man said to him: “No, that's false, I didn't do it. » Another moment, we hear it-

9th Sunday after Pentecost — On the Tears of Jesus Christ

Videns Jesus civitatem flevit super illam. Jesus, seeing the city, wept over it. (St. Luke 19:41)

Jesus Christ, upon entering the city of Jerusalem, wept over it, saying: “If at least you knew the graces I come to bring, and if you were willing to profit by them, you could still receive your pardon; but no—your blindness has risen to such a height that all these graces will serve only for your hardening and your misery. You have killed the prophets and put to death the children of God; now you are going to put the finishing touch to all these crimes by putting to death the very Son of God.” This, my brethren, is what made the tears of Jesus Christ flow so abundantly as He drew near that city. Alas! in all these misfortunes He discovered the loss of so many souls still more guilty than the Jews, since they were going to be more favored with graces than all of them had been.

Alas! he discovered in all these misfortunes the loss of so many souls much more guilty than the Jews, since they were going to be more favored with graces than all of them had been. Alas! My brethren, what touched him so deeply was that, despite the merits of his death and passion, which would have enough to redeem a thousand worlds larger than the one we inhabit, the majority would be lost. Yes, my brethren, he saw in advance those who among us would despise these graces and would only use them (only) for their misfortune. Alas! My brethren, who among us will not tremble when truly thinking of preserving his soul for heaven? Alas! are we not of this number? Is it not for us that Jesus Christ said while weeping: “Ah! if, at least, my death and my blood do not serve your salvation, they will kindle the wrath of my Father on you, for eternity. » A sold God!... a reprobate soul!... a rejected heaven!... is it really possible that we are insensitive to so many misfortunes?... Is it really possible, my brethren, that, despite everything that Jesus Christ has done to save our souls, we are so insensitive to their loss?,.. But, to extricate us, my brethren, from this insensitivity, I am going to show you 1° what a soul is; 2° what it cost Jesus Christ; and 3° what the demon does to lose her.

I. Ah! My brethren, if we had the good fortune to know the value (of our soul), with what care would we not preserve it? Alas! we will never understand it enough! Wanting, my brethren, to show you the greatness of the value of a soul: this is impossible for a mortal; there is only God who knows all the beauties, the perfections with which he adorns a soul. I will only tell you that everything God has created: heaven, earth and everything they contain, all these wonders are created in his favor. Our catechism gives us the most beautiful possible proof of the greatness of our soul. When we ask a child: What do you hear, when you say that the soul of man is a spirit created in the image of God? It is, the child tells you, that this soul has, like God, the power to know, to love and to determine itself freely in all its actions. This, my brethren, is the most beautiful praise we can make of the qualities with which God has embellished our soul, created by the three Persons of the Holy Trinity and in their likeness. A spirit, like God, eternal for the future, capable of knowing the beauties and all the perfections of God as much as it is possible for a creature; a soul, which is the object of the complacency of the three divine Persons; a soul, which can glorify God in all its actions; a soul, whose whole occupation will be to sing the praises of God for days without end [jours sans fin]; a soul, which will be luminous with the happiness of God himself; a soul which has such freedom in all its actions, that it can give its friendship, its love to whomever it wishes: it can not love God or love Him; but, if she is so happy to turn her love towards God, it is no longer she who obeys God; but God himself who does the wills (of this

soul) and who seems to take pleasure in doing so. We could even say that, since the beginning of the world, you would not find a soul which, having given itself to God without sharing, the good God [le bon Dieu] had refused it something it had desired. We see that God created us with such desires, that nothing created is capable of satisfying us. Present to a soul all the riches and all the treasures of the world, nothing of that will be able to satisfy it; God having created it for him, it is also only he who is capable of fulfilling all his vast desires. Yes, my brethren, our soul can love God, who is the greatest of all

Happiness! By loving him, we have all the goods and pleasures we can desire on earth and in heaven. We can still serve him: that is, glorify him in every action of our life. There is not (even) the least thing that we do that will not glorify God, if we do it with a view to pleasing him. Our occupation, while we are on earth, is no different from (that of) the angels who are in heaven: the only thing (which differs is) that we see all these goods only with the eyes of faith. Our soul is so noble, adorned with so many beautiful qualities, that the good God [le bon Dieu] only wanted to entrust it to a prince of his celestial court. Our soul is so precious in the eyes of God himself, that, in all his wisdom, he has found no food worthy of it than his adorable Body, of which he wants it to make his daily bread; and for his drink, there was only his precious Blood that was worthy of serving him. “Yes, my brethren, if we have a soul that God esteems so much,” Saint Ambrose tells us, “that, when it would have been alone in the world, he would not have thought of doing too much other than to die for it; and that, when the good God [le bon Dieu], in creating her, had not created a sky, although alone in the world, the good God [le bon Dieu] would have created one for her alone,” as he said one day to Saint Thérèse: “You are so pleasing to me,” said Jesus Christ to her, “that, even if there were no heaven, I would create one for you alone. » “O my body,” cries Saint Bernard, “how fortunate are you to house a soul adorned with so many beautiful qualities! A God, infinite as he is, makes him the object of his complacency! » Yes, my brethren, our soul is destined to spend its eternity in the bosom of God himself. Let us say everything in one word, my brethren: our soul is something so great, so precious, that only God surpasses it. One day, the good God [le bon Dieu] showed Saint Catherine a soul. She found it so beautiful that she cried out: “O my God, if faith did not teach me that there is only one God, I would believe that he is a divinity; no, my God, I am no longer surprised that you died for such a beautiful soul! » Yes, my brethren, our soul, for the future, will be eternal, as well as God himself. No, no, my brethren, let us go no further; we lose ourselves in this abyss of grandeur. From this alone, my brethren, I leave you to think whether we should be surprised that God, who knows the merit so (well), weeps so bitterly for the loss of a soul. I leave you to think what care we must take to preserve all its beauty. Alas! My brethren, the good God [le bon Dieu] is so sensitive to the loss of a soul that he mourned it before having eyes to cry; he borrowed the eyes of his prophets to mourn the loss of our souls. This is what we see, in a very noticeable way, in the person of the prophet Amos. “Being,” said this prophet, “withdrew into the darkness, considering the frightful multitude of crimes that the people of God committed every day, seeing that the wrath of God was ready to fall upon them, and that hell was opening its gulfs to swallow them up, having brought them all together, (and) being myself all trembling, I said to them, weeping bitterly: 0 my children, do you know well what is my occupation, night and day? Alas! I vividly imagine all your sins, in all the bitterness of my heart. If by force... overwhelmed with fatigue, I doze off, immediately I wake up with a start, crying out, my eyes bathed in tears and my heart broken with pain: My God, my God, don't

Is there no soul in Israel who does not offend you? While I fill my imagination with this sad and deplorable idea, I speak to the Lord about it, I groan bitterly in his holy presence, saying to him: My God, what means will I use to obtain their grace? This is what the Lord answered me: Prophet, if you want to obtain forgiveness from this ungrateful people, go, run into the streets and public squares; make them resound with the most bitter groans; enter the shop of merchants and artisans; go to the places where justice is administered; go up to the chamber of the greats and the chamber of the judges; say to everyone you find inside and outside the city: “Woe to you Iah! woe to you, who have sinned against the Lord! » It is not even enough, you will call to your aid all those who are capable of crying, so that they join their tears to yours, and

that your groans and your cries are so frightening that they throw consternation into all the hearts that hear you; that they may leave their sins, and weep for them unto the grave; so that they understand how sensitive the loss of their souls is to me. » The prophet Jeremiah, my brethren, goes even further. To show us how sensitive the loss of a soul is to the good God [le bon Dieu], listen to him himself, in a moment (when) he found himself seized by the spirit of the Lord: “Ah! my God, ah! my God, what will become of me, you have given me the care of a rebellious people, of an ungrateful nation, which does not want to listen to you, nor submit to your conduct; alas, what will I do? what side will I take? This is what the Lord answered me: “To show them how deeply touched I am by the loss of their souls, take your hair, tear it from your head, throw it away from you, because the sin of this people has forced me to abandon them, and my fury has its birth in the interior of their souls. » When the anger of the Lord is kindled by sin, in the heart, it is the most terrible disease. “But, Lord,” said the prophet, “what can I do to persuade you to turn away your angry eyes from your people? “Take sackcloth for clothing,” the Lord said to me, “and put ashes on your head, and weep continually, and so abundantly that your tears cover your face, and weep so bitterly, that your sins may be drowned in your tears. » Do you understand, my brethren, how sensitive the loss of our souls is to the good God [le bon Dieu]? You see how unhappy we are in losing a soul whom God loves (so much), that, not yet having eyes with which to cry, he borrows those of his prophets to shed bitter tears over their loss. The Lord tells us through his prophet Joel: “Cry for the loss of souls like a young husband who has just lost his wife, who should have provided all her consolation, and who is reduced to all kinds of misfortunes.” Saint Bernard tells us that three things are capable of making us cry; but there is only one that is capable of making (our tears) meritorious, which is when we cry for our sins or those of our brothers; everywhere else they are only profane or criminal tears, or finally, unsuccessful ones. Crying over the loss of an unfair trial, the death of a child: useless tears. Crying the deprivation of a carnal pleasure: criminal tears. Crying over a long illness: fruitless and useless tears. But, mourning the spiritual death of one's soul, the distance from God, the loss

Edu ciel: “O precious tears! this great saint tells us, but how rare you are! »And why, my brethren, if not because you do not feel the greatness of your misfortune, for time and for eternity. Alas! My brethren, it is the fear of this loss which has depopulated the world, to fill the deserts and the monasteries with so many Christians; it is because they understood much better (than us) that, if we lose our soul [perdre son âme], everything is lost, and that it must therefore be of great value, since God himself valued it so highly. Yes, my brethren, the saints suffered so much to preserve their souls for heaven! History provides us with countless examples; here is one, my brethren; if we do not have the courage to imitate him, at least we can admire him to bless the good God [le bon Dieu]. We see in the life of Saint John Calybite, who was born in Constantinople, (that he) began from his childhood to understand the nothingness of human things and to feel a great taste for solitude. A monk from a neighboring monastery passing through Constantinople to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, stayed with his parents, who received the pilgrims with great pleasure. The child asked them what life was like in their monastery. When they told him about the holy and penitent life of religious people, the pleasure that one tasted there, separated from the world to have no more commerce than with God alone, he was so touched and conceived such a great desire to leave the world, to go and share this happiness, that he could no longer find himself in the world. He told his parents that they should not think of any establishment in the world for him, that the good God [le bon Dieu] was calling him to go and end his days in retirement. His parents wanted to try if they could make him change gor of resolutionLion; but everything was useless; he asked them for their only inheritance, the book of the holy Gospels, which he made his entire treasure. But, to free himself from the pressing (requests) of his parents, and to give himself everything to God, he abandoned their house, and went to present himself at the door of a monastery to be received. His parents sent for him from all sides. Unable to find him, they abandoned themselves to [s'abandonner à] the bitterest tears. This young saint spent six years in this retreat practicing all the virtues and penances that his love for the good God [le bon Dieu] could inspire him. At the end of this time, the thought occurred to him of going to his parents, hoping that the good God [le bon Dieu] would grant him the

same grace as to Saint Alexis, who spent twenty years with him without anyone knowing him. As soon as he left the monastery, finding a poor man, he changed clothes with him to make himself even more unrecognizable; moreover, his austerities which had been so great and a serious illness, had extremely disfigured him. As far away as he saw his parents' house, he knelt down to ask God to lead him into his business. The port being already closed because of the night, he spent the night at the door. The next day, the servants having found him, took compassion on him and allowed him to enter a small lodge to retire there. Only God knew how much he had to suffer, seeing his parents, who, at every moment, passed in front of him, weeping bitterly for the loss of their child who was all their consolation. His father, who was very charitable, sent him from time to time something to feed him; but his mother could not approach him without feeling her heart rise, she found the poor thing so disgusting. If his charity had not

IXTH SUNDAY AFTER PRNTEGATB. If she was not inclined to overcome this repugnance, she would have thrown him out of her home. Always plunged in sadness, always shedding tears, and this in front of one who could not be insensitive to what was the greatest of all his mother's torments,... This good saint spent three years in this sad position, being occupied only with prayer and fasting which he carried to excess; her tears flowed constantly. When the good God [le bon Dieu] had made known to him his end, he asked the steward of the house to inspire his mistress with the charity of coming to see him, because he ardently desired to speak to her. When this commission was given to her, she seemed quite annoyed, although she was accustomed to often visiting the sick; but she had such a great reluctance to visit him that she had to take great pains to go to the entrance of the lodge where this poor man was. The dying man thanked her for all the care she had taken of a miserable stranger like himself, and assured her that he would pray earnestly to the Lord for her, so that he would reward her for all she had done for him. He again asked her for the grace to take care of his tomb. After she had promised him, he presented her with the very well-bound book of the Holy Gospels. She was very surprised to see that a poor man had such a well-bound book; then she remembered the one she had once given to her son whom she had lost. Her pain renewed, she began to shed tears in torrents. The father came to this noise, and having examined this book, recognized that it was his son's. He asked him what had become of their son. This saint, who had only one breath of life left, said to them, sighing and shedding tears: “This book is the one you gave me ten years ago; I am that son that you SKIXMONS. — Volume IT. 16 have sought so much and for whom you have shed so many tears. » These words, they remained as if dead to see their dear son whom they had sought so much and so far, Having him at home; they seemed to be unable to live any longer. But at the moment when they clasped him in their arms, he raised his hands and his eyes to heaven and gave back to God his beautiful soul, which, to preserve itself in innocence, had made so many sacrifices, penances and shed (so many) tears... This, my brethren, is what we can say: this Christian had the happiness of knowing the greatness of his soul and the care he had to take of it. Here, my brethren, is a Christian who has glorified God in all the actions of his life; here is a soul, who now radiates glory in heaven, who blesses the good God [le bon Dieu] for having given her the grace to overcome the world, flesh and blood. Oh! How happy are these deaths, my brethren, memo in the eyes of the world!

II. In the second place, we have said that, to know the price of our (soul, we) have only to consider what Jesus Christ has done for it. Who among us, my brethren, will ever be able to understand how much the good God [le bon Dieu] values ■■our soul, since he has done everything that it was possible for a God to do, to make a creature happy (1). To feel more inclined to love her, he wanted to create her in his image and likeness; so that in contemplating it, he might contemplate himself. Also, we see that he gives to our soul the most tender names and the most capable of showing love to the point of excess. He recalls his child, his sister, his beloved, his wife, his only one, his dove. But that's not enough: love (shows itself) much better through (i) See note U ¡1 at the END of the volume.

Actions than words. See his future eagerness from heaven, to take a body similar to ours; and marrying our nature, he married all our infirmities, except sin; or rather he wanted to take charge of the justice that his Father asked of us. See his annihilation in the mystery of the incarnation; see this poverty; for us (he is born) in a manger; see the tears that he shed on this straw, where he weeps in advance for our sins; see this blood flowing under the knife of circumcision; see him flee to Egypt like a criminal; see this humility and this submission to his parents; see him in the Garden of Olives, groaning and praying and shedding tears of blood; see him taken, bound, garrotted, thrown to the ground and beaten with kicks and sticks by his own children; consider him attached to this column, all in blood; his poor (body received) so many blows, (the blood flows so much), that the executioners themselves are completely covered with them; see this crown of thorns which pierces this holy and sacred head; see him carrying his cross to Calvary: so many steps, so many falls; see him nailed to the cross and lying there himself, without letting a single word or whisper come out of his mouth. See these tears of love that he shed as he died, which mingle with his adorable blood! Is this indeed, my brethren, a love worthy of a God who is love? Is this, my brethren, showing us the esteem he has for a soul! Is this (enough) to make us understand what it is worth and the care we must take of it? Ah! My brethren, if we had the happiness, once in our life, to fully understand the beauty and value of our soul, would we not be ready, like Jesus-

Christ, to make all the sacrifices to preserve it? Oh! how beautiful a soul is, how precious it is in the eyes of God himself! How can it be that we paid so little attention to her, and that we treated her more harshly than the vilest animal? What must be the thought of this soul who knows its beauty and all its beautiful qualities, to see itself dragged into the filth of sin? Ah! let us feel, my brethren, when we roll it in the waters of these dirty pleasures, what horror must not have of itself, a soul which has only God which surpasses it!... My God, is it really possible that we make so little regard for such beauty? See, my brethren, what becomes of a soul who has the misfortune of falling into sin. In the grace of God, she would be taken for a divinity; but, in sin!.,. The Lord one day showed a prophet a soul in a state of sin, he told us that it was like carrion, dragged for eight days in a street in the harshness of the sun. Ah! It is here, my brethren, that we can say with the prophet Jeremiah: “Great Babylon has fallen, she has become the den of demons. " Oh! How beautiful a soul is when it has the happiness of possessing the grace of its God! No, no, only God can (know) its full price and value! Also, see how God established a religion to make her happy here on earth, while waiting to make her enjoy greater happiness in the next life. Why, my brethren, did he institute all these sacraments? is it not to heal her, when she has had the misfortune of receiving wounds from sin, and to strengthen her in her battles? See how many outrages Jesus Christ exposed himself to for her; how many are his commandments are violated! how often its sacraments are profaned, how many sacrileges in the reception of the sacraments! But no, my brethren, although Jesus Christ knew well all the insults that he would receive there, the love he has for our souls could not stop him... let us say better, my brethren, Jesus Christ loved or rather loves our soul so much that, if he had to die a second time, he would do it. See his eagerness to come to our aid in our sorrows and sorrows; see the care he takes of all those who want to love him; you see all these crowds of saints that he feeds in a miraculous way. Ah! My brethren, if once we had the happiness of understanding well what a soul is and how much God..., how much he Loves it, and how much he must reward it throughout eternity, we would do like the saints: neither goods, nor pleasures, nor death would be capable of making us sell it to the devil. See all these crowds of martyrs, the torments they endured so as not to lose it, see them climb onto the scaffolds, and deliver themselves into the hands of the executioners with incredible joy. We have a fine example of this in the person of Saint Christine, virgin and martyr. This illustrious martyr was from Tuscany. His father, who was governor, himself became his own executioner. The subject of his anger was that his daughter had removed all the idols that he worshiped in his house; she broke them all up to give alms to the poor Christians. This action brought her father to such an attack of fury that he immediately placed her in the hands of the executioners, who, by his order, cruelly whipped her and tormented her with incredible cruelty. His poor little body was already covered in blood. The father ordered iron hooks to be

taken to remove him.

clean the body. They went so far that a large part of the bones were seen in almost every member of his body; but, far from such burning pain breaking down her courage and disturbing the peace of her soul, she picked up, without ecstasy, her own flesh and presented it to her father, asking him if he wanted to eat it. Such a surprising action, instead of touching the heart of this barbarian father, only served to irritate him even more: he had her thrown into a horrible prison, loaded with chains and shackles; he loaded her with curses, telling her that many other torments were prepared for her; but the holy girl, who was still only ten years old, was not troubled. In fact, a few days later, her father took her out of prison and had her attached to a wheel a little raised from the ground, which he had sprinkled with oil on all sides, and under which he had a large fire lit, so that as the wheel turned, the body of this little innocent girl would suffer double torture at the same time. But a great miracle stopped the effects: the fire respected the purity (of the virgin) and did not harm her body in any way; on the contrary, the fire turned against the idolaters, and burned an almost infinite number of them. The father, seeing all these prodigies, almost died of disappointment. Unable to bear this affront, without extracting all the vengeance that his hatred inspired in him, he took his daughter back to prison; but she did not remain there without help: an angel came down to her dungeon to console her, and at the same time healed her of all her wounds. He gave him new strength. The unnatural father having learned of this miracle, resolved to order a last effort. He ordered the executioner to place a stone on his daughter's neck and throw her into the lake. But the good God [le bon Dieu], who knew how to preserve her from the flames,

I also took her out of the waters: the same angel, who had accompanied her in the prison, accompanied her on shore. He quietly brought her back to the shore, where she was found as healthy as before. This father, seeing that everything he did to (make her) suffer was of no use to him, felt such great despair that he died of rage. Dion, who was his successor in the government of the city, was also affected by his cruelty: he believed it was his duty to avenge the death of the father, of which he believed the daughter was the cause. He invented a thousand kinds of torments against this innocent virgin; but the most rigorous was when he made her lie in a cradle filled with boiling oil mixed with pitch. But the holy girl, whom the good God [le bon Dieu] took pleasure in protecting in the face and confusion of her tyrants, (caused), with a single sign of the cross, all this matter to lose its strength. With a holy insult, she told them that they had put her in this cradle like a child who had just been baptized. These detestable ministers of Satan were indignant to see that a child of ten years triumphed over all their efforts; also these infamous barbarians, forgetting all the respect they owed to the modesty and modesty of this virgin, cut her hair and stripped her of her clothes, and, in this deplorable state, dragged her to a temple of idols to force her to present incense to the demon; but entering the temple, the idol fell to pieces and the tyrant fell dead. The crowds of idolaters who were (witnesses) were almost all converted: the number was three thousand. This holy girl passed into the hands of a third (executioner), named Justin. This tyrant, believing that it was his honor to avenge the shame and even the death of the one who had preceded him in

her charge, still felt on her all that fury could inspire in her; he began to have her thrown into a fiery furnace, to be consumed there; but the good God [le bon Dieu], by a new miracle, (allowed) that the flames did her no harm, and the virgin remained there five days without suffering anything. Then, the men finding themselves short in their malice, they had recourse to the demon, and for this, they turned to a magician who threw a number of horrible serpents into her prison, in the thought that she would be suffocated by the venom; but this diabolical execution only served to further enhance the glory of (the virgin), to make her triumph over animals, after having been triumphant over the rage of men. Her tongue was cut out, but she made herself heard even better and sang with even greater force the praises of the God she adored. Finally, not knowing what to do, the executioner had her tied to the post where her body was pierced with arrows, until her soul left her body to enjoy the presence of God that she had so well deserved. Tell me, my brethren, did this

young girl understand the greatness and the price of her soul? Was she aware of what she had to do to preserve it at the expense of her property, her pleasures and her very life? Ah! My brethren, if we had once understood what our soul is worth, restimo that God himself does, could we let it perish as we do? No, no, my brethren, let us no longer be surprised that Jesus Christ shed so many tears over the loss of our soul. But, do you think, what was it that Jesus Christ wept so much about? — Alas! he cried over our pride, seeing that we only seek honors and the esteem of the world instead of thinking than to annihilate us, in view of the humiliations that a God practiced to elevate us; he wept over our hatreds and our vengeance, while he himself died for his enemies; he wept over our infamous vices of impurity, seeing how this sin dishonors our soul and plunges us into dirty and foul mud. Alas! My brethren, he has wept for all your sins. He wanted to save us all and make us happy; he did not want such beautiful (souls), who are his creatures, to be lost, dishonored and reduced to the slavery of the demon, while they are endowed with so many beautiful qualities, and destined for such great happiness.

III. Saint Augustine tells us: “Do you want to know what your soul is worth? Go, ask the demon, he will tell you. The devil values ■■a soul so much that even if we lived four thousand years, if after these four thousand years of temptation he won over us, he would count it all for nothing. » This holy man who had experienced the temptations of the devil in a very particular way, tells us that our life is nothing but a continual temptation. The demon himself said one day through the mouth of a possessed man that as long as there was a man on earth, he would tempt him. Because, he says, I cannot tolerate that Christians, after so many sins, can still hope for the heaven that I lost once, without having been able to regain it. But, alas! if we ourselves do not feel that in almost all our actions we (are) tempted, sometimes by pride, vanity, the good opinion that we think people will have of us, sometimes by jealousy, hatred, revenge. Other times, doesn't the demon come and represent to us the dirtiest images 16 and the most impure. See in our prayers, he carries our spirit from side to side; does it not even seem to us that we are in a state when we are in the holy presence of God? And, moreover, you will not find a saint who has not been tempted since Adam, some in one way, others (in another), and the greatest saints are those who have been the most. If Our Lord was tempted, (it is) to show us that we must be tempted too, we must therefore absolutely expect it. If you ask me what is the cause of our temptations, I will tell you that it is the beauty and the value of our soul that the demon esteems and loves so much, that he would consent to suffer sweet hells if necessary, and if by doing so he could drag our soul into hell. We must never stop (watching) over ourselves, fearing that the devil will deceive us at the moment when we do not expect it. Saint Francis tells us that the good God [le bon Dieu] showed him, one day, the way in which the devil tempted his religious, especially against purity. He showed him an innumerable troop of demons who did nothing other than fire arrows against these monks, some of whom returned with violence against the very demons who had fired them. Then they fled, uttering terrible howls; the others fell back against whom they were fired, falling at their feet without doing them any harm; the others penetrated to the end of the iron, and finally pierced them right through. To drive them out, we must use, as Saint Anthony tells us, the same weapons: when he tempts us with pride, we must quickly humiliate ourselves and lower ourselves before God; if he wants to tempt us against the holy virtue of purity, he

We must try to mortify our bodies and all our senses and be even more vigilant about ourselves. If he wants to tempt us with disgust in our prayers, we must still do more, with more attention, and the more the devil tells us to leave them, the more (we) must increase (the number). The temptations most to fear are those we don't know about. Saint Gregory tells us that there was a religious who, laying for some time, had been a good religious; he felt a great desire to leave the monastery and return to the world, saying that the good God [le bon Dieu] did not want him in this monastery. His superior said to him: “My friend, it is the demon who is angry that you can save your soul, fight him. » But no, the other still believed that it was. The saint gave him permission to go; but on leaving the monastery, the saint knelt down to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] to let this poor monk know that it was only the demon who wanted to destroy him. As soon as he set foot on the threshold of the door to go out, he saw a large dragon falling on him. " Oh! My brethren, he cried, help me!

here is a dragon that will devour me. » In fact, the monks, who had rushed to hear this noise, found this poor monk lying on the ground, half dead; they took him into the monastery and he truly recognized that it was only the demon who wanted to tempt him and who was dying of rage because his superior had prayed for him and that he had prevented him from having him. Alas! My brethren, how we must fear not knowing our temptations! And we will never know them, if we do not ask the good God [le bon Dieu]. What should we conclude from this? My brethren, if not who! must

may our soul be something very great in the eyes of the demons, since they are so careful not to miss a single opportunity to tempt us, in order to ruin us, to drag us into their misfortune. But if we have seen, my brethren, how great our soul is, how much God loves it, how much he suffered to save it, the good things he prepares for it in the other life; if we have seen at the same time all the tricks and all the traps that the devil sets for us to destroy it; Now, my brethren, what do we think? and what esteem do we have of it? and what care do we take of it? Have we ever, my brethren, conceived a thought of the greatness of our soul, and of the care we must take of it? What do we do, my brethren, with this soul which cost Jesus Christ so much? Alas! My brethren, if we said that we only have it to make it unhappy and make it suffer!... We consider it less estimable than our vilest animals; when they are in the stable, we give them something to eat; we take care to open and close the ports for fear that thieves will take them from us; if they are sick, we go to the doctor to relieve them; we are often touched, to the (heart), by seeing them suffer. Are we doing it for our souls, my brethren? Do we take care to nourish it by grace, by frequenting the sacraments? Do we take care to close the doors tightly, lest thieves take it away? Alas! My brethren, let us say it to our shame, we let her perish from misery; we let it be torn apart by our enemies, who are our passions; we leave all doors open; the demon from which pride comes, we let him enter, bruise and tear our poor soul; that of impurity comes, he enters, dirties and rots this poor soul. “Ah! poor soul, Saint Augustine tells us, how little you are esteemed. A proud man sells you for a proud thought; A miser, for a piece of land, a drunkard, for a glass of wine, and a vindictive person, for a thought of revenge! » Indeed, my brethren, where. are our good prayers, our good communions, our prayers well said, our masses well heard, our resignation to the will of God in our sorrows, our charity for our enemies? Is it really possible, my brethren, that we make so little regard for a soul which is so beautiful, which God loved more than himself, since he died to save it? Alas, we love the world and the pleasures of the world; and everything that relates to the glory of God or the salvation of our soul bores us, repels us; we even whisper, when it is necessary to do so. Alas! how much regret we will one day have!... The world seems to give us some pleasures; but we are wrong. Listen to what Saint John Chrysostom tells us, you will see how much greater happiness is for the one who seeks to preserve his soul than for the one who only seeks his pleasures, and leaves his soul aside, “In my sleep, this great saint tells us, I had an extraordinary dream, which, when I awoke, presented me with many subjects for reflection before God. In this sleep, I saw a delicious place, a charming valley, where nature had brought together all the beauties, all the riches and pleasures capable of delighting a mortal. What surprised me was that in the middle of this valley of delights, I saw a sad-looking man, his face altered, his mind occupied; his posture announced the trouble and emotion of his soul: sometimes immobile and staring fixedly at the earth, sometimes striding with a lost air; then, stopping suddenly, heaving deep sighs and plunging into a deep melancholy which seemed to approach despair. Looking carefully, I saw that this valley of delights ended at a frightful precipice, at an immense chasm into which a foreign force seemed to drag him. This man was agitated despite so much delight, because at this sight, he could not taste a moment of joy or peace. But looking further, I saw another place quite contrary, a dark and obscure valley, steep mountains, barren deserts; drought alone seemed to inhabit this abode; no foliage, no greenery, brambles and thorns: everything inspired sadness, solitude, a kind of horror. But my surprise was at its height when I saw in this valley, a pale man, defeated, exhausted and yet with a serene face, a calm demeanor and a contented air; despite his distressing appearance, everything pointed to a man who enjoyed peace of mind; but looking even further, I saw at the

end of this valley of misery and this terrible desert, I saw a delicious place, a distant pleasant place where we discovered all kinds of beauties. This man constantly considered this term, never lost sight of it, walked with courage, passing through the brambles where he often injured himself; but his wounds seemed to revive his strength. Astonished at all this, (I asked) why one was so sad in this place of pleasure and the other so happy in this place of misery. Then I heard a voice which said to me: These two men, whom you see, are the image of those who are either entirely attached to the world, or sincerely devoted to the world.

Service of God. The world, this voice told me, first presents to its followers, goods, pleasures, (at least) in appearance: we throw ourselves into them like madmen; but we soon recognize that we have not found what we thought. What is saddest and most overwhelming is that at the end of this term, we find only an abyss, into which all those who walk this seemingly pleasant road will rush. The other, on the contrary, this voice tells me, experiences in himself quite the opposite: in the service of God, first of all there are trials and sorrows, it is a valley of tears that we inhabit; we must mortify ourselves, do some violence to ourselves, deprive ourselves of the sweetness of life, spend our days in constraint. But we are animated by the sight and hope of a forever happy future; it is the share of this man who is in this sad valley; but the thought of the happiness he hopes for consoles him and supports him in his struggles. Everything becomes consoling for him, his soul already tastes the goods which are promised to him and which await him, and which he will soon enjoy. » Can we, my brethren, find a more natural image than this, to help us understand the difference between the one who, during his life, only seeks to please God, to save his soul, with the one who leaves his God and his soul aside to run after some pleasures which lead us, without having tasted anything consoling or perfect, into a precipice which is nothing other than the abyss of hell. Happy is he, my brethren, who will walk this path, where there are some sorrows, but of little duration, and who, at the end, leads us to such a happy place in the possession of God himself! That is the happiness I wish you. [c'est le bonheur que je vous souhaite]

10th Sunday after Pentecost — On Pride

Non sum sicut ceteri hominum. I am not like other men. (St. Luke 18:11)

Such, my brethren, is the ordinary language of false virtue and of the proud man, who, always satisfied with himself, is always ready to censure and criticize the conduct of others. Such also is the language of the rich, who look upon the poor as if they were of a nature different from their own, and treat them accordingly. Let us say better, my brethren: it is the language of almost the whole world.

There are very few, even in the lowest conditions, who are not affected by this accursed sin, who do not have a good opinion of themselves, putting themselves entirely above their equals, and who do not carry their detestable pride to the point of believing that they are better than many others. From which I conclude that pride is the source of all vices, and the cause of all the evils that have happened and will happen in the coming centuries. We even carry our blindness so far that we often glory in what should cover us with

Econfusion. Some draw their pride from believing they have more intelligence; others, because of a few inches of land or some money; while they should tremble at the dreadful reckoning that God will one day require of them. Oh! My brethren, how many need to pray this prayer that Saint Augustine made to God: “My God, let me know what I am, and I have no need of anything else to cover me with confusion and self-contempt. » I will therefore show you 1° how pride blinds man and makes him odious in the eyes of God and men; 2° in how many ways we commit it; and 3° finally, what we must do to correct ourselves.

I. Yes, my brethren, to give you an idea of the greatness of this accursed sin, it would be necessary for God to allow me to go and snatch Lucifer from the depths of the abyss, and to drag him here in my place, and for him to depict to you himself the horrors of this crime, by showing you the goods that this sin has taken from him, that is to say, heaven, and the evils that it has brought upon him, which are the penalties of hell. Alas!

My brethren, for a sin which may be of a moment, a punishment which will last an eternity! The most unfortunate thing about this sin is that the more one is affected by it, the less one believes oneself to be guilty of it. Indeed, a proud person will never want to believe that he is proud, nor know that he is wrong: what he does and says is well done and well said. Do you want to understand, my brethren, the greatness of this sin? See what God did to atone for it. Why did he want to be born of poor parents, to live in oblivion, to pass (into the world), not as those of a mediocre condition, but as a person of nothing? It was because he saw that this sin had so outraged his Pore, that he could only be expiated (by him) by indulging in the most humiliating and contemptible state, which is that of poverty; because it is enough to have nothing to be despised by some and rejected by others. See, my brethren, how great are the evils that sin has caused. Without this sin, there would be no hell. Without this sin, Adam would still be in the earthly paradise, and we would all be happy, without illness, without all these other miseries which overwhelm us every day; no death, no judgment to undergo, which made the great saints tremble; no unhappy eternity to fear; Heaven was assured to us. Happy in this world and even happier in the other: our life would have been spent blessing the greatness, the goodness of our God, and we would have gone, in body and soul, to continue this happy work. Ah! what do I say, my brethren? without this cursed sin, Jesus Christ would not have died! 0 what torments this divine Savior has been spared!... But, you will ask me, why has this sin caused more evil than the others? - For what? here is the reason. If Lucifer and the other bad angels had not had pride, there would have been no demons, and, consequently, no one would have tempted our first parents and they would have had the happiness of persevering. I know well that all sins outrage God, that all mortal sins deserve eternal punishment: a miser who only seeks to collect and who will sacrifice his health, his reputation, and even his life to accumulate some money, in the hope of providing for the future, undoubtedly does a great insult to the providence of God, who promised us that, if we had

If you want to serve him and love him, he will take care of us. A drunkard who indulges in excesses of drinking while losing his reason, putting himself below the brute beast, likewise, does a great outrage to God, who only gives him good to make good use of it by devoting his strength, his life to serving him. A vindictive person who takes revenge for the insults done to him, shows bloody contempt to Jesus Christ, who, for so many months and perhaps even years, has suffered him on earth, and even better, provides him with everything he needs, while he would only deserve to be destroyed in the flames. An immodest person, by plunging himself into the mire of his passions, becomes more weary than swine, loses his soul [perdre son âme] and brings death to his God; of a temple of the Holy Spirit, made a temple of demons, of the members of Jesus Christ in fact the members of an infamous prostitute, of brother of the Son of God, becomes, not only the brother of demons, but the slave of Satan. These are crimes, for which no term could express the horrors or the magnitude of the torments they deserve. Well! My brethren, we say that these sins are as far away (from pride) by the outrages they do to God, as heaven is from earth: look, nothing is so easy to conceive, you will see it. When we commit other sins, sometimes we violate the commandments of God, sometimes we despise his benefits; or, if you like, we render useless all the works, sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. But this one, that is to say, the proud one, acts like a subject, who, not content with having despised and trampled under foot the laws and ordinances of his sovereign, carries his fury so far as to try to plant a dagger in his breast, tears him from his throne, tramples him under his feet and takes his place. Can we con- to see a greater atrocity, my brethren? Well! My brethren, this is what a person who is boastful does when he succeeds in what he does or says. O my God! how great the number! Listen, my brethren, to what the Holy Spirit says to us, speaking of the proud: “He will be an abomination to God and to men. For the Lord hates the proud and the proud,” Jesus Christ himself told us “that he thanked his Father for having hidden his secrets from the proud. » Indeed, if we peruse Holy Scripture, the evils with which God overwhelms the proud are so frightful and so multiplied that it seems as if he is exhausting his fury and his power to punish him, and we see that God takes pleasure in humiliating the proud in proportion as they wish to exalt themselves. We see that often a proud person falls into some shameful vice which dishonors him in

the eyes of the world (l). The great Nebuchadnezzar provides us with a fine example of this. This prince was so proud, he had such a good opinion of himself, that he wanted people to regard him as a God. At the moment when he was filled with the greatness of power, suddenly he heard a voice from heaven saying that the Lord could no longer tolerate his pride, and that, to make him know that there was a God, master of kingdoms, his kingdom would be taken from him and given to another; that he would be driven out of the company of men, that he would dwell among wild beasts, that he would eat grass and wood like a beast of burden. At that very moment, God knocked his brains out so badly that he thought he was an animal and fled into (1) Rodrigucz reports (p. 313, tom. IV), that Pallade... the demon in the form of a woman who dragged him. (Note of the Venerable.)

The forests until he recognized that he was nothing. See the punishments which the Lord inflicted on Gore, Dathan and Abiron, with two hundred of the most considerable of the Jews. Filled with pride, they said to Moses and Aaron: “And why should we not also have the honor of offering incense to the Lord as well as you? » The Lord told Moses and Aaron to separate them, along with all that belonged to them; that he wanted to punish them... As soon as they were separated, the earth opened under their feet, and swallowed them alive into hell. See Herod, who put Saint James to death and imprisoned Saint Peter. He was so proud that one day, dressed in his royal robe and seated on his throne, he spoke with so much eloquence to the people that they went so far as to say: “No, no, it is not a man who speaks, but it is a god. » At the same moment an angel struck him with such a terrible illness that the worms ate him alive, and he unfortunately perished. He wanted to pretend to be God, and he was eaten by the vilest insect. See also Aman, this famous proud man, who had commanded that every subject should bend the knee before him. Angered to the point of rage because Mordecai despised him, he had a gallows erected to hang him; but God, who abhors the proud, allowed it to be Himself who was attached to it. We read in history that a loner filled with pride wanted to show the greatness of his faith. Having gone to find Saint Palemon, the latter seeing him make all his display of pride, told him charitably that it was very difficult to have, with so much pride, the faith that he said; that having nothing good of ourselves, we could only humble ourselves, groan before God and ask him for the grace not to abandon us.

But this poor blind man, far from benefiting from this charitable advice, ran to throw himself into a fiery blaze, and God allowed me, to crown his pride, that he did not even feel the heat of the fire. But soon after, he fell into a great sin, a shameful sin against the holy virtue of purity. The demon presented itself to him in the form of a woman, who urged him so much, having sat down next to him and wanted to kiss him; then the demon threw himself on him, bruised him with so many blows that he left him lying on the pavement. Finally, recognizing his fault, that is to say, his pride, he returned to Saint Palemon and confessed his fault to him while crying. Strange thing, my brethren, while he was still speaking to him, the demon seized him, in front of Saint Palemon, dragged him with such fury and threw him into a flaming furnace, where he lost his life. Yes, my brethren, we see everywhere that God delights to shame the proud. Not only is a proud man an abomination in the sight of God; but it is still unbearable in the eyes of men, — Why is that? you will tell me. — This is because he cannot agree with anyone: sometimes he wants to rise above his equals, sometimes to equal those who are above him, so that he cannot agree with anyone. Thus the proud are always in dispute with someone, and from this it follows that everyone hates them, flees from them, despises them. No, my brethren, there is no sin which makes such a great change in the one who commits it, since an angel, the most beautiful creature, became by this sin the most horrible demon; and in man, from a child of God, he makes him a slave of the devil.

II. This sin, you will tell me, is truly awful;

8 3 must he who commits it know neither the good he loses, nor the evils he brings upon himself, nor finally the outrages he does to God and to his soul? But how can we know when we have been guilty of it? —How, my friend? here it is. We can even say that this sin is found everywhere, accompanies man in what he does

and says; it is a kind of seasoning that finds its place everywhere. Listen to me for a moment and you will see, Jesus Christ gives us an example in the Gospel, saying that a Pharisee, having gone to the temple to pray, stood in the presence of everyone, saying out loud: “I thank you, Lord, that I am not like other men, covered with sins; I spend my life doing good and pleasing you. » This is the true character of a proud person: instead of thanking God for being so good and using him for good, of giving him thanks, he sees all this as coming from himself and not from God. Let's get into some details, and you'll see that almost no one is excepted. The old as well as the young, the poor as well as the rich; everyone praises and flatters themselves for what they are or what they do, or rather for what they are not and what he didn't do. Everyone applauds each other and likes to be applauded; everyone runs to beg for the praise of men, and everyone works to attract them. This is how most people's lives go. The port through which pride enters with the greatest abundance is the door to riches. As soon as a person increases his wealth, you see him change his way of living; it makes, as Jesus Christ tells us of the Pharisees: “(these people) like to be called masters, let them be saluted, they want the first places; they begin to appear more richly dressed; » they leave this air of simplicity; if you salute them, they will barely shake your head without lifting their hat; walking with their heads raised, they will study themselves to look for all the most beautiful words, the meaning of which they often do not even know; they like to repeat them. This man will tell you about the inheritances he received, to show that his fortune has increased. All his care is to work to be esteemed and praised. Will he have succeeded in any work? he hastens to publish it to display his supposed knowledge. If he says something for which he is applauded, he never ceases to annoy those around him, to the point of annoying them and making them laugh at him. Did we take any trips? you hear these proud people say a hundred Ibis more than they have said or done: which brings compassion to those who hear them. They think they are pretending to be intelligent, while they are internally despised. We cannot help but say to ourselves: Here is a famously proud man, he convinces himself that everyone believes everything he says!... See a person of state examining the work of another; she will find a thousand faults there, saying: “Ah! what do you want? he doesn't know any more! » But as the proud never lowers others, without elevating himself; then she will hasten to talk about some work that she has done, which someone found so well done that he spoke about it to several people. A proud person, seeing several people talking together, believes that someone is saying bad or good about him. Will a young girl have a good figure? at least, she thinks she has it? You see her walking step by step u Does Elie have shirts, dresses? she will leave her cupboard open to show them. We take pride in our houses and our household. We read pride in knowing how to confess, in praying well to God, in being more modest in church. A mother reads pride in her children; an inhabitant, because his land is in better condition than that of others, which he condemns; and he applauds himself for his knowledge. Does a young man have a watch in his pocket, and perhaps even, often, (does he) only have the chain, with five sols in his pocket? you hear him say: “I don’t know if it’s very late; » so that we tell him to look at his watch, so that we know that he has one. If you play, to (try to) win, even if he only has two sous to give, he will take in his hand everything he has, and (even what) is often not his; or he will say more than he has (in reality). How many (are there) who borrow clothes or money to go to these pleasure parties? Does a person enter into a company of which he believes to be unknown? straight away you see her telling the story of her family, her possessions, her talents and everything that can help her, and making known what she is or rather what she is not. No, my brethren, there is nothing so ridiculous and so stupid as to always be talking about what we have, and what we have done. Listen to a father when his children are ready to marry. In all the companies where he is, we hear him say: “I have so many thousand francs on loan, my property gives me back so much,” and then ask him for five sols for the poor, he has nothing. Will a tailor have succeeded in making a dress or a dress, if they happen to see (the people wearing it) pass by: “That’s fine, I don’t know who made it. » — “Well, it’s me,” they will say. »And why did they say that? it is in order to show that they are very skilled. But if they have not done well, they will be careful not to talk about it, for fear of being humiliated. Women in their household And I will tell you that this sin is even more to be feared in people who seem to make a profession of piety. Here is a good example (1). This cursed sin of pride creeps even into the lowest functions (2). A plowman, or a person who

will cut wood, if it is in passing, they will put all their care into it; “so,” they say, “that when someone passes by, they will not find that I do not know how to work. » This sin even slips into crime and into virtue: we see some who glory in having done evil. Listen to the conversation of several drunkards - “Ah! they say, I found myself one day with such and such; he wanted to take with me the one who would drink the most without getting drunk; but I have, first of all, seen the end of it! » It is still pride to desire to be richer and to envy those who are, because we see that the rich are respected and honored. We will find others who, in their language, will be extremely humble and who will even despise themselves and seem to publicly admit their weakness. But, tell them something that penetrates (1) Origin... Apostolic Pastor, volume I, p. 201. (vial of the Venerable.) (2) Small mountain dwellers and poor shepherds are not exempt. (Note of the Venerable.)

E to the heart. From the first word, you see them rise up, stand up to you, to the point of decrying you and tearing up your reputation, for an alleged affront they have received. They will have great humility in appearance, as long as they are flattered or praised. Sometimes, if we say something good about another person in front of us, it annoys us, it seems that it humiliates us; we make ourselves appear sad, or we say: “Ah! she is good like the others, she did that well, she said that well, she doesn't have so many good qualities that you say are good, you don't know her!..." I say that pride creeps even into our good works. There are many who will only give alms and do service to their neighbors to pass themselves off as good people, charitable people. If they give alms in front of someone, they will give more than if there was no one. If they want to make it known that they have done some good, or rendered some service to their neighbor, they will begin to say: “So-and-so is very unhappy, it is very difficult for him to be able to live; he came one day, he showed me his misery, I gave him something. » A proud person never wants to be reprimanded, he always has the right; everything he says is well said, and everything he does is well done. And you see him constantly examining the conduct of others; everywhere he finds faults: there is nothing well done or well said. Even if a person does an action with the best intentions in the world, he, with his venomous tongue, turns it into evil. How many are there who invent out of pride? If they tell what they did or said, they will tell much more than there is. But others go up, afraid of being humiliated. Let us put it better: old men glory in what they have not done; to hear them, they seem to be the greatest conquerors of the world, (one would say) that they have traveled the entire universe; and the young people praise themselves for what they will never do: all beg and all run after a smoke of honor. This is the world today, my brethren; put your hand on your conscience, search your heart, and you will recognize the truth of what I tell you. But what is saddest is that this sin casts such thick darkness into souls that we do not even believe ourselves guilty. We know well when others praise themselves falsely, when they attribute praise to themselves that they have not deserved; but, for us, we always believe we deserve them. I say, my brethren, that everyone who seeks the esteem of men is blind. - For what? you will tell me. — My friend, here is the reason. First of all, I will not say that he loses all the merit of what he does, that all his charities, all his prayers and his penances will only be a subject of condemnation for him. He will believe he has done some good, but everything will be spoiled by pride. But I say he is blind. If he deserves the esteem of God and men, he only has to flee them instead of seeking them, he only has to convince himself that he is nothing, that he deserves nothing; he is sure to have it all. We see everywhere that the more a person wants to elevate himself, the more God allows him to be humiliated; and the more she wants to hide, the more God shines her reputation. Here: put your hand and your eyes on the truth, and you will recognize it. A person, that is to say, a proud one, runs to beg for the praise of men; and he is barely known in a parish!

E But he who hides himself as much as he can, who despises himself; go twenty or fifty leagues away, we publish his good qualities. Let's put it better: his reputation flies to the four corners of the world; the more he hides, the more he is known; and the more the other wants to show himself, the more he sinks into darkness, which means that almost no one knows him and he knows himself even less. If the Pharisee, as you have seen, is the true portrait of the proud, the publican is a sensitive image of a heart sincerely penetrated by its nothingness, its little merit and its great confidence in God. Jesus Christ presents him to us as an

accomplished model, by which we can guide ourselves. The publican, St. Luke tells us, forgets all the good that he could have done during his life, to concern himself only with his spiritual misery, with his unworthiness; he does not dare appear before such a holy God. Far from imitating the Pharisee, who places himself in a place where he can be seen by everyone and receive praise, this poor publican, barely has he entered the temple, when he runs to hide, in a corner, looks at himself as if alone before his judge, his face against the ground, his heart broken with pain, his eyes bathed in tears; he does not dare look at the altar, so covered is he with confusion at the sight of his sins, and of the holiness of God, before whom he finds himself unworthy to appear. He cries out in the greatest bitterness of his heart: “My God, please have mercy on me, for I am a great sinner! » This humility so touched the heart of God, that not only did he forgive him all his sins; but, moreover, he praised him publicly, telling everyone that this publican, although a sinner, had been more pleasing to him by his humility, than the Pharisee with all his vain display of so-called good works: “for I tell you,” said Jesus Christ, “that this publican returned home without sins, while the Pharisee is more guilty than before he entered the temple. From this I conclude that he who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. » We have seen, my brethren, what pride is, how dreadful this vice is, how much it outrages God, and finally how much the Lord delights in punishing it. Let us now see what humility is, which is the opposite virtue.

III. If pride is the source of all kinds of vices, we can say that humility is the source and foundation of all virtues; she is the door through which God lets us pass all his graces; it is she who seasons all our actions, which communicates so much value to them, which makes them so pleasing to God; finally, it is she who makes us masters of the heart of God, who makes him our servant, if I dare say so; because God has never been able to resist a humble heart. — But, you will ask me, in what does this humility consist, which deserves us so much grace? — My friend, here he is. Listen to me: you must have known if you are affected by pride, you will see, now, if you have the happiness of possessing this beautiful and rare virtue; if you have it in its entirety, heaven is assured to you. Humility, Saint Bernard tells us, consists of making ourselves known, of having nothing but contempt for ourselves. Humility is a torch that shows us our imperfections; it therefore does not consist in words, nor in actions; but in self-knowledge, which makes us discover an infinity of faults that our pride had hidden from us until now. I say that this virtue

Enous is absolutely necessary to go to heaven; listen to what Jesus Christ tells us in the Gospel: “Unless you are like a little child, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Truly, I tell you that if you do not convert, if you do not leave behind these feelings of pride and ambition so natural to man, you will never go to heaven. » “Yes,” the Sage tells us, “humility obtains everything. » Do you want to receive forgiveness for your sins, present yourself to God in the person of his ministers, covered in confusion, unworthy of obtaining the grace you ask, you are sure of your grace. Are you tempted? go and humble yourself by your misery and recognize that you can do nothing of yourselves, that you can lose yourself: you are sure of being delivered. Great virtue, how you make a soul pleasing to God! Jesus Christ himself could not give us a more beautiful idea of ■■the greatness of his merit than by telling us that he was willing to take the form of a slave, which is the vilest condition.; What made the Blessed Virgin so pleasing to God? except for her humility and the contempt she had for herself. 'We read in history that Saint Anthony had a vision, where God showed him the world covered with a net and the demons who held it by the four ends. “Ah! cries the saint, who can avoid falling into this net? » “Antony,” said the Lord to him, “humility alone is enough: that is to say, if you recognize that you deserve nothing of yourself, that you are capable of nothing, you will be victorious. » A friend of Saint Augustine asked him what virtue one should practice in order to be more pleasing to God? He replied: “Humility alone is enough. No matter how much I worked to seek the truth, to con-

born the surest way to go to God, I have never been able to find another. » Listen to what (history) tells us. Saint Macairc, returning with an armful of wood, found the demon armed with a pitchfork all on fire, who

said to him: “0 Macairc, how you make me suffer by not being able to mistreat you; why do you make me suffer so much? since everything you do, I do better than you: if you fast, I never eat; if you watch, I do not sleep; there is only one thing that you have more than me and by which you have overcome me. » Do you know, my brethren, the thing that was in Saint Macarius that the devil did not have? Ah! my friends, it is humility. O beautiful virtue, may he who possesses you be happy and capable of great things! Indeed, my brethren, even if you have all the other virtues, if you do not have this one, you have nothing. Give your property to the poor, weep for your sins all your life, do penance as much as your body can support it, live in retirement all your life; you will still be damned if you do not have humility. Also we see that all the saints worked all their lives either to acquire it or to preserve it. The more God showered them with blessings, the more they humbled themselves. See Saint Paul, raised to the third heaven, he only regards himself as a great sinner, a persecutor of the Church of Jesus Christ, a wretch, an abortion, unworthy of the place he occupies. Look at Saint Augustine, Saint Martin: they did not dare enter the church without trembling, so much did their spiritual misery frighten them. These must be our dispositions if we want to be pleasing to God. We see, my brethren, that the more a tree is loaded with fruit, the more its branches drop: from my Amc, the more we make

Good works, the more we must humble ourselves by recognizing ourselves as unworthy of God using such a vile instrument to do good. No, my brethren, we cannot recognize a good Christian unless he has humility. But, you will ask me, how can we know that a Christian is humble? — Nothing could be easier, you'll see. First, I say that a truly humble person never speaks (of himself), either good or bad; she is content to humble herself before God who knows her as (as she is). She only looks at her conduct, and she groans to see herself so guilty; she works to make herself more worthy of God. You don't see her passing judgment on the behavior of others, she has a good opinion of everyone. Does she know how to look down on someone? it's just herself. She turns for good everything her brothers do; she is very convinced that she is the only one capable of doing bad things. Hence it is that if she speaks of her neighbor, it is only in good terms; if there is nothing good to say, she remains silent, if she is despised, she thinks that we are only doing what we must, and that after having despised God herself, she finds that she deserves much more; if she is praised, you see her blush and flee, groaning to see how much she will disabuse, on the day of judgment, those who believe she is a good person; while she is all covered with sins. She has as much horror of praise as the proud have of humiliation. His friends will always be those who are him. make its faults known. If she has good to do, she will always choose (to do it to) the one who has slandered her or (who has) done her some wrong. The proud seek the company of those who flatter them, esteem them; she, on the contrary, will flee those17 there, to go with those who seem to have a bad opinion of her. Her pleasures are to be alone with God, to represent her misery to Him, begging Him to have pity on her. Alone or in company, you will not see any change in his prayers, nor in his way of acting. Doing all her actions only for God and with a view to pleasing Him, she does not think at all about what (others) think or say. She works to please God, and, for the sake of the world, she can say that she puts it under her feet. This is how those who share humility think and act. Jesus Christ does not seem to make any distinction between the sacrament of Baptism, that of Penance and humility. He tells us that, without Baptism, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven; without that of Penance, after having sinned, there is no forgiveness, and, immediately, he tells us that, without humility, we will never enter heaven. Yes, my brethren, if we have humility, even if we are completely covered with sins, we are sure of being forgiven; and, without humility, had we done all the good works possible, we will never be saved. Here is an example that will show you, as it couldn't be better. We read in the book of Kings that King Ahab was the most abominable of the kings who had reigned up to that day; I do not believe that we can say more than what the Holy Spirit tells us: Listen: “He was a king given over to all kinds of impurities, he carried his hands with impunity and without discretion on all the property of his subjects; he made the Israelites revolt against God, he seemed like a man sold and committed to doing all kinds of evil: in a word, he surpassed in his crimes all those who had preceded him. This is for-

Therefore, God no longer being able to tolerate his crimes and determined to punish him, calls his prophet Elijah, commands him to go find this king and tell him his plans: “Tell him that the dogs will drink his blood and that they will eat his flesh; I will bring down on his head all the wrath of my vengeance; I will spare nothing, I will make the excess of my fury felt, even through these dogs. » Notice here, my brethren, four things: 1° have we ever seen a more wicked man than him? 2° have we ever seen a clearer determination to put to death a man who so well deserves to be punished? 3° was a more precise order never given? “It is in this place,” says the Lord, “that it will be done. » -4° Have we ever seen, in history, a man condemned to a more infamous torture than that to which Ahab is condemned, than having his body eaten and dogs drinking his blood? AIil.My brethren, who can take it out of the hands of such a powerful enemy who has already begun? Ahab, having heard the prophet speak, began to tear his clothes. Listen to what the Lord said to him: “Go, it's no longer time, you waited too late, I'm making fun of you. » He covers himself with a hair shirt: “You believe,” said the Lord to him, “that this will give me feelings of pity, and will make me revoke my sentence; read fasts now: it was necessary to fast from the blood of so many people whom you have put to death. » Then lying on the ground, he covered himself with ashes, and when he had to appear, he walked with his head bare, his eyes fixed on the ground. “Prophet, says the Lord, have you seen how Ahab humbled himself and bowed his face to the earth? Well! go tell him that, since he has humiliated himself, for my sake, I will not punish him, and that I will not bring down on his head the thunderbolt and the vengeance that I had prepared. Go tell him that his humility touched me, made me revoke my orders and disarmed my anger. " Well! My brethren, was I not right to tell you that humility is the most beautiful and precious of all virtues, that it is omnipotent with God, and that God knows how to refuse it nothing? By possessing it, we have all the others; without it, all others are nothing. Let us conclude, my brethren, by saying that we will know if a Christian is a good Christian by the contempt he has for himself and everything he does, and because he interprets in a good way everything his neighbor does or says. From there, my brethren, we (can assure) that your heart (will taste) happiness on earth and that heaven will be for us.

11th Sunday after Pentecost — On Rash Judgment

Deus, gratias ago tibi, quia non sum sicut ceteri hominum: raptores, injusti, adulteri, velut etiam hic publicanus. I thank You, O my God, that I am not like other men—thieves, unjust, adulterers—nor like this publican. (St. Luke 18:11)

Such, my brethren, is the language of the proud man who, being full of a good opinion of himself, despises his neighbor in thought, censures his conduct, and condemns actions done with the purest and most innocent intentions. He finds nothing well done or well said except what he himself does and says; you see him always attentive to the words and actions of his neighbor, and on the slightest appearances of evil, without examining anything, he blames them, judges them, and condemns them. Ah! cursed sin—how many evils you cause!

EL is, my brethren, the language of the proud, who, being full of good opinion of himself, despises, in thought, his neighbor, censures his conduct, and condemns actions which are done with the purest and most innocent intentions. He finds nothing well done or well said, except what he does and what U says himself; you see him always attentive to the words and actions of his neighbor, and, on the slightest appearances of evil, without examining anything, he blames them, he judges them, he condemns them. Ah! cursed sin, that you cause divisions, hatred, disputes, or to put it better, that you drag souls into hell! Yes, my brethren, we see that a person who is subject to this sin, becomes scandalized and shocked by everything. Jesus Christ had to judge this sin very bad, (it is necessary) that the havoc it wreaks in the world be very frightful; since, to give us as much horror as possible, he depicts it to us in such a clear and sensitive manner in the person of this Pharisee. Ah! My brethren, how great and terrible are the evils that this accursed sin brings with it! Oh! how difficult it is for those who suffer from it to correct themselves!... To urge you, my brethren, to never let

yourself be dominated (by such a bad (defect), I will 1° show you (it) as much as I can; 2° we will see the means that we must use to guarantee this.

I. I say, first, that rash judgment is a thought or word disadvantageous to the account of one's neighbor and to slight appearances. It can only come from an evil heart, filled with pride or envy; because a good Christian, who is penetrated by his misery, does not think or judge of anyone; (never) at least, without having certain knowledge of it, and even then, when he is obliged by his duty to watch over these people and never otherwise. We say, my brethren, that rash judgments originate in a proud or envious heart, which is very easy to understand. A proud or envious person only has a good opinion of himself, and turns into evil everything that his neighbor does; the good that he sees in his neighbor afflicts and consumes him. Holy Scripture gives us a fine example of this in the person of Cain, who turned to evil everything his brother did. Seeing that he was pleasing to God, he conceived the dark plan of killing him. It was the same sin that led Esau to want to kill his brother Jacob. He only spent his time examining this

Whatever he did, he always thought badly of it in his heart, and in everything he did, he found no good deeds. But his good brother Jacob, who had a good heart and a humble (spirit), not only thought badly of his brother; he loved him with all his heart [de tout son cœur], he always thought well of him, he excused all his actions, although very bad, since he only sought to take his life. Jacob did everything he could to change the disposition of (his brother's) heart. He prayed to the good God [le bon Dieu] for him, he even gave him gifts to show him that he loved him and that he did not have the thoughts (that Esau) believed. Alas! My brethren, how bad is this sin in a Christian who cannot tolerate the good in others, turning into evil everything that others do! Yes, my brethren, this sin is a gnawing worm which devours, night and day, these poor people: you see them all sad, sorrowful, without even wanting to say what is tiring them, because their pride would be injured; this sin causes them to die slowly. O my God! what a sad life! But what happier life, my brethren, than that of one who is not subject to judging his neighbor badly, who turns everything for good! His soul is at peace, he only thinks badly of himself, and, through this, he humbles himself before God and hopes in his mercy. Here is a good example. We read in the story of the Fathers of the Deserts, that a religious who had led a life of the purest and most chaste, was attacked by an illness, from which he died. As he was close to death, and all the monks of the monastery were around him, the superior asked him to tell them how he believed he had made himself more pleasing to God. “My father,” replied this religious saint, “this pains me greatly;

but, out of obedience, I will tell you. From my childhood, I have been exposed to the harshest temptations of the devil; but as much as he tormented me, the good God [le bon Dieu] consoled me, as did the Blessed Virgin, who one day when I was tormented by the demon, appeared to me full of glory, cast out the demon and encouraged me to perseverance in virtue. In order, she told me, to make it easier for you, I will reveal to you something of the immense treasures of my divine Son; I want to teach you three things, which, if you practice them well, will make you very acceptable in the eyes of God, and will make you easily defeat the demon, your enemy, who only seeks your eternal pearl. It is to humble yourself: in eating, never look for what you like best; in your clothes, always dress simply; in your functions, never seek what can elevate you in the eyes of the world, but what is capable of lowering you; and for your neighbor, never judge badly of him in the words and actions that you see him do, because often the thoughts of the heart are not consistent with the action. Judge and think well of everyone; it is a very pleasant action for my Son. The Blessed Virgin disappeared while telling me this, and this is what I have tried to do ever since; which made me greatly merit for heaven. » From this, my brethren, you see that only an evil heart can judge badly of its neighbor. Moreover, we must not judge our neighbor without having regard to their weakness and the repentance they may have for their sin. Ordinarily, and almost always, we repent of having thought badly or spoken badly of others, because, often, after having examined carefully, we recognize that what we have said about our neighbor is false. What happens to us is what happened to those who judged the chaste Suzanne, on the

report of two false witnesses, without even wanting to give her time to justify herself; others imitate the presumption and malice of the Jews, who published that Jesus Christ was a blasphemer, that he was possessed by the devil; finally, others behave like this Pharisee, who, without examining whether Madeleine had renounced her disorders or not, only considered her as an infamous sinner, although he saw her afflicted, accusing her sins and crying for them at the feet of Jesus Christ (her) Savior and Redeemer. The Pharisee, my brethren, whom Jesus Christ presents to us as an infamous model of those who think and judge badly of their neighbor, fell, to all appearance, into three sins. In condemning this poor publican, he thinks badly of him, he judges badly of him and he condemns him, without even knowing the dispositions of his heart. He only made his judgment by conjecture: this, my brethren, is the first characteristic of rash judgment. He only despises it in himself as an effect of his pride and his malice: this is the second characteristic of this accursed sin. Finally, not knowing whether what he imputed to him was true or false, he judged and condemned him; while this penitent, reduced to a corner of the temple, beat his chest, and watered the pavement with his tears while asking the good God [le bon Dieu] for mercy. I say, 1st, my brethren, that what gives occasion for so many rash judgments is that we only regard this as a small thing; while, often, there may be mortal sin, if the thing be of considerable matter. — But, you will tell me, this only happens in the heart. — This is precisely what round this very bad sin, in that our heart is only created to love the good God [le bon Dieu] and our neighbor; and that is being a traitor. Often, in fact, in our words we make (others) believe that we love them, that we have a good opinion of them; while, in ourselves, we hate them. But there are some who believe that when they do not say what they think, there is no harm. It is true that sin is less than when we manifest it externally, because, then, it is a poison that we let pass into the heart of our neighbor on behalf of our neighbor. If this sin is already so great, even when we only commit it in the heart, I leave you to think what it is in the eyes of God, when we have the misfortune of manifesting it in words. This should lead us to examine things carefully before passing judgment on our neighbor's account, for fear of making a mistake: which often happens to us. Look at a judge, when he sentences someone to death: he calls the witnesses, one after the other; he questions them, he is extremely attentive (to examine) if they do not cut themselves; he threatens them, he looks at them with a frightening look: which throws fear and terror into their hearts; he even makes every effort to extract, if he can, the truth from the mouth of the guilty party. You see that, on the slightest doubt, he suspends his judgment; and, if he sees himself forced to pronounce the sentence of death, he does so only trembling, in fear of condemning an innocent person. Ah! My brethren, how many fewer rash judgments, if we had the good fortune to take all these precautions, when we want to judge the conduct and actions of our neighbor. Ah! My brethren, how many fewer souls in hell!

E The good Lord gives us a good example of the way in which we must judge our neighbor, and this in the person of our first father, Adam. (The Lord) had certainly seen and heard everything he had said and done; he could well condemn (our first parents) without further examination; but no, to teach us not to rush into the judgment we would like to make on the actions of our neighbor, he questioned them one after the other, so that they confessed the evil they had done. Where can come from, my brethren, this crowd of judgments so hasty on the account of our brothers? Alas! of a great pride, which blinds us by hiding our own faults, which are without number, and, often, much more dreadful than those (people) about whom we think or speak badly; and we can say that, almost always, we are wrong in misjudging the actions of our neighbors. I have seen some who, most certainly, made false judgments; although it was made clear to them that they were wrong, they did not want to budge on that. Go, go, poor proud people, the good God [le bon Dieu] is waiting for you, and towards him, you will be forced to recognize that it was only your pride that led you to think badly of your neighbor. Besides, my brethren, to judge a person by what he does or what he says, and not make a mistake, we would have to know the dispositions of his heart and the intention he had in doing or saying that, llalasl My brethren, we do not take all these precautions: which leads us to do so much harm by examining the conduct of our neighbors. We act as if we were condemning a person to death based on the simple report of a few thoughtless people, without wanting to give them time to justify themselves.

But, you will perhaps tell me, we only judge what we see, and according to what we have heard, and what we are witnesses to: “I saw him do the action, so I assure him; I heard with my ears what he said; According to this, I cannot be wrong. » — Well, Eli! I will tell you to start getting into your heart which is nothing but a pile of pride, which is completely roasted: you will recognize yourself infinitely more guilty than the one you judge so rashly, and you have great reason to fear that one day you will see him enter heaven, while you will be dragged with the demons into hell! “Ah! proud wretch, Saint Augustine tells us, you dare to judge your brother on the slightest appearance of evil, and do you know if he has not already repented of his fault, and if he is not among the friends of God? Be careful only that he does not take the place that your pride puts you in great danger of losing.)) Yes, my brethren, all these rash judgments and all these interpretations only come from a person (who has) a secret pride, who does not know himself, and who dares to want to know the interior of his neighbor: what is known only to God. Ilelas! My brethren, if we could succeed in uprooting this first capital sin from our hearts, our neighbor would never do harm in our opinion; we would never amuse ourselves by examining his conduct; we would be content to mourn our sins and work, as much as we could, to correct ourselves, and nothing else. No, my brethren, I do not believe that there is a sin more to fear and more difficult to correct, even among people who seem to fulfill their religious duties quite well. Yes, my brethren, a person who is not affected by this accursed sin can save himself without great penances; Here is a good example. It is reported in the story of the Desert Fathers that a religious man had led a very common life, which, in the eyes of other religious people, was very imperfect. Having arrived at death, the superior saw him so peaceful and so content that it seemed to him that heaven was assured to him. Astonished at this peace, fearing that it was this blindness by which the devil had deceived so many, he said to him: “My brother, you seem very calm to me and like a person who fears nothing; However, your life has nothing that can reassure you; on the contrary, the little good you have done must frighten you, for a moment when the greatest saints trembled. » — “That is true, my father,” replied this monk, “all that I have been able to do is very little, and almost nothing; but what consoles me at this moment is that, all my life, I have been busy fulfilling the great precept of the Lord, which is given to everyone, not to think, not to speak, not to judge badly (of) anyone: I thought that all my brethren did better than me, I always believed that I was the most criminal in the world; I have always hidden and excused their faults, as much as the good God [le bon Dieu] wanted, and, since Jesus Christ said: “Judge not, and you will not be judged,” I expect to be judged favorably. This, father, is what I base my hope on. » The superior, quite astonished at this, exclaimed: “Ah! beautiful virtue, how precious you are in the eyes of God! Come on, my brother, you have done everything, heaven is assured to you 1 » 0 beautiful virtue, how rare you are! Alas! you are as rare as those who are for heaven are rare! Indeed, my brethren, what is a Christian who will have all the other virtues if he does not have this one?

4015 Alas! he is only a hypocrite, a false, a wicked person, who, for being externally virtuous, is only more evil and more wicked. Do you want, my brethren, to know if you belong to the good God [le bon Dieu]? see how you behave towards your neighbor, see how you examine and judge his actions. Come on, poor proud people, poor envious people and poor jealous people, hell awaits you, nothing else. But let's touch on this a little closer. Will we say good things about a girl by telling about her good qualities? Ah! one will tell you, if she has good qualities, she also has bad ones; she frequents the company of someone who doesn't have too good a reputation; I am very sure that they do not see each other to do good. Here is one, who looks well dressed, and who adorns her children well; but she would do much better to pay what she owes. Having such a one, she seems good and affable to everyone, if you knew her as I do, you would judge very differently; she only makes all these grimaces to better hide her disorders; someone is going to ask her to marry him, but if he asked me for advice, I would tell him what he doesn't know; to put it better, it's a bad subject. Who is this person passing by? will say a den? Alas! my friend, if you did not know her, there would be no great harm; I won't tell you anything more. Just flee his company, he's truly scandalous; everyone looks at him as such. Look, it's still like this woman who plays the wise and the devout, there is no worse person that the earth can

support; Moreover, it is usually the case that these people who want to pass themselves off as virtuous, or, if you like, as wise, are evil, and the most resentful. — Maybe

What has this person done to you? - Oh! No; but you know very well that they are all the same. One day I found myself with one of my old acquaintances, he is a good drunkard and a famous insolent person. — Perhaps, the other will say, he said something to you that made you angry? —Ah! no, he never said anything to me that wasn't saying, but everyone looks at him like that. —If it wasn't you who told me, I wouldn't want to believe it. — When he is with those who don't know him, he knows how to play the hypocrite enough to make people believe that he is an honest man. It's like, one day, I found myself with someone you know well, he's also a virtuous man: if he doesn't wrong anyone, you shouldn't be grateful to him, it's good when he can't (do better); I assure you that I would not want to be alone with him. — Perhaps, the other will say to him, he has wronged you sometimes? — No, never, because I had nothing to do with him. —And how do you know that he is such a bad subject? - Oh! It's not difficult to know, everyone says it. He is also the one who was with you one day: to hear him speak, one would say that he is the most charitable man in the world, and that he cannot refuse anything to anyone who asks him for something; while he is a complete miser, who would travel ten leagues to reach soft lands; I assure you that now we no longer know the world, we can no longer trust anyone. It's still the one who spoke to you earlier: he does his business well, he behaves well, everyone (those at home) are tidy. It's not very difficult, he doesn't sleep all night. — Perhaps you saw him take something? - Oh! no, I never saw him take anything; but it has been said that

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beautiful night, he returned home well loaded; Besides, he doesn't have too good a reputation. He concludes by saying: I assure you that I am not without fault, but I would be very sorry if these people were so worthless. Do you see this famous Pharisee, who fasts twice a week, who pays tithes of everything he has, and who thanks the good God [le bon Dieu] for not being like the rest of men, who are unjust, thieves and adulterers! Do you see this pride, this hatred and (this) jealousy! But tell me, my brethren, on what are all these judgments and sentences based? Alas! it is based on weak appearances, and, most often, on what is said. But, perhaps you will tell me that you saw and heard. Alas! you can make the same mistake by seeing and hearing, you will see it. 1° To avoid making a mistake, you must know the disposition of the person's heart and their intention in doing (this action). Here is an example which will show you, as it could not be better, that we can easily be wrong, and that we are almost always wrong. Tell me, my brethren, what would you have said if you had lived in the time of Saint Nicholas, and you had seen him coming, in the middle of the night, going around the house of three young ladies, examining carefully and taking care that no one saw him. Here is a bishop, you would have immediately thought, who dishonors his character, he is a famous hypocrite; in liquorisc (he) seems to be a saint, and there he is, in the middle of the night, at the door of three young ladies who don't have too good a reputation. However, my brethren, this bishop who would most certainly be condemned, was a great saint and beloved of God; because what he did was the best work in the world. In order to avoid these young people ashamed to ask, he would come at night and throw money out their window, fearing that poverty would make them abandon themselves to [s'abandonner à] sin. If you had seen the beautiful Judith take off her mourning attire, and take everything that nature and art could provide her to enhance her beauty which was so extraordinary; you would have said, seeing her enter the room of the general of the army, who was nothing but an old shameless person; seeing her, I said, seeming to do everything she could to please him, you would have said: “Here is a woman of bad behavior. » However, she was a pious widow, very chaste and very pleasing to God, who exposed her life to save that of her people. Tell me, my brethren, with your haste to judge badly of your neighbor, what would you have thought if you had seen the chaste Joseph coming out of the room of Potiphar's wife, and hearing this woman scream, holding in her hands a piece of Joseph's cloak, pursuing him like an infamous person who had wanted to rob him of his honor? Immediately, without examining, you would have thought and said that this young man

was a bad subject and a libertine, for having sought to bring (to evil) the very wife of his master, from whom he had received so many benefits. Indeed, Potiphar, his master, condemns him, and everyone believes him guilty, blames him and despises him; but the good God [le bon Dieu], who knows the depths of Joseph's heart and innocence, congratulates him on his victory, on the fact that he had preferred to lose his reputation and his very life, (rather) than to lose his innocence by committing the slightest sin. Will you agree with me, my brethren, how much danger we are of judging badly the actions of our neighbor, despite all the knowledge and certain marks that we believe we have? Which should SEKMONR. — Volume 11. 48 lead us to never judge the actions of our neighbor without having thought carefully beforehand, and even then, only when we are responsible for the conduct of these people, such as fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses; but, to any other person, we almost always do wrong. Yes, my brethren, I have seen people misjudging the intentions of their neighbor, whose intentions I knew very well were good. No matter how much I made it clear to them, it didn't do anything. Ah! cursed pride, how evil you do and how you lead my souls to hell! Tell me, my brethren, are we better founded on the judgments that we make on the actions of our neighbor, than those who would have seen Saint Nicholas who was going around this house, and who was trying to find the door of the room of these three young ladies? are we more certain than those (who) would have seen the beautiful Judith adorn herself so advantageously and appear so free with Hoiophernes? No, my brethren, we are no more so judgmental of our neighbor than those who saw Potiphar's wife with a piece of Joseph's cloak in her hands, crying out to all who would listen that he had wanted to rob her of her honor. Here, my brethren, are three examples that the Holy Spirit has left us, to teach us how deceptive appearances are, and how much we expose ourselves to sin by judging badly of the actions of our neighbor; especially when we are not obliged to account for their conduct before the tribunal of God. We see that this Pharisee very rashly judged this publican to be a thief, because he received the impolite; saying, without knowing it, that he was asking

Emore than was necessary and he only used his authority to do injustices. However, this would-be thief leaves the feet of God, justified, and this Pharisee, who thought himself perfect, goes home more guilty; which shows us that, most often, the one who judges is more guilty than the one who is judged. But these bad hearts, these proud, jealous and envious hearts, since it is these three vices which generate all these judgments that we pass on our neighbors. Have we stolen from someone? Have we lost something? Immediately, we think that it may well be someone who did this, and (we think so) without even having the slightest knowledge of it. Ah! My brethren, if you knew this sin well, you would see that it is one of the sins most to be feared, which is the least known and the most difficult to correct. Listen to these hearts which are imbued with this vice. If anyone exercises some employment, some office in which others have done some injustice; immediately, they conclude that all those who take the place do the same, that they are no better than the others, that they are all thieves and cunning. If, in a family, one child goes wrong, all the others are worthless. If, in a parish, a few people have done something base to me, the whole parish is made up of bad people. If, among the priests, there are some who, perhaps, are not as holy as they should be; all the other priests are the same, they are all worthless: which is usually only a false pretext (to excuse one's own) indifference for one's salvation. Because Judas was worthless, would you like to make people believe that the other apostles were worthless? Because Cain was a bad subject, do you think that Abel, his brother, was like him? No, no doubt. Because Joseph's brothers were so miserable and so wicked, do (you) believe that Joseph was the same? No, really, since he is a saint. If we see a person who refuses alms to someone, we immediately say that he is a miser, that he has a heart harder than a rock, that, moreover, he has never been worth anything; while he will have done, in secret, great charities which we will only see at the judgment. Alas! My brethren, let us say that everyone speaks of the abundance of the heart, as Jesus Christ himself tells us very well, “we know a tree by its fruit. » Do you want to know a person's heart? (listen) to her speaking. A miser only knows how to speak of misers, of those who deceive, who are unjust; a proud person never ceases to bother you with those who want to show off, who believe they have a lot of intelligence, who praise

themselves for what they do or what they say. A shameless person has nothing other than: such and such a person leads a bad life; he has to do with such and such, who loses his reputation; and the rest, because it would take too long to go into these details. Ah! My brethren, if we had the happiness of being free from pride and envy, we would never judge anyone, we would be content to cry over our spiritual miseries and to pray for poor sinners, and nothing else; being fully convinced that the good God [le bon Dieu] will only ask us to account for our actions and not for those of others. Besides, my brethren, how can we dare to judge and condemn someone, even if (we) saw him committing a sin? Didn't Saint Augustine say that he who was a sinner yesterday can be a penilent saint today? When we see much evil in our neighbor, let us at least say: Alas,

If the good God [le bon Dieu] had not granted me more graces than he did, I would perhaps have gone even further. Yes, AI. F., rash judgment necessarily brings with it ruin and the loss of Christian charity. Indeed, my brethren, as soon as we suspect a person of misbehaving, we no longer have that good opinion of him that we should have. Besides, AI. F., it is not to us that others must account for their lives, but to God alone; it is wanting to establish ourselves as judges of what does not concern us; the sins of others will be for others, that is to say, for them, and ours, for us. The good Lord will not ask us to account for what others have done; but what we have done ourselves; Let us only take care of ourselves and not worry so much about others, thinking and saying what they have done or said. All this, AI. F., is nothing but wasted effort, which can only come from a base of pride similar to (that of) this Pharisee, who was only busy thinking and judging badly about his neighbor, instead of taking good care of himself and lamenting over his poor life. No, AI. F,, let's leave the behavior of our neighbor aside, let's content ourselves with saying, like the holy King David: “Alon God, give me the grace to know myself, such as I am; that I may see what may displease you, that I may correct myself, repent, and obtain forgiveness. » No, AI. F., as long as a person enjoys examining the conduct of others, neither he will know himself nor he will belong to the good God [le bon Dieu], that is to say, he will live proud and stubborn. Our Lord tells us: “Judge not and you will not be judged. Alon Father will treat you in the same way as you have treated others; you will be measured with the same measure that you used to measure others. » Besides, my brethren, who among us would be happy if people judged poorly what he does or says? Person. Does not our Lord say: “Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you. » Alas! My brethren, how many sins we commit in this way! Alas! that there are some who do not know them, and who, consequently, have never accused themselves of them! My God, how many people are damned, for lack of being educated or thinking carefully about their way of living!

II We have just seen how common and dreadful this sin is in the eyes of God, and, at the same time, how difficult it is to correct oneself from it. So as not to leave you without giving you the means to correct yourself, let us see what are the remedies that we must use to protect ourselves from it and to correct ourselves from it, if we have the misfortune of having been guilty of it. Saint Bernard, this great saint, tells us that, if we want not to judge badly of our neighbor, we must avoid this curiosity, (this desire) to know too much, and not inform ourselves of what one does and says another, nor of what happens inside houses. Let us let the world go as the good God [le bon Dieu] allows it to go, let us only think and judge badly of ourselves. Saint Thomas was told one day that he had too good an opinion of people, and that many took advantage of his goodness to deceive him. He gave them this beautiful answer, well worthy of being engraved forever in our hearts: “Perhaps that is true; but I think that it is only me who is capable of doing evil, as I am the most miserable in the world; I much prefer to be deceived,

What if I was wrong in judging badly of my neighbor (1). Listen to what Jesus Christ himself tells us, through the mouth of Saint John: “He who loves his neighbor fulfills all the commandments of God. » In order not to judge a person badly, my brethren, we must always separate what he does from the intention he may have had in doing it. Perhaps, you must think to yourself, he didn't think he was hurting by doing it; perhaps he had intended some good end, or else he himself will have been deceived; who knows? it is

perhaps out of levity and not out of malice; sometimes we act without thinking, when he sees what he has (done), he will repent of it; the good God [le bon Dieu] easily forgives an action of levity, it may well happen that one day he will be a good Christian and a saint Saint Ambrose gives us a good example, in the praise he gives to the Emperor Valentinian, telling us that this emperor never judged badly of anyone and that he only punished as late as he could the crimes into which his subjects fell. If they were young, he attributed their faults to the frivolity of their age and their little experience. If they were old, he replied that the weakness of age and their obsolescence could well serve as an excuse; that perhaps, they had long resisted and fought before doing evil, and that repentance had certainly followed closely on the heels of sin. If they were raised to any dignity, he said to himself: alas! no one doubts that honors and dignities are a great weight to lead us to evil; at every moment there is an opportunity to do so. If they were simple by- (1) Here the Venerable repeats the historical passage cited above, p. 405.

individuals: my God, he said to himself, this poor person has perhaps only hurt out of fear; it is undoubtedly because he does not want to displease someone who had done him good. If they were completely poor: who can doubt that poverty is something very hard? it is that they needed (this) so as not to die of hunger themselves or their children; perhaps they only did it with great difficulty, with the thought of repairing the wrong they had done. But when the thing was too obvious that he could no longer excuse it: my God, he cried, how delicate the devil is! perhaps he has been trying it for how long; he made this mistake, it is true, but perhaps his repentance has already earned him forgiveness from the good God [le bon Dieu]; what do we know? If the good God [le bon Dieu] had put me through such trials, would I not have done even worse? How could I have the courage to judge and punish him? he has plenty of time to be judged and punished by God, who cannot be mistaken in his judgment; while, most often, we are mistaken, for lack of enlightenment; but I think that the good God [le bon Dieu] will have pity on him, and that one day he will pray for me, who could fall at any moment and lose me. Do you see, my brethren, the way in which this emperor behaved; Do you see how he found everywhere something to excuse the faults of his neighbor and turned everything into good and never into May? Ah! My brethren, his heart was free from this detestable pride and this black jealousy or envy, with which we have the misfortune to be covered. See, my brethren, see the conduct of the people of the world, see if they have this Christian charity which turns everything for good and never for evil. Alas! My brethren, if we had the good fortune to take a look at

In our past life, we would be content to mourn our misfortunes of having spent our days doing evil, and we would leave behind what does not concern us. We see, my brethren, that there are few vices that the saints have more abhorred than that of slander. We read in the life of Saint Pachomius that, when someone spoke badly of his neighbor, he showed an astonishing aversion by saying that, from the mouth of a Christian, disadvantageous words against his neighbor should never come out. If he could not prevent them from backbiting, he fled in haste; in order to show them how much it pained him. Saint John the chaplain, when he saw someone who was backbiting in his company, he forbade the one who opened the door to let him in another time, if he saw him return, in order to teach him to correct himself. A solitary saint said one day to Saint Pachomius: “My father, how can we prevent ourselves from speaking badly of our neighbors? » Saint Pachomius replied to him: “We must always have before our eyes the portrait of our neighbor and our own: if we look attentively at our own and its faults, then we (are) sure to esteem that of our neighbor well and never speak ill of it; we will love him at least as ourselves, seeing him much more perfect than ourselves. Saint Augustine, being a bishop, had such a horror of backbiting and the slanderer that, to stop a custom so bad and so unworthy of a Christian, he had these words written in the apartment where he was eating: “Whoever likes to tear the reputation of his neighbor, must know that this table is forbidden to him. » If anyone, even from other bishops, escaped into slanderous words, he would rebuke them if 18'

41“ SERMONS. quickly, that he said to them: “Either erase these words which are written in this apartment, or get up and go to your houses, before dinner is finished; or, if you do not want to leave these speeches, I

myself will get up and leave you there. » Possidius, who wrote his life, tells us that he himself (was) a witness to this fact. It is recorded in the life of Saint Anthony that he was traveling with several solitary people who, throughout the journey, talked about different good things; but as it is very difficult, not to say impossible, to speak for a long time without coming across the conduct of one's neighbor, at the end of their journey, Saint Anthony said to these solitaries: "You were very fortunate to have had this good old man as your companion," and he turned in the same way to an old man who had not said a word during the entire journey, saying to him: "Well! my father, didn't you have a good trip to have met the company of these solitary people? » — “It is true that they are good,” replied the old man, “but they have no door to their house; » meaning that they had no restraint in their words, and that, often, they had injured the reputation of their neighbor. Ah! My brethren, let us conclude that there are very few who put doors in their house, that is to say, in their mouth, so as not to open it to the disadvantage of their neighbor. Happy is he who will leave the conduct of his neighbor, not being burdened with it, to think only of himself, groaning over his faults and making every effort to correct them! Happy is he who will occupy his mind and his heart only with what concerns the good God [le bon Dieu], and his tongue only with asking forgiveness from the good God [le bon Dieu], and (who will have) eyes only with which to cry for his sins!....

11th Sunday after Pentecost — On Detraction (Gossip)

Solutum est vinculum linguae ejus, et loquebatur recte. His tongue was loosed, and he spoke rightly. (St. Mark 7:35)

It would be desirable, my brethren, that one could say of each of us what the Gospel says of him whom Jesus healed—that he spoke very well.

Alas! My brethren, could one not, on the contrary, reproach us that we almost always speak badly, especially when we speak of our neighbor? What, indeed, is the conduct of most Christians of our day? Here it is. To criticize, to censure, to blacken, and to condemn what the neighbor does and says: that is of all vices the most common, the most universally spread, and perhaps the worst of all.

reproach ourselves that we almost always speak badly, especially when we speak of our neighbor. What, in fact, is the conduct of most Christians today? Here it is. Criticizing, censoring, blackening and condemning what our neighbor does and says: this is of all the vices the most common, the most universally widespread, and, perhaps, the worst of all. Vice that we can never hate enough, vice which has the most disastrous consequences, which brings trouble and desolation everywhere. Ah! Would to God to give me one of those coals which the angel used to purify the lips of the prophet Isaiah, in order to purify the tongue of all men! Oh! how many evils would be banished from the earth, if we could chase away the evil sacel May I, my brethren, give you so much horror, that you may have the happiness of correcting yourself forever! What is my purpose, my brethren? here it is. — It is to make you know: 1° what slander is; 2° what are the causes and consequences; 3° the necessity and difficulty of repairing it.

L I do not want to undertake to show you the grandeur, the darkness of this crime which causes so much harm; that is to say, which is the cause of so many disputes, hatreds, murders and enmities which often last as long as the lives of people, seeing that it does not spare the good any more than the worst; it is enough for me to tell you that co-crime is one of those which drags the most souls to hell. I believe that it is more necessary for you to make yourself known in how many ways we can be guilty of this; so that, knowing the evil you do, you can correct yourself and avoid the torments that are prepared for him in the other life. If you ask me: What is backbiting? I will tell you: it is to make known a fault or a fault of the neighbor (in a way) capable of harming, more or less, his reputation, and this is done in several ways. 1° We slander when we impute to our neighbor an evil that he has not done or a fault that he does not have, this is what is called slander; an infinitely terrible crime, which, however, is very common. Make no mistake, my brethren, from slander to slander, there is only a small step. If we examine things carefully, we see that almost always we add or

increase the bad things we say about our neighbors. A thing that passes through several mouths is no longer the same, the one who said it

The first no longer recognizes it as we change or add (1); From this I conclude that a slanderer is almost always a slanderer, and every slanderer is an infamous person. There is a holy Father who tells us that slanderers should be driven out of human society like wild beasts. 2° We meditate when we increase the evil that our neighbor has done. You saw someone who made some mistake; what are you doing? instead of covering it with the mantle of charity, or at least diminishing it, you increase it. You will see a servant who will rest for a moment, a worker, the same; If someone talks to you about it, you will say, without further examination, that he is a lazy person, that he is stealing his master's money. You will see a person pass through a vineyard or an orchard, he will take a few grapes and some fruit, which he should not do, it is true; you are going to tell everyone you see that so-and-so is a thief, who must be taken into account, even though he has never stolen anything; so for the rest... This is what we call backbiting by exaggeration. Listen to Saint Francis de Sales: “Do not say,” this admirable saint tells us, “that such and such is a drunkard and a thief, because you have seen him steal or get drunk once. Noah and Lot once got drunk; however, neither of them were drunkards. Saint Peter was not a blasphemer for having blasphemed on one occasion. A person is not vicious for having fallen once into vice, and even if he falls several times, there is always the risk of slander in an accusation. This is what happened to Simon the leper, (1) Slander while confessing..., slander about a person who wants to establish themselves. (Note of the Venerable.)

when he saw Madeleine at the feet of the Savior, whom she watered with her tears: “If this man,” he said, “were a prophet as they say, would he not know that it is a sinner who is at his feet? » He was grossly mistaken: Madeleine was no longer a sinner, but a penitent saint, because her sins were all forgiven. See again this proud Pharisee, who, standing at the top of the temple, displayed all his so-called good works while thanking God that he was not one of those men who are adulterous, unjust and thieves, such as this tax collector. He said that this publican was a sinner; whereas he had been justified at that very hour. Ah! my children, this kind Saint Francis de Sales tells us, because the mercy of God is so great, that a single moment is enough for him to forgive the greatest (greatest) crime in the world, how can we dare to say that he who was a great sinner yesterday is one today. » I conclude by saying that, almost always, we are wrong when we judge poorly of our neighbor, whatever appearance of truth the thing on which we pass our judgment has. 3° I say that we backbite when we make known, without legitimate reason, a hidden fault of our neighbor, or a fault which is not known. There are people who imagine that when they know something bad about their neighbor, they can tell it to others and talk about it. You are wrong, my friend. What have we, in our holy religion, recommended more than charity? Reason itself inspires us not to do to others what we would not want others to do to ourselves. Look at this a little closely: would we be very happy if someone had seen us make a mistake?

and that he was going to publish it to everyone? no, undoubtedly; on the contrary: if he had the charity to keep it hidden, we would be very grateful to him. See how much it annoys you if someone says something about you, or that of your family: where is justice and charity? As long as your neighbor's fault is hidden, he will maintain his reputation; but as soon as you make it known, you take away its reputation, and, in this, you do it a greater harm than if you took away part of its goods, since the Holy Spirit tells us that a good reputation is better than riches (1). 4° We meditate when we interpret in a bad way the good actions of our neighbor. There are people who are like the spider, who turns the best thing into poison. A poor person, once on the tongue of slanderers, is like a grain of wheat under the millstone: it is torn, crushed and completely destroyed. These people will attribute to you intentions that you never had, they will poison all your actions and your steps: if you have piety, if you want to faithfully fulfill your religious duties, you are nothing more than a hypocrite, a church god and a house demon. If you do good works, they will think it is out of pride, to show off. If you flee the world, you will be a singular being, a person who is weak-minded; if you take care

of your property, you are nothing more than a miser; let's say better, my brethren: the tongue of the slanderer is like a worm which bites the good fruits, that is to say, the best deeds of the world and stains (1) Speak evil of your neighbor in your heart. (Note of the Venerable.)

to turn them into bad people. The tongue of the slanderer is a caterpillar which dirties the most beautiful flowers, leaving the disgusting trace of its foam. 5° I say that one slanders even while saying nothing, and this is how: one will praise in your presence a person whom one knows that you know; you say nothing about it or you only praise it weakly: your silence and your affectation make you think that you know something bad about it which leads you to say nothing. Others backbite in a compassionate way. You don't know, they say, you know so-and-so well; did you hear what happened to him? so it's a shame that she allowed herself to be deceived!... aren't you, you're like me, you wouldn't have believed it?... Saint Francis tells us that such backbiting is like a poisoned line, which we dip in oil, so that it penetrates further. Finally, a gesture, a smile, a but, a nod, a little look of contempt: all this makes you think a lot of the person you are talking about. But the darkest and most fatal slander in its consequences is to report to someone what another has said about him or fled against him. These relationships produce the most terrible evils, which give rise to feelings of hatred and vengeance which often last until death. To show you how guilty these kinds of people are, listen to what the Holy Spirit tells us: “There are six things that God hates, but he hates the seventh, this seventh is relationships (1). (i) We can make known the faults of a person if we ask you what such a person is, because we would like to establish an establishment. You can tell the truth; but, never out of revenge, nor being unsure of what you say. (Note of the Venerable.)

This is approximately, my brethren, in how many ways You can sin through backbiting. Search your heart, and see if you are in any way guilty in this matter. First, I will tell you that we must not easily believe the bad things we say about others, and, although an accused person does not defend himself, we must not believe that what we say is quite certain; Here is an example which will show you that we can all be wrong, and that we should only believe with great difficulty the bad things we are told about others. It is reported in history that a widowed man with only one very young daughter, recommended her to one of his parents and went to become a monk in a solitary monastery. His virtue made him loved by all religious people. For his part, he was very happy with his vocation; but, some time later, thinking of his daughter, the tenderness he felt for this child filled him with pain and sadness at having thus abandoned her. The father abbot noticed this, and said to him one day: “What is the matter with you, my brother, that distresses you so much? » — “Alas! my father, replied the solitary man, I left a very young child in the city: that is the subject of my sorrow. » The abbot, not knowing that it was a girl, believing that it was a son, said to him: “Go and get him, bring him here, and you will come back to your side. » Immediately, he leaves, seeing this as a voice from heaven, he goes to find his little daughter who was called Marine. He told her to take the name Marin, forbade her ever to let it be known that she was a girl, and he brought her to his monastery. Her father took so much care to show her the necessity of perfection in a person who left the world to give herself (to God), that in a short time she became a

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model of virtue, even for former religious people, young as she was. Her father, before dying, once again advised her never to say who she was. Marine was still only seventeen when her holy father left her; all the monks only called him Brother Marin. Her humility which was so profound and her virtue so unusual made her loved and respected by all religious people. But the demon, jealous of seeing her walk so quickly in virtue, or rather, God, wanting to test her, allowed her to be slandered in the most black manner. It would have been easy for him to have his innocence recognized; but she (not read it). You will (see) that a person who truly loves God, regards everything that God (allows) to happen to us, even backbiting and slander, as only given to us for our good. The brothers used to go to the market on certain days of the week to get their provisions, the brother accompanied them there. The owner of the inn had a daughter who had abandoned

herself to [s'abandonner à] sin with a soldier. Having noticed that his daughter was pregnant, he wanted to know who had debauched her; this girl, full of malice, invented the blackest slander and the most awful slander, and told her father that it was Brother Marin who had seduced her, and that she had fallen into sin with him. The father, full of fury, comes to make his complaints to the abbot, who was very surprised by such a (fact) on the part of Brother Marin, who was considered a great saint. The father abbot called Brother Marin into his presence, asked him what he had done, what life he had (led), what a shame for a religious! Poor Brother Marin, lifting his heart to God, thought about what he should answer, and rather than defaming this shameless girl, he contented himself with saying:

E “I am a sinner who deserves to do penance. » The abbot did not examine further, believing her guilty of the crime of which she was accused, had her severely punished and expelled her from the monastery. But this poor child, similar to Jesus Christ, receives the blows and insults without opening her mouth to complain, or to have her innocence recognized, for whom it was so easy. She remained at the door of the monastery for three years, being regarded by all the monks as infamous; when the monks passed, she prostrated herself before them to ask for the help of their prayers; a poor piece of bread so as not to die of hunger. The innkeeper's daughter having given birth, kept this child for some time; but (as soon as) he was weaned, she sent him to Brother Marin as if he had been his father. Without showing anything of her innocence, she received him as her child, fed him for two years, sharing with this child the small alms given to him. The monks, touched to see so much humility, went to beg the abbot to have pity on Brother Marin, representing to him that, for five years, he had been doing penance at the door of the monastery, that it was necessary to receive him and forgive him for the love of Jesus Christ. The father abbot having summoned him, made bloody reproaches to him: “Your father was a saint,” said the abbot, “he brought you here from your childhood, and you had the effrontery to dishonor this house with the most detestable crime; However, I permit you to enter this house with this child, of whom you are the unworthy father, and I condemn you, for the expiation of your sin, to the vilest and lowest works, and to serve all the brothers. This poor Brother Marin, without saying a word of complaint, submits to everything, always content and always resolved not to say anything.

to make it known that he was not guilty. This new work, which hardly a robust man could have sustained, did not discourage him. However, after some time, overwhelmed by the fatigue of work and the austerities of his youth, he succumbed, and shortly after he died. The abbot ordered, out of charity, that the last duties be rendered to him as to another religious; but, to give more horror to this vice, he was buried far from the monastery, so that the memory of him would be lost. Laughing, God wanted to make known her innocence that she had kept hidden for so long. Having recognized that it was a girl: “O my God,” they cried, beating their breasts, “how could this holy girl have suffered with so much patience, so much opprobrium and affliction, without complaining, it being so easy for her to justify herself. » They ran to the abbot, uttering loud cries and shedding abundant tears: “Come, my father,” they said, “come and see Brother Marin. » The abbot, astonished by these cries and these tears, runs towards this poor innocent girl. He was seized with such intense pain that he knelt down, hitting the ground with his forehead and shedding torrents of tears. They all cried out together, he and his grieving monks: “0 holy and innocent girl, I beseech you, by the mercy of Jesus Christ, to forgive me all the punishments and the unjust reproaches that I have made you 1 — Alas! cried the abbot, I have been in ignorance, and you have had enough patience to suffer everything, and I, too little enlightenment to recognize the holiness of your life. » Having had the body of this holy girl placed in the monastery chapel, they brought this news to the father of the girl who had accused Brother Marin. This poor unfortunate woman, who had falsely cusé Saint Marine, was, since her sin, possessed by the demon, and came in despair to confess her crime at the feet of the saint, asking her forgiveness. She was immediately delivered through his intercession. See, my brethren, how much slander and backbiting make poor innocent people suffer. How many poor people are there, even in the world, who are falsely accused, and who, in the judgment, we will recognize as innocent. However, those who are accused in this way must recognize that it

is God who allows it, and that the best way for them is to leave their innocence in the hands of God and not torment themselves because their reputation may suffer; almost all the saints did this. See also Saint Francis de Sales, who was accused in front of a large number of people of having had a man killed in order to live with his wife. The saint left everything in the hands of God, and did not worry about his reputation. To those who advised him to defend it, he replied that he left it to the one who had allowed his reputation to be tarnished to restore it as soon as he saw fit. As slander is something very sensitive, God allows that almost all the saints have been slandered. I believe that the best course we can take in these things is to say nothing, to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] to suffer all this for the love of him and to pray for them. Moreover, God only (allows) this for those on whom he has great views of mercy. If a person is slandered, it is because God has resolved to make him achieve high perfection. We must pity those who blacken our reputation and rejoice over ourselves; because these are goods that we gather for heaven. Dream- no to our subject, because our main aim is to make known the harm that the slanderer does to himself. I will tell you that backbiting is a mortal sin, when it is something serious, since Saint Paul places this sin among those who exclude one from the kingdom of heaven. The Holy Spirit tells us that the slanderer is cursed by God, that he is an abomination to God and to men. It is true that backbiting is more or less great, depending on the quality, proximity and dignity of the people about whom we are speaking. It is, therefore, a greater sin to make known the faults and vices of one's superiors, such as one's father and mother, one's wife, one's husband, one's brothers and sisters and one's parents, than those of strangers, because one should have more charity for them than for others. To speak ill of consecrated persons and ministers of the Church is an even greater sin, because of the consequences which are so disastrous for religion and because of the outrage which is done to their character. Listen, here is what the Holy Spirit tells us through the mouth of his prophet: “To speak ill of his ministers is to touch the apple of his eye; » that is to say, that nothing can outrage him in such a sensitive way, and consequently, a crime always so great that you will never be able to understand it... Jesus Christ also tells us: “He who despises you, despises me. » Also, my brethren, when you are with people from another parish, who are always after speaking badly of their pastor, you must never (take) part in it; withdraw, if you can, or, if you cannot, say nothing. From this, my brethren, you will agree with me that

To make a good confession it is not enough to say that one has slandered one's neighbor; we must also say whether it was out of levity, out of hatred, out of revenge, if we sought to harm his reputation; say which people we spoke of: if it is a superior, an equal, a father and a mother, our parents, people consecrated to God; in front of how many people: all this is necessary to make a good confession. Many people get this last act wrong; we will accuse ourselves of having slandered our neighbor, but we say neither who nor what the intention was in speaking ill of these people, which is the cause of many sacrilegious confessions. Others, if you ask them if these slanders have caused harm to their neighbors, will tell you no. — My friend, you are wrong; every time you have said something that was not known to the person to whom you are speaking, it brings loss to your neighbor, because you have always diminished in the mind of this person the good esteem that he could have had of him. From this we can easily conclude that almost never does one meditate without harming or weakening, in some way, the reputation of our neighbor. — But, you will tell me, when it is public, there is no harm. — My friend, when it is public, it is as if a person had their entire body covered with leprosy, except for a small spot and you say, because this body is almost entirely covered with leprosy, we must finish covering it with it. It's the same thing. If the thing is public, you must on the contrary have compassion for this poor unfortunate person, hide and diminish (his fault) as much as you can. See if it is right, seeing a sick person on the edge of a precipice, to take advantage of their weakness and what they are.

ready to fall, to push him there? Well! this is what we do when we renew what is already public. — But, you will tell me, when one tells a friend, with a promise not to tell anyone? —You are wrong again; how can you expect others not to say it, since you can't help but say it? It is as if you were saying to someone: “Here, my friend, I am going to tell you something, please be wiser and more discreet than me; have more charity than me; don't do, don't say what I tell you. » I believe that the best way is to say nothing; whatever we do,

whatever we say, do not get involved in anything except working to gain heaven [gagner le ciel]. We are never sorry for not having said anything, and we almost always regret having spoken too much. The Holy Spirit tells us that “he who speaks so much does not always speak well (1). »

IL Let us now see what are the causes and consequences of backbiting. There are several reasons which lead us to slander our neighbor. Some slander out of envy, this is what happens, especially among people of the same state, to attract practices; they will speak ill of others: that their goods are worthless; or that they are deceiving, that there is nothing with them and that it would be impossible for them to give the (goods) at this price; that several people have complained about it... that they will see that it will not be of good use to them... or else: that the weight is not there nor the measure. A day laborer will say that another is not a good worker; that's it (1) Where you slander the most is in sales: where you start to say good things, and you end up saying all kinds of slander... in cabarets... (Note of the Venerable.)

how many houses he goes to, and that we are not too happy about it; he doesn't work, he has fun; or else: he doesn't know how to work. “What I tell you, you must say nothing,” they add, “because it would be a loss to him. » “You have to,” you tell him? it was much better for you not to say anything, it would have been done much sooner. An inhabitant will see that his neighbor's property prospers better than his own: it frustrates him, he will say bad things about it. Others speak badly of their neighbors out of revenge: if you have said or done something to someone, even out of duty or charity, they will seek to decry you, to invent a thousand things against you, in order to take revenge. If you say something good, it annoys them, they will say to you: “He is good like the others, he does have his faults; he did that, he said that; you don't know him? it’s because you never had anything to do with him. » Many slander out of pride, they believe they can rise by belittling others, by speaking ill of others; they will highlight their so-called good qualities; whatever they say and do will be right, and whatever others do or say will be wrong. But most of them slander out of levity, out of a certain itch to speak [démangeaison de parler], without examining whether it is true or not; they need to talk. Although these are less guilty than others, that is to say, than those who backbite out of hatred, envy or vengeance, they are not without sin; whatever motive makes them act, they no less tarnish the reputation of their neighbor. I believe that the sin of backbiting contains almost all that is worst. Yes, my brethren, this sin contains the poison of all vices, the pettiness of vanity, the venom of jealousy, the bitterness of anger, the gall of hatred and the levity so unworthy of a Christian: pFRMONf. — Volume H. 19 this is what made Saint James, the apostle, say “that the tongue of the slanderer is full of deadly venom, that it is a world of iniquity. » If we want to give ourselves (the point) of examining, nothing is so clear to conceive. Is it not, in fact, the backbiting which sows discord and division almost everywhere, which confuses friends, which prevents enemies from reconciling, which disturbs the peace of households, which embitters brother against brother, husband against wife, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law, son-in-law against his father-in-law. talk to each other. Who is the cause? The only bad language of the neighbor... Yes, my brethren, the tongue of a slanderer poisons all good actions and reveals all the bad ones (It is she) who, so often, spreads stains on an entire family, which pass from fathers to children, from one generation to another, and which, perhaps, will never be erased, even in the tomb of the dead. ashes of these poor unfortunates, by reviving, that is to say by renewing, their faults which were buried with them in the tomb. My brethren, what indignation would you not be filled with, if you saw an unfortunate person tearing it into a thousand pieces? Well, the crime is even greater to renew the faults of a poor dead person. habit when speaking of someone who will be dead: "Ah! he did well in his time, he was an accomplished drunkard, a complete dexterity, in short, he was a bad living man" Alas!

my friend, perhaps you are wrong, and if it were as you say, perhaps he is now in heaven, the good God [le bon Dieu] has forgiven you. But where is your charity? Are you not careful that you tarnish the reputation of his children, if he has any, or of his parents? Would you be happy if people spoke like this about your parents? With charity, we would have nothing to say about anyone, that is to say we would only take the

trouble to examine our conduct and not that of others. But, if you put charity aside, you will not find a man on earth in whom you do not see some fault; so that the tongue of the slanderer always finds something to say. No, my brethren, we will only know in broad daylight vengeance, the evil that the tongue of a slanderer has done. See, the only slander that Haman made against the Jews, because Mordecai did not want to bend the knee before him, had determined the king to put all the Jews to death. If the slander had not been discovered, the Jewish nation would be defined: this was the general's design. O my God, how much blood has been shed for a single slander! But God, who never abandons the innocent, allowed this unfortunate man to perish by the same torture with which he wanted to destroy the Jews. But, without going that far, how much harm does a person do who speaks ill of a child about his father or his mother or his teachers. You have given him a bad opinion of them, he will look at them with contempt; if he did not fear being punished, he would outrage them. Fathers and mothers, masters or mistresses will curse them, swear at them, treat them harshly; who will be the cause of all this? your bad language. You have spoken ill of the ministers of the Church, and perhaps even of your pastor; you have weakened the faith in (those who listened to you), they have abandoned the sacraments, they live without religion; and who is the cause? your bad language. You are the cause that this merchant and this worker no longer have the same practices, because you have decried them. This woman, who got along very well with her husband, you slandered her to him; now he can no longer tolerate it, so that, since your report, it has been nothing but hatred and curses.

III. If the consequences of backbiting, my brethren, are so terrible, the difficulty of repairing it is no less great. When backbiting is considerable, my brethren, it is not enough to confess it; (I do not mean that you should not confess to them; no, my brethren, if you do not confess your backbiting, you will be damned, despite all the penances that you could do;) but I mean that by confessing them, it is absolutely necessary, if you can, to repair the loss that slander has caused to your neighbor, and just as the thief who does not return the good he has stolen will never see heaven, likewise, the one who has Taking away the reputation of his neighbor will never see heaven, if he does not do everything that depends on him to repair the reputation of his neighbor. But, you will ask me, how should we go about repairing the reputation of our neighbor? here it is. If what we said against him is false, we absolutely must go find all the people to whom we spoke badly about this person, saying that everything we said was false, that it was out of hatred, revenge or carelessness; even though we should make ourselves

Calling ourselves a liar, a deceiver, an impostor, we must do it. If what we have said is true, we cannot deny it, because it is never permitted to lie; but you must say all the good things you know about this person, in order to erase the bad things you have said about them. If this slander, this slander, has caused him any harm, we are obliged to repair it as much as we can. Judge from this, my brethren, how difficult it is to repair the consequences of backbiting. See, my brethren, how sensitive it is to go and publish that one is a liar; However, if what we have said is false, we must do it, or never by heaven! Alas! My brethren, how this lack of repair will damn the world! The world is full of slanderers and slanderers, and (there are) almost none who repair, and, consequently, almost none who will be saved. There is no middle, my brethren, or reparation, if we can, or damnation. It is like the good that we would have taken; we will be damned, if we can return it and we do not return it. Well, my brethren, now feel the harm you are doing with your tongue and the difficulty it is to repair it. However, we must (understand) that not everything is backbiting when we make known the faults of a child to his parents, of a servant to his master, provided that it is in the thought that they will be corrected, that we only speak of them to those who can remedy them and always, guided by the bonds of charity. I end by saying that, not only is it wrong to slander and slander, but also to listen to slander and slander with pleasure; for if no one listened, there would be no slanderers. Through this, we

” makes one complicit in all the evil that the slanderer does. Saint Bernard tells us that it is very difficult to know who is more guilty, the one who meditates or the one who listens; one has the demon on his tongue and the other in his ears. But, you will ask me, what should we do when we find ourselves in a company that

gossips? Here it is. If it is an inferior, that is to say, a person who is below you, you must silence him immediately, making him see the evil he is doing. If it is someone of your rank, you must skillfully divert the conversation by talking about something else, or not pretending to hear what they are saying. If it is a superior, that is to say a person who is above you, you must not reprimand him; but appear serious and sad, which shows him that he is hurting you, and, if you can go away, you must do so. What should we conclude from all this, my brethren? Here it is. It is not to get into the habit of talking about the conduct of others, to think that there would be much to say about us if we were known as we are, and to avoid the companies of the world as much as we can, to often say like Saint Augustine: “My God, give me the grace to know myself as I am. " Happy! a thousand (times) happy, he who will only use his tongue to ask (from God) the forgiveness of his sins and sing His praises! That is what I wish you. [c'est ce que je vous souhaite]

11th Sunday after Pentecost — On Sins Hidden in Confession

Adducunt ei surdum et mutum. Behold, they brought to Jesus Christ a man who was deaf and mute. (St. Mark 7:32)

The deaf and mute man, my brethren, whom they presented to Jesus Christ to be healed, is the sad picture of a great number of Christians when they present themselves at the tribunal of penance. Some are deaf to the voice of their conscience, which presses them to declare their sins; others are mute when they must accuse themselves—they keep silence, and by that profane the sacraments. O my God, what a misfortune! Yes, my brethren, to hide a mortal sin through shame or fear, or to accuse it in such a way as not to make it known as conscience reproaches it, is to lie to Jesus Christ Himself; it is to change into a deadly poison the sacred remedy that the mercy of God has prepared for us.

O my God, what a misfortune! Yes, my brethren, to hide a mortal sin out of shame or fear, or to accuse it in such a way as not to make it known as conscience reproaches it, is to lie to Jesus Christ himself, it is to change into mortal poison the sacred remedy which the mercy of God offers us to heal the wounds which sin has made to our poor soul. sacrilege. Oh! I wish this crime was as rare among Christians as monsters!

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that everything I am going to say does not attack anyone who is here! But, alas! My brethren, let us say it while weeping bitterly, it is more common than we think! O my God! how sacrilegious confessions will be found on the great day of judgment! oh my God! how many sins which have never been known, and which will appear at this moment! O my God, can a Christian be guilty of such an outrage against his God and his Savior!... To give you as much horror as I can, my brethren, I will portray to your eyes how barbaric and cruel a Christian is in committing it, towards Jesus Christ his Redeemer, and how great the mercy of God must be to suffer such a monster on earth, after such a terrible attack.

I. Yes, my brethren, speaking to you about confession means speaking to you about everything that is most precious in our holy religion, if we except the death of Jesus Christ and the sacrament of Baptism. Go, my brethren, go and question all the damned who burn in hell; everyone will answer you that they are only reprobate because they have not had recourse to this sacrament, or because they have profaned it. Go up into heaven, ask all the blessed seated on these thrones of glory, what led them to this happy place; almost all of them will tell you that confession was the only remedy they used to escape from sin and be reconciled with the good God [le bon Dieu]. 0 beautiful religion! If people despise you, it’s because they don’t know you! 0 consoling religion, that you provide us with effective and easy means to return to God when we have had the misfortune of straying away by sin! But, you will ask me, what can make our confessions bad? — My friend, many things are the cause of this misfortune. It is 1° when we do not give enough time to examine ourselves; 2° when we do not declare our sins as we know them; 3° when we do not have enough contrition to receive absolution; 4° when in receiving absolution, we are not resolved to carry out the penance that the priest gives

us; and 5° when we do not want to make the restitutions that we can and must make, let the priest command us. I assure you, my brethren, that the very thought of going into this detail makes me tremble; I am sure that if faith is not extinguished in you, and if you truly desire your salvation, there will be very few among (you) who are not worried about their past confessions. Come, my brethren, let us ask these poor consciences, who for so many years have been torn by remorse; let us take in one hand this torch of the great days of vengeance, and in the other this scale which will weigh all the actions of men, and we will see what we have never seen, or, at least, what we have never wanted to see; and we will hear the cries of this conscience that you have tried to stifle until now. Let go, my brethren, of all your remorse, too happy, if you have not yet lost the precious gift of faith, if despair does not overcome you as you consider the abyss into which you have plunged. Do you hear this poor urn, which cries out to you to have pity on it, because if death struck you in this state, it would be damned: “Ah! please have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi], tear me out of this abyss 19 where you threw me! Must I be separated forever from my God, who was to make all my happiness? O my God! never see (you), what a terrible misfortune! » But no, my brethren, let us come to the proof, and we will know even better if we are among the number of these unfortunate people of whom we (are) going to speak to you today. I therefore say 1°, my brethren, that if we do not take enough time to examine ourselves, our confessions are worthless, not to mention (that they are) sacrilegious. It is true that it is hardly possible to determine the time we should use for our examination. He who has gone a long time (without) confessing must stay longer than he who confesses often. According to this, we must give time to it according to the state (in which) we are engaged, and according to the time that we have not confessed. Let us give it the time and care that we would give to a matter whose success we would really care about. Examination is therefore the first thing we must do to hope for a good confession. We must begin it with prayer, imploring with all our heart the light of the Holy Spirit and the protection of the Blessed Virgin. (One must do) some good deed, such as hearing holy mass; and, if we can, do some small deprivations for this in our meals, in our sleep; offer our sorrows of the day to the good God [le bon Dieu] to begin to bend his justice. (Then you must) retire to a corner, if you can, or at least, when you wake up, or while you are on your way, as the good God [le bon Dieu] makes you known (your sins), bear witness to him your pain. You must not be content to see your sins once, but several, and at point that you engrave them in your memory, so as not to lose sight of them, for the moment when you have the happiness of confessing them; for you know as well as I that if you allow some mortal sins, for want of having examined yourself, even if you had said them, if you had known them, that would not prevent your confession from being a sacrilege. If, before receiving communion, you remember some mortal sins, you must be careful: if you have left them through your fault, or because you have not given enough time to examine yourself, you must, if you can, reconcile yourself, and, if you cannot, you must also examine before the good God [le bon Dieu] whether, by confessing to this sin, the priest has given you permission to receive communion. If you are in doubt, it is better to leave your communion for another times. Alas My brethren, if we took as many precautions for the salvation of our soul as we take to do our temporal affairs well, all our confessions would be very good and would assure us of our forgiveness! Alas! what confessions made almost without examination, without preparation! According to this, can one live peacefully in such an unhappy state? We said, secondly, that after having carefully examined our conscience, we must accuse our sins as well as we can, if we want to obtain forgiveness. If I were speaking to the ungodly or to unbelievers, I would begin to prove to them the certainty of this necessity of accusing one's sins, but, no, my brethren, to you, this would be useless. No one doubts such a precious grace, which gives all the happiness of a Christian here on earth; because, after sin, it is his only and only hope to obtain heaven. I therefore say, my brethren, that this second condition is absolutely necessary for our confession to be good. It is the accusation that costs proud sinners the most; it is also she who makes the most sacrilegious confessions. You will see how many detours these bad Christians take to appear less guilty: we are more concerned with the way in which we accuse our sins in order to experience less confusion, than with the way of saying them as the good God [le bon Dieu] knows them. How many times have we felt our conscience letting us know that we were not saying them correctly, and we reassured ourselves by thinking that it was

indeed the same thing. How many times have we been angry at knowing our sins so well, and even at knowing so many, because we found ourselves too guilty; instead of thanking the good God [le bon Dieu] with all our hearts, for this great grace. How many times have we not chosen the moment when the priest has less time, so that he does not have the time to ask us any questions? How many times have we said our sins hastily, without giving the priest time to tell us the (notable) circumstances, which it is absolutely necessary (to discover) to make a good confession. I will not speak, my brethren, of those who pray to the good God [le bon Dieu] to find confessors who will not force them to leave their bad habits. However, they do not want to die there; but they are not resolved to leave them for the moment. Alas! they are poor blind people, who run to hell with giant steps and perhaps without thinking about it. But how many (are there) who, out of ignorance or fear, do not only want

Take the trouble to examine yourself or to distinguish the circumstances which make the sin more serious, or which change its species. I won't go into great detail, because last year I explained all this to you enough. You accuse yourself of having worked on Sunday; but you do not say (for) how many hours, nor how many people you have made work, nor if it is during the holy offices; how many people saw you, which scandalized them. You accuse yourself of having eaten meat on forbidden days; but you do not say how many people ate it because of you, and how many saw you, which scandalized them, and, perhaps, led them to do the same; (you do not say) whether you solicited your children or your servants. You accuse yourself of having eaten meat; but you do not say whether it is out of impiety, by mocking the commandments of the Church; you say that you made pardon without thinking about it; but you don't say that it was your greed that was the cause. You accuse yourself of having failed in your prayers: your Benedictite, your graces, your Angelus, the sign of the cross passing in front of a cross or a church; but you do not say that it is out of human respect, which greatly increases your sin. You accuse yourself of having had distractions in your prayers; but you do not say that it is during holy mass and during your penances, which is often a mortal sin, and (which is not) not in the other prayers of the day. You say that you sang bad songs; but you do not say how many bad reasons they had, and how many people there were who heard them; (you don't say) if you app- taken from others, if you have asked other people to teach you. You accuse yourself Lien of having spoken ill of your neighbor; but you do not say whether it is from your pore, from your more or from people consecrated to God, which makes your sin more considerable; you do not even say that you have spoken badly of your neighbor out of hatred, out of revenge or out of jealousy, and that you have sought out the people who wished him harm, in order to speak more at your ease. My God, how many things we do not (think) about! my God, how many sacrilegious confessions! But here, my brethren, is a ruse which the devil uses to deceive and ruin a large number of people. A person will have hidden a sin, there is two, or three or ten years, if you want: being too tormented, she accuses herself of it as if she had committed it since her last confession, and afterward, for that, she believes herself to be at peace, (although she has not said) how many confessions and communions (she has made), nor accused again of all the sins she has committed and confessed since that time. My God, what blindness, far from erasing her sin, she only adds. a new sacrilege to the elders. Ah! who could tell you, my brethren, the number of souls that the demon drags to hell in this way? Others, who will have committed some big sins, not daring to accuse them, will ask to make a general confession; in order to include this sin with the others, as having committed it for a long time, your confession is worthless. absolution, if you want your confession to be good. Here is another trap that the devil sets for us.

he sees that the sins that we have hidden torment us too much, he tries to calm us by telling us that we will confess them the first time we return, always in the hope that, (by then,) we will be dead or that the good God [le bon Dieu] will have abandoned us. Yes, my brethren, sacrilege is a crime which distances us so much from God, which so quickly extinguishes faith in us, that, often, despite all the means we have to escape from this state, we do not do it, and this, by a just punishment from God, which our sacrileges have brought upon us; Here is a frightening example. Father Lejeune relates a statement, which he tells us he got from (the

mouth of) the one who witnessed it. He told us that there was near the city of Brussels a poor woman who, in the eyes of the world, fulfilled her religious duties perfectly well. People considered her a saint; but the poor unfortunate woman was still hiding a shameful sin that she had committed in her youth. Having fallen ill with the illness from which she died, having fainted for a moment, and having regained consciousness, she calls her sister who served her, saying to her: “Sister, I am damned. » This poor girl approached her bed and said to her: “My sister, you are dreaming: wake up and commend yourself to the good God [le bon Dieu]. » — “I am not dreaming,” she said to him, “I know very well what I am saying; I have just seen the place prepared for me in hell. » His sister quickly runs to get the priest. (He) not being there, his brother, who was his vicar, quickly came in his place to see this poor sick woman; and it was from him, Father Lejeune tells us, that I learned it, on the spot, doing a mission. Accompanying us, he showed us the house where this poor woman was; he made us all cry as he told us (what line). He tells us that having entered the house, he approached this sick woman: “Well, my good one, what did you see that seemed so frightening to you? » — “Sir,” she replied, “I am damned; I have just seen the place prepared for me in hell, because I once committed such a sin. » (She admitted it in front of everyone in the room). “Hey! my good, tell me in confession, and I will absolve you of it. » — “Sir,” she said to him, “I am damned. » — “But,” said the priest, “you are still alive and on the path to salvation; if you wish, I will give you a note signed with my blood (by) which I will oblige myself, soul for soul, to be damned for you in the event that you are, if you wish to ask God for forgiveness and confess. » — “I know very well,” she said to him, “that if I want to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for forgiveness with all my heart, he will forgive me; (I know) that I can repair all my sacrileges; but I do not want to ask his forgiveness, because I have been abusing his graces for too long and crucifying him with my sacrileges. » The priest remained three days and three nights crying with this sick woman, without even being able to make her perform an act of contrition or (bring) her to confession; on the contrary, a moment before dying, she denied the good God [le bon Dieu], she renounced her baptism and gave herself to the devil. O my God, what a misfortune! Do you understand, my brethren, what it is to profane the sacraments? Don't you see that, despite all the means we have to repair the harm we have done, we do (nothing)? Alas! once the good God [le bon Dieu] abandons us as punishment for our horrors, what becomes of us? Alas! that there are some who are of this number, without being so visible to the eyes of the world; but who, in the eyes of God, are no less (guilty). How many (are there) who are in this state, not because they hide their sins, but because they have no contrition, because they do not in any way correct their bad habits; who always live the same, in whom we see no change. My God, how many damned Christians, who, in the eyes of the world, seem to be good Christians! You see therefore, my brethren, that if we understood well what it is to receive the sacraments, we would bring many other dispositions to it than we do. It is true that the greatest number, while hiding their sins, always retain the thought of accusing them; but, without a miracle, they will no less be lost. If you want the reason, it is very easy to give it to you; since, the more we remain in this terrible state which makes heaven and earth shudder, the more the demon gains power over us, the more the grace of God diminishes, the more our fear increases, the more our sacrileges multiply and the more we retreat; and by this, we make it almost impossible for us to return (in grace with God). I will give you a hundred examples for one. Tell me, my brethren, can you even hope that after having spent perhaps five to six years in sacrilege, during which you have outraged the good God [le bon Dieu] more than all the Jews put together, you would dare to believe that the good God [le bon Dieu] will give you all the graces you need to get out of this terrible state; you perhaps believe that in consideration of so many atrocities of which you have been guilty against Jesus Christ, you will only have to say: “I am going to leave sin; » and everything will be finished? Alas! my friend, who guarantees you that Jesus Christ will not have made the threat to you that he read (to the Jews) and pronounced the same sentence that he pronounced against them: “You do not want to deny the graces that I wanted to give you; but I will leave you, and you will seek me, and you will not find me, and you will die in your sin. » Alas! My brethren, our poor family, once in the hands of the devil, does not come out as easily as we believe. This, my brethren, is what the devil does to deceive us: when we commit sin, he represents it to us as very little. (It makes us think) that there are

many others who do more than us; or else, that we will confess it, that we will have said four as soon as two. But when sin is committed, it does the opposite: it represents it to us like a mountain, it gives us so much horror that we no longer have the strength to confess it. If we are too tormented by having hidden a sin, to reassure us, he tells us that we will declare it at the first confession; then he tells us that we will not have the courage, that we must wait another time to say it. Take care, my brethren, it is only the first step that costs; once in the prison of sin, it is extremely difficult to escape. But, of all sins, the one that makes us commit the most sacrileges is that which is against the holy virtue of purity (1); this accursed sin carries such infamy with it that it leads us into all kinds of misfortunes; and we will see, on the day of judgment, that the greatest number of bad confessions have been (1) And the good of others,,, (Note of the Venerable.)

Made evil by this sin. It is recorded in history that there was a young man who devoted himself to God from his youth. He had even retired to a wood to live alone. Through his great virtues he became a subject of admiration for everyone around him; He was spoken of as a saint. But the demon, who could not tolerate so many virtues in such a young man, used all his artifices to destroy him. He continually pursued him with bad thoughts. This young man immediately resorted to prayer, asking God for strength not to succumb. The demon never left him day or night, always in the hope that he would win him over. Alas! this poor young man, tired of fighting, surrendered little by little; and finally, in his heart, he gave consent to a desire for impurity. Alas! Scarcely had he consented to this desire than he felt very troubled in his soul. So much is true, alas! that as soon as sin enters our heart, the peace of the soul leaves. Seeing himself defeated, he abandoned himself to [s'abandonner à] such profound sadness that nothing could console him; he cried continually: “Ah! Pelagius,” he said, speaking to himself, “how soon you allowed yourself to be deceived! you who, so recently, were a beloved child of God, and now, here you are a child slave of the devil: you will have to confess it, do penance for your sin. But, if I confess it, what will people think of me? I'm going to lose the respect people have for me in the world. » In the midst of so many kinds of thoughts, having gone towards the door of his hermitage, he saw a person passing by dressed as a pilgrim, who said to him: “Pelagius, why are you giving yourself over to such profound sadness; he who serves such a good God [bon Dieu] must not be so sad; if you have offended him, do penance and confess, and without doubt, the good God [le bon Dieu] being so good, you will not be forgiven. » — “And where did you know me?” Pelage asked him. » — “I know you very well,” replied the pilgrim, “for Pelage who is considered a saint throughout the country. If you want to escape from this sadness, confess, and you will regain the ancient peace of your soul and your first tranquility. » Poor Pelage remained astonished at what the pilgrim said to him, and, looking in all directions, he no longer saw his pilgrim, because he had disappeared: which made him understand clearly that it was a warning from Heaven. Then he resolved to do a true penance which would be capable of appeasing the justice of God; and to better carry out his plan, he (resolved) to go to a neighboring monastery where great penances were performed. He went to find the superior, telling him that he had a great desire to take the holy habit. The abbot and all the monks had great joy, especially since he was considered a great saint. Indeed, when he was in the monastery, he was always first in all exercises of piety; he performed rigorous penances, he always wore a hair shirt and fasted very exactly. After some time he fell ill, he had no doubt that he was going to die. The good God [le bon Dieu] in his mercy, in recognition of so many virtues that he had practiced in his monastery, gave him strong thoughts to confess his hidden sin; but he never had the strength to confess it; still restrained by fear and shame, he confessed all his other sins with great regret. A moment after receiving Holy Viaticum, he died. The monks carried out the burial, not like that of an ordinary dead person, but of a saint whose protection they were already beginning to implore from the good God [le bon Dieu]. All ha-

Ebitants from neighboring countries came in crowds to recommend themselves to his prayers. Alas! that the good God [le bon Dieu] judges differently from men. The following night, the sexton got up to ring the office, and passing through the church, cast his eyes on the place where Pelage was buried; he noticed that the body was on the ground, and thinking that it had not been well covered, he buried it without saying

anything. But, the next day, I found him again outside his grave; he noticed that the earth had thrown him out. He went to the abbot and told him what he had seen. The abbot called together all his monks and ordered them to go to church. Being near the tomb of Pelagius, they prayed to Our Lord Jesus Christ to be willing to manifest his will if it was necessary to bury (the deceased) in a more honorable place; They even addressed the deceased, saying to him in a loud voice: “You, Pelagius, who were so obedient during your life, tell us if it is the will of God that your body be placed in a place more worthy of you? » Then the deceased uttered a terrible cry, saying to them: “Ah! unhappy as I am, for having hidden a sin in confession, I am condemned to the fire of hell, for as long as God will be God; If you want to make sure, come closer and look at my body. » The abbot approached and saw his body all ablaze, like pieces of iron in a furnace. Then the deceased told him that God's will was for him to be thrown into the rubble like an animal. Alas! what a misfortune, my brethren! how easy it would have been for him to save himself since he was a saint in terms of all the other virtues! O my God, what a misfortune! for not having had the strength to confess a single bad desire, which he had barely allowed to arise in his heart, he immediately repented of it. Alas! than regrets and so many tears throughout eternity! Alas My brethren, that this sin causes bad confessions to be made, or rather that this sin leads souls to hell! Alas! How many of those who now listen to me are among them and who need all their strength not to let it appear outside! Ah! my friend, let go of your remorse, let your tears flow, come and throw yourself at the feet of the Lord, and you will find the peace and friendship of your God that you have lost. But, you think, I don't believe that there are any who are capable of hiding their sins, because they would be far too tormented. —Ah! My brethren, if it were necessary to take an oath, (to affirm) that there are or that there are none, I would not hesitate to say that there are at least five or six who are burned by their remorse and by their sins, and who hear me, and who think that this is true; but have patience, you will see them on the day of judgment, and you will remember what I tell you today. O my God! can shame or fear keep a Christian in such a terrible state? Ah! my friend, what are you preparing for yourself? You don't dare open up to your pastor? but is he alone in the world? Would you not find priests who would have the charity to receive you? Do you think you will be given too long a penance? Ah! my friend, that doesn't stop you! You will help you, we will do most of it; we will pray for you, we will mourn your sins, to draw more abundantly the mercies of God on you! My friend, have pity on this poor soul who cost Jesus Christ so dearly! O my God! who can ever understand the blindness of these poor sinners! You have hidden your sin, my friend, but it will have to be known one day, and even in the eyes of the whole universe; while, with a word, you would have hidden it forever and you would change your hell into an eternity of happiness! Alas! how sacrilege drives these poor sinners far away! they don't want to die in this state, but they don't have the strength to get out of it. My God, torment them so much that they cannot stay there... We said in the third place, that the lack of contrition makes our confessions bad. Although you have just seen, from what we have said, that many people make bad confessions, I will nevertheless tell you that, all things considered, the lack of contrition will be the cause of the greatest number of sacrilegious confessions. I don't want to dwell on this, because perhaps I will talk to you about it on Sunday; I will only tell you, in passing, that we must never confess without asking (contrition) from the good God [le bon Dieu] with all our heart, through fervent prayers. It is true, my brethren, we do very well to torment ourselves (to obtain) the happiness of fully accusing our sins; but we must much more torment ourselves to (know) if we will have contrition for our sins. When we have the misfortune of hiding a sin, it is a tiger that devours us; but lack of contrition does nothing to us. But, you will tell me, what must we do to have it? You must first ask the good God [le bon Dieu] some time before confessing, and, if you want to know if you have it, which is quite easy, see if you have changed your life. So that our confession does not leave us with worries, it is necessary that, after having confessed our sins, we possess the virtues that are contrary to them. Humility, contempt for ourselves, must take the place of pride and this good opinion that we have of ourselves; this spirit of charity, goodness and mercy must take the place of this spirit of hatred, vengeance, jealousy and envy; this spirit of detachment from the goods of this world must succeed this spirit of avarice, greed, and the desire to deceive one's neighbor; this spirit of mortification and tears must take the place of gluttony and (love) of the pleasures of

the world; this beautiful virtue of purity must take the place on the throne where the infamous vice was placed. Ah! what do I say, my brethren? it is necessary that this fervor, this love for prayer and this vigilance in rejecting the temptations of the devil, replace this lukewarmness, this negligence and this indifference for everything that relates to God and the salvation of our soul, and that this gentleness, this patience be placed in the same place where these angers, these outbursts and all these curses were placed; in a word, we were sinners, now that we are confessed, we must cease to be. Alas! My brethren, if we do not see these changes in ourselves, after so many confessions and communions, let us tremble, or rather, retrace our steps, lest we feel the necessity of them, but too late. Fourthly, my brethren, we say that our confessions are worthless when we do not tell the number of our mortal sins, at least as well as we can. There are some who are content to say: “I accuse myself of having sworn, of having said bad songs, and nothing more. » Your confessions will never be good if you do not determine the number of your mortal sins. It is true that we do not

I can't always say exactly, but (you have to) get as close as you can. Fifthly, we said that a confession is bad when, upon receiving absolution, we do not intend to do the penance that the priest gives us. We must not be content with accusing ourselves of having missed our penance; but, clearly say that in (you) confessing, you did not intend to do so; then, if you missed it through negligence. If you missed it willfully and confessed mortal sins, you are committing a mortal sin. We must always do our penance on our knees, unless the priest tells us that we can do it sitting. There are some who do it while walking, while working, this is not doing your penance. You must never change it yourself, nor even have another priest change it, unless you cannot go and find the one who (imposed it on you); and this change should only be made when it (is) impossible for you to accomplish it. There are some who do not know how to read well enough; if we give them a few prayers about books, out of pride, they don't want to say that they don't know how to read well enough, and then they say it all wrong. You must simply say that you do not know how to read well enough, so that they will change it for you, and, if this has happened to you, you must say it in confession, (so) that they will give you another one. 6° We have said that the lack of restitution makes our confessions sacrilegious. I am not talking about those who have stolen or deceived their neighbor and who do not confess: these are truly lost; but I say that those to whom the confessor has ordered some restitution, if at the moment they received absolution, they have not (had) the intention of giving back, their confession is worthless; and if you have failed to reciprocate, as you promised, you must say it in confession. Agree with me how necessary it is to do, from time to time, small reviews of one's past life, (in order to) repair the bad confessions that we could have made, even without knowing him.

But, alasI My brethren, what an unhappy life leads those who hide their sins by confessing, and who remain with such executioners in their hearts! You always have the thought that you will accuse them in a confession or before you die. My friend, you are blind, you will not do it; the devil will prevent you from doing so as well in your other confessions or at the hour of your death as he has prevented you from doing so until now. If you doubt this, listen to me and you will see that it is true; that he who lives in sacrilege is almost sure to die there. It is reported by Father Jean Romain, of the Society of Jesus, that the famous John of Avila, preaching in a town in Spain, was called to hear the confession of a young lady who, through the care of her mother, had been raised in all kinds of virtues. (This mother) did not fail to receive communion every Saturday in honor of the Blessed Virgin. The mother having died, the daughter continued in the same devotion adding, moreover, several alms, fasts and other good works. As she often heard Father John of Avila preach, she was truly touched, she felt strongly inclined to virtue. Having fallen ill, she asked him to come and see her, because she wanted to confess to him. Although her illness was not very dangerous, she wanted

Provide early for the salvation of (one's) soul. She begged him to have the charity to hear her, (because) she had long wanted to confess and fully discover to him the state of her soul. The Father happily granted her what she asked for. She began to confess with signs of such deep pain and with such an abundance of tears

that the Father was in admiration to find such a beautiful soul, at least in appearance. His confession being finished, the Father leaves, consoled; having given her absolution, he left her in great security for her salvation, (always) at least in appearance. However, a very extraordinary thing happened. The Brother, whom this Father had taken to accompany him, being in another room, saw coming from time to time, from the side of the wall, a black hand covered with hair, which squeezed the sick woman's throat in such a way that it seemed as if she wanted to suffocate her. The Brother, seeing this, was very surprised. Having returned to the convent, he went to find the superior who told him what he had seen. The superior asked him if he was sure of that. He said to him: “I am as sure of this as I am sure of being in front of you. For a few (moments) I doubted it, but, having redoubled my attention, I saw everything I am telling you. » Then the superior called Father Jean, and, although it was night, he ordered him to return to the sick woman, telling her to do everything he could to encourage her to reconcile if she felt anything that caused her pain. The Father leaves with the same companion. When they were at the door, they heard cries and groans; but barely had they knocked when a valet came to tell them that his mistress was dead, that almost immediately after her confession, (she had lost) her speech and the use of her senses, so that she had not been able to receive communion. After seeing the deceased, they returned to the convent where they reported to the superior what had happened, which greatly distressed him. The Father who had confessed (the sick woman) was seized with such great pain that he began to cry bitterly, and went before the Holy Sacrament, where, being prostrated, he began to pray to the Lord for the rest of the unfortunate girl, begging Him to wish to remove her from eternal damnation. After praying for a few moments, he heard a loud noise like big chains being dragged along the ground. Having turned in the direction of this noise, he saw in front of him a person surrounded, from head to foot, with chains and dark flames. The Father, without being frightened, asked her who she was. She answered him: “I am the soul of this unfortunate girl whom you came to confess this morning, I am the one for whom you pray; but in vain. I have deceived the world with my hypocrisies and my false virtues. (H) you need to know these hypocrisies. After my mother's death, a young man fell in love with me; I first made some resistance; but he overcame my weakness. If my fault was great, the repugnance that the demon gave birth to in me (to) confess it (went) even further; I felt strong remorse of conscience [remords de conscience], the fear of the torments in which I now find myself felt like torture. Inconsolable and only seeking to escape from this pain, I had resolved several times to confess to it; but shame and the apprehension that my confessor would lose the good opinion he had of me, had always prevented me from doing so. In this fear, I always wanted to (continue) my confessions and my communions. When I heard your canaries, it was so many darts that pierced my

My heart, and I finally resolved to confess to you: that is why I called you. Ah! I should have started with my sacrileges, and not with the little mistakes! because, afterwards, I never had the strength to accuse you of my hidden sin. Here I am, damned forever! Don't waste your time praying for me. » — “But what is the greatest of your sorrows?” the Father asked him. “It is to see,” she replied, “that I could have saved myself by confessing my sin, as easily as I have just told you, without me reaping any benefit from it. » After this she disappeared, uttering terrible screams and making a terrible noise with her chains. Ah! My brethren, what state is that of a soul which is going to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ with sacrileges! Let us search in the most hidden recesses of our consciences, and, if we feel some remorse, try to make them disappear by a good confession, which is the only remedy, since neither penances nor alms will be able to remedy it. Alas! My brethren, a poor Christian in this sin has no merit in all his good works; all is lost to heaven. My God, can we live well with sacrileges on our conscience, especially when we know them? Are we not already in hell because of the remorse we continually experience? Can we find some pleasures in life? Saint Anthony tells us what the good God [le bon Dieu] revealed to a holy prelate, while he heard the confession of a person who, out of shame, hid a sin of impurity. The saint, seeing a demon next to her, asked him what he was doing there. The demon replied that he was observing a precept of Jesus Christ. “And what did the saint say to him, for how long have you been observing (the precepts) of Jesus Christ? » — “Yes,”

said the demon to him, “

I who had taken away the shame from this person, so that he might sin more boldly, now I restore it to him; so that being overcome by shame, she will not confess (her sin). » Omon Dieul that a proud person is to be pitied and in danger of damning himself; since, in fact, if we hide our sins, if we do not tell them as they are, it is nothing other than (the effect of) pride. Omon Dieul consent to be damned or, rather, exchange a humiliation of five minutes with one of eternity.... Alas! these poor damned will accuse their hidden sins and their sacrileges throughout eternity without being able to obtain forgiveness; whereas, in this world, a simple accusation to a priest full of charity, who helps us to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for our forgiveness, who desires our salvation as much as we ourselves, (would have saved us). Ah! no, no, my brethren, this cannot be understood! to carry your blindness to such a point!... You have fallen, my friend, you have undoubtedly done much harm; but, get up quickly, since you still can; maybe you won't be able to one (another) day, and here is the proof. It is recorded in history that a missionary went to see a sick woman during the night. Seeing that her illness was going to lead to her death, and having approached her bed, he said to her: “Madame, you are ready to give an account to God for your conduct, I am very afraid that you have hidden some sins in your confessions, r t, if you do not accuse yourself of them, you will be damned; (think). » — “Is it possible,” cried the sick woman, “I must die?” I admit, she said to the missionary, that it has been a long time since I confessed very badly, hiding my sins out of shame. » But, saying this, she lost her speech without being able to say a single word,

Was in this miserable state, and, no doubt, was damned. Alas! in what state of horror these people will appear on the day of judgment, being all covered with sacrileges! Oh! mountains, (they will say,) collapse on us, hide us from God as we have hidden our sacrileges from the eyes of the world! But no, everything will be seen and everything will appear before the face of (the universe). Ah! what regrets to have lived three or four years, perhaps, in this state, and to have been devoured by remorse of conscience [remords de conscience] without having wanted to remedy it! But tell me, what must a person who feels guilty of this sin think when he receives absolution? What must she think when the priest says to her: “Go in peace, and try to persevere well? » Ah! (if she) heard Jesus Christ who, from heaven, cries to his minister: “Stop, stop, unhappy man, this precious blood that you are causing to flow on this soul cries out for vengeance, it will write its sentence of reprobation; stop, minister, I condemn and curse this soul! » Ah! unhappy, you have just sold your God! Go, go, perfidious, traitor Judas, go to the holy table to finish (the work of) your fury! go kill him! Ah! if you heard Jesus Christ shouting to you from the depths of his tabernacle: “Stop, stop, my son! Ah! please spare (your Father)! Why do you want to kill me? Stop, stop, my son, spare your God, why do you want to give him the blow of death? » Ah! If a Christian could understand the greatness of his crime, could he carry his fury to such excess against a God so good, a God who loves us more than himself, who only wants and desires our happiness? O my God! Could a Christian who had once committed a crime such as sacrilege still live? Would it not seem to him to constantly hear internally, within himself, (a voice), like this young man who had killed his father: “O my son, why have you slain my throat, why have you taken my life? » Could a Christian who had this misfortune (once again) carry his prayers on this cross, towards this tabernacle; Oh! what am I saying? towards this holy table where he put to death Jesus Christ, his God and his Savior, in such a terrible and frightful way? Yes, my brethren, this sin is dreadful, although so common; it would be enough to die to think about it!... What should we conclude from all that we have just said? here it is. It is (that we must) take all possible means to make our confessions well; it is to never receive absolution when we have some bad habit, if we are (not with the intention of) correcting ourselves; to never make our confessions in haste; to never (seek) terms that can soften the accusation of our sins or diminish them in our eyes or those of our confessor, and never confess without asking God for contrition for our sins. Finally, when twenty or thirty years have passed since we have hidden sins, we must not listen to anything, quickly confess them; cl if we are sinecros, we are sure that the good God [le bon Dieu] will forgive us; whereas, if we wait until death, either we will not be able to, or perhaps even, by a terrible punishment of (God's) justice, we will not

(want) it as we have just seen. When we think of hiding some sin, let us quickly think what reproaches our confessor himself will make of us on the day of judgment, when he sees that we have deceived him. Yes, let us do whatever we do, as we would like to have done it at the hour of death, and all will be well done. That is what I wish you. [c'est ce que je vous souhaite]

Tome III — 12th through 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost — On the First Commandment of God

Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your strength. (Deut. 6:5)

Why, my brethren, does the Lord give us a commandment to love Him with all our heart—that is to say, without reserve, in the very manner in which He Himself has loved us; with all our soul and with all our strength—promising us an eternal reward if we are faithful to it, and an eternal punishment if we fail in it? For two reasons: first, to show us the greatness of His love; second, that we cannot be happy except in loving Him, and finally that this love is found only in the keeping of His commandments. Yes, my brethren, if so many evils crush us in this world, it is because we violate the commandments of God; for He Himself tells us: "If you keep My commandments faithfully, I will bless you in every way; but if you transgress them, you will be cursed in all that you do." So that, my brethren, if we wish to be happy in this world—at least as far as it is possible to be so—we have no other means than to observe faithfully the commandments of God; and we shall see that so long as we turn aside from the path which the commandments of God have traced out for us, we shall always be unhappy, for soul and for body, in this world and in the next. I am going, then, to show you, my brethren, that our happiness is bound up with our fidelity in observing the commandments which the good God has given us.

If we open the holy books, my brethren, we shall see there that all those who made it their duty to observe well what the commandments of God prescribed for them have always been happy, because it is very certain that the good God will never abandon the one who makes it his duty to do all that He commands him. Our first father, Adam, gives us a fair example of this. So long as he was faithful in observing the Lord's orders, he was happy in every way: his body, his soul, his mind, and all his senses had no other inclination than toward God; the very angels came down from heaven with joy to keep him company. So would the happiness of our first parents have continued, had they been faithful to their duties; but that moment, a thousand times blessed, did not last long. The devil, jealous of such happiness, soon ruined them and stripped them of all those goods which were to last for all eternity. As soon as they had the misfortune to transgress the Lord's commandments, everything went wrong for them [tout alla de travers]: sorrows, sicknesses, the fear of death, of judgment, and of another unhappy life took the place of their first happiness; their life was thenceforth only a life of tears and of pains. The Lord said to Moses: "Tell My people that if they are faithful in observing My commandments, I will overwhelm them with every kind of blessing; but if they dare to transgress them, I will overwhelm them with every kind of evil." The Lord said to Abraham: "Because you are faithful in keeping My commandments, I will bless you in everything; I will multiply your children like the grains of sand that are on the seashore. I will bless all who bless you; I will curse all who curse you; from your race shall be born the Savior of the world." He had it said to His people when they were about to enter the Promised Land: "The peoples who dwell in this land have committed great sins; that is why I wish to drive them out in order to put you in their place. But take great care not to violate My commandments. If you are faithful in observing them, I will bless you in everything and everywhere. When you are in your fields, in your towns, and in your houses; I will bless your children, who will love you, respect you, obey you, and give you every kind of consolation. I will bless your fruits and your cattle. I will command the heavens to give you rain in due season, as much as shall be needed to water your lands and your meadows: everything will prosper for you." In another place He tells them: "If you keep My commandments faithfully, I will watch without ceasing over your preservation; you will be without fear in your houses; I will prevent wild beasts from harming you; you will sleep in peace: nothing will be able to disturb you. I will always be in the midst of you. I will walk with you. I will be your God and you will be My people." Further on He says to

Moses: “Tell My people that if they observe My laws well, I will deliver them from all these evils that crush them.” And the Holy Spirit Himself tells us “that he who has the happiness of keeping well the Lord’s commandments is happier than if he possessed all the riches of the earth.” Tell me, would you ever have thought that the good God had so much at heart that we should keep His commandments, and that He would promise us so many goods if we are happy enough to observe them well? You will agree with me that we ought to place all our happiness in keeping His commandments faithfully.

To convince you still better, my brethren, that as soon as we transgress the commandments of God we can only be unhappy, see what happened with regard to David. So long as he was faithful in walking in the path which the commandments of God had traced for him, everything went well for him: he was loved, respected, and heeded by his neighbors. But from the moment he chose to leave off observing the commandments of God, at once his happiness ended, and every kind of evil fell upon him. Troubles and the remorses of his conscience took the place of that peace and that calm which he had enjoyed; tears and sorrow were his daily bread [son pain de tous les jours]. One day, when he was groaning so much over his sins, word was brought to him that his son Amnon had been stabbed in his drunkenness by his own brother Absalom. Absalom even sought to destroy his father, to take his life in order to reign in his place; David was forced to go and hide in the forests to escape death. The plague carried off an almost infinite number of his subjects. If you go further, see Solomon: so long as he was faithful in keeping the commandments of God, he was the wonder of the world; his reputation reached to the ends of the earth, since the queen of Sheba came from so far to be a witness of the marvels which the Lord worked in him; but we see that as soon as he had the misfortune to cease following the commandments of God, everything went ill for him. After so many proofs drawn from Holy Scripture, you will agree with me, my brethren, that all our evils come only from our not observing faithfully the commandments of God, and that if we wish to hope for some happiness and some consolation in this world—at least as far as it is possible to have any, since this world is only a tissue of evils and of pains—the only means of procuring these goods for ourselves is to do all that we can to please God by doing what He orders us through His commandments.

But if we pass from the Old Testament to the New, the promises are not less great. On the contrary, we see that Jesus Christ makes them all for heaven, because nothing that is created is capable of satisfying the heart of a Christian, which is made only for God, who alone can satisfy it. Jesus Christ strongly urges us to despise the things of this world in order to attach ourselves only to the things of heaven, which never end. We read in the Gospel that Jesus Christ, finding Himself one day with persons who seemed to think only of the needs of the body, said to them: “Do not be so anxious about what you shall eat or what you shall put on.” And to make them understand well that all that concerns the body is of very little account: “Consider,” He said to them, “the lilies of the field; they neither spin nor take care of themselves; see how your heavenly Father takes care to clothe them; for I assure you that Solomon in all his wealth and his power was never so well clothed as one of them. Look also at the birds of the air, which neither sow nor reap nor store anything in their barn; see how your heavenly Father takes care to feed them. Men of little faith, are you not more than they?… Seek first the kingdom of heaven—that is to say, observe My commandments faithfully—and all the rest will be given to you in abundance.” What do we mean by that, my brethren? That for a Christian who seeks only to please God and to save his soul, what is necessary for the needs of the body will never fail him. — But, you will perhaps say to me, when we have nothing, no one brings us anything. — First, I will tell you that all that we have, we hold from the goodness of God, and nothing from ourselves. But tell me, my brethren, how do you expect the good God to work miracles for us? Would it be because there are some who dare to carry their unbelief and their impiety so far as to wish to believe that the good God does not exist—that is to say, that there is no God? because others, less impious without being less guilty, say that the good God pays no attention to what happens on earth, that the good God does not concern Himself with so little a thing; and finally, because others will not admit that this great Providence is bound up with the observance of the commandments of God, and that they count for everything on their work and their cares?

(which it would be very easy for me to prove to you by your Sunday labors, which truly show that you count nothing on God, but everything on yourselves and on your work.) There are some, however, who believe in this great Providence, but who put an impenetrable barrier before it by their sins. Do you wish, my brethren, to experience the greatness of God's goodness toward His creatures? Make it your duty to observe well all that the commandments order you, and you will be astonished to see how much care the good God takes of those who seek only to please Him.

If you wish to see the proofs of it, my brethren, open the holy books and you will be perfectly convinced. We read in Holy Scripture that the prophet Elijah, fleeing the persecution of Queen Jezebel, went to hide in a wood. Being there, deprived of all human help, will the Lord let him die of misery? No, certainly, my brethren; the Lord, from the height of heaven, does not fail to keep His eyes upon His faithful servant. At once He sends him an angel from heaven to console him and to bring him all that he needed for food. See the care the Lord takes to feed the widow of Sarepta. He says to His prophet: "Go find that good widow, who serves Me and observes My commandments with fidelity; you will multiply her flour, lest she suffer." See how He commands another prophet, Habakkuk, to go and bring food to the three children who were in the furnace of Babylon. If you pass from the old law to the new, the marvels which the good God works for those who take care to observe His commandments well are not less great. See how the good God feeds thousands of persons with five loaves and two fishes; that is not hard to understand, since they sought first the kingdom of heaven and the salvation of their soul in following Jesus Christ. See how He takes care to feed a Saint Paul the hermit for forty years by the ministry of a raven—a very clear proof that the good God never loses sight of those who love Him, in order to furnish them with all that is necessary for them. When Saint Anthony went to see Saint Paul, the good God sent him a double portion. O my God, how You love those who love You! how You fear that they should suffer! Tell me, my brethren, who commanded that dog to go each day and carry the little provision to Saint Roch in a wood? Who commanded that doe to go every day and give her milk to the child of Genevieve of Brabant in her desert? Is it not the good God, my brethren? And why, my brethren, does the good God take such care to feed all these saints, if not because they were faithful in observing all the commandments He gave them?

Yes, my brethren, we may say that the saints placed all their happiness in observing the commandments of God, and that they would rather have suffered every kind of torment than violate them; we may also say that all the martyrs were martyrs only because they would not violate the commandments of God. Indeed, my brethren, ask Saint Regina, that young virgin, why she endured so many torments—which were all the more painful to her because it was her father who was her executioner. He had her hung by her hair to a tree, where he had her beaten with rods until her poor little innocent body was nothing but a wound. After these cruelties, which made even the pagans who witnessed them shudder, he had her led to prison, in the hope that she would do what he commanded her. Seeing her unshaken, he had her brought back to the tree, and ordering that she be fastened as the first time by the hair, he had her flayed alive. When the skin was separated from her body, he had her thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, where he watched her burn without pity. If you ask me, my brethren, why she bore so many cruelties—ah! my brethren, here it is. It is because she would not transgress the sixth commandment of God, which forbids all impurity. Why would the chaste Susanna not consent to the desires of those two infamous old men, and why did she prefer death instead? Is it not for the same reason? What was the cause that the chaste Joseph was defamed, calumniated before Potiphar his master, and led to prison? Is it not still for the same reason? Why did Saint Lawrence let himself be laid upon a brazier of burning coals? Is it not because he would not transgress the first commandment of God, which orders us to adore God alone and to love Him more than ourselves?

Yes, my brethren, if we run a little through the books in which the deeds of the saints are gathered, we see there admirable and astonishing examples of their fidelity in observing the commandments of God, and we see that they preferred to suffer all that executioners could invent rather than fail in them. We read in the

history of the martyrs of Japan that the emperor had twenty-four Christians arrested in the same place, to whom they made suffer all that the rage of the pagans could inspire. The martyrs said to one another: “Let us take great care not to violate the commandments of God in order to obey those of the emperor; let us take courage; heaven is well worth a few sufferings that last only a few moments. Let us hope firmly, and the good God, for whom we wish to suffer, will not abandon us.” When they had been led to the place where they were to be questioned, the one who had brought them, calling the roll and thinking that one was missing, cried aloud: “Matthew? Where is Matthew?” A soldier who had long desired to make himself known as a Christian cries out: “Here I am; what does the person matter, besides?” he said; “I am also called Matthew and I am a Christian like him.” The judge, all in a fury, asked him whether he said it in earnest. “Yes,” answered the soldier, “I have long professed the Christian religion; I hope never to leave it; I desire only the moment to manifest it outwardly.” At once the judge had him put among the number of the martyrs. He had so much joy from it that he died of joy before dying in the torments.

Among that number there was a child of ten years. The judge, seeing him so young, did not wish for some time to put him on the list of those who were to die for Jesus Christ. This child was inconsolable at seeing himself deprived of that happiness; he protested so strongly that he would never change and that he would die in that religion; he did so much that he forced, so to speak, the judge to put him among the number of the martyrs. He had so great a joy from it that he seemed no longer able to contain himself [ne pouvoir plus se posséder]; he always wanted to be first, always to answer for all; he would have wished to have the heart of all men in order to sacrifice them all to Jesus Christ. A pagan lord, having learned that this child was destined to die with the other Christians, was touched with compassion. He himself went to find the emperor, to beg him to have pity on this child, saying that he did not know what he was doing. The child, who heard him, turned against him, saying: “My lord, keep your compassion for yourself; think only of having yourself baptized and of doing penance, without which you will go to burn with the demons.” This lord, seeing him so firmly resolved upon death, left him. The child, being present when their sentence was read to them—which ordered that their noses and ears should be cut off, and that they should be led about on carts through the whole city, to give greater horror of the Christian religion, and so that the pagans might overwhelm them with insults—this poor little one had so great a joy that it seemed as if he had just been told of the possession of an entire kingdom. The pagans themselves were astonished that a child so young should have so much courage and feel so much joy at dying for his God. The executioners having come to carry out the emperor’s orders, all these holy martyrs went and presented themselves to their executioner to be cut, with as much tranquillity and joy as if they were being led into a banquet hall. They let their noses and ears be cut off with the same tranquillity as if a piece of their garment were being cut. Their poor body was all covered with blood, which horrified even the pagans who witnessed it. One heard these cry out from time to time: “O what cruelty! O what injustice, to make persons suffer so who have done no harm! Do you see,” they said to one another, “see what courage that religion which they profess gives them.”

Whenever they were questioned, they answered nothing except that they were Christians and that they knew how to suffer and to die, but that never would they violate the commandments of their God, because they placed all their happiness in being faithful to them. Alas! these poor martyrs, after they had been led about the city on those carts, their body was all covered with blood; the stones were all bloodstained and the earth was all red with the blood that flowed in abundance from their wounds. As their sentence ordered that they should each die upon a cross, the one who had led them the first time recognized these Christians. What touched him greatly was that child of ten years. He approached him, saying: “My child, you are very young; it is a great pity to die at so early an age; if you wish, I will undertake to obtain your pardon from the emperor, and what is more, a great reward.” This child, hearing him speak in that way, began to laugh, telling him that he thanked him well, but to keep all his rewards for himself, since he had no hope for the other life; but that as for himself, he despised all that as being too little a thing; that all his fear was of not having the happiness of dying, like the other martyrs, for Jesus Christ. His mother, who was a witness of all this,

although a Christian, was inconsolable at seeing her child die upon a cross. This poor little one, seeing his mother so distressed, called her to him, telling her that it was little edifying for a Christian mother to weep so much over the death of a child-martyr, as if she did not know the whole price of such a sacrifice; that she ought, on the contrary, to encourage him and thank the good God for such a grace.

This child of blessing, a moment before dying, said things so beautiful and so touching on the happiness of those who die for Jesus Christ that the pagans as well as the Christians all melted into tears. When he was brought near his cross, before being fastened to it, he embraced that cross, he kissed it, he watered it with his tears, so great was the joy he had at seeing that he was truly going to die for his God. When they were all upon their crosses, a troop of angels was heard singing the *Laudate, pueri, Dominum*, with their heavenly music; which was heard by all the pagans. What a spectacle, my brethren—heaven in admiration!… the earth in astonishment!… the bystanders in tears, and the martyrs in gladness, who leave the earth—that is to say, all the sufferings and miseries of life—to go and take possession of a happiness that will last as long as God Himself… Well then, my brethren, tell me, what led all these martyrs to endure so many torments, if not the resolve not to violate the commandments of God? What shame for us, my brethren, when Jesus Christ confronts us with them—us, whom so often a mere human respect, a cursed "what will people say?" [qu'en dira-t-on], makes blush, or rather makes us deny that we are Christians, to put ourselves among the number of renegades.

But let us examine this, my brethren, a little more closely, and we shall see that if the good God orders us to keep His commandments faithfully, it is only for our happiness. He Himself tells us that they are easy to fulfill, and that if we fulfill them we shall find in them the peace of our souls. If, in the first commandment, the good God orders us to love Him, to pray to Him, and to attach ourselves only to Him, and if we ought to pray to Him evening and morning, and often in the course of the day—tell me, my brethren, is that not the greatest of all happinesses for us, that the good God should be willing to allow us to present ourselves every morning before Him, to ask Him for the graces that are necessary for us to spend the day holily? Is it not a grace that He grants us? Is it not that grace which the good God gives us in the morning that makes all our actions meritorious for heaven? Is it not what makes us find them less hard? If this same commandment orders us to love God alone and to love Him with all our heart, is it not because He knows that He alone can satisfy us and make us happy in this world? See a house where all live only for God: is it not a little paradise? You will therefore agree with me, my brethren, that this commandment has nothing but what is sweet and consoling for the one who has the happiness of observing it with fidelity.

If we pass to the second, which forbids us every kind of swearing, blasphemy, imprecation, and cursing, and every kind of anger, recommending to us gentleness, charity, and thoughtfulness toward all who surround us: tell me, my brethren, who are the happier—those who give themselves up to all these excesses of anger, outbursts, and curses, or those who, in all they do or say, show that evenness of temper, that goodness, and who continually study to do the will of others? We see then that this commandment contributes only to make us happy ourselves and those who are with us. If we come to the third, which orders us to spend the Sunday holily, by ceasing every kind of manual work in order to occupy ourselves only with what concerns the service of God and the salvation of our soul: tell me, my brethren, is it not for our good—since we cease to work for this world which is nothing? since we are only an instant upon the earth, and since by praying or doing good works we heap up for ourselves a treasure for heaven which we shall never leave, and thereby we draw down upon our work of the week every kind of blessing? Is that not already a means for our happiness? This same commandment also orders us to employ this holy day in weeping over our sins of the week, in purifying ourselves from them by the virtue of the sacraments: is it not, my brethren, forcing us, so to speak, to seek only our good, our happiness, and our eternal felicity? Are we not more content when we have spent the holy day of Sunday well in praying to the good God, than if we have had the misfortune to spend it in pleasures, games, and debaucheries? The third commandment, then, has nothing but what is consoling and

advantageous for us.

If we pass to the fourth, which orders children to honor their parents, to love them, to respect them, and to wish and procure for them all the goods of which they are capable: tell me, is that not a just and reasonable thing? Parents who have done so much for their children—is it not just that these same children should love them and give them all the consolations of which they are capable? If this commandment were well observed, would not these families be a little paradise through that respect, that love which the children would have for their parents? If this same commandment orders parents to take great care of the souls of their children, and tells them that one day they will render a strict account of them, is that not a just thing—since these souls have cost Jesus Christ so much to save them, and since they will be the joy and the glory of their parents throughout all eternity? If this same commandment orders masters and mistresses to take great care of their servants, to regard them as their children—are not these masters too happy to be able to help in saving souls that have cost a God made man so many torments for us? Let us say better, my brethren: if this commandment were well observed, would not heaven come down upon earth through the peace and the happiness that we should taste there?

If we pass to the fifth, which forbids us to wrong our neighbor in his goods, his reputation, and his person, is that not a very just thing—since we ought to love them as ourselves—and at the same time a thing very advantageous for us, since Jesus Christ tells us that the goods of another will never enter into heaven? You see that this commandment has nothing hard in it, since by it we secure heaven for ourselves. If we pass to the sixth commandment, which forbids us all impurity in thoughts, desires, and actions: is it not for our peace and our happiness that the good God forbids us all these things? If we have the misfortune to give ourselves up to some of these vile and infamous sins, is not your poor soul as if in a hell? Are you not tormented both day and night? On the other hand, are not your body and your soul destined to be the dwelling of the Most Holy Trinity—ought they not, I say, to go and spend an eternity with the angels, near Jesus Christ who is purity itself? You see then that this commandment is given us only for our good and our rest, even from this world!

If the good God tells us, my brethren, by the voice of His Church: “I command you never to let more than a year pass without going to confession”—tell me, is this commandment not meant to show us the greatness of God’s love for us? Tell me, even if the Church had not made this commandment, can one live at peace with sin in the heart and heaven closed against us, being exposed at every instant to fall into hell? If the good God commands us to receive Him at Easter—alas! my brethren, can a soul live well, making only one meal a year? My God, how little we know our own good, our happiness! If the Church orders us to deprive ourselves of eating meat, to fast on certain days—is that an unjust thing, since being sinners we must of necessity do penance in this world or in the next? And is it not, in that, exchanging, for small pains or privations, evils that are very rigorous in the other life? Will you not agree with me, my brethren, that if the good God has given us commandments and obliges us to observe them, it is only to make us happy in this world and in the other? So that, my brethren, if we wish to hope for some consolations and some softenings in our miseries, we shall find them only in observing with fidelity the commandments of God; and so long as we violate them, we shall be only unhappy, even from this world.

Yes, my brethren, even if a person were mistress of half the world, if she does not place all her happiness in observing the commandments well, she will be only unhappy. See, my brethren, which was the happier—Saint Anthony in his desert, given over to all the rigors of penance, or Voltaire in all his goods and his pleasures; and, as Saint Paul tells us, in his abundance and his debauchery. Saint Anthony lives happy, dies content, and now enjoys a happiness that will never end; while the other lives unhappy with all his goods, dies in despair, and now, according to all appearance, without our judging him, suffers like a reprobate. Why, my brethren, this great difference? It is that the one places all his happiness in observing faithfully the commandments of God, and the other puts all his care into violating them and making them

despised; the one, in poverty, is content; and the other, in abundance, is very miserable—which shows us, my brethren, that God alone can satisfy us and nothing else.

See the happiness we have if we observe faithfully the commandments of God, since we read in the Gospel that Jesus Christ tells us: "He who observes My commandments loves Me, and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father; We will come to him and make Our abode with him." What happiness can be greater and what grace more precious—since by keeping the commandments of God we draw all heaven into ourselves? The holy king David had good reason to cry out: "O my God, how happy are those who serve You!" See again how much the good God blesses the houses of those who observe His divine laws. We read in the Gospel that the father and mother of Saint John the Baptist kept the commandments so well that no one could reproach them with the least thing; therefore the good God, in reward, gave them a child who was the greatest of all the prophets. It was an angel who came from heaven to announce to them this happy news. It was even the eternal Father who gave him the name of John, which means child of blessing and of happiness. Scarcely is Jesus Christ conceived in His Mother's womb when He Himself goes into that house to pour out there every kind of blessing. He sanctified that child before he was born, and filled the father and mother with the Holy Spirit. Do you wish, my brethren, that the good God should visit you and overwhelm you with every kind of blessing? Strive to put all your care into observing well the commandments of God, and all will go well in your house.

We read in the Gospel that a young man asked Jesus Christ what he must do to have life. The Savior answered him: "If you wish to have eternal life, keep My commandments with fidelity." Our Lord, conversing one day with His disciples on the happiness of the other life, said that the road which leads to heaven is narrow, that there are very few who truly seek it, and among those who find it, very few who are on that road; "it is not all those who say, 'Lord, Lord,' who will be saved, but only those who do the will of My Father by keeping My commandments. Many will say to Me on the day of judgment: Lord, we have prophesied in Your name; we have cast demons out of the bodies of the possessed and we have done great miracles. I will answer them: Depart from Me, workers of iniquity. You have done great things; but you have not observed My commandments; I do not know you." Jesus Christ said to the beloved disciple: "Be faithful to Me until the end, and I will give you the eternal crown." You see then, my brethren, that our salvation is absolutely bound up with the observance of the commandments of God. If you have any doubt whether you will be saved or damned, take the commandments of God and confront them with your life. If you see that you are walking in the path they have traced for you, trouble yourself only about persevering; but if you live in a manner altogether opposite, you may torment yourself as you will—you will not fail to be damned.

We say that if we wish to have peace of soul, we must keep the commandments of God, because the Holy Spirit tells us that he who has a pure conscience is as if in a continual banquet. It is very certain, my brethren, that he who lives according to the laws of God is always content, and what is more, nothing is capable of disturbing him. Saint Paul tells us that he is happier and more content in his prison, in his sufferings, his penances, and his poverty than his executioners are in their liberty, their abundance, and their debauchery; that his soul is filled with so much joy and consolation that it overflows on every side. Saint Monica tells us that she was always content although she was often ill-treated by her husband, who was a pagan. Saint John of the Cross tells us that he had spent the happiest days of his life where he had suffered the most. "But on the contrary," the prophet Isaiah tells us, "he who does not live according to the laws of the Lord will be neither content nor happy. His conscience will be like a sea stirred by a furious tempest; troubles and remorses will follow him everywhere." If these persons wish to tell you that they are at peace, do not believe them, because they are liars; because the sinner will never have peace. See the proof of it, my brethren, in Cain. As soon as he had the misfortune of having killed his brother Abel, his sin was all his life his executioner, which left him only at death to drag him into hell. See again the brothers of Joseph. See even Judas: after having sold his divine Master, he was so tormented that he went and hanged himself on a fig tree,

so much was life a burden to him. We read in history that a young man, in a fit of fury, killed his poor father. His sin gave him no rest day or night. He seemed to hear his father crying to him: “Ah! my son, why have you slain me?” He went himself to denounce himself so that they might put him to death, thinking that hell would not be more rigorous. Alas! my brethren, if we have the misfortune not to keep the commandments of God, never shall we be content, even with the greatest goods. See Solomon, and so on. But—strange thing, my brethren—man may be tormented as he will and know the remedies that must be taken to have peace with his God and with himself; he prefers to begin his hell rather than have recourse to the remedies which Jesus Christ has given us. You are unhappy, my friend—why do you wish to remain in that state? Return to Jesus Christ and you will find again the peace of soul which your sins have robbed from you.

We say that if we do not keep the commandments of God, we shall be unhappy all the days of our life. See the proof of it in Adam. As soon as he had sinned, the Lord said to him: “Because you have violated My laws, the earth for you shall be cursed; of itself it will produce only thorns and thistles. You shall eat your bread in the sweat of your brow, and that all the days of your life.” See Cain; the Lord said to him: “Cain, the blood of your brother cries for vengeance; you shall be a wanderer, a vagabond, and a fugitive all the days of your life.” See again Saul… So that, my brethren, as soon as we cease to follow what the commandments of God order us, we ought to expect every kind of spiritual and temporal evil.

Fathers and mothers, do you wish to be happy? Begin by observing well the commandments of God yourselves, so that you may be able to give yourselves as models to your children, and that you may always be able to say to them: “Do as I do.” If you wish them to say their prayers well, give them the example. Do you wish them to be very modest in church? Give them the example; put them beside you. Do you wish them to observe well the holy day of Sunday? Begin yourselves. Do you wish them to be charitable? Be so yourselves. Alas! my brethren, if so many evils crush us, let us seek no other reasons than the multitude of sins that we commit by transgressing the commandments of God. Let us pity, my brethren, those who will come some centuries after us. Alas! it will be still much worse. Do we wish, my brethren, that God should cease to chastise us? Let us ourselves cease to offend Him; let us do as the saints who sacrificed everything rather than violate His holy laws. See a Saint Bartholomew and a Saint Regina, who were flayed alive rather than offend God. See a Saint Peter and a Saint Andrew, who were crucified upon a cross. See all those crowds of martyrs who endured a thousand torments rather than transgress the commandments. See all the combats which the holy Fathers of the deserts sustained against the devil and their inclinations. When Saint Francis of Assisi was on a mountain to pray, the inhabitants of the neighborhood came to ask him to deliver them, by his prayers, from a quantity of wild beasts that were devouring all they had. This saint said to them: “My children, that comes only from your having violated the commandments of God; return to God and you will be delivered.” Indeed, as soon as they had changed their life, they were delivered.

Likewise, in finishing, let us say that if we wish our spiritual and temporal evils to end, let us finish offending the good God; let us cease to transgress His commandments. Cease, my brethren, to give over your heart, your mind, and perhaps even your body to impurity. Cease, my brethren, to frequent games, taverns, places of pleasure. Cease, my brethren, the labors of Sunday. Let us cease to keep away from the sacraments. Let us cease, my brethren, to make a game of violating the laws of fasting and abstinence; let us leave the road which the pagans follow, to whom the commandments are not known. Let us seek, my brethren, our true happiness, which can be found only in God alone, by fulfilling the commandments faithfully. Let us cease, my brethren, to labor at making ourselves unhappy for eternity. Let us return to God, my brethren, and let us think that we are Christians and that consequently we must combat our inclinations and the devil, flee the world and its pleasures, live in tears, penance, and humility. Let us say like the holy king David: “Yes, my God! I have gone away from Your commandments by my sins; but, my God, help me; I will return to You by tears and penance, and I will walk all the days of my life in the way of Your commandments, which will lead me to You never to lose You.” Happy, my brethren, is he who will imitate this holy king, who, having

returned to God, never left Him again! That, my brethren, is what I wish for you.

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost — On the First Commandment of God (Second Sermon)

Diliges Dominum Deum tuum. You shall love the Lord your God. (Luke 10:27)

To adore God, my brethren, and to love Him, is the fairest function of man upon the earth; since by this adoration we make ourselves like the angels and the saints who are in heaven. O my God! what an honor and what a happiness for a vile creature, to have the power to adore and to love a God so great, so powerful, so lovable, and so beneficent! No, my brethren, no—it seems to me that God ought not to have made this commandment, but only to have suffered us prostrate in His holy presence. A God, my brethren, commanding us to love Him and to adore Him!… Why that, my brethren? Does God have need of our adorations and our prayers? Tell me, my brethren, is it we who place those rays of glory upon His head? Is it we who increase His greatness and His power, since He commands us to love Him under pain of eternal chastisements? Ah! vile nothingness, creature unworthy of this happiness, of which even the angels, holy and pure as they are, acknowledge themselves infinitely unworthy, and who, if God permits them to prostrate themselves before Him, do it only trembling! O my God! how little man knows his happiness and his privilege!… But no, my brethren, let us not leave our ordinary simplicity. Ah! my brethren, this thought—that we can love and adore a God so great—seems to us so far above our merits that it draws us out of the way of simplicity. Ah! my brethren, to be able to adore God, to love Him and to pray to Him. O my God, what happiness!… who will ever be able to understand it?… No, my brethren, all our adorations and all our friendship add nothing to the happiness and the glory of our God; but, as the good God wills only our happiness here below, He knows that it is found only in the love that we shall have for Him, and that all who seek it outside of Him will never find it. So that, my brethren, when the good God orders us to love Him and to adore Him, it is that He wishes to force us to be happy. Let us see then all together, first, in what this adoration consists which we owe to God and which makes us so happy, and second, how we ought to render it to Him.

If you ask me now, my brethren, what it is to adore God—here it is. It is at once to believe *that* God is, and to believe *in* God. Note well, my brethren, the difference there is between believing that God is and believing in God. To believe that God is—which is the faith of the demons—is to believe that there is a God; that He exists, that He rewards virtue and punishes sin. O my God! how many Christians have not even the faith of the demons! They deny the existence of God, and in their frightful blindness and their frenzy dare to maintain that after this world there is neither punishment nor reward. Ah! unhappy ones, if the corruption of your heart has carried you to such an excess of blindness, go, question one possessed by the devil; he will teach you what you ought to believe of the other life; he will tell you that of necessity sin is punished and virtue is rewarded. Oh! what a misfortune, my brethren! When faith is extinguished in a heart, of what extravagances is one not capable? But when we say “believe in God,” it is to acknowledge that He is our God, our Creator, our Redeemer, and that we take Him for our model; it is to acknowledge Him as the One on whom we depend in all things, for soul and for body, for spiritual things and for temporal; as the One from whom we expect everything, and without whom we can do nothing. We see in the Life of Saint Francis that he spent whole nights making no other prayer than this: “Lord, You are all, and I am nothing; You are the creator of all things, You are the conserver of the whole universe; and I am nothing.” To adore God, my brethren, is to offer Him a sacrifice of our whole selves—that is to say, my brethren, to be submitted to His holy will in crosses, afflictions, sicknesses, losses of goods, and to be ready willingly to give our life for His love, if need be. Let us say still better, my brethren: it is to make Him a universal offering of all that we are—I mean, of our body by an exterior worship, and of our soul with all its faculties by an interior worship. Let us explain that, my brethren, in a simpler manner. If I asked a child: When must one adore God, and how

must one adore Him? he would answer me: “Morning and evening, and often in the course of the day—that is to say, always.” That is to say, my brethren, that we ought to do upon earth what the angels and the saints do in heaven. The prophet Isaiah tells us that he saw Our Lord seated upon a beautiful throne of glory; the seraphim adored Him with so great a respect that they covered their faces and their feet with their wings, and they sang continually: “Holy, holy, holy, is the great God of hosts; glory, honor, adoration be rendered to Him throughout all ages.” We read in the Life of the Blessed Victoria of the Order of the Incarnation that there was a religious of her order who was very devout and filled with divine love. Being one day in prayer, Our Lord called her by her name; this saint answered Him in her ordinary simplicity: “My divine Jesus, what do You wish of me?” The Lord said to her: “I have seraphim in heaven who praise Me and bless Me and adore Me without ceasing; I wish to have some also upon earth; I wish that you should be of that number.” That is to say, my brethren, that the function of the blessed in heaven is to be occupied only in blessing the good God in all His perfections, and that we ought to do the same while we are upon the earth—the saints triumphing and enjoying, and we fighting. Saint John tells us that he saw so great a troop of saints that it would be impossible to count them; they were before the throne of God, saying with all their heart and with all their strength: “Honor, blessing, thanksgiving be rendered to our God.”

I say then, my brethren, that we ought often to adore God, first, with the body: that is to say, we must put ourselves on our knees when we wish to adore God, to show Him the respect we have in His holy presence. The holy king David adored the Lord seven times a day, and he remained so long on his knees that he himself confesses that by force of praying, and in praying of remaining on his knees, his knees had become weak and infirm. The prophet Daniel, being at Babylon, turned toward Jerusalem and adored God three times a day. Our Lord Himself, who had no need at all to pray, to give us the example, often spent whole nights praying, on His knees, most often with His face to the ground, as He did in the garden of Olives. There have been a number of saints who imitated Jesus Christ in His prayer. Saint James often adored God not only on his knees but even with his face to the ground; so that his forehead, by force of touching the earth, had become hard like the skin of a camel. We see in the Life of Saint Bartholomew that he bent the knee to the ground a hundred times a day and as many at night. If you cannot, my brethren, adore the good God so often and on your knees, at least make it your duty to do so evening and morning and from time to time in the day, when you are alone in your houses, to show Him that you love Him and that you acknowledge Him as your creator and your conserver.

Above all, my brethren, after having given our heart to God on waking, having rid ourselves of all thoughts that have no relation to God, having dressed with modesty without losing the presence of God, we must make our prayer with as much respect as possible, and a little long if we can. We must take great care never to do anything before having said our prayers—such as making one’s bed, a part of one’s housework, putting the pot on the fire, calling one’s servants or one’s children, going to feed the animals—nor ever to command anything to one’s children and servants before they have said their prayer. (If you did so, you would be the executioners of their poor souls, and if you have done it, you must confess it and not return to it.) Remember well that it is in the morning that the good God prepares for us all the graces that are necessary to spend the day holily. So that if we say our prayer badly or if we do not say it, we lose all the graces that the good God had destined for us to make our actions meritorious. The devil knows how advantageous it is for a Christian to say his prayer well; he forgets no means of making us say it badly, or miss it. He said one day, by the mouth of a possessed person, that if he could have the first moment of the day, he was sure of having all the rest. To say your prayer as it ought to be said, you must take holy water in order to drive the devil away from you, and make the sign of the cross, saying: “My God, by this holy water and by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ Your Son, wash me, purify me from all my sins.” We must well persuade ourselves that if we do it with faith, we shall blot out all our venial sins, assuming that we have no mortal ones. O my God! can a Christian well commit a mortal sin which robs him of heaven, separates him from his God for all eternity!… O my God, what a misfortune, and yet so little known by the sinner! I say that we ought to say our prayer on

our knees, and not lying on a chair or against a bed, nor before the fire; although one may rest one's hands on the back of a chair. We must begin our prayer by an act of faith, the liveliest that is possible for us; by penetrating ourselves vividly with the presence of God—that is to say, with the greatness of a God so good, who is willing to suffer us in His holy presence, us who for a long time have deserved to be sunk in hell. We must take great care never to disturb ourselves, nor to disturb those who are saying their prayer, unless it is truly necessary: because one causes them to occupy themselves with us or with what we say to them; they say their prayer badly, and consequently we are the cause of it.

If now you also ask me how one must manage to adore—that is to say, to pray to God continually, for one cannot be on one's knees the whole day—nothing is easier; listen to me a moment, and you will see that one can adore God and pray to Him without leaving one's work, in four ways; but that, after having said one's prayer well on one's knees. I say in four ways: by thoughts, by desires, by words, by actions.

I say first, by thought. When one loves someone, does one not find a certain pleasure in thinking of him? Well then! my brethren, what prevents us from thinking of God during the day, now thinking of the sufferings that Jesus Christ endured for us; how much He loves us, how much He desires to make us happy, since He was willing to die for us; how good He was to make us be born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, where we find so many means of making ourselves happy—that is to say, of saving ourselves—while so many others have not the same happiness. From time to time, in the course of the day, let us carry our thoughts and our desires toward heaven, to contemplate there in advance the goods and the happiness that the good God prepares for us there after a moment of combat. This single thought, my brethren—that one day we shall go there to see the good God, and that we shall be delivered from every kind of pain—ought it not to console us in our crosses? If we are laden with some burden, let us think at once that we are in the train of Jesus Christ, carrying His cross for love of us; let us unite our sufferings and our pains to those of this divine Savior. Are we poor? Let us carry our thought into the crib: let us see and contemplate our lovable Jesus lying on a handful of straw, without any human resource. And if you wish, look at Him again, dying on a cross, stripped even of His garments. Are we calumniated? Let us think, my brethren, of the blasphemies that were poured out against Him during His Passion, Him who was holiness itself. From time to time during the day, let us make our heart pronounce these sweet words: "My God, I love You, and I adore You with all Your holy angels and all Your saints who are in heaven." Our Lord said one day to Saint Catherine of Siena: "I wish that you should make a retreat in your heart and shut yourself up there with Me, and keep Me company." What goodness, my brethren, on the part of this good Savior, to take pleasure in conversing with a poor frail creature! Well then! my brethren, let us do the same; let us converse with the good God, our lovable Jesus, who is in our heart by His grace. Let us adore Him, by giving Him our heart; let us love Him, giving ourselves wholly to Him. Let us never pass a day without thanking Him for so many graces that He has granted us during our life; let us ask His pardon for our sins, praying Him to think of them no more, but to forget them for eternity. Let us ask Him for the grace to think only of Him, and to desire only to please Him, in all that we shall do throughout our whole life. "My God," we ought to say, "I desire to love You as much as all the angels and all the saints together. I wish to unite my love to that which Your holy Mother had for You while she was upon the earth. My God, when shall I have the happiness of going one day to see You in heaven, in order to love You more perfectly?" If we are alone in our houses, what prevents us from putting ourselves on our knees? Even if we only said: "My God, I wish to love You with all my heart, with all its movements and all its thoughts and its desires; how long the time seems to me until I go to see You in heaven!" Do you see, my brethren, how easy it is to converse with the good God and to pray to Him continually? That, my brethren, is what it is to pray the whole day.

Second, we adore God by the desire of heaven. How not to desire to possess God, to see Him, which is all our happiness?…

Third, we say that we ought to pray by words. When we love someone, have we not a great pleasure in conversing about him and speaking of him? Well then! my brethren, instead of speaking of the conduct of this one and that one—which we almost never do without offending the good God—what prevents us from turning our conversation toward the things of God, either by reading some Life of a Saint, or by recounting what we have heard in an instruction, in a catechism? Let us converse especially about our holy religion; about the happiness we have in the Christian religion, about the graces that the good God grants us in it. Alas! my brethren, if it takes only a bad conversation to ruin a person, often it takes only a good one to convert her, or make her avoid sin. How many times, after having been with someone who has spoken to us of the good God, have we felt ourselves wholly drawn toward the good God; have we thought of doing better?… That is what made so many saints at the beginning of the Church; all the conversations, all the discourses were of the good God. By that, Christians animated one another; they always conceived a new taste for the things of God.

Fourth, we have said that we ought to adore God by our actions. Nothing is easier, nothing more meritorious. If you desire to know how that is done, here it is. In order that our actions may be meritorious and may be a continual prayer, we must first, in the morning, offer all our actions in general—that is to say, all that we shall do during the day. We say to the good God, before beginning: “My God, I offer You all the thoughts, the desires, the words, and the actions that I shall do during this day; grant me the grace to do them well and in the sole view of pleasing You.” Then, from time to time during the day, we renew our offering, saying to God: “You know, my God, You know that I promised You from the morning to do everything for love of You.” If we give some alms, let us direct our intention, saying: “My God, receive this alms, or this service that I am going to render to my neighbor; it is to ask You for such-and-such a grace.” Once you will do them in honor of the death and Passion of Jesus Christ, to obtain your conversion or that of your children, of your servants, or of other persons who interest you; another time, in honor of the most holy Virgin, to ask her holy protection for yourself and for others. If something is commanded us that is distasteful to us, let us say to the good God: “My God, I offer You that to honor the moment when they made You die for me.” Are we doing something that tires us much? Let us offer it to the good God, that He may deliver us from the pains of the other life. When we rest a moment, let us look at heaven which one day will be our dwelling. See, my brethren, if we had the happiness of behaving in this manner, how much we should gain for heaven, by doing only what we do—but doing it solely for God, and in the sole view of pleasing Him.

Saint John Chrysostom tells us that three things make themselves loved: beauty, goodness, and love. “Well then!” this great saint tells us, “the good God encloses all these qualities.” We read in the Life of Saint Lidwina that, feeling very violent pains, an angel appeared to her to console her. She herself tells us: his beauty appeared so great to her, and she was so ravished by it, that she entirely forgot her sufferings. Valerian having seen the angel who preserved the purity of Saint Cecilia, his beauty so charmed him, and so touched his heart, although he was still a pagan, that he converted on the spot. Saint John, the beloved disciple, tells us that he saw an angel of so great a beauty that he wished to adore him; but the angel said to him: “Do not do that; I am only a servant of God like you.” When Moses asked the Lord for the grace to let him see His face, the Lord said to him: “Moses, it is impossible for a mortal man to see My face without dying; My beauty is so great that any person who sees Me will not be able to live; his soul must leave his body by the mere sight of My beauty.” Saint Teresa tells us that Jesus Christ had often appeared to her; but that never will any man be able to form an idea of the greatness of His beauty, so much is it above all that we can think. Tell me, my brethren, if we had the happiness of forming an idea of the beauty of God, could we fail to love Him? Oh! how blind we are! Alas! it is that we think only of the earth and of created things, and not of the things of God, which would raise us up to Him, which would demonstrate to us a little of His perfections, and which would touch our hearts. Listen to Saint Augustine: “O beauty ancient and ever new! I have loved You so late!” He calls the beauty of God ancient because it is from all eternity, and he calls it always new because the more one sees it, the more one finds it beautiful. Why is it, my brethren, that the

angels and the saints will never tire of loving God and contemplating Him? It is, my brethren, that they will always feel a new taste and a new pleasure. And why, my brethren, should we not do the same thing upon the earth, since we can? Ah! my brethren, what a happy life we should lead while preparing heaven for ourselves!

We read in the Life of Saint Dominic that he had renounced himself so entirely that he could think of, nor desire, nor love anything but God alone. After having spent the whole day kindling in hearts the fire of divine love by his preachings, he flew away at night into heaven by his contemplations and his conversations with his God. That was all his occupation. In his journeys he thought only of God; nothing was capable of distracting him from this happy thought: that God was good, lovable, and that He well deserved to be loved. He could not understand how there could be found men upon the earth who could fail to love the good God, since He was so lovable. He shed torrents of tears over the misfortune of those who would not love a God so good and so worthy of being loved. One day, heretics having sought the means of making him perish, but the good God having saved him by a miracle, one of them asked him what he would have done if he had fallen into their hands. He answered him: “I feel so great a desire to love the good God, I would so much wish to suffer and die for Him, that I would have begged you to kill me, not with a single blow, but to cut my members into as many little pieces as you could, then to tear out my tongue and my eyes, one after the other, and after having rolled the trunk of my body in my blood, to cut off my head; and I would wish that all men were in the same disposition as I, because God is so beautiful and so good that never will one do anything that can approach what He deserves.” Well then! my brethren, is that loving the good God—to be in so fair a disposition? Is it not loving Him in good earnest, with all one’s heart and more than oneself? Tell me, my brethren, do we love Him like this saint—we who seem to make a kind of pleasure of offending Him, we who will not make the least sacrifice to avoid sin? Tell me, my brethren, do we love the good God by missing our prayers, by saying them without respect and without devotion? How many times do we not even put ourselves on our knees? Do we love the good God, my brethren, when we do not even give the time to pray to the good God to our servants or our children? Did we love the good God, my brethren, when we ate meat on the forbidden days?

Tell me, my brethren, do we love the good God when we work on the holy days of Sunday? Do we love the good God when we are without respect in church, when we sleep there, chat and turn our heads, or when we go outside during the offices? Alas! my brethren, let us say it with groaning—how many phantoms of adorers! Alas! how many Christians who are Christians only in name!

In the third place, we say that we ought to love the good God because He is infinitely good. When Moses asked the Lord to let him see His face, He said to him: “Moses, if I let you see My face, I will show you the abridgment and the assemblage of all goods.” We read in the Gospel that a woman, having prostrated herself before Our Lord, called Him “Good Master.” Our Lord said to her: “Why do you call Me Good Master? There is only God alone who is good”—wishing to tell us that He is the source of every kind of good. Saint Mary Magdalene de’ Pazzi tells us that she would wish to have enough strength to make herself heard at the four corners of the world, in order to tell all men to love the good God with all their heart, because He is infinitely lovable. We read in the Life of Saint James, religious of Saint Dominic, that he went into the countryside and into the woods, crying with all his strength: “O heaven! and you, O earth! do you not love the good God as well as the other creatures, since He is infinitely worthy of being loved? O my Savior! if men are so ungrateful as not to love You, O you, all creatures, love your Creator, since He is so good and so lovable!” Ah! my brethren, if we could once understand how happy one is in loving the good God, we should weep night and day at having been so long deprived of this happiness!… Alas! how miserable man is! a mere human respect, a little “what will people say?” [qu’en-dira-t-on], will prevent him from showing his brethren that he loves his God!… O my God! can one well understand it?…

We read in history that while tormenting Saint Polycarp, his executioners said to him: “Why is it that you do not adore the idols?” — “It is,” he said to them, “that I cannot; because I adore only one God, creator of heaven and of earth.” — “But,” they said to him, “if you do not do what we wish, we will make you die.” — “I consent willingly to die, but never will I adore the devil.” — “But what harm do you find in saying ‘Lord Caesar’ and in sacrificing, to save your life?” — “I will not do it; I prefer to die.” — “Swear by the fortune of Caesar,” the judge said to him, “and say insults to your Christ.” The saint said to him: “How could I say insults to my God? I have served Him for eighty years, and He has done me only good.” The people, all in a fury at hearing the manner in which he answered the judge, cried out: “He is the doctor of Asia, the father of the Christians; deliver him to us.” — “Listen, judge,” the holy bishop said to him, “here is my religion: I am a Christian; I know how to suffer, to die, and not to say insults to my Savior Jesus Christ who has so loved me and who so deserves to be loved!” — “If you will not obey,” the judge said to him, “I will have you burned alive.” — “The fire with which you threaten me lasts only a moment; but you do not know that of the justice of God, which will burn the impious eternally. Why do you delay? Here is my body ready to receive all the torments that you can invent.” All the pagans began to cry: “He deserves death; let him be burned alive.” Alas! all these unhappy ones prepare the pyre like men in despair, and during that time Saint Polycarp prepares himself for death and thanks Jesus Christ for making him share in His chalice. The pyre being ready, they took our saint and threw him into it; but the flames, less cruel than the executioners, respected our saint and made around him as it were a veil, so that his body received no harm from them: which obliged the persecutor to have him stabbed in his pyre. The blood flowed with such abundance that the fire was wholly extinguished by it. That, my brethren, is what is called loving the good God perfectly—it is to love Him more than one’s very life. Alas! where should we find Christians, in the unhappy century in which we live, who would do that for the good God? Alas! how thinly sown they would be [qu’ils seraient semés bien clairs]! But also, how few there are who will go to heaven!

We ought to love the good God because of the goods that we continually receive from Him. First, our first benefit is our creation. We have the happiness of being endowed with so many fair qualities: a body and a soul formed by the hand of the Almighty; a soul that must never perish, that is destined to go and spend its eternity with the angels in heaven; a soul, I say, that is capable of knowing God, of loving Him and of serving Him; a soul that is the fairest work of the most holy Trinity, a soul that God alone surpasses. Indeed, all the creatures that are upon the earth will perish; whereas our soul will never be destroyed. O my God, if we were ever so little penetrated with this benefit, would we not spend our whole life in thanksgivings, at the sight of a gift so great and so precious? Another benefit that is not less, my brethren, is the gift that the eternal Father has made us of His Son, who suffered and endured so many torments to redeem us, after we had sold ourselves to the devil by the sin of Adam. What other greater benefit could He do us than to establish a religion so holy and so consoling for all those who know it and who have the happiness of practicing it? Saint Augustine says: “Ah! fair religion, if you are despised, it is truly because you are not known.” “No, my brethren,” Saint Paul tells us, “you are no longer yourselves; you have all been redeemed by the blood of a God made man.” “O my children,” Saint John tells us, “what an honor for vile creatures to have been adopted as the children of God Himself, as the brothers of Jesus Christ! What charity,” he tells us, “that we should be called children of God and that truly we should be so; and that with this quality so glorious He should still promise us heaven!” Examine again, if you wish, all these particular benefits: He made us be born of Christian parents; He preserved our life, although we were His enemies; He has so many times forgiven our sins; He has lavished so many graces upon us throughout our whole life. After all that, my brethren, is it well possible that we should not love a God so good and so beneficent? O my God! what misfortune is comparable!

We read in history that a man had drawn a thorn from the paw of a lion; this same lion was taken after some time to be put with the others in the pit. This man who had drawn his thorn was condemned to be devoured by the lions. Being in the pit to be devoured there, this lion recognized him. Far from devouring him, he

threw himself at his feet, and let himself be devour by the other lions while defending his benefactor. Ah! ungrateful as we are, is it well possible that we should spend our life without living in such a way as to show the good God that we are grateful to Him for all His benefits? Understand, if you can, my brethren, what our shame will be one day, when the good God shows us that the beasts without reason have been more grateful for the least benefits they have received from men, and that we, overwhelmed with so many graces, lights, and goods, far from thanking our God for them, do nothing but offend Him! O my God! what misfortune is comparable to that! It is related in the Life of Saint Louis, king of France, that having gone to the Holy Land, one of his cavaliers having gone hunting, he heard the groanings of a lion. Having approached, he saw this lion which a great serpent had wrapped with its tail and was beginning to eat. This cavalier found means to kill the serpent. This lion was so grateful for it that he put himself in his train, like a lamb that follows its shepherd. As this cavalier was obliged to cross the seas, the lion not being able to enter the vessel put himself to swimming following his benefactor, until he had lost his life in the waters. What an example, my brethren: a beast losing its life to testify its gratitude to its benefactor!—and we, far from testifying ours to our God, do not cease to offend Him by sin, which does Him so many outrages! Saint Paul tells us that he who does not love God is not worthy to live; indeed, either man must love his God, or he must cease to live.

We say that we ought to love the good God because He commands us to. Saint Augustine cries out, speaking to us of this commandment: “O lovable commandment! My God! who am I, that You should command me to love You? If I do not love You, You threaten me with great miseries; is it then a small misery not to love You? What! my God, You command me to love You? Are You not infinitely lovable? Is it not already too much that You should wish to permit us to? O what happiness for a creature as miserable as we to be able to love a God so lovable! Ah! inestimable grace, how little you are known!” We read in the Gospel that a doctor of the law said one day to Jesus Christ: “Master, what is the greatest of all the commandments?” Jesus Christ answered him, here it is: “You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” Saint Augustine tells us: “If you have the happiness of loving the good God, you will become, in some sort, like Him; if you love the earth, you will become wholly earthly; but if you love the things of heaven, you will become wholly heavenly.” O my God! what happiness to love You—since loving You we receive every kind of good. No, my brethren, let us not be astonished if so many great ones of the world have left the tumult [brouard/tumulte] of the age to go and bury themselves in forests or between four walls, to do nothing else any longer than love God. See a Saint Paul the hermit, whose whole occupation for eighty years was to pray and love the good God day and night. See again a Saint Anthony to whom it seems that the nights are not long enough to praise, in silence, his God and his Savior, and who complains that the sun comes too quickly. To love the good God, my brethren—ah! what happiness when we shall have the happiness of understanding it. Until when, my brethren, shall we have a repugnance for doing a work that ought to make all our happiness in this world and our felicity in eternity?… To love God, my brethren—ah! what happiness!… My God, give us faith and we will love You with all our heart.

I say that we ought to love the good God because of the great goods that we receive from Him. “God,” Saint John tells us, “loves those who love Him.” Tell me, my brethren, can we have a greater happiness in this world than to be loved by God Himself? Thus, my brethren, the good God will love us according as we love Him—that is to say, if we love Him much, He will love us much; which ought to lead us to love the good God as much as we can, and as we are capable of. This love will be the measure of the glory that we shall have in paradise; it will be in proportion to the love that we shall have had for Him during our life; those who shall have loved the good God more in this world will have a greater glory in heaven, and will love Him more; because the virtue of charity will accompany us throughout all eternity, and it will receive a new degree in heaven. Oh! my brethren, what happiness to have loved the good God much during our life!—we shall love Him much in paradise. Saint Anthony tells us that there is nothing the devil fears so much as a soul that loves the good God; and that he who loves the good God carries with him the mark of a predestined soul; since there are only the demons and the reprobate who do not love the good God. Alas! my brethren, the

greatest of all misfortunes is that they will never have the happiness of loving Him. O my God, can one well think of it and not die of regret!…

We read in the Life of Saint Catherine of Genoa that, being present when a possessed person was being exorcised, she asked him what his name was. The demon answered her that he was called: Spirit without love of God. “What!” the saint said to him, “you do not love the good God who is so lovable?” — “Oh! no, no,” he cried. — “Ah! I would never have believed that there was a creature who did not love the good God.” She fell dead. Having come to herself, when she was asked what had made her faint, she answered that never would she have been able to believe that there was a creature who did not love the good God; that that had so surprised her that her heart had failed her. But tell me, my brethren, was she not right?—since we are created only for that alone. As soon as we cease to love the good God, we are not doing what the good God wishes us to do. Indeed, my brethren, what is the first question that was put to us when we came to catechism to be instructed in our religion? “Who created you and has preserved you until now?” We answered: “It is God.” — “And why still?” — “To know Him, to love Him, to serve Him, and by that means to acquire eternal life.” Yes, my brethren, our only occupation upon the earth is to love the good God—that is to say, to begin to do what we shall do throughout all eternity. Why still ought we to love the good God? It is, my brethren, that all our happiness is found and can be found only in the love of God. So that, my brethren, when we do not love the good God, we shall always be unhappy; and if we wish to have some consolations and some softenings in our pains, we shall find them only in the love that we shall have for God. If you wish to convince yourself of it, go find the happiest according to the world; if he does not love the good God, he will be only unhappy; and on the contrary, if you go find the most unhappy in the eyes of the world, if he answers you that he loves God, he is happy in every respect. O my God! open then the eyes of our soul, and we shall seek our happiness where we can find it!

But, you will say to me in finishing, how then ought we to love the good God? How must one love Him, my brethren? Listen to Saint Bernard; he himself is going to teach us, telling us that we ought to love God without measure. “As God is infinitely lovable, we shall never be able to love Him as He deserves. But Jesus Christ Himself teaches us the measure with which we ought to love Him, telling us: ‘You shall love your God with all your soul, with all your heart, with all your strength.’” You will engrave these thoughts well in your mind, and you will teach all these things to your children. Saint Bernard tells us that to love the good God with all our heart is to love Him courageously and with fervor—that is to say, to be ready to suffer all that the devil and the world will make us suffer, rather than cease to love Him. It is to prefer Him to everything, and to love nothing except for love of Him. Saint Augustine said to God: “When my heart, O my God, shall be too great to love You, then I will love something else with You; but as my heart will always be too small for You, and as You are infinitely lovable, I will never love anyone but You.” We ought to love the good God not only as ourselves, but even more than ourselves, and to be always in the resolution of giving our life for Him.

We may say that all the martyrs have truly loved Him, since they preferred to suffer the loss of their goods, contempt, prisons, scourges, wheels, gibbets, iron and fire, and finally all that the rage of tyrants could invent, rather than offend Him. It is related in the history of the martyrs of Japan that when the Gospel was announced to them and they were instructed in the greatness of God, His goodnesses and His love for men; above all when they were taught the great mysteries of our holy religion, all that the good God had done for men—a God being born in poverty, a God suffering and dying for salvation—“Oh! how good He is,” they cried, “how good is the God of the Christians! Oh! how lovable He is!” But when they were told that this same God had made us a commandment by which He ordered us to love Him, and that if we did not love Him He threatened us with an eternal chastisement, they were so astonished and so surprised that they could not recover from it. “What!” they said, “to make to reasonable men a precept of loving God, who has so loved us!… is it not the greatest of all misfortunes not to love Him, and is it not the greatest of all

happinesses to love Him? What! are not the Christians always at the foot of the altars to adore their God, penetrated with so much goodness and all inflamed with His love?" But when one came to teach them that there were Christians who not only did not love Him, but even who spent almost their whole life offending Him: "O ungrateful people! O barbarous people!" they cried with indignation, "is it well possible that Christians should be capable of such horrors! Ah! in what cursed land then do these men without heart and without feeling dwell?" Alas! my brethren, if these martyrs reappeared now upon the earth, and if one made them the recital of all the outrages that Christians do at every instant to God—to a God so good who wills and who seeks only their eternal happiness—alas! my brethren, could they well believe it? Sad thought, my brethren: until now we have not loved the good God!….

Not only must a good Christian love the good God with all his heart; but further he must make every effort to make Him loved by other men. Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses must use all their power to make Him loved by their children and their servants. Oh! what merit a father and a mother will have before the good God, if all those who are with them love Him as much as it is possible!… Oh! what blessings the good God would pour out upon these houses!… Oh! what goods both for time and for eternity!… But what are the marks by which we shall recognize that we love the good God? Here they are, my brethren. It is if we think often of Him, if our mind is often occupied with Him, if we have much pleasure, if we love to hear speak of Him in the instructions, and in all that can recall Him to us. If we love the good God, my brethren, we shall greatly fear to offend Him; we shall always be on our guard; we shall watch over all the movements of our heart, for fear of being deceived by the devil. But the last means is to ask it of Him often, since His love comes from heaven. We must carry our thought there during the day, even at night on waking, by producing acts of the love of God, saying to Him: "My God, grant me the grace to love You as much as it is possible that I should love You." We must have a great devotion to the holy Virgin who loved the good God, she alone, more than all the saints together; have a great devotion to the Holy Spirit, especially at nine o'clock in the morning. That was the moment when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, to inflame them with His love. At noon, we must recall the mystery of the Incarnation, where the Son of God became incarnate in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, asking Him to descend into our hearts as He descended into the womb of His blessed Mother. At three o'clock, we must represent to ourselves this good and charitable Savior, who dies to merit for us an eternal love. We ought, in that moment, to produce an act of contrition, to testify to Him the regret we have at having offended Him. Let us conclude, my brethren, that since our happiness can be found only in the love that we shall have for God, we ought greatly to fear sin, since it alone makes us lose it. Go, my brethren, draw this divine love from the sacraments that you can receive! Go to the holy table with a great trembling and with a great confidence, since He is our God, our Savior, and our Father, who wills only our happiness; I wish it for you…

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost — On Love of Neighbor (Third Sermon)

Vade, et tu fac similiter. Go, and do likewise. (Luke 10:37)

A doctor of the law, Saint Luke tells us, presented himself to Jesus Christ, saying to tempt Him: "Master, what must one do to have eternal life?" Jesus Christ answered him: "What does your law contain? What do you read there?" He answered Him: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself." — "You have answered very well," Jesus Christ replied to him; "go, do that, and you will have eternal life." Then the doctor asked Him who was his neighbor, and whom he ought to love as himself. Jesus Christ proposed to him this example: "A man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho; he fell into the hands of thieves, who, not content with having stripped him, pierced him with wounds, and left him half dead on the spot. At that moment there passed a priest who was coming down by the same road. This one, having seen him in that pitiful state, did not even look at him. Then a Levite, having perceived him, passed likewise; but a Samaritan who was following the same route, having

seen him, approached him, and was sensibly touched with compassion; he came down from his horse, and set about assisting him with all his power. He bathed his wounds with oil and wine, bound them; having put him on his horse, he carried him to an inn where he commanded the master to take all necessary care of him, telling him that if the money he gave him was not enough, on his return he would repay him what he had spent beyond." Jesus Christ said to the doctor: "Which of the three do you think was the neighbor of this man who fell into the hands of thieves?" The doctor answered Him: "I believe it is the one who exercised the works of mercy toward this man." — "Well then! go," Jesus Christ said to him, "do likewise, and you will have eternal life."

That, my brethren, is the perfect model of the charity that we ought to have for our neighbor. Let us see then, my brethren, whether we have this charity which assures us eternal life. But, to make you feel its necessity better, I am going to show you that our whole religion is only a false religion, and that all our virtues are only phantoms, and that we are only hypocrites in the eyes of God, if we have not this universal charity for everybody—that is to say, for the good as for the bad, for the poor as for the rich, for all those who do us harm as for those who do us good. No, my brethren, there is no virtue that makes us know better whether we are the children of the good God than charity; and the obligation that we have to love our neighbor is so great that Jesus Christ makes us a commandment of it, which He places immediately after that by which He commands us to love Him with all our heart. He tells us that the whole law and the prophets are enclosed in this commandment of loving our neighbor. Yes, my brethren, we ought to regard this obligation as the most universal, the most necessary, and the most essential to religion, to our salvation; because in fulfilling this commandment we fulfill all the others. Saint Paul tells us that the other commandments forbid us adultery, theft, insults, false testimonies; if we love our neighbor, we shall do none of all that, because the love that we have for our neighbor cannot suffer that we should do him harm.

I say first that this commandment, which orders us to love our neighbor, is the most necessary to our salvation, since Saint John tells us that if we do not love our brother—that is to say, everybody—we remain in a state of reprobation. We see again that Jesus Christ has so much at heart the fulfillment of this commandment that He tells us that it is only by the friendship that we shall have for one another that He will recognize us as His children. Second, I say, my brethren, that what imposes upon us so great an obligation to love one another is that we all have the same creator, all one same origin; that we are all but one same family, of which Jesus Christ is the father, and that we all bear His image and His likeness; that we are all created for one same end, which is eternal glory, and that we have all been redeemed by the death and Passion of Jesus Christ. After that, my brethren, we cannot refuse to love our neighbor without outraging Jesus Christ Himself, who commands it of us under pain of eternal damnation. Saint Paul tells us that since we all have one same hope, which is eternal life, one same Lord, one same faith, one same baptism and one same God, who is the father of all men, we ought therefore to love all men as ourselves, if we wish to please Jesus Christ and save our souls.

But perhaps you are thinking: in what then does the love consist that we ought to have for our neighbor? — My brethren, this love consists in three things: first, in wishing well to everybody; second, in doing them good whenever we can; third, in bearing with, excusing, and hiding their faults. That, my brethren, is the true charity due to the neighbor, and the true mark of a true charity, without which we can neither please God nor save our souls.

First, we ought to wish well to everybody, and to be much afflicted when we learn that some harm happens to him, because we ought to consider all men, even our enemies, as our brothers; we ought to show a good and affable air toward everybody; not to envy those who are better off than we; we ought to love the good because of their virtues, and to love the wicked in order that they may become good; to wish perseverance to the first and conversion to the others. If a man is a great sinner and a wicked man, we may hate the sin, which is the work of man and of the devil; but we must love his person, which is the image of God.

Second, we ought to do good to everybody, at least as far as we can; which is done in three ways that regard the goods of the body, the goods of honor, and the goods of the soul. With regard to the goods of the body, we ought never to wrong our neighbor, nor prevent him from gaining something, even when that profit could come back to us. There are no Christians so pleasing to God as those who have compassion on the unhappy. See Saint Paul: he tells us that he wept with those who wept, and rejoiced with those who were in joy. As for the honor of the neighbor, we ought to take great care never to harm his reputation by evil-speaking, and still less by calumnies. If we can prevent those who speak ill of him, we must prevent them; if we cannot, we must leave them, or else say all the good that we know of these persons. But for the goods of the soul, which are a hundred times more precious than those of the body, we can procure them these goods by praying for them, by turning them from evil by our counsels, and above all by our good examples; we are especially obliged to this toward those with whom we live. Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses are obliged to it in a particular manner, because of the account they will have to render to God of their children. Alas! my brethren, can one well say that fathers and mothers love their children, when they see them live with so much indifference for all that concerns the salvation of their souls? Alas! my brethren, a father and a mother who had the charity they ought to have for their children—could they live without shedding tears, night and day, over the unhappy state of their children who are in sin, who live, alas! as reprobates, who are no longer for heaven, who are only for hell?… Alas! my brethren, how will they love to procure their salvation for them, since they do not even think of their own salvation?

Alas! my brethren, how many fathers and mothers who ought to groan and pray continually over the state of their poor children, and who turn them from good and lead them to evil, by entertaining them with the wrongs, the disputes, the insults that their neighbors have said or done to them, with their bad faith, with the means they have employed to avenge themselves: which often leads the children to wish themselves to be avenged, or at least to keep hatred in the heart. Oh! my brethren, how far the first Christians were from all that, because they felt the price of a soul! Ah! my brethren, if a father and a mother knew the value of a soul, could they leave those of their poor children or of their servants to be lost with so much indifference? Could they make them miss their prayer in order to make them work? Would they have the courage to make them miss the holy offices? O my God! what are they going to answer Jesus Christ when He is going to show them that they preferred a beast to the soul of their children! Ah! what am I saying—a handful of hay! Ah! poor soul, how little one esteems you! No, no, my brethren, these blind and ignorant fathers and mothers have never understood that the loss of a soul is a greater evil than the destruction of all the creatures that exist upon the earth. Let us judge, my brethren, of the dignity of a soul by that of the angels: an angel is so perfect that all that we see upon the earth and in heaven is less than a grain of dust in comparison with the sun; and yet however perfect the angels may be, they have cost God only a word; whereas a soul has cost the value of His adorable blood. The devil, to tempt the Savior, offered Him all the kingdoms of the world, saying to Him: “If you will prostrate yourself before me, I will give you all these goods”; which shows us that a soul is infinitely more precious in the eyes of God, and even of the devil, than the whole universe with all that it possesses. Ah! what shame for these fathers and mothers who esteem the soul of their children less than the devil himself esteems it! Yes, my brethren, your soul is of so great a price that Saint John Chrysostom tells us that, even if there had been only one man upon the earth, his soul is so precious to Jesus Christ that He would not have thought it unworthy of Him to die to save it. “Yes,” he says, “a soul is so dear to its Creator that, if it loved Him, He would rather annihilate the heavens than leave it to perish.” “O body,” Saint Bernard cried, “how you are honored to lodge so fair a soul!” Tell me, my brethren, if you had been at the foot of the cross, and if you had gathered the adorable blood of Jesus Christ in a vessel, with what respect would you not have preserved it? Now, my brethren, we ought to have as much respect and care to preserve our soul, because it has cost all the blood of Jesus Christ. “Since,” Saint Augustine tells us, “I recognized that my soul was redeemed by the blood of a God, I resolved to preserve it, even at the expense of my life, and never to sell it to the devil by sin.” Ah! fathers and mothers, if you were well convinced that you are the guardians of the

souls of your children, could you well leave them to perish with so much coldness? My God, how many persons damned for having left poor souls to be lost, which they could well have prevented if they had wished! No, my brethren, we have not the charity that we ought to have for one another, and especially for our children and our servants.

We read in history that in the time of the first Christians, when the pagan emperors questioned them to know what they were, they answered them: “You ask us what we are—here it is: We make only one people and one family, which the bonds of charity unite together; as for our goods, they are all in common: he who has gives to him who has not; no one complains, no one avenges himself, no one speaks ill of another, and no one does harm to another. We pray for one another, and even for our enemies; instead of avenging ourselves, we do good to those who do us harm; we bless those who curse us.” Ah! my brethren, what has become of those happy times? Alas! how many Christians now are possessed only by love of themselves, and have none for the neighbor!

Do you wish, my brethren, to know what the Christians of our days are? Listen to me—here it is. If two persons who are together are of the same humor, of the same character, or else have the same inclinations, you see them loving each other well, living together; that is still not difficult. But if the humor or the character do not agree, there is no longer either peace, or friendship, or charity, or neighbor. Alas! my brethren, these are Christians who have only a false religion: they love their neighbor only insofar as he is of their inclination, and enters into their sentiments and their interests; otherwise, one can no longer see one another, bear with one another: one must separate, they say, to have peace and save one’s soul. Go, poor hypocrites, go, separate yourselves from those who are not, you say, of your character, and with whom you cannot live; you will not go as far from them as you are from God. Go, your religion is only a phantom, and you yourselves are only reprobates. You have never known either your religion, or what it commands you, or the charity that you ought to have for your brother in order to please God and save yourselves. It is not very difficult to love those who love us, and who are of our sentiments in all that we say or do; for in that there is nothing more than the pagans—they did just as much. Saint James tells us: “If you give a good welcome to a rich man, and despise a poor man; if you greet with good grace the one who has done you some good, while you scarcely greet the one who has done you some insult; you neither fulfill the law nor have the charity that you ought to have; you do nothing more than those who do not know the good God.”

— “But,” you will say to me, “how then ought we to love our neighbor?” Here it is. Saint Augustine tells us that we ought to love him as Jesus Christ loves us: He consulted neither flesh nor blood, but He loved us to sanctify us and to merit eternal life for us. We ought to wish and desire for our neighbor all the good that we can wish for ourselves. Yes, my brethren, we shall know that we are on the road to heaven and that we truly love the good God only insofar as, finding ourselves with persons entirely opposed to our character, and who seem to contradict us in everything, we nevertheless love them as ourselves, we see them with good grace, we speak well of them and never ill, we seek their company, we anticipate them and we render them service in preference to all those who enter into our interests and contradict us in nothing. If we do that we may hope that our soul is in the friendship of God and that we love our neighbor in a Christian manner. That is the rule and the model that Jesus Christ has left us and that all the saints have followed; let us not deceive ourselves—there is no other road that leads us to heaven. If you do not do that, do not doubt for a single instant that you are walking in that of perdition. Go, poor blind ones—pray, do penance, assist well at the offices, frequent the sacraments every day if you wish; give all your goods to those who love you—you will not fail to go and burn at the end of your life! Alas! my brethren, how little true devotion there is! how many devotions of character, of inclination! There are people who give everything, and who are ready to sacrifice everything, when it is for persons who suit them or who love them. Alas! how few there are who have this charity which pleases God and which leads to heaven!

Hold, my brethren—do you wish a fair example of Christian charity? Here is one that can serve you as a model all your life. It is related in the history of the Fathers of the desert that a solitary met on the road a poor cripple all covered with ulcers and rottenness; he was in so miserable a state that he could neither earn his living nor drag himself along. The solitary, touched with compassion, carried him into his cell, gave him all the reliefs he could. The poor man, having recovered his strength, the solitary said to him: "Do you wish, my dear brother, to remain with me? I will do all that I can to feed you, and we will pray and serve the good God together." — "Oh! how much joy you give me," the poor man said to him; "how happy I am to find in your charity a resource for my misery!" The solitary, who already had much trouble earning his living, redoubled his work to have enough to feed his poor man; and he tried to feed him as well as he could and much better than he fed himself. But after some time this poor man began to murmur against his benefactor, complaining that he fed him too badly. "Alas! my dear friend," the solitary said to him, "I feed you better than myself; I can do nothing else for you than what I do." Some days later this ungrateful one began his complaints again, and poured out against his benefactor a torrent of insults. The solitary suffered all that with patience, without answering anything. The poor man was ashamed of having spoken in that way to so holy a man, who did him only good; and he asked his pardon. But he soon fell again into the same impatience and took such a hatred against this good solitary that he could no longer bear him. "I am weary of living with you," he said to him; "I want you to carry me back to the road where you found me; I am not accustomed to being so badly fed." The solitary asked his pardon, promising him that he would try to treat him better. The good God inspired him to go find a charitable townsman of the neighborhood, to ask him for food a little better for his cripple. The townsman, touched with compassion, told him to come every day to fetch what was needed to feed him. The poor man seemed content; but after some weeks he began again to make new and sharp reproaches to the solitary. "Go," he said to him, "you are only a hypocrite; you pretend to go seek alms for me, and it is for yourself; you eat the best in secret, and you give me only your leftovers." — "Ah! my friend," the solitary said to him, "you do me wrong; I assure you that I never ask anything for myself, that I do not even touch a morsel of what is given me for you; if you are not content with the services I render you, at least have patience for the love of Jesus Christ, while waiting until I do better." — "Go," the poor man said to him, "I have no need of your remonstrances," and at once he seized a pebble and threw it at the solitary's head, who avoided the blow. Then this unhappy man took a great stick, which he used to drag himself along, and gave him so rude a blow with it that he made him fall to the ground. "May the good God pardon you," the good solitary said to him; "as for me, I pardon you well, for the love of Jesus Christ, the ill treatments that you do me." — "You say that you pardon me; but it is only with the tip of the lips [du bout des lèvres], because I know that you would already wish to see me dead." — "I assure you, my friend," the good solitary said to him tenderly, "that it is with all my heart that I pardon you." This good solitary wished to embrace him to show that he loved him. In that moment the poor man took him by the throat, tore his face with his nails, and wished to strangle him. The solitary having freed himself from his hands, the poor man said to him: "Go, you will never die except by my hands." This good solitary, who was always touched with compassion and filled with a truly Christian charity, took patience with him for three or four years. During that time, God alone knows how much he had to suffer from the poor man. He told him at every moment that he wanted him to carry him back to the road where he had found him, that he would rather die of hunger or of cold, or else be devour by the beasts, than live with him. This good solitary did not know what to decide; on one side, his charity represented to him that by carrying him back to the place where he had found him, he was going to perish of misery; on the other side, he feared to lose patience in this combat. The thought came to him of going to consult Saint Anthony on the course he ought to take to be most pleasing to the good God; he feared neither the pain nor the outrages that he received for all his benefits; but he wished only to know the will of God. Being near Saint Anthony, without telling him anything, this one, by whose mouth the Holy Spirit spoke, said to him: "Ah! my son, I know what brings you here, and why you come to find me. Take great care not to follow the thought you have of sending this poor man away; it is a hard temptation of the devil, who wishes to take away your crown; if you had the misfortune to abandon him, my son, the good God

would not abandon him." It seemed, according to what Saint Anthony said to him, that his salvation was bound up with the cares he gave to this poor man. "But, my father," the solitary said to him, "I fear to lose patience with him." — "And why would you lose it, my son," Saint Anthony replied to him; "do you not know that it is toward those who do us the most harm that we ought to exercise our charity most generously? My son, tell me, what merit would you have in having patience with a person who would never do you any harm? Do you not know, my son, that charity is a courageous virtue, which does not look at the vices of the one who causes us pain, but which looks only at God alone. Therefore, my son, I strongly urge you to keep this poor man: the more wicked he is, the more you ought to have pity on him; all that you do for him by charity, Jesus Christ will hold as done to Himself. Make it appear, my son, by your patience, that you are the disciple of a suffering God. Remember that it is by patience and by charity that one knows a Christian. Look upon this poor man as the one of whom God wishes to make use to make you work for your crown." The solitary was very satisfied to know from this great saint that it was the will of God that he should keep his poor man, and that all that he did toward him was very pleasing to God. He goes to find his poor man, and forgetting all the insults and the ill treatments that he had received from him until that day, showing him a charity that no longer had bounds, he served him with an admirable humility, and did not cease to pray for him. The good God saw in this young solitary so much patience and charity that He converted this poor man; and thereby showed His servant how pleasing to Him all that he had done was, since He granted this unhappy man his salvation and his conversion.

What do you think of that, my brethren? Is that a Christian charity, yes or no? Oh! how this example, on the great day of judgment, is going to confound Christians who will not even suffer a word, bear for eight days the bad character of a person, without murmuring, without perhaps wishing him harm. One must leave each other, one must separate to have peace, they say. O my God! how many Christians damn themselves by the lack of charity! No, no, my brethren, even if you worked miracles, you will never be saved if you have not charity. No, my brethren, that is not knowing one's religion; that is having only a religion of caprice, of humor, and of inclination. Go, go—you are only hypocrites and reprobates! Without charity, never will you see the good God, never will you go to heaven!… Give your goods, make great alms to those who love you or who please you, assist every day at holy Mass, communicate every day if you wish; you are only hypocrites and reprobates; continue your road and you will soon be in hell!… You cannot bear the faults of your neighbor because he is too trying; you do not love to be with him. Go see, go, unhappy one—you are only a hypocrite; you have only a false religion, which, with all the good that you do, will lead you to hell. O my God! how rare this virtue is! Alas! it is as rare as those are rare who will go to heaven.

"I do not even like to see them," you will say; "at church they give me distractions with all their manners." Ah! unhappy one, say rather that you have not charity, and that you are only a wretch who loves only those who enter into your sentiments or your interests, who contradict you in nothing, and who flatter you about your good works, who love to thank you for your benefits and who pay you with gratitude. You will do everything for these; you do not even fear to deprive yourself of your necessities to relieve them; but if they despise you or pay with ingratitude, you no longer love them, you no longer wish to see them, you flee their companies; you are content to cut short the conversations you have with them. O my God! how many false devotions that can lead us only among the reprobate! If you doubt it, my brethren, listen to Saint Paul, who cannot deceive you: "Though," he tells us, "I should give all my goods to the poor, though I should work miracles by raising the dead, if I have not charity, I am nothing other than a hypocrite." But to convince you of it better, run through the whole Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, see all the Lives of the Saints—you will find none who have not had this virtue: that is to say, who have not loved those who insulted them, who wished them harm, who paid them with ingratitude for their benefits. No, no, you will not see one who has not preferred to do good to the one who will have done him some wrongs. See Saint Francis de Sales, who tells us that if he had only one good work to do, he would choose the one who has done him some outrage, rather than the one who has rendered him some service.

Alas! my brethren, how far a person who has not charity goes for evil! If a person has given him some pain, you see him examining all her actions; he judges them, he condemns them, he turns them to evil, always believing he is right. — But, you will say to me, there are many times when one sees that they act badly; one cannot think otherwise. — My friend, as you have no charity, you believe that they do badly; but if you had charity, you would think quite otherwise, because you would always think that you can well be mistaken, as that happens so often; and to convince you of it, here is an example that I beg you never to erase from your mind, especially when you think that your neighbor does badly. It is related in the history of the Fathers of the desert that a solitary named Simeon, having remained several years in solitude, the thought came to him of going into the world; but he asked the good God that never in his life should men know his intentions. The good God having granted him this grace, he went into the world. He counterfeited the fool; he delivered the possessed from the devil, and he healed the sick; he went into the houses of women of bad life, made them swear that they would love only him, giving them all the money he had. Everybody looked upon him as a solitary who had lost his mind. One saw every day this man, who was more than seventy years old, playing with the children in the streets; at other times he went and threw himself into the midst of public dances to jump with the others, telling them some words that well showed them the evil they were doing. But one looked upon that as coming from a madman, and one only despised him. At other times he mounted upon the theaters, from which he threw stones at all those who were below. When he saw persons who were possessed by the devil, he put himself with them, and counterfeited the possessed as if he himself had been so. One saw him running into the inns, putting himself with the drunkards; in the markets he rolled on the ground, and did a thousand other things all very extravagant. Everybody condemned him, despised him; some looked upon him as a madman, others as a libertine and a bad subject who deserved only prison. And yet, my brethren, in spite of all that, he was a saint, who sought only contempt and to win souls to God, although everybody judged ill of him. Which shows us that although the very actions of our neighbor appear bad to us, we ought not ourselves to judge ill of them. Often we judge them bad, while in the eyes of God they are not. Ah! how he who had the happiness of having charity, that fair and incomparable virtue, would take good care not to judge and to wish harm to his neighbor!

— But, you will say to me, his character is too bad; one cannot bear it. — You cannot bear it, my friend—do you then believe yourself to be a saint, and without fault? Poor blind man! You will see one day that you have made those around you suffer more than they have made you suffer. It is the ordinary thing that the worst believe that they make others suffer nothing, and that they have everything to suffer from others. O my God, how blind man is when charity is not in his heart! On the other hand, if you had nothing to suffer from those who are with you, what then would you have to present to the good God? — When then will one be able to know that one is on the road that leads to heaven? — No, no, my brethren, so long as you do not love those who are of a humor, of a character altogether different from yours, and even those who contradict you in what you do, you will be only a hypocrite and not a good Christian. Do as many other goods as you wish—that will not prevent you from being damned.

Besides, see the conduct that the saints held, and how they behaved toward their neighbor; here is an example that shows us that this virtue alone seems to assure us heaven. It is related in history that a solitary who had led a very imperfect life, at least in appearance and in the eyes of the world, found himself at the hour of death so consoled and so content that his superior was much astonished at it. Thinking that it was a blindness of the devil, he asked him whence this great contentment could come; that he knew well nevertheless that his life had scarcely anything to reassure him, seeing that the judgments of God are so terrible, even to the most just. “It is true, my father,” the dying man said to him, “that I have not done extraordinary works, and even that I have almost done nothing good; but I have tried all my life to practice this great precept of the Lord, which is to love everybody, to think well of all, to bear with faults and to excuse them and to render them service; I have done it whenever the occasion presented itself; I have tried to do harm to no one, to speak ill of no one and to think well of everybody: that, my father, is what makes all my consolation and my hope in

this moment, and what, in spite of all my imperfections, gives me the hope that the good God will have pity on me." The superior was so astonished at that that he cried out with transports of admiration: "O my God! how fair and precious this virtue is in Your eyes!" "Go, my son," he said to the solitary, "you have done everything and accomplished everything, in accomplishing this commandment; go, heaven is assured for you." Ah! my brethren, if we knew this virtue well, and what its price is in the eyes of God, with what eagerness would we not seize all the occasions to practice it, since it encloses all the other virtues and assures us heaven so well? No, no, my brethren, we are only hypocrites so long as this virtue does not accompany all our actions.

But think within yourselves: whence comes it that we have not this charity, since it already makes us so happy in this world by the peace and the union that reign among those who have the great happiness of having it? — My brethren, three things make us lose it, namely: avarice, pride, and envy. Tell me, why is it that you do not love that person? Alas! it is because she does not enter into your interests; because she will have said some words against you, or done something that did not suit you; or else because you asked her some service that she refused you; or else that she will have made some profit that you hoped to make: that is what prevents you from loving her as you ought. You do not pay attention that so long as you do not love your neighbor—that is to say, everybody—as you would wish to be loved, you are such that if you came to die, you would be damned. Yet you still love to nourish in your heart sentiments that are not very charitable; you flee these persons; but take great care, my friend, that the good God does not flee you also. Never lose sight of the fact that for as much time as you do not love your neighbor, the good God is in fury against you; if you came to die, He would cast you at once into hell. O my God! can one well live with hatred in the heart!… Alas! my friend, you are no longer anything but an abominable one in the eyes of God, if you are without charity. Is it because you see great faults in your neighbor? Alas! my friend, be well persuaded that you have still much greater ones in the eyes of God and that you do not know. It is true that we ought not to love the faults and the vices of the sinner; but we ought to love his person; for, although a sinner, he does not cease to be the creature of God and His image. If you wish to love only those who have no faults, you will love no one, because no one is without faults. Let us reason, my brethren, as better Christians: the more a Christian is a sinner, the more he is worthy of compassion and of possessing a place in our heart. No, my brethren, however bad those with whom we live may be, we ought not to hate them; but, after the example of Jesus Christ, to love them more than ourselves. See how Jesus Christ, who is our model, behaved toward His enemies: He prayed for them and He died for them. What led the apostles to cross the seas, and to go finish their life by martyrdom? Is it not love for their enemies? See the charity of Saint Francis Xavier, who left his country and all his goods, to go dwell among barbarians, who make him suffer all that it is possible to make a Christian suffer, short of death. See a Saint Abraham, solitary, who left his solitude to go preach the faith in a country where no one had been able to make it received. Was it not his charity that was the cause that he was struck and dragged on the ground until he was left half dead? Could he not leave them in their blindness? Yes, without doubt, but his charity, the great desire to save their poor souls, makes him suffer all these insults. Yes, my brethren, he who has charity sees no faults in his brother, but only the necessity of helping him to save his soul, whatever it may cost.

We say that if we love our neighbor well, we shall take great care not to scandalize him and to do nothing that can turn him from good to lead him to evil. Yes, my brethren, we ought to love everybody and do him good as far as we can for soul and for body; because Jesus Christ tells us that when we do some good to the neighbor in his body, we do it to Himself; but all the more when we help him to save his soul. Never lose sight of these words of Jesus Christ, who tells us in the Gospel: "Come, you blessed of My Father; I was hungry, you gave Me to eat," and so on. See the charity of Saint Serapion, who left his habit to give it to a poor man; he met another, he gave him his under-habit; having nothing left but his book of the Gospel, he goes to sell it in order to be able to give still. His disciple asked him who had stripped him thus. He told him that he had read in his book: "Sell and give all that you have to the poor, and you will have a treasure in

heaven; that is why I have sold even my book." He went still further: he gave himself to a poor widow to have himself sold, so that she might have enough to feed her children; and being led among the barbarians, he had the great happiness of converting a great number of them. Oh! fair virtue! if we had the happiness of possessing you, how many souls we should lead to the good God!…. When Saint John the Almsgiver thought of this fair action of Saint Serapion: "I had believed," he said to his friends, "that I had done something, in giving all my money to the poor; but I recognized that I have still done nothing, because I have not given myself as the blessed Serapion, who gave himself to feed the children of a widow."

Let us conclude, my brethren, that charity is one of the fairest virtues, and the one that most assures us the friendship of the good God; with other virtues, we can still be on the road to hell; but with charity, which is universal, which does not flee, which loves its enemies as its friends, which does good to those who do it harm, as to those who do it good… he who possesses it is sure that heaven is for him!… That is the happiness that I wish for you.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost — On Absolution

Quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt. The sins will be remitted to those to whom you remit them, and they will be retained to those to whom you retain them. (John 20:23)

How much it has cost this divine Savior, my brethren, to give efficacy to these words: "The sins will be remitted to those to whom you remit them, and retained to those to whom you retain them!" Alas! what torments, what opprobrium, and what a painful death!… But we are so blind, so coarse, so little spiritual, that most believe that it depends only on the priest to give or to refuse absolution as he pleases. No, my brethren, we deceive ourselves grossly; a minister of the sacrament of Penance is only the dispenser of the graces and merits of Jesus Christ; he can give them only according to the rules that are prescribed to him. Alas! with what fright ought a poor priest to be seized, in exercising a ministry so formidable, where he is in so great a danger of losing himself while wishing to save others. What a terrible rendering of account for a poor priest, when the judgment comes and all these absolutions are put back before his eyes by God Himself, to examine whether he has not been either too prodigal of the graces of heaven, or too severe. Alas! my brethren, how difficult it is always to walk quite straight! How many priests, at the judgment, will wish they had not been priests, but simple laymen! How many of the faithful are also going to find themselves guilty, who perhaps have never prayed to God for their pastors who have exposed themselves to being lost in order to save them!…

But if a priest has the power to remit sins, he also has the power to retain them, and Saint Gregory the Great tells us that a priest must carefully examine what the dispositions of the sinner are, before giving him absolution. He must see whether his heart is changed, whether he has well taken all the resolutions that a converted sinner ought to have. It is therefore evident that the minister of penance must defer or refuse absolution to certain sinners, under pain of damning himself with his penitent. I am going then to show you or teach you, first, what absolution is; second, who are those to whom it must be given or refused: a matter very interesting, since it is a question of your salvation or of your loss.

How happy man is, my brethren—but how guilty he is! I say that he is happy; since, after having lost his God, heaven, and his soul, he can still hope to find means so easy to repair this great loss, which is that of an eternity of happiness. The rich man who has lost his fortune often cannot, in spite of his good will, reestablish it; but has the Christian lost his eternal fortune? He can recover it without its costing him anything, so to speak. O my God! how You love sinners, since You furnish us so many means of recovering heaven! I say that we are very guilty to be able to gain so many goods and to despise everything! You have lost heaven, my friend—and why do you wish to live in such poverty?… My God! how the sinful man can avoid his misfortune, and what facility he has to be able to repair it!

If you ask me what absolution is, I will tell you that it is a judgment that the priest pronounces, in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ, and by which our sins are as remitted, as blotted out, as if we had never committed them, if the one who confesses them receives it with the dispositions that this sacrament demands. Ah! my brethren, who of us will be able to keep from admiring the efficacy of this judgment of mercy? O happy moment for a converted sinner!… Scarcely has the minister pronounced these words: "I absolve you," when the soul is washed, purified of all its stains, by the Precious Blood that flows upon it. My God! how good You are toward a sinner!… Let us say again, my brethren, that our poor soul is torn from the tyranny of the devil and reestablished in the friendship and the grace of its God; it recovers peace, that peace so precious, which makes all the happiness of man in this world and in the other; innocence is restored to it, with all its rights to the kingdom of God, which its sins had robbed from it. Tell me, my brethren, ought we not to be penetrated and softened even to tears at the sight of so many marvels? Would you have been able to think that, each time a sinner receives absolution, all these goods are granted him? But all that is given and ought to be given only to those who deserve it—that is to say, who are sinners, it is true, but converted sinners, who regret their past life, not only because they have lost heaven, but because they have been led to outrage Him who deserves to be infinitely loved.

If you desire to know when one ought to defer or refuse you absolution, here it is: listen to it well and engrave it in your heart, so that each time you go to confess, you may know whether you deserve to be absolved or sent away. I find eight reasons that ought to lead the priest to defer you absolution; it is the Church Herself who has given these rules over which the priest must not pass; if he exceeds them, woe to him and to the one he leads: it is a blind man who leads another; they both cast themselves into hell. The duty of the minister is to apply these rules well, and yours, never to murmur when he does not give you absolution. If a priest refuses it to you, it is because he loves you and truly desires to save your poor soul, and you will know that only on the day of judgment: it is then that you will see that it was only the desire he had of leading you to heaven that led him to defer you absolution. If he had granted it to you, as you desired, you would be damned. You ought therefore never, my brethren, to murmur when a priest does not give you absolution; on the contrary, you ought to thank the good God for it, and work with all your strength to deserve this happiness.

I say first, that those who are not sufficiently instructed do not deserve absolution: the priest must not give it to them, and cannot without making himself guilty; because every Christian is obliged to know Jesus Christ with His mysteries, with His doctrine, His laws, and His sacraments. Saint Charles Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, tells us expressly that one must not give absolution to those who do not know the principal mysteries of Christianity, and the particular obligations of their state: "especially," he tells us, "when one recognizes that their ignorance comes from their indifference for their salvation." The laws of the Church forbid giving absolution to fathers and mothers, to masters and mistresses who do not instruct their children or their servants, or who do not have them instructed by others in all that is necessary to be saved; who do not watch over their conduct; who neglect to correct them of their disorders and their faults. To tell you that those who do not know what is necessary to be saved do not deserve absolution is as if I said to a person that she is in the precipice without giving her the means of getting out of it. I am going then to show you what you ought to know to get out of this abyss of ignorance; engrave it well in your hearts, so that it may never be erased from them, that you may teach it to your children and that your children may teach it to others.

Let us renew, my brethren, what I have already told you several times: a Christian must know the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed, the *Confiteor*, the three acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, the Commandments of God and of the Church, and his act of Contrition. I do not mean only the words—because one would have to be furiously ignorant not to know them; but it is necessary that, if one questions you, you may be able to give an account of the explanation of each article in particular, and of what they mean. That is what is asked of you, and not merely to know the words. You must know that the Our Father was composed by God Himself; that

the Hail Mary was composed, one part by the angel, when he came to find the holy Virgin to announce to her the mystery of the Incarnation, and the other part by the Church; you must know that the Creed was composed by the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Spirit, before dispersing themselves into the world; which makes it that in all places of the world the same religion and the same mysteries are taught. It encloses the abridgment of our whole holy religion, the mystery of the holy Trinity, which is one God in three persons—that it is the Father who created us, that it is the Son who redeemed us by His death and His sufferings, and that it is the Holy Spirit who sanctified us in holy Baptism.

When you say: "I believe in God the Father almighty, creator," and so on, it is as if you said: I believe that the eternal Father has created everything, our bodies and our souls, that the world has not always been, that it will not always last, that one day everything will be annihilated. "I believe in Jesus Christ"—it is as if you said: I believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the holy Trinity, made Himself man, that He suffered, that He died to redeem us, to merit for us the heaven that the sin of Adam had robbed from us. "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church," and so on—it is as if you said: I believe that there is only one religion, which is that of the Church, that it is Jesus Christ Himself who established it, that He has enclosed all His graces in it, that all those who are not in this Church will not be saved, and that this Church must last until the end of the world. When you say: "I believe in the communion of saints," it is as if you said: I believe that all Christians share their prayers, all their good works; I believe that the saints who are in heaven pray to the good God for us, and that we can pray for those who are in the flames of purgatory. When you say: "I believe in the remission of sins," it is as if you said: I believe that there are, in the Church of Jesus Christ, sacraments that remit every kind of sin, and that there are no sins that the Church of Jesus Christ cannot remit. In saying: "The resurrection of the flesh," that means that our same bodies, which we have now, will rise again one day, that our souls will reenter them to go into heaven, if we have had the happiness of serving the good God well, or to go into hell to burn there throughout eternity if… In saying: "I believe in eternal life," it is to say: I believe that the other life will never end, that our soul will last as long as God Himself, who is without end. When you say: "From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead," it is as if you said: I believe that Jesus Christ is in heaven in body and in soul, and that it is He Himself who will come to judge us, to reward those who will have done well and to punish those who will have despised Him.

You must know that the Commandments of God were given to Adam in creating him—that is to say, that God engraved them in his heart, and that after Adam had sinned, God gave them to Moses written on tables of stone, on Mount Sinai. They are the same that God Himself renewed when He came upon the earth to save us all.

I say that you must know your three acts, of Faith, of Hope, and of Charity. I do not mean simply the words (who does not know them?) but the sense of these acts. Faith makes us believe all that the Church teaches us, although we cannot understand it; it makes us believe that God sees us, watches over our preservation, that He will reward us or punish us according as we shall have done well or ill; that there is a heaven for the good and a hell for the wicked; that God has suffered and that He died for us. Hope makes us do all our actions in the view of pleasing God, because they will be rewarded throughout all eternity. We must believe that neither faith nor hope will any longer be necessary in heaven, or rather that we shall have neither faith nor hope: nothing to believe because there will be no more mysteries, nor anything to hope, since we shall see all that we ought to have believed and shall possess all that we shall have hoped; there will be left only love, which will consume us throughout all eternity: which will make all our happiness. In this world, the love of God consists in loving the good God above all that is created, preferring Him to everything, even to our life. That, my brethren, is what one means when one says that you must know the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Creed, the *Confiteor*, the One God, and your three acts. If you do not know that, you do not know what is necessary to save yourselves; it is necessary at least that if one questions you on what I have just told you, you may be able to answer.

That is not yet all: you must know what the mystery of the Incarnation is and what this word Incarnation means. You must know that this mystery means that the second person of the holy Trinity took a body like ours in the womb of the most holy Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. We honor this mystery on the 25th of March, the day of the Annunciation; for it is on that day that the Son of God united, joined His divinity to our humanity; that He took a body like ours, except sin, and that He charged Himself with all our sins to satisfy the justice of His Father. You must know that it is on the 25th of December that Jesus Christ came into the world, at midnight, on Christmas Day. You know that three Masses are said that day, to honor the three births of Jesus Christ: the first, in the bosom of His Father, which is from all eternity; the second, His bodily birth in the crib; and the third, His birth in our souls by holy communion. You must know that it is on Holy Thursday that Jesus Christ instituted the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist. The eve of His death, being with His apostles, He took bread, blessed it, changed it into His body. He took wine with a little water, changed it into His blood, and gave to all priests, in the person of His apostles, the power to do the same miracle whenever they would pronounce the same words: which is done during holy Mass when the priest pronounces the words of consecration. You must know that it is on Good Friday that Jesus Christ died—that is to say, that He died as man and not as God; because, as God, He could not die;—that He rose again on the holy day of Easter, that means that His soul reunited itself to His body, and that after remaining forty days upon the earth, He ascended into heaven on Ascension Day; that the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. You must, if one questions you and asks you when the sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ (or when they) had their effect—that is to say, communicated all His graces to us—be able to say that it was only after Pentecost. — If one asked you who instituted them, you must answer that only Jesus Christ could have instituted them; it is neither the holy Virgin nor the apostles. You must know how many there are, what the effects of each sacrament are, and what dispositions one must have to receive them; you must know that Baptism blots out in us original sin, which is the sin of Adam, and which we have in coming into the world; that Confirmation is given us by the bishop, and that it gives us the Holy Spirit with the abundance of His graces; that Penance is given us when we confess, and that, while the priest gives us absolution, if we are well prepared, all our sins are blotted out. In the holy Eucharist, we receive, not the holy Virgin, nor the angels, nor the saints, but the adorable Body and the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. As God, we receive there the three persons of the holy Trinity—that is to say, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and as man we receive only the Son: that is to say, His body and His soul united to His divinity. — The sacrament of Extreme Unction is the one that helps us to die well, and is instituted to purify us from the sins that we have committed by all our senses. That of Holy Orders communicates to men the same power that the Son of God gave to His apostles. This sacrament was instituted when Jesus Christ said to His apostles: “Do this in memory of Me, and whenever you pronounce the same words, you will work the same miracle.” The sacrament of Matrimony sanctifies the Christians who unite themselves together according to the laws of the Church and of the State. There is still to be said to you that there is a difference between the sacrament of the Eucharist and the others. In that of the Eucharist, we receive the adorable Body and the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, whereas in the others we receive only the application of His Precious Blood. One also gives the name of sacraments of the dead to some, and to others the name of sacraments of the living. Here is why one says that Baptism, Penance, and sometimes Extreme Unction are sacraments of the dead: because our soul is dead in the eyes of God by sin. These sacraments raise our soul again to grace; and the others that one calls sacraments of the living, it is because one must be in the state of grace to receive them—that is to say, without sin. You must still know that when Jesus Christ suffered on the cross, neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit suffered, nor died; but it is only the Son who suffered and who died as man and not as God. Well then! my brethren, if I had questioned you, would you have answered well to all that?… If you do not know all that I have just told you, you are not sufficiently instructed to save yourselves.

We have said that fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses must be instructed in all that concerns their state in order to save themselves. A father, a mother, a master, a mistress must know all the obligations they

have to fulfill toward their children and their servants—that is to say, know their religion perfectly, in order to teach it to their children and their servants; without which, they are only poor unhappy ones who cast themselves all into hell. Alas! how many fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses who do not even know their religion, who wallow with their children and their servants in a crass ignorance, and who have nothing to expect but death to be cast into hell! Saint Paul tells us that he who is ignorant of his duties deserves to be ignored by God. You will agree with me that all these persons are unworthy of absolution, and, if they have the misfortune to receive it, it is only a sacrilege that falls upon their poor soul. O my God! how ignorance damns people! We are quite sure that this single sin will damn more than all the others together; because an ignorant person knows neither the evil she does in sinning, nor the good she loses; so that an ignorant person is a lost person!

Second, I say that one must defer absolution to those who give no mark of contrition—that is to say, of regret for the sins they have committed. First, experience teaches us that we ought scarcely to trust all the promises and all the protestations that are made. All tell us that they are sorry to have offended the good God, that they wish to correct themselves in good earnest, and that if they come to confess, it is only for that. The priest, believing them sincere, gives them absolution. What follows from all these resolutions? Here it is: that eight days after they have been absolved, they forget all their promises and return to their vomit [retournent à leur vomissement]—that is to say, to all their bad habits. Thus all protestations are not sufficient proofs of conversion. Jesus Christ tells us that it is only by the fruit that one knows the tree; likewise, it is only by the change of life that one can know whether one has had the contrition necessary to be worthy of absolution. When one has truly renounced one's sins, one must not be content with weeping over them; one must still renounce, leave, and flee all that is capable of leading us to them—that is to say, be ready to suffer everything rather than fall again into the sins we have just confessed. One must see in us an entire change; without which, we have not deserved absolution, and there is every reason to believe that we have only committed a sacrilege. Alas! how few there are in whom one sees this change after having received absolution!… My God! how many sacrileges!… Ah! if at least out of every thirty absolutions there were one good one, how soon the world would be converted! These persons therefore do not deserve absolution who do not give sufficient marks of contrition. Alas! how many times, because they are sent away, they come no more. It is therefore truly because they had no desire to convert themselves, since, far from leaving their confession until another Easter, they would have worked with all their heart to change their life, and to come back to be reconciled with the good God.

Third, I say that one must refuse absolution to all those who keep hatreds, resentments in their heart, who refuse to pardon or to make the first steps to be reconciled; so that, my brethren, one must take great care never to receive absolution when you have something against your neighbor. After having had some difficulty, you must be as well disposed to render him service, and with good grace, as if all your life he had done you only good. If you are content to say that you wish him no harm, but that you leave him as he is; and that you do not greet him with good grace, that you avoid his company, that you prefer others to them: you do not love them as you ought, in order that the good God may pardon you your sins. God will pardon you only insofar as you truly pardon your neighbor, and so long as you feel something in your heart against him, the best is to work to root that out; afterward, you will receive absolution. I know well that one can, and even that one ought, to avoid the companies that can expose us to disputing with one another, where one speaks only of the conduct of the neighbors. With regard to those persons, here is how one must behave: frequent them only when it is necessary; but wish them no harm, nor speak any; be content to pray to the good God for them. Listen to what Jesus Christ tells us in the Gospel: "If, being on the point of presenting your offering at the altar, you remember that your brother has something against you, or that you have offended him, leave there your offering, and go first be reconciled with your brother. A judgment," Jesus Christ tells us, "is reserved for him who will not have shown mercy to his brother." You understand, my brethren, as well as I, that whenever we have something against someone, we ought not to receive absolution; because that would

be exposing ourselves to committing a sacrilege, which is the greatest of all misfortunes.

Fourth, I say that one must treat in the same way those who have done some wrong to the neighbor and who refuse to repair the evil they have done either in his person or in his goods; one cannot even give absolution to a person who is at the point of death, who has restitutions to make and who leaves them to be made by his heirs. All the Fathers say that for him who has another's goods, who could restore them and who does not restore them, there is no pardon nor salvation to hope for him.

Fifth, I say that one must refuse absolution to those who are in the proximate occasion of sinning, and who refuse to leave it. One calls proximate occasion of sinning everything that can ordinarily lead us to commit it, such as spectacles, balls, dances, bad books, dishonest conversations, profane songs, indecent pictures, dishonest ways of dressing, bad companies, the frequentation of persons of different sexes, liaisons with persons with whom one has already sinned, and so on. As are still the merchants who know how to sell nothing without lying or insulting; such are the tavern-keepers who give drink to drunkards and during the offices or at night; as also to servants who are solicited to evil by someone of the house. To all these sorts of persons, the priest must not and cannot, without damning himself, give them absolution, unless these persons promise to leave these things, and to renounce all those that can lead them to sin, or that are for them an occasion of sin. Otherwise, in receiving absolution, they can only commit a sacrilege.

Sixth, I say that one must refuse absolution to those who are scandalous; who, by their words, their counsels, and their pernicious examples, lead others to sin; such are those bad Christians who turn into ridicule the word of God and those who announce it, whether they be their pastors or other priests; who mock religion, piety, and holy things; who say words contrary to the faith or else to good morals; those who hold in their houses evening gatherings, profane dances, forbidden games; who have dishonest, indecent pictures, or bad books; as are still persons of the sex who adorn themselves with the intention of pleasing, who, by their looks, their manners, their pretentious bearing, cause so many fornications and adulteries of the heart to be committed. A confessor, Saint Charles says, must refuse absolution to all these persons, since it is written: "Woe to him by whom scandal comes."

Seventh, I say that one must refuse absolution—that is to say, defer it—to habitual sinners, who fall again for a long time into the same sins, who make no efforts, or at least very few, to correct themselves. Of this number are those who have the habit of lying at every moment, who make no scruple of it, who will take pleasure in telling lies to make others laugh; as those who have the habit of speaking ill of the neighbor, who always have something to say about him; as those who swear these little oaths: My God, yes; my God, no; faith; *pardi*, *parbleu*, and other similar things; those who have the habit of eating at every hour, even without necessity; who lose patience at every moment, for a nothing; those who drink and eat to excess; as those who do not make enough efforts to correct themselves of these thoughts of pride, of vanity, of bad thoughts against purity; finally, I say that one will refuse absolution to all those who do not themselves accuse their sins, who wait, to say them, until the confessor asks them. It is not for the priest to confess your sins, but for you; if the priest puts some question to you, it is to supply what you could not have known. — Alas! from some one must, so to speak, tear their sins from the bottom of the heart; and there are some who will dispute with their confessor, saying that they have not done great harm. It is evident that those persons are not worthy to receive absolution, and that they have not the dispositions necessary that this sacrament demands in order not to profane it. All the Fathers are agreed on this point, that when there is no change nor amendment in a person who confesses, his penance is false and deceitful. The holy Council of Trent orders us to give absolution only to those in whom one sees the cessation of sin, the hatred and detestation of the past, the resolution and the beginning of a new life. That, my brethren, is the rules from which a confessor cannot depart, without losing himself and his penitents.

But let us see now what are the reasons that are given to engage the confessor to give absolution. Some say that not to give absolution to those who go several times to confess is to destroy religion, and to make appear

too difficult to do what it commands us; that it is to rebuff sinners, that one is the cause of their abandoning religion; that it is to cast them into hell; that many others are easier; that at least one would have the pleasure of seeing, in the parish, a great number who would make their Easter duty, and that every year they would make it a pleasure to come back to confess; that by wishing too much, one has nothing. My brethren, all those who reason in that way are, first, those who do not deserve this grace. But, my friends, from the beginning of the Church, all the Fathers have followed this rule: that one must absolutely have left sin to receive absolution. These refusals appear hard only to impenitent sinners; this conduct can rebuff only those who do not think of converting themselves. What results, my brethren, from these precipitate absolutions? You know it yourselves only too well. Alas! a chain of sacrileges. Scarcely have you been absolved when you plunge yourselves again into your old sins; the facility with which you obtained your pardon made you hope that you would obtain it another time just as easily, and you continued your same kind of life; whereas if one had refused you this absolution, you would have entered into yourselves; you would have opened your eyes upon your misfortune, from which perhaps you will never get out. Your poor life is only a succession of absolutions and of falls. My God, what a misfortune! That is where our unhappy facility in absolving you leads you. Is it not rather a cruelty to give you absolution than to refuse it to you, when you are not in a state to receive it? Saint Cyprian tells us that a priest must hold to the rules of the Church, and wait until his penitent gives certain marks that his heart is changed, and that he begins to lead a life altogether different from that which he led before confessing: for Jesus Christ Himself, God though He was, master of grace, granted pardon only to true penitents: He received the good thief, whose conversion was sincere; but He rejected the bad one, because of his impenitence. He pardoned Saint Peter, whose repentance He knew; but He abandoned Judas, whose penance was false. How unhappy it is for a priest and for a penitent, if the priest gives him absolution when the penitent does not deserve it!—if, in the moment when the minister says to the penitent: “I absolve you,” Jesus Christ says: “I, I condemn him!” Alas! how great is the number of those, since there are so few who leave sin after having received absolution, and change their life!

All that is very true, you will say to me; but what will people say of me, after having seen me confess several times and not make my Easter duty? People will believe that I lead a bad life; besides, I know many others, more sinners than I, who have well passed; you have well received such-and-such a one, who ate meat with me; who well went on Sundays, as well as I, to— The conscience of the other is not yours; if he does badly, you must not listen to him. Would you wish, to save appearances, to damn yourself by committing a sacrilege? Would that not be the greatest of misfortunes? You believe that people notice you, because they have seen you confess several times, and that you do not communicate. Ah! my friend, fear rather the eyes of God, before whom you have done the evil, and pay no attention to all the rest. You say that you know some more guilty than you, who have passed. What do you know of it? Did an angel come to tell you whether God has not changed and converted them? And even if they were not converted, ought you to do evil because they do evil? Would you wish to damn yourself because others damn themselves? My God, what frightful language! — But, say these penitents who not only are not converted, but who do not even desire to convert themselves, but only to save appearances: When then must one come to communicate? I would scarcely wish to wait. — When must one come to communicate? Listen to Saint John Chrysostom; he himself is going to teach us when one must come to communicate. Is it at Easter, at Pentecost, at Christmas? No, he tells you. Is it at the point of death? No, he tells you again. When then is it? It is, he tells you, when you have renounced sin in good earnest, and are well resolved never to fall into it again, with the help of the grace of the good God; when you have restored that good which is not yours; when you have been reconciled with your enemy; it is when you are truly converted.

— Other sinners will say to us: If you are so difficult, we will go to others, who will pass us well enough. Here I have come so many times; I have something else to do than to run the roads; for a long time I will not come back; I see well that you have a grudge against me. What harm then have I done so much? — You will go find another, my friend; you are master to go to whom you please; but do you believe that another will

wish, better than I, to damn himself? No, without doubt. If he receives you, it is that he does not know you enough. Do you wish to know what a person is who speaks in that way, and who goes to seek an absolution elsewhere? Listen and tremble. She leaves her guide, who can well lead her, to seek a passport to go straight to hell. — But, you will say to me, here I have come so many times. — Well then! my friend, correct yourself, and he will pass you the first time you come back. — For a long time, you say, I will not come back. — So much the worse, for you alone, my friend. In coming no more, you go with giant steps toward hell. There are some who are so blind that they go so far as to believe that the confessor has a grudge against them, since he does not give them absolution. Without doubt, my friend, he has a will upon you; but it is the salvation of your poor soul that he wants from you; that is why he does not wish to give you an absolution which, far from saving you, would damn you for eternity. — But, you say, what harm then have I done so much? I have neither killed nor stolen… — You have neither killed nor stolen, you say? But, my friend, one also shuts up other persons who have neither killed nor stolen; there is more than these two sins that drag souls into hell. But if we were cowardly enough to give you absolution when you do not deserve it, that would be being the executioner of your poor soul, which has cost Jesus Christ so many sufferings.

Listen, my brethren, to this trait of history, which is going to teach us what are the effects of these precipitate absolutions, without the penitent being disposed for them. Saint Charles Borromeo relates to us that a rich man of Naples led a life that was scarcely Christian. He addressed himself to a confessor who passed for being very indulgent and very easy. This priest, indeed, had no sooner heard this penitent than he gave him absolution without any proof of repentance. The gentleman, although without religion, astonished at this facility which many wise and enlightened confessors had not had for him, rises abruptly, and drawing some pieces of money from his pocket: “Here, Father,” he said to him, “receive these pieces and keep them well until we find ourselves again together in the same place.” — “When, and in what place shall we see each other again?” the priest answered him, all astonished. — “Father, it will be at the bottom of hell, where we shall soon both be; you, for having given me the absolution of which I was unworthy, and I, for having been unhappy enough to receive it without having been converted.” What do you think of that, my brethren? Let us meditate on it together; there is enough to make both the ones and the others tremble.

— But, you will say to me, when then can one receive absolution? — As soon as you are converted, when you have changed in your manner of living; when you will pray well to the good God that He make known to your confessor what the dispositions of your heart are; when you have accomplished quite exactly all that your confessor will have prescribed to you, and when you will not fail to come back in the time that he has told you. It is related of a sinner who converted in a mission, that after his confession the priest saw him so well disposed that he was going to give him absolution. This poor man said to him: “What! Father, absolution to me! Ah! leave me to weep for some time over the sins that I have had the misfortune to commit; try me, so that you may be assured that my repentance is sincere.” In receiving absolution, he thought he would die of sorrow. My God! how rare these dispositions are!—but how rare also are good confessions! Let us conclude that we ought never to press our confessor to give us absolution, because we ought always to tremble at not being ready—that is to say, sufficiently converted. Let us ask the good God to convert us, in confessing, so that our sins may be truly pardoned. That is the happiness that I wish for you.

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost — On the Service of God

Quaerite primum regnum Dei et justitiam ejus. Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice. (Matthew 6:33)

Saint Matthew teaches us that Jesus Christ, having one day found Himself with persons who occupied themselves much with temporal affairs, said to them: Do not be so anxious about all that—“seek first the kingdom of heaven and its justice, and all the rest will be given to you in abundance”; wishing to tell them

thereby that if they had the happiness of putting all their care into pleasing God and saving their souls, His Father would furnish them all that would be necessary for the needs of the body. — But do you think, how is it that we can seek the kingdom of heaven and its justice? — How, my brethren? Nothing easier and more consoling: it is by attaching yourselves to the service of God, which is the only means left us to lead us to the noble and happy end for which we are created. Yes, my brethren, we all know it, and even the greatest sinners are convinced that they are in the world only to serve the good God, by doing all that He commands us. — But, you will say to me, why then are there so few who work at that? — My brethren, here it is: it is that some look upon the service of God as a very difficult thing; they think that they have not enough strength to undertake it, or that, having undertaken it, they will not be able to persevere. That is precisely, my brethren, what discourages or turns aside a great part of Christians. Instead of listening to those consoling words of the Savior, who cannot deceive us, and who tells us that His service is sweet and agreeable, that in doing it we shall find in it the peace of our souls and the joy of our heart… But, to make you understand it better, I am going to show you which of the two leads a harder, sadder, and more painful life—he who fulfills his duties of religion with fidelity, or he who abandons them to follow his pleasures and his passions, to live at his liberty.

Yes, my brethren, from whatever side we consider the service of God, which consists in prayer, penance, the frequentation of the sacraments, the love of God and of the neighbor, and an entire renunciation of oneself—yes, my brethren, we find in all that only joys, only pleasures, and only happiness, for the present and for the future, as you are going to see. He who knows his religion and who practices it knows that crosses and persecutions, contempt, sufferings, and finally poverty and death change into sweetnesses, into consolation, and into eternal reward. Tell me, have you ever formed a sensible idea of it? No, without doubt. Yet, my brethren, it is such as I tell you; and to prove it to you in such a way that you cannot doubt it, listen to Jesus Christ Himself: “Blessed are the poor, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them, and woe to the rich, because it is very difficult for the rich to be saved.” You see then, according to Jesus Christ, that poverty ought not to make us unhappy, since the Savior tells us: “Blessed are the poor.” In the second place, it is not sufferings nor sorrows; since Jesus Christ tells us: “Blessed are those who weep and who are persecuted, because a day will come when they will be consoled; but woe to the world and to those who take their pleasures, because a day will come when their joy will change into tears and into eternal sadness.” In the third place, it is not being despised, since Jesus Christ tells us: “They despise Me and they will despise you; they persecute Me and they will persecute you; but far from letting yourselves go to sadness, rejoice, because a great reward awaits you in heaven.” Tell me, my brethren, what will that poor man be able to answer now who wishes to tell us that he is unhappy, and who asks us how he will be able to save himself in the midst of so many persecutions, calumnies, and injustices that are done him? No, no, my brethren, let us say it: nothing is capable of making man unhappy here below but the lack of religion; and man, in spite of all that he may experience upon the earth, if he wishes to attach himself to the service of God, will not fail to be happy.

We have said, my brethren, that he who attaches himself to the good God finds himself happier than the people of the world, in the moment when everything goes according to their desires; and even we see that several saints breathed only the happiness of suffering; we have a fair example of it in the person of Saint Andrew. It is related in his life that Aegeas, governor of the city, seeing that Saint Andrew by his preachings made deserted the temple of his false gods, sent to take him. The saint being presented before his tribunal, he said to him with a threatening air: “Is it you who make profession of destroying the temple of our gods, by announcing a religion altogether new?” Saint Andrew answered him: “It is not new; on the contrary, it began with the world.” — “Either you will renounce your crucified One, or I will make you die on a cross like Him.” — “We Christians,” Saint Andrew answered him, “do not fear sufferings; they make all our happiness upon the earth; the more we shall have been conformed to Jesus Christ crucified, the more glorious we shall be in heaven; you will sooner be weary of making me suffer than I of suffering.” The proconsul condemned

him to die on a cross; but to make his torment longer, he ordered that he not be nailed, but only fastened with cords, so that he might suffer longer. Saint Andrew had so much joy at being condemned to die on a cross like Jesus Christ, his divine Master, that seeing two thousand men who were going to assist at his death, and who almost all shed tears, fearing that one might deprive him of his happiness, he raised his voice to conjure them, as a favor, not to delay his martyrdom. As soon as he perceived the cross on which he was to be fastened, he cried out all transported with gladness: "I salute you, O venerable Cross, who have been consecrated and adorned by the touch of the adorable Body of Jesus Christ, my divine Savior! O sacred Cross! O Cross so desired! O Cross loved with so much ardor! O Cross that I have sought and desired with so much zeal and without ceasing! it is you who are going to satisfy all the desires of my heart! O well-beloved Cross, receive me from the hands of men to remite me into those of my God, so that I may pass from your arms into those of Him who has redeemed me." The author who wrote his Life tells us that being at the foot of the cross to be fastened to it, he did not change color, his hair did not stand on end, as happens to criminals; he did not lose his voice, the blood did not freeze in his veins, he was not even seized with the least fright; but on the contrary, one saw that the fire of charity with which his heart burned made him cast burning flames from his mouth. When he was near the cross, he stripped himself and gave his garments to the executioner; he mounted without the help of anyone upon the wood where the cross was placed. All the people, who were at least twenty thousand, seeing Saint Andrew fastened, cried that it was an injustice to make so holy a man suffer, and ran to the palace to tear the proconsul to pieces if he did not unfasten him. Fearing for his life, the proconsul goes to have him unfastened. As soon as Saint Andrew saw him coming, he cried out: "O Aegeas, what do you come to do here? If you come to learn to know Jesus Christ, good, come; but if you come to have me unfastened, go no further; know that you will not succeed in it and that I shall have the consolation of dying for my divine Master! Ah! I already see my God; I adore Him with all the blessed." In spite of that, the governor wished to have him unfastened, for fear that the people should make him die himself; but it was impossible to unfasten him: as they approached to unfasten him, their strength failed them; they remained motionless. Then Saint Andrew cried out lifting his eyes to heaven: "My God, I ask You the grace not to permit that Your servant, who is on the cross for the confession of Your name, receive this humiliation of being delivered by the orders of Aegeas. My God! You are my Master; You know that I have sought and desired only You." As he finished these words, one saw a light in the form of a globe that enveloped his whole body, and spread an odor that embalmed all the bystanders, and in the same moment his soul departed for eternity. Do you see, my brethren? he who knows his religion and who is attached to the service of his God does not look upon sufferings as misfortunes; but he desires them and looks upon them as inestimable goods.

Yes, my brethren, even from this world, he who has the happiness of attaching himself to God is happier than the world with all its pleasures. Listen to Saint Paul: "Yes," he tells us, "I am happier in my chains, in my prisons, in contempt and sufferings, than my persecutors are in their liberty, in their abundance and their debauchery. My heart is so filled with joy that it cannot contain it; it overflows on every side." Yes, without doubt, my brethren, Saint John the Baptist is happier in his desert, abandoned of all human help, than Herod on his throne, buried in his riches, and plunged in the happiness of his infamous passions. Saint John is in his desert; he converses familiarly with his God, like a friend with his friend, while Herod is devour by a secret fear of losing his kingdom, which leads him to have so many poor children slaughtered. See again David: is he not happier in fleeing the anger of Saul, though reduced to spending the nights in the forests; betrayed and abandoned by his best friends, uniting himself during that time to his God and putting all his confidence in Him—is he not happier than Saul in the goods and the abundance of riches and pleasures? David blesses the Lord for prolonging his days to give him time to suffer for His love, while Saul curses his life and becomes himself his executioner. Why that, my brethren? Alas! it is that the one attaches himself to the service of his God, and that the other abandons Him. What to conclude from that, my brethren? Nothing other than that it is neither goods, nor honors, nor vanity that can make man happy upon the earth; but attachment alone to the

service of God, when we have the happiness of knowing it and of fulfilling it well.

That woman who is despised by her husband is therefore not unhappy in her state because she is despised, but because she does not know her religion, or because she does not practice what it orders her. Teach her her religion, and as soon as you see that she will practice, she will cease to complain and to believe herself unhappy. Oh! how happy man would be, even upon the earth, if he knew his religion, and if he had the happiness of observing what it commands us, if he considered the goods that it proposes to us for the other life! Oh! what power has not a person before God, when she loves Him and serves Him with fidelity. Alas! my brethren, a person despised by the people of the world, who seems worthy only of being trampled under foot—see her make herself mistress of the will and of the power of God Himself. See a Moses, who forces the Lord to grant pardon to three hundred thousand very guilty men; see Joshua, who commands the sun to stop—the sun becomes motionless: which had never happened and which perhaps will never happen. See the apostles—only because they loved the good God, the demons fled before them, the lame walked, the blind saw, the dead rose again. See a Saint Benedict who commands the rocks to stop in their course—they remain suspended in the air; see him who multiplies the loaves, who makes waters come forth from the rocks, and who makes stones and wood as light as a blade of straw. See a Saint Francis of Paola who commands the fishes to come hear the word of God—they render themselves at his call with so much fidelity that they applaud his words. See a Saint John who commands the birds to be silent—they obey him. See still others who cross the seas without any human help. Well then! put now in comparison all these impious ones and all these great ones of the world with all their fine minds and their science for doing everything: alas! of what are they capable? of nothing at all; and why that? if not because they have not attached themselves to the service of God. Oh! how powerful and happy at the same time is he who knows his religion and who practices what it commands! Alas! my brethren, how unhappy and capable of very little is he who lives at the pleasure of his passions and abandons the service of God! Put an army of a hundred thousand men near a dead man, and let all employ their power to raise him: no, no, my brethren, he will not rise; but let a person who is despised by the world and who is in the friendship of the good God command this dead man to take up life again: at once you will see him rise and walk.

If, to serve the good God, one had to be rich or else learned, many persons could not do it. But no, my brethren, great sciences and great riches are not at all necessary to serve the good God; on the contrary, they are very often a very great obstacle. Yes, my brethren, whether we be rich or poor, in whatever state we be, learned or not, we can please God and save ourselves; and even Saint Bonaventure says that we can do it “in whatever state or condition we be.” Listen to me a moment, and you are going to see that the service of God has nothing but what can console us and make us happy in the midst of all the miseries of life. For that, you have no need to leave either your goods, or your parents, or even your friends, unless they lead you to sin; you have no need to go spend your days in a desert to weep there over your sins; if again that were necessary for us, we ought to find ourselves happy to have a remedy for our evils; but no—a father and a mother of a family can serve the good God while living with their children, raising them Christianly; a servant can very easily serve the good God and his master—nothing prevents it; on the contrary, his work and the obedience that he is obliged to give to his masters become a subject of merits. No, my brethren, the manner of living in serving the good God changes nothing in all that we do; on the contrary, we do better all that we do; we are more assiduous and more attentive in fulfilling the duties of our state; we are gentler, more human, and more charitable; more sober in our meals, more reserved in our words; less sensitive to the losses and the insults that we receive—that is to say, my brethren, that when we attach ourselves to the service of God, we do better all that we do; we act only in a manner more noble, more elevated, and more worthy of a Christian. Instead of working by ambition, by interest, we work only to please the good God, who commands it of us, and to satisfy His justice. Instead of rendering service or giving alms to the neighbor by pride, to be esteemed, we do it only in view of pleasing God and of redeeming our sins. Yes, my brethren, once again, a Christian who knows his religion and who practices it sanctifies all his actions without changing anything in

what he does; and without adding anything to it, everything becomes a subject of merit for heaven. Well then! my brethren, tell me, if you had well thought that it was so sweet and so consoling to serve the good God, could you have lived as you have lived until now? Ah! my brethren, what regret at the hour of death, when we shall see that if we had attached ourselves to the service of God, we would have gained heaven by doing only what we have done! O my God! what misfortune for him who will be of the number of these blind ones!

Now I am going to ask you whether it is the exterior of religion that appears to you repulsive and too difficult. Is it prayer, the divine offices, the days of abstinence, fasting, the frequentation of the sacraments, charity toward your neighbor? Well then! you are going to see that of all that there is nothing painful as you have believed.

First, I say: Is it prayer that is painful? Is it not, on the contrary, the happiest moment of our life? Is it not by prayer that we converse with the good God, like a friend with his friend? Is it not in that moment that we begin to do what we shall do with the angels in heaven? Is it not too great a happiness for us that, being so miserable, the good God, who is so great, suffers us in His holy presence, where He shares with us, with so much goodness, every kind of consolation? Besides, is it not He who has given us all that we have? Is it not just that we adore Him and love Him with all our heart? Is it not the happiest moment of our life, since we experience there so many sweetnesses? Is it a pain to offer Him every morning our prayers and our actions, so that He may bless them and reward us for them for eternity? Is it too much to consecrate to Him each week one day? Ought we not, on the contrary, to see that day come with a great pleasure—since it is on that holy day that one teaches us the duties that we are obliged to fulfill toward God and our neighbor, and that one makes us conceive that great desire of the goods of the other life, which leads us to despise what is contemptible? Is it not in an instruction that we learn to know the greatness of the pains that sin deserves? Do we not feel ourselves wholly disposed no longer to commit it, to avoid the torments that are reserved for it? O my God! how little man knows his happiness!

Tell me: is it confession that is distasteful to you? But, my friend, can one find a greater happiness than to see, in less than three minutes, change our unhappy eternity into another eternity of pleasures, of joy, and of happiness? Is it not confession that restores to us the friendship of our God? Is it not confession that extinguishes in us those remorses of conscience that tear us without ceasing? Is it not it that gives peace to our soul, and that gives us a new hope for heaven? Is it not in that moment that Jesus Christ seems to unfold the riches of His mercy even to infinity? Ah! my brethren, without this sacrament, how many more damned and how many fewer saints!… Oh! how grateful the saints who are in heaven are to Jesus Christ for having established this sacrament!

Tell me, my brethren, is it the fasts that the Church prescribes for you that make you find the service of God painful? But the Church does not command you more of them than you can do. Besides, my brethren, if we considered that with the eyes of faith, is it not a great happiness that by small privations we avoid the pains of purgatory which are so rigorous? But how many, my brethren, who condemn themselves to much more rigorous fasts, to preserve their health and to satisfy their love of pleasures or their gluttony? Will one not see a young woman abandon her children into the hands of strangers, and also her household?… Will one not see others often spend whole nights in a tavern, in the midst of drunkards, who often overflow with wine, where they hear only filth and abominations? Does one not find widows who snatch the few minutes that remain to them to live, and that they ought to consecrate only to weeping over the follies of their youth—does one not find some who give themselves over to every kind of vice, like persons who have suddenly lost their head; they serve as a scandal to a whole parish? Ah! my brethren, if one did for the good God what one does for the world, how many Christians would go to heaven! Alas! my brethren, if you had to spend three or four hours in a church praying, as you spend them in a dance or in a tavern, how long the time would seem to you!… If one had to make several leagues to hear a sermon, as one does for one’s pleasures or else to satisfy one’s

avarice—alas! my brethren, what pretexts, what evasions one would take in order not to go! but for the world, nothing costs; and what is more, one fears to lose neither one's God, nor one's soul, nor heaven. Oh! my brethren, how right Jesus Christ was when He said that the children of the age had much more zeal to serve their master who is the world, than the children of light have to serve their Master who is the Lord. Alas! my brethren, let us say it to our shame—one fears neither expenses nor even making debts when it is a question of one's pleasures; but if a poor man asks them, they have nothing: that is what it is—one has everything for the world and nothing for the good God, because one loves the world and not the good God.

But what is the cause, my brethren, that we abandon the service of God? Here it is, my brethren! We would wish to be able to serve God and the world—that is to say, to be able to ally ambition and pride with humility, avarice with that spirit of detachment that the Gospel asks of us; one would have to be able to mingle corruption with the holiness of the divine life, or, to say it better, heaven with hell. If religion commanded or at least permitted hatred and vengeance, fornication and adultery—if that could be done, we should all be good Christians; all would be children faithful to their religion; libertinage, as well as all the other vices, would no longer make reprobates. But to serve the good God, it is not possible to be able to conduct oneself in that manner; one must absolutely be wholly God's or nothing. Although we have said, my brethren, that everything is consoling in our holy religion, as that is very true, yet one must add that we ought to do good to those who do us harm, love those who hate us, preserve the reputation of our enemies, defend them when we see other persons speaking ill of them; and instead of wishing them harm, we must pray the good God to bless them. Far from murmuring when the good God sends us some pain and some sorrow, we must thank Him, after the example of the holy king David, who kissed the hand that chastised him. Our religion wishes that we spend holily the holy day of Sunday, in working to procure for ourselves the friendship of the good God, if we have the misfortune not to have it, or to preserve it, if we are so happy as to have it; it wishes that we look upon sin as our most cruel enemy. Well then! my brethren, that is what appears to us the hardest and the most repulsive. But tell me, in all that, is it not seeking our happiness upon the earth and for eternity? Ah! my brethren, if we knew our holy religion, and the pleasure one has in practicing it, how little all that would appear to us! how many saints have gone beyond what God asked of them to give them heaven! They have told us that if one had once tasted the sweetnesses and the consolations that one finds in the service of God, it would be impossible to leave it to serve the world with its pleasures. The holy king David tells us that a single day spent in the service of God is worth more than a thousand of those that worldlings spend in their pleasures and their profane joys.

Tell me, who of us would want the service of the world, if we had the happiness, the great happiness of understanding all the miseries that one experiences there in seeking its pleasures, and the torments that one prepares for oneself for eternity? O my God! how blind we are to lose so many goods, even from this world, and still more for eternity!—and that for pleasures that have only the appearance of pleasures, joys that are mixed with so many sorrows and sadnesses. Indeed, who would want the service of God, if one had to suffer as much and undergo as many cares, mortifications, and heart-rendings as for the world? See a man who has set it in his head to heap up goods: there are no winds nor bad weather that stop him; he suffers now hunger, now thirst, now bad weather; he goes even, a number of times, so far as to expose his life and lose his reputation. How many who go at night to plunder their neighbors, who expose themselves either to be killed or to lose their reputation and that of their whole family. Without going so far, my brethren, would it cost you more during the holy offices to be in the church listening to the word of God with respect, than to go outside to chat there about your temporal affairs or about things that are nothing? While we say Vespers, would you not be as happy to come there as to remain at home boring yourselves, while one sings the praises of God?

But, you will say to me, there are still many violences to do to oneself when one wishes to serve the good God. — Well then! I, I will tell you that there is much less to suffer to follow God with His cross than to pursue the world, to follow one's passions, and you are going to see it. You think perhaps that it is difficult to

pardon an insult that has been done you; but tell me, which of the two suffers more—he who pardons promptly and with a good heart for the good God, or he who nourishes, for two or three years, sentiments of hatred against his neighbor? Is it not a worm that gnaws and devour him continually, which often prevents him both from eating and from sleeping; whereas the other, in pardoning, has at once found the peace of the soul? Is one not happier in mastering one's impure passions than in wishing to satisfy them? Can one once satisfy them entirely? No, my brethren, never: on coming out of a crime, they lead you to another, without telling you that it is enough; you are a slave; they drag you wherever they wish.

But to convince you of it better, let us go find one of those men who place all their happiness in the pleasure of the senses, and who throw themselves headlong into the filth of the most infamous and shameful passions. Yes, my brethren, if, before such a man had given himself to libertinage, someone had made him the painting of the life that he leads now, could he have thought of it without horror? If you had said to him: My friend, you have two parties to take: either to repress your passions or to abandon yourself to them. The one and the other has its pleasures and its pains—here they are: you will choose which of the two you wish. If you wish to take the party of practicing virtue, you will take great care never to frequent libertines; you will choose your friends among those who think and act like you. All your readings will be from holy books, which will animate you to the practice of virtue, which will make you love the good God; you will conceive each day a new love for Him; you will employ your time holily, and all your pleasures will be only innocent pleasures, which, while refreshing your body, will nourish your soul; you will fulfill your duties of religion without affectation, but with fidelity; you will choose to lead you in the way of salvation a wise and enlightened confessor, who will seek only the good of your soul, and you will follow with fidelity all that he will command you. That, my friend, is all the pains that you will experience in the service of God. Your reward will be to have always the soul in peace and your heart always content; you will be loved and esteemed by all good people; you will prepare yourself a happy old age, exempt from an infinity of infirmities, which are only too ordinary to those who spend a disordered youth; your last moments will be sweet and tranquil; from whatever side we consider your life, nothing will be able to sadden you—on the contrary, everything will contribute to rejoice you. Your crosses, your tears, and all your penances will no longer be anything but like ambassadors that heaven will send you to assure you that your happiness will be eternal and that you have nothing more to fear. If, in those moments, you carry your looks toward the future, you see only heaven open to receive you; finally, you will leave this world like a holy and chaste dove that goes to bury itself and hide in the bosom of its beloved; you will leave nothing, to take everything. You have desired only God alone and here you are with Him for all eternity.

But now, if you wish to leave God and His service to follow the world and its pleasures, your life will pass in always desiring and always seeking, without ever being content or happy; you may put everything to use for that—you will never succeed in it. You will begin to erase from your mind the principles of religion that you learned from your childhood and that you have followed until now; you will no longer see those books of piety that nourished your soul and that guaranteed it from the corruption of the world; you will no longer be master of your passions, but they will drag you wherever they wish; you will make yourself a religion after your fashion; you will read some bad books, which will breathe only contempt of religion and libertinage, and you will walk in the path that they will have traced for you; you will recall your former days, which you spent in the practice of virtue and of penance and where you made yourself so great a joy of approaching the sacraments, in which the good God overwhelmed you with so many graces, only in regretting not having given all that time to the pleasures of the world; you will go so far as to believe nothing and to deny everything; and to say it all at once, you will be only a little impious one: in that belief, you will loose the bridle to all your passions, saying that since everything ends with life, one must seek all the pleasures that one can taste. Blinded by your passions, you will cast yourself from sins into sins, without even perceiving it; you will give yourself over to all the excesses of a boiling and corrupted youth; you will not fear to sacrifice your rest, your goods, your health, your honor, and your very life; I do not say your soul, because you believe

that you have none. You will be the fable of a whole parish; one will look upon you as a monster; one will flee you and one will fear you; no matter—you will mock all that; you will always go your ordinary train, following no longer anything but the way of your passions, which will drag you wherever they wish. Now one will find you near a young person, putting in motion all the artifices and all the ruses that the devil will inspire you with to deceive her, seduce her, and ruin her; now one will see you in the middle of the night at the door of a widow offering her all possible promises to make her consent to satisfy your infamous desires. One will see you even, without any respect for the sacred right of marriage, trampling under foot all the laws of religion, of justice, and of nature itself, and you will be only an infamous adulterer. You will even go so far as to make the members of Jesus Christ the members of an infamous prostitute. You will go still further, because the pains of mind and of heart are not the only pains that you will have to devour in living in libertinage: the infirmities of the body, an impoverished blood, a languishing old age will be your portion. During your life you have abandoned the good God; death will make reappear that faith that you had extinguished by your bad life… If you recognize that you have abandoned the good God, He will make you see that He has also abandoned you and rejected you forever, and cursed you for an eternity; then the remorses of conscience, which you had tried to extinguish, will make themselves felt and will devour you, in spite of all that you can do to stifle them; everything will trouble you and cast you into despair. If you wish to go back over your life, you will count your days only by the number of your crimes, which will be to you like so many tyrants that will tear you without ceasing; your life will present to you only despised graces and a very precious time that you will have lost; you had need of everything and you have profited from nothing. If you wish to consider the future: the torments with which your soul will be devour will make you believe that the flames that burn the unhappy reprobate seem already to reach you; the world, which you had so loved, to which you had so feared to displease, to which already you had sacrificed your God and your soul, abandons you and rejects you forever. You wished to follow its pleasures: now—that is to say, in the moment when you would have need of so much help—you will be abandoned to yourself; your only resource will be despair, and what is more, you will die, and in falling into hell you will say that the world has seduced you; but that too late you have recognized your misfortune.

Well then! my brethren, what do you think of all that? That nevertheless is the pains and the joys of all those who live in virtue, and those of those who live for the world. Oh! my brethren, what misfortune for him who wishes only the world and who leaves aside the salvation of his soul!… Oh! my brethren, how he who has the great happiness of seeking only God alone and the salvation of his soul spends his life happy! How many fewer pains! how many more pleasures in the service of God! how many remorses of conscience spared at the hour of death! how many torments avoided for eternity!… Oh! my brethren, how happy our life would be, in spite of all that we can experience from the world and the devil, if we had the happiness of attaching ourselves to the service of God, by despising the world and all that follows it! Oh! my brethren, how the service of God makes a great change in him who is so happy as to seek only God upon the earth! If you are with a proud man who will suffer nothing, pray the good God to attach him to His service: then you will see everything change in him; he will love contempt and will despise himself. Are a husband or a wife unhappy in their household? Try to make them embrace the service of God; then you will no longer see them look upon themselves as unhappy, but peace and union will reign between them. Is a servant treated harshly by his masters? Counsel him to give himself to the service of God; from then on you will see him no longer complain—he will even bless the goodness of God for making him do his purgatory in this world. Let us say better, my brethren: a person who knows her religion and who practices it is no longer for herself, but she tends only to make her neighbor happy.

To make you feel it better, here is a fair example of it. We read in history that there was in the city of Toulouse a holy priest, whom his zeal and his charity made considered in the whole city as the father of the poor. Although he was very poor himself, helps did not fail him. One day a devout woman came to announce to him that they had just put her husband in prison and that she had four children left; that if someone did not

have pity on her and her children, they could only die of hunger. This holy priest, softened even to tears, although he had already just made the collection, sets out again to ask again, especially of a rich merchant. But in the moment when this priest entered, the merchant had just received a letter that announced to him a considerable loss. The priest, without knowing anything, makes him the recital of the miseries of this family. The merchant said to him with a surly air: “Here you are again—it is too much.” — “Ah! sir, if you knew!” the priest said to him. — “No, no, I wish to know nothing; withdraw promptly.” — “But, sir,” the priest said to him, “what will become of this poor family? Ah! I conjure you, have pity on their misfortunes!” The other, all occupied with his misfortune, turns against the priest and gives him a rude slap. The priest, without showing the least emotion, presented him the other cheek, saying to him: “Sir, strike as much as you wish, provided that you give to relieve this family.” The merchant, all astonished at that, said to him: “Well then! come with me”; and taking him by the hand, he led him into his cabinet, opened his strongbox for him: “Take all that you wish.” — “No, sir,” the priest said to him humbly, “give me what you wish.” The merchant plunges his two hands into his sacks, saying to him: “Come whenever you wish.” Ah! my brethren, how precious a thing religion is for him who knows it! Indeed, all that there is of good in the world—it is only religion that has produced it. All these hospitals, all these seminaries, all these houses of education—all that has been established only by those who are attached to the service of God. Ah! if fathers and mothers knew how happy they themselves would be, and how much they would contribute to making God glorified by raising their children holily! Ah! if they were well convinced that they hold the place of God Himself upon the earth, how they would work to make themselves meritorious of the merits of the death and Passion of Jesus Christ!…

Let us conclude, my brethren, by saying that never, in following the world, in wishing to satisfy our inclinations, shall we be happy, nor shall we be able to find what we seek; whereas in attaching ourselves to the service of God, all our miseries will be well softened, or rather, they will change into joy and into consolation, thinking that we work for heaven. What a difference between him who dies after having lived badly and him who dies after having lived well: he has only heaven for his portion; all his combats are going to end; his happiness, which he already sees in advance, is going to begin never to end! Yes, my brethren, let us give ourselves to God in good earnest, and we shall experience these great benefits that God will never refuse to him who will have loved Him! That is the happiness that I wish for you.

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost — On the World

Nemo potest duobus dominis servire. No one can serve two masters. (Matthew 6:24)

Jesus Christ tells us, my brethren, that we cannot serve two masters—that is to say, God and the world. You cannot please God and the world, He tells us. In spite of all that you will do, you will not be able to suit both at the same time. Here is the reason, my brethren: it is that they are extremely opposed in their thoughts, their desires, and their actions: the one promises a thing altogether contrary to what the other promises; the one forbids what the other permits and commands; the one makes you work for the present time, and the other for the time to come, which is heaven; the one offers you pleasures, honors, and riches, the other presents you only tears, penance, and renunciation of yourselves; the one calls you into a path of flowers (at least in appearance), and the other into that of thorns. Each, my brethren, asks for our heart—it is for us to choose which of these two masters we wish to follow. The one, which is the world, promises to make us taste all that we can desire during our life (though it always promises more than it gives); but at the same time it hides from us the evils that are reserved for us throughout eternity. The other, which is Jesus Christ, does not promise us all these things; but He tells us, to console us, that He will help us and that He will even greatly soften our pains: “Come to Me, I will console you; and in My train you will find the peace of the soul and the joy of the heart.” That, my brethren, is these two masters who ask us for our heart; to which do you wish to belong? All that the world presents to you is only for the present time. Goods, pleasures, and honors will end

with life, and in ending life we are going to begin an eternity of torments. But if we wish to follow Jesus Christ, who calls us, laden with His cross, we shall soon see that the pains of His service are not as great as we well believe: He will walk before us, He will help us, He will console us, and He promises us, after a few little instants of pains, a happiness that will last as long as Himself. But to make you understand it better, my brethren, I am going to show you that it is impossible to please God and the world. Either wholly God's, or wholly the world's: no sharing [point de partage].

It is certain, my brethren, that if Jesus Christ knew well that many would leave the world to give themselves to him, would embrace the follies of his cross, and, following his example, would spend their lives in tears, groans and penitence, to make themselves worthy of the reward he has merited for us; he also knew that many would leave him to give themselves to the world, which only promises them (what it) will never give them, hiding from them the misfortunes of eternity; This is why he wanted to give us only one heart, so that we could only give ourselves to one master. He tells us formally that it is impossible to belong to God and to the world; because when we want to please one, we will become the enemy of the other. The good God, my brethren, to show us how difficult it is to save ourselves among the world, cursed this world, saying: "Woe to the world 1" But let us touch on this a little more closely. You know, my brethren, that the spirit of Jesus Christ is a spirit of humility and self-contempt, a spirit of charity and kindness for everyone. Well, how can you preserve this spirit, if you are going to mingle with a proud person, who will only talk to you about pleasures and honors, who will praise himself and boast of all his so-called good qualities, of all the good he has done and even of that which he has not done. If you hang out with him for a while, necessarily, without realizing it, you will become proud like him. You will continually hear (someone) speaking badly of his neighbor; likewise, without knowing it, you will become a bad tongue, who will bring trouble wherever you are. You know that Jesus Christ, whom you took to be your master, wants us to keep our hearts and our bodies pure for Him, as much as possible; but if you are going to associate with this libertine, who is only busy thinking and saying the dirtiest and most infamous things; how can you maintain this purity that God asks of you? By seeing him, you will become as dirty and as infamous as him. You know that your Master wants you to love and respect religion, and everything related to religion; but, if you attend; an impious person, who mocks everything, despises what is holiest, and turns everything into ridicule; how can you love religion and practice what it commands you, hearing all these impieties? How can you trust the priests, after the impious have slandered you and persuaded you that it is true, and that all priests are the same? Ah! My brethren, woe to him who follows (the world)!

It is lost! Tell me, how will you have respect for the laws of the Church, if you go with these impious people who mock and despise fasting and abstinence, telling you that (all this) is only the invention of men? — The spirit of God, as you know, is to despise created things and to attach himself only to the goods of eternity. Hey! how will you be able to form an idea of ■■it if you associate with this man who is an unbeliever, who believes (although he does not seriously believe it), or who wants everything to end with life. My friend, if you want to save yourself, you must necessarily flee the world, otherwise you will think and act like the world, and you will find yourself among those who are cursed by God. See, my brethren, when some great sinner does not want to convert, the Church excommunicates him, that is to say, rejects him from her bosom; she no longer regards him as her child, he no longer shares in the graces that the good God distributes to us through the merits of his death and his passion; she does not even want us to eat and drink with him, nor to greet him; she forbids us from having any communication with him, if we do not want to participate in his misfortune. (If such people) die, they are buried in a profane place, and have no right to prayers, because they die as reprobate. Well, my brethren, if we want to follow the world, the same misfortune will happen to us. Besides, my brethren, if you doubt it, see what all the saints did: they regarded the world, its pleasures and even its goods, as a plague for the salvation of their souls, and all those who could left it. What is the cause of the deserts being populated by so many people, who formerly inhabited the cities and the countryside, if not because they feared the world, and left it, in fear that the contagion of the world would destroy them, by

giving rise to the same feelings in them and making them act with the same spirit? Yes, my brethren, let us flee the world, or we are sure to get lost like the world. No, my brethren, we will never agree with the world though. we want to save ourselves. We must swear eternal war against him: this is what all the saints have done. Or renounce heaven, or renounce the world!... Here, my brethren, do you want to know how much we are enemies of the world, and how much the world hates us? Listen to me for a moment, and you will see what we must do if we want to hope to one day have heaven. We have a good example of this in the person of Saint Januarius, who was bishop of Benevento.

He was denounced to the governor Timothy, because he did everything he could to strengthen the Christians, and to induce the pagans to convert; he told them that they were among those whom Jesus Christ had cursed (with these words): “Woe to the world!” The governor, transported with anger at this report, ordered the saint to be immediately taken and brought to him, bound hand and foot, before his tribunal. He had an idol placed before the saint, ordering him to immediately worship the gods; or that he should expect to die in the most severe torments that could be invented. The saint answered him without being moved, that he was not born and baptized to follow the party of the world; but to follow Jesus Christ carrying his cross and dying on Calvary; that all these torments with which he was threatened did not retaliate; it was his sharing that would one day make all his happiness. “You,” he said to the governor, “are from this world that Jesus Christ has cursed.” This response put the governor into such fury that he ordered the saint to be thrown immediately into a lit furnace. But the good God, who never abandons those who are his and not of the world, made Saint Januarius, instead of being burned by the flames, appear to enter a refreshing bath. This saint came out without his clothes, nor even his hair, being damaged in the least: which astonished the whole crowd of pagans who were present. The governor himself was quite astonished; but, thinking that this was done by the devil, he only became more furious, and he had the saint put to torture, to make him suffer such torture as only hell could have inspired him. He ordered that all the nerves of his body be torn out one after the other; then, (seeing that he) could no longer walk except by a miracle, he ordered him to be taken to prison, in the hope of making him suffer even more. The faithful of his diocese, having learned what the holy bishop had been made to suffer, left immediately to visit him and relieve him if they could. The governor having learned of it, immediately sent soldiers to arrest them all and bring them before

This miracle so struck this whole multitude that they were heard to exclaim: “Yes, yes, there is only the God of the Christians who is the true God, and all our gods are only gods who deceive us and destroy us; never have the priests of our idols done anything similar.” The governor, hearing these murmurs, feared for himself, and ordered the martyrs to be led into the public square to cut off their heads; but, as they were being led there, Saint Januarius, passing before the governor, said: “Lord, please take away the sight of this tyrant, so that he does not have the barbaric pleasure of seeing your children die.” Immediately, the governor lost his sight. This miraculous punishment made him recognize the power of this servant of God. Immediately, he ordered to stop the execution of the sentence which had (been) passed against the holy martyrs, and, having brought the saint, he said to him in a suppliant tone: “You who adore the Almighty God, pray to him for me, that he may restore to me the sight of which he deprived me, in punishment for my sins.”

As the saints have neither gall nor hatred, to show by a double miracle the power of the true God, he made a second prayer in favor of the governor. It was as effective as the first. Timothy received his sight immediately. This wonder was not useless for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; almost five thousand pagans, who witnessed it, were converted the same day; but the governor, for whom this miracle had been done, was so hardened that he himself did not convert. Fearing that if he spared the martyrs he would be disgraced by the emperor, he secretly ordered his officers to put the holy bishop to death. While he was being led to the place. to be executed there, a good old man asked him, after throwing himself at his feet, for something that would have served him to preserve him respectfully. The saint, touched by his faith, said to him: “My friend, I only have my handkerchief which will be used to blindfold me; but be sure that

afterwards you will have it." Those who heard him speak in this way began to laugh, and, after having put the saint to death, put their feet on the handkerchief, saying: "Let him now give his handkerchief to this old man to whom he promised you." But they were very surprised when, as they passed, they saw this old man holding it in his hands. The saint cried out, as his head was cut off: "My God, I commend my soul into your hands." Well, my brethren, this is the world and Jesus Christ, that is to say, those who have despised the world to follow only Jesus Christ with his cross; those who have truly left the world, its goods and its pleasures, to seek only heaven and the salvation of their soul. See, which way you would turn, if the good God put you to a similar test as Saint Januarius and his fellow martyrs. Alas! my God, how few there would be..... because there are very few who are not of the world, that is to say, who do not love the world, its goods and its pleasures. Is it really possible that, although the world only makes unhappy people, that it promises a lot without ever giving what it promises, and although we are so unhappy in its wake, we still love it! Everyone complains of his perfidy, and despite this, we still seek to please him, and if we cannot satisfy him, we at least want to give him our best years, our youth and often our health, our reputation and even our life. Ah! cursed world, how long will you deceive us by calling us to follow you to overwhelm us with so many evils, to be always unhappy and never happy? O my God! please open the eyes of the soul to us and we will know our blindness in loving the one who only seeks our eternal loss!

But to make you understand even better which of the two parties you must follow, let us consider this world composed of three societies; some are everything for the world, others are everything for the good God as we have just seen, and finally, others are in between; they would like to be in the world without ceasing to be God's, which is impossible, as you will see. We say, first, my brethren, that a part, and perhaps the greater part, are all to the world; and, of this number, are those who are happy to have stifled all feeling of religion, all thought of the other life, who have done everything they could to erase the terrible thought of the judgment which they will one day have to undergo. They use all their knowledge and often their wealth to attract as many people as they can along their path; they no longer believe in anything, they even pride themselves on being more impious and more unbelieving than they are (in reality), to better convince others, and make them believe, I am not telling the truths, but the falsities that they would like to give birth to in their hearts. Like Voltaire who one day, at a dinner given to his friends, that is to say, to impious people, rejoiced that, of all those who were there, not one believed in religion. And yet he himself believed in it, as he clearly showed at the hour of his death. So he eagerly asked for a priest so that he could be reconciled with the good God; but it was too late for him; the good God, against whom he had unleashed himself with so much fury, had done to him as to Antiochus: he had abandoned him to the fury of the demons. (Voltaire) had, in this terrible moment, only despair and hell to share. "The ungodly," the Holy Spirit tells us, "says within himself that there is no God," but it is only the corruption of his heart that can lead him to such excess; he does not believe it in the depths of his soul. This word: "There is a God," will never fade away. The greatest sinner will often utter it, even without thinking about it; but let us leave these impious ones aside. Fortunately, although you are not as good Christians as you should be, thank God, you are not yet one of them. But, you will ask me, who are those who are sometimes God's, sometimes the world? My brethren, here it is. I compare them (if I dare use that term) to those dogs who give themselves to the first person who calls them. Follow them, my brethren, from morning until evening, from the beginning of the year until the end: these people only look at Sunday as a day of rest and pleasure; they stay in bed longer than the days of the week, and, instead of giving their hearts to the good God, they do not even think about it.

They will think, some of their pleasures, of the people they will see; the others, to the markets they will make or to the money they will carry or receive. They barely make a sign of the cross, as best they can; under the pretext that they will go to church, they will not say prayers saying to themselves: "Oh! I have plenty of time to do it before mass." They always have to do (before) going to mass; they believed that they would have time left to say their prayers, and they are not only at the (beginning) of holy mass. If they find a friend along the way, they have no problem taking him home and leaving mass for another time. However, as they still

want to appear Christian in the eyes of the world, they still go there sometimes; but, it is with mortal boredom and disgust. This is the thought that occupies them; “My God, when will this be over?” You see them in church, especially during instruction, turning their heads from one side to the other, asking their neighbor what time it is; others yawn and stretch out, turning the pages of their book, as if to examine whether the bookseller has made any mistakes; others, you see them sleeping like in a good bed. The first thought that presents itself to them is not that they have desecrated such a holy place, but: "My God, this will never end... I will never come back 1..." And finally, others to whom the word of God, (which has converted so many sinners), (gives) pain to the heart: they are obliged to go out, they say, to breathe a little air, to avoid. not die; you see them sad, sorrowful during the holy services; but when the office is over, and often even, the priest has not yet come down from the altar, they rush to the door to see who will come out first; you then see the joy reborn that they had lost at the service. They are so tired that they often do not have the courage to return to vespers. If we ask them why they don’t go to vespers: “Ah! they tell you, you should be at church all day; we have something else to do!” For these people, there is no question of catechism, nor rosary, nor evening prayer: all this is regarded by them as nothing. If we ask them what we said during the instruction: “Ah! They will answer you, he has shouted enough!... he has annoyed us enough. I do not just remember it!... M if it wasn't so long, we would remember it much better; this is what puts people off going to services: (it’s) because it’s too long.” You are right to say: the world, because these people are among those who are of the world, without knowing it.

But, come on, we will try to make them understand better (at least if they want); but being deaf and blind (as they are), it is very difficult to make them hear the words of life, and, being blind, it will still be difficult to make them understand their unhappy state. First of all, with them there is no longer any question of saying their Benediction before the meal, nor their thanksgiving afterwards, nor their Angelus. If, out of an old habit, they do it, if you witness it, it hurts your heart: women do it while working, shouting at their children or their servants; men do it by turning their hat or cap in their hands, as if to examine if they have holes; they think as much of the good God as if they truly believed that there was none, and that it is for fun that they do this. They have no scruples about selling or buying on the holy day of Sunday, although they know very well (or at least they must know) that a somewhat heavy walk done on Sunday, without necessity, is a mortal sin. These people look at all these things as nothing. They will go to a parish, in these holy days, to hire servants; if we tell them that they are hurting: “Ah! they tell you, you have to go there when you can find them.” They have no problem going to pay their taxes on Sunday; because, during the week, we should go a little further, and take a few more moments. Ah! you will say to me, we do not pay attention to all that. — You do not pay attention to all that, my friend, I am not surprised, it is because you are part of the world; that is to say, you would like to be God's and please the world. Do you know, my brethren, what these people are? These are people who have not yet entirely lost their faith, and to whom there still remains some attachment to the service of God, who would not want to abandon everything, because they themselves blame those who no longer attend services; but they do not have enough courage to break with the world, and to turn to the side of the good God. (These people) would not want to damn themselves, but they would not want to embarrass themselves either; they hope to be able to save themselves, without doing so much violence to themselves; they have the thought that the good God, being so good, did not create them to ruin them, that he will forgive them all the same; that a time will come when they will give themselves to the good God, that they will correct themselves, that they will leave their bad habits. If, in a few moments of reflection, they put their poor life a little before their eyes, they will groan, and sometimes they will even shed tears.

Alas, my brethren, what a sad life leads those who would like to be in the world without ceasing to be God's! Let us go a little further and you will understand it even better, you will see how ridiculous their very life is. One moment you will hear them praying to the good God or doing an act of contrition, and another moment you will hear them swearing, maybe even God's holy name, if something doesn't go their way. This morning, you saw them at Holy Mass singing or hearing the praises of God, and, on the same day, you see them

making the most infamous remarks. The same hands that took holy water, asking God to cleanse them of their sins, a moment later, the same hands are used to make dirty touches on them or perhaps even on others. The same eyes which, this morning, had the great happiness of contemplating Jesus Christ himself in the holy host, in the course of the day will voluntarily focus on the most dishonest objects, and this, with pleasure. Yesterday, you saw this man giving charity to his neighbor, or doing him a service; today, he will try to deceive him, if he can benefit from it. It is only a moment ago that this mother wished all kinds of blessings for her children, and now that they have thwarted her, she overwhelms them with all kinds of misfortunes: she would never like to have seen them, she would like to be as far from them as she is close to them; she ends up giving them to the demon, in order to get rid of them. One moment, she sends her children to holy mass or confession; another, she will send them to the dance, or at least, she will pretend not to know, or she will forbid it from them while laughing, which means: “Leave.” Once, she will tell her daughter to be very reserved, not to mix with bad company, and another time, she sees her spending entire hours with young people, without saying anything to her. Come on, my poor mother, you (are) of the world; you believe that you belong to God, through whatever exterior religion you practice.

You are wrong: you are among those to whom Jesus Christ said: “Woe to the world!” Look at these people who believe they belong to God and who are in the world: they have no scruples about taking from their neighbor, sometimes wood, sometimes a few fruits and a thousand other things; as long as they are flattered in their actions, which they do regarding religion, they even have great pleasure in doing it, they show a lot of eagerness, they are good at giving advice to others; but if they are despised or slandered, then you see them become discouraged, tormented because they are treated in this way; Yesterday, they only wanted good for those who hurt them, and today they can no longer suffer them, nor often even see them or speak to them. Poor world! that you are unhappy, go your ordinary way; come on, you can only hope for hell! Some would even like to attend the sacraments at least once a year; but for that, they would need a very easy confessor, they would just like it and that is all. If the confessor does not see them well enough and refuses them absolution; here they are who are unleashed against him, saying everything that can justify them for not having completed their confession; they will speak ill of it; they know well why they stay on the way, but as they (also) know that the confessor cannot grant them anything, so they content themselves by saying whatever they want. Come on, people, go your ordinary way, one day you will see what you did not want to see. We should therefore be able to divide our hearts in two! But no, my friend, either all to God or all to the world. Do you want to attend the sacraments? Well! leave the games, the dances and the taverns. Besides, you have good grace today to present yourself to the tribunal of penance, to sit at the holy table to eat the bread of angels; and, in three or four weeks, perhaps less, you will be seen spending the night among drunkards who are overflowing with wine, and even more, doing (the most infamous acts) of impurity. Come on, world, come on! you will soon be in hell: you will be taught there what you had to do to go to heaven, which you lost through your own fault. No, my brethren, let us not be mistaken; we must, of all necessity, either sacrifice the world to Jesus Christ, or else make to Jesus Christ the sacrifice of all that we have dearest on earth. But what can the world give you that can compare with what Jesus Christ promises us in heaven?

Moreover, my brethren, among all those who have attached themselves to the world, who have only sought to satisfy their brutal and corrupt inclination, there is not one who is not its dupe and who, at the hour of death, does not repent of having loved it. Yes, my brethren, it is then that we will feel the vanity and the fragility of these things, and we would feel them even from this moment, if we would take a glance at our past life; we would see that life is very little. Tell me, my brethren, you who the years are beginning to make your head bow on your shoulders: during your youth, you ran after the pleasures of the world, and it seemed to you that you could no longer be satisfied; you spent many years seeking only your pleasures: dances, games, taverns and vanity were all your occupation; you have always postponed your return to God. When you reached an older age, you thought about collecting some good things. So you have reached old age, without having done anything for your salvation. Now that you are disillusioned with the follies of youth;

now that you have worked to get something, you think that now you will do better. I do not believe it, my friend. The infirmities of old age which will overwhelm you; your children, who, perhaps, will despise you; all this will be a new obstacle to your salvation. You believed that you belonged to God and you find yourself to be of the world: that is to say, among those who are sometimes God's and sometimes the world, and who end up receiving the reward of the world. Woe to the world! Go, world, follow your master as you have done hitherto. You see very well that you made a mistake in following the world; Well, my brethren, will you be any wiser? No, my brethren, no. If a person deceives us once, we will say: We no longer trust him; and we are quite right; the world continually deceives us, and yet we love it. “Be careful,” Saint John tells us, “from loving the world and attaching yourself to anything in the world.” — “It is in vain,” the Prophet tells us, “that we would bring (light) to this sort of people; they have been deceived and they will be deceived again; they will only open their eyes at the time when they no longer have any hope of returning to God.” Ah! My brethren, if we thought carefully about what the world is, we would spend our lives receiving its farewells and saying ours to it. At the age of fifteen we said goodbye to the amusements of childhood, we considered it silly to chase flies, as children do who build (them) houses of cards or mud.

At thirty, you began to say goodbye to the noisy pleasures of a fiery youth; what you liked so much at that time is already starting to bore you. Let us say better, my brethren, every day we say goodbye to the world; we act like a traveler who enjoys the beauty of the countries he has passed through; as soon as he sees them, he must leave them; it is the same with the goods and pleasures to which we are so attached. Finally, we arrive at the edge of eternity, which swallows up everything in its abysses. Ah! It is then, my brethren, that the world will disappear forever from our eyes, and that we will recognize our folly in having attached ourselves to it. And everything that we have been told about sin!.... All this was therefore very true, we will say. Alas! I have only lived for the world, I have only sought the world in everything I have done, and the goods and pleasures of the world are nothing for me anymore! everything is slipping out of my hands: this world that I loved so much, these goods and these pleasures, which have so occupied my heart and my mind 1.... I must now return to my God!... Ah! My brethren, how consoling this thought is for him who has sought only God alone during his life! but how desperate it is for those who have lost sight of their God and the salvation of their soul! No, no, my brethren, let us make no mistake, let us flee, or we put ourselves in great danger of getting lost. All the saints have fled, despised and abandoned the world all their lives. Those who were forced to stay there lived there as if they were not there. How many great people of the world have left it to live in solitude! see a Saint Arsenius. Struck with this thought: How difficult it is to save oneself in the world, he abandons the court of the emperor, and goes to spend his life in the forests, to mourn his sins and do penance. Yes, my brethren, if we do not flee the world, at least as much as possible, we can only get lost with the world, short of a great miracle. Here is a good example and one capable of making us understand it. We read in holy scripture that Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, made an alliance with Ahab, king of Israel. The Holy Spirit tells us that the first, that is, Jehoshaphat, was a holy king; but he tells us that the second, who is Ahab, was an ungodly man. Nevertheless, Jehoshaphat agreed to go with Ahab to fight against the Syrians. Before leaving, he wanted to see a prophet of the Lord, to ask him what would happen in this fight. Ahab said to him: “We have here a certain prophet of the Lord, but he only predicts misfortunes for us. " - " Well! said Jehoshaphat to him, send for him, and we will consult him.” The prophet being before the king, Jehoshaphat asked him whether he should go and fight against the enemies or not. King Ahab hastens to tell him that all his prophets have assured him of victory. “Yes, says the prophet of the Lord, go, Princes, you will attack your enemies, you will defeat them and you will return victorious and loaded with their riches.” King Jehoshaphat saw clearly that this was not what the prophet thought, he asked him to say what the Lord (inspired him to do.) Then the prophet taking the tone of the prophet of the Lord, “Long live the Lord, in whose presence I am!” Here is what the

Lord, the God of Israel, commanded me to say to you: You will fight; but you will be defeated. King Ahab will perish there, and his army will be routed and everyone will return home without a leader.” King Ahab

said to the other: “I told you that this prophet only announces misfortunes.” He had him put in prison, to punish him on his return. But the prophet worried very little about this, for he knew well that the king would not return, but would perish. Having fought the battle, Ahab, seeing that the main body of the army was turning on him, changed his clothes. So they took King Jehoshaphat for Ahab, the only one they wanted. Seeing himself about to be pierced by the enemies: “Ah Lord, God of Israel,” he cried, “have mercy on me.” Then the Lord helped him and removed all his enemies from him. But he sent his prophet to rebuke him for wanting to accompany this (ungodly) king: “You would have deserved to perish with him, but because the Lord saw good works in you, he preserved your life, and you will have the happiness of returning to your city.” For Ahab, he perished in this fight, as the prophet had predicted to him before his departure. This, my brethren, is what it is to frequent the world: which shows us that, necessarily, we must flee the world if we want not to perish with it. With the people of the world we take the spirit of the world and lose the spirit of God: which leads us into an abyss of sin, almost without realizing it; we have a good example of this in history. Saint Augustine tells us that his friend was a young man who lived a perfectly good life. He followed his path as well as a young man can. One day, some of his fellow students were going out with him after dinner; The latter, angry that he did not do like them, tried to drag him to the amphitheater. It was a day when men were having their throats slit by other men. As this young man had an extreme horror for these sorts of curiosities, he initially resisted with all his strength; but his companions used so much flattery and so much violence that, this time, they dragged him away, so to speak, in spite of himself. He said to them: “You can easily train my body and place it among you in the amphitheater; but you cannot dispose of my mind or my eyes, which, assuredly, will never take part in such a horrible spectacle. So I will be there as if not being there, and, through that, I will satisfy you without taking part in it.” But Alypius said in vain, they took him away, and while the whole amphitheater was in the transport of these barbaric pleasures, the young man forbade his heart to take part in them, and his eyes from looking, by keeping them closed. Ah I would to God that he had stopped his ears too; because, having been struck by a loud cry which was heard, curiosity got the better of him: wanting to see only that, he opened his eyes, it was enough to ruin him. The more he looked, the more his heart felt pleasure; he went so far later that, far from being asked to go there, he himself led the others. “Alas! my God, cries Saint Augustine, who can pull him out of this abyss? Nothing else, except a miracle of God's grace.” I conclude, my brethren, saying that if we do not flee (the world) with its pleasures, if we do not hide as much as we can, we will be lost and we will be damned. But the most convenient route is to be sometimes in the world, sometimes with God, that is to say, doing some practices of piety and following the way of the world: games, dances, taverns, working on Sundays; (nurture) these hatreds, these revenges, these resentments, (note) these small wrongs. But to be all God's, you must expect to be despised and rejected by the world. Happy, my brethren, he who will be of this number, and who will walk courageously following his Master, carrying his cross; since it is only through this that we will have the great happiness of arriving in heaven. What I wish for you.

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost — On the Thought of Death

Cum appropinquaret portae civitatis, ecce defunctus efferebatur filius unicus matris suae: et haec vidua erat. Jesus, drawing near the gates of the city (of Naim), found that they were carrying to burial the only son of a mother who was a widow. (Luke 7:12)

Nothing, my brethren, is more capable of withdrawing us from the pleasures of the world, and of leading us to occupy ourselves with that terrible moment which must decide everything for eternity, than the sight of a corpse that is being led to the tomb. That is why the Church, who is always attentive and occupied in furnishing us all the means most capable of making us work at our salvation, puts before us, three times a year, the remembrance of those dead whom Jesus Christ raised; in order to force us, in some sort, to occupy ourselves with it so as to prepare ourselves for that journey. In one place of the Gospel, she presents to us a

young girl aged only twelve years—that is to say, at an age when one can scarcely begin to enjoy pleasures. Although she was an only daughter, very rich and tenderly loved by her parents, death nonetheless strikes her and makes her disappear forever from the eyes of the living. In another place, we see a young man of about twenty-five years, who was in the flower of his age, the only support and the only consolation of a widowed mother; yet neither the tears nor the tenderness of that desolate mother can prevent death, that pitiless death, from making him its prey. In another part of the Gospel, we see another young man, who is Lazarus. He took the place of a father to his two sisters, Martha and Magdalene; it seems to us that death ought at least to have had regard for this last; but no, that cruel death reaps him, and reduces him to the tomb, to make him the food of worms. It took Jesus Christ three miracles to restore life to them. Let us open our eyes, my brethren, and contemplate for a moment this touching spectacle, which is going to prove to us, in the strongest manner, the frailty of life and the necessity of detaching ourselves from it, before this inexorable death tears it from us in spite of ourselves. “Young or old,” the holy king David said, “I will often think that I shall die one day, and I will prepare myself for it in good time.” To engage you to do the same, I am going to show you how necessary the thought of death is to us in order to detach us from life and to attach us to God alone.

We see, my brethren, that despite the degree of impiety and unbelief to which men have arrived in the unhappy century in which we live, they have not yet dared to deny the certainty of death; but only, they do everything they can to banish the thought of it, as of a neighbor who might disturb them in their pleasures and trouble them in their debauches.

But also, we see in the Gospel that Our Lord Jesus Christ wishes that we never lose from view the thought of our departure from this world for eternity. To make us understand well that we can die at every age, we see that He raises neither children who are still insensitive to the pleasures of life, nor decrepit old men who, despite their attachment to the earth, cannot doubt that their departure is little distant. But He raises those who are at an age when we most ordinarily forget this salutary thought: that is to say, from twelve to about forty years. Indeed, from forty years on, death seems to pursue us rapidly; we lose something every day that announces to us that we must soon leave this world; we feel each day our strength diminish, we see our hair whiten, our head become bald, our teeth fall, our sight weaken: all that bids us farewell forever, and we ourselves confess that we are no longer what we once were. No, my brethren, no one has the least doubt of it. Yes, my brethren, it is certain that a day will come when we shall no longer be among the number of the living, and that one will think of us no more than if we had never been in the world. Behold then that worldly young girl, who took so much care and so much trouble to appear in the eyes of the world: behold her reduced to a little dust, which is trodden under the feet of passers-by. Behold that proud man, who made so much of his mind, of his riches, of his credit and of his office: behold him led into a tomb, eaten by worms, and put into oblivion until the end of the world—that is to say, until the general resurrection, when we shall see him again with all that he will have done during the days of his unhappy life. But perhaps you are going to ask me what this moment of death is that ought so much to occupy us, and that is so capable of converting us? It is, my brethren, an instant which, little sensible in its duration, is little known to us, and which nonetheless suffices to make us make the great passage from this world to eternity. Formidable moment in itself, my brethren, when everything that is in the world dies for man, when man at the same time dies for everything that is his upon the earth. Terrible moment, my brethren, when the soul, despite the so intimate union it has with its body, is torn from it by the violence of illness; after which, man being stripped of everything, leaves to the eyes of the world only a hideous figure of himself—extinguished eyes, a mute mouth, hands without action, feet without movement, a disfigured face, a body that begins to corrupt and that is no longer anything but an object of horror. Pitiless moment, my brethren, when the most powerful and the richest lose all their riches and their glory, and when they have for their whole inheritance only the dust of the tomb. Very humiliating moment, my brethren, when the greatest is confounded with the most miserable of the earth. Everything is confounded: no more honors, no more distinctions, all are put on the same level. But a moment, my brethren, a thousand times more terrible still by its consequences than by its presence,

since the losses of it are irreparable. “Man,” the Holy Spirit tells us, speaking of the dying, “will go into the house of his eternity.” A short moment, it is true, my brethren, but very decisive; after which the sinner has no more mercy to hope for, and the just no more merits to acquire. A moment whose thought has filled the monasteries with so many great ones of the world, who left everything in order to think only of that terrible passage from this world to the other. A moment, my brethren, whose thought has peopled the deserts with so many saints, who never ceased to give themselves over to all the rigors of penance that their love for the good God could inspire in them. Terrible moment, my brethren, but very short, which nonetheless is going to decide everything for an entire eternity. After that, my brethren, how can it be that we do not think of it, or at least that we think of it in so weak a manner? Alas! my brethren, how many souls are burning now for having neglected this salutary thought! Let us leave, my brethren, let us leave a little the world, its goods and its pleasures, to occupy ourselves with this terrible moment. Let us imitate, my brethren, the saints, who made it their principal occupation; let what perishes with time perish, let us give our cares to what is eternal and permanent. Yes, my brethren, nothing is more capable of detaching us from the life of sin, and of making kings tremble on their thrones, judges and libertines in the midst of their pleasures, than the thought of death. Here is an example, my brethren, which is going to show you that nothing can resist this thought well meditated. Saint Gregory reports to us that a young man, in whose soul’s salvation he took a great interest, had conceived such a passion for a young girl that, she being dead, he could no longer console himself. Saint Gregory, pope, after many prayers and penances, went to find this young man: “My friend,” he said to him, “come with me, and you will see once more her who makes you heave so many sighs and shed so many tears.” Taking him by the hand, he leads him to the tomb of that young girl. When he had had the plank that covered her body lifted, this young man, seeing a body so horrible, so foul-smelling, so filled with worms, no longer anything but a heap of corruption, draws back in horror: “No, no, my friend,” Saint Gregory says to him, “advance and sustain for a moment the sight of this spectacle that death presents to you. See, my friend, consider what this perishable beauty has become, to which you were madly attached. Do you see this head all wasted, these extinguished eyes, these livid bones, this horrible heap of ashes, of rottenness and of worms? Behold, my friend, the object of your passion, for which you have heaved so many sighs, and sacrificed your soul, your salvation, your God and your eternity.” Words so touching, a spectacle so frightful, made so lively an impression on the heart of this young man that, recognizing from that moment the nothingness of this world and the fragility of every perishable beauty, he at once renounced all the vanities of the earth, thought no more of anything but preparing himself to die well by withdrawing from the world, to go spend his life in a monastery, there to weep, for the rest of his days, the wanderings of his youth, and to die a saint. What happiness, my brethren, for this young man! Let us do the same, my brethren, since nothing is more capable of detaching us from life, and of determining us to leave sin, than this happy thought of death.

Ah! my brethren, at death, how differently one thinks than during life! Here is a fair example. It is related in history that a lady possessed all the qualities capable of pleasing the world, whose pleasures she tasted. Alas! my brethren, that did not prevent her from arriving like the others at her last moments, and much sooner than she would have wished. At the beginning of her illness, they concealed from her the danger in which she found herself, as one does only too often to these poor sick persons. Yet the evil made each day new progress; it was necessary to warn her that she must think of her departure for eternity. She had then to do what she had never done and to think what she had never thought; she was extremely frightened by it. “I do not believe,” she said to those who gave her this news, “that my illness is dangerous; I still have time”; but they press her, telling her that the physician found her in danger. She weeps, she laments at leaving life at a time when she could still enjoy her pleasures. But while she wept, they represent to her that no one being immortal, if she escaped this illness, another would carry her off, that all she had to do was to set her conscience in order, so as to be able to appear with confidence before the tribunal of God. Little by little she entered into herself, and as she was instructed, she was soon convinced of it; her tears turned toward her sins; she asked for a confessor to make to him the confession of her faults, which she would greatly have wished

never to have committed. She herself makes the sacrifice of her life; she confesses her faults with a great sorrow, an abundance of tears; she prays her companions or her friends to come to see her before she leaves this world, which they did with eagerness. When they were around her bed, she said to them weeping: “My dear friends, you see in what state I am; I must go appear before Jesus Christ, to render Him an account of all the actions of my life; you yourselves know how ill I have served the good God and how much I have to fear; but nonetheless I am going to abandon myself to His mercies. All the counsel I have to give you, my good friends, is not to wait, in order to do well, for this moment when one can do nothing, and when, despite tears and repentance, one is in so great a danger of being lost for eternity. It is for the last time that I see you; I conjure you, do not lose a moment of the time that the good God gives you and that I myself have not. Farewell, my friends, I am going to depart for eternity; do not forget me in your prayers, so that, if I have the happiness of being pardoned, you may help me to draw myself out of purgatory.” All her companions, who in no way expected this language, withdrew shedding tears, and filled with a great desire not to wait for this moment, when we have so many regrets at having lost so precious a time. Oh! my brethren, how happy we should be, if the thought of death and the presence of a corpse made the same impression upon us, worked the same change in us! Yet we have a soul to save like those persons who were converted at the sight of that young lady who was going to die; and moreover, we have the same graces if we wish to profit by them. Alas! my God, why attach oneself so strongly to life, since we are in it only for an instant, after which we leave everything, to carry away only the good and the evil that we have done?… Why, my brethren, attach ourselves so little to the good God, who makes, even from this world, our happiness, to continue it throughout eternity? How could we attach ourselves to the goods and the pleasures of this world, if we had these words well engraved in our hearts: we come into the world entirely naked and we shall leave it the same? Yet we know and we see every day that the richest carries away no more than the poorest. The great Saladin recognized it well before dying—he who had made the universe tremble by the greatness of his victories. Seeing himself near death, recognizing then, better than ever, the emptiness of human grandeurs, he commanded him who ordinarily walked before him carrying his standard to take a piece of the cloth in which he was to be wrapped, to put it at the point of a pike, and to walk through the city crying as loud as he could: “Behold all that the great Saladin, conqueror of the East and master of the West, carries away of all his treasures and of all his victories: a shroud.” O my God! how wise we should be, if this thought never left us!

Indeed, my brethren, if that miser, in the moment when he spares neither injustices nor deceits to amass goods, thought that in a little time he is going to leave everything, could he well attach himself so strongly to objects that are going to lose him for eternity? But no, my brethren, seeing the manner in which we live, one would believe that we must never leave life. Alas! how much it is to be feared that if we live as blind men, we shall die the same! Here is a very striking example. We read in history that Cardinal Bellarmine, of the Company of Jesus, was called to a sick man who had been a procurator, and who, unhappily, had preferred money to the salvation of his soul. Believing that he was sending for him only to set in order the affairs of his conscience, he ran there with eagerness. On entering, he begins to speak to him of the state of his soul; but scarcely had he begun to speak when the sick man said to him: “Father, it is not for that that I asked for you; but only to console my wife who is desolate at losing me; for as for me, I am going straight to hell.” The cardinal reports that this man was so hardened and so blind that he pronounced these words with as much tranquillity and the same coldness as if he had said that he was going to take a moment of pleasure with some of his friends. “My friend,” the cardinal said to him, who was desolate at seeing his poor soul fall into hell, “think then of asking pardon of the good God for your sins and confess yourself; the good God will pardon you.” This poor wretch told him that he must not lose his time, that he did not know his sins, nor wish to know them; that he would have plenty of time to know them in hell. The cardinal might well pray him, conjure him, for mercy’s sake, not to lose himself for eternity, since he still had all the means of gaining heaven, promising him that he would help him to satisfy the justice of God, adding that he was sure that the good God would still have pity on him. But no, nothing was capable of touching him; he died without giving

any feeling of repentance. Alas! my brethren, he who does not think of death during his life puts himself in a great danger of never thinking of it, or of wishing to repair the evil only when there will no longer be remedies. O my God! how many sins those who never lose the thought of death avoid during life, and how many regrets for eternity!

The same cardinal reports that having gone to visit one of his friends who was sick by an excess of debauch, he wished to exhort him to repentance and to confess his sins, or at least to make an act of contrition. The sick man answered him: “Father, what do you mean by an act of contrition? I have never known that language.” This cardinal might well wish to make him understand that it was to regret the sins one had committed, so that the good God might pardon us. — “Father, leave me, you trouble me, leave me in peace.” He died without wishing to produce an act of contrition, so blinded and hardened was he. O my God! what a misfortune for a person who has lost the faith! alas! there are no more resources! Ah! my brethren, how rightly one says: Such is the life, such is the death [telle vie, telle mort]. Alas! my brethren, if that drunkard thought a little of this moment of death, which must end all his dissolutions and his debauches, when his body will be delivered to the worms, while his poor soul will burn in hell; ah! my brethren, would he have the courage to continue his excesses? But no, if one speaks to him of it, he mocks at it, he thinks only of diverting himself, of contenting his body, as if everything must end with him, the prophet Isaiah tells us. Ah! my brethren, the demon takes great care to make us lose the remembrance of it, because he knows much better than we how salutary it is to us to draw us from sin and bring us back to the good God. The saints, my brethren, who had so much at heart the salvation of their soul, took care never to lose the remembrance of it. Saint William, archbishop of Bourges, assisted at burials as much as he could, in order to engrave well in himself the thought of death. He represented to himself how miserable we are to attach ourselves to life which is so unhappy, so filled with the danger of losing ourselves for eternity! There is another who went to spend a year in a wood, to have leisure to prepare himself well for death: “because,” he said, “when it arrives, it is no longer time.” These saints had no doubt good reason, my brethren, because on that hour everything depends, and because often, if we wait to think of it until the moment when death strikes us, sometimes that serves for nothing. Oh! how powerful the thought of death is to guarantee us from sin, and to make us do good!

Alas! my brethren, if that unhappy man who drags himself in the filth of his impurities thought well of the moment of death when his body, which he takes so much care to content, will be rotten in the earth; ah! if he made the least reflection on those dry and arid bones heaped up in the cemetery; if he took the trouble to go upon those tombs, to contemplate there those foul and rotten corpses, those skulls half gnawed by worms, would he not be struck by such a spectacle? Would he have any other thought than to weep over his sins and his blindness, if he thought of the regret he will have at the hour of death at having profaned a body that is the temple of the Holy Spirit and the members of Jesus Christ? Do you wish, my brethren, to know the unhappy end of an impure man who would not see death during his life? Saint Peter Damian reports that an Englishman, in order to have wherewith to satisfy his shameful passion, gave himself to the demon, on condition that he would warn him three days before his death, in the hope that he would still have time to convert. Alas! how blind man is, once in sin! But after he had dragged himself, rolled and bathed in the juice of his impurities, the moment of his departure arrived. The demon, liar though he is, kept his word to this scoundrel. But the Englishman was well deceived in his expectation; for, to the great astonishment of all who were present, as soon as one spoke to him of his salvation, he seemed to fall asleep, made no answer; but if one spoke to him of temporal affairs, he had his knowledge perfectly; so that he died in his impurities, as he had lived in them. To show us well that he was reprobate, the good God permitted that great black dogs appear surrounding his bed, as ready to spring upon their prey; one saw them still upon his tomb, as if to guard that abominable deposit. Alas! my brethren, how many other examples as frightful as those!

Tell me, if that ambitious man thought well of this moment of death, which will make him see all the nothingness of human grandeurs, could he well fail to make these reflections, that soon he will be covered with earth and trodden under the feet of passers-by, having for his whole mark of greatness only these two words: “Here rests such a one”? O my God! how blind man is! We read in history that a man, during his whole life, had in no way thought of his salvation; but only of diverting himself and of amassing goods. Being near death, he well recognized his blindness in not having worked to make a good death. He recommended that one put upon his tomb: “Here rests the fool, who left this world without knowing why the good God had put him in it.” If, my brethren, all those sinners who mock at all the graces that the good God makes them to leave sin and who despise them; if they thought well that, in the moment when they will leave this world, these graces will be refused them, and that the good God whom they have fled will flee them in His turn, and will leave them to die in their sins; tell me, would they have the courage to despise so many graces that the good God presents them now to save their poor soul? Ah! my brethren, how many sins would not be committed, if one had the happiness of thinking often of death. That is why the Holy Spirit recommends to us so strongly never to lose the remembrance of our last ends, because we should never sin. It was again this thought, my brethren, that finished converting Saint Francis Borgia. Being still in the world, he found himself at the court of Spain when the empress Elizabeth, wife of Charles V, died. As one was to bury her in the tomb of her predecessors, which was at Granada, the conducting of this body was given to Francis Borgia. On arrival at Granada, one wished to perform the ceremony, and one opened the coffin where the body was. Francis Borgia was to protest that it was indeed the same that one had put in the coffin. When one had uncovered that face which had been so beautiful, it was found all black and half rotten; the eyes were all melted; an unbearable odor came from it. Then he said: “Yes, I swear that it is the body that was put in the coffin, and that it is that of the princess; but I no longer recognize it.” From that moment, he reflected on the nothingness of human grandeurs and how little they are; he took the resolution to leave the world, to think no more of anything but saving his soul. “Ah!” he said, “what has become of the beauty of this princess, who was the most beautiful creature in the world? O my God! how blind man is to attach himself to vile creatures in losing his soul!” Happy thought, my brethren, which won him heaven! But why is it, my brethren, that we forget this death, which would always make us hold ourselves ready to die well? Alas! one does not wish to think of it, one dies without having thought of it, and we look upon this death as very far from us. The demon does not say to us, as formerly to our first parents: “You shall not die”; because that temptation would be too gross, it would deceive no one; “but,” he says to us, “you will not die so soon”; and by this illusion, we put off the thought of converting ourselves to our last illness, when we shall no longer be in a state to do anything.

It is thus, my brethren, that death has surprised so many, and will surprise so many until the end of the world. It is nonetheless this thought that has drawn so many from sin; here is a very striking example. It is related in history that a young man and a young girl had had together an infamous commerce. It happened that this young man, passing through a wood, was slaughtered. A little dog that followed him, seeing his master killed, goes to find that girl, takes her by her apron, pulling her as if to tell her to follow him. Astonished at that, she follows this little dog, which leads her to the place where her master was. It stopped near a heap of leaves. Having looked at what there was, she saw that poor young man all covered with blood: robbers had stabbed him. Entering into herself, she began to weep, saying to herself: “Ah! unhappy one, if the same fate had happened to you, where would you be? alas! you would be burning in hell. Perhaps this young man is burning now in the abyss because of you!… Ah! unhappy one, how could you lead so criminal a life? Ah! in what state is your poor soul!… My God! I thank You for not having made me serve as an example to others!” She left the world, went to bury herself in a monastery for her whole life, and died like a saint. Ah! my brethren, how many sinners have similar examples converted! O my God! how hard and insensitive our hearts must be to be touched by nothing, and to live in sin, perhaps, without thinking of leaving it! Alas! my brethren, it is to be feared that, in the moment when we shall wish to return to the good God, we shall not be

able; the good God, in punishment of our sins, will have abandoned us. I am going to show you this in an example. We read in history that a man had lived a long time in disorder. Having converted, he fell back after some time into his old sins. His friends, who were much grieved at it, did all they could to bring him back to the good God; he always promised them and did nothing of it. They told him that there was a retreat in the neighboring parish; that they would lead him there with them, and that he ought to prepare himself for it. The other, who for a long time had mocked God and all their counsels, answered them laughing that yes; that they had only to come take him on the morning of the day when it was to begin, and that they would all leave together. The others did not fail to go find him, in the hope of bringing him back to the good God; but on entering, they saw him stretched in the middle of his house: he had died in the night, of a sudden death, without having had time either to confess himself, or to give the least sign of repentance. Alas! my brethren, where did that poor soul go who had so much despised the graces of the good God?

We have said that it is very useful to think often of death: first, to make us avoid sin and to make us expiate those which we have had the misfortune to commit; and second, to detach us from life. Saint Augustine tells us that we must not think only of the death of the martyrs, in whom, by an admirable grace, the pain of sin has become as it were an instrument of merit, but of the death of all men. This thought of death would be for us one of the most powerful means of salvation, and one of the greatest remedies for our evils, if we knew how to draw from it the advantages that the divine mercy wishes to procure for us by the chastisement that His justice exacts of us. We are condemned to die only because we have sinned; but it would suffice for us, in order to sin no more, to think well of death, as the Holy Spirit tells us. We say, my brethren, that the thought of death produces in us three effects: first, it detaches us from the world; second, it stops our passions; third, it engages us to lead a holier life.

If the world, my brethren, can deceive us for some time, that certainly will not last always; for it is sure that all the things of the world have not great force against the thought of death. If we think that, in a few moments, we shall have said farewell to life never to reappear in it! The man who has death always present to his mind can look upon himself only as a traveler upon the earth, who only passes through it, and who leaves without pain everything he meets, because he tends to another end and advances toward another country. Such was, my brethren, the disposition of Saint Jerome: as he saw that once dead he would no longer be able to animate his disciples by his examples of secret virtues, he wished, in dying, to leave them holy instructions: “My children,” he said to them, “if you wish, like me, to regret nothing at death, accustom yourselves to detach yourselves from everything during life. Do you wish still to fear nothing in this terrible moment? love nothing of what you will have to leave. When one is well undeceived of the world and of all its illusions, when one has despised its goods, its false sweetnesses and its mad promises; when one has not put one’s felicity in the enjoyment of creatures, one has no pain in leaving them and separating oneself from them forever.” O happy state, this great saint cried, that of a man who, full of a just confidence in God, finds himself retained by no attachment to the world and to the goods of the earth! Behold, my brethren, the dispositions to which the thought of death leads us.

The second effect that the thought of death produces in us is to stop our passions. Yes, my brethren, if we are tempted, we have only to think quickly of death, and at once we shall feel the passion fall: that was the practice of the saints. Saint Paul tells us that he dies every day. Our Lord, being still upon the earth, spoke often of His Passion. Saint Mary of Egypt, being tempted, thought quickly of death, and at once the temptation left her. Saint Jerome lost this thought no more than respiration. It is related in the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert that a solitary who had lived some time in the great world, being touched by grace, went to bury himself in a desert. The demon never ceased to recall to him the young person for whom he had had a criminal love. A moment before she died, God made it known to him. He leaves his solitude, he goes to see her: she was ready to be put in the earth; he approaches the coffin, uncovers her face for him, takes in his handkerchief an abscess that came from her mouth. After that, he returns into his desert, and every time he

was tempted, he took this handkerchief and said to himself, representing to himself the filth of that poor creature: “Fool that you are, behold the sweet favor of the object that you so much loved at the expense of your soul; if at present you cannot bear this horrible stench that has come from the body of this creature, what then was your folly to have loved her during her life, to the prejudice of your salvation; but what would be your blindness still to think of it after her death!” Saint Augustine tells us that when he felt himself violently carried to evil, the only thing that retained him was to think that one day he would die, and that after his death he would be judged. “I often said to my dear friend Alypius, when I entertained myself with him concerning what must make the different lot of the good and of the wicked, I confessed to him that, despite all that the impious could formerly say to me, I have always believed that, at the hour of our death, the good God will make us render an account of all the evil that we shall have done during our life.” It is related in the history of the Fathers of the Desert that a young solitary said to an ancient: “Father, what must I do when I am tempted, especially against the holy virtue of purity?” — “My son,” the saint said to him, “think quickly of death and of the torments reserved for the impure in hell, and you are sure that this thought will drive away the demon.” Saint John Climacus tells us that a solitary who always had the thought of death engraved in his mind, when the demon wished to tempt him to relax, cried out: “Ah! unhappy one, behold you are going to die, and you have still done nothing to be presented to the good God.” Yes, my brethren, a person who wishes to save his soul must never lose the remembrance of death.

The thought of death furnishes us still with pious reflections: it puts our whole life before our eyes; then we think that everything that rejoices us according to the world during our life will make us shed tears at the hour of death; all our sins, which must never be effaced from our memory, are so many serpents that devour us; the time that we have lost, the graces that we have despised: all that will be shown to us at death. After that, it is impossible not to work to live better and to cease doing evil. It is related in history that a dying man, before rendering the last sigh, had his prince called, to whom he had been very faithful for many years. The prince went there with eagerness: “Ask of me,” he said to him, “everything you wish, and you are sure to obtain it.” — “Prince,” this poor dying man said to him, “I have only one thing to ask of you, it is a quarter of an hour of life.” — “Alas, my friend,” the prince replied to him, “that is not in my power; ask of me any other thing, so that I may be able to grant it to you.” — “Alas!” the sick man cried, “if I had served the good God as well as I have served you, I should not have a quarter of an hour of life, but an eternity.” The same regret was experienced by a man of the law, when he was near leaving life, without having thought of saving his soul: “Ah! fool that I am, I who have written so much for the world, and nothing for my soul; I must die, I have done nothing that can reassure me, and there are no more remedies; I see nothing in my life that I can present to the good God.” Happy, my brethren, if he himself profited by that—that is to say, by his good sentiments.

Third, here are the reflections that the thought of death must make us make: If we neglect to prepare ourselves for it, we shall be separated throughout eternity from the company of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels and of the saints, and we shall be forced to go spend our eternity with the demons, to burn with them. We read in the Life of Saint Jerome that a long experience had rendered him so learned in the science of salvation that, being on his deathbed, he was prayed by his disciples to leave them, as by testament, of all the truths of Christian morals, that of which he was most persuaded. What do you think, my brethren, that this great holy doctor answered them? “I am going to die,” he said to them, “my soul is on the edge of my lips; but I declare to you that of all the truths of Christian morals, that of which I am most convinced is that scarcely, out of a hundred thousand persons who will have lived badly, will there be found a single one saved in making a good death, because, to die well, one must think of it every day of one’s life. And do not believe that it is an effect of my illness: I speak to you of it with the experience of more than sixty years. Yes, my children, scarcely out of a hundred thousand persons who will have lived badly will there be a single one who will make a good death! No, my children, nothing carries us better to live well than the thought of death!”

What conclude from all that? My brethren, here it is: it is that, if we think often of death, we shall have a great care to conserve the grace of the good God; if we have the misfortune to have lost this grace, we shall hasten to recover it, we shall detach ourselves from the goods and the pleasures of the world, we shall bear the miseries of life in a spirit of penance, we shall recognize that it is the good God who sends them to us to expiate our sins. Alas! we ought to say to ourselves, I am running with great strides toward my eternity; presently I shall no longer be of this world… After this world, where am I going to spend my eternity?… shall I be in heaven or in hell?… that depends on the life I am going to lead; yes, young or old, I will often think of death, in order to prepare myself for it in good time. Happy, my brethren, is he who will always be ready! That is the happiness I wish for you!…

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost — On Humility

Omnis qui se exaltat, humiliabitur, et qui se humiliat, exaltabitur. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:14)

Could our divine Savior, my brethren, show us in a clearer and more evident manner the necessity of humbling ourselves—that is to say, of having low sentiments of ourselves, whether in our thoughts, or in our words, or in our actions—if we wish to hope to go and sing the praises of God throughout eternity? Being one day in the company of several persons, and seeing, I say, that several seemed to glory in the good they had done and despised the others, Jesus Christ proposed to them this parable which, according to all appearance, was a true history. “Two men,” He said to them, “went up to the temple to make their prayer; one of them was a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee standing spoke thus to God: ‘I give You thanks, O my God, that I am not like the rest of men, who are thieves, unjust, adulterers, nor even like this publican: I fast twice a week, I give the tithe of all that I possess.’” That is his prayer, Saint Augustine tells us. You see well that this prayer is only an affectation full of vanity and of pride; he does not come to pray to God, nor to give Him thanks; but to praise himself and insult even Him whom he prays to. The publican, on the contrary, standing far from the altar, did not even dare to lift his eyes to heaven; he struck his breast, saying: “My God, have pity on me, who am a sinner.” — “I declare to you,” Jesus Christ adds, “that this one has returned to his house justified, and not the other.” The sins of the publican are pardoned to him; and the Pharisee with all his virtues reenters his house more criminal than he had left it. If you wish to know the reason, here it is: it is that the humility of the publican, though a sinner, was more pleasing to God than all the pretended good works of the Pharisee with his pride. And Jesus Christ concludes from that, that “he who wishes to exalt himself will be humbled, and that he who will humble himself will be exalted.” That is the rule, my brethren—let us not deceive ourselves; the law is general; it is our divine Master who comes to publish it. “When you have raised your head up to heaven,” the Lord says, “I will tear you down from it.” Yes, my brethren, the only road that leads to elevation for the other life is humility. Without humility, that fair and precious virtue, you will enter no more into heaven than without baptism. Let us understand then today, my brethren, the obligation that we have to humble ourselves, and the motives that ought to engage us to it. I am going then, my brethren, to show you: first, that humility is a virtue that is absolutely necessary to us, if we wish that our actions be pleasing to God and rewarded in the other life; second, that we all have reasons to practice it, whether on the side of God, or on the side of ourselves.

Before, my brethren, making you understand the need that we have of this fair virtue, which is as necessary to us as baptism after original sin; as necessary, I say, as the sacrament of penance after mortal sin, I must tell you in what this lovable virtue consists, which gives so great a merit to all our good actions, and adorns so richly all our good works. Saint Bernard, that great saint who practiced it in so extraordinary a manner, who left goods, pleasures, parents, and friends, to go spend his life in the forests, among wild beasts, to weep there over his sins, tells us that humility is a virtue by which we know ourselves; which leads us to have only contempt for ourselves, and to take no pleasure at all in seeing ourselves praised. I say: first, that this virtue is

absolutely necessary to us if we wish that our actions be rewarded in heaven; since Jesus Christ Himself tells us that we cannot save ourselves without humility any more than without baptism. Saint Augustine tells us: "If you ask me what is the first virtue of a Christian, I will answer you that it is humility; if you ask me what is the second, I will tell you that it is humility; if you ask again what is the third, I will tell you again that it is humility; and as many times as you put this question to me, I will give you the same answer."

If pride engenders all sins, we can likewise say that humility engenders all virtues. With humility, you will have all that you need to please God, to save your soul; and without humility, with all the other virtues, you have nothing. We read in the holy Gospel that some mothers presented their children to Jesus Christ to have them blessed. The apostles made them withdraw. Our Lord finding it wrong, said to them: "Let these little children come to Me; for the kingdom of heaven is theirs and those who resemble them." He embraced them and gave them His holy blessing. Why so much welcome on the part of this divine Savior? It is that children are simple, humble, and without malice. Likewise, my brethren, if we wish to be welcomed by Jesus Christ, we must be simple and humble, in all that we do. "It was," Saint Bernard tells us, "it was this fair virtue that was the cause that the eternal Father looked upon the holy Virgin with complacency; and if," he tells us, "virginity drew the looks of God, her humility was the cause that she conceived the Son of God. If the holy Virgin is the Queen of virgins, she is also the Queen of the humble." Saint Teresa asked Our Lord one day why formerly the Holy Spirit communicated Himself with so much facility to the personages of the Old Testament, whether to the patriarchs or to the prophets, and declared His secrets to them, while He no longer did so at present. Our Lord answered her that it was because they were simpler and more humble, and that at present men have a double heart and are filled with pride and vanity. God does not communicate Himself to them; He does not love them as He loved those good patriarchs and those prophets, who were simple and humble. Saint Augustine tells us: "If you humble yourself profoundly, and if you acknowledge that you are nothing, that you deserve nothing, the good God will give you graces in abundance; but if you wish to exalt yourself and believe yourself something, He will withdraw from you, and will abandon you in your poverty." Our Lord, to make us understand well that humility is the fairest and most precious of all virtues, begins the beatitudes with humility, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them." Saint Augustine tells us that these poor in spirit are those who have humility as their portion. The prophet Isaiah says to God: "Lord, upon whom does Your Holy Spirit descend? Is it upon those who have great reputation in the world and upon the proud? No," the Lord says, "but upon him who has a humble heart." Not only does this virtue make us pleasing to God; but further to men. Everybody loves a person who is humble; one takes pleasure in her company. Whence comes it that ordinarily children are loved, if not because they are simple and because they are humble? A person who is humble yields to everything, never contradicts anyone, vexes no one, is content with everything; she always seeks to hide herself from the eyes of the world.

We have a fair example of it in the person of Saint Hilarion. Saint Jerome relates that this great saint was sought by emperors, kings, and princes, by the crowd of the people drawn into his desert by the odor of his holiness and by the brilliance and the noise of his miracles; but that he, on the contrary, fled the world as much as he could. He often changed his cell, in order to live hidden and unknown; he wept without ceasing at the sight of that multitude of religious and of people who came to him to be healed of their evils. Regretting his former solitude: "I have," he said weeping, "I have returned into the world; I shall receive my reward in this life, since one looks upon me as a person of some consideration." And nothing, Saint Jerome tells us, more admirable than to see him so humble amid so many honors that were rendered him. The rumor having spread that he was going to withdraw into the depth of the desert and that one would no longer be able to see him, twenty thousand men were put to guard him; but the saint said to them that he would take no food before he was left free. They guarded him for seven days; seeing that he ate nothing… He fled into the most remote desert, where he gave himself over to all that his love for God could inspire him. It was only there that he believed he was beginning to serve the good God. Tell me, my brethren, is that a humility, a contempt

of oneself? Alas! how rare these virtues are!—but also how rare the saints are! As much as one has hatred for a proud man, so much does one love a humble person, because she always takes the last place, she respects everybody and esteems them all; that is what makes one love so much the company of these persons who have such fair qualities.

Second, I say that humility is the foundation of all the other virtues. He who desires to serve the good God and save his soul must begin to practice this virtue in all its extent. Without which, our devotion will be like some sticks of straw that you will have planted, and which, at the first puff of wind, will be overturned. Yes, my brethren, the devil fears very little these devotions that have not humility for foundation, because he knows well that he will overturn them when he wishes. Which happened to that solitary who went so far as to walk on burning coals without burning himself; but who, lacking humility, fell some time afterward into the most deplorable excesses. If you have not humility, say that you have nothing, that at the first temptation you will be overturned. It is related in the Life of Saint Anthony that the good God made him see the world all filled with snares that the devil had stretched to make men fall into sin. He was so surprised at it that his body trembled like the leaf of the forests, and addressing himself to God: “Alas! Lord, who will be able to avoid so many snares?” He heard a voice that said to him: “Anthony, he who will be humble; because God gives His grace to the humble to resist temptations; whereas He permits the devil to make sport of the proud, who, as soon as they are in the occasion, will fall into sin. On the contrary, he does not dare to attack persons who are humble.” When Saint Anthony had fallen, he did nothing but humble himself profoundly before the good God, saying: “Alas! Lord, You know that I am only a miserable sinner!” At once the devil took flight. When we are tempted, my brethren, let us keep ourselves hidden under the veil of humility, and we shall see that the devil will have little strength over us. We read in the Life of Saint Macarius that, going one day into his cell laden with palm leaves, the devil came to meet him with a frightful fury, wishing to strike him, and not being able, seeing that the good God had not given him the power; he cried out: “O Macarius! how you make me suffer; I have not the strength to mistreat you, although I accomplish more perfectly than you all that you do: for you fast sometimes, but as for me, I never eat; you watch sometimes, but as for me, I never sleep. There is only one thing in which I confess that you surmount me.” Saint Macarius asked him in what it was. — “It is in your humility.” The saint threw himself face to the ground, asked the good God not to succumb to the temptation, and at once the devil took flight. Oh! my brethren, how this virtue makes us pleasing to God, and how powerful it is to drive away the devil! But how rare it is—which is very easy to understand, since there are so few Christians who resist the devil when they are tempted.

But, so that you may not deceive yourselves and that you may know that you have never had it, let us enter into a very simple detail. No, my brethren, it is not all the words and all the fair manifestations of contempt of self that prove to us that we have it. Before beginning, I am going to cite you an example that will prove to you that words signify little. We find in the Lives of the Fathers that a solitary having come to see Saint Serapion would not pray with him, because, he said, I have committed so many sins that I am unworthy of it; I dare not even breathe where you are. Remaining seated on the ground, he did not even dare to sit on the same seat as Saint Serapion. Saint Serapion wishing to wash his feet according to custom, he resisted him still more. There is a humility which, according to us, has every appearance of being very sincere, and you are going to see what this humility comes to. Saint Serapion contented himself with telling him that he would do much better to remain in his solitude than to run from cell to cell living as a vagabond, and to work to live. Then the solitary could not keep from showing that his humility was only a false virtue; he rose up against the saint and left him. Whereupon the saint said to him: “Eh! my son, you were telling me just now that you had done all imaginable crimes, that you dared neither pray nor eat with me, and, for a simple warning, which has nothing that can offend you, you let yourself go to anger! Go, my friend, your virtue and all your good works are stripped of the fairest quality, which is humility.” You see, by this example, that there is very little true humility. Alas! how many are there who, so long as one flatters them, praises them, or at least appears to esteem them, are all fire for the practices of piety—they would give everything and strip

themselves of everything; but a little reproach, an air of indifference casts bitterness into their heart, torments them, wrings tears from them, makes them take a bad humor, makes them make a thousand rash judgments, thinking that one treats them unworthily, that one would not do it to another. Alas! how rare this fair virtue is among the Christians of our days! how many virtues that have only the appearance and that, at the first blow, are carried away!

But in what does humility consist? Here it is: I will tell you first that there are two sorts of humility, the one interior and the other exterior. Exterior humility consists, first, in not praising oneself for having succeeded well in some work that we have done, in not repeating it to the world; in not recounting our traits of folly, the journeys we have made, our address and our skill, nor what one has said to us perhaps to our advantage; second, in hiding the good that we may have done, such as our alms, our prayers, our penances, the services we have rendered to the neighbor, the interior graces that the good God has granted us; third, in not taking pleasure when one praises us; in trying to turn the conversation, attributing to God the good success of which one praises us; or in making known that that gives us pain, and going away, if we can; fourth, in never saying good or ill of oneself. There are some who often say ill of themselves, so that one may praise them: this is a false humility, which one calls a hooked humility [humilité à crochet]. Say nothing of yourself; be content to think that you are a wretch, that it takes all the charity of a God to suffer you upon the earth. Fifth, one must never dispute with one's equals; one must yield to them in all that is not contrary to conscience; not always believe that one is right: when one would be, one must quickly think that one could well be mistaken, as that has happened so many other times; and above all never obstinately insist on having the last word, which shows a very proud spirit. Sixth, one must never show sadness when one appears to despise us, nor go complain of it to others; that would show that we have no humility, since if we had it, we would never find that one despises us, because never will one be able to treat us as we deserve, because of our sins; on the contrary, one must thank the good God for it, like the holy king David, who rendered good for evil, thinking how much he himself had despised the Lord by his sins. Seventh, one must be very content when one despises you, after the example of Jesus Christ, of whom it is said "that He filled Himself with opprobrium," and after the example of the apostles, of whom it is said "that they had a great joy at being found worthy to suffer some contempt, some ignominies for the love of Jesus Christ"; which will make all our happiness and our hope at death. Eighth, we ought not to excuse ourselves for our faults, when we have done something that can make us be blamed; not to make people think that it is not so, whether by lies or evasions, or by our air which seems to say that it is not we. Even when we would be accused wrongly, provided that the glory of the good God is not interested in it, we ought to say nothing. See what happened to that young girl to whom one had given the name of Brother Marin. Alas! who of us would have been put to trials like that without justifying himself, being able to do so so easily? Ninth, this humility consists in doing all that is most disgusting, what others will not do, and in loving to be clothed simply. That, my brethren, is in what exterior humility consists.

But in what does the interior consist? Here it is. It consists, first, in having low sentiments of oneself, never applauding oneself in one's heart when one has done something that has succeeded well, but believing oneself unworthy and incapable of doing any good action, founded on the words of Jesus Christ Himself, who tells us that without Him we can do nothing good; we cannot even pronounce a word, such as saying the holy name of Jesus, without the help of the Holy Spirit. Second, being very glad that others know our faults, in order to have the occasion to hold ourselves in our nothingness. Third, being very content that others surpass us in goods, in mind, in virtue, or in all other things; submitting oneself to the will, to the judgment of another, whenever it is not against conscience. Yes, my brethren, a truly humble person must be like a dead person who neither gets angry at the insults done him, nor rejoices at the praises given him. That, my brethren, is what it is to possess Christian humility, which makes us so pleasing to God and so lovable to the neighbor. See now whether you have it or not. And if you have it not, there remains for you, in order to save yourself, only to ask it of the good God, until you obtain it; because without it we shall not enter into heaven.

We read in the life of Saint Elzear that, having been in danger of perishing on the sea, with all those who were in the vessel, the danger being past, Saint Delphine, his spouse, asked him whether he had not been afraid. He answered her: “When I am in such a danger, I recommend myself to God, and all those who are with me; and I tell Him that if there are some who must die, let it be I, as being the most miserable and the most unworthy to live.” What humility!… Saint Bernard was so penetrated with his nothingness that when he entered a town, he put himself on his knees to pray the good God not to punish that town because of his sins; he believed that wherever he went, he was capable only of drawing the curse upon the place. What humility, my brethren!—so great a saint, whose life was only a chain of miracles! It is necessary, my brethren, that all that we do be accompanied by this fair virtue, if we wish that it be rewarded in heaven.

In saying your prayers, have you that humility which makes you look upon yourselves as wretches, unworthy of being in the holy presence of God? Ah! if that were so, you would not be content to say them while dressing or while working. No, you have it not. If you had it, when you are at holy Mass, with what respect, with what modesty, with what trembling would you not hold yourselves there? Ah! no, no, one would not see you laugh, chat, turn your head, wander your looks about the church, sleep there, say your prayers there without devotion, without love of God. Far from finding the offices long, you would no longer be able to leave them, thinking how great the mercy of God must be to suffer you among the faithful—you who deserve, by your sins, to be now among the reprobate. If you had this virtue, when you ask some grace of the good God, you would do like the Canaanite woman, who threw herself on her knees at the feet of the Savior before everybody; like Magdalene, who kissed the feet of the Savior in a numerous assembly. If you had it, you would do like that woman who for twelve years was afflicted with a flux of blood, and went with so much humility to throw herself before the Savior, to touch His mantle humbly. If you had the humility of a Saint Paul, who had been raised up to the third heaven, and looked upon himself only as an abortion, the last of the apostles, unworthy of the name he bore!… O my God! how fair this virtue is—but how rare!…

If you had this virtue, my brethren, when you confess, ah! how far you would be from hiding your sins, from recounting them like a story made for pleasure, and especially from recounting those of others! Ah! with what trembling would you be seized, seeing the greatness of your sins, the outrages they have done to God; and seeing on the other side the charity He has in pardoning you? My God! would one not die of sorrow and of gratitude?… If after having confessed your sins, you had that humility of which Saint John Climacus speaks to us, who, being in a monastery, tells us he himself saw there religious so humble, so humiliated and so mortified, who felt in such a way the weight of their sins, that the noise of their cries, and the prayers they addressed to God were capable of touching hearts as hard as stone. There were some who were all covered with ulcers, from which an unbearable stench came forth; they took so little care of their bodies that they had left only the skin attached to the bones. One heard the monastery resound with the most heartrending cries. “Ah! woe to us who are miserable! With justice, my God, You can cast us into hell!” Others cried out: “Ah! Lord, pardon us, if our souls can still receive some pardon!” They all had the image of death before their eyes; they said to one another: “What will become of us, after having had the misfortune of offending a God so good? Can we have some hope for the day of vengeances?” Others asked to be thrown into the river to be eaten by the beasts. The superior seeing Saint John Climacus said to him: “Well then! Father, have you seen our soldiers?” Saint John Climacus tells us that he could neither speak nor pray: for the cries of these penitents, so profoundly humbled, wrung tears and sobs from him in spite of himself. Why is it, my brethren, that we have no humility, although we are much more guilty? Alas! it is that we do not know ourselves!

Yes, my brethren, a Christian who knows himself well—everything ought to lead him to humble himself. I mean three things: the consideration of the greatnesses of God, the abasements of Jesus Christ, and our own misery. First, who is he, my brethren, who could consider the greatness of a God, without annihilating himself in His presence, thinking that from nothing He created heaven by a single word, and that a single one of His looks could annihilate everything? A God who is so great, and whose power has no bound—a God

filled with every kind of perfection—a God with His eternity without end, His justice so great, His providence which governs everything with so much wisdom and which provides for our needs with so much care!—while we ourselves are only a vile nothingness! O my God! ought we not, all the more, to fear, like Saint Martin, that the earth should open under our feet to swallow us up, so unworthy are we to live? At this sight, my brethren, would you not do like that great penitent of whom it is spoken in the life of Saint Paphnutius? This good old man, the author of his life says, having gone to find this sinner, was much surprised to hear her speak of God. The holy abbot said to her: "Do you know well that there is a God?" — "Yes," she said to him; "moreover, I know that there is a kingdom for those who live according to His commandments, and a hell where the wicked will be cast to burn there." — "If you know all these things, how, in losing so many souls, did you expose yourself then to burning there?" The sinner knowing by these words that it was a man of God, threw herself at his feet melting into tears: "My father," she said to him, "give me such penance as you wish, and I will do it." He shut her up in a cell, saying to her: "Being so criminal as you are, you do not deserve to pronounce the name of the good God; you will content yourself with turning toward the East, and for all prayer you will say: O You who have created me, have pity on me!" That is her whole prayer. Saint Thais spent three years doing this prayer, shedding tears and uttering sobs day and night. O my God! how well humility makes us know what we are!

Second, we say that the annihilation of Jesus Christ ought to humble us still much more. "When I consider," Saint Augustine tells us, "a God who, from His incarnation to the cross, has led only a life of humiliations and ignominies—a God unrecognized upon the earth—I, should I fear to humble myself? A God seeks humiliations—I, a worm of the earth, would wish to exalt myself? My God! of Your grace, destroy this pride which distances us so much from You."

The third motive, my brethren, that ought to humble us is our own misery. We have only to look at it a little closely; we shall find there an infinity of subjects for humbling ourselves. The prophet Micah tells us: "That we carry in the midst of us the principle and the motives of our humiliation. Do we not know," he says, "that nothingness is our origin, that an infinity of centuries have elapsed before we were, and that of ourselves we would never have been able to come out of that frightful and impenetrable abyss. Can we ignore that, created though we are, we have a violent inclination toward nothingness, and that the powerful hand of Him who has drawn us from it must prevent us from falling back into it, and that if the good God ceased to look upon us and to sustain us, we would be erased from upon the earth, with the same rapidity as a straw carried away by a furious tempest." What then is man to boast of his birth and of his other advantages? "Alas!" the holy man Job tells us, "what are we? Filth before being born, misery when we come into the world, infection when we leave it. We are born of a woman," he tells us; "we live little time; during our life, though it be very short, we weep much; death is not long in striking us." — "That is our portion," Saint Gregory the Pope tells us; "judge after that whether we can find place to exalt ourselves in the least thing in the world? so that he who dares to have the temerity to believe that he is something is a madman, who has never known himself, because, knowing ourselves such as we are, we can only have horror of ourselves." But we have no less reason to humble ourselves in the order of grace. Whatever gifts and whatever talents we may have, we hold them all from the liberal hand of the Lord, who gives them to whom He pleases, and consequently we cannot glory in them. A council has declared to us that man, far from being the author of his salvation, is capable only of losing himself, and that of himself he has only sin and lying. Saint Augustine tells us that all our science consists in knowing that we are nothing, and that all that we have we hold from God. Finally, I say that we ought to humble ourselves with regard to the glory and the happiness that we await in the other life, for of ourselves we cannot merit it. If the good God is so good as to give it to us, we can count only on the mercy of God and on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ His Son.

As children of Adam, we deserve only hell. Oh! how charitable the good God is to give us the hope of so many goods, to us who have done nothing to merit them! What ought we to conclude from that? My

brethren, here it is: it is to ask the good God well, every day, for humility—that is to say, that He grant us the grace to know that we are nothing of ourselves, and that the goods, whether of the body or of the soul, come to us from Him… Let us practice humility whenever we can;… let us be well persuaded that there is no virtue more pleasing to God than humility, and that with it we shall have all the others. However sinners we may be, we are sure that with humility the good God will pardon us. Yes, my brethren, let us attach ourselves to this fair virtue; it is she who will unite us to God, who will make us live in peace with our neighbor, who will make our crosses less heavy, who will give us that great hope that we shall see God one day. He Himself tells us: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, because they shall see God!" That is what I wish for you.

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost — On the Love of God

Diliges Dominum Deum tuum. You shall love the Lord your God. (Luke 10:27)

We read in the Gospel, my brethren, that a young man, having presented himself before Jesus Christ, said to Him: "Master, what must I do to have eternal life?" Jesus Christ answered him: "What is written in the law?" — "You shall love the Lord your God," the young man answered Him, "with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself." — "But I do all that." — "Well then!" Jesus Christ replied to him, "sell your goods, give them to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven." This word of selling his goods to give them to the poor grieved him greatly. Jesus Christ wished to show him that it is by works and not by words that we show whether we truly love the good God. If, to love Him, Saint Gregory tells us, it sufficed to say that one loves Him, this divine love would not be so rare as it is, because there is not a person who, being asked whether he loves the good God, does not answer at once that he loves Him with all his heart: the just will say it and the sinner also; yet the just will say it only trembling, after the example of Saint Peter; whereas the sinner will say it perhaps with a tone of assurance that will seem to answer for his sincerity; but he is greatly mistaken, because the love of God does not consist in words, but in works. Yes, my brethren, to love the good God with all one's heart is a thing so just, so reasonable, and in some sort so natural, that those among us whose manner of living is most opposed to Him do not fail to claim and to be persuaded that they love Him. Why do all believe that they love the good God, although their conduct is entirely opposed to this divine love? Ah! my brethren, it is that everybody seeks his happiness, and that this love alone can procure it for us: that is why one wishes to persuade oneself that one loves the good God. Yet nothing is so rare as this divine love. Let us see then in what this love consists, and by what we can know whether we love God. To understand it better, let us consider, on the one side, what Jesus Christ has done for us, and on the other, what we ought to do for Him.

It is very certain, my brethren, that the good God has created us only to love Him and serve Him. All the creatures that are upon the earth are created for man, but man is created to love the good God. Why is it, my brethren, that the good God has given us a heart whose desires are so vast and so extended, that nothing created is capable of satisfying it? It is in order to force us, in some sort, to attach ourselves only to Him and to love only Him; because there is only He who can content us. When man possessed the entire universe, he would never be fully satisfied; there would always remain something for him to desire, so that nothing created could fill him. Yes, we are so persuaded that we are created to be happy, that we do not cease, a single instant of our life, to seek happiness, and to do everything that depends on us to procure it for ourselves. Whence comes it then that, despite all our searches, all our pains and all our cares, we do not yet find ourselves content? Alas! it is that we do not turn our looks nor the movements of our heart toward the object that alone is capable of filling the vast extent of our desires: God alone. No, my brethren, no, never will you be able to content yourselves and be fully happy—at least as much as it is possible to be so in this world—if you do not despise, at least from the heart, created things in order to attach yourselves only to God alone. We ought then to apply all our cares and all the movements of our heart to desire and to seek only God alone in everything we do; without which, our life will pass in vainly seeking a happiness that we shall never

find. We have then been mistaken until now; since, despite everything we have done to be happy, we have not been able to be so. Believe me, my brethren, seek the friendship of the good God, and you will have found your happiness. O my God! how blind man is not to love You; since You can so well content his heart!

But, my brethren, to engage you to love a God so good, so worthy of being loved, and so capable of filling all the affections of our heart, let us cast a glance upon what He has done for us; let us follow Him in the course of His mortal life and even after His death. See Him, my brethren, from the moment of His Incarnation until the age of thirty years—are they not great, the proofs of His love for us? What did He do in His Incarnation? He made Himself man like us and for us. In His birth He raised us to the most eminent dignity to which a pure creature can be raised; He became our brother!… O what love for us! have we ever well understood it?… In His circumcision, He made Himself our Savior. My God! how great Your charity is!… In His epiphany, He became our light, our guide. In His presentation in the temple, He became our pontiff, our doctor; oh! what am I saying, my brethren? He offered Himself to His Father to redeem us all. Later—that is to say, in the house of Saint Joseph—He became our model, for the love and the respect that we ought to have for our parents and our superiors. Let us say still better: He showed us how we ought to lead a life hidden and unknown to the world, if we wish to please God His Father. Let us follow Jesus Christ in His active life: everything He did, He did for us: His prayers, His tears, His vigils, His fasts, His preachings, His journeys, His conversations, His miracles; yes, all that was done for us. See, my brethren, with what zeal He sought us, in the person of the Samaritan woman; see with what tenderness He receives all sinners—and we are all such—in the person of the prodigal son; see with what goodness He opposes Himself to the justice of His Father, who wishes to punish us in the person of the sinful woman. In His suffering life, alas! what injuries, what torments has He not endured? He was bound, slapped, accused, condemned, and finally crucified for us. Did He not die for us, in the midst of incomprehensible opprobriums and pains?… Ah! my brethren, who could understand all that His good heart has done for us?…

Let us enter further into the wound of this good heart. Yes, Jesus Christ could satisfy the justice of His Father, for our sins, by a drop of His blood, by a single tear—ah! what am I saying?—by a single sigh; but what could satisfy the justice of His Father could not satisfy the tenderness of His heart for us. It is still His love for us that made Him suffer in an anticipated manner, in the garden of Olives, the sufferings that He was to endure upon the cross. O abyss of tenderness of a God for His creatures!… Did Jesus Christ content Himself with loving us until the end? No, my brethren, no. After His death, the lance, or rather His love, opened His divine heart, to open for us as it were an asylum, where we should come to hide ourselves and console ourselves in our pains, our griefs and our other miseries. But let us go further, my brethren. This divine Savior wishes to shed for us even to the last drop of His precious blood, in order to wash us of all our iniquities. After having expiated our sins of pride by His crowning with thorns; by the gall and the vinegar, the sins that we have the misfortune to commit by our tongue, and which are in so great a number; all our sins of impurity by His cruel and painful scourging; all those that we have committed by our hands—that is to say, all the bad actions that we have done—by the wounds of His feet and of His hands; He wished still to expiate all our sins by the wound of His divine heart, because it is in the heart that all our sins take birth. O prodigy of love of a God for His creatures!… He is offended by us and He is punished for us, and it is upon Himself that He takes vengeance for the offenses that we have done Him!… Alas! if we were not as blind as we are, we should recognize that it is our hands that truly immolated Him upon the cross. But once more, my brethren, why so many prodigies of love? Ah! you know it; it is to deliver us from all sorts of evils, and to merit for us all sorts of goods for eternity. And if, despite that, we see that we still come to offend Him, that He is ready to pardon us, to love us and to fill us with all sorts of goods, if we wish to love Him. O what love for creatures so insensitive and so ungrateful!…

His love goes still further. Seeing that death was going to separate Him from us, and in order to remain among us, He worked a great miracle: He instituted that great sacrament of love, where He leaves us His

adorable body and His precious blood, never more to leave us, until the end of the world. What love for us, my brethren, that a God should be willing to nourish our soul with His own substance and make us live with His own life! By means of this great and adorable sacrament He offers Himself, each day, to the justice of His Father, satisfies anew for our sins and draws upon us all sorts of graces. See still, my brethren, this tender Savior who, dead for our salvation, opens heaven to us. To lead us all there, He Himself is going to be our mediator; it is He Himself who is going to present all our prayers to His Father, and ask grace for us, each time that we shall have the misfortune to sin. Yes, my brethren, He awaits us in that place of happiness, in that abode where one always loves and where one never offends…. No, my brethren, never have you well reflected how the good God loves you. Is it well possible that we live only to offend Him, since we can be happy only in loving Him? Doubtless, if I asked you whether you love the good God, you would tell me that you love Him; but that does not suffice; one must give the proof of it. But where are they, my brethren, these proofs that manifest the sincerity of our love for the good God? Where are the sacrifices that we have made for Him? where are our penances? alas! the little good that we do is done in great part without taste, without having a very upright intention. How many human views!… how many good works done by pure inclination and without true devotion. Alas! my brethren, what poverty!…

Now, my brethren, if you wish to know how we can know whether we truly love the good God, listen well to what I am going to tell you, and afterward you yourselves are going to judge whether you love Him in truth. Behold what Jesus Christ Himself tells us: “He who loves Me keeps My commandments”; but he who does not love Me does not keep them. It is then very easy for you to know whether you love the good God. The commandments of God or His will, my brethren, are only one and the same thing. He orders you and wishes that you fulfill well all the duties of your state, with intentions very pure and very upright, without humor, without impatience, without negligence, without fraud in the truth or in good faith. We ought to have a generous love toward the good God, which makes us prefer death to infidelity. Of that, my brethren, we have examples without number in all the saints, and especially in the martyrs of whom many let themselves be cut in pieces, rather than cease to love the good God. Here is a fair example in the person of the chaste Susanna. Having gone one day to the bath, two old men, who were judges of the people of Israel, having perceived her, conceived the design of soliciting her to sin; they followed her, proposed to her their infamous design, of which she had horror. Lifting her eyes to heaven, she said: “Lord, You know that I love You, sustain me.” “I see myself in pain on all sides,” she said to the old men; “we are here in the presence of God who sees us; if I have the misfortune to consent to your shameful passion, I shall not escape the hand of God: He is my judge, I know that He will make me render an account of an action so base and so criminal. If, on the contrary, I do not consent to your desires, I shall not escape your resentments; I see well that you are going to make me die; but I prefer to die rather than offend God.” These wretches, seeing themselves thus rebuffed, went out with anger, and at once published that Susanna had been surprised in adultery, that they had seen a young man doing evil with her. Unhappily, alas! they were believed, and, on their testimony, she was condemned to death. When they were leading her to the torment, a child of twelve years, who was the little Daniel, cried out from the midst of the crowd: “What are you doing, people of Israel, why do you condemn the just? I declare to you that I take no part in the crime that you are going to commit, in shedding the blood of this innocent.” Young Daniel, having approached the people, said to them: “Make the two old men come.” Having made them separate one from the other, he interrogated them. They cut themselves in their words in such a manner that one could not doubt that they themselves were guilty, and not Susanna; they were both condemned to death. Behold what a person does, my brethren, who loves the good God, in showing in the trial that she truly loves Him, that she loves Him more than herself. Susanna could not give a greater mark of it, since she chose death in preference to sin. It is not doubtful that, when only words are needed to say that one loves the good God, it costs little. All believe that they love the good God and all dare to persuade themselves of it; but if the good God put us to the trial, how few would have the happiness of sustaining it!

See still what happened under the reign of Antiochus. This cruel tyrant commanded the Jews, under pain of death, to eat meat forbidden by the law of the Lord. A holy old man named Eleazar, who had always lived in the fear and the love of God, courageously refused to obey; he was condemned to death. “It depends only on you,” one of his friends said to him, “to save your life, as we ourselves have done. Behold meat that has not been offered to the idols: eat it; this little dissimulation will appease the tyrant.” The holy old man answered them: “Do you believe that I am much attached to life, and that I prefer it to the love that I owe my God? And even if I escaped the fury of the tyrant, do you believe that I could escape the justice of God? No, no, my friends, I prefer to die rather than dishonor my religion and offend my God whom I love more than myself. No, it will never be said that at the age of ninety years I abandon my God and His holy law.” When they were leading him to the torment and the executioner was cruelly tormenting him, one heard him cry out: “My God, You know that it is for You that I suffer. Sustain me, You know that it is because I love You; yes, my God, it is for Your love that I suffer!” See his courage in seeing his poor body cut and devour. Well then! my brethren, behold what we call truly loving the good God. This good old man, who gives his life with so much joy for God, does not content himself with saying that he loves Him; but he shows it by his works. We say well that we love the good God; but when everything goes according to our desires, when nothing contradicts us in our manner of thinking, of speaking and of acting. How many times does a single word, an air of contempt, or even a somewhat cold air, a thought of human respect, make us abandon the good God?

We have said, my brethren, that if we wish to testify to the good God that we love Him, we must accomplish His holy will, which is that we be submissive, respectful toward our parents, our superiors, and all those whom the good God has placed above us to conduct us. The will of God is that those who are superiors conduct their inferiors without haughtiness, without harshness; but with charity and with goodness, as we would wish that one conducted us; the will of God is that we be good and charitable toward everybody; and that, if one praises us, far from believing ourselves something, on the contrary, we think that one is mocking us, as Saint Ambrose very well tells us: “If one despises us we must not grieve, but think that if one knew well what we are, one would say much more ill of us than one says.” Or as Saint John tells us: “If one insults us, the will of God is that we pardon from a good heart and at once; and that we be ready to render service every time the occasion presents itself.” This will is that, in our meals, we never let ourselves go to gluttony; that in our conversations we try to hide and excuse the faults of our neighbor and that we pray for him. The will of God is that, in our pains, we do not murmur, but that we bear them with patience and resignation to His will; that is to say, that in what we do, and in everything that He sends us, the good God wishes that we think that everything truly comes from Him and that all that is for our happiness, if we know how to make a good use of it. Behold, my brethren, what the commandments of God order us. If you love the good God, as you say, you will do all that, you will comport yourselves in this manner; if not, you have good to say that you love Him, Saint John tells you that you are liars and that the truth is not in your mouth.

Let us examine, my brethren, all our conduct and all our life, and let us see in detail all our actions. We must not stop at all our good thoughts, at all our good desires, and at all the sensible movements that we experience, as for example, when we are touched in reading a good book, in listening to the holy word, we form all sorts of fair resolutions: all that is nothing other than illusions, if moreover we do not apply ourselves to doing what God orders us by His commandments, and if we do not avoid what He forbids us there. See, my brethren, how much you are in contradiction with yourselves. In the evening and in the morning you join your hands in saying your prayers, you say: “My God, I love You with all my heart, and above all things”; do you believe you are saying the truth? Yet some moments afterward, your hands are occupied in stealing from your neighbor. Alas! perhaps at some shameful work. How many times have you not employed these hands to fill yourselves with wine and to give yourselves over to debauchery; this same mouth which has just pronounced an act of the love of God is going to soil itself, as soon as the occasion presents itself, by oaths, by reports, detractions, calumnies and by all sorts of words that are going to offend and dishonor this same God, to whom you have just said that you love Him with all your heart. Alas! my

brethren, we say that we love the good God with all our heart! where are the proofs that assure us that what we say is true? One says in the world that true friends are known in the occasion; that is true, and that trials are needed to know whether friends are sincere: which is very easy to understand. Indeed, if I told you that I am your friend and that I did nothing to show it to you, and that on the contrary I did a thousand things to give you pain; if, in all the occasions where I could testify my attachment to you, I gave you only marks of aversion, you would not wish to believe that I love you, despite my having often said it to you; it is the same, my brethren, with regard to God. You may well say to Him a hundred times a day: "My God, I give You my heart," that does not suffice. One must give Him proofs of it in what we can do each day, because there are scarcely any days when we are not obliged to make some sacrifice to the good God, if we do not wish to offend Him and if we wish to love Him. How many times does the demon not give us thoughts of pride, of hatred, of vengeance, of ambition, of jealousy, how many movements of anger and of impatience: how many thoughts or desires against the holy virtue of purity? and, at other times, how many thoughts and desires of avarice? Alas! our miserable body carries us without ceasing to evil, while the lights of conscience and the impressions of grace carry us to good. Well then! my brethren, that is what it is to please God, that is what it is to love Him: it is to combat, it is to resist courageously all temptations. That is how we shall give proofs of the love that we have for the good God; that is what will put us in a continual disposition to sacrifice everything rather than offend the good God. You say that you love the good God, or at least that you desire to love Him—you are a liar. Why then do you let this thought of pride enter into your heart? do you give yourselves over to these murmurings, to these jealousies, to these detractions and to these complacencies in yourselves? it is that you are only a hypocrite. You are angry at it, I well believe it; you will be well angry at it. Alas! how few there are who love the good God!… Let us say it, to the shame of Christianity, there is almost no one who loves Him with that love of preference, always ready to sacrifice everything to please Him, and always in the fear of displeasing Him.

See, my brethren, how Saint Eustace comported himself with all his family, see his constancy and his love for the good God. It is related in his life that being at the hunt, he was pursuing a stag of enormous size; having sprung upon a rock and seeking the means of reaching it, he perceived between its horns a fair crucifix which told him to go have himself baptized and to return, that it would teach him all that he would have to suffer for its love; that he would lose his goods, his reputation, his wife, his children and that he would finish by being burned in the fire. Saint Eustace heard all that without the least fright nor the least repugnance, nor even the least murmur. Indeed, a little time afterward, the plague put itself into his flocks and among his slaves, and spared not one. Everybody began to flee him and no one wished to relieve him. Seeing himself so miserable and so despised, he took the party of going into Egypt where he still had some goods. His wife and he each took their little children by the hand and abandoned themselves to the Providence of the good God. When it was necessary to cross the water, the master of the vessel kept the wife for his passage, and throwing the father and the children to land, set sail another way. Behold our Saint Eustace still deprived of one of his greatest consolations. Bearing all that, without a single murmur against the conduct that the good God held toward him, the author of his life tells us, he took a little crucifix between his hands, and kissing it respectfully, he continued his way. A little further, it was necessary to pass a rather wide river… and the rest… Behold, my brethren, what we can call a true love, since nothing is capable of separating him from his God.

We say, my brethren, that if we truly love the good God, we ought greatly to desire to see Him loved by all creatures. We have a fair example of it in history, and we see there a fair spectacle of divine love. One saw a woman, in the midst of the city of Alexandria, holding in one hand a vase full of water, and in the other a lighted torch. Those who saw her, all astonished, asked her what she pretended to do with all this apparatus. "I would wish," she answered, "with this torch, to set all heaven and all the hearts of men on fire, and, with this water, to extinguish all the fire of hell, so that, henceforth, one might love the good God neither by the hope of the reward, nor by fear of the punishment reserved for sinners; but uniquely because He is good, and

because He deserves to be loved." Fair sentiments, my brethren, worthy of the greatness of the soul that knows what God is, and how much He deserves by Himself all the affections of our heart.

One recounts in the history of the Japanese that, when one announced the Gospel to them, when one instructed them concerning God and His lovable qualities, especially when one taught them the great mysteries of our holy religion, and all that the good God had done for men: a God being born in a poor stable, laid upon a handful of straw in the rigors of winter, a God suffering and dying upon a cross to save us; they were so astonished at so many marvels that God had worked for our salvation, that one heard them cry out all transported with love: "Oh! how great He is! oh! how good He is! oh! how lovable is the God of the Christians!" But when afterward one told them that there was a commandment that ordered them to love the good God, and that threatened them with chastisements if they did not love Him, they were so surprised at it that they could no longer recover from their astonishment. "What!" they said, "to reasonable men, to make a precept of loving a God who has so much loved us!… but, is it not the greatest happiness to love Him and the greatest misfortune not to love Him? What!" they said to the missionaries, "are not the Christians always at the foot of the altars of their God, all penetrated with the greatness of His goodnesses and all inflamed with His love?" And when one came to teach them that, not only were there some who did not love Him, but further who offended Him: "O unjust people! o barbarous people!" they cried with indignation, "is it well possible that Christians are capable of such outrage toward a God so good? In what cursed land then do these men without heart and without feelings dwell?" Alas! according to the manner in which we conduct ourselves toward the good God, we only too much deserve these reproaches! Yes, my brethren, a day will come when these distant and foreign nations will call these testimonies against us, will accuse us and will condemn us before God. How many Christians pass their life without loving the good God! Alas! perhaps we shall find several, on the great day of judgment, who will not have given a single entire day to the good God! Alas! what a misfortune!…

Saint Justin tells us that love ordinarily has three effects. When we love someone, we think often, and willingly, of him; we give willingly for him and we suffer willingly for him: behold, my brethren, what we ought to do for the good God, if we truly love Him. I say first, that we ought often to think of Jesus Christ. Nothing is more natural than to think of those whom one loves. See a miser: he is occupied only with his goods or with the means of increasing them; alone or in company, nothing is capable of distracting him from this thought. See a libertine: the person who makes the whole object of his love leaves him scarcely more than respiration; he thinks of it so much that, often, his body is so overwhelmed by it that he is sick from it. Oh! if we had the happiness of loving Jesus Christ as much as a miser loves his money or his lands, as a drunkard his wine, as a libertine the object of his passion, should we not be continually occupied with the love and the grandeurs of Jesus Christ? Alas! my brethren, we occupy ourselves with a thousand things which, almost all, come to nothing; while, for Jesus Christ, we pass hours and even entire days without remembering Him, or, in so weak a manner, that we scarcely believe what we think. O my God, how is it that one does not love You! Yet, my brethren, of all our friends is there one more generous, more beneficent? Tell me, if we had well thought that in listening to the demon who carried us to evil, we have greatly afflicted Jesus Christ, that we have made Him die a second time, should we have had that courage?… should we not have said: How, my God, could I offend You, You who have so much loved us! Yes, my God, day and night my mind and my heart will be occupied only with You.

Second, I say that if we truly love the good God, we shall give Him everything that it is in our power to give Him, and that, with a great pleasure. If we have goods, let us share them with the poor, it is as if we gave them to Jesus Christ Himself; it is He who tells us in the Gospel: "Everything that you will give to the least of Mine—that is to say to the poor—it is as if you gave it to Myself." What happiness, my brethren, for a creature, to be able to be liberal toward his Creator, his God and his Savior! It is not only the rich who can give; but all Christians, even the poorest. We do not all have goods to give them to Jesus Christ in the person

of the poor; but we all have a heart, and it is precisely of this present that He is most jealous; it is that which He asks with so much eagerness. Tell me, my brethren, could we refuse Him what He asks of us with so many instances, Him who has created us only for Himself? Ah! if we thought well of it, should we not say to the divine Savior: “Lord, I am only a sinner, have pity on me; behold me all Yours.” How happy we should be if we made this universal offering to the good God! how great our reward would be!…

Third, but nonetheless the best mark of love that we can give to the good God is to suffer for Him; for, if we wished well to consider what He has suffered for us, we could not prevent ourselves from suffering all the miseries of life, the persecutions, the illnesses, the infirmities and poverty. Who would not let himself be touched at the sight of all that Jesus Christ has suffered during His mortal life? What outrages do men not make Him suffer, by the profanation of His sacraments, by the contempt of His holy religion, whose establishment cost Him so much? What blindness, my brethren, not to love a God so lovable and who seeks, in everything, only our happiness! We have a fair example in the person of Saint Magdalene, become celebrated in the whole Church by this great love that she had for Jesus Christ. Once she was His, she never left Him; not only from the heart, but further really: following Him in His journeys, assisting Him with her goods, and accompanying Him even to Calvary. She was present at His death, she prepared the perfumes to embalm His body and went early in the morning to the sepulcher. Not finding the body of Jesus Christ there any more, she takes it out on heaven, on the earth; she begs the angels and men to tell her where they have put her Savior; because she wishes to find Him at whatever price it may be. Her love was so ardent that we can say that it was impossible for Jesus Christ to hide Himself from her; for she thought only of Him, she desired and wished only Him; all things are nothing to her; she had neither human respect, nor fear of being despised or mocked; she abandoned all her goods, she trampled under foot ornaments and pleasures to run in the train of her Beloved; all the rest is no longer anything to her.

Listen still to the lesson that Saint Dominic gives us. This holy patriarch whose love of God had filled all desires, after having preached the whole day, passed entire nights in contemplation; he believed himself already in heaven, and could not understand that one could live without loving the good God, since we find there all our happiness. One day when he was taken by heretics, God worked a miracle to draw him from among their hands. “What would you have done,” one of his friends said to him, “if they had wished to make you die?” — “Ah! I would have conjured them not to make me die all at once, but to cut me into as many little pieces as they could; afterward to tear out my tongue and my eyes, and, after having rolled the rest of my body in my blood, to cut off my head. I would have prayed them to leave no part of my body without making it suffer. Ah! it is then that I should have had the happiness of saying truly to the good God that I love Him. Yes, I would wish to be master of all the hearts of men, in order to make them all burn with love.” What fair language comes from this heart burning with divine love! All his life this great saint sought the means of dying a martyr, to show the good God that truly he loved Him.

See still Saint Ignatius, martyr, bishop of Antioch, who was condemned, by the emperor Trajan, to be exposed to the beasts. He had so much joy at hearing the sentence that condemned him to be devour by the beasts, that he believed he would die of happiness. He had only a single fear, it is that the Christians might obtain his pardon. He wrote to them saying: “My friends, let me become the prey of the beasts and let me be ground like a grain of wheat of God to become the bread of Jesus Christ. I know, my friends, that it is very useful for me to suffer; the irons, the gibbets, the fierce beasts must tear my members and break them in my body, and all the torments must come to fall upon me. Everything is good to me provided that I arrive at the possession of God. I begin now to love Jesus Christ; it is at present that I am His disciple. I have no more than disgust for the things of life, I am hungry only for the bread of my God, which must satisfy me throughout eternity; I thirst only for the flesh of Jesus Christ, which is only charity.” Tell me, my brethren, can one find a heart more inflamed with the love of God? Indeed, he was devour by the lions, who left only some parts of his body.

What must one conclude from all that, my brethren, if not that all our happiness upon the earth is to attach ourselves to God—that is to say, it is necessary that, in everything we do, the good God be the unique end; since we all know by our own experience that nothing created is capable of rendering us happy, that the whole world with all its goods, its pleasures could not satisfy our heart. Never lose from view, my brethren, that everything will leave us. A moment will come when everything that we have will pass into other hands… Whereas if we have the great happiness of possessing the love of God we shall carry it away into heaven, which will make our happiness throughout eternity. To love God, to serve only Him alone and to desire only His possession: that is the happiness I wish for you.

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost — On Charity (Fragments)

Diliges Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart. (Matthew 22:37)

To serve the good God perfectly, ah! it is not enough to believe in Him. It is true that faith makes us believe all the truths that the Church teaches us, and that, without this faith, all our actions are without merit in the eyes of God. Faith is then absolutely necessary to us to save ourselves. Yet this precious faith which discovers to us in advance the beauties of heaven will leave us one day, because, in the other life, there will no longer be mysteries. Hope, which is a gift of heaven, is also necessary to us to make us act with intentions very upright and very pure, in the sole view of pleasing God, in everything we do, whether to gain heaven, or to avoid hell. But charity carries us to love God because He is infinitely good, infinitely lovable and because He deserves to be loved.

But, you will say to me, how then to know whether we have this fair virtue which is so pleasing to God, and which makes us act with so much nobility—that is to say, which carries us to love the good God, not by the fear of the pains of hell, nor by the hope of heaven; but uniquely because of His infinite perfections? What ought to carry us so much to desire and so much to ask of the good God this fair virtue, is that it must accompany us throughout eternity. Still more, it is charity that must make all our happiness, since the felicity of the blessed consists in loving. This virtue so fair, so capable of rendering us happy, even from this world—let us see, my brethren, whether we have it, and let us seek the means of acquiring it.

If I asked a child: What is charity? he would answer me: It is a virtue that comes to us from heaven, by which we love God with all our heart, and the neighbor as ourselves with relation to God. But, you will ask me now, what is it to love the good God above all things, and more than oneself? It is to prefer Him to everything that is created; it is to be in the disposition of losing one’s goods, one’s reputation, one’s parents and one’s friends, one’s children, one’s husband or one’s wife and one’s life itself, rather than commit the least mortal sin. Saint Augustine tells us that to love God perfectly is to love Him without measure, when there would be neither heaven to hope for, nor hell to fear; it is to love Him with the whole extent of one’s heart. If you ask me the reason for it, it is that God is infinitely lovable and worthy of being loved. If we truly love Him, neither sufferings, nor persecutions, nor contempt, nor life, nor death will be able to snatch from us this love that we owe to God. We feel ourselves, my brethren, that if we do not love the good God we can only be very unhappy, very unhappy. If man is created to love the good God, he can find his happiness only in God alone. When we were masters of the world, if we do not love the good God, we can only be unhappy all the time of our life. If you wish better to convince yourselves of it, see, interrogate the people who live without loving the good God. See those persons who abandon the frequentation of the sacraments and prayer, see them in some grief, some loss—alas! they curse themselves, they kill themselves, or die of grief. A miser is not more content when he has much than when he has little. Is a drunkard happier after having drunk the cup of wine where he believed he found all his pleasure? He is only the more unhappy for it. A proud man never has rest: he always fears to be despised. A vindictive man, in seeking to avenge himself, can sleep neither day nor night. See still an infamous impure man who believes he finds his happiness in the pleasures of the flesh: he

goes so far as—I do not say to lose his reputation—but his goods, his health and his soul, without however being able to find wherewith to content himself. And why, my brethren, can we not be happy in everything that seems ought to content us? Ah! it is that, being created only for God, there is only He alone who will be able to satisfy us—that is to say, to render us happy as much as it is possible to be so upon this poor earth. Blind that we are, we attach ourselves to life, to the earth and to its goods! alas! to pleasures—let us say better, we attach ourselves to everything that is capable of rendering us unhappy! How much wiser than we the saints, my brethren, have been to despise everything in order to seek only God alone. How little account he who truly loves the good God makes of everything that is upon the earth! How many great ones of the world, how many even princes, kings and emperors, do we not see, who have left everything to go serve the good God more freely in the deserts or in the monasteries! How many others to show the good God their love have mounted upon scaffolds, like conquerors upon their thrones! Ah! my brethren, how happy is he who has the happiness of detaching himself from the things of the world to attach himself only to God alone! Alas! how many are there among you who are twenty or thirty years old, and have never asked of the good God this love which is a gift of heaven, as your catechism tells you. From then on, we must not be astonished, my brethren, if we are so earthly and so little spiritual! This manner of comporting ourselves can lead us only to a very unhappy end: the separation from God for eternity. Ah! my brethren, is it well possible that we do not wish to turn ourselves toward our happiness which is God alone! Let us leave this subject, though so interesting. Charity makes all the joy and the felicity of the saints in heaven. Ah! Beauty ancient and always new, when is it that we shall love only You?

If now I asked a child: What is charity with relation to the neighbor? he would answer me: The charity for God must make us love Him more than our goods, our health, our reputation and our life itself; the charity that we ought to have for our neighbor must make us love him as ourselves, so that, all the good that we can desire for ourselves we ought to desire for our neighbor, if we wish to have this charity without which there is neither heaven, nor friendship of God to hope for. Alas! how many sacraments does this lack of charity make profane, and how many souls does it lead into hell! But what must one understand by this word: our neighbor? Nothing easier to understand. This virtue extends to everybody, as well to those who have done us evil, who have harmed our reputation, have calumniated us and who have done us some wrong, even when they would have sought to take our life from us. We ought to love them as ourselves, and wish them all the good that we can desire for ourselves. Not only is it forbidden us to wish them any evil, but we must render them service every time they have need of it and we can. We ought to rejoice when they succeed in their affairs, to sadden ourselves when they experience some disgrace, some loss, to take their part when one says ill of them, to say the good that we know of them, not to flee their company, to speak to them even in preference to those who have rendered us some service: behold, my brethren, how the good God wishes that we love our neighbor. If we do not comport ourselves in this manner, we can say that we love neither our neighbor, nor the good God; we are only bad Christians, and we shall be damned.

See, my brethren, the conduct that Joseph held toward his brothers who had wished to make him die, who had thrown him into a cistern and who had afterward sold him to foreign merchants. God alone remained to him for consoler. But as the Lord does not abandon those who love Him, as much as Joseph had been humbled, so much was he elevated. When he had become almost master of the kingdom of Pharaoh, his brothers, reduced to the greatest misery, came to find him without knowing him. Joseph sees coming to him those who had wished to take his life from him, and who would have made him die if Reuben had not turned them from it. He has all the powers of Pharaoh in his hands, he could have them taken and make them die. Nothing could prevent him from it; on the contrary, it was even just to punish the wicked. But what does Joseph do? the charity that he has in his heart has made him lose the remembrance of the bad treatments that he has received. He thinks only of filling them… he weeps with joy, he quickly asks news of his father and of his other brothers; he wishes, the better to make them feel the greatness of his charity, that they all come near him forever.

But, you will say to me, how can one know whether one has this fair and precious virtue, without which our religion is only a phantom? First, my brethren, a person who has charity is not proud, she does not love to dominate over others; you will never hear her blame their conduct, she does not love to speak of what they do. A person who has charity does not examine what is the intention of others in their actions, she never believes she does better than they do; and never puts herself above her neighbor; on the contrary, she believes that others always do better than she. She does not get angry if one prefers the neighbor to her; if one despises her, she is not less content for it, because she thinks that she deserves still more contempt. A person who has charity avoids as much as she can giving pain to others, because charity is a royal mantle that knows well how to hide the faults of its brethren and never lets one believe that one is better than they.

Second, those who have charity receive with patience, and resignation to the will of God, all the accidents that can happen to them, illnesses, calamities, thinking that all that recalls to us that we are sinners, and that our life is not eternal here below. In their griefs, in their pains, in their illnesses or in the losses of goods, you see them always submitted to the will of God, and never do they despair, thinking that they are accomplishing this divine will. See the holy man Job upon his dunghill: is he not content? If you ask me why he does not let himself go to despair? it is that he has charity in his soul, and that in submitting himself to the will of God, he acquires merits for heaven. See still the holy man Tobias who became blind in burying the dead: he does not despair, and he is tranquil. Why still this tranquillity? He knows that he is doing the will of God and that in this state he glorifies Him…

In the third place, I say that this one has charity, who is not avaricious and in no way seeks to amass the goods of this world. He works because the good God wishes it, but without attaching himself to his work nor to the desire of hoarding for the future; he rests with confidence in the Providence that never abandons him who loves Him. Charity reigning in his heart, all the things of the earth are no longer anything to him; he sees that all those who run after the goods of this world are the most unhappy. For him, he employs as much as he can his goods in good works to redeem his sins and to merit heaven. He is charitable toward everybody and has preference for no one; all the good that he does, he does in the name of God. He assists the poor who has need of it, whether he be his friend or his enemy. He imitates Saint Francis de Sales, who, being able to make only one alms, remitted it to him from whom he had received some pain, rather than to him to whom he was obliged. The reason for this conduct is that such an action is much more pleasing to God. If you have charity, never examine whether those to whom you give have done you some wrong, or said some injury; whether they are wise or not. They ask you in the name of God, give to them likewise. Behold all that one must do in order that your alms be rendered worthy of being rewarded. We read in the life of Saint Ignatius that one day, being pressed by some affair, he refused alms to a poor man. But he soon ran after this unhappy man to give to him, and from then on promised the good God never to refuse alms, when one asked it of him in His name. But, do you think, if one gives to all the poor, one will soon be poor oneself. Listen to what the holy man Tobias said to his son: Never retain the wages of workmen, always pay in the evening after they have worked; and as for the poor, give to all if you can. If you have much, give much; if you have little, give little; but always give from a good heart; because alms redeems sins and extinguishes the flames of purgatory. Moreover we can say that a house that gives to the poor will never fall into ruin, because the good God would rather work a miracle than permit it. See Saint Anthony who sells all his goods to give them to the poor, and who goes into a desert where he abandons himself entirely into the hands of Providence. See a Saint Paul the hermit, a Saint Alexis, who strip themselves absolutely of goods, to lead a poor and despised life. See a Saint Serapion, who, not only sells all his goods and his garments, but who still sells himself to redeem a captive. How guilty we are when we do not make alms, and when we despise the poor, by rebuffing them, by telling them that they are lazybones; that they can well work!… My brethren, let us make alms as much as we can, because it is the thing that must reassure us at the hour of death, and if you doubt of it, read the Gospel where Jesus Christ speaks to us of the judgment: “I was hungry,” etc. Do you wish to leave children happy and wise? Give them the example of being almsgiving and charitable toward the poor, and

you will see one day that the good God has blessed them. That is what Saint Blanche understood, saying: “My son, we shall always be rich enough if we love the good God, and if we love to do good to our brethren.”

If we truly have charity, this virtue so pleasing to God, we shall not comport ourselves like the pagans who do good to those who do good to them, or from whom they hope it; but we shall do good to the neighbor, in the sole view of pleasing God and of redeeming our sins. Whether one be grateful to us or not, whether one do us good or evil, whether one despise us or praise us: that must do nothing to us. There are some who act entirely humanly. Have they made an alms, have they rendered service to some person, if they do not use reciprocity, that angers them, and they reproach themselves for having been simple. How blind you are! Either you have done your good works for the good God, or you have done them for the world. If you have done them to be esteemed and praised by men, you have reason to wish to be paid with gratitude; but if you have done them in the sole view of redeeming your sins and of pleasing God; why complain? It is from God alone that you await the reward of them. You ought much rather to thank the good God that one pays you with ingratitude, because your reward will be much greater. Ah! how happy we are! because we shall have given some little thing, the good God gives us heaven in return! Our little alms and our little services will then be well rewarded. Yes, my brethren, let us always prefer to do good to those who will never be able to render it to us, because if they render it to us we risk losing the merit of it. Do you wish to know whether you have true charity? Here is the mark of it: See to whom you prefer to make alms or render some service. Is it to those who have given you some pain, or to those who are united to you, who thank you? If it is to these last, you have not the virtue of charity; and you have nothing to hope for for the other life; all the merit of these good actions is then lost. I am persuaded that if I wished well to enter into the detail of all the faults into which one falls on this point, I should find almost no one who has in his soul this virtue entirely pure and such as God wishes it. To be rewarded in everything that we do for the neighbor, let us seek only God, and let us act only for Him alone. How rare this virtue is among Christians! Let us say better, it is as rare to find it as it is rare to find saints. And what is astonishing? Where are those who ask it of God, who make some prayers or some good works to obtain it? How many are twenty years old and perhaps thirty, and have never asked for it? The proof of it is very convincing. Have those asked for it who have only human views? See yourself what repugnance you have to do, at once, good to him who has just done you some wrong or some injustice. Do you not even conserve a certain hatred or, at least, a certain coldness with regard to him? You scarcely salute him, and consent to speak to him as to another person. Alas! O my God! how many Christians lead an entirely pagan life, and still believe themselves good Christians: Alas! how many are going to be undeceived when the good God will make them see what charity is, the qualities that it ought to have to render all their actions meritorious.

Fourth, it is not necessary to show you that a person who has charity is free from the infamous vice of impurity, because a person who has the happiness of having this precious virtue in the soul, is so united to the good God, and acts so well according to His holy will, that the demon of impurity cannot enter into her heart. The fire of divine love so inflames this heart, her soul and all her senses, that it puts her out of the reach of the demon of impurity. Yes, my brethren, we can say that charity renders a person pure in all her senses. O infinite happiness who will ever understand you!

Fifth, charity is not envious: she does not feel sadness at the good that happens to the neighbor, whether in the spiritual, or in the temporal. You will never see a person who has charity angry that another succeeds better than she, or that she is more loved, more esteemed. Far from afflicting herself at the happiness of her neighbor, she blesses the good God for it. But, you will say to me, I am not angry that my neighbor does his affairs well, that he is very rich, very happy. — Agree however with me that you would be more content that that happened to you rather than to him. — That is still true. — Well then! if that is so, you have not charity such as the good God wishes that you have it, as He commands it to you, and in order to please Him.

Sixth, he who has charity is not subject to anger, for Saint Paul tells us that charity is patient, good, gentle toward everybody. See how far we are from having this charity. How many times for a nothing we get angry, we murmur, we fly into a passion, we speak with haughtiness, and we remain in anger for several days!… — But, you will say to me, it is my manner of speaking; I am not angry afterward. — Say rather then that you have not charity, which is patient, gentle, and that you do not conduct yourselves like a good Christian. Tell me, if you had charity in the soul, would you not bear with patience, and even with pleasure, a word that one will say against you, an injury, or if you wish, a little wrong that one will have done you? — He attacks my reputation. — Alas! my friend, what good opinion do you wish that one have of you after you have so many times deserved contempt? Ought we not to look upon ourselves as too happy that one is willing to suffer us among creatures, after we have treated the Creator so unworthily!… Ah! my brethren, if we had this charity, we should be upon the earth almost like the saints who are in heaven! Who then knows whence come to us all these griefs that we experience as well the ones as the others; and why are there so many in the world who suffer all sorts of miseries? That comes from our not having charity.

Yes, my brethren, charity is a virtue so fair, it renders everything that we do so pleasing to the good God, that the holy Fathers do not know what terms to use to make us know all its beauty and all its value. They compare it to the sun which is the fairest star of the firmament, and which gives to the others all their clarity and their beauty. Like it, the virtue of charity communicates to all the other virtues their beauty and their purity, and renders them meritorious and infinitely more pleasing to God. They compare it to fire which is the noblest and the most active of all the elements. Charity is the noblest and the most active of all virtues: it carries man to despise everything that is vile, contemptible and of little duration, to attach himself only to God alone and to the goods that must never perish. They still compare it to gold which is the most precious of all metals, and makes the ornament and the beauty of everything rich that we have upon the earth. Charity makes the beauty and the ornament of all the other virtues; the least action of gentleness or of humility, done with charity in the heart, is of a price that surpasses everything that we can think. The good God tells us in Holy Scripture that His spouse had wounded His heart by a hair of her neck, to make us understand that the least good work done with love, with charity in the soul, is so pleasing to Him, that it pierces His heart. The least action, however small it may be, is always very pleasing to Him, since there is nothing so small as the hairs of the neck. O fair virtue! how happy are those who possess you; but, alas! how rare they are!… The saints still compare it to the rose which is the fairest of all flowers, and very odoriferous. Likewise, they tell us, charity is the fairest of all virtues; its odor mounts even to the throne of God. Let us say better, charity is as necessary to us to please God and to render all our actions meritorious, as our soul is necessary to our body. A person who has not charity in the heart, is a body without soul. Yes, my brethren, it is charity that sustains faith and that reanimates it; without charity, it is dead. Hope, like faith, is only a languishing virtue which, without charity, will not last long.

Do we understand now, my brethren, the value of this virtue and the necessity of possessing it to save ourselves. Let us have at least the care to ask it every day of God, since, without it, we do nothing for our salvation. We can say that when charity enters into a heart, it leads there with it all the other virtues: it is she who purifies and sanctifies all our actions; it is she who perfects the soul; it is she who renders all our actions worthy of heaven. Saint Augustine tells us that all the virtues are in charity, and that charity is in all the virtues. It is charity, he tells us, that conducts all our actions to their end, and that gives them access near God. Saint Paul, who has been and who still is the light of the world, makes so much of it and so much esteem, that he tells us that it surpasses all the gifts of heaven. Writing to the Corinthians, he cries out: “Though I spoke the language of the angels, if I have not charity, I am like a cymbal that resounds, and produces only a sound. Though I had the gift of prophecy, and so much faith that I could transport mountains from one place to another, if I have not charity, I am nothing. Though I gave all my goods to the poor and delivered my body to sufferings, all that would serve for nothing if I have not charity in my heart, and if I do not love my neighbor as myself.” Do you see, my brethren, the necessity in which we are of asking of the

good God, with all our heart, this incomparable virtue, since all the virtues are nothing without it?

Do you wish a fair model of it? See Moses: when his brother Aaron and his sister Miriam murmured against him, the Lord punished them; but Moses seeing his sister covered with a leprosy which was the punishment of her revolt: O Lord! he said to Him, why do You punish my sister? You know well that I have never asked You for vengeance, pardon her if You please. Also the Holy Spirit tells us that he was the mildest of the men who were then upon the earth. Behold, my brethren, a brother who truly has charity in his heart, since he afflicts himself at seeing his sister punished. Tell me, if we saw someone punished who had done us some outrage, should we do like Moses: should we afflict ourselves, should we ask the good God not to punish him? Alas! how rare are those who have in their soul this charity of Moses! But, you will say to me, when one does us things that we do not deserve, it is very difficult to love the authors of them. Difficult, my brethren?… see Saint Stephen. While one stones him to death with blows of stones, he lifts his hands and prays God to pardon these executioners who take his life from him, the sin that they commit. But, do you think, Saint Stephen was a saint. — He was a saint, my brethren? but if we are not saints, it is a great misfortune for us: we must become so; and so long as we shall not have charity in the heart, we shall never become saints.

How many sins, my brethren, does one commit against the love of God and of the neighbor! Do you desire to know how often we sin against the love that we owe to God? Do we love Him with all our heart? have we not often preferred to Him our parents, our friends? To go see them, without there being necessity, have we not often missed the offices, Vespers, the catechism, evening prayer? How many times have you not made your children miss prayer for fear of making them lose some minutes? alas! to go pasture your flocks in the fields!…. My God! what an unworthy preference!… How many times have we not ourselves missed our prayers, or have we said them in our bed, while dressing, or while walking? Have we had care to refer all our actions to the good God, all our thoughts, all our desires? Have we consecrated ourselves to Him from the age of reason, and have we well given Him everything that we had? Saint Thomas tells us that fathers and mothers ought to have a great care to consecrate their children to the good God, from the most tender age, and that, ordinarily, the children who are consecrated to the good God by their parents, receive a grace and a blessing entirely particular, which they would not receive without that. He tells us that if mothers had well at heart the salvation of their children, they would give them to the good God before they came into the world. We say that those who have charity receive with patience and resignation to the will of God, all the accidents that can happen to them, illnesses, calamities, thinking that all that recalls to us that we are sinners, and that our life is not eternal here below.

We still sin against the love of God, when we remain too long without thinking of Him. How many, alas! pass a quarter and even half of the day without making an elevation of their heart toward God, to thank Him for all His benefits, especially for having made them Christians, for having made them be born in the bosom of His Church, for having preserved them from dying in sin. Have we thanked Him for all the sacraments that He has established for our sanctification, for our vocation to the faith? Have we thanked Him for everything that He has operated for our salvation, for His Incarnation, for His death and Passion? Have we not had indifference for the service of God in neglecting either to frequent the sacraments, or to correct ourselves, or to have often recourse to prayer? Have we not neglected to instruct ourselves in the manner of comporting ourselves to please God? When we have seen someone blaspheme the holy name of God, or commit other sins, have we not been indifferent, as if that did not regard us? Have we not prayed without taste, without design of pleasing God; rather to rid ourselves of it, than to draw His mercies upon us, and nourish our poor soul? Have we not passed the holy day of Sunday contenting ourselves with Mass, Vespers; without making any other prayer, nor visit to the Blessed Sacrament, nor spiritual reading? Have we been afflicted when we have been obliged to miss the offices? Have we tried to supply for them by all the prayers that we could?… Have you made your children, your domestics miss the offices without grave reasons?… Have we well

combated all these thoughts of hatred, of vengeance and of impurity? To love the good God, my brethren, it does not suffice to say that one loves Him; one must, to assure oneself well whether that is true, see whether we observe well His commandments, and whether we make those well observe them of whom we have the responsibility before the good God. Listen to Our Lord: “In truth, I say to you that it is not he who will say: Lord, Lord, who will enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who will do the will of My Father.” We love the good God, when we seek only to please Him in everything we do. One must desire neither life, nor death; however, one can desire death to have the happiness of going toward the good God. Saint Ignatius had so great a desire to see God, that, when he thought of death, he wept with joy for it. Yet in the expectation of this great happiness, he said to God, that he would remain as long as He wished upon the earth. He had so much at heart the salvation of souls, that one day not being able to convert a hardened sinner, he went to plunge himself, up to the neck, into a frozen pond in order to obtain of God the conversion of this unhappy man. As he was going to Paris, one of his scholars took from him on the way all the money that he had. This scholar having fallen sick at Rouen, this good saint made the journey from Paris to that city, on foot and without shoes, to ask the healing of him who had taken from him all his money. Tell me, my brethren, is that a perfect charity? You think in yourselves that it would already be much to pardon. You would do the same thing, if you had the same charity as this good saint. If we find so few persons who would do that, my brethren, it is that there are very few who have charity in the soul. How consoling it is that we can love God and the neighbor without being learned, nor rich! We have a heart, it suffices for this love.

We read in history that two solitaries asked of God for a long time, that He would be willing to teach them the manner of loving Him and of serving Him, as one must, since they had left the world only for that. They heard a voice that told them to go into the city of Alexandria where there dwelt a man, named Eucharistus, and his wife who was called Mary. Those served the good God more perfectly than the solitaries, and would teach them how He ought to be loved. Very happy at this answer, the two solitaries betake themselves in all haste into the city of Alexandria. Having arrived, they inquire, for several days, without being able to find these two holy personages. Fearing that this voice may have deceived them, they were taking the party of returning into their desert, when they perceived a woman at the door of her house. They asked her, whether she would not know by chance a man named Eucharistus. — It is my husband, she said to them. — You are then called Mary, the solitaries said to her? — Who has taught you my name? — We have learned it, with that of your husband, by a supernatural voice, and we come here to speak to you. The husband arrived, toward evening, leading a little flock of sheep. The solitaries at once ran to embrace him, and prayed him to tell them what was his kind of life. — Alas! my fathers, I am only a poor shepherd. — It is not what we ask of you, the solitaries said to him; tell us how you live and in what manner, you and your wife, serve the good God. — My fathers, it is well for you to tell me what one must do to serve the good God; I am only a poor ignorant man. — No matter! we have come from the part of God to ask you how you serve Him. — Since you command it of me, I am going to tell you. I have had the happiness of having a mother fearing God, who, from my childhood, recommended to me to do everything and to suffer everything for the love of God. I suffered the little corrections that one made me for the love of God; I referred everything to God: in the morning, I rose, I said my prayers and did all my work for His love. For His love, I take my rest and my meals; I suffer hunger, thirst, cold and heat, illnesses and all the other miseries. I have no children; I have lived with my wife as with my sister, and always in a great peace. Behold my whole life and it is also that of my wife. — The solitaries, ravished at seeing souls so pleasing to God, asked him whether he had goods. — I have little goods, but this little flock of sheep that my father has left me suffices me, I have of it to spare. I make three parts of my little revenue: I give one part to the church, another to the poor, and the rest makes my wife and me live. I nourish myself poorly; but never do I complain: I suffer all that for the love of God. — Have you enemies, the solitaries said to him? — Alas, my fathers, who is he who has none? I try to do them all the good that I can, I seek to please them in every circumstance, and I apply myself to doing evil to no one. At these words, the two solitaries were filled with joy at having found a means so easy of pleasing

God and of arriving at high perfection. You see, my brethren, that to love the good God and the neighbor it is not necessary to be very learned, nor very rich; it suffices to seek only to please God, in everything we do; to do good to everybody, to the good as to the bad, to those who tear our reputation, as to those who love us. Let us take Jesus Christ for our model, we shall see what He has done for all men and particularly for His executioners. See how He asks pardon, mercy for them; He loves them, He offers for them the merits of His death and Passion; He promises them pardon. If we have not this virtue of charity, we have nothing; we are only phantoms of Christians. Either we shall love everybody, even our greatest enemies, or we shall be reprobate. Ah! my brethren, since this fair virtue comes from heaven, let us address ourselves then to heaven to ask for it, and we are sure of obtaining it. If we possess charity, everything in us will please the good God, and by that we shall assure ourselves paradise. That is the happiness I wish for you.

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost — On Purity

Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8)

We read in the Gospel that Jesus Christ, wishing to instruct the people who came in crowds to learn from Him what must be done to have eternal life, sat down, and opening His mouth said to them: “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” If we had a great desire to see God, my brethren, should not these words alone make us understand how much purity renders us pleasing to Him, and how necessary it is to us—since, according to Jesus Christ, without it we shall never see Him? “Blessed,” Jesus Christ tells us, “are those who have a pure heart, for they shall see the good God.” Can one hope for a greater reward than that which Jesus Christ attaches to this beautiful and lovable virtue—namely, the enjoyment of the three Persons of the most holy Trinity for all eternity? Saint Paul, who knew its price so well, writing to the Corinthians, said to them: “Glorify the good God, since you bear Him in your bodies; and be faithful in keeping them in a great purity. Remember well, my children, that your members are the members of Jesus Christ, and that your hearts are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Take great care not to defile them by the sin which is adultery, fornication, and all that can dishonor your body and your heart, in the eyes of God who is purity itself.” Oh! my brethren, how beautiful and precious this virtue is—not only in the eyes of men and of angels, but in the eyes of God Himself. He sets such store by it that He never ceases to praise it in all those who are happy enough to keep it. Also, this inestimable virtue is the fairest ornament of the Church, and consequently it ought to be the most cherished of Christians. We, my brethren, who in holy Baptism have been sprinkled with the adorable Blood of Jesus Christ, purity itself—in that adorable Blood which has brought forth so many virgins of both sexes; we, to whom Jesus Christ has given a share of His purity by making us His members and His temple… But alas! my brethren, in this unhappy age of corruption in which we live, one no longer knows this virtue, this heavenly virtue which makes us like the angels! Yes, my brethren, purity is a virtue necessary to us all, since without it no one will see the good God. I should like to give you an idea of it worthy of God, and to show you, first, how much it renders us pleasing in His eyes by giving a new degree of holiness to all our actions; and second, what we must do to preserve it.

It would take, my brethren, to make you understand well the esteem we ought to have for this incomparable virtue, to recount its beauty to you, and to make you appreciate its value before God—not a mortal man, but an angel from heaven. Hearing him, you would say with astonishment: How is it that all men are not ready to sacrifice everything rather than lose a virtue which unites us so intimately with God? Let us try, however, to form some idea of it by considering that this virtue comes from heaven, that it brings Jesus Christ down upon the earth, and that it raises man up to heaven by the likeness it gives him to the angels, to Jesus Christ Himself. Tell me, my brethren, after that, does it not deserve the title of precious virtue? Is it not worthy of all our esteem and of all the sacrifices necessary to keep it?

We say that purity comes from heaven, because only Jesus Christ Himself was capable of teaching it to us and of making us feel all its value. He has left us prodigious examples of the esteem He had for this virtue. Having resolved, in the greatness of His mercy, to redeem the world, He took a mortal body like ours; but He wished to choose a virgin for His Mother. Who was this incomparable creature, my brethren? It was Mary, the purest among all, who by a grace granted to no other was exempt from original sin. She consecrated her virginity to the good God from the age of three years, and in offering Him her body and her soul she made Him the holiest, the purest, and the most pleasing sacrifice that God has ever received from a creature on earth. She sustained it by an inviolable fidelity in keeping her purity and in avoiding all that could in the least tarnish its brightness. We see that the Blessed Virgin set such store by this virtue that she would not consent to be the Mother of God until the angel had assured her that she would not lose it. But when the angel had told her that in becoming the Mother of God, far from losing or tarnishing that purity which she esteemed so highly, she would only be the purer and more pleasing to God, she consented willingly then, in order to give a new brilliance to that virginal purity. We see further that Jesus Christ chose a foster-father who was poor, it is true; but He wished his purity to be above that of all other creatures, the Blessed Virgin excepted. Among His disciples He distinguished one, to whom He showed a singular friendship and confidence, to whom He shared His greatest secrets; but He took the purest of all, and one who had been consecrated to God from his youth.

Saint Ambrose tells us that purity raises us up to heaven and makes us leave the earth, as far as it is possible for a creature to leave it. It raises us above corrupted nature and, by its sentiments and its desires, makes us live the very life of the angels. According to Saint John Chrysostom, the chastity of a soul is of greater price in the eyes of God than that of the angels, because Christians can acquire this virtue only by combats, whereas the angels have it by nature. The angels have nothing to combat in order to keep it, while a Christian is obliged to make continual war upon himself. Saint Cyprian adds that chastity not only makes us like the angels, but also gives us a character of resemblance to Jesus Christ Himself. Yes, this great saint tells us, a chaste soul is a living image of God upon earth. The more a soul detaches itself from itself by resistance to its passions, the more it attaches itself to God; and, by a happy return, the more the good God attaches Himself to it: He looks upon it, He regards it as His spouse and His beloved; He makes it the object of His dearest complacencies and fixes His dwelling there forever. “Happy,” the Savior tells us, “are those who have a pure heart, for they shall see the good God.” According to Saint Basil, if we find chastity in a soul, we find there all the other Christian virtues; it will practice them with great ease, “because,” he tells us, “to be chaste one must impose many sacrifices upon oneself and do oneself a great violence. But once it has won such victories over the devil, the flesh, and the blood, all the rest costs it very little; for a soul that commands with empire this sensual body easily overcomes all the obstacles it meets on the path of virtue.” Also we see, my brethren, that Christians who are chaste are the most perfect. We see them reserved in their words, modest in all their ways, sober in their meals, respectful in the holy place, and edifying in all their conduct. Saint Augustine compares those who have the great happiness of keeping a pure heart to the lilies that rise straight toward heaven and spread around them a very pleasing fragrance; the mere sight of them makes us think of this precious virtue. Thus the Blessed Virgin inspired purity in all who looked upon her. Happy virtue, my brethren, which sets us in the rank of the angels, which seems even to raise us above them! All the saints have set the greatest store by it and have preferred to lose their goods, their reputation, and even their life rather than tarnish this beautiful virtue.

We have a fair example of it in the person of Saint Agnes. Her beauty and her riches had caused her to be sought, at the age of twelve, by the son of the prefect of the city of Rome. She made known to him that she had consecrated herself to the good God. She was arrested under the pretext that she was a Christian, but in reality so that she might consent to the young man’s desires. She was so united to the good God that neither promises, nor threats, nor the sight of the executioners and the instruments displayed before her to frighten her, made her change her sentiments. Her persecutors, unable to gain anything over her, loaded her with

chains and wished to put an iron collar and rings on her neck and hands; they could not succeed, so frail were her poor little innocent hands. She remained firm in her resolution amid these raging wolves, and she offered her little body to the torments with a courage that astonished the executioners. She was dragged to the feet of the idols; but she confessed aloud that she recognized as God only Jesus Christ, and that their idols were only demons. The cruel and barbarous judge, seeing that he could gain nothing, thought she would be more sensitive to the loss of that purity which she prized so highly. He threatened to expose her in an infamous place; but she answered him firmly: "You may well make me die, but you will never be able to make me lose this treasure: Jesus Christ Himself is too jealous of it." The judge, dying of rage, had her led into that place of infernal filth. But Jesus Christ, who watched over her in a particular manner, inspired so great a respect in the guards that they looked upon her only with a kind of fear, and He commanded one of His angels to protect her. The young men who entered that chamber, burning with an impure fire, seeing an angel beside her fairer than the sun, came out all burning with divine love. But the prefect's son, more wicked and more corrupted than the others, entered the chamber where Saint Agnes was. Without regard for all these wonders, he approached her in the hope of satisfying his impure desires; but the angel who guarded the young martyr struck the libertine, who fell dead at her feet. At once the rumor spread through Rome that the prefect's son had been killed by Agnes. The father, all in fury, came to find the saint and gave himself up to all that his despair could inspire. He called her a fury of hell, a monster born for the desolation of his life, since she had caused his son to die. Saint Agnes answered him calmly: "It is because he wished to do me violence; then my angel gave him death." The prefect, a little softened, said to her: "Well then! pray your God to raise him up, so that it may not be said that it is you who made him die." "Doubtless," the saint said to him, "you do not deserve this grace; but so that you may know that Christians never take revenge, that on the contrary they return good for evil, go out from here, and I am going to pray the good God for him." Then Agnes threw herself on her knees, prostrate with her face against the ground. While she prayed, her angel appeared to her and said: "Take courage." At the same instant the lifeless body took life again. The young man raised by the saint's prayers rushed from the house, ran through the streets of Rome crying: "No, no, my friends, there is no other God than the God of the Christians; all the gods we adore are only demons who deceive us and drag us into hell." Yet in spite of so great a miracle they did not fail to condemn her to death. Then the prefect's lieutenant commanded that a great fire be lighted, and had her thrown into it. But the flames parting did her no harm and burned the idolaters who had run up to be spectators of her combats. The lieutenant, seeing that the fire respected her and did her no harm, ordered that she be struck with a sword-blow in the throat, so as to take her life; but the executioner trembled as if he himself were condemned to death… As the parents of Saint Agnes wept over their daughter's death, she appeared to them saying: "Do not weep for my death; on the contrary, rejoice that I have acquired so great a glory in heaven." You see, my brethren, what this virgin suffered rather than lose her virginity. Conceive now the esteem you ought to have for purity, and how much the good God is pleased to work miracles in order to show Himself its protector and guardian. How this example will one day confound those young people who set so little store by this beautiful virtue! They have never known its price. The Holy Spirit is therefore quite right to cry out: "Oh! how beautiful is the chaste generation; its memory is eternal, and its glory shines before men and angels!"

It is certain, my brethren, that each one loves his like; also the angels, who are pure spirits, love and protect in a particular manner the souls that imitate their purity. We read in Holy Scripture that the angel Raphael, who accompanied the young Tobias, rendered him a thousand services. He preserved him from being devoured by a fish, from being strangled by the demon. If that young man had not been chaste, most certainly the angel would not have accompanied him and would not have rendered him so many services. What pleasure does the guardian angel enjoy who leads a pure soul! There is no virtue for the preservation of which the good God works miracles so numerous as those He lavishes in favor of a person who knows the price of purity and strives to safeguard it.

See what He did for Saint Cecilia. Born at Rome of very rich parents, she was well instructed in the Christian religion, and following God's inspiration she consecrated her virginity to Him. Her parents, who did not know it, promised her in marriage to Valerian, son of a senator of the city. It was, according to the world, a very considerable match. She asked her parents for time to think of it. She spent that time in fasting, prayer, and tears, to obtain from God the grace not to lose the flower of that virtue which she esteemed more than her life. The good God answered her to fear nothing and to obey her parents; for not only would she not lose this virtue, but that he whom she would have… She consented therefore to the marriage. On the day of her wedding, when Valerian presented himself, she said to him: "My dear Valerian, I have a secret to communicate to you." He answered her: "What is this secret?" — "I have consecrated my virginity to God and never shall a man touch me, for I have an angel who watches over my purity; and if you were to attempt it, he would strike you with death." Valerian was much surprised at this language, because being a pagan he understood nothing of all that. He answered: "Show me this angel who guards you." The saint replied: "You cannot see him because you are a pagan. Go find Pope Urban on my behalf, and ask him for Baptism; afterward you will see my angel." At once he set out. After being baptized by the Pope, he came back to find his spouse. Entering her chamber, he perceived the angel watching with Saint Cecilia. He found him so beautiful, so brilliant with glory, that he was charmed and touched. Not only did he permit his spouse to remain consecrated to God, but he himself made a vow of virginity. They soon both had the happiness of dying as martyrs. Do you see how the good God takes care of a person who loves this incomparable virtue and works to preserve it?

We read in the life of Saint Edmund that, studying at Paris, he found himself with some persons who were saying foolish things; he left them at once. This action was so pleasing to God that He appeared to him under the form of a beautiful child and greeted him with a most gracious air, telling him that He had seen with satisfaction that he left his companions who were holding licentious discourses; and to reward him for it, He promised that He would always be with him. Moreover Saint Edmund had the great happiness of keeping his innocence until death. When Saint Lucy went to the tomb of Saint Agatha to ask the good God, through her intercession, for the cure of her mother, Saint Agatha appeared to her and told her that she could obtain by herself what she asked, because by her purity she had prepared in her heart a dwelling most pleasing to her Creator. This shows us that the good God can refuse nothing to one who has the happiness of keeping body and soul pure.

Listen to the account of what happened to Saint Potamiana, who lived in the time of the persecution of Maximian. This young girl was the slave of a debauched and libertine master, who never ceased soliciting her to evil. She preferred to suffer all sorts of cruelties and torments rather than consent to the solicitations of that infamous master. He, seeing that he could gain nothing, in his fury had her delivered as a Christian into the hands of the governor, to whom he promised a great reward if he could win her over. The unjust judge had this virgin brought before his tribunal, and seeing that all the threats did not make her change her sentiments, he made her endure all that rage could inspire in him. But the good God, who never abandons those who have consecrated themselves to Him, gave the young martyr so much strength that she seemed insensible to all the torments. This iniquitous judge, unable to overcome her resistance, had a cauldron filled with pitch placed on a very hot fire, and said to her: "Look at what is being prepared for you, if you do not obey your master." The holy girl answered without being troubled: "I prefer to suffer all that your fury can inspire in you rather than obey the infamous will of my master; besides, I should never have believed that a judge could be so unjust as to wish to make me obey the designs of a debauched master." The tyrant, irritated by this answer, commanded that she be thrown into the cauldron. "At least," she said to him, "order that I be thrown into it fully clothed. You will see what strength the good God whom we adore gives to those who suffer for Him." After three hours of torment, Potamiana gave her beautiful soul back to her Creator, and thus won the double palm of martyrdom and of virginity.

Alas! my brethren, how little this virtue is known in the world, how little we esteem it, how little care we take to preserve it, how little zeal we have to ask it of God, since we cannot have it of ourselves. No, we do not know this beautiful and lovable virtue which so easily wins the heart of God, which gives so fair a luster to all our other good works, which raises us above ourselves, which makes us live on earth as the angels live in heaven!… No, my brethren, it is not known to those old infamous and impure ones who drag themselves, roll, and drown in the mire of their turpitudes, whose heart is like those rocks on the mountain-tops roasted and burned by these impure fires. Alas! far from seeking to extinguish it, they never cease to kindle and inflame it by their looks, their thoughts, their desires, and their actions. In what state will that soul be when it appears before a God who is purity itself? No, my brethren, this beautiful virtue is not known to that person whose lips are only a mouth and a pipe of which hell makes use to vomit its impurities upon the earth, and who feeds on them as on daily bread [pain quotidien]. Alas! their poor soul is no longer anything but an object of horror to heaven and to earth! No, my brethren, this lovable virtue of purity is not known to those young people whose eyes and hands are soiled by looks and …… O God, how many souls this sin drags into hell!… No, my brethren, this beautiful virtue is not known to those worldly and corrupted girls who take so many precautions and cares to draw upon themselves the eyes of the world; who by their studied and indecent adornments publicly announce that they are infamous instruments of which hell makes use to ruin souls—those souls which have cost Jesus Christ so much labor, so many tears and torments!… Look at them, these unhappy ones, and you will see that a thousand demons surround their head and their breast. O my God, how can the earth bear such satellites of hell? Still more astonishing: how can mothers suffer them in a state unworthy of a Christian woman! If I did not fear to go too far, I would say to these mothers that they are worth no more than their daughters. Alas! this unhappy heart and these impure eyes are only a poisoned spring that gives death to whoever looks at them or listens to them. How dare such monsters present themselves before a holy God so great an enemy of impurity! Alas! their poor life is nothing other than a heap of grease which they amass to feed the fires of hell for all eternity. But, my brethren, let us leave a matter so disgusting and so revolting for a Christian, whose purity ought to imitate that of Jesus Christ Himself; and let us return to our beautiful virtue of purity which raises us up to heaven, which opens to us the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, and draws upon us every kind of spiritual and temporal blessing.

We have said, my brethren, that this virtue is of great price in the eyes of God; let us also say that it does not lack enemies who strive to make us lose it. We may even say that almost everything around us works to snatch it from us. The devil is one of our cruellest enemies; as he lives in the filth of impure vices, as he knows that there is no sin which so outrages the good God, and as he knows how pleasing a pure soul is to Him, he lays every kind of snare for us to take this virtue away. On the other hand, the world, which seeks only its ease and its pleasures, also works to make us lose it, often while seeming to show us friendship. But we may say that our cruellest and most dangerous enemy is ourselves—that is to say, our flesh which, already spoiled and corrupted by Adam's sin, drives us with a kind of fury toward corruption. If we are not continually on our guard, it has soon burned and devoured us with its impure flames. But, you will say to me, since it is so difficult to keep this virtue, so precious in the eyes of God, what then must one do? — My brethren, here are the means. The first is to watch well over our eyes, our thoughts, our words, and our actions; the second, to have recourse to prayer; the third, to frequent the sacraments often and worthily; the fourth, to flee all that is capable of leading us to evil; the fifth, to have a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin. If we do this, in spite of all our enemies and in spite of the fragility of this virtue, we are nevertheless sure of keeping it.

I say, first, that we must watch over our looks; that is not doubtful, since we see that there are so many who have fallen into this sin by a single look, and who have never risen again. Never allow yourselves any liberty without a true necessity. Rather suffer some inconvenience than expose yourselves to sin… Second, Saint James tells us that this virtue comes from heaven and that we shall never have it if we do not ask it of the good God. We must therefore often ask the good God to give us purity in our eyes, in our words, and in all

our actions. I say, in the third place, that if we wish to keep this beautiful virtue, we must often and worthily frequent the sacraments; without which we shall never have this happiness. Jesus Christ did not institute the sacrament of Penance only to remit our sins, but also to give us strength to combat the devil; which is very easy to understand. What person is there who, having made a good confession today, will be able to let himself be dragged into temptation? Sin, even with all its pleasures, would fill him with horror. Who is there who, having communicated a little while ago, will be able to consent—I do not say to an act of impurity, but to a single evil thought? Ah! the divine Jesus, who has made His dwelling in his heart, makes him understand too well how infamous this sin is and how much it displeases Him, and draws him away from it. Yes, my brethren, a Christian who frequents the sacraments holily may well be tempted; but to sin is another thing. Indeed, when we have the great happiness of receiving the adorable Body of Jesus Christ, do we not feel that impure fire being extinguished? Can that adorable Blood which flows in our veins do less than purify our blood? Does not that sacred Flesh which mingles with ours divinize it in some manner? Does not our body seem to return to the first state in which Adam was before his sin? Ah! that adorable Blood which has brought forth so many virgins!… Let us be well assured, my brethren, that if we do not frequent the sacraments, we shall fall at every instant into sin.

We must still, in order to defend ourselves from the devil, flee the persons who can lead us to evil. See what the chaste Joseph did when tempted by his master's wife: he left his cloak in her hands, and fled to save his soul. The brothers of Saint Thomas Aquinas, unable to bear that their brother should consecrate himself to God, to prevent him shut him up in a castle and brought there a woman of bad life to try to corrupt him. Seeing himself pushed to the limit [poussé à bout] by the effrontery of that bad creature, he took a firebrand in his hand and drove her shamefully from his chamber. Having seen the danger to which he had been exposed, he prayed with so many tears that the good God granted him the precious gift of continence—that is to say, that he was never again tempted against this beautiful virtue. See what Saint Jerome did to have the happiness of keeping purity; see him in his desert, abandoning himself to all the rigors of penance, to tears and to macerations that make one shudder. This great saint relates to us the victory won by a young man in a combat perhaps unique in history, in the time of the cruel persecution which the emperor Decius let loose against the Christians. The tyrant, after having submitted this young man to all the trials that the devil could inspire in him, thought that if he made him lose the purity of his soul, he would easily lead him to renounce the true religion. To that end he ordered him to be led into a garden of delights, amid lilies and roses, near a stream that flowed with a soft murmur, and under trees stirred by a pleasant wind. There they put him on a bed of feathers; they bound him with silk cords, and he was left alone in that state. Then they brought a courtesan, adorned as richly and as indecently as possible. She began to solicit him to evil, with all the impudence and all the attractions that passion can inspire. This poor young man, who would have given his life a thousand times rather than soil the purity of his beautiful soul, saw himself without defense since his feet and hands were bound. Not knowing any longer how to resist the attacks of voluptuousness, driven by the Spirit of God, he cut off his tongue with his teeth and spat it into the face of that woman. Seeing which, she was so covered with confusion that she fled. This fact shows us that the good God will never leave us to be tempted above our strength.

See further what Saint Martinian did, who lived in the fourth century. After having spent twenty-five years in the desert, he was exposed to a very near occasion of sin. Already he had consented to it by thought and by word. But the good God came to his aid and touched his heart. He conceived so great a regret for the sin he was about to commit that, having gone back into his cell, he lighted a great fire and put his feet into it. The pain he felt and the regret of his sin made him utter frightful cries. Zoe, that bad woman who had come to tempt him, ran at his cries; and she was so touched that, instead of perverting him, she converted. She spent all her life in tears and penance. But as for Saint Martinian, he remained seven months on the ground without movement, because both his feet were burned. After his cure, he withdrew into another desert, where he did nothing but weep for the rest of his life at the memory of the danger he had run of losing his soul. There, my

brethren, is what the saints did; there are the torments they endured rather than lose the purity of their soul. That astonishes you perhaps; but you ought rather to be astonished at the little store you set by this beautiful and incomparable virtue. Alas! this deplorable disdain comes from our not knowing its price!

I say finally that we must have a great devotion to the most holy Virgin if we wish to keep this beautiful virtue; that is not doubtful, since she is the queen, the model, and the patroness of virgins…. Saint Ambrose calls the Blessed Virgin the mistress of chastity, Saint Epiphanius calls her the princess of chastity, and Saint Gregory the queen of chastity…. Here is an example which will show us the great care the Blessed Virgin takes of the chastity of those who have confidence in her, to the point that she never knows how to refuse anything they ask of her. A gentleman who had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin had made a little chapel in her honor in a room of the castle he inhabited. No one knew of the existence of this chapel. Each night, after a few moments of sleep, without warning his wife, he rose to go to the Blessed Virgin and remain there until morning. This poor woman conceived a great pain from it; she believed that he went out to find some girl of bad life. One day, unable to bear it any longer, she told him that she saw well that he preferred another woman to her. The husband, thinking of the Blessed Virgin, answered her affirmatively. This so wounded her that, seeing no change in her husband's conduct, in the excess of her grief she stabbed herself. Her husband, on returning from his chapel, found his wife bathed in her blood. Extremely afflicted at this sight, he locked the door of his chamber, went back to the Blessed Virgin, and all in tears prostrated himself before her image, crying out: "You see, holy Virgin, that my wife has given herself death because I came at night to keep you company and to pray to you. Nothing is impossible to you, since your Son has promised you that you would never have a refusal. You see that my poor wife is damned; will you leave her in the flames, since it is because of my devotion to you that she killed herself in her despair? Holy Virgin, refuge of the afflicted, restore life to her, if you please; show that you love to do good to everyone. I will not leave here until you have obtained this grace for me from your divine Son." While he was absorbed in his tears and his prayers, a servant sought him and called him, telling him that her mistress was asking for him. He answered: "Is it quite sure that she is calling me?" — "Hear her voice," the servant replied. The gentleman's joy was so great that he could not tear himself away from the Blessed Virgin. At last he rose, weeping with joy and gratitude. He found his wife in full health; there remained of her wounds only the scars, so that she might never lose the memory of such a miracle worked by the protection of the Blessed Virgin. Seeing her husband enter, she embraced him saying: "Ah! my friend, I thank you for having had the charity to pray for me. I was in hell and condemned to burn there eternally, because I had given myself death. Let us thank well then the Blessed Virgin who has torn me from such an abyss! Ah! how one suffers in that fire! who will ever be able to say it and above all to make it understood!" She was so grateful for this prodigious favor that she spent all her life in tears, in penance, and could not recount the grace which the Blessed Virgin had obtained for her from her divine Son without weeping hot tears. She would have wished to teach everyone how powerful the Blessed Virgin is to succor those who trust in her. Tell me, my brethren, if the Blessed Virgin has the power to tear souls even from hell, could we doubt that she will obtain for us the graces we ask of her, we who are on earth, the place where the mercy of the Son and the compassion of the Mother are exercised? When we have some graces to ask of the good God, let us address ourselves then with great confidence to the Blessed Virgin, and we are sure of being heard. Do we wish to come out of sin, my brethren? Let us go to Mary; she will take us by the hand and lead us to her Son to receive our pardon. Do we wish to persevere in good? Let us address ourselves to the Mother of God; she will cover us with the mantle of her protection and all hell will be able to do nothing against us. Do you want the proof of it? Here it is: we read in the life of Saint Justina that a young man having conceived a violent love for her, and seeing that he could gain nothing by his solicitations, had recourse to a certain Cyprian who had dealings with the devil. He promised him a sum of money if he brought Justina to consent to what he wished. Soon afterward the young girl felt herself violently tempted against the holy virtue of purity; but as soon as the devil solicited her, she quickly had recourse to the Blessed Virgin. At once the devil took flight. The young man having asked why he could not

win this girl, Cyprian addressed himself to the devil and reproached him for his little power in this circumstance, whereas in a like case he had always been able to accomplish his designs. — The devil answered him: That is true, but she has recourse to the Mother of God; and as soon as she prays to her, I lose my strength and can do nothing. Cyprian, astonished that a person who had recourse to the Blessed Virgin should be so terrible to all hell, converted, and died a saint in martyrdom.

I finish by saying that if we wish to keep the purity of soul and of body, we must mortify our imagination; never let roll in our mind the thought of those objects which lead us to evil, and take care not to be a subject of sin to others, whether by our words or by our manner of dressing, which concerns especially persons of the [female] sex. If we perceive someone badly arranged, we must turn away from her at once, and not do like those who have impure eyes, who stop there as long as the devil wishes. We must mortify our ears: never take pleasure in hearing filthy words or songs. Ah! my God, how is it that fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses who hear, at the evening gatherings [veillées], the most infamous songs, and see committed actions that would horrify pagans, can suffer them without saying anything, under the pretext that they are childishnesses? Ah! unhappy ones, the good God awaits you on the great day of vengeance!… Alas! how many sins your children and your servants will have committed for you!… "Blessed," Jesus Christ tells us, "are those who have a pure heart, for they shall see God." How happy are those who have the great happiness of possessing this beautiful virtue! Are they not the friends of God, the beloved of the angels, the cherished children of the most holy Virgin? Let us often ask the good God, my brethren, through the intercession of this most holy Mother, to give us a pure soul and heart, a chaste body; and we shall have the happiness of pleasing God during our life, and of going to glorify Him for all eternity: that is what I wish for you.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost — On Lukewarmness

Sed quia tepidus es, et nec frigidus, nec calidus, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo. But because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit you out of My mouth. (Apocalypse 3:16)

Could we hear, my brethren, without shuddering, such a sentence come forth from the mouth of God Himself against a bishop who seemed perfectly to fulfill all the duties of a worthy minister of the Church? His life was regular; his goods were not spent amiss. Far from authorizing vice, he opposed it strongly; he gave no bad examples, and his life seemed truly worthy of being imitated. Yet in spite of all that, we see that the Lord has Saint John say to him that if he continued to live in that manner, He was going to reject him—that is to say, punish him and reprobate him. Yes, my brethren, this example is all the more frightening in that many follow the same road, live in the same manner, and hold their salvation for assured. Alas! my brethren, how small is the number of those who are neither on the side of the sinners already reprobate in the eyes of the world, nor of the number of the elect! In what path do we walk? Is it the right path that we follow? What ought to make us tremble is that we know nothing of it. Frightening uncertainty!… Let us try, however, to know whether you are unhappy enough to be of the number of the lukewarm. I am going, first, to show you the marks by which you will know it; and second, if you are of that number, I will indicate to you the means of coming out of it.

In speaking to you today, my brethren, about the terrible state of a lukewarm soul, my intention is not to paint for you the frightening and despairing picture of a soul that lives in (mortal) sin, without even having the desire to escape from it; this poor unfortunate woman is only a victim of God's wrath for the next life. Alas! these sinners listen to me, they know well who I'm talking about (at this moment) Let us not go any further, everything I say would only serve to harden them more. In speaking to you, my brethren, from a lukewarm soul, I do not want to speak to you more about those who do neither Easter nor confessions; they know very well that despite all their prayers and their other good works, they will be lost. Let us leave them in their blindness, since they want to stay there. But, you will ask me, will not all those who confess, who celebrate

their Easter and who receive communion often, be saved? Certainly, my friend, they will not all be; for if the greatest number of those who frequent the sacraments were saved, it must be admitted, the number of the elect would not be as small as it will be. But, however, let us recognize it; all those who will have the great happiness of going to heaven will be chosen from among those who attend the sacraments, and never from those who neither make Easter nor make confessions. Ah! you will say, if all those who do neither Easter nor confession are damned, the number (of the reprobate) will be greatly increased. Yes, without doubt, it will be great. Whatever you may say, if you live as sinners, you will share their fate. Does this thought not touch you?... If you are not hardened to the last degree, it must make you shudder and even despair. Alas! my God! how unhappy a person who has lost faith is 1 Far from benefiting (from these truths), these poor blind people, on the contrary, will make fun of them; and yet, despite everything they may say about it, it will be as I say: no Easter, no confessions, no heaven, no eternal happiness. O my God! that the blindness of the sinner is frightful! I do not yet understand, my brethren, by a lukewarm soul, one who would like to be in the world without ceasing to be God's: you will see him, for a moment, prostrating himself before God, his Savior and his master; and, another moment, you will see him prostrate himself before the world, his idol. Poor blind man, who extends one hand to the good God and the other to the world, both of whom he calls to his aid, promising his heart to each one. He loves the good God; at least he would like to love her, but he would also like to please the world. Tired of wanting to give himself to both, he ends up giving himself only to the world. An extraordinary life which presents such a singular spectacle that we cannot be convinced that it is the life of the same person. I will show it to you in such a clear manner that perhaps many of you will be offended; but, it doesn't matter to me, I will always tell you what I have to tell you, and you can do with it what you want.

I say, my brethren, that he who wants to be in the world without ceasing to be God, leads a life so extraordinary that it is not possible to reconcile the different circumstances. Tell me, would you dare to think that this girl, whom you see in these parties of pleasure, in these worldly assemblies where one does only evil and never good, giving herself over to everything that a spoiled and perverted heart can desire, is the same one whom you saw, (barely) a fortnight or a month ago, at the foot of the tribunal of penitence confessing her faults, protesting to God that she is ready to die rather than fall back into sin? Is this really the person you saw going up to the holy table with downcast eyes and prayer on his lips? O my God! what a horror! Can we think about it without dying of compassion? Would you believe, my brethren, that this mother who, three weeks ago, sent her daughter to confession, rightly recommending her to think seriously about what she was going to do, and giving her a rosary or a book; today, tells her to go to a dance, a wedding or an engagement. These same hands, which gave him a book, are employed to arrange his vanities, in order to better please the world. Tell me, my brethren, is it really this person who, this morning, was in church, singing the praises of God, and who now uses this same language to sing bad songs and to make the most infamous speeches? Is this really the master or father of the family who, earlier, was at Holy Mass with great respect, who seemed to want to spend Sunday so holy, and who you now see working and making his people work? O my God! what horror! how is the good God going to put all this away on the day of judgment? Alas! how many damned Christians 1

I say more, my brethren: he who wants to please the world and the good God, leads a most unhappy life. You will see it. Here is a person who frequents pleasures, or who has contracted some bad habit; What is not her fear when she fulfills her religious duties, that is to say, when she prays to the good God, when she confesses, or wants to receive communion? She would not want to be seen by those with whom she danced, and spent nights in taverns, where she got into all kinds of disorder. Did she succeed in deceiving her confessor, by hiding all the worst things she had done, and did she thus obtain permission to take communion, or rather to commit sacrilege? she would like to receive communion before or after Holy Mass, that is to say when there is no one there. But she is happy to be seen by people who are wise, who are unaware of her bad life, and in whom she hopes to inspire a good opinion of herself. With people of piety, she speaks of religion; with

people without religion, she will only talk about the pleasures of the world. She would blush to perform her religious practices in front of the companions of her debaucheries. This is so true that one day someone asked me to have him receive communion in the sacristy, so that no one would see him. What a horror! My brethren, can we think about it and not shudder at such behavior? But let us go further, you will see the embarrassment of these poor people who want to follow the world without leaving the good God, at least in appearance. Easter is approaching. You have to go to confession; it's not that they want it, nor that they feel the need: they would much rather like Easter to only come every thirty years. But their parents still insist on the external practice of religion; they are happy that their children present themselves at the Holy Table, they even urge them to go to confession: in this they do very badly That they pray for them, and do not torment them to make them commit sacrileges; alas! they will do enough! To free themselves from the importunity of their parents, to keep up appearances, these people will gather to know which confessor they must go to to be absolved the first or second time. “Several times already,” said one, “my parents have tormented me because I am not going to confess. Where will we go? » — “You must not go to our priest, he is too scrupulous; he wouldn't make us have Easter. We need to go find so-and-so. There have been such and such who have committed as many crimes as we have. We have done no more harm than them. » Another will say; “I assure you, if it weren’t for my parents, I wouldn’t have Easter; since our catechism tells us that to make a good confession, we must leave sin and the occasion of sin, and we do neither. I tell you sincerely, I am very embarrassed every time Easter arrives. I don't see the hours being established so I don't run anymore. So I will make a confession with all my life to repair those I am making now, otherwise I would not die happy. » — “Well, someone else will tell him, you will have to return to the one who confessed to you until now, he will know you much better. » “Ah certainly no, I will go to the one who did not want me to pass, because he did not want to damn me. » — “Ah, how good you are! It doesn’t matter, they all have the same power.

To pass, to absolve. I'm missing it. see. » — “That is good to say as long as you are in good health; but when we are sick we think very differently. One day, I went to see someone who was very ill; she told me that she would never go back to confess to these priests who are so easy, and who, by pretending to want to save you, throw you into hell. » This is how many of these poor blind people behave. “Father,” they said to the priest, “I have come to confess to you, because our priest is too scrupulous. He wants us to promise things that we cannot keep; he would like us to be saints, and that is not very possible in the world. He would like us to never go dancing, to never go to taverns or games. If one has some bad habit, he no longer grants absolution until one has completely left it. If we had to do all that, we would never have Easter. My parents, who are very religious, are always after me because I don't do my Easter. I will do everything I can; but we cannot say that we will not return to these amusements again, since we do not know the opportunities that we may encounter. » — “Ah! the confessor, deceived by this beautiful language, will say to him, I see that your priest is a little scrupulous. Make your act of contrition, I will give you absolution, and try to be very good. » That is to say, lower your head; you are going to tread on the adorable blood of Jesus Christ, you are going to sell your God as Judas sold him to his executioners, and tomorrow you will take communion, or rather, you will go and crucify him. 0 horror, oh abomination! V a, infamous Judas, goes to the Holy Table; go and kill your God and your Savior! Let your conscience cry out; just try to stifle your remorse as much as you can....

But, my brethren, I go too far; let us leave these poor people blind to their darkness. I think, my brethren, that you want to know what the state of a lukewarm soul is. Well! here it is: A lukewarm soul is not yet completely dead in the eyes of God, because faith, hope and charity, which are its spiritual life, are not completely extinguished. But it is a faith without zeal, a hope without firmness, a charity without ardor. I am going to give you the portrait of a fervent Christian, that is to say a Christian who truly desires to save his soul, (at the same time as) that of a person who leads a lukewarm life in the service of God. Let us put them next to each other, and you will see which of the two you resemble. A good Christian is not content to believe all the truths of our holy religion, he loves them, he meditates on them, he seeks all means to learn them; he loves to hear the word of God; the more he hears it, the more he desires to hear it, because he

desires to benefit from it, that is to say, to avoid everything that God forbids him and to do everything that he commands. The instructions never seem too long to him; on the contrary, these moments are the happiest for him, since he learns the way in which he must behave in order to go to heaven and save his soul. Not only does he believe that God sees him in all his actions and that he will judge them all at the hour of death; but he still trembles every time he thinks that one day he will have to go and give an account of his whole life before a God who will be without mercy (for sin). He doesn't just think about it, tremble; but he works to correct himself every day; he never stops inventing new ways to do penance every day; he counts for nothing everything he has done so far, and laments that he has wasted a lot of time, during which he could have gathered great treasures for heaven. How different is the Christian who lives in lukewarmness! He still believes all the truths that the church believes and teaches, but it is in such a weak way that his heart has almost nothing to do with it. He does not doubt, it is true, that the good God sees him, that he is always in his holy presence; but with this thought he is neither wiser nor less sinful; he falls into sin with as much ease as if he believed nothing; he is very convinced that, as long as he lives in this state, he is an enemy of God" but he does not leave it for that. He knows that Jesus Christ gave the sacrament of penance the power to forgive our sins and to make us grow in virtue. He knows that this sacrament grants us graces proportionate to the dispositions we bring to it; no matter: the same negligence, the same lukewarmness in practice. He knows that Jesus Christ is truly in the sacrament of the Eucharist, that it is absolutely necessary food for his poor soul; However, you see few desires in him. His confessions and his communions are very far from each other; he will only decide on the occasion of a great celebration, a jubilee, or a mission; or else, because others go there, and not because of the need of his poor soul. Not only does he not work to deserve this happiness; but it does not even envy those who taste it more often. If you speak to him about the things of the good God, he responds with an indifference which shows you how little his heart is sensitive to the goods that we can find in our holy religion. Nothing touches him: he listens to the word of God, it is true; but often he gets bored; he listens with difficulty, out of habit, like a person who thinks he knows enough, or does enough. Prayers that are a little long disgust him. His mind is so full of the action he has just finished, or the one he is going to do; (his boredom is so great) that his poor soul is like in agonio: he still lives, but he is capable of nothing for heaven. The hope of a good Christian is firm; his trust in God is unshakeable. He never loses sight of the goods and evils of the other life.

The memory of the sufferings of Jesus Christ is continually present in his mind; his heart is always occupied with it. Sometimes he carries his thoughts into hell, to understand how great is the punishment of sin and how great is the misfortune of the one who commits it, which disposes him to prefer death even to sin; sometimes to excite himself to the love of God, and to feel how happy he is who prefers the good God to everything, he carries his thoughts into heaven. He imagines how great the reward is for those who leave everything for the good God. Then, he desires only God and only wants God: the goods of this world are nothing to him; he likes to see them despised and to despise them himself; the pleasures of the world horrify him. He thinks that being the disciple of a crucified God, his life should only be a life of tears and suffering. Death does not frighten him in the least, because he knows very well that it alone can deliver him from the evils of life, and reunite him with his God forever. But a lukewarm soul is far removed from these feelings. The goods and evils of the other life are almost nothing to her: she thinks of heaven, it is true, but without truly desiring to go there. She knows that sin closes the doors to her; despite this, she does not seek to correct herself, at least in an effective way; so it is always the same. The demon deceives her by making her make many resolutions to convert, to do better, to be more mortified, more restrained in her words, more patient in her sorrows, more charitable towards her neighbor. But all this does not change her life in any way: she has been filled with good desires for twenty years, without having changed her habits in any way. She resembles a person who envies the one who is on a triumphal chariot, but does not even deign to lift her foot to get on it. However, she would not want to renounce eternal goods for those of earth; but she desires neither to leave this world nor to go to heaven, and if she could spend her time without a cross and without sorrows, she

would never ask to leave this world. If you hear him say that life is very long and very miserable, it is only when everything does not go according to his desires. If the good God, to force her, in some way, to detach herself from life, sends her crosses or miseries, there she is who torments herself, who becomes sad, who abandons herself to complaints, to murmurs, and often to a kind of despair. She no longer seems to want to recognize that it is the good God who sends her these trials for her good, to detach her from life and attract her to himself. What could he have done to deserve them? she thinks to herself, many others more guilty than her do not suffer as much. In prosperity, the lukewarm soul does not go so far as to forget the good God, but it does not forget itself either. She knows very well how to tell of all the means she used to succeed; she believes that many others would not have had the same success; she likes to repeat it, to hear it repeated; every time she hears it, it is with new joy. Towards those who flatter her, she takes on a graceful air; but for those who have not given her all the respect that she believes she deserves, or who have not been grateful for her benefits, she maintains a cold, indifferent air, and seems to tell them that they are ungrateful people who did not deserve to receive the good that she has done for them. But a good Christian, my brethren, far from believing himself worthy of anything, and capable of doing the least good, only has his misery before his eyes. He is wary of those who flatter him, like so many traps that the devil sets for him; his best friends are those who make his faults known to him, because he knows that it is absolutely necessary to know them in order to correct them. He flees the occasion of sin as much as he can; remembering how little things bring him down, he no longer counts on all his resolutions, nor on his strength, nor even on his virtue.

He knows, through his own experience, that he is only capable of sinning; he places all his trust and hope in God alone. He knows that the demon fears nothing so much as a soul who loves prayer, which leads him to make his life a continual prayer through an intimate conversation with the good God. The thought of God is as familiar to him as breathing; the elevations of her heart towards him are frequent; he likes to think of him as his father, his friend and his God who loves him, and who so ardently desires to make him happy in this world, and even more so in the next. A good Christian, my brethren, is rarely occupied with earthly things; if you talk to him about it, he shows as much indifference as people of the world show when we talk to them about the goods of the other life. Finally, he makes his happiness consist of crosses, afflictions, prayer, fasting and the thought of the presence of God. For a lukewarm soul, it does not completely lose, if you like, confidence in God; but she doesn't trust herself enough. Although she often exposes herself to sin, she still believes that she will not fall. If she falls, she attributes her fall (to the next one) and she affirms that another time, she will be firmer. He who truly loves the good God, my brethren, and who has the salvation of his soul at heart, takes all possible precautions to avoid the occasion of sin. He doesn't just avoid big mistakes; but he is careful to destroy the slightest faults that he sees in himself. He always considers as a great evil everything that can displease God even a little; or to put it better, everything that displeases God displeases him. He looks at himself as at the foot of a ladder to the top of which he must climb; he sees that to achieve it he has no time to lose; so he goes from virtue to virtue every day, until the day of eternity. It is an eagle that cuts through the air; or rather it is a lightning bolt which loses none of its rapidity, from the moment it appears to the moment it disappears. Yes, my brethren, this is what a soul does who works for God and who desires to see him. Like lightning, it finds neither limits nor delay, before being buried in the bosom of its Creator. Why does our mind travel so quickly from one end of the world to the other? It is to show us how quickly we must bring ourselves to God through our thoughts and desires. But such is not the love of God in a lukewarm soul. We do not see in her these ardent desires and these burning flames, which will overcome all the obstacles which oppose salvation. If I wanted, my brethren, to paint for you exactly the state of a soul which lives in lukewarmness, I would tell you that it is similar to a turtle or a snail. She only walks by dragging herself on the ground, and we barely see her change her place. The love of God, which she feels in her heart, is like a small spark of fire hidden under a pile of ashes; this love is enveloped by so many earthly thoughts and desires, that if they do not stifle it, they prevent its progress and extinguish it little by little. The lukewarm soul comes to the point of being quite indifferent to its loss. She has only a love without tenderness, without

activity and without strength, which barely supports her in everything that is essentially necessary to be saved; but for everything else, she regards it as nothing or as little. Alas! My brethren, this poor soul is in its lukewarmness, like a person between two sleeps. She would like to act; but her will is so weak that she has neither the strength nor the courage to accomplish her desires. It is true that a Christian who lives lukewarmly still fulfills his duties fairly regularly, at least in appearance.

He will say his prayers every morning, on his knees; he will attend the sacraments well, every year, at Easter, and even several times a year; but in all this, there is so much disgust, so much cowardice and so much indifference, so little preparation, so little change; in his way of life, which we clearly see that he only fulfills his duties out of habit and routine; because it is a festival, and he is in the habit of filling them at that time. His confessions and communions are not sacrilegious, if you like; but these are fruitless confessions and communions, which, far from making him more perfect and more pleasing to God, only make him more guilty. As for his prayers, God alone knows how they are made: alas I without preparation. In the morning, it is not the good God that he concerns himself with, nor the salvation of his poor soul; but he only thinks about working well. His mind is so enveloped in the things of the earth that the thought of God has no place there. He thinks about what he will do during the day, where he will send his children and his servants; how he will go about activating his work. To say his prayers, he kneels, it is true; but he knows neither what he wants to ask of the good God, nor what is necessary for him, nor even before whom he finds himself; his manners, so disrespectful, announce it well. He is a poor man who, although very miserable, wants nothing and loves his poverty. He is an almost desperate patient, who despises doctors and remedies, and loves his infirmities. You see this lukewarm soul making no difficulty in speaking, under the slightest pretext, during his prayers; a little thing makes her abandon them, in part, at least, thinking that she will do them at another time. Does she want to offer her day to God, say her blessings and her graces? She does all this, it is true; but often without thinking about who she is talking to. She won't even quit her job. Is it a man? he will turn his cap or hat in his hands, as if to examine whether it is good or bad, as if he intended to sell it. Is it a woman? she will recite them while cutting bread from her soup, or pushing her wood into the fire, or while shouting at her children or her servants. Distractions in prayer are not very intentional, if you want them to be; we would prefer not to have them; but, because it is necessary to use some violence to chase them away, we let them come and go as they please. A lukewarm soul perhaps does not work, on the holy day of Sunday, on works which seem forbidden to people who have a little religion; but make a few stitches, arrange something in the household, send your shepherds to the field, during services, under the pretext that they don't have much to give their animals; They have no scruples about it, and thus prefer to let their souls and those of their workers perish than (let their animals perish). A man will arrange his tools, his carts for the next day; he will go and visit his land, he will plug a hole, he will cut some ropes, he will bring saddles and arrange them. What do you think, my brethren? isn't it, alas! the pure truth?... A lukewarm soul will still confess every month, and even much more often. But, alas! what faiths? No preparation, no desire to correct oneself; at least they are so weak and so small that the first gust of wind overturns them. All his confessions are only a repetition of the old ones, blessed again if they have nothing to add. Twenty years ago they accused what they accuse today; in twenty years if they confess again, it will be the same repetition. A lukewarm soul will not, if you like, commit great sins; but a little backbiting, a lie, a feeling of hatred, aversion, jealousy, a little dissimulation hardly costs him. If you don't give her all the respect she believes she deserves, she will make it clear to you, under the pretext that you offend God; she should rather say, because she herself is offended.

It is true that she will not stop frequenting the sacraments, but her dispositions are worthy of compassion. The day she wants to receive her God, she will spend part of the morning thinking about her temporal affairs. If he is a man, he will think of his markets or his sales; if it's a woman, she will think of her household and its children; if it's a girl, how she will dress; if it's a boy, he will dream of some frivolous pleasures, and the rest. It contains its God as in a dark and dirty prison. She does not give him death, but he is in this heart without joy and without consolation; all his dispositions announce that his poor soul has only one breath of life left.

After receiving Holy Communion, this person hardly thinks more about the good God than on other days. Her way of living tells us that she has not known the greatness of her happiness. A lukewarm person thinks little about the state of his poor soul, and almost never returns to the past; if, however, she thinks of doing better, she believes that having confessed her sins, she must be perfectly at peace. She attends holy mass, almost as she attends an ordinary event; she thinks about it seriously, and has no difficulty in talking about different things while going there; click will not think even perhaps once that she is going to participate in the greatest of all the gifts that the good God can give us, all God that he is. For the needs of her soul, she thinks about it, it is true, but very weakly; often she even presents herself before the good God without knowing what she is going to ask him. She has few scruples about removing, under the slightest pretext, the Passion, the procession and holy water. During holy services, she does not want to sleep, it is true, and she is even afraid of being seen; but she does not commit the slightest violence. As for distractions during prayer or holy mass, she would not want to have them; but as it would be necessary to fight a little, she suffers them with patience, however, without loving them. The days of fasting are reduced to almost nothing, either because the meal time is brought forward, or because we snack abundantly, which amounts to a supper, under the pretext that heaven is not taken by famine. When she does some good deeds, her intention is often not well purified: sometimes it is to please someone, sometimes it is out of compassion, and sometimes to please the world. With them, everything that is not a great sin is good enough.... They love to do good, but they would like it to cost them nothing, or at least very little. They would still like to see the sick, but the sick would have to come and see them themselves. They have the means to give alms, they know well that such a person is needed; but they wait for her to come and ask them, instead of warning her; which would make their good work much more meritorious. Let us say better, my brethren, a person who leads a lukewarm life, does not fail to do many good works, to frequent the sacraments, to regularly attend all the holy offices; but in all this, you see only a weak, languid faith, a hope that the slightest trial overthrows, a love for God and for neighbor which is without ardor, without pleasure; everything she does is not entirely lost, but close to it. See before the good God, my brethren, on which side you are: on the side of sinners, who have abandoned everything, who think nothing of the salvation of their poor soul, who immerse themselves in sin, without remorse? On the side of just souls who see and seek only God alone, who are always inclined to think badly of themselves, and are convinced as soon as they are made aware of their faults; who always think that they are a thousand times more miserable than we believe, and who count for nothing everything they have done up to now? Or are you one of those cowardly, lukewarm and indifferent souls such as we have just described? In what path do we walk? Who can assure himself that he is neither a great sinner nor lukewarm; but he is elected! Alas! My brethren, how many seem to be good Christians in the eyes of the world, who are lukewarm souls in the eyes of God, who knows our interior.

IL But, you will ask me, what means should we use to get out of this unfortunate state? My brethren, if you want to know this, listen to it carefully. However, let me tell you again that he who lives in lukewarmness is in a sense more in danger than he who lives in mortal sin, and that the consequences of this state are perhaps even more fatal. Here is the proof. A sinner who does not celebrate Easter, or who has bad and criminal habits, moans from time to time about his state in which he is resolved not to die; he even wants to get out of it, and he will do so one day. But a soul that lives in lukewarmness does not think of leaving it, because it believes that it is good with the good God. What to conclude from all this? here it is, my brethren This lukewarm soul becomes a tasteless, insipid and disgusting object in the eyes of God, who ends up vomiting it out of his mouth; that is to say, he curses and reproaches her. O my God, that this state loses souls! If we want to bring a lukewarm soul out of its state, she replies that she does not want to be a saint; that as long as she goes to heaven, that is enough. You don't want to be a saint, (you say); but it is only the saints who go to heaven. Either be a saint, or be a reprobate: there is no middle ground. If you want to emerge from lukewarmness, my brethren, transport yourself from time to time to the gate of the abyss, where you hear the cries and howls of the reprobate, and you will form an idea of ■■the torments they endure for having lived

with lukewarmness and negligence in the matter of their salvation. Carry your thoughts into heaven, and see what is the glory of the saints for having fought and having done violence while they were on earth. Transport yourselves, my brethren, to the depths of the forests and you will find there these multitudes of saints who have spent fifty, seventy years mourning their sins in all the rigors of penance. See, my brethren, what they have done to deserve heaven. See what respect they had for the presence of God; what devotion in their prayers, which lasted all their lives. They had abandoned their possessions, their parents and their friends to think only of God alone. See their courage in fighting the temptations of the devil. See the zeal and eagerness of those who were confined in the monasteries to make themselves worthy of often approaching the sacraments. See their pleasure in forgiving and doing good to all those who persecuted them, who wanted them and spoke evil to them. See their humility, their contempt for themselves and their happiness at seeing themselves despised, and how much they feared being praised and esteemed by the world. See how carefully they avoided the smallest sins, and how many tears they shed over their past sins. See their purity of intention in all their good works: they had only God in view, they desired to please only God alone. What else will I tell you? See these crowds of martyrs who cannot be satisfied with suffering, who mount the scaffolds with more joy than the kings on their thrones. Let us conclude, my brethren. There is no state more to fear than that of a person who lives in lukewarmness, because a great sinner will convert rather than a lukewarm person. Let us ask the good God with all our hearts, if we are in this state, to give us the grace to leave it, to take the road that all the saints have taken, in order to arrive at the happiness which they enjoy. This is what I wish you...

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost — On Envy

Ut quid cogitatis mala in cordibus vestris? Why do you think evil in your hearts? (Matthew 9:4)

"It is perfect that the wicked do not blame or condemn; they corrupt, through the malignity of their envy, the finest virtues of men, and spread the poison of their slander and their rash judgments on the best actions of their neighbors. They are like snakes who only feed on flowers to make them the material for their venom. Go that they hate in their brothers, Saint Gregory tells us Great, these are the most beautiful qualities; and by this, they seem to reproach the good God that he does them. Why did the Jews declaim so loudly against Jesus Christ, this tender and amiable Savior, who only came among them to save them? Why did they so often gather together, sometimes to throw him from the top of the mountain, sometimes to stone him, and other times to put him to death? holy and exemplary condemned their proud and criminal life, and that she was like a secret executioner who tortured them? Was it not also because her miracles attracted the people to follow her, and because they seemed to leave these impious people aside, being devoured by an interior rage, no longer able to hold on to them: What have we to deliberate, they cried, what are we waiting for? Do you not see that he astonishes the world with the greatness of his prodigies? Do you not notice that everyone runs after him and abandons us? Let us put him to death: Alas! My brethren, what passion is comparable to that of envy? the envy which devours them is the cause of their being afflicted; what should convert them becomes the matter of their envy and their jealousy. A paralytic lying in his bed is presented to him. This tender Savior looks at him and heals him, saying to him with kindness: "My son, have faith, your sins are forgiven you." Anyone other than the Pharisees would have been filled with gratitude, and would have hastened to go. publish everywhere the greatness of this miracle; but no, they were so hardened that they took the opportunity to decry it, to treat it as a blasphemer. This is how, my brethren, envy poisons the best actions Ah! if at least this cursed sin had died with the PhariseesI but, on the contrary, it has grown roots so deep that it is found in all states and in all ages. indulges in this sin, I will show you, first,, that nothing is more odious, and yet nothing is more common than this sin; second,, that there is nothing dangerous for salvation like envy, and that, however, there is no sin from which we correct ourselves less.

Before showing you, my brethren, how much this sin degrades and degrades those who commit it, and how much the good God abhors it, I want to make you understand, as much as I can, what the sin of envy is. This accursed sin, Saint Thomas calls it a mortal sorrow and sadness, which we feel in our heart, regarding the benefits that God deigns to bestow on our neighbor. It is still, he tells us, a malicious pleasure that we experience when our neighbor suffers some loss or some disgrace. I am sure, my brethren, that this simple presentation already begins to make you feel how odious this sin is, not only to God, but also to anyone who is not devoured by it. Can we find a blinder passion than that which consists of grieving over the happiness of one's brothers, and rejoicing over their misfortune? This is precisely what we call the sin of envy, a sin so odious that it contains cowardice, cruelty and secret perfidy at the same time. Could you, my brethren, form an idea of ■■this? can you represent it as it is? No, you never can. This is especially impossible for those who commit it, as it blinds them. Tell me, why are you angry that your neighbor is more successful than you in his business? He doesn't stop you from doing what you can to succeed as well or even better than him. You are distressed by the fact that he has more talent and more intelligence than you; but it does not take away what you have. You see with difficulty that he increases his goods; but this increase does not decrease yours. You are saddened by the fact that he is loved and esteemed; but it does not take away the love or esteem that people have for you. You are tired of seeing a wiser person; Hey, who's stopping you from being even more so than her, if you want? Will the good God not give you his grace as much as you need? Other times, on the contrary, you rejoice when your neighbor experiences some loss of property, or when his reputation is tarnished a little; but his disgraces and his miseries give you nothing. Do you see, my brethren, how much this passion blinds the one who abandons himself to it. This sin is not like the others: a thief, for example, when taking, experiences a certain pleasure in possessing what he has taken; an immodest person who indulges in his turpitudes enjoys a moment's pleasure, although remorse follows very closely; a drunkard feels satisfaction in the moment when the wine passes from the glass into his stomach; a vindictive person believes he experiences joy in the moment he vindicates himself; but an envious or jealous person has nothing to compensate him. His sin is like a viper, which produces in its womb the young which will destroy it. Ahi cursed sin, what cruel and internecine war do you not wage against him who has the misfortune of having fathered you! But, you may ask me, where was this sin committed for the first time? — IlelasI it began in the sky. The angels, who were God's most beautiful creatures, became jealous and envious of the glory of their Creator, and wanted to attribute to themselves what was due to God alone; and this sin of envy was the cause that the Lord dug a hell, to precipitate there this infinite multitude of angels who are now demons. From there, the sin of envy descended to the earth, and took root in the earthly paradise; It is therefore truly through envy that sin entered the world. The demon who, through his envy, had already lost heaven, not being able to bear that man, who was very inferior to him by his creation, was so happy in the earthly paradise, wanted to try to drag him into his misfortune. Alas! he succeeds only too well. Addressing the woman as the weakest, he made her eyes shine with the great knowledge that she would have more if she ate the fruit that the Lord had forbidden her to eat. She allowed herself to be tempted and deceived, and led her husband to do the same.

This mistake cost them dearly; from that moment, they were condemned to death: which is the most humiliating punishment; man being created never to die. Since then, this sin has wreaked the most terrible havoc on the world. The first murder that was committed was caused by envy. Why, Saint John tells us, did Cain kill his brother Abel? This is because Cain's actions were evil, and he attracted the hatred of God and men; while his brother, being good, was loved by God and men, and his good deeds became a continual reproach for Cain. But the desire with which he was devoured was not confined only to his soul. It showed on his face by the great sadness he showed. So the Lord, Holy Scripture tells us, looked neither at Cain nor at his offering. Then he said to himself: My brother is loved by everyone; it is the cause that I am despised. I must take revenge for this contempt, I must kill him with my own hands, and I must remove from my eyes an object that is intolerable to me. “Come, my brother,” said this unfortunate envious man, “let’s go for a walk

in the fields." The poor innocent follows him, without knowing that he is going to be his executioner. As soon as they are in the fields, Cain hits him, wounds him and kills him. Abel falls at her feet bathed in her blood. Far from being horrified by such a crime, Gain, on the contrary, rejoices in it, at least for the moment; for his sin will soon become his executioner. See again Esau, whom envy devours. Like Cain, he also wants to kill his brother Jacob, because of the blessing he received from his father. He said to himself: "The time of my father's death will indeed come; then I will take revenge, I will kill him." Poor Jacob is obliged, to avoid death, to flee to his uncle Laban, where he remained for a long time without returning, for fear of being exposed again to the envy of his own brother. It was also the envy that moved Joseph's brothers against him, to the point of wanting to take his life. My God! how blind this passion is! Joseph told his brothers about a dream he had had, which seemed to elevate him above them. They therefore resolved to kill him; because his innocent and God-pleasing life condemned their criminal life. Likewise, Saiil, devoured with envy against David, to whom more praise was given than to himself, set all kinds of traps for him to destroy him, and could not rest until death. Ah! My brethren, that we must take care not to allow this passion to arise in our hearts; because once it takes root, it is difficult to destroy it! Here is a very striking example, reported in the story of Abbot Paphnutius. His virtues were so dazzling that he was an object of admiration for all those who had the good fortune to know him. In the same monastery lived another monk, so jealous of such a great reputation, that he resolved to do everything he could to decry him. One Sunday, this envious man secretly entered the cell of Saint Paphnace, who was at that moment attending holy mass, and having hidden his book under a small pile of wood, went with the others to the church. He came to take his complaints to the superior, and assure everyone that his book had been stolen. The superior ordered that none of the religious leave the church; after which he sent three elders, who searched all the cells, and found this book in the cell of Saint Paphnutius. On their return, they showed it to everyone, saying that they had found it in Paphnutius' cell. The latter, although his conscience was safe, made no attempt to justify himself; for fear that, if he denied it, they would believe him guilty of lying. No one, in fact, could believe anything other than what he had seen with his own eyes. This poor young man was content to offer his tears to the good God, and humiliated himself deeply in front of everyone, as if he had been truly guilty. He spent almost two weeks fasting, to ask the good God for the grace to endure this ordeal for his love.

Witnessing the joy of his servant, God wasted no time in making the truth known. In order to reveal the innocence of his disciple, who so calmly supported the black slander that envy had brought upon him, he allowed, by a terrible judgment, that the author of such a great crime was possessed by the demon, and forced (to confess) this crime of envy in the presence of all the religious. This impure spirit attacked him so violently, and tormented him with so much obstinacy, that no saint of the desert was able to drive it out. This unfortunate envious man was finally forced to confess his imposture, and to proclaim that Paphnutius was a saint and alone could deliver him; (he added) that the demon had only possessed him as punishment for wanting to make this saint appear to be a hypocrite. He asked him for forgiveness, begging him to have pity on him. Like all the saints, Paphnutius, without gall and without resentment, approached the culprit, and commanded the demon to leave him; which he did immediately. Alas! said Saint Ambroise, how many envious people there are in the world who are angry that the good God blesses their brothers! According to the holy man Job, anger kills a fool, and envy kills small minds. Indeed, my brethren, is it not a very small mind to be angry that a neighbor, and perhaps even a brother or sister, is happy, that he does his business well, that he is loved and that he is blessed by the good God? Yes, my children, Saint Gregory the Great tells us, you must have a very weak mind to allow yourself to be tyrannized by a passion so dishonorable and so far from charity. Shouldn't a Christian rejoice to see his neighbor happy? Tell me, my brethren, can one imagine anything more odious than being angry at the happiness of one's neighbor, and rejoicing in his sorrows? Also we see that he who is affected by a passion so base and so unworthy of a reasonable creature, takes great care to hide it as much as he can. He refuses to wrap it up with a thousand pretexts, in order to make people believe that he only acts for the good. What criminal cowardice! To be devoured with sorrow

because the good God fills with good things those who deserve it much better than us!... An envious person does not have a moment of rest. On whom does the envious person spread his venomous foam? It is either on his enemy, or on his friend, or finally on a person who is indifferent to him. first, If it is against an enemy, the envious person knows well that not only must he not wish him harm; but that Jesus Christ commands him to love him as himself, to do him good and to pray for him; so that the good God blesses him in his spiritual or temporal goods. But, you say, it is because someone did me harm, it is because someone said something to me that didn't suit me. Fine, but in doing so you show terrible cowardice: you do not have the courage to do what so many saints have done with divine grace. second, If it is a friend, you pretend to him when you see him, you speak to him as if you wished him all kinds of good things, and in your heart you would like him to be unhappy, that the good God would abandon him, reduce him to misery, or that he would become an object of contempt in the eyes of the world: what perfidy, what cruelty! He opens his heart to you, while you vomit the venom of your envy on him. What would you think of a person who behaved this way towards you? If you saw the depths of his heart, you would be indignant, you would say to yourself: here is a coward, a perfidious, a wicked person, who, by speaking to me, is good to me, and seems to wish me all kinds of good things; while, in his heart, he would like to see me the most unhappy of men. Is there a passion more wicked than that? third, But he is an indifferent person. What did she do to you to attract the venom of your gall? Why grieve that she is happy, or rejoice that some disgrace befalls her?

How cruel this passion of envy is, my brethren, and how blind it is. 1 As men, you know, my brethren, we must have humanity for one another; but an envious person, on the contrary, would, if he could, destroy what he sees good in his neighbor. As Christians, you also know, we must have boundless charity for our brothers. We have seen saints who, not content with giving all they had to redeem their brothers, also gave themselves. Moses agreed to allow himself to be erased from the book of life to save his people, that is to say, to obtain their forgiveness from the Lord. Saint Paul tells us that he would give his life a thousand times over to save the soul of his brothers. But an envious person is far removed from all these (virtues), which are the most beautiful ornament of a Christian. He would like to see his brother ruined. Every trait of God's goodness towards his neighbor is a spear thrust that pierces his heart and causes him to die secretly. Since we are all one body of which Jesus Christ is the head, we must show union, charity, love and zeal in everything. To make each other happy, we must rejoice, as Saint Paul tells us, in the happiness of our brothers, and grieve with them when they have some sorrows. Far from having these feelings, Penvieux continues to launch slander and slander against his neighbor. In this way he seems to be relieved and to soften his sorrow a little. Alas! we have not said enough yet. It is this formidable vice which overthrows kings and emperors from their thrones. Why, my brethren, among these kings, these emperors, these men who occupy the first places, are some driven out, others poisoned, others stabbed? It is only to reign in their place. It is not bread, nor wine, nor accommodation that the perpetrators of these crimes lack. No, undoubtedly; but it is envy that devours them. On the other hand, look at a merchant, he would like to have all the practices, and the other points. If someone leaves him to go elsewhere, he will try to say as much bad as he can either about the person of the merchant or about the merchandise. He will take any means possible to make him lose his reputation, by saying that his merchandise is not as good as his, or that he is not a good weight. See again (the diabolical ruse) of this envious man: we must not tell it to others, he adds, for fear of causing him loss; I would be very sorry, I only tell you so that you do not allow yourself to be deceived. Look at a worker, if another goes to work in the house where he is accustomed to going, it annoys him; he will do everything he can to decry this person so that they will not be accepted. Look at a father of a family, how angry he is if his neighbor does his business better than him, if his land produces more than his. Look at a mother, she would only like people to speak favorably of her children; if we praise other children in front of her and do not praise her own, she will respond: They are not perfect; and she becomes sad. How good you are, poor mother! the praise we give to others takes nothing away from yours. See the jealousy of a husband towards his wife and of a wife towards her husband; see how they examine themselves in everything they do, in everything they say; as they notice

every person they talk to, every house they go to. If one notices that the other is talking to someone, there is no sort of insult that he does not heap on him, although often he is quite innocent. Isn't it this cursed sin that divides brothers and sisters? If a father or mother gives something more to one than to the other, you immediately see the birth of this jealous hatred against the one who has been favored; (hatred that lasts) for whole years and sometimes for a lifetime. Aren't these children always watching their mother or father, to see if he doesn't give something, or is kind to one of them? So, there's no harm they say.

We even see that this sin seems to be born with children. See, in fact, among them, this little jealousy which they conceive against each other, if they perceive any preference on the part of the parents. Look at a young man, he would like to be the only one to have intelligence, knowledge, good behavior; he is distressed if others do better, or are more esteemed than him. Look at a young girl, she would like to be the only one loved, the only one well adorned, the only one sought after. If others are preferred to her, you see her grieve and torment herself, perhaps even cry, instead of thanking the good God for being despised by creatures for clinging only to Him alone. What blind passion, my brethren! who could possibly understand it? Alas! My brethren, this vice is found even among those in whom it should not be found; I mean among people who profess religion. They will examine how long such a person remains to confess, the way in which she stands to pray to the good God; they talk about it and they blame them. They think that all these prayers, these good works are only to show off, or, if you want, are only grievous. No matter how much we tell them that the actions of their neighbor concern them alone; they become irritated and take umbrage when others act better than themselves. See even among the poor, if more good is done to one of them, they speak ill of the one who gave the alms, in order to divert it for another time. My God! what a detestable passion! It attacks everything, spiritual as well as temporal goods. We said that this passion shows a little spirit. This is so true that no one believes they have it, or at least doesn't want to believe they have it. We will try to cover it with a thousand pretexts to hide it from others. If, in our presence, someone speaks well of our neighbor, we remain silent; it grieves our hearts. If we are forced to speak, we do so in a cold manner. No, my brethren, there is no charity in an envious person. Saint Paul tells us that we must rejoice in the good that happens to our neighbor. This, my brethren, is what Christian charity should inspire us for one another. But the feelings of an envious person are very different. No, I do not believe that there is a sin worse and more to be feared than that of envy, because it is a hidden sin, and often covered with a beautiful robe of virtue or friendship. Let us put it better: it is a lion that we pretend to muzzle, or a snake covered with a handful of leaves, which will bite you without you realizing it; it is a public plague which spares no one... It is usually only this accursed sin which brings divisions and turmoil into families. I say, my brethren, that this sin is a sin of malice: here is an example which will clearly prove it to you. Saint Vincent Ferrier reports that a prince, having learned that there were two men in his capital city, one of whom was very miserly and the other very envious, brought them to him. He promised to grant them whatever they asked, with this condition however, that the one who asked first would receive half as much as his companion. This condition troubled them greatly. The miser burned with the desire to have money, but said to himself: If I ask the first, I will only have half of what the other will have. The envious man was eager to ask, but he was jealous that the other would have had half as much as he did. Time thus passed in disputes, without either of them wanting to start: one was held back by avarice, the other by envy. To finally end this dispute, the prince ordered that the envious person should ask first. In his despair, see what this one did. Seized by an attack of incomprehensible fury, he cried out: “Since you have promised us to grant everything we ask, I want one of my eyes taken out.” Do you know, my brethren, why he made this request?

This is because, you remember, the prince had promised double to the one who asked for the last. The envious person said to himself; I will still have one eye to enjoy the pleasure of seeing my comrade's two eyes gouged out, and he will have no more than me. I do not believe, Saint Vincent Ferrier tells us, deploring the misfortune of those who are affected by this vice, I do not believe that another passion has ever led a man to such wickedness. Was it not envy that caused poor Daniel to be thrown into the lions' den? How common

is this sin! It extends everywhere, to all conditions, to all ages. How detestable he is! But what is most deplorable, my brethren, is that it is little known, and there are very few who want to believe themselves guilty of it, and there are even fewer who work to correct it.

To accuse oneself of a sin, to humble oneself by it and to stop committing it, one must necessarily know it.

But an envious person, a jealous person is so blind that he does not recognize his passion. He is a hardened person who neither wants to leave her nor blame himself for it. From this, I conclude that it is very rare for an envious person to convert. You will perhaps tell me that every sin blinds those who commit it. This is true; but there is none which envelops the soul in clouds as thick as the sin of envy, and which takes away more from the knowledge of oneself. This is why the Holy Spirit tells us, through the mouth of the Wise, not to associate with the envious, because they have no share in wisdom. A poor envious person convinces himself that his sin is nothing, or at least very little, because this sin does not dishonor him in the eyes of the world like theft, blasphemy, adultery would do. He regards the passion which dries him up as a very forgivable thing; he does not think that it is the poison of Cain, of which he becomes the imitator. This wretch, Holy Scripture tells us, could not tolerate that God preferred the offering of his brother Abel to his own. His passion blinded him to such an extent that he had no rest before taking his life. The Lord made his voice heard to him from heaven: “Cain, Cain, what have you done? where is your brother? his blood cries for vengeance.” Cain trembled and shivered all over. He himself became his executioner, and carried his torture with him everywhere. But, Saint Basil tells us, does he recognize himself? does he convert? No, my brethren, no, envy has so blinded him that he perishes miserably in his sin. Look again at the Pharisees.

Envy made them cry out for the death of Jesus Christ, who had worked so many miracles before their eyes. Did they convert? No, my brethren, no, they are dead in their sin. I say further: this sin not only blinds, but also hardens. Saint Basil adds that an envious person is nothing other than a monster of... who returns evil for good; his sin leads him into a series of other sins which always distance him from God, and always harden him more. Its conversion becomes ever more difficult. See what happened to Moses' sister. She could not bear the honor that the Lord gave to her brother. Did the Lord only speak to Moses? she said. Did he not speak to us as well as to himself? But the Lord rebuked her for daring to envy her brother, and said to her: You will soon suffer the punishment that your sin of jealousy deserves; and he struck her with leprosy which covered her whole body. Why did the good God send him this disease rather than another? It is because this disease shows the nature of his sin: as leprosy spoils all the parts of the body, so envy corrupts all the powers of the soul. Leprosy is a corruption of the mass of the sung and a sign of death; in the same way envy is a spiritual rottenness which insinuates itself into the marrow of the bones. This shows us, my brethren, how much it It is difficult to cure a person who is afflicted with the sin of envy. See again what happened to Korah, Dathan and Abiron, jealous of the honors which were given to Moses, these wretches said to him: "Are we not as good as you? Can we not offer incense naked as well as you?" They wanted to offer incense. But God said to Moses and Aaron: “Make them separate, and all that belongs to them. I will punish them rigorously.” Indeed, at the moment when they thought they had satisfied their desire, the earth opened up under their feet, and swallowed them alive into hell! get rid of it; they keep it for months, for whole years and often for their entire life; they will still be of service to those who are the object of it; but they would rather not see them, they cut short their conversation, if they can; the cause and they say: I would prefer not to see them, because it tires me, their ways displease me. You are wrong, my friend, it is your passion of envy which gnaws at you and dries you up; remove this sin from your heart and you will love them like everyone else. Do you want, my brethren, an example which will make you know how much this sin blinds man? See Pharaoh. overwhelmed him with works. The Lord, through the ministry of Moses and Aaron, performed extraordinary miracles to force him to let his people go. But the miracles, which should have converted this prince, only served to harden him more and more. However, a final punishment touched his heart. Then, the king consented to let (the Israelites) go. repented and pursued them with all his army But the Lord still

protected his people... Moses, seeing himself caught between the sea and Pharaoh's army, struck the sea. The sea opened a passage for him, and as soon as the Israelites had passed, it returned to its ordinary bed, swallowed up Pharaoh and all his army without a single one remaining.

It was again envy that motivated Saùi against poor David, to the point of seeking every means to take his life. And do you know why? David had killed ten thousand enemies. When the people returned from the war they sang: “Saul has killed a thousand and David ten thousand.” Holy Scripture tells us that this irritated Saiil so much that from that day on he had no rest. But the good God, to make known (how odious) this sin is to Him, gave permission to the demon to enter Saiil's body. His pride engendered envy, because these two passions cannot exist without each other. We can say that a proud person is an envious person, and an envious person is a proud person. We see that almost all those who are affected by this vice even lose their lives by this executioner. Saiil, unable to hold it any longer, cut his own throat. You therefore see, my brethren, from these examples, how much this sin is to be feared, since, almost never, an envious person has converted. The good God, it is true, does not always strike the envious with these punishments

Remember the sin of Joseph's brothers. (Note of the Venerable.) terrible; but they are no less unhappy, and still remain damned. We lead ourselves to hell without realizing it. But how, my brethren, can we correct ourselves from this vice, since we do not believe ourselves guilty? I am sure that, out of a thousand envious people, if you examine them carefully, there will not be one who wants to believe that he is among this number. There is no sin that we know less than this. In some, ignorance is so great that they do not know even a quarter of their ordinary sins; and as the sin of envy is much more difficult to know, it is not surprising that so few confess and correct themselves from it. Because they do not commit these big sins that crude and stupid people commit, they think that the sins of envy are only small defects of charity, while for the most part they are very bad mortal sins, which they nourish and maintain in their hearts, often without knowing them well. But, think to yourself, if I knew them, I would try to correct myself. — To know them, my brethren, you must ask for the light of the Holy Spirit: he alone will give you this grace. No matter how hard you put them to your finger, you wouldn't want to agree, you would always find something that would make you believe that you are not wrong to think and act the way you act. Do you still know what can contribute to making you aware of the state of your soul and to discovering this cursed sin hidden in the secret folds of your heart? It is humility: as pride hides it from you, humility will reveal it to you. Saint Augustine feared this sin (of ignorance) so much that he often repeated this prayer: “Lord, my God, make me know what I am.”

Alas! My brethren, how many people who, even profess piety, are affected by it and do not believe it. If now I asked a child what the virtue opposed to envy is, he would answer me: It is love of neighbor and liberality towards the poor. How happy the world would be, my brethren, if we had this love that religion commands us to have for one another; if we knew how to rejoice with those who are happy and in joy, and to grieve with those who are in pain and suffering; thank the good God for the good he grants to our neighbors, as we would like them to do towards us! However, this, my brethren, is what all the saints have done. See Jesus Christ himself, how touched he was by our miseries and how he wanted to make us happy. He left his father to come and give us happiness. He sacrificed not only his reputation, but his very life, by dying, like an infamous person, on a cross. See how he was touched with compassion for the sick, the infirm; see with what eagerness he will himself heal and comfort them. See how his bowels are moved by the same compassion for this crowd of people who followed him in the desert; he even performs a miracle to give them something to eat. “I fear,” he said to the apostles, “that these poor people will fall from weakness along the way.” See how the apostles all sacrificed their lives to make their brothers happy! See how charitable the first Christians were to one another, and how far sin was from them! The Holy Spirit tells us "that they had only one heart and one soul," and thus shows us that they saw with as much pleasure the good that the good God did to their brothers as if he had done it to themselves. Look at all the saints: some gave their lives to save that of their

brothers; others have stripped themselves, not only of their possessions for the poor or the suffering; but, after giving all they could give, they gave themselves again! They sold themselves to ransom the captives! How happy we would be, my brethren, if we saw among us this charity, this love for one another, this pleasure and this joy when our neighbor is happy and esteemed by men, this compassion, this pain and this sorrow when we see him afflicted and miserable! Would not the world be the beginning of heaven? Let us end, my brethren, by saying that we must fear, above all, that this cursed sin of envy takes root in our hearts, since it makes a person so unhappy. If the devil tempts us with thoughts of envy against our neighbor, far from making it known to him with an indifferent air; we must show him friendship and be of service to him as much as we can. As for his actions, if they seem bad to us, let us quickly think that we could well be wrong being as blind as we are; and that, moreover, we will not be judged by what others do; but only on the good and the bad that we will have done during our life. If we have thoughts of envy because others are more successful than us in their temporal affairs, let us quickly remember that a good Christian must thank God for the good he has done to his brother. If it is for spiritual good, let us think how happy we are that the good God has people who compensate him for the outrages we do to him. I conclude, my brethren, by telling you that if we want to hope to go to heaven, we must absolutely be happy with the good that the good God does to our neighbor, and be saddened by the evils he experiences, since Saint John says to us: How can you make us believe that you love the good God whom you do not see, while you do not love your brother whom you do see. Let us cast our eyes on our great model, who, to cure us of this accursed sin of envy and jealousy, died for his enemies and to make us happy; It’s the same happiness that I wish you.

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost — On Impurity

Ligatis manibus et pedibus ejus, mittite eum in tenebras exteriores: ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium. Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 22:13)

O my God! can we dare to pronounce the name of a vice so horrible, not only in the eyes of Christians, but also in those of reasonable creatures? Could I say it, my brethren, and you, will you be able to hear it without shuddering? Ah! if I had the happiness, by showing you all the darkness and all the horror of this sin, to make you flee it forever! O my God! Can a Christian abandon himself to a passion which degrades him to the point of placing him below the vilest, most brutal, most filthy beast! Can a Christian indulge in a crime that wreaks so much havoc on a poor soul! Can a Christian, I say, who is the temple of the Holy Spirit, a member of Jesus Christ, plunge and roll, drown himself, so to speak, in the slime of such an infamous vice, which, by shortening his days, making him lose his reputation, prepares for him so many evils and misfortunes for eternity! Yes, my brethren, to give you an idea of ■■the greatness of this sin, I (will) first, show you, as much as I am possible, the full horror of this crime; second, in how many ways we can be guilty of it; third, what are the causes which can lead us there; fourth, finally, what we must do to protect ourselves from it.

To make you understand the magnitude of this accursed sin which loses so many souls, it would be necessary here to display to your eyes all that is most frightful, most despairing, and, at the same time, all that the power of God exerts on a guilty victim of such a crime. But, you understand as I do, that it will never be possible to grasp the greatness of this sin and the rigor of God's justice towards the immoral. I will only tell you that he who commits the sin of impurity is guilty of a kind of sacrilege, since our heart being the temple of the Holy Spirit, our body being a member of Jesus Christ, we truly desecrate this temple by the impurities to which we abandon ourselves; and from our body, which is a member of Jesus Christ, we truly make the member of a prostitute. Examine now whether you can ever form an idea which approaches the greatness of the outrage which this sin does to God and the punishment which it deserves. Ah! My brethren, it would be necessary to be able to drag here, in my place, this infamous Queen Jezebel who lost so many souls through her impudence; She herself would have to give you a despairing picture of the torments she is enduring, and

that she will endure for all eternity, in this place of horror into which she has been thrown by her turpitudes. Ah! you would hear her cry out from the middle of these flames which devour her: Alas! how I suffer! Farewell, beautiful sky, I will never see you, everything is over for me. Ah! cursed sin of impurity, the flames of God's justice make me pay dearly for the pleasures I have tasted! If I still had the happiness of being on earth, how much more precious this virtue of purity would be to me than it has been to me! Let us go even further, my brethren, perhaps you will feel a little better the horror of this accursed sin. I am not talking about a pagan, who does not have the happiness of knowing the good God; but of a Christian who knows how this vice is opposed to the holiness of his condition as a child of God, of a Christian who has been all watered with the adorable blood, which so many times has served as his dwelling and tabernacle. How can this Christian abandon himself to such sin! O my God can we think about it and not die of horror! Listen to what the Holy Spirit says: He who is unfortunate enough to abandon himself to this accursed sin deserves to be trodden under the feet of the devil like dung under the feet of men. Jesus Christ said one day to Saint Bridget that he saw himself forced to prepare terrible torments to punish the immoral, and that almost all men were affected by this infamous vice. If we take the trouble to go through Holy Scripture, we see that, since the beginning of the world, the good God has pursued the immoral in the most severe manner. See all the men before the flood who abandoned themselves to this infamous vice; the Lord can no longer suffer them; he repents of having created them; he sees himself forced to punish them in the most frightful way, since he opens the cataracts of heaven on them and makes them all perish by a universal flood. This land, soiled by so many crimes, and so horrible in the eyes of God, had to be purified by the flood; that is, by the waters of the wrath of the Lord. If you go further: See the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as the other neighboring cities; their inhabitants indulged in crimes of such appalling impurity that the Lord, in his just anger, caused a rain of fire and sulfur to fall on these accursed places which burned them and their inhabitants; men, beasts, trees, lands and stones were as if destroyed; this place has been so cursed by God that it is now nothing more than a cursed sea. It is called Dead Sea because it does not support any fish and because on its shores we find certain fruits which have a beautiful appearance, but contain only a handful of ashes. In another place we see that the Lord commanded Moses to put to death twenty-four thousand men, because they had given themselves over to impurity.

Yes, my brethren, we can say that this accursed sin of impurity has been, from the beginning of the world, until the coming of the Messiah, the cause of almost all the misfortunes of the Jews. See David, see Solomon and so many others. Who brought so many punishments upon their persons and upon their subjects, if not this accursed sin? O my God! May this sin deprive you (of souls), oh let it drag some to hell!

If we move from the Old Testament to the New, the punishments are not less. Saint John tells us that Jesus Christ showed him, in a revelation, the sin of impurity in the figure of a woman sitting on a beast which had seven heads and ten horns, to show us that this sin attacks the ten commandments of God and contains the seven deadly sins. If you want to be convinced of this, you only have to examine the conduct of an immodest person; you will see that there is not a commandment that he does not transgress, and one of the deadly sins of which he is not guilty, by satisfying the desires of his body. I do not want to go into all these details, see it for yourselves, and you will say that it is true. But I will add that there is no sin in the world that causes so many sacrileges to be committed: some do not know half of the sins they commit in this way, consequently they do not say them; the others do not want to say them, although they know them; so that we will see on the day of judgment that there is no sin that has thrown so many souls into hell. Yes, my brethren, this sin is so dreadful that not only do we hide ourselves to commit it; but we would still like to hide it from ourselves, it is so infamous, even in the eyes of those who are guilty of it!

But, to make you better understand how common this sin, although so dreadful, is among Christians, and how easy it is to commit it, I will tell you in how many ways we sin against the sixth commandment of God. We sin in six ways: by thoughts, by desires, by looks, by words, by actions and by occasions.

Jo say first,, by thoughts; there are many who do not know how to distinguish a thought from a desire; which can lead to sacrilegious confessions. Listen to me carefully and you will see: a bad thought is when our mind voluntarily stops thinking about an impure thing, either in relation to us or in relation to others, without wanting to accomplish what we think; we only let our minds languish on these dirty and dissolute things. You accuse yourself of this; it is necessary to say how long you let your thoughts rest there, without turning away from it, or whether you thought of things which could lead you there by the memory of some conversation you had, or of some familiarity you allowed, or of some object you saw. The devil only puts cola before your eyes in the hope that he will lead you to sin, at least in thought. second, We sin by desires. This, my brethren, is the difference between thought and desire; desire is wanting to accomplish what we think about; but to speak to you more clearly, it is wanting to commit the sin of impurity, after having thought about it for some time, when we find the opportunity or when we seek it. It is necessary to say whether this desire has remained in our heart, whether we have taken any steps to accomplish what we desired, whether we have asked some people to do harm with us; then say clearly who are the people we wanted to bring to harm, if it is a brother, a sister, a child, a mother, a sister-in-law, a brother-in-law, a cousin. You must say all this, otherwise your confession would be worth nothing. However, one should only name people as much as is necessary to make one's sin known. It is quite certain that if you had done wrong with one. brother or sister, and if you are content to say that you have committed a sin against the holy virtue of purity, that would not be enough. third, We sin by looking, when we focus our eyes on impure objects, or something that can lead us there. There is no door through which sin enters so easily and so often as through the eyes; also the holy man Job said: “That he had made a pact with his eyes never to look a person in the face.” fourth, We sin by words. We speak, my brethren, to manifest externally what we think within ourselves, that is to say, what is happening in our hearts. You must blame yourself for all the impure words you said, how long your conversation lasted; what motive prompted you to say them, to which people and to how many people you were able to say them. Alas! My brethren, there are poor children for whom it would be much better to find a tiger or a lion on their path than some shameless ones. If, as they say, the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart, judge what must be the corruption of the hearts of these infamous people who roll around, drag themselves and drown, so to speak, in the mire of their impurity. O my God! if you tell us that you know the tree by its fruit, what an abyss of corruption can be like! fifth, We sin by actions. Such are the guilty liberties on oneself or on others, the impure kisses, without daring to tell you the rest; you understand what I am saying. My God, where are those who, in their confessions, accuse themselves of all this? But also what sacrileges this cursed sin of impurity causes! We will only know this on the great day of vengeance. How many young girls will stay sweet or three hours with libertines, and there will be no kind of impurity that their infernal mouth does not vomit continually. Alas! my God, how can I not burn in the middle of such a blazing inferno? 6° We sin by occasion, either by giving it or by taking it.

I say, in giving it, like a person of the sex who is dressed in an indecent manner, leaving her handkerchief too far apart, having her neck and shoulders uncovered, wearing clothes which outline the shape of the body too much, or not wearing a handkerchief in summer, or else dressing in a too affected manner. No, these unfortunate people will only know at the tribunal of God the number of crimes they have caused to be committed. How many married people have fewer reserves than pagans! A girl is still guilty of many impure sins, almost all of which are mortal sins, whenever she is too easy and too familiar with young people. We are still guilty when we go with people who we know only have bad words in their mouths. You may not have enjoyed it, but you were wrong to expose yourself to it. Often, we delude ourselves, we believe we are not doing any harm, while we sin horribly. So people who see each other under the pretext of marriage believe that there is no harm in spending a considerable amount of time alone, day and night. Do not forget, my brethren, that all these embraces which are made in these moments are almost all mortal sins, because ordinarily it is only a carnal friendship which causes them to be done. How many young engaged couples

have no reservations; they take upon themselves the most terrible crimes, and seem to force the justice of God to curse them the moment they enter the state of marriage. You must be as reserved during this time as you are with your sisters; anything more than that is a sin. Alas! my God, where are those who accuse themselves of this? almost no one. But also, where are those who enter the state of marriage holyly? Alas! almost not. This results in so many evils in marriage for both the soul and the body. Hey! my God! parents who know this can sleep! Alas! how many souls drag themselves through hell! We still sin against the holy virtue of purity when we get up at night without being dressed to go out, to serve the sick, or to open the door. A mother must be careful never to have any dishonest glances or unnecessary touching of her children. Fathers and mothers and masters are guilty of all the familiarities they allow between their children and their servants, which may prevent them. We are still guilty of reading and lending bad books or licentious songs; by writing letters to each other between people of different sexes. We participate in sin by encouraging young people to meet, even under the pretext of marriage. You are obliged, my brethren, to declare all the aggravating circumstances, if you want your confessions to be good. Listen to me, you will understand it even better. If you sin with a person already abandoned to vice, who professes it, you voluntarily make yourself the slave of Satan, and incur eternal damnation. But, to teach evil to a young person, to lead her to evil for the first time, to take away her innocence, to take away the flower of her virginity, to open the door of her heart to the demon, to close heaven to this soul which was the object of the love of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, to make her worthy of the execration of heaven and earth: this sin is still infinitely greater than the first, and you are obliged to accuse yourselves of it. To sin with a free person, neither married nor related, is, according to Saint Paul, a crime which closes heaven to us and opens the depths to us; but to sin with a person committed to the bonds of marriage is a crime which contains a large number of others; it is a horrible infidelity, which destroys and profanes all the graces of the sacrament of marriage; it is still an execrable perjurer who tramples underfoot a sworn faith at the foot of the altars, in the presence not only of angels, but of Jesus Christ himself; a crime which is capable of bringing all kinds of curses, not only on a house, but also on a parish.

To sin with a person who is neither relative nor ally is a great sin, since it loses us forever; but, to sin with a relative or an ally, that is to say, a father with his daughter, a mother with her son, a brother with his sister, a brother-in-law with his sister-in-law, a cousin with his cousin, is the greatest of all crimes that one can imagine; it is to play with the most inviolable rules of modesty; it is to trample underfoot the most sacred rights of religion and nature. Finally, sinning with a person consecrated to God is the height of all misfortunes, since it is a terrible sacrilege. O my God! can there be Christians who indulge in all this turpitude! Alas! if at least, after such horrors, we had recourse to the good God to ask him to pull us out of this abyss!

But, no, you live peacefully, and most only open their eyes when they fall into hell. Have you, my brethren, formed any idea of ■■the greatness of this sin? No, probably, because you would be much more horrified by it, and you would have taken more precautions to avoid falling into it.

If you ask me now what can lead us to such a crime. My friend, I only have to open my catechism and ask a child, saying: What usually leads us to this shameful vice? He will simply answer me: Monsieur le Curé, these are the dances, the balls, the all-too-familiar associations with people of different sexes; the songs, the free words, the immodesty in clothes, the excesses in drinking and eating. I say: excesses in drinking and eating. If you ask me why this is, here it is, my brethren: It is because our body only tends to the loss of our soul; we must necessarily make him suffer in some way, otherwise, sooner or later, he will throw our soul into hell. A person who has the salvation of his soul at heart will never pass a day without mortifying himself in something like drinking, eating, or sleeping. Concerning the excess of wine, Saint Augustine clearly tells us that a drunkard is immodest, which is very easy to prove. Enter a cabaret, or be in the company of a drunkard, he will have nothing in his mouth other than the dirtiest words; you will see him doing the most

shameful actions; and certainly he would not make them if he were not into wine. So you see from this, my brethren, that if we want to maintain purity in our soul, we must necessarily deny something to our body, otherwise it will ruin us.

I say that balls and dances lead us to this infamous vice. This is the means the demon uses to take away the innocence of at least three-quarters of young people. I do not need to prove it to you, you know it only too unfortunately from your own experience. Alas! how many bad thoughts, bad desires and shameful actions caused by dances! It would be enough for me to tell you that eight councils held in France defended dancing, even at weddings, under penalty of excommunication. But, you will ask me, why are there priests who give absolution to these people without testing them? For this reason, I will not tell you anything, everyone will give an account of what they have done. Alas! My brethren, where did the loss of young people come from? Why did they no longer attend the sacraments? Why did they even leave their prayers? Do not look for any other cause than dancing. Where can this great misfortune come from that many people no longer have Easter, or do it poorly? Alas! dance. How many young girls, as a result of dancing, have lost their reputation, their poor soul, heaven, their God! Saint Augustine tells us that there would not be as much harm in working all day on Sunday as in dancing. Yes, my brethren, we will see in the great day of judgment, that these worldly girls have caused more sins to be committed than they have hairs on their heads. Alas! what bad looks, what bad desires, what dishonest touches, what impure words, what bad embraces, what jealousies, what disputes, what quarrels do we not see committed during the dance or following dances! To better convince you, my brethren, listen to what the Lord tells us through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: “The worldly” dance to the sound of flutes and drums, and a moe” lies after they descend into hell.” The Holy Spirit tells us through the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel: “Go” and tell the children of love, that because they have indulged in dancing, I am going to punish them rigorously; so that all Israel may be seized with fear.” Saint John Chrysostom tells us that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob never wanted to allow dancing at their wedding, for fear of bringing curses from heaven upon them. But I do not need to look for any other evidence than you. Talk to me sincerely, do not you want to die coming from a dance? No, probably, because you would hardly be ready to appear before the tribunal of God. Tell me why you would not want to die in this state, and why you do not fail to confess it? It is therefore well proven, you yourself feel that you are doing wrong; otherwise you would not need to accuse yourself of it and would not fear to appear before Jesus Christ. Listen to what Saint Charles Borromeo tells us about dancing: in his time, a person who went dancing was sentenced to three years of public penance, and if he continued, he was threatened with excommunication. Let us go no further, my brethren, death will prove to you what we are saying today, but too late for many. You really have to be blind to believe that there is no great harm in the dance, when we see that all the people who wanted to secure heaven for themselves left it and mourned the misfortune of having gone there, in the time of their follies. But let us draw back the curtain until the great day of vengeance when we will see all this more clearly, when the corruption of the heart will no longer be able to find an excuse.

I say that immodesty in clothing leads us to this shameful vice. Yes, my brethren, a person who does not dress decently is the cause of many sins: bad looks, bad thoughts, dishonest words. Do you want to know, at least in part, the evil of which you are the cause? Place yourself for a moment at the feet of your crucifix, as if you were going to be judged. It can be said that people dressed in a worldly manner are a source of impurity, and a poison which brings death to all those who do not have the strength to flee from them. See in them this effeminate or playful air, these piercing glances, these shameful gestures, which, like so many features soaked in the poison of their impudence, hurt almost all the eyes unfortunate enough to look at them. Alas! How many sins does a heart commit once it is soaked in this impure slime! Alas! there are some of these poor hearts who are as burned with this impure vice as a handful of straw in a madman. I do not know if you have begun to form an idea of ■■the greatness of this sin and in how many ways you can be guilty of it. Pray to the good God, my brethren, that he will make it known to you well and that you will understand such horror about it that you will never commit it again.

IV. But let us now see what we must do to protect ourselves from this sin, which is so horrible in the eyes of God, and which drags so many poor souls to hell. To show it to you in a clear and simple way, I only have to open my catechism once again. If I asked a child what are the means that we must employ to avoid falling into this accursed sin, he would answer me with his ordinary simplicity: There are several, but the main ones are: retirement, prayer, frequentation of the sacraments, great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, avoidance of opportunities, and finally promptly rejecting all the bad thoughts that the devil presents to us. I say that you have to love retirement, I do not mean that you have to hide in a wood, or even in a monastery, which would however be a great happiness for you; but I want to say that you should only flee the companies of people who only talk about things capable of sullying your imagination, or who only care about earthly affairs and not at all about the good God. This, my brethren, is what I mean. On Sunday especially, instead of going to see your neighbors, pick up a book, like the Imitation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, or the lives of the saints; you will see how they fought the temptations that the devil tried to create in their minds; you will see how many sacrifices they made to please God and save their souls: this will encourage you. You will do like Saint Ignatius, who, being wounded, began to read the lives of the saints; seeing the struggles they had experienced and the courage with which they fought for the good God, he said to himself: And why should I not do what these saints did? do I not have the same God who will help me to fight, the same heaven to hope for and the same hell to fear?... You will do the same. Yes, • my brethren It is necessary to flee the company of people who do not love the good God. Let us be with the world only out of necessity, when our duty calls us to do so. We say that we must love prayer if we want to maintain the purity of our soul. If you ask me why we must pray, I will give you the reason: it is that this beautiful virtue of purity comes from heaven, it is therefore through prayer that we must ask for it and preserve it. It is certain that a person who does not resort to prayer will never keep his soul pure in the eyes of God. Through prayer we converse with the good God, the angels and the saints, and through this celestial conversation we necessarily become spiritual; our mind and our heart gradually detach themselves from created things to consider and love only the goods of heaven. However, we must not believe that every time we are tempted, we offend God; sin is only found in consent and in the pleasure one takes in it. When we are tempted for eight or fifteen days, if it horrifies us, we do like the children in the furnace of Babylon, who only came out more beautiful. We must quickly have recourse to the good God by saying to him; My God, come to my aid; you know that without you, I can only get lost; but, helped by your grace, I am sure to emerge victorious from the fight. Ah! Holy Virgin, we must say, do not allow the demon to ravish my soul which has cost your divine Son so much suffering. To maintain purity, one must have recourse to the sacraments, and receive them with good dispositions. Yes, my brethren, a person who has the happiness of frequenting the sacraments often and holyly, can very easily maintain this beautiful virtue. We have proof that the sacraments are of great help to us, in the efforts of the devil to distance us from them or make us profane them. See, when we want to approach him, how much fear, trouble, and disgust the demon arouses in us. Sometimes he tells us that we almost always act badly, sometimes that the priest doesn't know us, or that we do not make ourselves known enough, whatever?

But, to mock him, we must redouble our care, approach him even more often, and then bury ourselves in the bosom of God's mercy, saying to him: You know, my God, that I seek only you and the salvation of my poor soul. No, my brethren, there is nothing that makes us so formidable to the devil as frequenting the sacraments; here is the proof. See Saint Thérèse. The demon confessed, through the mouth of a possessed man, that this saint had become so formidable to him through the holiness drawn from holy communion, that he could not even breathe the air where she had passed. If you look for the reason, it is very easy to understand: is not the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist this wine which produces virginity? How can you not be a virgin while receiving the king of purity? Do you want to preserve or acquire this beautiful virtue which makes you like the angels? frequent the sacraments often and holyly, you are sure that, despite all the efforts of the devil, you will have the great happiness of preserving the purity of your soul. If we want to keep this temple of the Holy Spirit pure, we must have great devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, since she is

the Queen of virgins. It was she who first raised the standard of this incomparable virtue. See how much the good God esteems him: he did not disdain to be born of a poor mother; unknown in the world, to have a poor father as a foster father; but he needed a pure and spotless mother, a father of such purity that only the Blessed Virgin could surpass him in purity. Saint John Damascene greatly encourages us to have a tender devotion to the purity of the Blessed Virgin; he tells us that everything we ask of the good God in honor of the purity of the Blessed Virgin we always obtain. He tells us that this virtue is so pleasing to the angels that they continually sing in heaven: “0 Virgin of virgins, we praise you; we bless you, O Mother of beautiful love.” Saint Bernard, this great servant of Mary, tells us that he converted more souls through Ave Maria than through all his sermons. Are you tempted? he tells us, call Mary to your aid, and you are sure not to succumb to temptation. When we recite Hail Mary, he tells us, all heaven rejoices and trembles with joy, and all hell shudders remembering that Mary was the instrument that God used to chain him. This is why this great saint so recommends devotion to the Mother of God, so that Mary regards us as her children. If you are well loved by Mary, you are sure to be well loved by her Son. Several holy Fathers recommend us to have great devotion to Mary, and to make from time to time some communions in her honor, and especially to have the honor of her holy Purity; which is so pleasing to her that she will not fail to make us feel her intercession with her divine Son. To preserve this angelic virtue we must fight temptations and flee opportunities, as the saints did, who preferred to die than lose this beautiful virtue. See what the patriarch Joseph did, when Potiphar's wife wanted to solicit him to sin, he left half of his cloak in her hands. See the chaste Suzanne; who preferred to lose his reputation, that of his family and his very life, than to lose this virtue which is so pleasing to God. See also what happened to Saint Martinian, who withdrew into a wood to think only of pleasing God. A wicked woman came to him, pretending to have lost her way in the forests and begging him to have pity on her. The saint received her in her solitude and left her alone. The next day, having returned to see what had become of her, he found her well dressed. Then she told him that the good God had sent her to make an alliance with him; that she had great property in the city, that he could give a lot of alms.

The saint wanted to know if it came from God or the devil; he told him to wait, because every day people came to recommend themselves to his prayers and he must not let them make a useless journey; he was going to the mountain to see if any arrived. When he was on the mountain, he heard a voice which said to him: Martinian, Martinian, what are you doing? you listen to the voice of Satan. He was so frightened that he returned to his solitude, made a big fire and jumped into it; the pain of the sin he was exposed to committing and the pain of the fire made him cry out loudly. This unfortunate woman, having come to this noise, asked him what had put him in such a state. Ah! replied the saint, I cannot bear the fire of this world, how could I endure that of hell, if I have the misfortune to sin as you desire? What struck this woman so much that she remained in the saint's cell, did penance all her life, and Martinien went further to continue his austerities. It is reported in the life of Saint Thomas Aquinas that a wicked woman was sent to him to lead him to sin. She was brought into his room while he was away. When he saw this creature, he took a burning brand and chased it away shamefully. See again Saint Benedict, who, to free himself from his bad thoughts, rolled among the brambles where he got all bloody. Other times, he immersed himself up to his neck in icy water to extinguish this impure fire. But I find nothing in the lives of the saints that is comparable to the story of Saint Jerome. From the depths of his desert, he writes to one of his friends, and gives him a picture of the struggles he experiences and the penances he exercises on his body; one cannot read it without crying with compassion. “In this vast solitude which the heat of the sun makes unbearable,” he said, “feeding myself only on a little black bread and raw herbs,” lying on the bare earth, drinking only water, “even in my illnesses, I never cease to cry at the feet of my crucifix. When my tears fail, I take a stone, I beat my chest with it until the blood comes out of my mouth, and despite this, the demon leaves me no rest;” you must always have weapons in hand.” What can we conclude, my brethren, from all that we have just said? There is no (virtue) that makes us so pleasing to the good God as the virtue of purity, and no vice that pleases the devil so much

as the sin of impurity. This enemy cannot allow a person who is God's to possess this virtue; and this is what should compel you to neglect nothing to preserve it. To do this, watch carefully over your looks, your thoughts and all the movements of your heart; resort to prayer frequently; flee bad company, dances, games; practice mortification; have recourse to the most holy Virgin; frequent the sacraments often. What good luck! if we are happy enough not to let our hearts be defiled by this accursed sin, since Jesus Christ tells us that only those who have a pure heart will see God. Let us ask, my brethren, every morning the good God to purify our eyes, our hands and generally all our senses; so that we can appear with confidence before Jesus Christ, who is the portion of pure souls; That’s all the happiness I wish you.

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost — Duties of Parents toward Their Children

Credidit ipse et domus ejus tota. He believed, and his whole house. (John 4:53)

Where could we find, my brethren, an example more capable of showing all heads of families that they cannot work effectively for their own salvation without at the same time working for that of their children? In vain would fathers and mothers spend their life doing penance, weeping over their sins, distributing their goods to the poor; if they have the misfortune to neglect the salvation of their children, all is lost for them. Do you doubt it, my brethren? Open the Scriptures, and you will see that if the parents were saints, the children and even their servants were also saints. When the Lord praises those fathers and mothers who distinguished themselves by their faith and their piety, He never forgets to tell us that their children and their servants followed in their footsteps. Great examples for fathers and mothers! O my God! if the fathers and mothers of our days had the happiness of being saints themselves, how many more children for heaven! How many fewer children for hell! But, you will perhaps ask me, what must we do to fulfill our duties, since they are so great and so formidable? Alas! I scarcely dare tell you—they are so frightening for a Christian who wishes to fulfill them as the good God asks. But since I am forced to show them to you, here they are: instruct your children—that is, teach them to know the good God and their duties; correct them Christianly; give them a good example; lead them on the path to heaven by walking there yourselves. Alas! my brethren, I fear that this instruction will be for you, like so many others, a new subject of condemnation. Oh how many married people will not go to heaven! And why, you ask me? My friend, here it is.

Because there are many who enter the state of marriage without the necessary dispositions, and who thus first of all profane this sacrament. Yes, where are those who receive this sacrament with the appropriate preparation? some are led by the thought of satisfying their impure desires; others are attracted by sights of interest or the seductions of beauty; but almost no one has God alone as their object. Alas! How many marriages are desecrated, and how few unions exist where peace and virtue reign! My God! How many married people will be damned! But, no, my brethren, let us not go into these details, we will come back to them another time; let us just talk about the duties of parents towards their children: they are vast enough, extensive enough to serve as a subject for discussion. For today, my brethren, we will say nothing about these fathers and mothers, whose darkness and horror of crime I could not depict in sufficiently vivid and energetic terms. They fix, even before God, the number of their children, they set limits to the designs of Providence, and oppose its adorable wills. Let us cover, my brethren, all these turpitudes, with a veil that He who has seen everything, counted everything, and weighed everything, will be able to tear away in the broad daylight of vengeance. Your crimes are hidden, my friend, but wait a few more days, and God will know how to reveal them to the face of the entire universe. Yes, my brethren, we will see on the day of judgment horrors that have been committed in marriage, and which would have made even the pagans shudder. Nor will we say anything about these criminal mothers, who would see without pain, alas! perhaps even with pleasure, to perish their poor children, before having given birth to them, and having obtained for them the grace of holy baptism; some, by fear of the trouble they would experience in raising them; the others, by fear of the contempt and rejection that they would suffer from a brutal and unreasonable husband: I do not say,

without religion, because the pagans would not do more. O my God! can such crimes be found among Christians? However, my brethren, how great the number! Once again, how many married people are damned! Hey! why, my friend, must the good God have given you knowledge so above beasts only to better outrage him? Should small birds and even the most ferocious animals serve as an example to you? See them, these poor little creatures, how much they rejoice to see their generation multiply; during the day, they are busy looking for food for them, and at night, they cover them with their wings, to protect them from the insults of the air. If a greedy hand takes away their young, you hear them cry in their own way; they no longer seem to be able to leave their nests, always in the hope that they will find them again. What a shame, I do not say for pagans, but for Christians, that animals are more faithful to accomplish the designs of Providence for them, than God's own children; that is to say the fathers and mothers whom the good God chose only to populate heaven. No, no, my brethren, let us go no further, let us leave such a revolting subject; let us go into details that will concern a larger number of people. I will speak to you as simply as possible, so that you can fully understand your duties and carry them out. I say first, that, as soon as a mother is pregnant, she must offer some prayer or some alms; better still, if she can, have a mass said to pray to the Most Holy Virgin to receive her under her protection, so that she can obtain from the good God that this poor child does not die without having received holy baptism. If a mother really had religious feelings, she would say to herself: ah! if I had the happiness of seeing this poor child become a saint, of contemplating him all eternity beside me, singing the praises of the good God, what joy for me!

But no, no, my brethren, it is not the thought that occupies a pregnant mother; rather, she will experience a devouring sorrow at seeing herself in this state, and perhaps she will have the thought of destroying the fruit of her womb. O my God! can the heart of a Christian mother well conceive of such a crime? However, how many we will see in broad daylight who will have harbored these thoughts of homicide within themselves! second, I say that a pregnant mother who wants to keep her child for heaven must avoid two things: the first of carrying too heavy burdens and raising her arms to take something, which could harm her poor child and cause it to perish. The second thing to avoid is taking remedies that could tire your child, and getting into fits of anger, which could often suffocate them. Husbands have to overlook many things that they would not overlook in another time; if they do not do it in relation to the mother, let them do it in relation to this poor child; because perhaps he would lose the grace of holy baptism: which would be the greatest of all misfortunes! third, As soon as a mother sees her childbirth approaching, she must go to confession, and for several reasons. The first is that many die in childbirth, and that, consequently, if she had the misfortune of being in a state of sin, she would damn herself. The second is that being in a state of grace, all the suffering and pain she endures will be rewarded for heaven; the third is that all the blessings she wishes for her child, the good God will not fail to grant them to her. A mother, in childbirth, must maintain modesty and modesty, as much as possible in her state, and never lose sight of the fact that she is in the presence of the good God, in the company of her good guardian angel. She must never go fat on forbidden days without permission, which would bring a curse on her and her child. i° Never let more than twenty-four hours pass without baptizing your children; if you do not do it, you are guilty, unless you have serious reasons. In your choice of godparents, choose wise people as much as you can; here is the reason: it is that all the prayers, the good works that their godparents will do, by virtue of the spiritual kinship with your children, will obtain for them a quantity of graces from heaven. Yes, my brethren, we are sure to see at the last judgment many children who will recognize themselves indebted for their salvation to the prayers, good advice and good examples of their godparents. Another reason obliges you to do so: if they miss you, they are the ones who must take your place. So, if you had the misfortune of taking godparents without religion, they could only lead your children to hell. Fathers and mothers, you must never let your children lose the fruit of baptism; how blind and cruel would you not be? The Church has just saved them through holy baptism, and you, through your negligence, would you give them back to the devil? Ah! poor children, into whose hands have you had the misfortune to fall! But if it is a question of godparents, we must not forget that to respond for a child we must be

sufficiently educated, in order to be able to instruct this child if the father and mother were to fail him. Furthermore, they must be good Christians, and even perfect Christians; since they must serve as examples to their spiritual children. Thus, a person who does not celebrate Easter must not answer for a child, nor a person who maintains a bad habit without wanting to give it up, nor a person who goes to dances, who habitually frequents taverns; because, at each question from the priest, he makes a false oath: a serious thing, as you think, in the presence of Jesus Christ himself, at the foot of the sacred font of baptism.

When you are not in the conditions required to be Christian godparents, you must refuse; and, if this has happened to you, you must confess it and not fall into this sin again. fifth, You should not make your children sleep with you before they are two years old; if you do, you are committing a sin. If the Church has made this law; it is not without reason: you are obliged to observe it. But, you will tell me, sometimes it is very cold, or we are very tired. All this, my brethren, is not a reason that can excuse you in the eyes of God. Besides, when you got married, you knew well that you would be obliged to fulfill the responsibilities and obligations which are attached to this state. Yes, my brethren, there are fathers and mothers so little instructed in their religion, or so little concerned with their duties, that they will make children from fifteen to eighteen years old sleep with them, and often even brothers and sisters together. O my God! in what state of ignorance are these poor fathers and mothers! — But, you will tell me, we do not have a bed. — You do not have a bed: but it is much better to have them sleep on a chair, or at your neighbor's. O my God! what damned parents and children! But I come back (to my subject) by telling you that every time you make your children sleep with you, before they are two years old, you offend the good God. Alas! how many poor children the mother finds suffocated in the morning, and how many mothers are present to whom this misfortune has happened! And even if the good God had preserved you from it, you are no less guilty than if, each time your children slept with you, you had found them suffocated in the morning. You do not want to admit it, that is to say, you do not correct yourself; let us wait for the judgment, and you will be forced to recognize what you do not want to recognize today. But, you will tell me, when they are baptized they are not lost; on the contrary, they go to heaven. Without doubt, my brethren, they are not lost; but it is you who will be lost; and besides, do you know what God intended these children for? Maybe this child would have been a good priest. He would have led many souls to the good God; every day, by celebrating Holy Mass, he would have given more glory to God than the angels and saints all gathered together in heaven. He would have drawn more souls from purgatory than the tears and penances of all the solitary people gathered before the tribunal of God. Will you understand, now, the misfortune of letting a child perish, even if baptized? If the mother of Saint Francis Xavier, who was such a great saint, who converted so many idolaters, had allowed him to perish: alas! how many souls in hell, who, on the day of judgment, would reproach him for having been the cause of their misfortune, because this child was raised up by God to convert them! You let this girl perish who perhaps would have given herself to the good God; through her prayers and her good examples she would have led many to heaven. Perhaps, as a mother, she would have raised her children well, who, in turn, would have raised others, and thus the religion would have been maintained and preserved over many generations. You take little account, my brethren, of the loss of a child, under the pretext that he is baptized; but wait for the judgment, and you will see and recognize what you will never understand in this world. Alas! if fathers and mothers made this reflection from time to time, how many more souls would be in heaven. 6° I say that parents are very guilty in caressing their children in an improper manner. But, you will tell me, we do no harm, it is to caress them; and I will say that you offend the good God, and that you bring a curse on these poor children. Do you know what results from this? here it is. There are children who picked up this habit from their parents, and who kept it until their first communion. But, my God! can we believe this from Christian parents?

7° There are mothers who have so little religion, or, if you like, are so ignorant that to show a neighbor the health of their children they strip them naked; others, to change them, leave them uncovered for a long time in front of everyone. Well! even in the absence of anyone, you should not do it. Shouldn't you respect the

presence of their guardian angels? The same is true when you breastfeed them. Should a Christian mother leave her breasts uncovered? and although well covered, should she not turn towards the side where there is no one? Others, under the pretext that they are nurses, are always only half covered: what an abomination! Is there not even enough to make the pagans blush? We are obliged, in order not to expose ourselves to evil looks, to flee their company. Oh what a horror! But, you will tell me, although there are people, we must breastfeed our children, and change them when they cry? And I will tell you that when they cry, you must do everything you can to soothe them; but it is much better to let them cry a little than to offend the good God. Alas! how many mothers are the cause of bad looks, bad thoughts, dishonest touches! Tell me, are these Christian mothers who should be so reserved? O my God what judgment must they expect? Others are so cruel that they let their children run around all morning half-covered in summer. Tell me, wretches, would you not be better off among the wild beasts? Where is your religion and your concern for your duties? Alas! As for religion, you have none, and have you ever known your duties? You provide proof of this every day. Ah! poor children, how unfortunate you are to belong to such parents! 8° I say, that you must still supervise your children, when you send them to the fields; then, distant from you, they indulge in everything that the devil wants to inspire them. If I dared, I would tell you that they do all kinds of dishonesty; let them spend half the day doing abominations. I know well that most do not know the harm they do; but wait until they have knowledge. The devil will not fail to make them remember what they did at that moment, to make them commit sin, or similar things. Do you know, my brethren, what your negligence or your ignorance produces? here it is: remember it well. A good number of the children you send into the fields commit sacrileges for their first communion; they have contracted these shameful habits; or they do not dare to say it, or they are not corrected. Then, if a priest, who does not want to damn them, refuses them; we will reproach him, saying: It is because he's mine... Come on, you wretches, watch over your children a little better, and they will not be refused. Yes, I would say that the majority of your children began their disapproval when they went to the fields. But, you will tell me, we cannot always follow them, there would be plenty to do. For this, my brethren, I tell you nothing; but all I know is that you will answer for their souls as well as your own. — But we do what we can. — I do not know if you are doing what you can; but what I know is that, if your children are damned at home, you will be too; This is what I know and nothing else. You may say no, that I am going too far; you will agree, if you have not entirely lost your faith; this alone would be enough to throw you into a despair from which you could not escape. But I know very well that you will not take another step to better fulfill your duties towards your children; you do not worry about all this, and you are almost right, because you will have plenty of time to torment yourself throughout eternity. Let us move on. 9° You must not make your servants or your daughters sleep in the apartments where.

In the morning your servants will fetch your turnips and your potatoes. This must be said to the shame of fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, poor children, servants who will have the confusion of getting up and dressing in front of people who have no more religion than if they had never heard of the true God. Often the beds of these poor children will not have any curtains. But, you will tell me, if I had to do everything you say, there would be a lot of work. — My friend, this is the work that you must do, and if you do not do it, you will be judged and punished: that is it. You should also not make your children sleep in the same room as you, once they are seven or eight years old. Look, my brethren, you will only know the evil you are doing at the judgment of God. I know very well that you will do nothing or almost nothing of what I have just taught you; but, no matter, I will always tell you what I have to tell you; then all the harm will be for you and not for me; because I am letting you know what you must do to fulfill your obligations towards your children. When the good God judges you, you will not be able to say that you did not know what to do; I will remind you of what I tell you today. You have just seen, my brethren, that your children, although small, have made you commit many faults; but you will see that when they are big they make you commit much bigger ones and much more fatal ones for you and for them. You will all agree with me, my brethren, that the older your children get, the more you must redouble your prayers and your care, given the greater

dangers and the more frequent temptations. Now tell me, is this what you do? No, undoubtedly, when your children were little, you took care to talk to them about the good God, to make them say their prayers; you watched over their conduct a little, you asked them if they had gone to confession, if they had attended Holy Mass; you had the precaution of telling them to go to catechism. Since they were eighteen to twenty years old, far from inspiring them with the fear and love of God, the happiness of those who serve him during their life, the regret that we have when dying for having lost ourselves; alas! these poor children are full of vices, and have transgressed the commandments of God a thousand times without knowing them; their spirit is full of the things of earth and empty of those of God. You tell them about the world. A mother will begin to tell her daughter that so-and-so married so-and-so, that she has indeed found a good match; that she should have the same happiness. This mother will only have her daughter in mind, that is to say, she will do everything she can to make her shine in the eyes of the world. She will burden her with vanity, perhaps even to the point of incurring debts; she will teach her to walk straight, telling her that she walks all hunched over, that we do not know what she looks like. It surprises you that there are such blind mothers! Alas! How great are the number of these poor blind people who seek the ruin of their daughters! Another time, seeing them go out in the morning, they are more eager to quickly look to see if they have their hats straight, their faces and hands clean, than to ask them if they have given their hearts to the good God, if they have said their prayers and offered their day: of all this, they do not talk about it. Another time, they will say that we must not appear wild, that we must be kind to everyone; that you have to think about making acquaintances to establish yourself. How many blinded mothers or poor fathers say to their child: If you are very kind or if you do this well, I will let you go to the Montmerle fair, or to the fashion show; that is to say, if you always do what I want, I will drag you to hell. O my God, is this indeed the language of Christian parents, who should pray night and day for their poor children; so that the good God would inspire in them a great horror for pleasures, a great love for him with the salvation of their souls!

What's even sadder; there are children who are not at all inclined to go out; the parents are praying to them, asking them, saying to them: You always stay there, you will not be able to establish it, you will not be known to the world. Do you want, mother, for your daughter to make acquaintances? Do not worry so much, she will do well without you worrying so much; wait a little longer, and you will see that she has made them. The daughter, whose heart will perhaps not be as spoiled as that of the mother, will say to him: “I will do well” as you wish; but no, the priest does not want to; he tells us that all this only brings the curse of God on marriages; I do not want to go to the dances, what do you think, mother? — Well, good God, how good you are, my daughter, to scare Mr. I priest, he must tell us something; it is his livelihood, we take what we want from it, and we leave the rest to others. — But we will not have an Easter? — Ah, poor child, if he does not want to receive us, we will go to another; what one does not want, the other always takes. My daughter, be good, come back early, go, only, you will not have fun when you are no longer young.” Another time, it will be a neighbor who will say to her: “You give your daughter too much freedom; it will end up giving you grief.” — “My daughter! will answer him, “I am not afraid of that. Besides, I recommended her to be very good, she promised me that; I am sure" that she only sees good people.” — My mother, wait a while and you will see the fruit of her wisdom. When the crime breaks out, it will be a subject of scandal for the entire parish, it will cover the family with opprobrium and dishonor; and if nothing comes to light, that is to say, if no one finds out, she will carry under the veil of the sacrament of marriage, a heart and a soul spoiled by the impurities to which she indulged before her marriage, a source of curses for all her life. But, a mother will say, when I see that she is doing too much, I will know how to stop her; I will not give him permission to go out anymore, or else I'll take a stick. — You will no longer give him permission, mother; do not worry, she will know how to take it without you having the trouble of giving it to her, and if you only pretend to refuse it to her, she will know how to brave you, make fun of you and leave. You pushed her first; but it is not you who will remove it. You may cry, but what good will your tears do? nothing, except to remind you that you were wrong, that you should have been wiser and led your children better. If you doubt it, listen to me for a

moment, and you will see, despite the hardness of your heart for the souls of your poor children, that it is only the first step that costs; once you have let them go astray you are no longer in control of them, and often they come to very miserable ends. It is recorded in history, that a father had a son, who gave him all kinds of consolations; he was wise, obedient, reserved in his words, he was at the same time the edification of the entire parish. One day, when there was a little entertainment in the neighborhood, the father said to him: “My son, you never go out, go and have fun with your friends for a while, they are all decent young people, you will not be in bad company there.” The son said to him: “Father, I have no greater pleasure or better recreation than being in your company.” This is a beautiful response for a child who values ■■the company of his father more than all other pleasures and all other companies. “Ah! my son,” said this poor blind father, “if that is so, I will go with you.” The father leaves with his son. The second time, the young man no longer needed to be asked so much to leave; the third time he leaves alone; he doesn't need his father; on the contrary, his father begins to hinder him, he finds the way perfectly.

His mind is only occupied with the sound of the instruments he has heard, the people he has seen. He ended up abandoning these little practices of piety that he had prescribed for himself at the time when he was entirely God's; he then gets involved with a young girl, much worse than him. The neighbors are already starting to talk about him as a new libertine. As soon as the father notices it, he wants to oppose it, he forbids him from going anywhere without his permission; but he no longer finds this former submission in his son. Nothing can take it away; he makes fun of his father, telling him that, now that he can no longer entertain himself, he wants to prevent others from doing so. The father, in despair, sees no more remedy, he pulls his hair out, he wants to correct him. The mother, who felt better than her husband the dangers of these companies, had often told him that he was doing very badly, that he would be angry about it; but no, it was too late. One day, when his father sees these pleasures coming, he punishes him. The son, seeing that he was being hampered by his parents, committed himself, and after some time, the father received a letter informing him that his son had been crushed under the feet of horses. Alas! where did this poor child go? God grant he is not in hell. However, if he is damned, by appearances his father is the real cause of his gate. When the father does penance, his penance and his tears will never have the power to rescue this poor child from hell. Ah! unhappy parents, who throw your children into the eternal flames. You find this a little extraordinary; However, if we look closely at the behavior of parents: this is what they do every day. If you doubt this at all, let us touch on this a little closer. Do not you complain about your children every day? that you cannot anymore. be masters? this is very true. You may have forgotten the day when you said to your boy or your girl: If you want to go to the fair in Montmerle, or to the fashion house at the inn, you can go; you will come back early. Your daughter told you that it would be just as you wanted. - Just go, you never go out, you have to have a moment of pleasure. — You will not say no. But later, you will not need to ask her or even give her permission. Then you will be tormented by the fact that she is leaving without telling you. Look back, mother, and you will remember that you gave her permission once and for all. Plus, consider what will happen when you give her the freedom to go wherever her poor brainless head takes her. You want her to make acquaintances to establish herself. Indeed, by dint of running, she will make acquaintances, she will increase her crimes. It will be like a mountain of sins which will prevent the blessing of the good God from being poured out on these children at the time of their marriage. Alas! these poor people are already cursed by God! While the priest raises his hand to bless them, the good God, from heaven, launches his curses. Hence, for them a terrible source of misfortune. This new sacrilege, added to so many others, makes them lose their faith forever. So, in marriage, where we think we have everything, life is nothing more than an abyss of corruption, which would make even hell shudder if it were to witness it. But, alas, all this only lasts for a while. Soon after, sorrows, hatreds, arguments and mistreatment on the part of both spouses are not uncommon. — After five or six months of marriage, the father will see his son coming all furious like a desperate person, cursing the father, the mother, the wife, and perhaps even those who requested the marriage. His father, astonished, will ask him what happened to him: “Oh how unhappy I am; Ah at least if

after my birth you had crushed me, if before I married someone had poisoned me! “But, my son,” the father will tell him in great sorrow, “you must be patient.” What do you want! maybe it will not last. - Born "

tell me nothing, if I believed my courage, I would shoot myself or I would throw myself into the water: one must always be arguing or fighting. "Isn't that right, Father, let the priest say, you have to make acquaintances, otherwise you wouldn't find a place to settle down. Always leave, my son, be good, come back early and be calm. Yes, without doubt, my friend, if you had been wise, if you had consulted the good God, you would not have established yourself as you did; God would not have allowed it; but he would have done to you as he did to young Tobio; he himself would have chosen for you a wife who, by coming to you, would have brought peace, virtue, all kinds of blessings. This, my friend, is what you have lost by not listening to your pastor, and by following the advice of your blind parents. Another time it will be a poor girl who will come, perhaps all bruised from blows, to place her tears and her sorrow in her mother's bosom. They will mix their tears together: “Ah! poor mother, how unfortunate I am to have taken a husband like that! He's "so mean and so brutal! I fear that one day it will be said that he killed me.” — But, the mother will tell him: “you must do whatever he commands you.” — “I” do it well; nothing satisfies him, he is always in co-” 1ère.” — “Poor child,” the mother will say, “if you had had the good fortune to take so-and-so, who asked you, you would have been much happier.” You are wrong, mother, that is not what you should tell him. “Ah! poor child, if I had had the good fortune to inspire in you the fear and love of the good God, if I had never let you pursue pleasures: God would not have allowed you to be so unhappy. Would you not, mother? Let the priest say, always leave; be good, come back early and be calm. This is very good, mother, but listen... One day, I happened to pass by a big fire, I took a handful of very dry straw, I threw it in, telling it not to burn. Those who witnessed this said to me, mocking me: “Even if you tell her not to burn, that will not stop her from burning. “And how,” I replied, “since I tell him not to burn?” — What do you think, mother? do you recognize yourself there? Is this not your behavior or that of your neighbor? Didn't you tell your daughter to be very good when you gave her permission to leave? — Yes, without a doubt...— Come on, mother, you were blind and the executioner of your children. If they are unhappy in their marriage, you alone are the cause.

Tell me, my mother, if you had some feelings of religion and friendship for your children, should you not work with all your power to make them avoid the harm that you yourself did, when you were in the same situation as your daughter? Let us speak more clearly. You are not happy enough to be unhappy yourself, you still want your children to be unhappy too. And you, my daughter, are you unhappy in your household? I am very angry about it, I am very sad about it; but I am less surprised than if you told me that you are happy, after the arrangements made for your marriage. Yes, my brethren, corruption has risen today to such a high degree among young people, that it would be almost as impossible to find any who holyly receive this sacrament, as it is impossible to see a damned person ascend into heaven. But, you will tell me: there are still a few. Alas! my friend, where are they?... Ah! well yes, a mother or father has no difficulty leaving a daughter with a young man for three or four hours in the evening, or during vespers. — But, you will tell me, they are wise. — Yes, without doubt, they are wise; charity must make us believe it. But tell me, mother, were you very good when you were in the same situation as your daughter? Let us end, my brethren, by saying that if children are unhappy in this world and in the next, it is the fault of the parents who did not use all the means of which they were capable to holyly lead their children on the path of salvation, where most certainly, the good God would have blessed them, llalas! today, a young man or a young girl wants to settle down, they absolutely must abandon the good God... No, let us not go into that detail, we will come back to it another time. Poor fathers and mothers, what torments await you in the next life. As long as your generation lasts, you will participate in all the sins that are committed there, you will be punished for them as if you had committed them, and even more, you will account for all the souls of your generation who have damned themselves. All these poor souls will accuse you of having lost them. This is very easy to understand. If you had raised your children well, they would have raised theirs well: they would have saved each other. That is

not all yet, you will be responsible before God for all the good works that your generation has accomplished until the end of the world and which were not done through your fault. What do you think of this, fathers and mothers? If you have not yet lost your faith, do you not have reason to cry about the harm you have done and the impossibility of repairing it? Was I right to tell you at the outset that it is almost impossible to show you in all its magnitude the magnitude of your duties?... Still, what I told you today is only a small overview... Come back on Sunday, fathers and mothers, have your children look after the house, and we will go further without being able to make you aware of everything. Alas! how many parents drag their poor children into hell, falling there themselves. My God! can we think about so many misfortunes without shuddering! Happy are those whom the good God does not call to marriage! What less account to give! — But will you say to me: “We do what we can.” — You do what you can, yes undoubtedly; but it is to lose them and not to save them. In closing, I want to show you that you are not doing what you can. Where are the tears you shed, the penances and the alms you gave to ask God for their conversion?

Poor children, how unhappy you are to belong to parents who only work to make you unhappy in this world and even more so in the other! Being your spiritual father, here is the advice I have to give you: When you see your parents who miss services, who work on Sundays, who go to school on forbidden days, who no longer attend the sacraments, who do not learn: do just the opposite; so that your good examples may save them themselves, and if you had this happiness, you would have gained everything. This is what I wish you.

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost — On Drunkenness

Nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria. Do not be drunk with wine, wherein is luxury. (Ephesians 5:18)

Do not give yourselves over to drunkenness, which leads to impurity. (Eph. 5:18)

To show you, my brethren, the greatness of the sin of drunkenness, it would be necessary to be able to make you aware of the greatness of the evils that it brings with it for time and for eternity; which will never be given to mortal man, because only God can know it. Everything I tell you about it will therefore be nothing compared to what it is. First, you will agree with me that a person, who still has a little common sense and religion, cannot be indifferent and insensitive to the loss of his reputation, his health and his salvation. Should I explain it better, I will tell you that the drunkard, through his sin, brings upon himself the ruin of his health, the aversion of men and the curse of God himself. I believe, my brethren, that this alone should be enough to make you conceive of it an execrable horror. What a shame for a person, but especially for a Christian, to plunge into this infamous quagmire! The Holy Spirit tells us in Holy Scripture that we must send the lazy person to the ant to learn from it to work; but that for the drunkard, he must be sent to the brute beast to learn from him temperance in drinking and eating. When we want to encourage a sinner to escape from sin, we hasten to offer him the examples of Jesus Christ and the saints; but for a drunkard, you have to change your language, you have to offer him the example of animals, and without fear of going down to the most filthy. Great God, what a horror! Saint Basil tells us that drunkards among men should not be tolerated; but that they should be chased away, and relegated among the wild beasts which are deep in the forests. This sin seems odious even to pagans. It is recorded in history that the magistrates of the city of Sparta, whose inhabitants were very sober, to make the young people understand how unworthy this vice is of a reasonable creature, brought, on a certain day of the year, into the middle of the public square, a slave who had been drunk. The young people, seeing this man dragging himself through the water or the mud, were astonished and exclaimed: 0 heaven! where can such a monster come from? He has a human face, but he has less reason than a brute beast. You see, my brethren, pagan as they were, they could not conceive that a reasonable creature was capable of giving itself over to a passion which reduced it to such a dishonorable state. We also read that a young lord, a good man, had a servant unfortunate enough to dabble in wine from time to time. One day, as he was going to church, he found him in this state, and asked him where he was going. I am

going to church, to pray to God, the servant replied. You are going to church, his master replied, ah! infamous! how could you pray to the good God when you would not be able to feed your horse. This sin is not like those which, with time and grace, are corrected; for this one requires a miracle of grace, and not ordinary grace. Do you ask me why drunkards convert so rarely? Here is the reason: they have neither faith, nor religion, nor piety, nor respect for holy things; nothing is capable of making them squint and make them open their eyes to their unhappy state. If you threaten them with death, with judgment, with hell waiting to burn them; if you tell them about the happiness that God reserves for those who love him; In response, they will give you a clever little smile which means: “Perhaps you think you are scaring me like you do to children; but I am not yet one of those who give up. to believe all this.” That is all you get out of it. He believes that when we are dead, everything is over. His God is his wine and he leaves it at that. “Go, unhappy man,” said the Holy Spirit to him, “this wine that you drink in excess is like a snake that kills you.” You don’t believe it now; but in hell you will learn that there is another God besides your womb.

Besides the harm that the drunkard does to himself by this sin, what excesses is he not capable of going to when he is in his vice! Saint Augustine gives us a frightening example. In the city where he was bishop, a young man named Cyril had, like so many others, alas! the unfortunate habit of frequenting taverns. One day when he was returning from the place of his debaucheries, he carried the fury of passion so far that he attacked his mother herself who was pregnant. Seeing herself in the hands of this accursed son, she struggled with so much effort that she caused the poor child she was carrying to perish. O my God, what a misfortune! a child who will never see heaven because of the fury of this unfortunate libertine!... This infamous person, seeing that he could not win over his mother, went after one of his sisters, who preferred to let herself be stabbed than to consent to his infamous desire. The father, hearing a loud noise, runs to free his daughter. The unfortunate man throws himself at his father, stabs him with a knife and makes him fall at his feet. Another of her sisters runs to the aid of her father whom she saw murdered; the unfortunate man also stabs her. 0 sky what horror! what is the passion like this? Saint Augustine, having gathered the faithful at the church to inform them of this event, himself reports that everyone burst into tears at the story of such a crime. See, my brethren, what horror of this sin the Holy Spirit wants to inspire in you, since he tells you not even to look at the wine when it shines in the glass. If you drink it in excess, he says again, it will bite you like a snake, it will poison you like a basilisk. Do you want, Saint Basil tells us, to know what the stomach of a drunkard is, here it is: it is a reservoir filled with all the filth of the cabaret. You usually see, he said, a drunkard leading a languid life; he is capable of nothing except ruining his health, eating away his property, putting his family in poverty: that is all he is capable of. This passion must be very dishonorable, since the world, however corrupt it may be, still has sovereign contempt for drunkards and regards them as public pests. This is not very difficult to understand: does it not contain everything that is capable of making a man infamous and odious even in the eyes of pagans? Is he not odious when, through neglect of his affairs, he ruins his family and puts them in misery? Is he not odious by the scandals he gives, by the turpitude of his life, and the insults he utters against his superiors as well as against his inferiors; because a drunkard has no more respect for some than for others.

You will agree with me, my brethren, that it would not take so much to make a person contemptible. Listen to me for a moment longer, and you will understand it better. Where will you find a father who wants to give his daughter to a drunkard, if he knows him to be such? As soon as you make the proposition to him, he replies: “If I wanted to make my daughter die of grief, I would do it; but as I love my children, I prefer to keep her with me all my life.” Besides, my brethren, where would the girl be who would want to agree to take a young man who rolls the taverns? - “I would rather,” she would tell you, “go spend my life in a wood than take an idiot, who, perhaps, in his wine will kill me, as we have seen very often.” Tell me, my brethren, what bourgeois is there who would want to entrust the government of his domain to a drunkard, charge him with paying his expenses, receiving his money? Out of all five thousand you will not find one who agrees to it, and they are quite right. Where is the judge who would like to receive the testimony of a drunkard in

court? He would have him expelled from his audience, and would order him to be taken to his stable, with his horses, or even better with his pigs, if he had any. Where will you find an honest man who would appear in an inn in the company of a drunkard? If no one knows Me, he will perhaps be patient; but, if he thinks he is recognized by a proper person, he immediately takes flight; or, if he cannot, he seeks a thousand detours to make it understood that he found himself in this company without knowing it. If you want to hurt him in an argument, reproach him for having seen him in such company; it is telling him that he's not worth

Who haunts. - Owner. no better than this drunkard; and we assume all kinds of bad qualities in a drunkard! Saint Basil tells us that if animals were capable of knowing what a drunkard is, they would not want to suffer him in their company, they would believe they were dishonoring themselves. Doesn't a drunkard put himself below the crudest beast? See, in fact, an animal has feet to go where it wants, where it is called; but a drunkard has none. How often do you find him lying in a path, like an animal whose four feet have been cut off? If you have the charity to pick it up, it immediately falls back, to the point that you are obliged either to leave it in the mud, or to take it on your shoulders. Isn't that the truth? — Yes, undoubtedly, you think to yourself. —An animal has eyes to see, to behave, to go to its master's house, and to place itself in the stable that he has designated for it. A drunkard has no eyes to guide himself home, he does not know whether to take the right or the left; if he is one of your neighbors, he does not only know you. Ask him if it is day or night, he doesn't know. A beast has ears to hear what its master says to it; she cannot answer him; but she looks at him to show that she understands and is ready to do what he commands her. If a dog sees its master sign to it that it has lost its handkerchief or its stick, it immediately sets out to look for it, it brings it back and shows its master the joy, the pleasure it has in doing him a service. If you find a drunk lying on your way, try talking to him for hours on end, he will not only answer you, his ears are so blocked, his eyes are so obscured by

33 “SERMONS. the smoke of the wine. If drunkenness still leaves him with the strength to open his mouth, he will answer you one thing for another; and you will end up leaving, deploring his unfortunate inclination. If, in this state, he still has some knowledge, there is no kind of filth and infamy that he does not vomit up; you will see him commit actions that would make pagans blush if they witnessed them, and this without remorse. Should we give a final brushstroke to make you better appreciate what is the value and what are the fine qualities of a drunkard? I only add one word: it is a demon of impurity clothed in a body, which hell has vomited onto the earth, it is the dirtiest, the most foul of all animals. Take away his soul, and it is only the last of the beasts that the earth bears. I believe that now, my brethren, you can get an idea of the greatness of the sin of drunkenness. We find it very horrible, and yet we have only a very limited knowledge of the malice of sin; I leave you to think in what way the good God, who knows it in all its extent, must consider it! If it were not immortal, could he, without dying of horror, bear the sight of this vice which dishonors him in his creatures, since they are, Saint Paul tells us, the members of Jesus Christ. Let us go no further, my brethren, it is enough. I will only tell you that an impudent person, although very criminal, can still at least, in his sin, produce an act of contrition which reconciles him with the good God. the slightest sign of repentance, far from knowing the state of his soul, he does not even know if he is in the world; so that, my brethren, dying in intoxication or dying as a reprobate is the same thing.

We say, my brethren, that a drunkard is quite incapable of working out his salvation, as you will see. For him to emerge from his state, he would have to be able to feel its full horror. But, alas! he has no faith; he only very weakly believes the truths that the Church teaches us. He would have to resort to prayer; but he does almost none, or if he does, it is by dressing or undressing, or else he will be content to make the sign of the cross, as best he can, by throwing himself on his bed like a horse on its dunghill. He would have to use the sacraments, which are, despite the contempt shown by the impious, the only remedies that the mercy of God presents to us to attract us to him. But, alas! he does not know the provisions that must be made to receive them worthily, nor even the most necessary of what one must know to be saved. If you want to ask him about

his (state), he doesn't understand anything, he tells you one thing for another. If? in a time of jubilee, or mission, he wants to keep up appearances, he will be content to say only half of his sins; and, with the others, he goes to the holy table, that is to say, he is going to commit sacrilege; that is enough for him. My God, what a state a drunkard is in! how difficult it is to be able to get out of it! My brethren, if you would take the trouble to consider the retention of a drunkard in church, you would think that he is similar to an atheist who believes nothing; you see him come last, or go out to relax a little, look for some of his peers to accompany him to the cabaret, while the others are listening to Holy Mass. The prophet Isaiah tells us that drunkards are useless creatures on earth for good; but that they are very dangerous for evil. For us to believe, my brethren, enter a cabaret, which Saint John Climaquc calls the demon's shop, the school where hell weakens and teaches its doctrine, the place where souls are sold, where households are ruined, where health deteriorates, where disputes begin and where murders are committed. Alas! so many things that horrify those who have not yet lost their faith. What do we hear there? You know it much better than me: blasphemy, swearing, imprecations, dirty words. And how many shameful deeds that one would not do anywhere else!… See, my brethren, this poor drunkard! He is full of wine and his purse is empty. He throws himself onto a bench or table; the next day he is surprised to find himself in a cabaret, whereas he thought he was at home. He leaves after having spent all his money, and often he is obliged to leave (as pawn) his hat or his clothes with a note, in order to be able to take away his body with the wine he has drunk. When he returns, his poor wife and children, whom he has left without bread, with only their eyes to cry, are obliged to quickly flee, otherwise they will be mistreated, as if they were the cause of the spending of his money and the bad deals he made. My God, how deplorable the state of a drunkard is! The Council of Mayonce is right to tell us that a drunkard transgresses the ten commandments of God. If you want to be convinced of this, examine them one after the other, and you will see that a drunkard is capable of doing everything that God's commandments forbid us to do. I do not want to go into this detail which would take too long. Saint John Chrysoslom said, addressing the people of the city of Anlioche: “Take care, my children, not to indulge in drunkenness; because this sin degrades (man) in such a terrible way that it places him below the brute beast deprived of reason. Yes, he continues, drunkards are truly the friends of the devil; where drunkards are, there are demons in great numbers.” Alas! my brethren, must this sin not be horrible in the eyes of God, for him to punish it in such a frightening way, even in this world. Here is a striking example.

We read in Holy Scripture that King Balthasar had prepared a splendid feast for the nobles of his court, which surpassed all those he had offered them during his reign. He had searched throughout his kingdom for the most delicious wines. When his guests were assembled, and, boasting of drinking in long drafts, the blood began to heat up and impudence to kindle; we can well say that one does not go without the other: when they were already plunging into voluptuousness, suddenly there appeared before the king's face, a bodyless hand, writing on the wall certain words which were the condemnation of this king, without his knowing it. Alas! My brethren, how little the proudest, most proud and most ferocious man is in such an accident, or rather in the slightest accident! Balthasar was so frightened and trembled so greatly that the joints of his back were broken and his knees knocked against each other. All the guests were prey to the same terror and seemed to be half-dead. The king hastened to seek out someone who could make him understand the meaning of these words; but no one understood anything about it. Then he ordered all his diviners, that is to say, his false prophets, to come. Everyone wanted to know, but without success. Finally the king was told that Daniel, the prophet of

Lord, only he could give him its meaning. As he greatly desired to know the meaning of these words, he ordered him to be brought forth immediately. The prophet went without resistance to the king, who received him with great respect, and asked him for an explanation of these words, offering him several gifts. The prophet refuses them. “Prince,” he said, “listen. Here is what these three words MANÉ, THÉCEL, PHARES mean. The first, that your days are numbered and that you are at the end of your life and your reign; the second, that you were weighed and found too light; the third, that your kingdom will be divided between the

Medes and the Persians.” Thus the king heard from the prophet's own mouth the sentence of condemnation which announced to him the end of all his debaucheries. Note carefully, this happened at the time when this unfortunate man was drinking with his guests, from the sacred vessels removed by his father during the pillage of the temple of Jerusalem; while they filled their bodies with wine, and immersed themselves in the dirtiest pleasures. O my God what a thunderbolt of your anger! But he was not free from fear, as is commonly said: everything happened as the prophet had predicted. The king was massacred, and his kingdom was divided between the Modes and the Persians. Despite this warning capable of converting any other sinner, this unfortunate man was only hardened; for it does not appear that he gave the slightest sign of repentance. To all appearances, from his villainy and his fear he descended into hell. Which shows us how difficult it is for a drunkard to convert. See again Holofernc, this famous proud man, who prided himself on filling himself with wine until he was overflowing, in the presence of the beautiful Judith. It was precisely in her drunkenness that she cut off his head. Oh! My brethren, what a fatal passion! who could understand its tyranny and give in to it? No, my brethren, a person who abandons himself to drunkenness no longer has any reserve, not even for his parents, as we have said. But to impress it on your heart, here is an example which is no less frightening. The story goes that a father had a son, who, while still very young, had the habit of going to taverns quite often. One day, seeing him return from this place of misfortune, and noticing that he had drunk a little too much, the father wanted to show him how shameful it was for him, who was still only a child, to go to taverns where evil is done and where good is never done; that he would do much better to flee these places where his reputation and his money were wasted, and that, if he wanted to continue, he would find himself chased out by his father. This young man, hearing these words, became so angry that he ran at his father, and, stabbing him with a knife, stabbed him and knocked him down at his feet all covered in blood. Tell me, my brethren, could you ever have thought that drunkenness could lead man to such excesses? So the drunkard not only commits the sin of gluttony; but he becomes capable, through this sin, of committing all crimes. If I were not afraid of being too long, I would show it to you so clearly that you would not be able to doubt it. After this, my brethren, it is not necessary to tell you how much you should fear drunkenness, and flee from those who indulge in it. However, my brethren, as the mercy of the good God is infinite, and as he wants to save drunkards like other men, although their conversion is very difficult; if they wanted to lend themselves to the grace given to them to correct themselves, they would be able to pull themselves out of this abyss. The first thing they must do is to flee drunkards and taverns: this condition is absolutely necessary for them to return to the good God. The second way is to resort to prayer, in order to touch the heart of God and regain his friendship. The third is to have great respect for holy things, to never despise anything that relates to religion.

The fourth, to have recourse to the sacraments where so many graces are granted to us: this is the means which all sinners have used to return to the good God, both drunkards and others. Saint Augustine says, according to his mother's own account, that she had almost damned herself by playing the little gourmand with wine. She watched for the moment when no one saw her, and then she tried to be content. But a servant who had seen her sometimes, and who one day happened to displease her, told her that she was a little drunkard. This word was so close to her heart, she was so confused by it, that, in her repentance, she cried for a long time. She immediately went to confess this fault, which she had never dared to tell her confessor, as she considered this sin so infamous and shameful, although she was barely twelve years old. She corrected herself so well with the grace of the good God that she never fell back into it again in her entire life, and she lived in such an exemplary way that she became a great saint. We see that the good God, to make her atone for her sin, allowed her to marry a drunken and brutal man who made her suffer a thousand ill-treatments. His son

Satisfy yourself.

Augustine, until the age of thirty-two, was no less a drunk than his father. Saint Monica, recognizing that the good God allowed this so that she could satisfy his justice, bore this ordeal so well that she was never heard to make the slightest complaint to anyone. She finally had the happiness of seeing her husband and her son Augustine converted. You see, my brethren, that the good God reaches out and gives grace to those who ask him, with a true desire to escape from sin, to live only for him. But another example will please you, because it will show you that drunkards, although very miserable, can still save themselves; and that those who do not convert from their bad habits, and believe that they will not be able to correct themselves, are very much mistaken. It is rare to find a trait that suits our subject better. In a village near Nîmes, there was a peasant named Jean. From his youth, he had been so addicted to drunkenness that he was almost continually involved in wine, and was generally considered the biggest drunkard in the country. The parish priest having brought missionaries to instruct his parishioners, thought it necessary to make them aware of this sinner, lest he deceive them. This wise precaution of the pastor seemed at first useless; because not only did the peasant not introduce himself to any missionary, but he also did not attend any of the mission exercises. Two days before it was finished, he decided to go and hear a sermon on the prodigal son or on the mercy of God, which was preached by M. Castel, priest of Nîmes, one of the missionaries who had the most talent and zeal. This speech written with noble simplicity, but delivered with great force and anointing, made the most lively

So give me the grace to understand myself, and that I may, at least, have the consolation of confessing. The missionary complied with this desire, and the peasant made his confession as well as he could. He accompanied the accusation of his sins with so many tears and such lively repentance; he resisted with so much courage the prudent advice given to him, not to give up wine entirely, because of his health, and only to use it more rarely and more soberly; he protested so strongly that nothing could ever reconcile him with this cruel enemy, who had brought death to his soul, and that he would hate it all his life, that the missionary, seeing him so well disposed, gave him absolution, strongly recommending him to persevere in the good feelings that the good God had inspired in him. This great sinner promised him, and what followed would prove that his repentance had been sincere. Five or six months after the mission, one of Jean's sisters made a trip to Nîmes. She met the missionary who was very curious to know if her famous drunkard Jean had persevered. You come, no doubt, from your village, he said to him, can you give me news of brave Jean? Ah! sir, replied this woman, we have great obligations to you; you made him a saint. Since you left our country, not only have his old friends not been able to take him to taverns; but it was not possible for us to make him drink a single drop of wine. No, no, he tells us, when we talk to him about it, he has been my greatest enemy, I will never be reconciled with him; do not talk to me about it anymore. The missionary could not hear these words without shedding tears, so joyful was he to know that this converted sinner had had the happiness of persevering. Every time he recounted this trait, he was accustomed to adding that after such a conversion, one should never despair of the greatest sinners, if the sinner wants to correspond to the grace that the good God grants to all to save them.

We will see, my brethren, that sinners, that is to say drunkards, have no pretexts which justify their excesses. Saint Augustine tells us that, although drunkenness is condemned by everyone, everyone believes they can excuse themselves from it. If you ask a man why he got into wine, he will answer you, without worrying, that a friend came to see him; that they went to the cabaret, and that if they drank too much, it was only out of complacency. — It is out of complacency! but, either this friend is a good Christian or he is an impious one. If he is a good Christian, you have greatly scandalized him by urging him to drink, and by spending your time in a cabaret. Perhaps it was even during Holy Mass or during Vespers 1 Eh! what, my brother, you two reasonable people entered the tavern, and you left less reasonable than two brute animals. Believe me, my friend, if you had kept your friend at home for a moment, and, having no wine, you would have offered him water; you would have given him much more pleasure than by making him sell his soul to the demon. If this friend is a bad Christian or an impious person without religion, you must not go with him, you must run away from him. — But, you will tell me, if I do not make him drink, and if I do not take him to the cabaret, he will

resent me, he will call me a miser. — My friend, it is a great happiness to be despised by the wicked,

Get confused. because it proves that we are not like them. You must serve as an example to them. Saint Augustine tells us: Eh! what, wretch, you have taken to wine to be the friend of a drunkard, of an impious person, of a libertine; while you become the enemy of God himself! Oh unfortunate! what an unworthy preference! So you see, my brethren, you have nothing that can excuse you: you dabble in wine, because your gluttony leads you to it. Some tell you that they are in the habit of going to the cabaret to drink with the others; but that, however copiously they drink, wine never disturbs their reason. My friend, you are wrong. Although wine does not trouble you, as soon as you drink more than you need, you are as guilty in yourself as if you had lost your reason; there is only one little scandal less. And yet you are no less, in the eyes of the public, a cabaret pillar. Listen to what the prophet Isaiah tells us: Woe to you who are strong-headed enough to drink to excess, who pride yourself on making others drunk: you make yourself drunk. Here are some who still tell you: It is to make a deal, to give or to receive money. — Alas! my friend, I do not want to prove to you how many of those who are in the wine business make deals all wrong. We make them sign receipts without them having the money, or if they have received it, we quickly try to take it back from them. Besides, how do you want to know what you are doing? you do not know yourself. What conclusion should we draw from all cola, my brethren? here it is. It is to seriously return to ourselves, as the Lord tells us through the mouth of the prophet Joel: Wake up, he says, you drunkards, because all kinds of misfortunes await you. Weep and shout at the sight of the punishments that the just wrath of God is preparing for you in hell, because of your drunkenness. Wake up, unhappy, to the clamors of this poor woman whom you mistreated after eating her bread; wake up, drunkards, to the cries of these poor children whom you reduce to begging or who you put in the situation of dying of hunger. Listen, infamous drunkard, to this neighbor who asks you for the money he lent you, and which you ate in debaucheries and in taverns. He needs it to feed his wife and children, who are mourning the misery your drunkenness has caused them. Ah! unhappy sinners, what did you promise the good God when he received you for his child? You promised to serve him, not to fall into these disorders again. What did you do in your drunkenness? Alas! you revealed secrets that were entrusted to you and that you were never supposed to tell. You have committed an infinite number of deeds that horrify everyone. What have you done by indulging in drunkenness? You have ruined your reputation, your fortune, your health and you have made your family so miserable that, perhaps in order to live, they will abandon themselves to all kinds of disorder. You yourself have become a worthless man, the fable and the opprobrium of your neighbors, who now only look at you with contempt and horror. What have you done with your soul, with this soul so beautiful that only God surpasses it in beauty? You have made it completely carnal, completely disfigured by your excesses. What have you lost through your drunkenness? Alas! my friend, you have lost the greatest of all goods, you have lost heaven, eternal happiness, infinite goods; you have lost your poor soul which had been redeemed by the adorable blood of Jesus Christ. Ah! let us say further: You have lost your God, this tender Savior, who only lived to make you happy throughout eternity. Oh! what a loss! Who can understand it and be insensitive to it! What misfortune is comparable to this? But what have you deserved? Alas! nothing but hell, to be burned there for all eternity. You have deserved, my friend, to be placed on the table of demons where you will feed and maintain the fury they have against Jesus Christ himself.

You are going to be this victim on whom the just wrath of God will fall for endless centuries... Agree with me that perhaps you would never have been able to form an idea of ■■the greatness of the sin of drunkenness, of the state to which it reduces those who commit it, of the evils that it brings upon them during their life and of the punishments that it prepares for them for eternity. Who would not be affected by so many evils, my brethren? Cry, unhappy drunkards, for your disturbances and all the bad examples you have given, instead of laughing at them as you do. Cry out to heaven, to ask for mercy, to try, if the Lord will still have mercy on you. Let us pray to God to protect us from this unfortunate sin, which seems to make it almost impossible for us to save ourselves. For this, let us only love God alone, this is the happiness that I wish you.

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost — On Anger

Tenens suffocabat eum, dicens: Redde quod debes. Seizing him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what you owe. (Matthew 18:28)

Tenens suffocabat eum, dicens: Hedde quod debes. Having taken him by the throat, he said to him: Give me back what you owe. (S. Matthew, xvm, 28.)

How the feelings of man are different from those of God! This wretch, who had just received the remission of everything he owed to his master, far from being touched with gratitude, and being ready to show the same indulgence towards his brother, barely saw him when he flew into a rage, no longer possessed himself, jumped at his throat and seemed to want to strangle him. The other throws himself at his feet to beg for mercy, but nothing touches him and nothing stops him. He must exhaust his fury against this poor wretch, and have him dragged to prison until he has paid his debt. This, my brethren, is the conduct of the people of the world. God is represented to us by the master. If he voluntarily gives us everything we owe to his justice, if he treats us with such kindness and gentleness, it is so that, following his example, we behave in the same way towards our brothers. But an ungrateful and fiery man soon forgot everything his God had done for him. For nothing, we will see him indulge in all the fury of a passion so unworthy of a Christian, so outrageous to a God of gentleness and goodness. Let us fear, my brethren, a passion so evil, so capable of distancing us from God, and of making us and those around us pass an unhappy life. I will therefore show you: 1° how much anger outrages God; 2° how unworthy of a Christian it is.

I do not want to talk to you about these little impatience, these murmurs which are so frequent. You know that whenever you do not reject them, you offend God. Although this is not the usual mortal sin, you must not fail to accuse yourself of it. If you ask me what anger is, I will tell you that it is a violent, impetuous movement of the soul, which persistently rejects what displeases it. If we open the holy books, where are contained the actions of men who have been the admiration of heaven and earth, everywhere we see that they have always had a horror of this accursed sin, and that they have regarded it as a mark of reprobation. However, I will tell you with Saint Thomas, that there is a holy anger, which comes from the zeal that we have to support the interests of God. We can sometimes, he tells us, get angry without offending God, according to these words of the King-Prophet: “Get angry; but do not sin.” There is therefore a just and reasonable anger, which we can rather call zeal than anger. Holy Scripture shows us a large number of examples of this. There we read that Phinees, who was a man fearing the Lord and supporting his interests, entered into holy anger at the sight of the scandalous sin of a Jew with a Midianite woman, and pierced them with a blow of the sword. Not only did he not offend the Lord by the death of these two abominables, but on the contrary, he was praised for his zeal in avenging the outrages done to him. Such was also the conduct of Moses. Indignant because the Israelites had worshiped a golden calf, in contempt of the true God, he had twenty-three thousand of them killed to avenge the Lord, and this, by the orders of God himself. Such was also that of David who, from the morning, declared war on all these great sinners who spent their lives insulting his God (1). Such was finally that of Jesus Christ himself, when he went into the temple to drive out those who sold and bought there, saying to them: “My house is a house of prayer and you are making it a den of thieves.” Such must be the anger of a pasteitr who has the salvation of his parishioners and the glory of his God at heart. If a pastor remains silent when he sees God outraged and souls going astray, woe to him! If he does not want to damn himself, if there is some disorder in his parish, he must trample on human respect and the fear of being despised or hated by his parishioners; and although he would be sure of being put to death after coming down from the pulpit, that should not stop him. A pastor who wants to fulfill his duty must always have the sword in his hand to defend the innocent, and pursue sinners until they have returned to God; this pursuit must only cease upon his death.

If he does not behave in this way, he is a bad priest, who loses souls instead of leading them to God. If you saw some scandal happening in your parish, and your pastors said nothing: bad- (1) Psalm c, v. 8. Happy to you, because God has punished you by sending you such pastors. I therefore say that all these angers are only holy angers, praised and approved by God himself. If all your anger were of this nature, you could only praise it. But when we reflect a little on everything that is happening in the world, when we hear all these noises, see these dissensions which reign between neighbors, brothers and sisters: we recognize only a fiery, unjust, vicious and unreasonable passion, the pernicious effects of which it is necessary to show you; in order to make you realize all the horror it deserves. Listen to what the Holy Spirit tells us: By becoming angry, a man not only loses his soul and his God, but also shortens his days. I will prove it to you with a striking example. We read in the history of the Church that the Emperor Valentinian, upon receiving the deputies of the Quadi, entered into such a terrible anger that he lost his breath and died immediately. O my God! what horror! what detestable and monstrous passion! she brings death to the one who gives birth to her! I know very well that we do not often indulge in such excesses; but how many pregnant women, through the anger in which they indulge, cause their poor children to perish, before having given birth and baptism! These unfortunate people will therefore never have the happiness of seeing the good God! On the day of judgment we will see them lost: they will never go to heaven! And only a mother's anger will be the cause! Alas! these poor children will often cry out in hell: Ah! cursed sin of anger, that you have deprived us of goods!... it is you who have stolen heaven from us; it is you who condemned us to be devoured by flames! O my God! how this accursed sin has robbed us of great goods! Goodbye beautiful sky, we will never see you; ah! what a misfortune!... O my God! Could a woman who was guilty of such a crime live without shedding torrents of tears day and night, and not say to herself at every moment: Unhappy woman, what have you done? where is your poor child? you threw him into hell. Alas! what reproaches for the day of judgment, when you will see him come and ask you for heaven! This poor child will throw himself at his mother with terrible fury. Ah! mother he will say to him, cursed mother give me back the sky; It’s you who stole it from me! This beautiful sky that I will never see, all eternity I will ask you; this beautiful sky that a mother's anger made me lose!... O my God! what a misfortune! And yet how great the number of these poor children is!

— A pregnant woman must, when confessing a sin of anger, never fail, if she (wants) to save herself, to declare her condition; because, instead of a mortal sin, there can be a mild one. If you do not do this, that is to say, if you do not say this circumstance, you must very much doubt your confessions. Likewise, a husband who makes his wife angry must blame himself for this circumstance; as well as all those who are guilty of the same fault. Alas! how few there are who accuse themselves of this! My God, what bad confessions! The prophet Isaiah tells us that an angry man is like water tossed by a storm. Nice comparison, my brethren.. Indeed, nothing represents the sky better than the sea when it is calm; it is a large mirror in which the stars seem to reproduce themselves; but also, as soon as the storm has disturbed the waters, all these celestial images disappear. Thus, the man who has the happiness of maintaining patience and gentleness is, in this calm, a sensitive image of God. But anger and impatience no sooner destroy this calm than the image of the divinity disappears. This man therefore ceases to be the image of God and becomes that of the devil. He repeats the blasphemies, represents the fury. What are the demon's thoughts? These are only thoughts of hatred, revenge, division: such are those of an angry man. What are the expressions of the demon? It is all curses and oaths. If I listen to an angry man, I hear nothing from his mouth except swearing and curses. O my God! What sad company is that of a person who is prone to anger! Look at a poor woman who has a husband like this: if she has the fear of God, and wants to spare him offenses and mistreatment of herself, she cannot lift her tongue (1), even if she had the greatest desire in the world. She must be content to moan and cry in secret; so as not to create a bad relationship or cause scandal. But, a passionate man will say to me, why does she stand up to me? we know that I am lively. — You are lively, my friend, but do you think that others are not as lively as you? Instead, say that you have no religion, and you will say what you are. Shouldn't a person who fears God know how to govern his passions, instead of letting himself be governed by them? Alas! if I

said that there are unhappy women because they have carried away husbands; there are husbands (1) Say a single word. who are no less unhappy, with women who will never be able to say a good word to them, who are taken away and maddened by the slightest thing. But what misfortune in a household, when neither one nor the other wants to give in; it is nothing more than arguments, anger and curses. 0 great God! Is this not truly an anticipated hell? llélasl what school are these poor children at? what lessons of wisdom and gentleness do they receive? Saint Basil tells us that anger makes man like the devil, because it is only the devil who is capable of giving in to these kinds of excesses. A person in this state is like a furious lion, whose roar scares other animals to death. See Herod: because the Magi had deceived him, he became so angry, or rather in such fury, that he had all the little children of Bethlehem and the surrounding area slain. He was not content with these horrors; he had his wife and children stabbed again. Alas! how many poor children are crippled for their lives, by the bad blows they received from their parents, in these transports of anger. But I add that anger almost never works alone: ■■it is always accompanied by many other sins, as we will see.

IT Anger brings with it swearing, blasphemy, denials of God, curses, imprecations. Saint Thomas tells us that swearing is a sin so great, so dreadful in the eyes of God, that we will never be able to understand the outrage it causes him. This sin is not like the others, whose lightness of substance often only makes it a venial sin. In swearing, the lighter the matter, the greater the sin; since it is a greater contempt, and a greater profanation of the holy name of God. The Holy Spirit assures us that the house of man who is accustomed to swearing will be filled with iniquity, and that the chastisements of God will not come out of it until it is destroyed. Can we hear without shuddering these unfortunate people, who dare to carry their fury to the point of swearing the holy name of God, that adorable name that the angels have so much joy in constantly repeating: Holy, holy, holy, the great God of hosts! (may he) be blessed for ever and ever! If we thought carefully when using our tongue, that it is an instrument given by God to pray to him, to sing his praises; that this tongue has been watered by the precious blood of Jesus Christ; that, so many times, it served as a resting place for the Savior himself, could it be used to outrage such a good God, and to profane a name so holy and so respectable! See what horror the saints had of swearing. Saint Louis, king of France, had made a law stating that anyone who swore would have his tongue pierced with a hot iron. A bourgeois of the city, in an argument, swore the holy name of God. He was taken before the king, who immediately condemned him to have his tongue pierced. All the powerful people of the city having come to ask for his pardon, the king replied to them that, if he had had the misfortune to commit this sin, he would pierce it himself. And he ordered that his sentence be carried out. When he went to fight for the Holy Land, he was taken prisoner. He was asked to take an oath, which, however, did not seem to offend his conscience; However, he preferred to expose himself to death rather than doing so, so afraid was he of swearing. Also, we see that a person who swears is ordinarily a person abandoned by God, overwhelmed with all kinds of misfortunes, and who often comes to an unhappy end. We read in history an example capable of giving us the greatest horror of swearing. During the time that Saint Narcissus governed the Church of Jerusalem, three libertines horribly slandered the saint, supporting their assertion with three execrable oaths.

The first said that if what he affirmed was not true, he wanted to be burned alive; the other, that he wanted to die of the obsolete disease; the third, that he wanted his eyes gouged out. Because of these slanders, Saint Narcissus was chased out of the city as an infamous person, that is to say, as a bishop who abandoned himself to all kinds of impurities. But God's vengeance did not take long to punish these unfortunate people. A fire having been set during the night in the house of the first, he was burned alive there. The second died of the disease; the third, terrified by such horrible punishments, lost his sight while weeping for his sins. I know that very few allow themselves to swear these kinds of things. The most ordinary oaths are these: My foil My conscience! - My God! Yes; - My God! No; — parbleu! — morbleu! - Morning! When you confess, you must be accused of the reason why you swore; whether it is to assure false things or the truth. If you made other people swear by not wanting to believe them. You need to say if you are used to it, and how long you have had it. To the oaths, we must be careful not to add the oath. There are some who say: If this is not true, I

will never move from my place; see the sky; God damn me! let the plague suffocate me! may the devil take me away!.... Alas! my friend, perhaps the devil is only waiting for your death to win!... You must say, in your confessions, whether what you said was or was not against the truth. There are some who believe that there is no harm (in making an oath) to assure something that is true. The evil, it is true, is not so great as for a false thing; but it is still a sin, and even a big one. You are therefore always obliged to accuse yourself of it, otherwise you are damned. Here is an example that makes one tremble. It is reported in the life of Saint Edward, King of England, that (Count Gondevin, father-in-law of the king), was so proud that he could not tolerate anyone near him. The king one day accused him of having cooperated in the death of his brother. The count replied that, if that were true, he wanted a piece of bread to strangle him. The king made the sign of the cross on this piece of bread, his father-in-law took it, and as he swallowed it, the bread stuck in his throat, strangled him, and he died. Terrible punishment, my brethren! Alas! where did his poor soul go, since he died committing this sin? Not only must we not swear, under any pretext whatsoever, even if it means losing our property, our reputation and our life, because, by swearing, we lose heaven, our God and our soul; but we must not even make others swear.

Saint Augustine tells us that, if we anticipate that those whom we bring to justice will swear falsely, (we must not do this;) we are as guilty and even more guilty than if we took their lives. In fact, by slitting their throats we are only giving death to their bodies, if they have the good fortune to be in a state of grace; the only harm is for us: instead of making them swear, we lose their poor soul, and we lose them for eternity. It is reported that a bourgeois of the city of Hippo, a good man, but very attached to the land, forced a man to whom he had lent money to swear in court; he swore falsely. The same night he was presented before the tribunal of God. — Why did you make this man swear...? Shouldn't you rather lose what he owed you than lose his soul? Jesus Christ told him that he forgave him this time, but that he condemned him to be whipped; which was carried out immediately by the angels; because the next day he found himself covered with sores. You will tell me: Should I lose what you owe me? — We would have to lose what we owe you; but do you value your brother's soul less than your money? Besides, be sure that if you do this for the good God, he will not fail to reward you. Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses must examine whether they have not been, for their children or their servants, the cause of some swearing, through the fear they sometimes have of being mistreated or scolded. We swear for lies as well as for the truth. Take care, when you are called to court, never to swear falsely. Although you have not sworn, you must even examine whether you have not had the thought of it in yourself, and how many times you have had this thought; if you have advised others to swear falsely, under the pretext that if they tell the truth they will be condemned. You have to say that. Blame yourself again if you have taken a few detours to say otherwise than you thought; for you are obliged to say as you think it or as you have seen and heard it; otherwise, you are committing a great sin. You must likewise distinguish whether you have given something to induce others to lie: thus, a master who threatens his servant to mistreat him or make him lose his wages, must explain all this in confession, otherwise his confession would only be sacrilege. The Holy Spirit tells us that the false witness will be punished rigorously. We have just said what swearing and oath are, let us now see what blasphemy is. There are many who do not know how to distinguish blasphemy from swearing.

If you do not know how to distinguish one from the other, you cannot expect your confessions to be good, because you do not make known your sins as you have committed them. Listen carefully; so that you leave this ignorance, which would most certainly damn you. Blasphemy is a Greek word which means to hate, to curse infinite beauty. Saint Augustine tells us that Your blasphemy is when we attribute to God something that he does not have, or that does not suit him; when we take away from him what suits him, or, finally, when we attribute to ourselves what is due only to God. Let us explain this. first, We blaspheme when we say that God is not just, if what we do or undertake does not succeed. second, To say that God is not good, as some unfortunate people do in the excess of their misery, is blasphemy. third, We blaspheme when we say that God does not know everything; that he does not pay attention to what is happening on earth; that he not

only knows us in the world; that all things go as they will; that God does not interfere in such little things; that by coming into the world we bring our fate of being unhappy or being happy, and that God changes nothing. fourth, When we say: If God had mercy on this one, truly SBUMOUS. — Volume 111. iG it would not be just; because he did too much and deserved nothing but hell. fifth, When we get angry with God at the occasion of some loss, and we say: No, God cannot do more to me than he does to me. It is also blasphemy to mock and mock the Blessed Virgin, or the saints, by saying: He is a saint who does not have much power, I have been (praying) for several days and I have obtained nothing; I do not want to use him anymore. It is blasphemy to say that God is not powerful, and to treat him unworthily, as in saying: Despite Dicul S... D..! S... N..! The Jews had such a horror of this sin that when they heard blasphemy, they tore their clothes as a sign of grief. The holy man Job feared this sin so much that, fearing that his children had committed it, he offered sacrifices to God to atone for it. The prophet Nathan said to David: Since you have been the cause of blaspheming God, your child will die, and punishment will not leave your house while you live. The Lord says in Holy Scripture: Whoever blasphemes my holy name, I want him to be put to death (1). While the Hebrews were in the desert, a man was caught blaspheming, and the Lord ordered him to be stoned to death.

Sonnacherib, king of the Assyrians, who besieged Jerusalem, having blasphemed the name of God, saying that, despite God, he would take this city, and put it all to fire and blood; the Lord sent an angel, who in one night killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, and he himself was slain by his own children. These blasphemies have always been held in horror since the beginning of the world; they are truly the language of hell, since the devil and the damned never stop uttering them. When Emperor Justin learned that some of his subjects had blasphemed, he had their tongues cut out. During the reign of King Robert, France was afflicted by a great war. The good God revealed to a holy soul that all these evils would last until blasphemy was banished from the kingdom. Is it not then an extraordinary miracle that a house where a blasphemer is found is not crushed by lightning and overwhelmed with all kinds of misfortunes? Saint Augustine also says that blasphemy is a greater sin than perjury; for in the latter, God is taken as witness to a false thing; in the latter, on the contrary, it is a false thing that is attributed to God. You will agree with me, my brethren, of the greatness of this sin and of the misfortune that results from it for the man who indulges in it. After having indulged in it, should he not fear that God's justice would punish him immediately, like so many others? Let us now see what difference there is between blasphemy and the denial of God. I do not want to talk to you about those who deny God by leaving the Catholic religion to embrace a false one: such are the Protestants, the Jansenists and so many others. We call these people renegades and apostates. This concerns those who, following some loss or some disgrace, have the accursed habit of bursting out in angry words against God. This sin is horrible, because at the slightest thing that happens to us, we take it out on God himself, we lose our temper against him; it is as if we were saying to God: You are a

! a 1 an unhappy I a vindictive! You are punishing me for such an action, you are unfair. God must wipe away our color, as if he were the cause of the loss we suffered and the accident that happened to us. Is it not he, this tender Savior, who took us from nothing, who created us in his image, who redeemed us with his precious blood and who has preserved us for so long; while we deserved to be buried in hell for many years... He loves us with an inconceivable love, and we despise him; we profane his holy name, we swear it, we deny it! What horror! Is there a more monstrous crime than this? Isn't this imitating the language of demons? demons who only do that in the underworld? Alas! My brethren, if you imitate them in this life, you are sure to go and keep them company in the underworld. O my God! Can a Christian indulge in such horrors? A person who indulges in this sin must expect an unhappy life, even in this world. It is said that a man, after having been a blasphemer all his life, said to the priest who confessed him: Alas! my father, how unhappy my life has been! I used to swear, to blaspheme the name of God; I lost all my property, which was considerable; my children, on whom I have only brought curses, are worthless; my tongue, which has sworn, blasphemed the holy name of God, is ulcerated and rotting. Alas, after having been very unhappy in this world, I still fear being damned because of my oaths. Remember, my brethren, that your tongue was only

given to you to bless the good God; it was consecrated to him by holy baptism and by holy communion. If unfortunately you are subject to this sin, you must confess it with great pain and make it a harsh penance; otherwise you will suffer the punishment in hell. Purify your mouth, pronouncing the name of Jesus with respect. Ask God often for the grace to die rather than fall back into this sin. Would you have ever thought how blasphemy is a horrible sin in the eyes of God and man? Tell me, did you confess properly, did you not just say that you swore, or even said rude words? search your conscience, and do not. do not fall asleep, because it is quite possible that your confessions are worthless. Let us now see what is meant by curse and imprecation. Here it is. Cursing is when, driven by hatred or anger, we want to destroy or make unhappy anyone who opposes our will. These curses fall on us, on our fellow human beings or on animate or even inanimate creatures.

When we do this, we do not behave according to the spirit of God, which is a spirit of gentleness, goodness and charity; but according to the spirit of the demon, whose whole occupation is to curse. The worst curses are those that fathers and mothers call upon their children, because of the great evils that follow. A child cursed by his parents is, ordinarily, a child cursed by God himself; because the good God said that if parents bless their children, he will bless them; on the contrary, if they curse them, their curse will remain on them. Saint Augustine cites an example worthy of being forever engraved in the hearts of fathers and mothers. A mother, he tells us, cursed in anger her three children; At that very moment, they were possessed by the demon. A father said to one of his family: You will not die. His child fell dead at his feet. What makes this sin even worse is that, if a father and mother are in the habit of committing it, their children will contract this habit, this vice becomes hereditary in families. If there are so many houses which are unhappy, and which are truly the retreat of demons and the image of hell, you will find the explanation in the blasphemies and curses of their ancestors, which passed from their grandfather to their father and from their father pass to their children, and so on. You have heard an angry father uttering swear words, imprecations and curses; well, listen to her children when they are angry: the same swearing, the same imprecations she remains. Thus the vices of parents pass to their children like their possessions, and even better. Cannibals only kill strangers to eat them; but, among Christians, there are fathers and mothers, who, to satisfy their passions, wish the death of those to whom they have given life, and deliver to the devil those whom Jesus Christ has redeemed with his precious blood. How often do we hear these fathers and mothers without religion say: Ah! cursed child, you do not, once! you bore me; the good God will not punish you once!...,; (I wish) you were as far from me as you are near! that little child! this demon of a child, these ch... children! these stupid children and the rest. O my God! Can all these curses come from the mouth of a father and a mother, who should only wish and desire the blessings of heaven for their poor children! If we see so many children in his, surly, without religion, crippled, let us not look for the cause elsewhere than in the curses of the parents; at least for the majority.

What then is the sin of those who curse themselves in times of trouble? It is a terrible crime which combats nature and grace; because nature and grace inspire us with love for ourselves. He who curses himself is like a madman who kills himself with his own hands; it is even worse; often he attacks his soul, saying: God damn me! let the devil take me away! I would as much like to be in hell as to be as I am! Ah! unhappy, says Saint Augustine, that God does not take you at your word; because you would vomit the venom of your rage into hell. O my God! if a Christian thought carefully about what he said, would he have the strength to utter these blasphemies, capable, in some way, of forcing God to curse him from the top of his throne! Oh! How unhappy a man prone to anger is! He forces this God who would only want his good and his happiness to be punished! Will we ever be able to understand it! What is the sin of a husband and a wife, a brother and a sister, who vomit all kinds of blasphemies against each other? It is a sin the magnitude of which no term can ever express; it is a sin all the greater because they are more strictly obliged to love and support one another. Alas! how many married people never stop spewing all sorts of curses at each other! A husband and wife who should wish each other only happy wishes, and seek God's mercy; in order to obtain for each other the

happiness of spending their eternity together, take on curses; they would tear their eyes out if they could, and

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All the sorrows that befall us must make us remember that, having rebelled against God, it is right that creatures should revolt against us. We must never give others the opportunity to curse us. Children and servants especially, must do all they can; so as not to cause their parents or their masters to curse them; for it is certain that sooner or later some punishment will befall them. Fathers and mothers must consider that they have nothing so dear in the world as their children, and, far from cursing them, they must never cease to bless them; so that God may pour out on them whatever good they desire. If something bad happens to you, instead of heaping curses on what doesn't go your way, it would be just as easy and much more advantageous for you to say: God bless you. Imitate the holy man Job, who blessed the name of the Lord in all the troubles that befell him, and you will receive the same graces as him. Seeing his great submission to the will (of God), the demon flees, blessings are poured out abundantly on his goods, everything is returned to him double. If, unfortunately, you happen to utter one of these bad words, quickly make an act of contrition to ask for forgiveness, and promise that you will not return there. Saint Teresa tells us that when we pronounce the name of God with respect, all heaven rejoices; while if we say these bad words, it is hell. A Christian must never lose sight of the fact that his tongue is only given to him to bless God in this world, and to thank him for the goods with which he has showered him during his life; in order to bless him for eternity with the angels and the saints: this will be the portion of those who have imitated, not the devil, but the angels. I wish you...

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost — On Restitution

Reddite quae sunt Caesaris Caesari, et quae sunt Dei Deo. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. (Matthew 22:21)

To render to God what is God’s and to the neighbor what is due to him: nothing is more fair, nothing more reasonable. If all Christians followed this path, hell would have none among its inhabitants, and heaven would be populated. Ah! would to God, the great Saint Hilary tells us, that men never lost sight of this precept! But alas! how many delude themselves? They spend their lives deceiving one, stealing from the other. Yes, my brethren, nothing is more common than injustices, nothing rarer than restitutions. The prophet Hosea was right to say that injustices and thefts covered the face of the earth, and that they were like the flood which ravaged the universe. Ah! unfortunately, as many as there are guilty, there are just as many who do not want to recognize it. O my God, how many thieves death will reveal! To convince you of this, my brethren, I will show you, first, that ill-gotten goods never benefit; second, in how many ways you harm your neighbor; third, how and to whom you must return what does not belong to you.

We are so blind that we spend our lives seeking and gathering goods that we will lose for ourselves, while we leave behind those that we can keep for all eternity. The riches of this world are only worthy of contempt for a Christian, and it is precisely after which we run so eagerly [après lesquelles nous courons]. Man is therefore a fool, since he acts in a manner quite contrary to the end for which God created him. I do not want to speak to you, my brethren, about those who lend at usury, at seven, eight, nine and ten percent; let us leave them aside. To make them feel all the grandeur and darkness of their injustice and their cruelty, it would be necessary for one of these old usurers, who for three or four thousand years have been burning in hell, to come and tell them the story of the torments he endures, and of which his thousand injustices are the cause. No, that is not my intention. They know well that they do wrong, and that God will never forgive them, if they do not repay those who they have wronged. Anything I said to them would only make them more guilty. Let us go into a detail that concerns a larger number of people. "'I say that property acquired unjustly will never enrich the person who possesses it. On the contrary, it will be a source of curses for all his family. O my God, how blind man is! He is perfectly convinced that he only comes into this world for a little while; every moment, he sees those leaving younger and more robust than him; no matter, that does not make him open his eyes. The Holy Spirit told him in vain, through the mouth of the saint man Job, that he came into the world devoid of everything, and that he will come out of it in the same way; that all these goods, after which he runs, will all leave him at the moment when he least thinks of them: all this does not stop him yet that he who wants to become rich by unjust ways, will not delay falling into great error; even more, that he will never see the face of God. a miser or, if you like, a person who has acquired some property by fraud or by skill, will almost never convert, as this sin blinds the one who commits it. Listen to how Saint Augustine speaks to those who have the property of others. No matter how much you confess, no matter how much you do penance and cry for your sins, if you do not repay, when you can, God will never forgive you. All your confessions and all your communions will only be forgiven. sacrileges, which you will heap on one another, either give back what is not yours, or you will have to resolve to go and burn in hell. The Holy Spirit is not content only to forbid us from taking and desiring the good of our neighbor, he does not even want us to look at it, in fear that this sight will make us lay our hands on it. that it be destroyed. And I say that not only will the property acquired by fraud or by skill not benefit you, but that it will cause your property acquired legitimately to perish, and that your days will be shortened. If you doubt it, listen to me for a moment, you will be convinced.

We read in Holy Scripture that King Ahab, wanting to enlarge his garden, went to find a man named Naboth, to ask him to buy his vineyard. “No,” Naboth told him, “it’s the inheritance of my fathers, I want to keep it.” The king was so outraged by this refusal that he fell ill. He could neither drink nor eat, and went to bed. The queen came and asked him the cause of his illness. The king replied that he wanted to enlarge his garden, and that Naboth had refused to sell his vineyard. “linked what!” replied the queen, “where is your authority?” Do not worry; I'll make sure you have it.” She hastens to go find some people who, won by money, will testify that Naboth had blasphemed against God and against Moses. This poor man tried in vain to defend himself by asserting that he was innocent of the crime of which he was accused; we didn't believe him; he was

dragged away and knocked out with stones. The queen, seeing him bathed in his blood, ran to the king to tell him to take possession of the vineyard, because the one who had been bold enough to refuse it to him was dead. At this news, the king was cured and ran, like someone in despair, to take possession of the vineyard. This unfortunate man did not think that this was where God was waiting to punish him. The Lord calls his prophet Elijah, commands him to go to the king, and tell him on his behalf that, in the dreary place where the dogs had licked the blood of Naboth, they would lick his own blood, and that none of his children would reign after him. He also sends her to Queen Jesabol to tell her that the dogs will eat her as punishment for her crime. Everything happened as the prophet predicted. The king, massacred in a fight, the dogs licked his blood. A new king called Jôhu, entering the city, saw a woman sitting at a window. She had adorned herself like a goddess, hoping to charm the heart of the new king. He asks what this creature is. He is told that it is Queen Jezebel. He immediately ordered her to be thrown down. Men and horses trampled it underfoot. When evening came, when they wanted to give him a burial, only a few pieces of his body were found: the dogs had eaten the rest. “Ah! cried Jehu, “the word of the prophet has been fulfilled.” King Ahab left seventy children, all princes; this new king ordered that the heads of all of them be cut off, and that they be placed in baskets at the gate of the city to show, by such a frightful spectacle, what misfortunes the injustices of parents bring upon their children. Saint Victor tells us an example which is no less astonishing. A man, he told us, had entered his neighbor's attic to steal some wheat. As he took his bag, the demon seized him, and, in front of everyone, dragged him as if he had taken him to the underworld. O my God, how blind man is to damn himself for so little... The second reason which should make us fear taking the property of others is that it leads us to hell. The prophet Zechariah said that, in a vision, God showed him a book where it was written that those who steal the property of others would never see God, and that they would be thrown into the flames. And yet, my brethren, there are some who are so blinded, that they would rather die and be damned than give up the ill-gotten good, while death is about to snatch it from their hands. A man had spent his life stealing and pillaging... Being only thirty years old, he fell ill with the illness from which he died. One of his friends, seeing that he was not asking for a priest, went to find one himself. “My friend,” said the priest, “you seem very ill to me. So you didn't think to ask me? you would like to confess. — Ah, sir, replies the patient, with a completely bewildered air, so you think I am already dead? — But, my friend, the more knowledge you have, the better you will receive the sacraments. — Do not talk to me about that, I am tired at the moment; When I am better, I'll go find you at church.

— No, my friend, if you were to die without being administered, I would be too sorry. Since I am here, I will not leave until I have confessed to you.” Seeing himself as forced, he consents; but how does he do it? like a person who has property from others, and who does not want to give it back. He says nothing about it.... — “If you get worse, I will come back and bring you the good God.” In fact, the sick person goes to the side of death; Your short informs the priest that his penitent is expiring. He hurries to run. When the sick man heard the bell, he asked what it was, and, learning that the priest was bringing him the good God; “Hey! What, he cried, did I not tell you that I did not want to receive him? Tell him not to go any further.” The priest nevertheless entered, and, approaching his bed: “You do not then want to receive the good God who would console you, and who would help you to suffer your sorrows.” — “No, no, I have already done enough harm. — But you will scandalize the whole parish. — Hey! What does it matter to me that everyone knows that I am damned. — If you do not want to receive the sacraments, you cannot be buried Christianly. — Does a damned person deserve to be buried among the saints? When the demon has taken my cursed soul, throw my body to the wolf, like that of an animal..." Seeing his wife in tears: "Are you crying? console yourself; If you accompanied me to go, at night, to rob the neighbors, you will not take long to come and join me in the underworld.” He cried out in his despair: “Ah! horror of hell, open your abysses! come and tear me away from this world, I cannot hold on any longer.” And he dies with visible signs of disapproval. But, you will tell me, he had certainly committed great crimes. — Alas! my friend, if I dared, I would tell you that he was only doing what almost all of you do; sometimes it was a bundle, sometimes an armful of hay or a sheaf of

wheat.

If I wanted, my brethren, to examine the conduct of those present here, I would perhaps find only thieves. Does this surprise you? Listen to me for a moment and you will recognize that this is true. If I begin by examining the conduct of the servants, I find them guilty on the side of their master and on the side of the poor. On the side of their masters, the servants are guilty, and, consequently, obliged to make restitution, every time they have taken more time than was necessary to relax, that they have lost time in taverns; if they allowed their masters' property to be lost or taken, and being able to prevent it they did not do it. Likewise, if, by praising himself, a servant has assured that he is capable of doing certain works, knowing very well that he was ignorant of it or could not..., he is obliged to compensate his master for the pearl which is the consequence of his ignorance or his weakness. Moreover, he steals from the poor every time he spends his money gambling, going to a cabaret or on other useless things. But, you will tell me, this money is indeed mine since it is my pledge. I will answer you: You worked to earn it, it is true, and yet you are guilty; you will understand it. Perhaps your parents are poor enough to be obliged to resort to public charity; if you had kept your wages, you could relieve them: you are unable to do so; is this not stealing from the poor? One girl or boy has spent all their money, one on buying vanities, the other in taverns or games; if the good God sends them some illness or infirmity, they are obliged to go to the hospital, eat the bread of the poor; or else they will wait for a charitable person to reach out to them and give them what will be lacking to others even more unfortunate. If they enter a household, there they are with their children, reduced to poverty. Why is this? otherwise because being young, they didn't know how to reserve anything. Isn't it, my sister, if we thought a little, vanity wouldn't rise so high? What is most unfortunate is that not only are you lavishing a good that you will lack; but you lose your poor soul. But here is a sin all the more deplorable because it is more common, that of children and servants who steal from their parents or their masters. Children should never take anything from their parents just because they are not given enough. When your parents fed you, clothed you and taught you; they do not owe you anything more. Moreover, as soon as a child steals from his parents, he is seen as capable of anything. Everyone runs away from him and despises him. A servant will tell me:

Vm servant. A servant.

I am not paid for my troubles, I must reward myself - You are not paid for your troubles, my friend, why do you stay with these masters? When you hired yourself, you knew well what your pledge was and what you could deserve; you had to go elsewhere, where you would have earned more. And let those who receive into their homes what servants steal from their masters or children from their parents be careful. Even if these objects have only remained with them for five minutes, and even if they do not know their value, these receivers are obliged to return them, under penalty of damnation, if the culprits do not return them themselves. There are some who will buy some object, from a child or from a servant: but if they pay more for it than it is worth, they are obliged to return to the master either the object or its value; otherwise they will be thrown into hell. If you have advised another person to steal; even if you have not made any profit, if the thief does not return it, it is up to you to do so; otherwise, you can no longer hope for heaven. The most common thefts are in sales and purchases. Let us go into detail, so that you know the wrong you are doing, and, at the same time, you can correct yourself. When you go to sell your goods, you will be asked if your eggs or your butter are very fresh, you will hasten to answer yes; while you know very well the opposite. Why do you say it, if not to steal two or three pennies from a poor person, who, perhaps, borrowed them to maintain their household? Another time is by selling hemp. You will have to take the precaution of hiding the smallest or the worst inside. You may say: If I do not do it this way, I will not sell it as much. — That is to say, if you behaved like a good Christian, you would not steal as you do. Another time, you realized that you had been given more than you needed in your account, but you said nothing. — Too bad for this person, it is not my fault. —Ah! my friend, a day will come when people will perhaps say to you with more reason: Too bad for you!... Such and such a person wants to buy you wheat, wine or animals. She will ask you if this

wheat is a good year. Without hesitation you assure him that this is. You mix your wine with other bad wines, and you sell it like any good wine. If people do not want to believe you, you swear it, and it is not once, but twenty times that you give your soul to the demon. Oh! my friend, you do not need to torment yourself so much to give yourself to him; You've been his for a long time! Does this beast, they will still ask you, have any fault? Make no mistake, I just borrowed this money, if you do, I am in misery. —Ah! certainly not, correct yourself; this beast is very good. If I sell it, it is not without being angry about it; If I could do otherwise, I wouldn't sell it. And in reality, you are only selling it because it is worthless and can no longer be of use to you. — I do like the others; too bad for whoever gets caught. I have been deceived, I give up deceiving, otherwise I would lose too much. — You see, my friend, the others damn themselves, you must damn yourself too; They are going to hell, do you have to go there with them? You would rather have a few extra pennies, and go burn in hell for all eternity! Well! I tell you that if you have sold a car with hidden defects, you are obliged to compensate the buyer for the loss that these hidden defects may have caused him, otherwise, you will be damned, — Ah! If you were in our place, you would do just like us. — Yes, without doubt, I would do like you, if, like you, I wanted to damn myself; but wanting to save myself, I would do the complete opposite of what you are doing. Other people passing through a meadow, a ravine or an orchard will have no difficulty filling their apron with herbs or turnips, and taking their baskets and pockets full of fruit.

Parents will see their children coming with their hands full of stolen things, and will take them back with a laugh. — Well, that is a big thing. — my brethren, if you take sometimes for a penny, sometimes for two, you will soon have made the material for a mortal sin. Besides, you can commit a mortal sin by taking only a cent if you want to take three francs. So what should parents do when they see their children coming with something stolen? here it is. They must force them to return it themselves to those they stole. Once or twice will be enough to correct them. An example will show you how faithful you must be to this. It is reported that a child of nine to ten years old began to commit petty thefts, such as taking fruit or other small things of little value. It continued to increase, to the point that he was later taken to the scaffold. Before dying, he asked the judges to bring his parents; when they were present: “0 unfortunate father and unhappy mother,” he cried, “I want everyone to know that you are the cause of my shameful death. You are dishonored in the eyes of the world; but you

Field of raves. If you had corrected me at the beginning of my little thefts, I would not have committed those which led me to this scaffold.” I say, my brethren, that parents must be wise towards their children, even if they forget that they have a soul to save. We see in fact, usually, that as the parents are, such are the children. Every day you hear: So-and-so has children who will follow in the footsteps they followed when they were young. — That doesn't concern you, you will say to me, leave us alone, do not come and disturb us; we no longer thought about that, and you put it back in front of us. Is the fire of hell not rigorous enough, nor eternity long enough, for you to make us suffer like this from this world? —It is very true, my brethren, but it is precisely because I would not like to see you damned. — Well, too bad for us; if we do evil, it is not you who will suffer the penalty. — If you are happy, at the right time!... Sometimes it will be a shoemaker who will use bad leather and bad thread, and who will charge them as good ones. Or again, it will be a tailor who, under the pretext that he is not receiving a good enough price for his work, will keep a piece of fabric without saying anything about it. O my God! How many thieves will be discovered by death!... It is another weaver who spoils part of his thread, rather than taking the trouble to unravel it; or else, he will put on the least, and will keep, without saying anything about it, the one entrusted to him. Here is a woman who will be given hemp to spin, she will throw away part of it, under the pretext that it is not well combed, will keep some, and, putting her thread in a damp place, the weight will still be there. She perhaps does not think that it belongs to a poor servant, who will have no use for this thread, because it is already half rotten: she will therefore be the cause of the numerous oaths that he will make against his master (I). A shepherd knows very well that it is not permitted to graze in this meadow or this wood; no matter, if we do not see it, that is enough for him.

Another knows that it was forbidden to go and pick up the tares in this wheat because it is in flower; he looks to see if anyone sees him and he enters. Tell me, my brethren, would you be very happy if your neighbor did this to you? No, undoubtedly; well! believe that if we now examine the conduct of the workers, there are a good number of them who are thieves. In a moment you will be convinced of it. If we make them work at fixed prices, either to draw, or to mine, or for any other work; They will massacre half of them, and will not fail to get paid well. If they are hired by the day, they are content to work well when the master is watching them, and then they start chatting or doing nothing. A servant will have no difficulty in receiving and treating his friends well in the absence of his masters, knowing well that they would not tolerate him. Others will give large alms, in order to be considered as charitable people... Should they not, on the contrary, give of their pledge which they so often dissipate in vanity? If this has happened to you, do not forget that you are obliged to return to the rightful person everything that you have given to the poor, without the knowledge and against the will of your masters. It is still a

Who will have given him this hemp for his pledge. Fixed price. Will hurt... (Xote from the editors.) first servant, to whom his boss will have entrusted the supervision of others or his workers, and who, at their request, will give them wine or anything else; pay close attention to this: if you know how to give, you will have to know how to give back, under penalty of damnation. A businessman will have been charged with buying wheat, hay or straw, he will say to the merchant: “Make me a note, on which you will also count to my master a few bichetals of wheat, ten, twelve quintals of straw or hay than you deliver to me. It cannot be wrong.” Now, if this poor blind person delivers such a note, he is obliged to return himself the money that this man will have given in addition to his master, otherwise, he must resolve to go and burn in hell. If we now turn to the side of the masters; I believe we will not fail to find thieves there. Indeed, how many masters do not give everything they agreed with their servants; who, seeing the end of the year approaching, do everything possible to make them leave, so as not to have to pay them. If an animal perishes despite the care of the person in charge of it, they will pay him the price from his pledge; so that a poor child will have worked all year, and at the end of this time will find himself with nothing. How many more, having promised cloth, will have it made either narrower, or worse (he, or even make it wait several years; to the point that they have to be called to court to force them to pay. How many finally by plowing, mowing, harvesting, exceed the limits; or even cut off a scion from their neighbor to get away with it?

Measurements. Young flexible tree. make a pickaxe handle, a viol or a rope for their cart. Was I not right to say, my brethren, that if we examined the conduct of people of the world very closely, we would only find thieves and cunning people? Do not fail to examine yourself on what we have just said: if your conscience cries out, hurry to repair the harm you have done, and while there is still time, pay back immediately, if you can, or, at least, work with all your strength to put yourself in a position to restore what you have ill-gotten. Remember also to say in your confessions how many times you neglected to repay, when you were able to do so; because, God gives you the thought, these are just as many despised graces. I will also tell you about a fairly common theft in families, where certain heirs, when dividing, hide as much of their property as they can. This is real theft, and we are obliged to make restitution, otherwise we are lost. I told you at the beginning, nothing is more common than injustice, and nothing more rare than restitution: there are few, as you see, who do not have something on their conscience. linked well! where are those who restore? I do not know anything about it. However, my brethren, although we are obliged to return ill-gotten goods under penalty of damnation; when we return it, God does not fail to reward us. An example will clearly prove this to you. A baker, who had, for several years, used false weights and false measures, wanting to put his conscience at rest, con-

A wreath tie. Tricksters. advised his confessor, who advised him to do the weight a little heavier for a while. The rumor having spread, the crowd of clients became very great, and, although he earned little, God allowed that by returning, he considerably increased his fortune.

Now, you will say, we can hope to know, at least roughly, how we can do wrong. But how and to whom should we give back? — Do you want to give it back? Well! Listen to me for a moment, and you will find out. We must not be satisfied with returning half, nor three-quarters; but everything, if you can; otherwise you will be damned. There are some who, without considering the number of people they have wronged, will give some alms, or have a few masses said; c l, after that, they will think they are safe. It's true, alms and masses are very good things; but they must be given from your money, and not from that of your neighbor. This money is not yours; give it to its master, and then give some of your own, if you wish: you will do very well. Do you know what Saint Chrysostomo calls these alms? the alms of Judas and the devil. When Judas had sold Our Lord, seeing himself condemned, he ran to return the money to the doctors; these, although very miserly, did not want to accept it; They bought a field to bury the strangers. But, you will say to me, when those who have been wronged are dead, to whom should we give back? Can we not keep it or give it to the poor? — My friend, this is what you must do. If they have children, you should give to them; if they have no children, it is up to the parents, to the heirs; if they have no heirs, you must go and find your pastor, who will tell you what you have to do. There are others who say: I have wronged so-and-so, but he is rich enough: I know a poor person who has a much greater need. — My friend, give this person some of your property; but return to your neighbor the good that you have taken from him. — It will be misused. — Cola is none of your business; give him his property, pray for him and sleep peacefully. Alas! Today the people of the world are so greedy, so attached to the goods of the earth, that, believing they have never had enough, it is a question of who will be the most clever and will best deceive others. But you, my brethren, do not forget that if you know the people to whom you have wronged, even if you would have given double to the poor; if you do not return to the master what you took from him, you will be damned. I do not know if your conscience is clear, I doubt it!... I said that the world is full of thieves and cunning people. Merchants steal by deceiving with weights and measures; they take advantage of a person's simplicity to sell more dearly, or to buy cheaper; masters steal from their servants, making them lose part of their labor; others, by making them wait a considerable time, by counting down to one day of illness, as if they had taken their trouble from a neighbor and not from their service!... For their part, the servants steal from their master, sometimes by not doing their work, sometimes by allowing the property to be lost through their fault; a worker gets paid, while

Remain at rest. Pledges. his work is half done. Those who run the taverns, these reservoirs of iniquity, these gates of hell, these Calvaries where Jesus Christ is constantly crucified, these infernal schools where Satan teaches his doctrine, where religion and morals are destroyed. The innkeepers, I say, see the bread of a poor woman and her children by giving wine to these drunkards, who spend on Sunday everything they will have earned during the week. A tenant farmer will divert a thousand things for his benefit, before the master shares, and will not take them into account. O my God! where are we? So many things to examine at the hour of death!... If their conscience cries out too loudly, these people will go find a minister of the Lord. They would like to have their debt forgiven; if, on the contrary, they are urged to make restitution, they will find a thousand pretexts to prove that others have also wronged them, and that they cannot do so at this moment. Hey my friend, I do not know if the good God will be satisfied with your reasons? If you wanted to take away a little from these vanities, from these delicacies, from these games; go a little less to cabaret and dancing, and redouble your work; you would soon have paid off part of your debts. Be very careful, if you do not do your best to give back to everyone what you owe them, whatever penance you do, you will only end up falling into hell: you are sure of it... You will find some blind enough to say that their children will do so after their death. Your children, my friend, will do it as you do. Besides, do you want your children to take more care of your soul than you yourself? You'll be damned, that is what will happen to you.

(I) Brother.

Tell me, have you then made full satisfaction for all the little injustices your parents had committed? You took good care not to; and your poor parents are in hell for not having made restitution in their lifetime,

trusting too much to your good will. In short, to cut it shorter, how many are there among those who hear me whose parents charged them, perhaps more than twenty years ago, to give alms or to have Masses said, and not one of them has done it? They took good care not to! They prefer to enlarge their lands, to frequent games and taverns, to buy vanities for their children. Saint Antoninus relates that a usurer chose to die without the sacraments rather than give back what did not belong to him. He had only two sons; one feared God and the other did not. The one who was concerned for the salvation of his soul was so touched by the unhappy state in which his father died, that after having used part of his fortune to repair paternal injustices, he became a monk, so that he would only have to think of God alone. The other, on the contrary, squandered all his money in debauchery and died suddenly. The news was brought to the monk, who at once set himself to prayer. He then saw in spirit the earth opened, and in its midst a deep abyss vomiting flames. In the midst of these flames, his father and his brother burned and cursed each other. The father cursed his son; because, wanting to leave him more property, he had not feared being damned for him, and the son reproached his father for the bad examples he had received from him. Shall I tell you about those who wait until they die before giving back? I will prove to you by two examples that, when the time comes, either you will not want it, or, even if you want it, you will no longer be able to do it. first, You will not want it. It is said that the father of a large family was about to die, and his children said to him: “Father, you know, this property that you are leaving us is not ours: we should return it. — My children,” the father said to them, “if I gave back all that is not mine, you would have almost nothing left. — Father, we would rather work to earn our living than if you were damned. — No, my children, I do not want to restore; you do not know what it is to be poor. —If you do not give back, you will go to hell. — No, I will not give anything back.” He dies as a reprobate... O my God! how the sin of avarice blinds man! second, I said that, even if you wanted to at that moment, you would not be able to do so. It is reported by a missionary that a father, seeing his end approaching, called his children near his bed and said to them: “My children, you know that I have wronged many people; if I do not give back, I am lost. Go find a notary to receive my arrangements. - Well, my father, his children reply, would you like to dishonor yourself and us too, by making yourself appear to be a dishonest man? Would you like to reduce us to misery, and send us to beg for our bread? — But, my children, if I do not restore, I will be damned!” One of his impious sons did not fear to say to him: “My father, do you fear hell? Come on, you get used to everything: in eight days, you will be used to it....” Well, my brethren, what do we conclude from all this? How famously blind you are! You lose your souls to leave a few inches of land, or a few makeshift possessions for your children, who, far from being grateful to you, will make fun of you, while you burn in the flames. Let us end by saying that we are fools, to think only of amassing goods, which make us unhappy when we collect them, while we possess them, when we leave them, and again throughout eternity. Let us be wiser, my brethren, let us attach ourselves to these goods which will follow us into the other life, and will make us happy for endless days: which is what I wish for you...

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost — On the Death of the Just

Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus. The death of the just is precious in the eyes of the Lord. (Ps. 115:15)

Preliosa in conspeclu Domini, mors sanciorim cjus. The death of the righteous is precious in the eyes of the Lord. (Ps. cxv, 15-)

Death, my brethren, is a just subject of trouble and of fear for the unrepentant sinner, who sees himself forced to leave his pleasures. Overwhelmed with pain, besieged by the thought of the judgment he is going to undergo, devoured in advance by the fear of the horrors of hell into which he will soon be thrown; he sees himself as abandoned by creatures and by God himself. But, by a completely contrary law, death fills with joy and consolation the good man who will have lived according to the gospel, walked in the footsteps of Christ himself, and satisfied divine justice by true penance. The righteous regard death as the end of their

evils, their sorrows, their temptations and all their miseries; they consider it as the beginning of their happiness; it provides them with entry into life, rest and eternal bliss. But, my brethren, there are no men, even the most scandalous, who do not desire and desire this precious death. What is incomprehensible is that we all want a good death, and that almost no one takes the means to make themselves happy. It is a blindness difficult to explain; However, as I ardently desire that you all die a good death, I am going to encourage you to live in such a way as to be able to hope for this happiness, by showing you 1° the advantages of a good death, and 2° the means of making it good.

If we were to die twice, we could expose one; but you only die once and our eternity depends on our death. Where the tree falls [là où l'arbre tombe, il reste], it remains. If a person finds himself, at the time of death, in some bad habit, his poor soul will fall to the side of hell; if, on the contrary, it is in good condition, it will take the path to heaven. 0 happy path which leads us to the enjoyment of perfect goods! Should we go through the flames of purgatory, we are sure to succeed. However, this will depend on the life we ■■have led: it is certain that our death will conform to our life; if we have lived as good Christians and according to God, we will likewise die as good Christians to live eternally with God. On the contrary, if we live according to our passions, in pleasures and libertinage, we will infallibly die in sin (1). Let us never forget this truth, which has converted so many sinners: where the tree falls [là où l'arbre tombe, il reste], it will remain forever. But, my brethren, death, by itself, is not (1) But, far from working to make our death happy, we do quite the opposite; tell me, is it this pride that will give you a good death? is this... Details of all the other sins... Death of the Blessed Virgin. (Note of the Venerable.) not as frightening as we want to believe, since it is up to us to make her happy, beautiful and pleasant. Saint Jerome was close to dying; his friends having announced it to him, he seemed to gather all his strength to exclaim: “0 happy and good news! O death, come soon! ah! How long I have wanted you! come and deliver me from all the miseries of this world! Come, it is you who will reunite me with my Savior! » Addressing those present: “My friends, in order not to fear (death) and find it sweet, we must walk in the path that J.-C. has traced out for us, and continually mortify ourselves. » Indeed, it is at the hour of death that a good Christian begins to be rewarded for the good he was able to do during his life; at this moment, the sky seems to open to let him taste the sweetness of celestial goods. Here is a good example on this subject. Saint Francis de Sales, visiting his diocese, was asked to come to a good sick peasant who ardently desired, before dying, to receive his blessing. In all haste, the holy bishop went to him, and found in this dying man a still very sound judgment. In fact, the sick man expressed to his bishop the joy he had at seeing him, and asked to confess. When he had finished, seeing himself alone with the holy prelate, he asked him this question: “Monseigneur, must I die soon? » The saint, believing that fear led the sick person to make this request, replied to reassure him, that he had seen sick people returning from further away, and that besides, he had to put his trust in God, to whom alone our life and our death belong. — “But still, Monseigneur, do you believe that I die? » — “My son, a doctor would answer this better than me; At most, I will tell you that your soul is in very good condition, and perhaps in another time, you would not have such good dispositions. The best thing for you to do, then, is to abandon yourself entirely to the providence and mercy of God; so that he may dispose of you as he pleases.

» — “Monseigneur,” replied the peasant, “it is not the fear of dying that makes me ask you if I will die of this disease; but rather the fear of living longer. » The saint surprised by such extraordinary language, and, knowing that great virtue or excessive sadness were alone capable of giving rise to the desire for death, asked the sick man where this disgust for life came from. " Oh! My lord, cries the sick man, this world is so little! I don't know how anyone can love this life. If the good God didn't force us to stay there until he takes us out, I wouldn't have been there a long time ago. — Is it suffering, poverty, that has made you so disgusted with life? — No, Monseigneur, I led a very serene life until the age of seventy when you see me, and, thank God, I do not know what poverty is. — Perhaps you have had some dissatisfaction from your wife, or your children? — Not at all, they never caused me the slightest sadness, and always tried to make me happy; the only thing I would regret when leaving the world would be leaving them. — Why then do you desire death

with so much ardor? — It is because I have heard in preaching so many marvels about the other life and the joys of paradise, that this world is for me like a dungeon and a prison. » Then, speaking of the abundance of the heart, this peasant added things so beautiful and so sublime about the sky, that the evoked saint withdrew delighted with admiration, and himself took advantage of this example, to become animated to despise the

LET'S SUM. created things and to sigh after the happiness of heaven. Was I not right to tell you that death is sweet and consoling for a good Christian; because it delivers him from all the miseries of life and the word one possession of eternal goods. 0 miserable life, how can we be so attached to you!... Job tells us in a few words what life is: "Man lives a very short time and his life is filled with misery. Like a flower, it only appears, and is already withering. He is like the shadow that passes and flees. » There is, in fact, no animal in the world that is as full of misery as man. From head to toe, there is no place that is not subject to many kinds of diseases. Not to mention the fears, the fears of evil, which, most often, will never happen to us. And, death My brethren, delivers us from all these miseries (1). Saint Paul, writing to the Hebrews, said to them: "We are here like poor exiles, who have no permanent city; but we are looking for one, which is in the other world. » What joy, my brethren, for a person who has been banished from his country, and led for many years into slavery, when he is told that his exile is over, that he will return to his homeland, to see his parents and his friends! Now, the same happiness awaits a soul who loves God, and languishes here below, in the desire to go see him in heaven among the saints, who are his true parents and friends. She therefore longs ardently for the moment of her deliverance. Death, Al. F., is to the good man what sleep is to the plowman, who rejoices at the approach of (1) Three things will console a good Christian at the hour of death, the past, the present and the future... (Note of the Venerable.) night where he will find rest from the fatigues of the day. Death delivers the righteous from the prison of his body; this is what made Saint Paul say: "Ah! unfortunate man that I am! who will deliver me from this body of death? » — "Take me out, my God," said the holy King David, "take out my soul from the prison of this body, because the righteous wait for me, until you have given me my reward. Ah! who will give me wings like a dove? » And the Wife of the song: "If you have seen my beloved, tell him that I long for love! » Alas! our poor soul is in our body like a diamond in the mud. 0 happy death, which delivers us from so much misery!... Saint Gregory reports that a poor man named Praeneste, for a long time crippled in all his limbs, being close to dying, asked the assistants to sing. They asked him why, and what could make him happy in the state he was in. "Ah! he said, "soon my soul will leave my body! Soon I will be delivered from this prison! » When they had sung for a while, they heard the pleasant music of angels. " Oh! said the dying man to them, do you not hear the angels singing? let, let them sing! » and he died. Instantly, such a pleasant odor spread around him that the room was perfumed with it. In this example, my brethren, we see fulfilled to the letter what (God) said through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: "Arise, Jerusalem, my beloved, wake up, for you have drunk from my hand, to the dregs, the chalice of my anger... all evils have come together to fall upon you... Listen, Jerusalem, poor city, you will no longer drink in the future the chalice of my indignation... put on your strength, Zion; put on the garments of your glory...Come out of your dust, and break the chains of your neck..."

SKUMllNS.

Who could understand, my brethren, the greatness of the joys of Saint Liduwino? After twenty-seven years of illness, eaten away by a canker and devoured by worms, seeing herself at the end of her ills, she exclaimed: "0 happiness! all my ills are over!.. Happy news! Precious death, hurry! Jo has wanted you for so long! » What satisfaction for Saint Clement, martyr, when after thirty-two years of prison and torture, they came to announce his death sentence! "0 happy news! he cries, goodbye prison, torture and executioners! here is finally the end of my life and my sufferings. 0 death, how precious you are, oh! don't delay!...; O death so desired, come and put the height of my happiness by reuniting me with my God... » How happy is a Christian, if he has the courage to walk in the footsteps of his divine Master!... But what does the life of J.-C. consist of? Here it is, my brethren. It consists of three things, namely: prayers, actions and sufferings. You

see that in his public life, the Savior often withdrew to pray, and that he was always active for the salvation of souls. Now, my brethren, it would be necessary for the thought of God to be as natural to us as breathing. During his life of prayers and actions, J.-C. suffered a lot: sometimes poverty, sometimes persecution, sometimes humiliation and all kinds of mistreatment. “My life,” he tells us through his prophet, “has failed in sorrow, and my years in groaning, my strength has failed in poverty (1). » Can the life of a good Christian be something other than that of a man attached to the cross with J. - C? A righteous person is a crucified one.

(1) Ps.xxx, 10.

We see that the oozes found so much pleasure in pain that they seemed unable to get enough of it. Look at this great Pope Innocent I: he was covered with ulcers from the feet to the head, however he was not yet happy, and was constantly sighing for new sufferings. He asked God for them every day through his prayers. “My God,” he said, “increase my pains,” send me even more cruel illnesses, provided” that you give me new graces! » — “Why did we say to him, are you asking God for more suffering? you are already covered in sores. » — “You do not know how great is the merit of suffering. Ah! if you could understand what pain is worth, how you would like it! » Saint Ignatius the martyr, fearing that the lions and tigers would come to lick his feet, as sometimes happened, uttered these beautiful words: “When will I kiss you, fierce beasts, you who are prepared for my torture l A h l when will I caress you? If you don't want to devour me I will excite you; so that you may fall on me with more fury; I will urge you so that you hasten to devour me. » He wrote to his disciples: “I am writing to you to tell you how happy I am! I am going to die for Christ my God! » All I ask of you is to do nothing to tear me away from death, I know what is advantageous to me. » I am God's wheat. I must be ground between the teeth of lions to become bread worthy of Jesus Christ. » Hear again Saint Andrew who exclaims at the sight of the cross on which he will lose his life: “0 happy cross, through you I will be reunited with my Master! ah! blessed cross, receive me into your arms; since, from your arms, I will be received into those of my God. » The crowd, seeing this good old man attached to the cross, wanted to tear the proconsul to pieces and detach the saint. “No, my children,” Saint Andrew cried to them from the top of his cross, “leave me, let me end such a miserable life, since, from there, I go to my God. » Saint Laurent is stretched out on an iron grill, the flames which, once upon a time, spared the three children in the furnace of Bubylone, burn him pitilessly. It is already roasted on one side, and for any reward it requires to be turned over to the other side; so that in heaven all parts of his body may be equally glorious.

Without doubt, my brethren, this example is a miracle of grace, which is omnipotent in him who loves God; but see Saint Paula. This Roman lady was tortured by violent pains that she felt in her stomach, she preferred to die than to drink a drop of wine that they wanted to make her take. Saint Gregory tells us this story of a poor but famous beggar, who, having remained paralytic for several years, unable to move on the straw where he slept, suffered inconceivable pain, and yet, did not stop for an instant of his life from blessing God. He died singing his praises. Ah! says Saint Augustine, how consoling it is to die with a peaceful conscience! The rest of the urn and the tranquility of the heart are the most precious gifts we can obtain, the Holy Spirit tells us, there is no pleasure comparable to the joy of the heart. The just, says the same Doctor, does not fear death, since it will reunite him with his God and put him in possession of all kinds of delights. See the joy that the saints show by going to death... See, Saint John Chrysostom tells us, the intrepidity and the joy with which Saint

Paul goes to Jerusalem, although he is certain of the mistreatment that awaits him. “I know that for me there are only tribulations and chains; I know the persecutions and the evils that I will suffer there; but, regardless, I fear nothing, because I am convinced that I am dealing with a good master who will not abandon me. Jesus Christ himself is my surety and my guarantor. » And seeing his disciples crying, the apostle added; “What are you doing, weeping and grieving my heart? for I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. » We are not sure, it is true, of being like Saint Paul, the friends of the good God; yet, though sinners, if we have confessed our sins with sincere regret, and have failed to satisfy as much

as we could by prayer and penance; but above all, if great pain for our sins is joined by an ardent love for the good God, we can have confidence: our sins have been drowned in the precious blood of J. - C, like Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. My brethren, there were three crosses on Calvary, that of J. - C, which is the cross of innocence, we cannot aspire to this, because we have sinned. Then, that of the good thief, the cross of penance: it must be ours. Let us imitate the good thief, who took advantage of the last moments of his life to repent, and from his cross ascended to heaven. J.-C. announced it to him: "Today you will be with me in paradise..." The last cross is that of the bad thief, we must leave it to those sinners who want to die in their sin... But, for us, my brethren, we can certainly, if we wish, be among those who make a good death.

At death, everything leaves us: possessions, relatives and friends; but here what is torture for the sinner brings great joy to the righteous. Tell me what sorrow, in fact, could a good Christian experience in his last hour? Could he regret these goods, which he has despised all his life? His body? he regards him as a cruel (enemy), who has more than once put him in danger of losing his soul. Could it be the pleasures of the world? No, probably, since he spent his life in groans, penitence and tears. No, my brethren, he doesn't regret any of this. Death only separates him from what he has always hated and despised; that is to say, sin, the world and pleasures. When he leaves, he takes with him everything he loved most: his virtues and his good works; he leaves all kinds of misery to take possession of innumerable riches; he leaves the fight to go and enjoy peace; he leaves a cruel enemy, the demon, to go and rest in the bosom of the best of all fathers. Yes, his good works lead him in triumph before God, who appears to him, not as a judge, but as a tender friend, who after having sympathized with his sufferings, desires nothing other than to reward him. The prophet Isaiah teaches us that our good works will solicit the goodness of God, open the door to paradise for us, and mark us our home in heaven. It is perfectly true that our good works will accompany us. Here is a beautiful example of the pious King Hezekiah. The Holy Spirit shows us this king adorned with all the merits of the righteous. He devotes himself with all his heart to the practice of good works, his intention is pure, the motive of all his actions is solely that of pleasing God. He observes faithfully, and with great respect, all the ceremonies of the law. But what happened? Here it is. Everything worked out for him during his life. But at the hour of his death all his magnificence and his riches, which were very great, left him; his most loyal subjects were forced to abandon him; while his good works never left him. Through them, he prays to God to give him grace: “I beseech you, Lord, remember that I have always walked before you with a pure and upright heart; I have always sought what I believed would be more agreeable to you. » Such is it, my brethren.

, the happy ending of a person who worked all his life to do well everything he did, in order to please God alone. “Blessed,” says Saint John, “are those who die in the Lord, for their works follow them! » Yes, my brethren, we will take away all that we have most precious; the goods which must pass, we will leave on earth, and what must last forever will follow us. The solitary will be accompanied by his silence, his retirement and all his prayers; the religious will be accompanied by his macerations, his fasts and abstinences; the priest of all his apostolic works: he will see there all the souls he has converted and who will be his reward and his glory; the faithful Christian will find all the good confessions and communions he has made, all the virtues he has practiced during his life. Happy death, my brethren, only that of the righteous! Listen to the prophet Isaiah: “Tell the righteous that he is happy, because he will reap the fruit of his works. » You will therefore agree that the death of the righteous is very precious in the eyes of all men; if a priest goes to visit such a dying person, his very presence will strengthen faith and hope; if we speak to him about God and his graces, immediately his love will ignite like a fiery furnace; that they spoke to him of the last sacraments, which freezes a sinner with fear and fear, he is flooded with a torrent of delight; because his God will come into his heart to lead him with him to paradise. Saint Gregory tells us that his aunt Saint Tharsille, being close to death, exclaimed, transported: “At o’clock! here is my God! here is my husband! » and she expired in a burst of love. See again Saint Nicholas of Tolentin. During the last eight days of his illness, when he had received the body of the Savior, the angels could be heard singing in his room; and when these

songs had ceased, he died: the angels took him to heaven with them. Happy death than that of the righteous 1... Saint Thérèse having appeared all brilliant with glory to a nun of her order, she assured her that Our Lord was present at her death, and had led her soul to heaven. Happy the AMC who can be assisted in death by J. - C - himself!... How sweet and consoling it is to die in the friendship of Dioul... Is this not a first reward for the good that one was able to do during one's life?

I know, my brethren, that we all want to have a good death; but it is not enough to desire it, we must still work to deserve this happiness, this great happiness. Do you want to know what can provide us with this good? Here it is in a few words. Among the means we must take to die well, I choose three, which, with the grace of God, will infallibly lead us to a good death. We must prepare ourselves for it by a holy life; 2" by true penance if we have sinned, and 3° by a perfect conformity of our death to that of J. - G. We usually die, as we have lived: this is one of those great truths that Scripture and the holy Fathers affirm to us in many places. If you live as good Christians, you are sure to die as good Christians; but if you live badly, you are sure to die a bad death. The prophet Isaiah says: "Woe to the impious who only thinks of doing bad, because he will be treated as he deserves: (at death) he will receive the reward for the works of his hands." It is true, however, that one can sometimes, by a kind of miracle, begin badly and end well; but this happens so rarely that, according to Saint Jerome, death is ordinarily the echo of life; But if, being touched with repentance, you begin to live Christianly, you will be among those penitents who soften the heart of God and win his friendship. Although less rich, they still go to heaven, and it is precisely them that God uses to manifest his mercy: “If you have a friend, do him good before your death” My brethren, can we have a better friend. our soul? let us do everything we can for her; for the moment we want to do her good, we will no longer be able to do so!... Life is short, covered in sins, before the tribunal of Christ. brothers, this is not what you must do; you must purify yourselves, and always keep yourself ready to appear before your judge.

Here is an example which will show you that he who delays his return to God from day to day dies as he lived. Cardinal Pierre Damien tells us that a religious had spent the best part of his life in squabbles and arguments with his brothers. Being on the bed of death, his brothers implored him to confess his sins, to ask for forgiveness from God and to do penance for them, with a good intention not to fall into them again, if his health were restored. They didn't get a single word out of it. But a little later, having spoken again, he spoke to them, and about what? Alas! of what had been the subject of his conversations during his life: trials and other matters. His brothers begged him to think of his soul; everything was useless, he went back to sleep and died thus, without giving the slightest sign of repentance. Yes, my brethren, like life, like death. Do not hope for a miracle that God rarely does; you live in sin, you die in sin. A large number of examples prove to us that after a bad life, we should not expect a good death. We read in Holy Scripture that Abimelech, a proud and proud prince, seized the kingdom which he was to share with his brothers, and put them to death in order to reign alone. As he was attacking a place, the besieged having taken refuge in a tower, he approached it to set it on fire. A woman who saw him from the top of the rampart threw a stone at him and split his head. This unfortunate man, feeling wounded, called his squire and said to him: “Draw your sword and pierce my body... Put me to death quickly, in order to spare me the confusion of having been killed by a woman. » What strange conduct, my brethren? Is he the first prince who was thus injured? Why then does he want his squire to kill him? Ilelas! it is because all his life he was nothing but ambitious!... Satil had just given battle to the Amalekites, the fate of the armies was very certain; he felt lost; because he was already wounded, and saw the enemy army ready to fall on him. Leaning on his sword, and seeing a soldier coming behind him, he said to him: “Come here, my friend, who are you? » — “I am an Amalekite. » — “Eli bien! do me a favor: throw yourself on me and kill me; because I am overwhelmed with pain; I cannot die, finish me off. "And why, my brethren, does this wretch want to die by the hand of an Amalekite? Was this the only prince who lost a battle?

Do not be surprised by this, the Holy Fathers answer us, he is a prince who, during his life, gave himself over to vices, who allowed himself to be dominated by envy, avarice and by all kinds of passions. Why does he die in such a dishonorable way? It's because he had a bad life. Everyone knows that Absalom had been disobedient and rebellious to his good father all his life. The hour of his death which God had marked for all eternity, having finally arrived, as he passed under a tree, he remained there hanging by his hair. Joab, seeing him, shot him three times with arrows. Where does the unhappy end of this prince come from, my brethren? except that all his life he had been nothing but a bad son. He died in this way, because he had lived badly. So you see clearly, my brethren, that if we want to have a good death, we must lead a Christian life and do penance for our sins; we must excite in us, with the grace of God, a deep humility in a heart full of regret for having offended such a good master. But a third way to prepare ourselves to die well is to adjust our death to that of Christ. When we bring the good God to a sick person, we also carry the cross; it is not only to cast out the demon, but much more, so that this crucified Savior serves as a model to the dying, and so that, casting his eyes on the image of a God crucified for his salvation, he prepares himself for death as J.C. prepared himself. The first thing J.-C. did before dying was to separate from his apostles; a sick person must remember, distance himself from the world, and detach himself as much as he can from the people who are most dear to him, to only concern himself with God alone and his salvation. Jesus Christ, knowing that his death was near, prostrated himself with his face to the ground in the Garden of Olives, praying earnestly. This is what a sick person should do when approaching death; he must pray with fervor, and, in his agony, unite with the agony of Christ. The sick person who wants to make his illness meritorious must accept death with joy, or, at least, with great submission to the will of his heavenly Father, thinking that it is absolutely necessary to die to go see God, and that this is all our happiness. Saint Augustine tells us that he who does not want to die bears the mark of a reprobate. Oh! my brethren, how happy a Christian who has lived well is at this last moment! He leaves all kinds of misery to come into possession of all kinds of goods I...

Happy separation! It unites us to our sovereign good which is God himself!... This is what I wish you.

Tome IV — Feasts and miscellaneous sermons

Invention of the Holy Cross — On the Cross

Complacuit reconciliare omnia in ipsum, pacificans per sanguinem crucis ejus, sive quæ in terris, sive quæ in cælis sunt. It pleased God to reconcile all things [complacuit reconciliare omnia] through Jesus Christ and in him, pacifying by the blood of his cross what is, whether on earth or in heaven. (S. Paul to the Colossians, i, 20.)

Who among us, my brethren, will be able to cast his eyes on this holy and sacred cross, on which Jesus Christ lost his life, without being imbued with the most lively gratitude? What! My brethren, Jesus Christ equal to his Father dies to save us I O holy cross! 0 precious cross Without you, never heaven without you, never from God! without you, always crying in hell! without you, never any happiness in the next life! Yes, it is this cross which brought down the Son of God from heaven, through the desire he had to die on it, and thus redeem the whole world. May the sight of this cross bring good things to a Christian who has not yet lost his faith! Alas! what were we before this cross was dyed with the adorable blood of the Son of God? We were banished from heaven [bannis du ciel], separated forever from our God [séparés pour toujours de notre Dieu], condemned to spend our eternity in flames [condamnés à passer notre éternité dans les flammes], crying and suffering for endless days. Let us go often to the foot of this cross, and we will see in it the key which opened the door of heaven for us, and closed that of hell. O my God, if so many goods are given to us by it, what respect and what esteem should we not have for it. To increase this respect in you, I will show you 1° the benefits that we receive from the cross, and 2° the esteem that we must have for it.

I. Before the cross was sanctified by the death of a God made man, the demons were on the earth, and, like lions [semblables à des lions], devoured everything that presented itself to them. This spirit of darkness [esprit de ténèbres] confessed it one day to Saint Anthony, telling him that, since the advent of the Messiah, he had been chained and could only harm those who wanted it. Saint Anthony, in all his temptations, so frequent and so violent, had no other weapons than the salutary sign of the cross. So he was always victorious over his enemy. Saint Teresa, with a single sign of the cross, put to flight [mettre en fuite] the demon, who appeared to her one day in the form of a half-open mountain ready to swallow her up. I will not go into great detail about the goods we receive from the cross. It's the cross which brought us an eternity of happiness; it is she who changed the anger of the Lord into infinite love; it is she who snatched the thunderbolts [arracher les foudres] from the hands of the Eternal Father, to fill them with all kinds of goodness and blessings. It is still the cross which gives us our good thoughts, our good desires, the remorse of conscience [remords de conscience], the pain of our past sins - Ah! it is not yet enough!... It is through this cross that we have become the children and friends of God, the brothers and members of Jesus Christ, the heirs of his eternal happiness [héritiers de son bonheur éternel]; it is also on it that this beautiful religion was born which gives us, with its consolations, the hope of a happy future [l'espérance d'un avenir heureux]. From this cross, the sacraments derive all their effectiveness. O beautiful and holy cross, what blessings you have merited for us! It is you who make the adorable blood of Christ flow every day on our altars to appease the anger of God... It is on the cross that this heavenly manna [manne céleste] was sown, that is to say the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, which will be, until the end of the centuries, the nourishment of our souls [nourriture de nos âmes]. It is this cross which bore these mysterious grapes [raisins mystérieux], whose juice waters our soul [abreuve notre âme] during its exile [pendant son exil]. The sinner finds there his conversion and the righteous perseverance. O beautiful and precious cross! that he who often came to your feet would be strong and terrible against the powers of hell [terrible contre les puissances de l'enfer]! Moreover, I say that the sight of the cross brings glory to the saints in heaven, and despair to the damned in hell. Indeed, the elect in heaven see that the glory and happiness which they enjoy came to them from the cross, and that, on this sacred wood, was born this love which must intoxicate them eternally [les enivrer

éternellement]. On the contrary, the mere presence of this cross will cause despair among the damned. They will remember that it could have been for them the instrument of salvation [l'instrument du salut], a means to avoid eternal misfortune, and an abundant source of help [source abondante de secours] and graces. Ah, 1 sad memory of so many despised goods!... It is only through the cross [ce n'est que par la croix] that we can go to heaven. There are different kinds of crosses: some are interior and invisible, others visible or sensitive. The former weigh heavily on all mortals without the exception of a single one; we each have our own. Let's treat this familiarly. 1° You ask me what an invisible cross is? By this name I understand, for example, a violent temptation which pursues you eagerly to make you fall into sin; a slander that is uttered against you; a loss of property, a wrong done to you [un tort que l'on vous fait]; an illness that never seems to want to leave you. It is yet another invisible cross that these taunts, this contempt with which you will be relentlessly showered. All these crosses are softened, and lose almost all their bitterness [perdent presque toute leur amertume], by the sight of the cross on which our good Savior died to rescue us from the clutches of the devil. Do you want to find your sorrows light or rather sweet and pleasant? Come with me for a moment to the foot of the cross, on which we were born in AD. Are you despised? See your God in the hands of the Jews, dragged by his hair, thrown against the walls, blindfolded, with his hands tied behind his back, beaten with great blows with fists and sticks, while they ask him who hit you? Are you poor? Well see this God in a manger, lying on a bed of straw. Do you want more? Look to the cross, and you will see this God die stripped of his clothes. Are you being slandered? Listen to the blasphemies and curses that are uttered against a God who came to earth to flood it.

of blessings. Everything that is said against him is false; and how does he take revenge? praying for those who slander him- Are you in sufferings, infirmities? Lift up your eyes to this cross, consider your God bound, dying the most cruel and painful death. My Father, please forgive those who put me to death: it is for them that I lose my life, it is for their sin that I suffer. What do we suffer, my friends, if we compare it to what Jesus Christ endured for us? Ah! My brethren, that the saints knew much better than us the price of suffering I... See Saint John of the Cross, beaten by his monks until he fell in his own blood. Our Lord appears to him and says to him: “John, what do you want me to give you, for all that you suffer with so much love? » — “Ah! Lord, please do not lessen my sufferings; but, on the contrary, make for every reward that I suffer ever more, since you, innocence itself, have endured so many torments. Saint Bernard could not look at the cross without shedding tears when he saw what a God had suffered for us. Listen to what Jesus Christ said one day to Saint Peter, martyr, when he complained of the outrages done to him: “And I, Peter, what did I do when I was crucified? » Yes, my brethren, at the foot of the cross [au pied de la croix] we will learn what sin is, the price of our soul and the love of a God for men. It is at the foot of the cross [au pied de la croix] that we will find the sweetest consolations in our sorrows, the greatest strength in our temptations, and at the hour of death, the firmest confidence. Let us come often to the foot of this cross, pour out our hearts, and there we will learn what a God has done for us, and what we must do for him.

2° I said first of all that at the foot of the cross [au pied de la croix] we will learn what sin is, and the horror we must have of it. The fire of hell, it is true, seems to make us understand something of its enormity, since, for a single thought of pride which will have lasted barely one or two minutes, if we die in this sin, we will be condemned to burn in the braziers lit by the wrath of an Almighty God (1), A person will have stolen fifty sous or three francs from his neighbor; If, being able to do so, she does not repay You, this sin alone will precipitate her forever into the abyss. And so with all other sins: it makes my God shudder that the man who commits it is blind! But blinder still is he who commits it, and, seeing himself in this state, pushes his fury to the point of remaining there. However, I dare to tell you that the love of a God dying on the cross shows us in an even more sensitive way the malice and fury of sin. Indeed, if we consider everything that J.C. suffered to atone for him: the humiliations, the outrages, the blasphemies that were vomited against him, his crucifixion and his death, we can say: Only God knows what sin is. Second, I said that the cross shows us the infinite love of a God for his creatures. Ah! my children, he tells us from the top of the cross on which he is nailed;

see if you can find a love like mine; could I do more than die for you? Ah! if we looked at this cross with the eyes of faith, could we not exclaim like Saint Paul: O holy and sacred cross! O cross of love, what good things you bring us! Ah! my children, you have not (1) See note A, at the end of the volume.

wouldn't thank your God? Yes, my brethren, if we truly loved our God, we would only live for him. In this I mean that we must take him as a model, be happy to see ourselves humiliated, despised, slandered, and far from taking revenge, look at all this, on the contrary, as coming from the hand of God, and as a great grace that he grants us. If you wanted to imitate Jesus Christ, you would flee pleasures, balls, dances, games and cabarets; because Jesus Christ condemned all this, by the example of a penitent and retired life. Imitate Jesus Christ and you will not fear death; on the contrary, it will be a joy since it will reunite you with him. If you live without being attached to the things of earth, your heart will be all for heaven. I then said, my brethren, that the cross will provide all the consolation of the Christian who will have carried it with joy during his life. Indeed, where will your resource be in this terrible moment which will decide your eternal fate? where will you look, where will you address your sighs and your prayers, if not towards the cross? What will we expose to your eyes, what will we put in your hands, what will we apply to your lips? Nothing other, my brethren, than the cross. What name will you be called at this moment? the name of Jesus and of Jesus crucified. Oh! what consolation for a Christian to hold a cross in his hands when dying, if it was during his life the subject of his meditations and his love! Then he will be able to say to his Judge: “Lord, you see that I have never fled or despised your cross; I wore it with pleasure; the humiliations, insults and suffering, far from beating me down and discouraging me, filled me with joy and courage. » O my God, if we could understand what a great blessing the crosses are to us from your hand!

Let us never lose sight, my brethren, that at death, the cross will be our only resource. But also what despair for the one who, in his last hour, will see this cross which he will have despised during his life and of which he will have blushed for fear of a mockery. What despair, when Jesus Christ confronts his life with that of this sinner! When he opposes his humility and the contempt he has endured to the pride of this sinner. His poverty to avarice, his purity to infamous actions, the forgiveness of his enemies to vengeance, his penances and his tears to pleasures, his fasts to the delicacies of this wretch!... What will then become of these poor unfortunates, who, during their life, will have had no trait of resemblance to their Savior?.,. O my God! can we think of this, and not die of pain!... A God lives and dies in suffering, and a Christian, although burdened with sins, does not want to suffer anything!.,. Alas! what repentance at the hour of death But it will be too late.

II. I will now speak to you about visible crosses, and give you the reason for their multiplicity, their blessing and the great honors that the Church pays them. If the interior crosses are so numerous, if the visible crosses, images of the one where our God died, are also in great number; it is so that we always keep in mind that we are the children of a crucified God. Let us not be surprised, my brethren, by the honors that the Church pays to this sacred wood, which provides us with so many graces and such great advantages. We see that the Church makes the sign of the cross in all ceremonies, in the administration of all the sacraments. Why is this? will you laugh at me? My friend, here it is: all our prayers and all the sacred men, draw their strength and virtue from the cross. During the holy Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, which is the greatest, most august and most sublime Action of all those which can glorify God, at every moment the priest makes the sign of the cross. God wants us to never lose the memory of it, as the surest means of our salvation and the most formidable instrument of the devil. He even created us in the shape of a cross; so that every man might be the image of this cross, on which Jesus Christ died to save us. See how the Church hastens to multiply their number: it makes them the special ornament of our churches, of all its altars; she places them on the highest places, to show us the triumph won over the enemy of our salvation. What could be more touching than this glorious monument, which puts before our eyes the summary of all the sufferings of our good Savior! Does he not seem to say to us: See, my children, what I have done to deserve your homage! O my God, is not such

a spectacle capable of touching the hardest heart and the one most buried in the filth of sin? O my God, may a heart that is even slightly sensitive find consolations and tears there! Could a Christian cast his eyes on this sacred wood, without feeling the remorse of conscience [remords de conscience] awaken within him, without recognizing what he is and what he must do? 1° Why are crosses placed near towns and villages? It is to show the public profession that a Christian must make of the religion of Jesus Christ, and, to remind passers-by that they must never lose the memory of the death and passion of the Savior. This salutary sign distinguishes us from idolaters, as in the past circumcision distinguished the Jewish people from the infidels. Also

Let us see that as soon as we want to destroy religion, we start by overthrowing these monuments. The first Christians considered it their greatest happiness to carry with them this salutary sign of our Redemption. In the past, women and girls wore a cross which they made their most precious ornament; they hung it around their necks, thereby showing that they were the servants of a crucified God. But, as faith has diminished, and religion has weakened, this sacred sign has become rare, or, to put it better, has almost disappeared. See how the demon leads to evil by degree. They began to remove the image of the Crucified One and the Blessed Virgin, and were content to wear a cross that they called a butterfly. After that, the demon pushed them further: to replace this sacred sign, they took a chain, which is nothing other than an ornament of vanity, and which, far from attracting the blessings of Heaven to them, on the contrary, only engages them in the ways and pitfalls of the demon. See the difference between a chain and a cross: through the cross, we have become free children; through the cross, Jesus Christ delivered us from the tyranny of the devil, to which sin had led us. The chain, on the contrary, is a sign of slavery; that is to say, through this instrument of vanity, we leave God by giving ourselves to the devil. Lord! how the world has changed since the first Christians, who took an honor and a holy joy in wearing this sacred sign of our religion!... 2° The intention of the Church is that we all have crosses in our homes, so as never to lose sight of the fact that we are Christians and disciples of a crucified God. We quickly know if religion reigns in a house-

INVENTION OF THE HOLY CROSS. ■ sound, by the crosses and images that ■■■ finds there. When entering a house, I look around for the sign of our Redemption. If I don't find it, I can't help but deplore the misfortune of the house and those who are inside. Ob! My brethren, how beneficial the presence and sight of a cross is! Often, all it takes is a glance at a crucifix to soften the deepest and most painful sorrows, to make us make the greatest sacrifices, and practice the most sublime virtues. Who could still have the courage to satisfy any passion, seeing a God nailed to a cross? Who would find his sufferings too great, considering a God whose body is all in tatters from the blows he received in his scourging? Who could find the practice of virtue difficult, seeing a God who has not commanded anything that he has not begun to practice himself? No one, therefore, should leave their house without this salutary sign; so that all who enter may recognize that you are Christians, and that you make a public profession of it. A virtuous Christian should have a beautiful crucifix, some beautiful images, and regard them as the finest ornament and honor of his house. From time to time look at the images or the crucifix, think a little about what Jesus Christ suffered for us and how much he loved us. Seeing the image of the Blessed Virgin (for you must never leave your homes without a representation of this good Mother), pray to her to receive you and your family under her holy protection. When you consider the images of the saints, think of the virtues they practiced, the penances they did during their lives, to deserve the happiness they now (enjoy)

in the sky. What should we think of a house where we find neither Christ nor any other sign of religion? Alas! it is believed that it is inhabited by people who have lost their faith, who have become enemies of the cross, and are no longer Christians in name only. Ah! how great is the number of those who are Christians only in name, and whose conduct is similar to that of the pagans! Ah! you might say, that’s a bit strong! We are not sorry to be Christians, on the contrary: explain to us how we only have the title of Christian? — Hey! my friends, it's easy. It is when you fear to perform your religious acts in front of the world, and when,

finding yourself in a house, you do not dare to make the sign of the cross before eating, or when, to do so, you turn to the other side, for fear of being seen and mocked; it is when hearing the Angelus ring, you pretend not to hear it, and you do not say it, for fear that people will make fun of you. Or again, when the l 3 o n God gives you the thought of going to confession, you say: “Oh! I won't go, people will make fun of me. » If you behave in this way, you cannot say that you are Christians. No, my friends, you are, like the Jews of old, rejected, or rather, you have separated yourself; you are only apostates; your language proves it, and your way of living manifests it quite clearly. Why, my brethren, was the name of apostate given to the Emperor Julian? This is, you will tell me, because he was first a Christian and then he lived like the pagans. - Well! my friends, what difference is there between your conduct and that of the pagans? Do you know what the common vices of pagans are? Some, corrupted by the infamous vice of impurity, vomit from their mouths all kinds of abominations; others, given over to gluttony, seek only good morsels or fill themselves with wine; all their daughters' occupation is only in adornment and the desire to please. What do you think, my brethren, of this conduct? — This is the behavior of people who have no hope of another life. — You are right. And what is the difference between your life and theirs? If you will speak frankly, you will agree that there is none, and that, therefore, you are Christians in name only. O my God, how few Christians you have to imitate you! Alas, if there are so few to carry their cross, there will be just as few to bless you for eternity. 3° We plant blessed crosses in the fields, and we place them in places where the crops are: the reason is that our sins seem to continually press the justice of God to bring down on us the scourges of his wrath: hail, frosts, droughts, floods. As through the cross the Son of God reconciled us to his Father, and merited for us heavenly treasures; the intention of the Church is, by placing them in the fields, to ward off calamities. The blessing they receive is to ask God not to turn his merciful eyes from the fields where they are planted, and to pour out his blessings there. But it is not enough to plant crosses, it must also be done with piety, with faith, and above all not then be in a state of sin; you are sure that if you plant them with such sentiments, the good God [le bon Dieu] will bless your lands and protect them from temporal misfortune. If your crosses do not produce the effect you expected, it is not difficult to imagine, it is because you will plant them without faith, without piety; is that by planting them, you have- maybe you don't even say a Pater and an Ave on your knees; or, if you have prayed, perhaps it is one knee on the ground and the other in the air. If this is true, how do you want the good God [le bon Dieu] to bless your crops? But when you find them (l), it is indeed another abomination!... Oh! how much religion has lost its ancient beauty! Yes! these crosses are really planted in the fields of pagans, and not of Christians. O my God! What an unfortunate century we have arrived in!... When the Church instituted this holy ceremony, everyone envied the happiness of placing these crosses in their field, it was done with the deepest respect. When they were found, either while harvesting or harvesting, they prostrated themselves with their faces to the ground to worship Jesus Christ, died on the cross for us, and we thus expressed our gratitude for what he had wanted to preserve and bless the harvest. Everyone, with tears in their eyes, kissed the sacred sign of our Redemption. Alas! my God, this is no longer how Christians show their gratitude to you! Dare I say it? They imitate Judas and the Jews! They are like the Jews, when they bowed the knee to insult his royalty; they imitate Judas, who kissed him with a mouth stained with the greatest crimes. Everyone only gave him this semblance of respect out of derision; Isn't that really what you do when you encounter a cross? Instead of showing God your gratitude for the fact that he was willing to bless and preserve the fruits of the earth; Is it not an insult that you are doing to her, to kiss her while laughing? Is it not an act of derision or rather idolatry to present a handful of wheat as if (1) At the time (the harvests.

you praise the person holding the cross. Come on, unhappy man, either in this world or in the other, the good God [le bon Dieu] will punish you. Fathers of families, did I not tell you, two years ago, that at harvest time, you must take all the crosses that are in your fields, in order to avoid their desecration? Did I not recommend that you put them back on your stacks, and, when you have threshed your wheat, burn them, lest they be desecrated? If you have not done this, you are very guilty; you must not fail to confess it; Alas! who could

count all the horrors that are committed at harvest time, or grape harvest, in those moments when God in his goodness and charity covers the earth with the gifts of his providence! The ungrateful man then seems to redouble his insults and multiply his outrages. How dare you murmur that your crops are failing, that hail or frost are taking them away from you? Ah! rather, be amazed that, despite so many sins, the good God [le bon Dieu] still wants to give you what you need, and much more than you still need! O my God! how miserable and blind man is! 4° The sign of the cross is the most terrible weapon against the devil; also, the Church wants us not only to have it continually before our eyes, to remind us of what our soul is worth, what it cost J. -C; but also that we do it at all times on ourselves: when we go to bed, when we wake up at night, when we get up, when we begin our actions, and especially when we are tempted. We can say that a Christian who makes the sign of the cross with feelings of piety, that is to say, well penetrated by the action he is performing, makes people tremble all hell (1). A tempted person who makes this sign of our salvation with living faith can be said to crush demons and rejoice the whole heavenly court. See Saint Anthony, against whom the demons waged a harsh and continual war; What means did he use to defend himself, if not the sign of our Redemption? One day when the demons were tempting him, he said to them: “How little you are! I, who am only a poor solitary man, barely able to stand up straight, overwhelmed by penance, with a single sign of the cross I put you all to rout. » It is recounted in the life of Saint Justine that Cyprian the magician, in love with her beauty, sold himself to the devil, so that he would use all his artifices to lead her to evil. The demon was quick to admit to her that he could do nothing about her, because, at the first temptation, she made the sign of the cross, and thus rendered her efforts useless. But when we make the sign of the cross, we must do it not out of habit, but with respect, with attention, thinking about what we are doing. O my God! with what holy trembling would we not be penetrated, if, in doing so upon ourselves, we remembered that we pronounce all that is holiest and most sacred in our religion! See with what devotion we would be imbued, if we thought that we were naming the three persons of the most holy and most adorable Trinity: the Father, who created us and brought us from nothing like all that (1) Indeed, nothing is more striking than this sign, it represents to us 1° the mystery of the Holy Trinity; 2° by the movement that the hand makes from the forehead to the stomach, it reminds us of the descent of Christ from the womb of his Father into that of the Blessed Virgin; 3° the crucifixion of J.-G. by the cross that we form; 4° the final judgment involves the movement of the hand from left to right. [Note from the Venerable.)

which exists; the Son, who took body and soul in the womb of the most holy Virgin, who sacrificed himself to save us all from hell, and merit us eternal happiness; the Holy Spirit, who makes our heart his temple, to whom we are indebted for all the good inspirations and all the good desires that we have. See, my brethren, if you made all these reflections, how much you would be imbued with love and gratitude towards this God in three persons, especially when, entering church, you take holy water. Oh! if this were so, one would only enter trembling. This is why, when your children begin to move their arms, you must soon make them form this sacred sign, and inspire them with the greatest respect. 5° You will perhaps ask me what these words mean: Invention of the Holy Cross, Exaltation of the Holy Cross? My friends, these are two holidays, one of which is on May 3, and the other on September 14. Here is the origin of the first: II. It was 326 years since Jesus Christ died, the Emperor Constantine fighting against the tyrant Maxentius, saw in the air a cross brighter than the sun, and on which were written these words: “As a sign, you will be victorious over your enemy. » The emperor, struck by such a prodigy, immediately had this sacred sign painted on his weapons and his flags, and won a resounding victory. Saint Helena, her mother, conceived such devotion towards the cross of Christ that she did not give herself any more rest until she had found it. So she went to Jerusalem. God having made known to her the place where it was, after painful searches, she found it as well as the two other crosses of the thieves. In order to distinguish which was that of the Savior, a dead man was brought (1) who, being placed (1) See note A, at the end of the volume.

on the first two, did not resurrect. But when they had placed him on the third, the dead man got up and began to walk. This cross has been the source of an infinite number of miracles. Saint John Chrysostom calls it, the

hope of Christians, the resurrection of the dead, the consolation of the poor, the hope of the rich, the confusion of the proud and the torment of hell. O my children, says Saint Epiphanius, let us engrave this salutary sign on the top of our doors, on our foreheads, on our mouth, on our chest; let us often put on this impenetrable armor against the devil. Let us never go without having this sacred sign with us. God, to show us how much he wanted the sacred wood on which he died to be venerated throughout the universe as a source of blessing, allowed that, for several centuries, the wood of the holy cross did not diminish, despite the fact that it was constantly taken away. Subsequently, when this holy relic had been exhibited throughout the Christian world, it diminished: now it is believed that there is no country where we do not have a piece of this wood on which Jesus Christ worked our salvation. This is the origin of this feto which is called the Invention of the Holy Cross, because it was the day that it was found by Saint Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine. The festival which is celebrated on September 14, recalls that this holy cross having remained for fourteen years with the Barbarians, who had removed it from Jerusalem, the Emperor Ileraclius, victorious over the Persians, formulated in the peace treaty that this sacred wood would be returned to him. It was brought back in triumph to Jerusalem, and this is why, on September 14, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is celebrated. The saints, my brethren, all loved the cross, they found their strength and their consolation there. See Saint Lidu- wine to whom thirty-eight years of suffering seem only a flash, as his heart expands in this source of love!... But, you will ask me, must we always have something to suffer? sometimes illness or poverty; sometimes slander or slander; a loss of property or an infirmity? Are you being slandered? my friend, are they heaping insults on you? Are you being wronged? so much the better. It's a good brand; do not worry: you are on the path that leads to heaven. Do you know when to cry? I don't know if you will understand it; but it would be precisely if, on the contrary, you had nothing to suffer, that everyone would esteem and respect you; you should envy those who have the happiness of spending their lives in suffering, contempt and poverty. Do you forget then that, in your baptism, you accepted a cross, which you must only leave at death, and that it is the key which you will use to open the door of heaven! Do you therefore forget these words of the Savior: “My son, if you want to come after me, take up your cross and follow me,” not for a day, not for a week, nor for a year, but for the rest of your life. The saints were afraid to spend a few moments without suffering, because they considered that time as wasted. According to Saint Thérèse, man is in this world only to suffer, and as soon as he stops suffering, he must stop living. Saint John of the Cross asks

Feast of St. John the Baptist

Mirabilis Deus in Sanctis suis. God is admirable in his saints. (PS. LXVII, 36.)

jjpSi This was the language of the Prophet-King, considering the greatness of the goods and graces that God grants to those who love him. Yes, without V # Fdoubt, my brethren, everything that God has done is admirable: everything announces to us a God infinite in wisdom, in power, in mercy and in all kinds of perfections. But, we can affirm that in his saints, he did something more particular, or, to put it better, he wanted to trace in them all the virtues that Jesus Christ his Son practiced during his mortal life. Indeed, do we want to know what his hidden life was? Let us go and find these ancient loners whose hair has turned white in the forests, and we will see in them his own virtues. Do we want to know, at least in part, the beauty and esteem he gave to the most beautiful of virtues, purity? Let us enter the monasteries, and we will see people of both sexes constantly crucify their flesh, to preserve in them such beautiful virtue. Do we want to know his apostolic life? Let us consider all these apostles and all these missionaries, who cross the seas to announce the Gospel to idolaters, who sacrifice their health and their lives to save these poor souls. Do we want to have an idea of ■■the suffering life of Jesus Christ? Let us go find these crowds of martyrs, see their tortures: some die on racks or burning braziers, others are ground between the teeth of lions, or even expire in the midst of the most frightful torments. Yes, my brethren, we seem to see again in all these saints, the own life of Jesus Christ. This is precisely what made the holy King-Prophet say in advance: “O my God, how

admirable you are in your saintsl" However, my brethren, we can say that Saint John the Baptist, whose feast we celebrate, and whom we have the happiness of having taken as our particular protector, contains in himself all the virtues of the other saints. The life of the Savior was entirely devoted to pleasing his Father, to saving souls and to doing penance: such was also the life of Saint John the Baptist. The life of Jesus Christ was pure; pure was that of Saint John the Baptist. From the most tender age, he returned to the desert, from which he only left to fight sin and die for his God, before his God died for him. Jesus Christ died to repair the glory of his Father: Saint John died to uphold the rights of his God. Oh! My brethren, what virtues we discover in this great saint! It is true that Mary holds first rank after her Son; but we can say that after Mary, Saint John the Baptist holds the first rank. To encourage you, my brethren, to have great confidence in this incomparable saint, I am going to let you know some of the graces that the good God [le bon Dieu] gave him, in preference to other elect. If we wish to praise certain saints, we begin to show the vices to which they first abandoned themselves; then we let go of drowning them in their tears, and covering them with the penances they practiced during the rest of their lives. We see on one side human weakness, and on the other the power of grace. Are we talking about Saint Madeleine? We begin by recounting her miserable life, then the tears she shed and the penances she did to appease the justice of God. Are we talking to you about Saint Peter? We tell you that after having had the misfortune of denying his divine Master, he wept bitterly, and his penance lasted as long as his life. Their tears and their penances console us; but nevertheless their sins afflict us, because they have offended a God who is so good and who so deserves to be loved! But, my brethren, in our good and great Saint John the Baptist, we find nothing that could sadden us. Everything must, on the contrary, rejoice us; for we see in him only good and no evil: he has only virtues and no sins. We only begin to count the virtues of other saints and their penances from a certain age; but, of Saint John the Baptist, we can begin to say wonders, even before his birth. Oh! My brethren, how good it is to praise a saint in whom we see only the most sublime virtues! But the great difficulty we find in praising Saint John the Baptist is that his virtues are brought to such a high degree of perfection and so far beyond human knowledge that it seems rash to us to attempt to say anything about them. Shouldn't we be content with praise and bless the Lord, who distinguished You from all the other saints in such an extraordinary way? Suint JeanBaptiste is the only man who remained so short a time under the tyranny of sin; he was still only six months old when Jesus Christ himself came to sanctify him in his mother's womb: a grace which was granted only to him. It is well said that the prophet Jeremiah was sanctified in his mother's womb, but the holy Fathers doubt that this penny in the same way. To give you an idea of ■■the greatness of our saint, I will tell you that he was the ambassador of the Eternal Father, who sent him to announce the coming of his Son to earth. Yes, my brethren, this great saint was like this beautiful morning star, announcing the rising of the sun which should warm the earth and revive nature. Heaven made so much of Saint John the Baptist that it employed all the greatest in its court to announce his coming. It was this same angel who announced the conception of the Savior and that of Saint John. It was, we can say, a completely celestial child: he was formed in the womb of a mother, the holiest that the earth has ever borne, after the Blessed Virgin. This was rather the work of grace than that of nature; because his parents were very advanced in age and unable to have children. Saint Augustine asks why we celebrate the birth of Saint John the Baptist, while, for all the other saints, the feast is only celebrated on the day of their death? "It is," he tells us, "that the other saints were not chosen by God neither before they were born, nor even when they were born, but only in the course of their lives, after many battles and penances; Saint John the Baptist, on the contrary, was chosen by God, not only at birth, but even before being born; before seeing the day, he is a prophet; he is still in his mother's womb, when he already recognizes the Savior of the world, himself still in the womb of the most holy Virgin. » Yes, my brethren. let's say it, before his eyes were opened.

green, he contemplated his God and his Savior, promised for so many centuries. So we see that his life was a continual wonder. His birth was similar to this beautiful sun which appears every day, bringing joy and fertility everywhere. His cradle was like a mountain of balsam, which spreads its perfumes to the ends of the

earth. Indeed, when Saint John came into the world, all his relatives, all those around him were delighted with admiration; we could hear them saying to each other: “What will become of this child one day? truly, the omnipotent hand of God is upon him. » Yes, my brethren, from whatever side we consider this saint, we see nothing but great in him. 1° He is great by the name of John which was given to him; 2° he is great by the graces with which heaven has showered him; 3° he is great by the mission that God assigned to him, 1° he is great by the sublime virtues that he practiced; 5° he is great before God; 6° he is great before men; 7° finally, he is great in his death. Isn't this an abyss of grandeur? Am I not right to tell you that we would gain just as much from remaining silent as from wanting to undertake the praise of such a great saint, as his virtues and his privileges are above the knowledge of a mortal! Oh! what graces, my brethren.we can obtain from heaven by M his protection! I therefore say 1° that Saint John is great by the name that the angel gave him. It was the Eternal Father who chose this name for him, to show us that this child would be completely celestial. The name John means graces, blessing, pri- extraordinary city. 2° I say that he is great because of the favors that heaven granted him. The good Lord, in fact, did not follow the ordinary laws to erase original sin from him: he was sanctified in his mother's womb. Saint Ambrose tells us that the grace of God animates him, even before having life, and Saint Peter Chrysologus, that God puts him in heaven before his feet touch the earth; he gives him the divine spirit before the human spirit, and gives him a gift of his grace before nature has formed his body. Yes, adds this great saint, God makes him live in him before he lives natural life. But if we want to have an even more sublime idea of ■■this greatness, we must consider that Jesus Christ himself, as a man, merited these graces, and that the Blessed Virgin was chosen by the Eternal Father to be their depositary. Oh! My brethren, what graces, what virtues, what greatness contained in a single saint!... When Jesus Christ is conceived in the womb of his mother, he leaves, or rather he commands her to go quickly to find her cousin Elizabeth, in order to sanctify her precursor. “It seems,” says Saint Peter Damien, “that the Son of God came to earth for this one alone: ■■he leaves all other men to seek only Saint John. » He gives extraordinary strength to his Mother to cross the mountains of Judea, which she does with incredible speed. When Mary arrived, Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist were seized with sweet delight. Elisabeth opens her mouth to publish the favors that God gives her through Mary's visit; Jean-LJaptFste quivers with joy, and adores his God and his Savior, even before seeing him with his bodily eyes. Ah! happy sanctification which was made by Jesus Christ himself with so much kindness and eagerness!

But to this considerate love of Jesus Christ let us add, my brethren, the attentions of Mary, the dispenser of his graces. Oh! what happiness for Saint John the Baptist, who, after emerging from his mother's womb, was placed in the arms of the Holy Virgin! Oh! My brethren, what an effusion of graces, during the three months that she stayed with her cousin Elisabeth! How many times did she not take this child in her arms? How many times has she not carried him and fucked him? Saint Ambrose tells us that the Blessed Virgin had so much purity and holiness, especially since she had conceived and given birth to the Son of God, that she communicated purity to all those who saw her. It was impossible, said this Father, to look at her without feeling burning with love for this beautiful and precious virtue. Saint Denis the Areopagite says that, even after the Ascension of Jesus Christ, she had so many graces, so many charms, so many attractions, so much holiness; we saw in her so much majesty and rays of divinity that everyone would have adored her as a goddess, if faith had not forbidden it. If then all those who looked at her felt filled with such great purity, what purity must she not have communicated to Saint John the Baptist by caressing him, by kissing him, by spreading on his lips the spirit of grace with her virginal breath; because, at that moment, Jesus and Mary were, so to speak, one person? Jesus, in these happy times for Mary, only breathed through Mary's mouth; the breath and breath of Mary were only the breathing of Jesus. If Mary had so much empire over souls after the Ascension of Jesus Christ, what torrent of graces must she have poured out on Saint John, while Jesus Christ was in her womb? 0 happy child! 6 happy mother! What graces Mary's visit has given you. Should we not believe that the little heart of Saint John was, in these happy moments, a brazier of flames of divine love? But if so many graces are granted at his birth, what will it be during his life? Every moment, God gives him

new favors; he gives them to him from his mother's womb, and he will only stop at the moment when King Herod will have his head cut off, to have it taken to the infamous Herodias. 3° Saint John the Baptist is great because of the mission that God the Father has assigned to him from all eternity. The Holy Spirit only speaks of it with transports of admiration: he tells us that the Eternal Father chose him to announce to men the coming of the Savior. The prophets and figures designated him long in advance; but John the Baptist is himself the voice of God crying in the desert, announcing to the people that the kingdom of heaven is near, that the Savior is already on earth. Seeing the Son of God coming to him, John, overjoyed, turns to the people saying: “Here is the Lamb of God, here is he who takes away the sins of the world. »Here is the Redeemer of the world, promised and awaited for four thousand years; it is he himself who comes to redeem men... “make therefore worthy fruits of penitence!” » Yes, my brethren, this office of precursor is so important that we have no terms to speak of it with dignity. The Eternal Father wanted Saint John the Baptist to take care of the interests of his Son; it is to him alone that he seems to want to entrust the care of his cause, as being the purest and most worthy heart. But what increases the greatness of Saint John the Baptist almost to infinity is having had the honor of baptizing his God; this mission completes the height of his glory. “O my God! cries Saint Augustine with transports of admiration, what greater glory for a servant than that of baptizing his Sauworm and his Master? What an honor for a creature to see its Creator at its feet." "My children," Tertullian tells us, "to touch the adorable body of Jesus Christ, Saint John the Baptist had to have a purity proportionate to that of the Holy Virgin," which seems to put him almost in the same rank. 4° Saint John the Baptist is great for the sublime virtues he practiced. I will not speak to you, my brethren, about his interior virtues; it is a chaos (1) which has no bottom, and which only God has been able to fathom: the most we can speak of those which have appeared to the eyes of men, and which have filled the world with astonishment. If we want to consider his penitence, his tireless zeal, his detachment and his great humility, we will not know which virtue we should first speak of. I first say that he left his father's house while still a child, to go to a desert where he lived alone, in the company of wild beasts; His only clothing was a coarse tunic, made of camel's hair. His food consisted of a little wild honey and grasshoppers. Water alone was enough for him to drink, although he took so little of it that Jesus Christ tells us “that he neither ate nor drank,” thus making us understand that he took little to sustain his life. We see, it is true, many saints going to spend the rest of their days in the woods; but they had enough to house themselves and provide for their needs. Saint John, we can say, is the only one who entered the forests so young. In fact, he would have been barely eighteen months old when King Herod conceived the barbaric plan of killing all children under the age of two.

(i) Abyss. See note Adu volume 1.

His father, Zacharie, advised Elisabeth, his wife, to take the child and flee, in order to avoid the massacre. Indeed, after all the wonders that had been witnessed at his birth, it was to be feared that he would be taken for the Messiah. To spare her child from death, Elisabeth fled into the woods in all haste, thus abandoning herself to [s'abandonner à] the hands of Providence; but, alas! forty days later, she died! When the king's officers came to Zechariah, they asked him where the child and his mother were? The father replied that he could not tell them. Foaming with rage, they knocked him down between the vestibule and the altar; because he was then praying in the temple (1). But what will become of our Saint John, not yet two years old, in the middle of a wood, without father, without mother, without hope of the slightest human help? This may surprise you, but have no fear, all this is only done by an express order from Providence. Although his parents were great saints, they were not yet worthy of taking care of this incomparable child; it was for the angels that this honor was reserved. As soon as Elizabeth died, the Eternal Father sent, not only an angel, but a crowd of angels, who watched over the preservation of this celestial child, until the moment when he could be self-sufficient. We know well that the Lord sent several times to his saints something to help their misery: to some, ravens, such as to a Saint Paul, a hermit; to others, dogs, like at Saint Roch; deer, like at Saint Gilles; he once commanded an angel to bring food to the prophet Elijah, at a time when Queen Jezebel was persecuting him.

(1) See note 13 at the end of the volume.

But for our Saint John, the animals would not have dared to approach the ambassador of the Eternal Father. One angel was not enough; the whole of heaven had to be used for him alone. Our saint is therefore deprived of maternal arms; but immediately the angels come and surround him. “O my God! exclaims the illustrious Cardinal Baronius, what a prodigy of wonders is this child, who, even at birth, astonishes heaven and earth! » His penance begins almost with his life. Ah, poor child, why are you doing penance? It's true, he's not the only one who did penance. When we look through the lives of the Saints, we find rigors that make us shudder and confound our cowardice. Some spend seven or eight days without eating or drinking; others, such as Saint Simeon Stylite, even go up to forty days; or else they will endure torments that will make them die of fear, such as Saint Venantius, a Saint Queen, and many others. Nevertheless, we see that all had sinned, and all, therefore, needed to do penance to satisfy divine justice. But our Saint John, why does he do penance? is not her life the holiest and purest of all lives, after that of the Blessed Virgin? Here is the reason. Being the ambassador of the Eternal Father to announce the coming of his Son, he had to be adorned with the most sublime virtues, and his mere presence began to shake and touch hearts by the example of such an innocent and penitent life. Tears and groans are all his food and occupation; there is no virtue that he does not practice to the highest degree of perfection. If, after so many years of tears and penances, he leaves his desert, it is to announce to the people and prepare for the coming of the Messiah; if he had so much of courage is that he hoped to give his life for his Savior, before his Savior gave it for him. He was great in his zeal. He spoke with so much ardor, with such fiery zeal, that he astonished everyone. It was believed to see in him the prophet Elijah returned to earth and mounted on his fiery chariot, to convert the most hardened sinners. Nothing is capable of stopping it; wherever he finds vice, he fights it with incredible zeal. He reproaches sinners for their shameful lives, and threatens them with the wrath of God if they do not do penance: “You races of vipers,” he said to them, “who taught you to flee the wrath of the Lord ready to fall on you? Therefore produce worthy fruits of penance, do not delay your conversion any longer; for the ax is at the foot of the tree, and every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. » “Yes,” cries Saint Bernard, “he was so inflamed with the love of God that his words were like burning coals, capable of inflaming the coldest hearts, and converting the most hardened sinners. » If they asked him what they should do to prepare for the coming of the Messiah: “Let him,” he said to them, “who has two garments give one to the poor. Let him who has bread give it to him who has none. » Finally, in the ardor of his zeal, having learned that the king abandoned himself to [s'abandonner à] the infamous vice of impurity, he went to court, and boldly reproached him for a life so shameful and so unworthy. However, he knew very well that this step would cost him his life; no matter, the glory of God is attacked, this is enough for him so that neither threats nor torments can stop him; he tramples everything under his feet; he believes he is in the world only to defend the interests of his God, and as soon as the opportunity presents itself, he seizes it. Ah! would rather God his ministers today were all in the same disposition, and that neither promises nor threats were a reason for them to betray their conscience. Yes, my brethren, this great saint burned with the desire to give his life for his Savior. Oh! if we all had this happiness, and if we did everything in our power for it, how many fewer sins, how many more virtues and good works... He is great in his detachment from the goods of this world and his very contempt for life. He, in a way, surpassed Jesus Christ in his poverty. If Jesus Christ did not want to be born in a house which belonged to his parents; however, some time later he returned to Nazareth, to his mother's house. Saint John the Baptist, on the contrary, left his father's house at the age of about eighteen months, and he never returned. The Son of God was very poor in his clothing and his food; Saint John the Baptist, so to speak, was even more so. The Son of God had ordinary clothes; he only has a camel skin bristling with hair. The food of the Son of God is a little ordinary bread; that of Saint John the Baptist is a little wild honey and a few locusts. The Son of God was resting on a very bad bed; Saint John only had bare earth. Also Jesus Christ himself said that John the Baptist neither ate nor drank, to show us the greatness of his penitence. The Savior of the world still had the company of his parents; Saint John the Baptist only had

the company of wild beasts. Isn't that true, my brethren? we are forced to admit, we cannot find the bottom of this ocean of virtues, and all we can say about it is nothing. He is great in his humility. Never, my brethren, the earth 2 never had the happiness of seeing such a humble saint. He is, after the Blessed Virgin, all that is greatest, and he compares himself to all that is vilest and weakest on earth. He enjoys, in the eyes of the world, the highest reputation: some regard him as an angel descended from heaven, others take him for the Messiah himself. In fact, the pontiffs and the first among the Jews had conceived such a great idea of ■■him that they sent to him all that was most considerable in their nation, such as the priests and the Levites, to find out from himself and from his own mouth, who he was. He was first asked if he was the Messiah; because a life filled with so many prodigies, so withdrawn and so penitent, could, in their eyes, only be suitable for the Messiah. This abyss of humility answers them bluntly: “No. » Unable to convince themselves that he was an ordinary man, they asked him if he was Elijah; knowing that this prophet was a man of miracles. He said again: “No, I am not. » “But,” they said to him, “if you are neither the Messiah nor a prophet, tell us who you are, so that we may give reason to those who sent us to you. » “Well, he answers them with this prodigy of humility, I am the voice of him who cries in the desert: Prepare the ways of the Lord, do penance. » Could he better show his humility, saying that he is only the sound of a voice resounding in the desert? Can we find anything weaker and of less value than the sound of the voice? “He who comes after me is infinitely greater than me, I am not even worthy to touch the string of his shoes,” 0 incomparable humility! He could very well attribute to himself the quality of prophet, since he is sent by God to announce the coming of his Son; but, in order to destroy the good opinion nion that we had of him, he uses the terms most likely to confuse him with ordinary mortals. “It is easy, my brethren,” Saint Augustine tells us, “not to desire praise when people do not want to give it to us; but it is difficult not to take pleasure in hearing them when they are published before us. » 5° Saint John the Baptist is great before God, because Jesus Christ himself made his panegyric, and he praised all his beautiful virtues. Certainly, there is a great deal of difference between the praises that men give and those that God himself gives. All men are subject to error, but God only esteems and praises that which is worthy of esteem or praise. 0 what glory for our saint to have been great before God! It is the greatest honor. Jesus Christ held it in such esteem that he did not want an ordinary man, nor even an angel, to praise its virtues; he wanted to do it himself: thus showing that there was no creature in heaven or on earth capable of doing it worthily. We read, it is true, in Holy Scripture, that God says, speaking of Moses, of Joseph, of the prophet Nathan and of the prophet Elijah, that they were great before the kings of the earth; but, to be great before God, Saint John the Baptist alone is placed in this rank. If I dared, I would say that God seems to want to equal himself. The angel, messenger of the Incarnation, uses the same words when speaking to Mary and when speaking to Elizabeth: “The Son who will be born to you will be great before God and before men. » Accordingly, my brethren, was I not right to tell you that no creature was capable of praising this earthly angel? Jesus Christ, it is true, praised Madeleine for having kissed his feet; he well praised the Centurion and the Canaanite, saying that there was no no such great faith in all Israel; but this is only said for a few particular virtues; on the contrary, he takes a singular pleasure in speaking of each of the perfections of our saint. Listen to him when, addressing the Jews, he speaks to them of his firmness: “What did you go to see in the desert? A reed shaken by the wind? » that is to say, an ordinary man, whose prerogative is constancy and weakness, who bends to all the winds. But no, he is an unshakeable man, and inviolably attached to the laws of his God. Hear him talk about penance. Who did you go to see? “Have you seen a man dressed delicately? » like socialites? “No, these people stay in the houses of the big ones. » Finally, to carry his praises to infinity, he says that “none of the children of women can equal him. » What more can we say, my brethren? When Jesus Christ praised certain virtues, he never placed them above those of other saints; but, when he praises John the Baptist, he exalts his holiness above that of all other men. Again, he ends up assuring that “he is a prophet, and more than a prophet. » Oh! My brethren, what graces and what blessings we would obtain, if we had the happiness of having true confidence in this great saint 1... 6° Saint John is great before men. Several centuries before, the prophets announced his birth, and they used, in speaking of his coming, all the eloquence that the Holy Spirit had given them. The prophet Isaiah depicts

him as a resounding voice, which will be heard in all the deserts of Judea. Jeremiah compares him to a wall of bronze and a fiery arrow, to show us his constancy and his zeal for the glory of God. Malachi calls him an angel, to MUST show the beauty and grandeur of its purity. “The opinion that people had of him was so great,” says Saint John Damascene, “that all the people followed him, taking him for the Messiah. When he had the good fortune to baptize Jesus Christ, these words which were heard coming down from heaven would have been attributed to him: “This is my beloved Son,” if the Holy Spirit, who then appeared in the form of a dove, had not made the Son of God known by resting on his head. » After his death, we believed we saw in the person of Jesus Christ, the resurrected John the Baptist. The Fathers of the Church do not know in what terms to speak of him, as they find his merits above their knowledge. Saint Peter Chrysologus calls him the school of virtue, the model of holiness, the rule of justice, the martyr of virginity, the example of chastity, the preacher of penance, the voice of the apostles, the light of the world, the witness of God and the sanctuary of the Holy Trinity. And to give you an idea of ■■the esteem that the Church of heaven and earth has of our saint, I will tell you that God had inspired in his Church the thought of celebrating three masses on the day of his birth, as on the birth of the Savior; so much conformity is his life with that of the divine Master. Well! My brethren, did you have such an idea of ■■the greatness, the dignity and the holiness of our John the Baptist? Ah! my friends, why do we have so little devotion and trust in the saints? This is because we have never taken the trouble to know the virtues and penances they practiced, and the power they have with the good God [le bon Dieu]. 7° Finally, Saint John the Baptist is great through his death. It is perfectly consistent with that of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ traced the path to heaven for all the saints, as for Saint John the Baptist, he made him walk in front him. John the Baptist preceded you to the desert, before him he embraced external penance, before him he preached, before him he died. The Savior was neglected and abandoned by all his friends, except his holy Mother; Saint John seems to have been even more so. Jesus Christ, in his passion, is followed by several holy women in tears; Saint John is not consoled by anyone: following the example of his divine Master, he will die in torment and universal abandonment. When the blessed Saint Stephen was stoned by the Jews, he had the happiness of being encouraged by the Lord himself, who opened the heavens, and, through this breach, showed himself to him. Saint John suffers an even more bitter death than Saint Stephen; for if Jesus had wanted to console Saint John, he would not have needed to open the heavens; but only to take a few steps to come from Galilee to Judea. He could have at least sent him an angel to console him as he did to Saint Peter, who, having been put in prison in the same city of Jerusalem by the order of Herod, an angel was sent to him who broke his chains, and returned him safe and sound to the faithful. Why then, my brethren, does Jesus Christ not act in this way towards his parent, the most innocent of all saints, the most austere of all confessors in the rigors of penitence, the most chaste among virgins, the most mortified and the most afflicted of martyrs in his passion and in his death? Do not be surprised, my brethren, to see such a great saint, of whom God himself has praised so much, die without consolation and abandoned in his last hour; after having been throughout his life a living image of Jesus Christ, he must still be so in his death. Just as the Son of God was to be, at his last moment, abandoned by his Father, in the same way our saint had to be abandoned by his own parent. The zeal that Jesus Christ showed for the glory of his Father, his freedom to return to vice, attracted accusers and false witnesses to him. It was the same for Saint John the Baptist. Herod, seeing his freedom to take him back, had him put in prison at the request of Herodias, an adulterous woman. Those who testified falsely against Jesus Christ were contemptible people; those who condemned Saint John the Baptist were all the most infamous things that the earth had ever seen: a shameless king, an adulterous woman and her daughter who was no less infamous. While the king and his entire court were given over to debauchery and impudence, she danced with so much grace that the king promised to give her whatever she wanted, when it was half his kingdom. The infamous girl spoke to her mother to find out what she should ask the king. This adulterous mother, enemy of the holiest of men: “Go,” she said, “take this dish, and bring me the head of John. » The unfortunate girl, worthy of such a mother, immediately goes to find the king. “Give me,” she said, “in this dish, and immediately, the head of John the Baptist. » The king seemed to be horrified by this request, but, not wanting to appear fickle, he ordered the executioner to go and cut off

John's head. This criminal girl, more joyful with this head than with half of Herod's kingdom, goes all triumphant to take her to her mother, who, foaming with rage, dares to put her impure hands on the tongue of the holiest of the children of men, and, taking the awl with which she curled her hair, pierces and pierces it again in a thousand places, to avenge herself for the liberty the saint had taken to reproach her for her crimes. Alas! My brethren, who would not be touched with compassion at the sight of so much cruelty your! Jesus Christ was covered in his blood during the scourging; Saint John the Baptist was no less so in his passion, since his blood seemed to have made him a second garment. Jesus Christ was no longer persecuted after his death; our great saint experienced, even after his death, the fury of his enemies. Who among us would not be surprised to see such a great saint suffer so much torture, without Jesus taking his defense? Ah! My brethren. is that God wanted to elevate John to the highest degree of perfection and glory. He wanted his life and death to be nothing more than a continual martyrdom. God was quick to punish the authors of John's words. The shameless girl, crossing a river one day, was caught, it is said, between two pieces of ice which cut off her head. As for Herod and the adulterer Herodias, accused by Agrippa of having plotted sedition, and forced to go into exile in Spain, they both died on the way, overwhelmed with evils of all kinds. All this shows us that suffering and persecution have been and always will be the share of saints and good Christians, and that we should rejoice when we are despised and persecuted by the people of the world. Let us ask, my brethren, to the good God [le bon Dieu], during the octave of this beautiful celebration, that he may grant us, through the intercession of our great saint, the virtues that he practiced during his life, and especially his humility, which he brought to such a high degree; his purity, which he defended at the expense of his life; his detachment from earthly goods and his contempt for death; finally, his perfect union with God. Yes, let us turn with complete confidence to Saint Joan the Baptist; let us remember that he is even more powerful in heaven than on earth, that he will obtain for us graces for time, and glory for eternity. I wish you happiness...

Martyrdom of the Maccabees

Parati sumus mori, magis qtiam patrias Dei leges prœvaricari. We are ready to die rather than [parati sumus mori, magis quam] violate the law of God [violé la loi de Dieu] and our country. (IIL. of the Maccabees, lives, 2.)

It was, my brethren, the response made by the illustrious family of the Maccabees to Antiochus, this famous persecutor of religion [ce fameux persécuteur de la religion]. These young Hebrews responded courageously: “We owe God unfailing [à toute épreuve] love, and no torment can make us violate the fidelity we owe to him; here we are, you can make us suffer, our bodies are in your power; but you are not the master of our faith, our love, you have no control over us in that; so do not expect us to do anything that will displease the Lord, we are happy to die. » They do not waver, they are resolved, with the grace of God, to lose not only their property, their honor, but also their lives. Do you see the courage of these ancient martyrs, who had much less grace than us? No, my brethren, these holy martyrs had not seen, like us, Jesus Christ carrying his cross to Calvary; they had not yet seen these crowds of martyrs, who, following the example of Jesus Christ, gave their lives with so much courage; but they were the ones who blazed the trail. They did not, like us, have the happiness of hearing the voice of Jesus Christ, who, from the top of the cross, seems to say to us: “Come, my children, come, ascend to your Calvary, as I ascended to mine. » This is indeed a language capable of giving us strength. But no, they didn't have the same happiness! Oh! if our fathers reappeared among us, could they recognize us as their children and their heirs in the faith? IlelasI how many of us who, not out of fear of death or even of the loss of our possessions, but out of a little human respect, a little fear of being mocked, abandon our God and blush for being good Christians? How many others dishonor this holy religion with an entirely pagan and worldly wine? To encourage you, my brethren, to fear nothing when it comes to pleasing God and saving your soul, I will put before your eyes the courage of the holy martyrs of the Old Testament and of some of the New. But let us not be content to admire their intrepidity and their zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of their souls. Let us compare their lives with ours, their courage with

our cowardice, their torments with our horror of penitence; let's see if we can hope (for heaven) like them by doing what we do. Alas, how many damned Christians there are!... Let us do, to imitate them, everything in our power.

I. If we open the Holy Books, we see that throughout time the good have been persecuted by the wicked. This is what (we must) expect, if we want to hope for heaven. See Abel and Cain, Joseph and his brothers, David and Saul, Jacob and Esau, etc., etc. We have no other division on earth, those who have gone before clearly demonstrate this to us. Throughout time, those who wanted to be God's have made the sacrifice of their goods, their reputation and their very lives; if we want to hope for their reward, we must do like them, otherwise we will never have the happiness of participating in their joy. Here is an example to better convince you. We read in the Old Testament that the Jews, returning from the Babylonian captivity, were at peace until the impious Antiochus ascended the throne. This wicked king incited the cruelest persecution they had ever seen until then; God permitted it, it is true, to test his servants; and moreover, the prophet Daniel had announced it to them. The design of this impious king was to abolish entirely, if he could, the worship of the true God. He ordered, under penalty of death, to desecrate the Sabbath and festivals, to strip the holy places, to build altars and temples to the devil, and to sacrifice animals forbidden by the law. He had an infamous idol placed in the temple, the books of the law were destroyed and thrown into the fire. If a few Jews were found who wanted to serve the Lord, they were immediately caught and punished with death. The holy city was abandoned by its own subjects and became the home of the pagans. The holy temple became deserted, all the festivals were changed to mourning; However, despite all the terrors that were beginning to be spread to force the Jews to renounce the true God, several resolved to do nothing against the law, and to die rather than violate it. One of those who proved the most intrepid was a good old man named Eleazar, aged ninety, known for his pure and innocent life. His persecutors took him and ordered him to eat meat that had been offered to idols, otherwise they would put him to death according to the law of the evil king. Seeing that he refused, they wanted to force him; some opened his mouth, others put the meat into him, as if these fools did not know that the will alone causes sin, and that an action where. the heart having no part is not a sin. Eleazar was invincible, he preferred death rather than obeying the emperor by eating meat forbidden by law. “I prefer,” he said, “an innocent death to a criminal life. » While he was going with joy to death, he had to undergo a trial at the hands of his friends, and, for that very reason, much more formidable than that which the impious king made him endure. When they came to him, they said to him weeping: “My friend, we have come here to save you, as we saved ourselves. We will bring meat that has not been offered to idols, that is to say to the devil, and, out of complacency, you will only touch it, and we will tell the king's officers that you have obeyed. This is a sure way to avoid death and return to your nation. » But the holy martyr cried out: “No, no, I will never do that; let me be led immediately to execution, rather than committing similar cowardice, which would outrage my God; to be thrown into the tomb alive, I prefer it a thousand times over. What! my God, people believe me capable, at my age, of dissembling, of making people believe that my religion is only a superstition!

Me, leaving such a bad example to the youth who intend to take me as a model?... me, letting them believe that I was seduced by the love of life and by the fear of torture? No, no!... never, in the few days I have left to live, will I indulge in such cowardice! Even if I could, today, by prostituting my soul and my conscience, escape the torments of men, could I escape the justice of God? No, let us die with constancy, my friends, and show ourselves worthy of our age, since God deigns to choose us to present us as a spectacle to youth. The cruelest death is as sweet as it is glorious, when it is to God that one makes the sacrifice of one's life. Why should I fear losing a life that soon I will be forced to leave without merit, while by giving it today to God, I receive such a beautiful reward for eternity? Come, executioners, he added with extraordinary courage, come, and you will see the sacrifices that those who are helped by the force from on high can make; you are going to take away the remainder of my life to give me an eternal one. Ah! I seem to see the angels who come to me, to take my soul into heaven; no, no, my friends, I fear neither torment nor death, all this is good

for me. Let us die for our God, and we will show Him that we truly love Him. Let us die, my children, and we will leave war and suffering to go to a place of peace, joy and delight. Yes, my God, I willingly sacrifice my life to you!" Oh! My brethren, how beautiful these feelings are! that they are worthy of the greatness of a beautiful soul and of a religion as holy as ours. All these beautiful words that he uttered in the presence of his executioners should have been touch and change their hearts; but no, they only become more furious. They rush at this poor old man, they throw him to the ground, they strip him, they bind him; the executioners, armed with rods, beat him until he lost his breath; but in the midst of so much pain, he picks up the louse of strength that remains to him, and addresses the Lord: "You know, O my God, it is for you that I suffer in fear of offending you; my God, support me, make me die for the love of you! » They did not stop beating him until he had surrendered his beautiful soul to God. What an example for us, my brethren! but what a shame for so many cowardly Christians, who, so many times, out of cursed human respect, transgress the laws of the Church by eating meat on forbidden days! Tell me, if you had been put to such trials, would you have done like this good old man of ninety years old, who preferred death rather than pretending to eat meat forbidden by the law of the Jews? What condemnation for so many apostates who trample underfoot this holy law! Go to a fair, to a cabaret, on a Friday or another day when it is forbidden to eat meat; see these tables which are covered with it, examine those who eat it - Alas! they are fathers, mothers, masters and mistresses, who, perhaps, will have their children and their servants with them; These are these bad Christians, even sacrilegious, who will have fulfilled their Easter duty, and who have already promised so many times not to transgress this law again! What idea do we have today of God, his religion and his laws? Alas! My brethren, our holy religion is no longer, in the eyes of the greatest number of Christians, but a chimera, only a ghost; we no longer keep only a certain exterior, when nothing bothers us, when nothing costs us; but, at the slightest thing, we despise everything, and we seem to be nothing more than apostates. Oh! how many lost Christians! How unfortunate they are to commit sin with so much reflection, knowing so well that they put Jesus Christ to death, that they tear away their poor soul from Him to drag it to hell!... What will they be able to respond when Jesus Christ judges them? Will they say that it was their fragility or poverty that led them to do this? What a shame for these unfortunate apostates, some of whom sinned through impiety by mocking the laws of the Church, others through cursed human respect! They preferred to lose their soul [perdre son âme], to outrage God, rather than bear the shame of a word coming from the mouth of an impious person, a libertine!... Let us come, my brethren, to other examples, and we will see that if old age is naturally more firm in faith, the tenderest age also provides us with examples which are no less great. After the battles of this good old man, we saw a mother enter the ranks with her seven children in the prime of life. They had so much candor and modesty that they were admired by everyone. The cruel Antiochus had them all brought before him, he ordered them immediately to eat the meat which had been offered to the demon, and this, without replying, according to the orders he had given. They all unanimously refused to do so. Upon this refusal, he had them stripped before him, and ordered that they be beaten with whips and sinews of oxen, until their bodies were completely torn. The eldest of the seven brothers, without being surprised at this treatment, spoke up and said to the tyrant: "What do you ask of us? Learn that we know how to suffer and die, but not to betray the law of the Lord. »

This response put the impious Anliochus into such great fury that he ordered the brazen cauldrons to be immediately reddened, and, while all the executioners hastened to obey him, outraged with anger against this young man who had just defied him in the name of all, he had his tongue cut out, the skin torn off his head, the extremities of his feet and hands cut off, and this in the presence of his mother and all his brothers. He makes him apply red iron blades to all parts of his body. As after this cruel torment he was still alive, he ordered him to be thrown into the brazen cauldron which the fire had made as hot as an iron bar emerging from the fire, and mercilessly watched him burn. Meanwhile, his mother and brothers encouraged each other to suffer. "Come, my children," this mother cries to them, "courage! By our death, we can glorify God and make ourselves happy for eternity; since we are all condemned to die as a result of the sin of our first parents,

let us die; our death is a few moments, and we will have a reward, eternal happiness. » The first being dead, the second was seized. They began by pulling out his hair and the skin of his head, asking him if he wanted to eat the meat that was being presented to him. He answered them that he would know how to suffer and die like his brother, but that he would never have the cowardice to violate the law of the Lord. They made him suffer the same torments, they cut off his hands and feet. Having only a sigh left, he said to the king: “Wicked prince, you are making us lose our present life; but we are assured that the Lord, for whom we lose it, will make it eternal for us. » After this, we move on to the third, which presents itself, and without waiting to be questioned exposes oneself to the same tortures. He is asked for his hands, which he presents with joy: “It is from heaven,” he says, “that I received these members; I gladly deliver them to you to make them suffer, since, through these sufferings, I can glorify God and secure heaven for myself. » Ah! My brethren, if we had a faith as lively as that of these holy martyrs, what contempt would we not make of our bodies and our sensual pleasures?... Would we have the courage to sacrifice our soul and our eternity to them so easily?... Ah! if we thought well of our resurrection, which will be glorious in proportion to our bodies having been despised and persecuted 1... With what glory will appear these crowds of martyrs who allowed their bodies to be put in tatters!... The king and all his courtiers, not knowing enough of the strengths that religion gives us, could not recover from their surprise. They only became more enraged. Antiochus came to the fourth, he no longer took the trouble to threaten, because he knew well that it was a waste of time, he immediately came to torments. So he had his skin torn off. His feet and hands are cut off, he is thrown into a burning cauldron: “I do not fear your orders,” he said again, “because a glorious resurrection awaits us, and the God we serve is all our hope; for you, you will be resurrected one day, but it will not be for life, an eternal death awaits you. » They seized the fifth, and the king, all furious, said: “Let's see if they will be equally insensitive. " The child does not wait to be caught by the executioners, he runs to meet them, and, from the middle of the flames where his poor body was already in pieces, he calmly looks up at the tyrant: "You do with us now what you want, but there will come a time when you you will in turn experience the rigor of divine justice. » The king no longer being able to possess himself: “Let us finish,” he said to his executioners, “the extermination of this insolent family. » The sixth arrives, sweetness painted on his forehead; he comes forward with joy and delivers himself without fear into the hands of the executioners. These furious people began to tear him, tearing off and cutting off his hands and feet: “What do you fear, pitiless king? said the generous martyr, there remains only one, who is my brother, and my mother; a child and a wife; my brethren are waiting for me in heaven, you make me die, I am very happy. » However, what is most worthy of admiration is the attitude of this poor mother, who sees all her children perish before her eyes, and this in a single day, without shedding a tear. She knew how to hold back her pain so well that, on the contrary, she did everything she could to encourage them. 0 mothers who are listening to me, if your children are not religious, or rather, if they are without religion, blame only yourselves!... If you had the good fortune to imitate this generous mother, if, like her, you thought that you only have children to give them to the cioll... “Ah! my children, she cried to them, while their bodies were torn and cut into pieces, my children, courage, die for the Lord, and heaven is yours! lose a miserable life, and you will have a happy and eternal one. » Alas! how many poor mothers, too weak, see their children running into evil, or rather into hell, without shedding a tear, perhaps without saying a Father and a Hail! Let us leave, my brethren, these sad lessons. However, out of seven children, this poor mother only had one left, the youngest. Antiochus, covered with shame at not having been able to defeat these children, wanted to one last effort to win at least this one. He made him beautiful promises, saying that he would include him among his favorites, provided he abandoned his religion. But this child was unwavering. The king, feigning compassion, called to the courageous mother: “Save at least, I pray you, this last child. He will make you happy and your consolation through the favors with which I will shower him. » Fathers and mothers, come and learn; listen to the language of a mother who knows that her children are given to her to lead them to heaven and not to damn them. She said to him in the presence of the king: “My son, have pity on her who carried you nine months in her womb, who nourished you for three years with her milk and who raised you to the age where you are; look, my son, at this beautiful

sky, you are only on earth to go there; see your brothers who are already on thrones of glory, they are waiting for you; following their example, willingly lay down your life for your God. » These words inspired in the child such a great love of God, that he turned to the executioner saying: “What are you waiting for? Do you think I will obey your ungodly orders? no, no, I want to show that I am worthy of following in the footsteps of my brethren, whom your cruelty has placed on thrones of glory. They are waiting for me: do you see them holding out their hands to me; yes, like them I abandon my body and my life for the defense of the law of my God. » Then the king was so furious to see that a woman and children were making fun of him, that he made him suffer even more. He had his hands and feet cut off... and ended up throwing him into a red-hot cauldron, where this executioner, in his diabolical joy, took pleasure in seeing him tormented. The mother remains alone, among the scattered limbs of her sons; whichever way she turns (her gaze), she sees the feet, hands, skin and tongues of her children, which had been thrown here and there around her, to torture her further. Antiochus, having no longer any hope of winning her mother, made her suffer such cruel torments that she died in torture, blessing God for having given her the happiness of seeing all her children die before her to go to heaven. Thus died this blessed mother, who left earth only for paradise. Happy mother to have seven children who are now placed on seven thrones of glory 1 0 happy children, to have had such a mother! who only brought you into the world to lead you to the possession of God! For Antiochus, this unfortunate tyrun, the avenging hand of the Almighty visibly punishes him; he was struck by an invisible and incurable wound, just punishment of an executioner who had invented so many tortures to make the servants of God suffer. He fell from his cart and bruised his entire body. His insides were swarming with worms, his flesh was falling off in shreds; he spread such an unbearable stench that no one could approach or serve him. Feeling struck by the invisible hand of God, he made great promises and took the most beautiful resolutions; but the Holy Spirit tells us that the fear of torments alone made him do all this. God did not listen to his prayer, and this unfortunate prince died, eaten by worms. This is the ordinary end of these impious people, who seem to live only to outrage God and lead others to evil. The good Lord, tiring of their impieties, strikes them, and throws them into hell to rid the earth of them. If the difference, my brethren, was so great between Antiochus and this mother with her children, it is even greater now: the king is in hell, while the mother and children are in heaven. Oh, there are few Christians today who are ready, I am not saying to give their lives for the good God [le bon Dieu], as these children did, but even to endure the slightest thing so as not to violate the laws of our holy religion. How many are there who make neither confession nor Easter communion? who pay no attention to the fasts commanded by the Church, and who spend this holy time like any other, without mortifications, without perhaps depriving themselves of eating between meals? Alas, how many others frequent cabarets, or, without doing all this, spend these days devoted to penance, without doing one more prayer or good work? How many are there who have no difficulty in missing the parish office, and who, perhaps, will miss three Sundays in a row, knowing very well what the Church threatens them with? How many fathers and masters force their children and their servants to work on the holy day of Sunday, how many poor children go perhaps whole months without attending services! Alas! what damned masters! Others are not content with violating the laws of the Church, despising them, mocking them, they pay no attention to the word of God which they regard only as the word of a man. How many, during holy services, are without devotion, and let their spirit go wherever it wants! They hardly know what they come to church for, and would be very embarrassed to answer if we asked them why they come to Holy Mass? How many barely get on their knees! We have no problem missing vespers, instructions, the rosary, the way of the cross and evening prayer. There are some who almost never visit the Blessed Sacrament between services, and spend the holy

Sunday day less well than the other days. Oh! how dare they hope for heaven? How can they believe that the good God [le bon Dieu] will have mercy on them in this terrible moment when the greatest saints trembled; them whose life has been nothing but good works, and who, for a few slight faults, have done so many penances (1)? How many of these poor Christians are there still, who spend whole days without thinking

about the good God [le bon Dieu] and without taking a little look at themselves, that is to say, at their poor life; in order to realize the horror of their sins, and to (excite themselves to) do some good actions with the aim of attracting the mercy of God on them? This, my brethren, is the behavior of the majority of Christians these days: We do not think at all about our salvation, we are entirely occupied with temporal affairs, we regard death as never coming. However this moment is coming for everyone; and if we have done nothing to secure heaven for ourselves, then all our sins present themselves in multitude to our memory, all the graces which we have despised, all the good works and prayers which we could have done and which we have not done; we see, in this sad moment, all the souls that we have lost by our bad examples, and that we could have led to God, if we had given them good ones. Oh! what misfortunes await a person who has lived without religion, without penances and without examining what the commandments of God and the Church oblige him to do! This is not the way to do it, it is not the way the saints did it; they were so intent on pleasing God and saving their souls that not only did they (i) See note C at the end of the volume.

avoided the slightest sins, but still they spent their whole lives in good works, tears and penance. A large number of martyrs gave their lives to secure heaven, we have beautiful examples of this in the history of the New Testament saints. I will cite to you that of Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian.

IT They were two twin brothers. Their mother, who had the fear of the Lord, took every possible care to inspire them with the love of God; she often spoke to them of the happiness of those who give their lives for Jesus Christ. These brothers, who had only good examples before their eyes, could do no less than imitate the virtues of their mother, 0 what grace, what happiness for children to have wise parents! Oh! what poor, damned children, who would be in heaven if they had had truly religious parents! My God! Is it possible that the parents' lack of religion precipitates so many souls into hell? Unhappy parents, who seem to have children only to drag them to hell!... How can children who only have bad examples before their eyes practice virtue? Will the children be better than their parents, who make neither Easter nor confession, who do not pray, who get up and go to bed like beasts of burden; parents who only have bad reasons (1) in their mouths; who go so far as to mock, criticize religion and those who practice it, who ridicule confession and those who confess? Will children, I say, be better than their parents, who let them live at their ease, who allow them to play and dance?

(1) Bad words.

s e s, cabarets; who themselves, perhaps, spend almost entire nights there with all kinds of libertines? - If a pastor, seeing such bad examples, wants to make them aware of their fault and that of their children, they will get angry, they will blame him, they will speak ill of him, they will make a thousand contradictions to their children. Oh, how many poor children will curse the moment of their birth, and their parents, who, far from helping them to save themselves, have lent themselves to ruining them, by their little care in making them aware of their religious duties and the greatness of sin... Alas, my brethren, you will recognize this all too well one day!... But let us return to our saints who had the good fortune to have such virtuous parents! Having completed their studies, they became very skilled in the knowledge of medicine. Their knowledge was accompanied by the gift of grace, so that, by going only to see their sick, they restored them to health: the blind saw, the lame walked, the deaf heard, and the demons fled at their mere presence. The brilliance of so many wonders made them admired by everyone. But this high reputation was the cause of their martyrdom. The emperors Diocletian and Maximian having renewed the persecution against the faithful, they sent the president Lysias to the city of Aegean to search for them and punish them according to the law. Lysias arriving in this city, the two doctors were denounced to him as going from province to province, and performing astonishing miracles in the name of the one they called Jesus Christ. It was added that many thus abandoned the worship of idols to embrace a completely new religion. Lysias, upon this report, sent for them. When they came before him, he said to them angrily: “So you are these deceivers who go through the cities and provinces, arousing the people against the gods of the empire, under the pretext of making them worship

a crucified man? From this moment on, if you do not renounce this God and if you do not obey the edicts of the emperors, there is no torture that I will not use to make you suffer. Tell me your names and country. » — "We are from Arabia, one of our names is Cosmas, the other is Damien, we have three more brothers, who, like us, adore the true God. » He ordered them to offer incense to the demon. When they refused, he put them to torture and made them endure terrible cruelties. However, the holy martyrs were so strengthened by the grace of God that they did not even feel their torments; They said to him: "You are making us suffer very little; if you have other tortures, use them, because we do not feel those. » The prefect, dying of rage, and to get rid of them as quickly as possible, had them thrown into the sea. But an angel broke their ties, pulled them out of the waters and brought them back to the shore. The prefect attributing this to the demon, told them to teach him their spells, in order to use them like them. "We do not know," said the martyrs, "what magic is. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we do all this; if you want to become a Christian, you will recognize the truth of what we tell you. » — "In the name of the god Apollo," replied Lysias, "I want to perform the same miracle. » This blasphemy had no sooner left his mouth than two demons seized him, struck him without mercy, and would have killed him if the saints had not chased him away. "You see clearly (they said to him) that your gods are only demons who only seek to harm you; will you now recognize our God as the only truth?

3 table? Therefore hate your idols. » Despite this grace, the prefect remained indifferent; moreover, he had his liberators taken to prison. The next day he brought them back, seeing that he could not defeat them, he lit a big fire and had them thrown into it. But they walked through the fire without the slightest pain; on the contrary, they were as if in a garden of delights, singing songs of thanksgiving; and the fire which respected them went to burn the idolaters, many of whom lost their lives. These wonders should have converted the prefect, they only hardened him more and more. He had them put on the rack, where the executioners tormented them until they lost their breath; then they were each tied to a cross, in order to massacre them with stones; but they returned with impetuosity on those who threw them. Lysias, irritated because he could not manage to put them to death, himself took stones to throw at their heads; but they came back on him with so much force that they broke his teeth. He then made the soldiers take arrows, in order to throw them against the saints; but these again, far from harming them, turned around and killed a large number of men and women who had come to see this spectacle. The prefect, despairing of being able to put them to death (through torture), had them beheaded. This is what grace can do in a good Christian and in children whose parents have raised with care, inspiring them with a great love for God, a true contempt for the goods of this world and even for life. Happy children and happy parents! This, my brethren, is how wise parents save their children! (You have seen, moreover), how parents without religion drag their poor children with them to hell, through their evil

Let me see examples and the little care they take to raise them well in the love of God. Let us end, my brethren, by saying that we are not, it is true, exposed to such great trials as these saints; but that, if we would make good use of the sorrows we experience, (we could also deserve the crown of martyrdom). How many illnesses, contradictions, humiliations, contempt! How many times we have to renounce our own will, how many efforts we have to make to forgive and love those who hurt us Well, my brethren, this is the martyrdom that the good God [le bon Dieu] wants us to endure to deserve the same happiness that the saints now enjoy. Let us often ask, my brethren, these good saints to obtain for us this strength, this courage in our daily trials: we will thus work to please God and for heaven. It is happiness that I wish you.

Assumption — On the Grandeurs of Mary

Quia respexit humilitatem ancilloœ suœ. Because the Lord looked at the baseness of his servant. (S. Luke, r, 48.)

If we see, my brethren, the Blessed Virgin lowering herself, in her humility, below all creatures, we also see this humility raising her above everything that is not God. No, it was not the great people of the earth who raised it to this supreme degree of dignity where we have the pleasure of contemplating it today. The three persons of the Most Holy Trinity have placed her on this throne of glory; they proclaimed her Queen of heaven and earth, making her the depositary of all celestial treasures. No, my brethren, we will never understand enough the greatness of Mary, and the power that Jesus Christ her divine Son gave her; we will never fully understand the desire she has to make us happy. She loves us like her children; she rejoices in the power that

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God gave it to him, in order to be more useful to us. Yes, Mary is our mediator; it is she who presents to her divine Son all our prayers, our tears and our groans; it is she who attracts to us the graces necessary for our salvation. The Holy Spirit tells us that Mary, among all creatures, is a prodigy of greatness, a prodigy of holiness and a prodigy of love. What happiness for us, my brethren, what hope for our salvation! Let us express our confidence in this good and wonderful Mother, considering 1° her greatness; 2° his zeal for our salvation; 3° what we must do to please him and deserve his protection.

I. To speak of the greatness of Mary, my brethren, is to want to diminish the sublime idea that you have of her; for Saint Ambrosio tells us that Mary is elevated to such a high degree of glory, honor and power, that even angels cannot understand: this is reserved for God alone. From there, I conclude that everything you can hear will always be nothing or almost nothing, compared to what it is in the eyes of God. The most beautiful praise that the Church can give us is to say that Mary is the Daughter of the Eternal Father, the Mother of the Son of God Savior of the world, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. If the Eternal Father has chosen Mary for his daughter par excellence, what torrent of graces must he not pour into her soul? She alone received more than all the angels and all the saints combined. He began by preserving her from original sin, a grace which was granted only to her. He fixed her in this grace, with perfect assurance that she would never lose it. Yes, my brethren, the Eternal Father enriched him with the gifts of heaven, in proportion to the great dignity to which he was due.

worm. He formed in her a living temple of the three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity. Let's say even better: he did for her everything that was possible for a creature. If the Eternal Father took so much care with Mary, we also see the Holy Spirit come to beautify her to such a degree that from the moment of her conception, she became the object of the complacency of the three divine Persons. Mary alone has the happiness of being the daughter of the Eternal Father, she also has that of being the mother of the Son and the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Through these incomparable dignities, she sees herself assimilated to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, to form the adorable body of Jesus Christ. It is from her that God was to use to overthrow and ruin the empire of the devil. It is she that the three divine Persons used to save the world, by giving it a Redeemer. Would you have ever thought that Mary was such an abyss of grandeur, power and love? After the adorable body of Jesus Christ, it is the most beautiful ornament of the celestial court. We can say that the triumph of the Blessed Virgin in heaven is the consummation of all the merits of this august Queen of heaven and earth. It was at this moment that she received the last ornament of her incomparable dignity as Mother of God. After having suffered for some time the various miseries of life and the humiliations of death; she went to enjoy a life, the most glorious and happy that a creature could ever enjoy. We are sometimes surprised that Jesus, who loved his mother so much, left her on earth for so long after his resurrection. The reason for this is that he wanted, through this delay, to obtain greater glory for him, and that besides, the apostles still needed of his person to be comforted and led. It was Mary who revealed to the apostles the greatest secrets of the hidden life of Jesus Christ. It is again Mary who raised the standard of virginity, who made known all its splendor, all its beauty, and shows us the inestimable reward reserved for this holy state. But let's start again, my brethren, let's continue to follow Marie until the moment she leaves this world. Jesus Christ wanted that

before being elevated to heaven, she could see all her apostles once again. All, except Saint Thomas, were miraculously transported around his poor bed. By an excess of this humility which she had always carried to a very high degree, she kissed all of their feet, and asked them for their blessing. This act prepared her for the eminent glory to which her Son was to raise her. Then Mary gave them all her blessing. It would be impossible for me to make you understand the tears that the apostles shed at that moment, over the loss they were about to experience. Was not the Blessed Virgin, after the Savior, all their happiness, all their consolation? But Mary, to ease their pain a little, promised them not to forget them near her divine Son. It is believed that the same angel who had announced to him the mystery of the Incarnation, came to mark for him, on behalf of his Son, the hour of his death. The Blessed Virgin replied to the angel: “Al)! what happiness and how much I longed for this moment! » After this happy news, she wanted to make her will, which was soon made. She had soft tunics, she gave them to two virgins, who had served her for a long time. She then felt herself burning with so much love that her soul, like a fiery furnace, could no longer remain in her body. Happy moment!...

Can we see, my brethren, the wonders that take place at this death, without feeling an ardent desire to live holy in order to die holy? It is true, we should not expect to die of love, but at least let us have the hope of dying in the love of God. Mary has no fear of death, since death will put her in possession of perfect happiness; she knows that heaven awaits her, and that she will be one of its most beautiful ornaments. Her Son and the entire celestial court come forward to celebrate this brilliant festival, all the saints of heaven are only waiting for the orders of Jesus, to come and collect this Queen and take her in triumph into her kingdom. Everything is prepared in heaven to receive it; she will enjoy honors beyond anything that can be conceived. To leave this world, Mary does not suffer illness, because she is free from sin. Despite his great age, his body was never decrepit like that of other mortals, on the contrary, it seemed that as he approached the end, it took on a new shine. Saint John Damascene tells us that it was Jesus Christ himself who came to look for his mother. Thus disappears this beautiful star which for seventy-two years illuminated the world. Yes, my brethren, she sees her Son again, but in a very different aspect from that in which she had seen him, when, covered in blood, he was nailed to the cross. 0 Divine Love, this is the most beautiful of your victories and of all your conquests! You couldn't do anything more, but also you couldn't do anything less. Yes, my brethren, if the mother of a God had to die, she could only die from a transport of love. O beautiful death! O happy death! ô desirable death! Ah! that she is compensated for this torrent of humiliation and pain with which her holy soul was flooded during her

morrellc life! Yes, she sees her Son again, but quite different from the day she saw him lay out his painful passion, in the hands of his executioners, carrying his cross, crown of thorns, without being able to relieve him. Oh! no, she no longer sees him under this sad apparatus, capable of annihilating even slightly sensitive creatures; but she sees him, I say, all brilliant with light, clothed in a glory which (makes) all the joy and happiness of heaven; she sees the ancestors and the saints who all surround her, praising her, blessing her and adoring her to the point of annihilation. Yes, she sees this tender Jesus again, free from everything that could make him suffer. Ah! Who among us would not want to work to join the Mother and the Son in this place of delight? A few moments of struggle and suffering are greatly rewarded. Ah! My brethren, what a happy death [une bonne mort]! Mary fears nothing, because she has always loved her God; she regrets nothing, because she has never possessed anything but her God. Do we want to die without fear? Let us live, like Mary, in innocence; let us flee sin, which causes all our misfortune for time and eternity. If we have been unfortunate enough to commit it, following the example of Saint Peter, let us cry until we die, and let our regrets only end with life. Following the example of the holy King David, let us descend into the tomb shedding tears; let us wash our souls in the bitterness of our tears. Do we want, like Mary, to die without sorrow? Let us live like her, without attaching ourselves to created things; let us do like her, love only God

alone, desire only Him alone, seek only to please Him in all that we do. Happy is the Christian who leaves nothing to find everything!... Let us approach for a moment more this poor pallet, who is so happy to support this precious pearl, this rose always fresh and without thorns, this globe of glory and light, which must give new radiance to the entire celestial court. The angels, it is said, sang a song of joy in the humble abode where the holy body was, and it was filled with an odor so pleasant that it seemed as if all the sweetness of heaven had descended there. Come, my brethren, let us accompany, at least in spirit, this sacred convoy; let us follow this tabernacle, where the Father had contained all his treasures, and which will be hidden, for some time, as was the body of his divine Son. The pain and the groans silenced the apostles and all the faithful who had come in crowds to see once again the Mother of their Redeemer. But having come to themselves, they all began to sing hymns and canticles to honor the Son and the Mother. A portion of the angels ascended to heaven to lead this peerless soul in triumph; the other remained on earth to celebrate the funeral of the holy body. I ask you, my brethren, who would be capable of painting for us such a beautiful spectacle? On the one hand, we heard the blessed spirits employing all their celestial industry, to testify to the great joy they had in the glory of their Queen; on the other, we saw the apostles and a large number of faithful also raising their voices to support the harmony of these celestial singers. Saint John Damascene tells us that before placing the holy body in the tomb, they all had the happiness of kissing his holy and sacred hands, which, so many times, had carried the Savior from the mummy. At that moment, there was not a sick person who did not receive healing; there was not a person in Jerusalem who did not ask for some grace from the good God [le bon Dieu] through the mediation of Mary and who did not obtain it. God wanted it thus to show us that all those who, subsequently, had recourse to her, were sure of obtaining everything. When each one, the holy memo tells us, had satisfied his devotion and received the effect of his requests, we thought of the burial of the Mother of God. The apostles, according to the custom of the Jews, ordered the holy body to be washed and embalmed. They therefore entrusted two virgins with this office to serve Mario. They, by a completely miraculous fact, could not see or touch the holy body. They believed they recognized in this the will of God, and they buried the body with all its clothing. If Mary, on earth, was of unequaled humility, her death and her burial were also without equal, for the grandeur of the wonders which then took place. It was the apostles themselves who carried the precious deposit, and this holy and sacred procession passed through the city of Jerusalem to the place of burial, which was the town of Gelhsemane, in the valley of Jehoshaphat. All the faithful accompanied him with torches in their hands, several joining this pious troop, which carried the ark of the new covenant and led it to the place of its rest. Saint Bernard tells us that the angels themselves made their procession, preceding and following the body of their Sovereign with songs of joy; all those present heard the song of these angels, and wherever this holy body passed, it spread a delicious odor, as if all the heavenly sweetness and perfumes had descended to the earth. There was, adds this saint, an unfortunate Jew, who, dying of rage to see that so much honor was being paid to the Mother of God, threw himself on the body to make it fall into the mud; but no sooner had he touched it than both his hands fell dry. Having repented, he prayed to Saint Peter that he was brought near to the body of the Blessed Virgin. By touching him, his two hands were replaced by themselves without appearing to have ever been separated. The body of the Mother of God having been respectfully placed in the sepulchre, the faithful withdrew to Jerusalem; but the angels continued to sing the praises of Mary for three days. The apostles came one after the other, to unite with the angels who remained above the tomb. After three days, Saint Thomas, who had not witnessed the death of the Mother of God, came to ask Saint Peter for the happiness of seeing the virginal body once again. So they went to the tomb, and found nothing there except the clothes. The angels had taken her into heaven, because they were no longer heard. To give you a faithful description of his glorious and triumphant entry into heaven, it would be necessary, my brethren, to be God himself, who, at that moment, wanted to lavish on his Mother all the riches of his love, of his gratitude. We can say that he then gathered everything that was capable of embellishing his triumph in heaven. “Open yourselves, gates of heaven, here is your Queen who leaves the earth to beautify the heavens with the grandeur of her glory, with her immensity of merits and dignity. » What a delightful sight! never had heaven seen entering its enclosure a creature so beautiful, so

accomplished, so perfect and so rich in virtues. “Who is this,” says the Holy Spirit, “who rises from the desert of this life, full of delight and love, leaning on the arm of her beloved?...” Come near, the gates of heaven open, and the whole celestial court prostrates itself before her as before its Sovereign. Jesus Christ himself leads her in her triumph, and seats her on the most beautiful throne of his kingdom. The three Per-

The sons of the Most Holy Trinity place a brilliant crown on her head and make her the depositary of all the treasures of heaven. Oh! My brethren, what glory for Maricl but also what cause for hope for us, to know her so exalted in dignity, and to know the great desire she has to save our urns!

ÏT. What love does she not have for us? She loves us like her children; she would have wanted to die for us if it had been necessary. Let us turn to her with great confidence, and we are sure that, however miserable we may be, she will obtain for us the blessing of our conversion. She takes so much care for the salvation of our urn, she so desires our happiness... We read in the life of Saint Stanislas, great devotee to the Queen of Heaven, that one day, while in prayer, he told the Blessed Virgin to be willing to show herself to him with the holy Child Jesus. This prayer was so pleasing to the good God [le bon Dieu] that at the same moment Stanislas saw the Holy Virgin appear before him, holding the Holy Child in her arms. Another time, finding himself ill in a house of Lutherans who did not want to allow him to receive communion, he addressed himself to the Blessed Virgin and begged her to give him this happiness. His prayer had barely finished, he saw an angel coming who brought him the Holy Host and who was accompanied by the Holy Virgin. In an almost similar circumstance, the same thing happened to him, an angel brought Jesus Christ to him and gave him holy communion. See, my brethren, how much Mary takes care of the salvation of those who trust in her! How happy we are, to have a Mother to precede us in the practice of the virtues that we must have, if we want to go to heaven and please God! But let us be careful never to despise either her or the worship we pay to her. Saint Francis of Borgia tells us that a great sinner, on his deathbed, did not want to hear about God, nor about his urn, nor about confession. Saint Francis, who was then in the country of this unfortunate man, began to pray to God for him; as he prayed with tears, he heard a voice which said to him: “Go, Francis, go and carry my voice to this unfortunate man, exhort him to penance. » Saint Francis runs towards the sick person already in the arms of death. Alas! he had already closed his heart to grace. Saint Francis begged him to have pity on his soul, to ask forgiveness from the good God [le bon Dieu]; but no, everything was lost for him. The saint heard twice more the same voice which said to him: “Go, Francis, carry my cross to this unfortunate man. » The saint again showed his crucifix, which was found to be all (covered) in blood and which was flowing everywhere; he told the sinner that this adorable blood would obtain his forgiveness if he would ask for mercy. But no, everything was lost for him, he died blaspheming the holy name of God: and his misfortune came from the fact that he had mocked and despised the Blessed Virgin, in the honors paid to her. Ah! My brethren, let us be careful never to despise anything that relates to the worship of Mary, this Mother so good, so inclined to help us at the slightest confidence we have in her! Here are some examples which will show you that, if we have been faithful to the slightest practice of devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, she will never allow us to die in sin. It is recorded in history that a young libertine indulged, without any remorse, in all the vices of his heart.

An illness stopped him in the midst of his disorders. Libertine as he was, he never failed to say a Hail Mary every day; it was the only prayer he prayed, and even then he did it very badly: it was nothing more than a simple habit. As soon as it was known that his illness had no hope of recovery, they went to find the parish priest who came to visit him, and urged him to confess. But the sick man replied that, if he had to die, he wanted to die as he had lived, and that, if he were to escape, he did not want to live otherwise than until then. This was the answer he gave to all those who wanted to talk to him about confession. There was great consternation; no one dared talk to him about it anymore, for fear of giving him the opportunity to vomit the same blasphemies and the same impieties. In the meantime, one of his comrades, but wiser than he, who had often corrected him for his troubles, went to find him. After talking to him about different things, he said to

him bluntly: “You should think about converting, my comrade. » — “My friend,” replied the sick man, “I am too great a sinner; you know well the life I led. " - " Well! pray to the Blessed Virgin who is the refuge of sinners. » — “Ah! I said a Hail Mary every day; but here are all the prayers that I prayed. Do you think this is of any use to me? » — “How 1 replied the other, it will serve you well. Did you not ask him to pray for you at the hour of death? So now she will pray for you. » — “Since you think that the Blessed Virgin prays for me, go and find the priest to confess to me completely. » As he said these words, he began to shed torrents of tears. “Why cry? his friend told him. » — “Ah! could I never cry enough, after having led such a criminal life, after having offended such a good God [bon Dieu], who still wants to forgive me! I wish I could cry tears of blood, to show the good God [le bon Dieu] how angry I am at having offended him so much; but, my blood is too impure to be offered to Jesus Christ in expiation for my sins. What consoles me is that Jesus Christ my Savior offered his to his Father for me, it is in him that I hope. » His friend hearing this speech and seeing his tears flowing, began to cry with him for joy. This change was so extraordinary that he attributed it to the protection of the Blessed Virgin. At that moment the priest returned, and, very surprised to see them both crying, he asked them what had happened. — “Ah! Sir, replied the sick man, I weep for my sins! Alas! I'm starting to cry for them very late! But I know that the merits of Jesus Christ are infinite and that his mercy is without bounds; I still have hope that the good God [le bon Dieu] will have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi]. » The priest, astonished, asked him who had made such a change in him? “The Blessed Virgin,” said the sick man, “prayed for me, which made me open my eyes to my miserable state. » — “Would you like to confess?” » — “Oh yes, Sir, I want to confess, and even out loud; since I have scandalized by my bad life, I want people to be witnesses of my repentance. » The priest told him that this measure was not necessary, that it was enough, to repair the scandals, to know that he had been administered. He confessed with so much pain and tears that the priest was obliged several times to stop and let him cry. He received the sacraments with such great marks of repentance that one would have thought he was going to die. Wasn't Saint Bernard right to tell us that he who is under the protection of Mary is safe; and that we have never seen the Blessed Virgin abandon a person who has performed some act of piety in her honor? No, my brethren, this has never been seen and will never be seen again. See how the Blessed Virgin rewarded a Hail Mary, which this young man had said every day? and again, how did he say it? However, you just saw that she performed a miracle, rather than letting him die without confession. What happiness for us to invoke Mary, since in this way she saves us and makes us persevere in grace! What cause for hope to think that despite our sins, she constantly offers herself to God to ask for our forgiveness! Yes, my brethren, it is she who revives our hope in God, it is she who presents our tears to him, it is she who prevents us from falling into despair at the sight of our sins. Blessed Alphonse de Liguori recounts that one of his companions, a priest, one day saw entering a church a young man whose exterior revealed a soul devoured by remorse. The priest approached the young man and said to him: “Would you like to confess, my friend? » He replied that yes, but, at the same time, he asked to be heard in a secluded place, because his confession was to be long. When they were alone, the new penitent spoke in these terms: “Father, I am a stranger and a gentleman; but I do not believe that I can ever become the object of the mercies of a God whom I have offended so much, by my criminal life. Without telling you about the murders and infamies of which I was guilty, I will tell you that having despaired of my salvation, I gave myself up to all kinds of sins, less to satisfy my passions, than to outrage the good God [le bon Dieu] and satisfy the hatred I had against him.

I had a crucifix on me, I threw it away out of contempt. This very morning, I went to the holy table to commit sacrilege, my intention was to trample the holy host underfoot, if the people present had not prevented me; (and at this moment, he gave to his confessor the holy host which he had kept in a paper). As I passed this church, he added, I felt rushed to enter, to the point that I could not resist; I felt remorse so violent, it tore my conscience so much, that as I approached your confessional, I fell into great despair. If you hadn't come out to come to me, I was going to leave the church, I really don't know how it could have happened that I was here at your knees to confess. » But the priest said to him: “Have you not done some good works which have

merited such grace for you? perhaps you have offered some sacrifices to the Blessed Virgin or implored her assistance, because such conversions are usually only effects of the power of this good Mother? » — “My father, you are wrong, I had a crucifix, I threw it away out of contempt. » — “But, think carefully, this miracle did not happen without some reason. » — “My father,” said the young man placing his hand on his scapular, “this is all that I have preserved. » — “Ah! my friend, said the priest, kissing him, do you not see that it is the Blessed Virgin who obtained this grace for you, that it is she who attracted you to this church which is dedicated to her? " At these words, the young man burst into tears; he entered into all the details of his criminal life, and his grief ever increasing, he fell at the feet of his confessor as if dead; When he came to himself, he finished his confession. Before leaving the church, he promised to tell everywhere the great mercy that Mary had obtained from her Son for him.

III. How happy we are, my brethren, to have such a good Mother, so devoted to the salvation of our souls! However, we must not be content with praying it, we must also practice all the other virtues that we know are pleasing to God. A great servant of Mary, Saint Francis de Paule, was one day called by Louis XI, hoping to obtain healing from him. The saint found in the king all kinds of good qualities, he devoted himself to a number of good works and prayers in honor of Mary. He said his rosary every day, gave many alms to honor the Blessed Virgin, carried several relics with him; but knowing that he did not have enough modesty and restraint in his words, and that he suffered bad people at home, Saint Francis of Paula said to him crying: “Prince, do you believe that all your devotions are pleasing to the Blessed Virgin? No, no, prince, start imitating Mary, and you are sure that she will hold out her hands to you. » Indeed, having made a confession throughout his life, he received so many graces and so many means of salvation that he died in the most edifying way, saying that Mary had earned him heaven through her protection. The world is full of monuments which attest to the graces that the Blessed Virgin obtains for us; see all these sanctuaries, all these paintings, all these chapels in honor of Mary. Ah! My brethren, if we had a tender devotion to Mario, what graces we would all obtain for our salvation! Oh! fathers and mothers, if every morning you put all your children under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, she would pray for them, she would save them and you too.

Oh how the demon fears devotion to the Blessed Virgin!... One day he complained loudly to Blessed Francis that two (kinds) of people were making him suffer. First, those who contribute to spreading devotion to the Blessed Virgin, then those who wear the Holy Scapular. Ah! My brethren, do we need more to inspire us with great confidence in the Blessed Virgin and the desire to devote ourselves entirely to her by putting our life, our death and our eternity in her hands? What consolation for us in our sorrows, in our sorrows, to know that Mary wants and can help us! Yes, we can say that he who has the happiness of having great confidence in Mary has his salvation in security, and we will never have heard that he who has put his salvation in the hands of Mary has been damned. We will recognize at the hour of death how much the Blessed Virgin has made us avoid sins, and how she has made us do good that we would never have done without her protection. Let us take her as our model, and we are sure of walking well in the path of heaven. Let us admire in her this humility, this purity, this charity, this contempt for life, this zeal for the glory of her Son and the salvation of souls. Yes, my brethren, let us give ourselves and consecrate ourselves to Mary for all our lives. Happy is he who lives and dies under the protection of Mary, heaven is assured to him! This is what I wish you.

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

From qua natus is Jesus. It is from Mary that a Savior was born to us. (S. Matth., /, 16.)

There, my brethren, in two words, is the most complete praise that can be given to Mary, saying that it is from her that Jesus, Son of God, was born to us. Yes, Mary is the most beautiful creature that ever came from the hands of the Creator. God himself chose her to be the channel through which he would make his most precious and abundant graces flow to all those who would trust in her. God represents her to us as a beautiful

mirror in which he is reflected, as an accomplished model of all virtues. We also see that the Church considers her as its Mother, its patroness and its powerful protector against its enemies; that she hastens to celebrate with the greatest pomp, the happy day when this beautiful star began to shine on the earth. The birth of the great people of the world inspires us with fears and alarms, because we do not know whether they (will be) righteous or sinners, saved or reprobate; we do not know, I said, whether they will return their happy or unhappy people. But for Mary we have no fear. She was born to be Mother of God, and, through her birth, brings us all kinds of goods and blessings. God offers it to us as a model, in whatever state and in whatever condition we may be. Let us therefore, my brethren, with the whole Church, indulge in holy joy, and admire in this holy Virgin the model of the most perfect virtues; 2° let us consider Mary as having been destined from all eternity to be the Mother of the Son of God and ours; 3° finally, let us contemplate with gratitude the gifts and graces contained in the Mediatrix that God has prepared for men. But give me your attention; because, speaking to you about Mary, does not that interest your hearts, by speaking to you about the object of your trust and your love.

I. My brethren, if it were necessary to inspire you with a tender devotion to Mario, to show you how much happiness there is for those who trust in her; how numerous are the helps, the graces and the advantages that it can obtain for us; if it were necessary, I say, to show you the blindness and misfortune of those who have only indifference and contempt for a Mother so good and so tender, so powerful and so inclined to make us experience the effects of her tenderness, I would only have to question the patriarchs and the prophets, and you would find in all the great things that the Holy Spirit made them say about Mary, a subject of confusion in view of base feelings. with which you are only too often filled for this good Mother. Then, if I told you the story of all the examples that the saints have drawn from it, we could only deplore our blindness and rekindle our confidence in it. First, nothing is more capable of inspiring us with a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, than the first feature we read in Holy Scripture, where we see God himself first announcing the birth of Mary. When our first parents had the misfortune of falling into sin, God, touched by their repentance, promised that a day would come when a Virgin would be born who would give birth to a son, to repair the misfortune caused by their sin. Subsequently, the prophets, after him, continued to announce from century to century, to console the human race which groaned under the tyranny of the devil, that a Virgin would give birth to a son, who would be the Son of the Most High, and sent by the Father to redeem the world, lost by the sin of Adam. All the prophets announce that she will be the most beautiful creature that has ever appeared on earth. Sometimes they call it the Morning Star, which dazzles all others with its brightness and beauty, and which, at the same time, serves as a guide to the traveler on the sea; in order to show us that she would be an accomplished model of all virtues. It is therefore with reason that the Church says to the Blessed Virgin, in a thrill of joy: “Your birth, O Virgin Saint Mary, fills the whole world with sweet consolation and holy joy, because it is from you that this Sun of justice was born to us, our Jesus, our God, who rescued us from the curse into which we were plunged by the sin of our first parents, and filled us with all kinds of blessings. » Yes, it is you, Virgin without peer, Virgin incomparable, who destroyed the empire of sin and reestablished the reign of grace. “Rise,” says the Holy Spirit, “come out of your mother’s womb, you who are my dearest, as well as my most beautiful lover, come, tender dove, whose purity and

modesty are without equal, show yourself on earth, appear to the world, as the one who should beautify the sky and make the earth happy. Come and appear with all the splendor with which God has adorned you, for you are the most beautiful work of your Creator. » Indeed, although the Blessed Virgin was in ordinary ways, the Holy Spirit wanted her soul to be the most beautiful and the richest in graces; he also wanted his body to be the most beautiful body that had ever appeared on earth. Scripture compares it to the dawn in its birth, to the moon in its fullness, to the sun in its noonday. She also tells us that she has a crown of twelve stars, and is

established as the dispenser of all the treasures of heaven. Since the fall of Adam, the world was covered with terrible darkness; then Mary appears, and, like a beautiful sun in a serene day, dispels the darkness, revives hope and gives fertility to the earth. Should not God, my brethren, have said to Mary, as to Moses: “Go and deliver my people, who groan under the tyranny of Pharaoh; will tell him that his deliverance is near, and that I have heard his prayer, his groans and his tears. Yes, Mary, he seems to say, I have heard the groans, I have seen the tears of the patriarchs, the prophets and of so many souls who sigh after the happy moment of their deliverance. » Indeed, my brethren, Mary, even much better than Moses, announces that soon our misfortunes will end and that heaven will be reconciled with earth. 0 what treasures the birth of Mary brings to heaven and earth! The demon shudders with rage and despair, because, in Mary, he sees the one who must crush and confound him. On the contrary, the angels and the blessed make the vault of heaven resound with songs of joy at seeing the birth of a Queen who will give their beauty a new radiance.

But, as God wanted to begin to show us that heaven would only be given to us through humility, contempt, poverty and suffering, he wanted the birth of the Blessed Virgin to be nothing extraordinary. She is born in a state of weakness, her cradle is watered with tears like that of other children, who seem to foresee, when they are born, the miseries with which they will be overwhelmed during their life; it is in this sense that the Holy Spirit tells us through the mouth of the Sage: “That the day of death is preferable to that of birth. » Mary is born in a state of darkness. Although she was of the race of David, and could count among her ancestors patriarchs, prophets and kings: all these titles, so sought after by the people of the world, had fallen into oblivion; she had nothing more remarkable than virtue, which, in the eyes of men, is not a great distinction. God had thus permitted it, so that this birth would be more in conformity with that of his divine Son, of whom the prophets had announced that he would have nowhere to rest his head. But if she comes into the world so poor in the goods of earth, she is rich in the goods of him who, from all eternity, had chosen her to be his Mother. Saint John Damascene tells us that the centuries argued over who among them would have the happiness of seeing it born. Do we want to know, says one of her great servants, the holy bishop of Geneva, who is this Virgin crowned at her cradle? Let us ask the angels, they will tell us that she infinitely surpasses them in grace, in merits, in dignity and in all kinds of perfections. Saint Basil tells us that, from the creation of the world until the coming of Mary, the Eternal Father had not found a creature pure enough and holy enough to be the Mother of his Son. How many times have the patriarchs and the prophets cried out in their sighs and in their tears: “Ah! When will the happy moment come when this holy Virgin will appear in the world? Oh! that happy will be the eyes which see this creature, which must be the Mother of the Savior of men 1 »

It would be impossible, my brethren, not to love Mary, if we wanted to reflect for a moment on her tenderness for us, and on the benefits with which she has never ceased to shower us. Indeed, if Jesus Christ shed his precious blood to save us, who produced this adorable blood, isn't it Mario? If we follow the traces of her mortal life, what sorrows, what pains, what anguish did she not endure? Every time she looked tenderly at her divine Son, she suffered, the holy Fathers tell us, more than all the martyrs put together. And how, you ask me? God, to fulfill this prophecy, wanted to make known to him in advance all the sufferings, outrages and torments that his divine Son had to endure before dying. Every time she looked at the adorable feet and hands of Jesus, she said to herself: “Alas! these feet and these hands which, for thirty-three years, will only be occupied in carrying graces and blessings, will one day be pierced and nailed to an infamous wood; his loving eyes will be covered with spittle; his face, more beautiful than the heavens, will be bruised by the blows that will be given to him. This entire body must be flogged with so much cruelty that it will be almost impossible to recognize it as a man; this sheet metal, all radiant with glory, will be pierced with a cruel crown of thorns. " When she passed through the streets of Jerusalem, she said to herself: "A day will come when I will see these paving stones all watered with his blood precious. He will be lying on the tree of the cross, I will hear the blows of the hammer, and will not be able to bring him help. » « 0 incomprehensible pain! 0 ineffable martyrdom, a holy Father tells us, only God can understand its full extent! » Yes, my

brethren, we say that Jesus Christ made his Mother experience each of the pains of his passion in particular; because Mary continually had in mind the tortures that her Son had to endure, a Ah! cries Saint Bernard, this great servant of Mary, how blind and unfortunate we are, not to love such a beneficent and good Mother! For a long time, without Mary's prayers, the world would no longer exist, and would have fallen into ruins because of our sins. » Indeed, it is reported that, in the time of Saint Dominic and Saint Francis, God was so angry with men that he resolved to destroy them all. These two saints saw the Blessed Virgin throw herself at the feet of her divine Son: “My Son,” she said to him, “remember that it is for this people that you died; I will send my two great servants (showing him Saint Dominic and Saint Francis), yes, they will go throughout the world inviting all men to convert and do penance. » Alas! how many times has she not presented to her Son, the womb where he was conceived, the breasts which suckled him, the arms which carried him? How many times did she not say to him: “My Son, let yourself be touched by the prayers of her who carried you for nine months in her womb, who nourished you with so much tenderness, and who would have given her life with so much joy to save yours; Please spare these people who cost you so much. » 0 ingratitude! 0 blindness of sinners, how great and incomprehensible you are! Have nothing but contempt for the one who would have so willingly given her life for us!

The saints, my brethren, acted quite differently towards Mary. Ah! This is because they were convinced that without Mary, it was almost impossible for them to be able to resist the attacks that the demon was making to destroy them. Saint Bernard tells us that all the graces we receive from heaven pass through the hands of Mary. Who, another Father of the Church tells us, “Mary is like a good mother who is not content to take care of all her children in general, but who watches over each of them in particular. » If God had treated us after each sin as we deserved, we would have been burning in hell a long time ago. Oh! how many are in the flames, and who would not be there, if they had had recourse to Mary 1 She would have prayed to her Son to prolong their days to give them time to do penance. If this misfortune, my brethren, has not happened to us, let us thank Marie; it is truly to her that we are indebted. We read in the Gospel, “that a man had planted a tree in his garden: when the time of fruit had come, he went to see if this tree had any; but he found none. He went there a second and a third time without finding any, so he said to the gardener: I have come three times in vain to look for fruit, why do you let this tree occupy the place of another that would bear fruit? cut it and throw it into the fire. » What does the gardener do? He throws himself at his master's feet to beg him to wait a little longer; because he will redouble his care; he will work the earth that is around; he will smoke the tree and forget nothing to make it bear fruit. “But,” he adds, “if next year, when you come, it has no fruit, we will cut it and throw it into the fire. » Sensitive image, AI. F., of what happens between God, the Blessed Virgin and us: The Master of this garden is God himself; the garden is his whole Church, and we ourselves are the trees planted in this garden. He claims and wants us to bear fruit, that is, to do good works for heaven. Like this master of the garden, he waits two, three, alas perhaps twenty or thirty years, to give us time to convert and do penance. When he sees that we are only increasing our sins, instead of correcting ourselves and doing penance, he commands that this tree be cut down and thrown into the fire; that is to say, God allows the devil to take these sinners and throw them into hell. But what is Marie, my brethren doing? She does what this good gardener did, she throws herself at the feet of her divine Son: “My Son,” she said to him, “thank this sinner for a while longer, perhaps he will convert, perhaps he will do better than he did. » What does she do to appease the Father's anger? She places before her eyes all that her Son has done and suffered, to repair the glory that sin has stolen from him; she hastens to represent to her Son all that she suffered during her mortal life for love of him: “My Son,” she says to him every moment, “a few more days, perhaps he will repent.” 0 tenderness of Mother, how great you are! but that you are repaid with ingratitude! Some despise her, others, not content with despising her, still despise with their mockery those who trust in her! Well! My brethren, although we have nothing but contempt for her, she has not yet abandoned us; because, if that were the case, we would already be in hell; the proof is very convincing. Here is what we read in the life of Mr. de Q. He himself reports that the demon did everything he could to make him die in sin. One night, thunder almost

crushed it: it pierced several boards and carried half away from his bed. Some time later, he found himself in a place where the demon was being driven out of the body of a possessed man, and he asked him who had protected him from lightning. The demon replied: “Thank the Blessed Virgin, without her for a long time we would have kept you in hell, we really thought we had you that day. » Well, my brethren, I could tell you the same thing, and if you are still living, despite so many sins with which your conscience is burdened, you are sure that for a long time you would have suffered in the other life, without the protection of Mary near her divine Son, whom she prays to prolong your days, to see if you will convert. Ah! My brethren, why should we not constantly have recourse to the Blessed Virgin, since we always need her protection, and she is always inclined to help us? We read in the life of Saint Mary Egyptian, that she led a shameful life until the age of nineteen. One Good Friday, she wanted to go like the others, to worship the precious wood of the true cross. As she enters the church, she feels an invisible hand pushing her out, three times. Frightened, she retreated to the corner of the square, and began to examine where such an extraordinary event could have come from: everyone entered without difficulty, only she was pushed back with such violence. “Ah! she cried, sighing, “my crimes, I see clearly, are the cause! will there be no more resources? Would I dare to present myself before God, after having stolen from him so many souls redeemed by his precious blood? Will he allow my body, which has only been used for crime, to approach his sacred wood, him, so holy and so pure? Oh! she said to herself, weeping bitterly, "I have often heard that the Blessed Virgin had great kindness for the greatest sinners, and that no one had ever prayed to her without having obtained grace and mercy, so I will also go and pray to her. » And she withdraws, trembling, near an image of the Blessed Virgin; she prostrates herself with her face to the ground, which she waters with her tears: “0 Holy Virgin, you have before you the greatest sinner in the world; would I still dare to implore your help and that of your divine Son, would he have abandoned me forever? 0 Holy Virgin, if you obtain for me mercy from Jesus Christ, and the happiness of going to adore this sacred wood on which he immolated himself, I will go to (the place) that you please to do penance. » After this protest, she goes to stand trembling at the door of the church, to see if she can enter without being pushed back, like the other times. She enters without any difficulty. Full of gratitude, she adores the sacred wood, waters the pavement with her tears, and confesses to receive the forgiveness of her sins. Subsequently, she retired to a wood where she remained for forty years, making the desert resound with her cries and sobs, eating only wild herbs. She herself reports that the demon tempted her for nineteen years in all kinds of ways; and, as the demon tormented her, she redoubled her penances; sometimes in the morning, when she got up, she was completely covered with snow, and, in her desert, the cold was so severe that her body fell in pieces. She meditated evening and morning, sometimes on her past faults, sometimes on the graces that Mary had obtained for her, or even on the hope she had of going to sing in heaven of the mercies of the Lord. Oh! how happy we would be, my brethren, if we imitated this great penitent in her repentance and her trust in Mary!

When you love someone, you consider yourself lucky to have something of them as a souvenir. Likewise, my brethren, if we love the Blessed Virgin, we must make it an honor and a duty to have in our homes some of her images, which, from time to time, remind us of this good Mother. Furthermore, truly Christian parents must never fail to inspire in their children a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin; it is the true way to attract the blessings of heaven and the protection of Mary to their family. We read in the life of Saint John Damascene that the emperor had such an aversion to holy images that he ordered them, under penalty of death, to be destroyed or burned. Saint John immediately began to write that we must have images and honor them. The emperor was so angry with the saint that he had his wrist cut to prevent him from writing. The saint went to prostrate himself before an image of the Blessed Virgin, saying to her: “Holy Virgin, I have come to ask you for the hand that was cut off from me, because I wanted to support the honor that is given to your images, I know that you are powerful enough to give it back to me. » This prayer finished, he fell asleep, and during his sleep he saw the Blessed Virgin; she told him that his prayer was answered. When he woke up, he found his hand perfectly attached to his arm, only God had left him, where it joined his arm, a

small red stripe, to make him remember the grace that the Blessed Virgin had obtained for him. By this miracle, she wanted to show how pleasing to her is the honor that is paid to her representations, that is to say to her images. Listen to what Saint Anselm tells us: “Those who are unfortunate enough to despise the Mother are sure of being despised by the Son. Yes, it is only the demons, the reprobate and the great sinners, immersed in the filth of their crimes, who do not love Mary and who do not trust in her. You will easily know if a Christian is on the path to heaven, or if he is walking the path of perdition: ask him if he loves Mary; if he tells you yes, and his actions prove it, bless the Lord, this soul is for heaven. But if he tells you no, and he only appears to have contempt for what concerns his worship, throw yourself at the feet of your crucifix, and weep bitterly; for he is abandoned by God, and ready to fall into the abyss. Yes, even if you are immersed in the most shameful habits, if you have confidence in her, do not despair, she will sooner or later obtain your forgiveness. » We read in history that Saint Denis the Areopagite was a great devotee to Mary." He had the happiness of living while the Blessed Virgin was still on earth. He prayed to Saint John the Evangelist, to whom God had entrusted Mary before dying, to give him the happiness of seeing the Blessed Virgin. Saint John therefore brought him into the room where she was. Saint Denis was so dazzled by her presence, that suddenly he saw himself surrounded by a celestial light: “I lost myself,” he said, “I felt such a pleasant odor coming out of her body, that I thought I was dying of love; my mind and my heart were so struck by the grandeur of her glory, that I saw such a great burst of light coming out of her sacred body, that if faith had not taught me that there is only one God, I would really have taken her for a divinity. All the rest of my life, it seemed to me that I had her present to my eyes. u x, my mind and my heart were constantly in this room where I had the pleasure of contemplating it! Oh! What will it be then, when we see her in heaven, near her Son, on the beautiful throne of the celestial court, and clothed in the glory of God himself. » What! My brethren, after all that we have just said, we would not love Mary, she who only seems to rejoice in being Mother of God in order to obtain more graces for us? 0 blindness 1... Not loving the one who only wants our happiness, this mother who would have given her life to save us 1...

III, The Blessed Virgin is still a continual bulwark against the attacks of the demon! One day Saint Dominic, his great servant, being asked to drive the demon from the body of a possessed person in the presence of an immense crowd of people, who had come to witness this action; the demon confessed in front of everyone that the Blessed Virgin was his most cruel enemy, that she overthrew all his designs; that, without it, there would have been no religion for a long time, and that it would have upset the Church with schisms and heresies. Marie, at every moment, snatched from him souls that he hoped one day to have in hell; that many, in the hour of death, by asking for her help, had obtained mercy, and that none of those who had confidence in her had been lost. This, my brethren, is what the demon confessed in front of all those present. And if we need to convince you even better, let's look at this woman who was falsely accused by her husband and condemned to die on Péchafaud: she went to throw herself at the foot of an image of the Blessed Virgin, begging her not to let her die, since she was innocent. However, when the executioner wanted to execute him, he was never able to complete it.

Believing her to be dead, however, she was untied, and when she was taken to the church to be buried, not only did she show signs of life, but she got up and ran to an image of the Blessed Virgin: "0 Holy Virgin," she cried, "you are my liberator." comforted me while I hung on the gallows. » All those who witnessed this miracle felt their confidence in the Blessed Virgin redoubled. But, some ignorant and unreligious men will say, all this is good for those who cannot read, or for the poor in spirit and property. — Ah! My brethren, if I wanted, I would prove to you that in all states, there have been great servants of the Blessed Virgin; I would find you among those who beg their bread from door to door; I would find you among those who are in a state such as that of most of you; I would find you among the rich, and in large numbers. We read in the Gospel that Our Lord always treated everyone with great gentleness, except one kind of people whom he treated harshly: these were the Pharisees; and this because they were proud and hardened sinners. They would have gladly prevented him, if they could, from fulfilling the will of his Father; so he called them

“whitened sepulchres, hypocrites, races of vipers, vipers, who tear their mother's womb. » We can say the same thing about devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Christians all have a great devotion to Mary, except those old hardened sinners, who, having long since lost their faith, roll around in the filth of their brutal passion. The devil tries to keep them blind, until death makes them open their eyes. Ah! if they had the good fortune to have recourse to Mary, they would not fall into hell, as will happen to them! No, my brethren, let's not imitate these people! on the contrary, let us follow in the footsteps of all the true servants of Mary. Among this number was Saint Charles Borromeo, who always said his rosary on his knees; moreover, he fasted every day before the feasts of the Blessed Virgin. He was so exact in greeting her at the sound of the bell that when the Angelus rang, wherever he was, he got down on his knees, sometimes even in the middle of the street full of mud. He wanted throughout his diocese to have great devotion to Mary, and to pronounce her holy name with great respect. He had a number of chapels built in his honor. Well! My brethren, why should we not follow these great saints who obtained so many graces from Mario to protect themselves from sin, do we not have the same enemies to fight, the same heaven to hope for? Yes, Mary always has her eyes on us: are we tempted? let us turn our hearts to Mary and we are sure of being delivered. But it's not yet enough, my brethren; to deserve her protection, we must imitate the virtues of which she gave us the example. We must imitate his great humility. She never despised anyone: although she knew very well that God had elevated her to the greatest of all dignities, that of Mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth, yet she considered herself the lowest of creatures. We must imitate her admirable purity, which made her so pleasing to God. Her modesty was so great that God took pleasure in contemplating her. We must, my brethren, following his example, detach ourselves from the things of this world, and only think of heaven, our true homeland. From-then the Ascension of her divine Son, she only languished on earth. She bore life with patience, it is true; but eagerly awaited death which would reunite her with her divine Son, the sole object of her love. How many times has she cried out like the prophet: “My God, how long will you prolong my exile! Oh! When will the happy moment come when I will be reunited with you forever? Oh! if you see my Spouse, tell him that I am longing for love! » God took her from this world where she had suffered so much during her long pilgrimage; she died, but neither the infirmities of age nor the failings of nature caused her death, it was the only love of her divine Son. His first breath had been a breath of love, it was only fitting that his last was also a breath of love. If we want to be convinced of this, my brethren, let's take a look at Marie's deathbed. 0 new show! heaven and earth are delighted with admiration; the faithful come running from all sides; the apostles find themselves united by a miracle in this poor house. We do not see in Mary's death what is horrifying in ours: this frightening pallor, this universal weakness, these painful convulsions of agony; at the death of Mary everything is calm, her face is more brilliant than ever, her modest graces are manifested even more brilliantly than during her life, an amiable modesty shines on her forehead, a sweet majesty covers her holy body, her eyes, tenderly fixed towards heaven, already have all the serenity; his mind, absorbed in God, already seems to see him face to face; her tender heart, pressed by a love equally sweet and strong, tastes in advance the torrents of eternal delights that her God was preparing for her in heaven. She has no fear, because she has never offended her

God; she has no sorrow, because she has never attached herself to earthly things; she only sighs after her Jesus, and death gives her this happiness; she sees him coming to meet her, with the entire celestial court, to honor her triumphant entry into heaven. Thus this sacred lover falls asleep in the kiss of the Lord, thus disappears this beautiful star which illuminated the world for seventy-two years. Thus triumphs over death the one who gave birth to the Author of life. What can we conclude from all this, my brethren? that we must, following the example of Mary, sigh and work to deserve the same happiness. This is what I wish you.

Feast of the Holy Rosary

Says discipido: Ecce maler tua. Jesus said to the disciple he loved: My son, here is your Mother. (S. John, xix, 27.)

: U These words, my brethren, are sweet and consoling, for a Christian who can understand all the depth of love that they contain! Yes, Jesus Christ, after having given us all that he could give us, that is to say, the merits of all his works, of his sufferings, of his painful death, ah! I will tell you, his adorable Body and his precious Blood to serve as food for our souls, he still wants to make us heirs of what is most precious to him, that is to say his holy Mother. Does he not seem to say to her: “My Mother, I must return to my Father and leave my children; the demon will do everything he can to ruin them; but what consoles me is that you will take care of them, that you will defend them and that you will support them in their sorrows. » And did not the Blessed Virgin say to him for her part: “No, my Son, I will never stop taking care of them, until they have arrived in your kingdom, in this kingdom which you acquired for them through your sufferings. " Oh! what happiness for us, my brethren I What resource and what hope we find in Mary to conquer the devil, our passions and the world! “With such a guide,” Saint Bernard tells us, “one cannot go astray; with such protection it is impossible to perish. " Oh! My brethren, how safe he is who has true confidence in the Blessed Virgin! All the feasts of the Blessed Virgin announce to us some new blessing from heaven. His Conception, his Birth, his Presentation at the temple, his Vis.talion to Saint Elizabeth, the feast of his Compassion, and finally his Assumption (1); but we can say that the feast of the Holy Rosary is like a summary of all the graces that the good God [le bon Dieu] granted her during her life, and it reminds us that her divine Son placed all her treasures in her hands. Consequently, my brethren, do we want to become rich in the goods of heaven? let us go to Mary, we will find with her the graces that we can desire: graces of humility, purity, chastity, love of God and neighbor, contempt for earth and desire for heaven. But, to better convince you of this, I will show you 1° that all graces come to us through her; and 2° that all the brotherhoods which are established in his honor, and in particular the body of the Holy Rosary, have attracted us the most abundant favors.

I. We need powerful help in three different states. The first is where we find ourselves while we are on earth, where the de- (1) Delay] of all this... [Xote of the Venerable,)

my world never ceases to lay a thousand traps for us to deceive us and ruin us. The second state is the one we will be in when we appear before the judge, and we will give an account of a life which perhaps will only be a web of sins. Finally, the third state is that in which we will find ourselves when, after having been judged, we will spend perhaps an infinite number of years in the flames of purgatory. Ah! woe to us! if in all these states we did not have the Blessed Virgin to come to our aid, to solicit the mercy of her Son in our favor! But we are sure that she will be with us if, during our life, we have had great confidence in her, if we have tried to imitate her virtues as faithfully as possible. 1° I say that our life is a chain of miseries, illnesses, sorrows and a thousand other sorrows, as the Holy Spirit depicts it to us so well through the mouth of the holy man Job: “Man suffers greatly. » But without going back so far, let us return to our own heart, and we will see families of sins which are constantly born there. Indeed, how many, during our life, do we experience bad thoughts, and those bad desires that very often we would not like to have; how many thoughts of hatred, revenge, pride, vanity; how many murmurs in the little sorrows that the good God [le bon Dieu] sends us; how many disgusts for the service of God, even during the Mass, such a precious time when Jesus Christ sacrifices himself for us to the justice of his Father? How often do we not feel as if we are being led away by the bad examples of those around us, and especially by their impious, worldly conduct? But, without leaving ourselves, are not all our senses like so many ropes that drag us to evil, almost in spite of ourselves? From this I conclude that, if we are alone to fight, it is very difficult for us to escape the danger. Here is an example that will demonstrate this to us. Saint Philip of Neri one day meditated on the continual danger we face of losing ourselves; he was surprised that, already so inclined to self-harm, we were still surrounded by so many and such bad examples. Once he went out to a secluded place to cry better at his ease; believing himself alone, he cried out: “Alas! my God, I am lost! I am damned 1” A person having heard him, ran to him. “Father, are you giving in to despair? you know well that God's mercy is infinite! » — “Oh no, my friend, I do not despair, on the contrary, I hope very much; but the thought that I am alone to fight frightens me, at the

sight of so many dangers which surround me. » Tell me, my brethren, how can we escape all the traps that the devil sets for us, the world and our inclinations? Alas! If we are alone to fight, if we do not have someone powerful to help us, it is to be feared that we will never go to the end. And for that, what can we find more powerful to defeat our enemies, if not the Blessed Virgin? However unfortunate we are, my brethren, we nevertheless have great resources. Listen to Saint Bernard: “My children, are you tempted? Call Mary to your aid, and the tenLator will disappear. She is this peerless Virgin who gave birth to Him who chained (the demon). Are you in pain? Look at Mary, she is the comforter of the afflicted, she is also the mother of sorrow, since her life has been nothing but an abyss of sorrow.

mertume. Are you attacked by the demon of impurity? Throw yourself at the feet of Mary; she is too keen to preserve for you this beautiful virtue so pleasing to her Son. » Let's say more, my brethren, with the help of Marie, we only have to want to win to be sure of being victorious. Oh! My brethren, how happy we are to have so many means of achieving our salvation, if we know how to take advantage of them! Alas! how many souls would now burn in hell, without the protection of Mary I 2° We have just seen, my brethren, that during our life, a thousand dangers surround us to ruin us; but, on the other hand, we have great resources to help us overcome. When we leave this world, we will give an account to God for all our works. This moment is frightening, since it decides our fate either for heaven or for hell, without appeal, without hope of ever changing our decision. The devil, who knows the dangers much better than we do, redoubles his efforts to deceive us; for if he can win us, he immediately drags us to hell. It is the thought of this terrible moment that has led so many great people of the world to leave, to spend the rest of their lives in tears and penances, and thus have some hope at this moment so dreadful for the sinner. See a Saint Hilarión (Cite his life), a Saint Arsenius (Cite). Ah! My brethren, what will it be like for us who will be completely covered in sins, and who will have done nothing good?... What can, however, reassure us, is that, while we are before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, a large number of souls will be in prayer, asking for grace for us; I say more, it is the Blessed Virgin herself who will present our souls to her Son, our judge. Oh! My brethren, what hope for us at this moment terrible! (Quote the words of Saint Jerome before the tribunal of Jesus Christ). 3° After this fearful moment has passed, although judged worthy for heaven, how many years will we not have to suffer in purgatory, where the justice of God is felt with such rigor? (Cite the example of Saint Hildegard). But, tell me, what greater consolation for a Christian in the flames than to know and feel that such powerful prayers are said for him, and when he sees the time of his punishment passing away quickly?...

II. We can say, my brethren, that all the brotherhoods established by the Church are means that the good God [le bon Dieu] provides us to help us achieve our salvation, and means that are all the more powerful, if the members, whether they are on earth or in heaven, unite all their prayers together. Each brotherhood has a particular goal. Those who are part of the brotherhood of the Blessed Sacrament aim to compensate Jesus Christ for the outrages he receives in the reception of the sacraments, and especially in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist. They come together to make honorable amends to Jesus Christ for so many communions and sacrilegious confessions; they must also do penances, alms... Those who are of the holy brotherhood of the Heart of Jesus Christ, want to compensate the divine Master for the contempt that we flee from his love for men. They must often perform acts of love for God, and complain to him that men have so little love for him who loved us so much. Those who are of the brotherhood of Holy Slavery, place in the hands of the Blessed Virgin all their actions, so that she may pre-empt them.

feels herself to her divine Son; they see themselves as no longer belonging to themselves, but entirely to the Blessed Virgin. In the brotherhood of the Holy Scapular, we take pride in carrying with us a sign, by which we recognize that Mary is our sovereign, and that we belong to her in a very special way. For her part, she undertakes to never refuse us her protection, during our life and at the hour of our death. As for the brotherhood of the Holy Rosary, it is one of the most extensive. It is, so to speak, established throughout the Catholic world, and is made up of all the most fervent Christians. We can say that if someone has the

happiness of being of this holy brotherhood, in every corner of the Christian world there are souls who pray for his conversion, if he is unfortunate enough to be in sin; for his perseverance, if he has the happiness of being in the grace of the good God [le bon Dieu], and for his deliverance, if he is in the flames of purgatory. This alone should make us feel how much help we receive to help us work out our salvation [faire son salut]. The Rosary is made up of three parts, which are dedicated to honoring the three different states of the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The first is to honor his Incarnation, his Birth, his Circumcision, his flight into Egypt, his Presentation, his loss in the temple. We must then ask God for the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the righteous. The second is to honor his suffering life and his painful death on the cross, asking for the necessary graces for the afflicted, for the dying and for those who will appear before the tribunal of God and give an account of their lives. The third is dedicated to honoring his glorious life, praying for the deliverance of souls from purgatory. Yes,

My brethren, all these well-meditated mysteries would be capable of touching the most hardened hearts, and tearing away the most inveterate habits. I say first of all that, in the first part, we ask God for the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the righteous. In heaven, as soon as we are in sin, we have nothing but hell to wait for: faith dies in us little by little, the horror of sin diminishes and the thought of the happiness of heaven weakens; so that we fall into sin almost without realizing it; and, (what) is even more unfortunate, a large number take pleasure in staying there. See an example of this in the person of David, who remained in his sin until the prophet came to bring him back to himself. (Quote the line.) Well! My brethren, who will help us get out of this abyss? It's not us, since we don't even know our state; now, what happens? While we are in such an unhappy state, a great number of souls, in all parts of the world, are in prayer asking God to have mercy on us. It is impossible for him not to let himself be touched by this union of prayers. What remorse of conscience [remords de conscience], what good thoughts, what good desires, what means present themselves to us to get us out of sin? Are we not amazed at how we could remain in such an unhappy state which exposed us to getting lost at any moment? If we damn ourselves being of this brotherhood, it will be necessary to do as much violence to ourselves as to save us, so great and abundant are the graces and the help there. What is still consoling is that there is not a minute in the day or night when Ton no prays for us; how then could we remain in sin and damn ourselves?

We say that this part is still offered to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for the perseverance of those who have the happiness of being in his grace. But, my brethren, even if we had this happiness, we are not completely delivered for that; the demon will not fail to return to bring us evil if he can. How many times have we found ourselves in such great dangers that we are surprised not to have succumbed to them! Ah! the true cause of our resistance is that, at the time when we were tempted, there was an almost infinite number of souls, who, through their prayers, their penances and all their holy communions, opposed the efforts of the demon with an impenetrable rampart. Another reason which proves to us how pleasing this brotherhood is to God and to his holy Mother, and so terrible to the devil, is the contempt that the wicked have for it. See these jokes, these taunts on a practice of piety, which puts before our eyes the most striking mysteries of our holy religion, the most capable of distancing us from evil and leading us towards God. Do you want proof? listen to the demon himself. He said one day, through the mouth of a man possessed, that the Blessed Virgin is his cruelest enemy, that, without her, he would have overthrown the Church a long time ago, and that a large number of souls that he prided himself on having were torn from him as soon as they had recourse to her. Agree with me, my brethren, that (great is) the happiness of those who are of this holy brotherhood, since the good God [le bon Dieu] promised the Blessed Virgin never to refuse her anything. If Moses obtained the forgiveness of three hundred thousand people, what would not the Blessed Virgin do, who is much more pleasing to God than Moses? It is not only the Blessed Virgin who prays for us, but an infinity of equally pleasant souls 5

to God than Moses. If we see so many sinners having lived only to outrage God, and yet still being saved, let us look for no other cause than the protection of the Blessed Virgin. Ah! My brethren, may he who has recourse to Mary find his salvation easy I... But in order to make you better understand how these mysteries, carefully meditated, are consoling for a Christian, I will explain them to you, and you will not be able to help but thank the good God [le bon Dieu], who inspired you with the thought of entering this holy brotherhood. The Holy Rosary is composed of everything that is most touching. It is a practice of piety which brought Jesus Christ as well as his Mother. Moreover, it is impossible to remain in sin while sincerely meditating on these mysteries; Whatever side we take this practice, everything demonstrates its excellence and usefulness. When we pray to the Blessed Virgin, we do nothing other than instruct her to present our prayers to her divine Son; so that they are better received, and that we receive more graces from them. Mary is the channel through which we raise the merit of our good works to heaven, and who then transmits to us celestial graces. What should encourage us to address her with great confidence is that she is always attentive to listening to our requests. Here is proof: One day Saint Dominic lamented about the progress that impiety was making in the world, and about the faith which was being lost more and more. Prostrated before an image of the Blessed Virgin, he asked her, in his simplicity, what remedy could be used to prevent the loss of so many souls. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him, telling him that if he wanted to bring souls back to his Son, the only resource was to inspire great determination.

FEAST OF T devotion for the holy Rosary, and that soon he would see the fruit of this devotion. Saint Dominic therefore began to preach the devotion of the Holy Rosary, and first began to practice it himself. This devotion spread in a short time, and so well, that there were a large number of conversions; which made the saint say that he had converted more souls by reciting a Hail Mary than by all his sermons. It is true that the recitation of the Holy Rosary is simple, but it is what is most touching. We place ourselves in the presence of God by an act of faith; we recite the I believe in God, which puts before our eyes what Jesus Christ suffered for us... (explanation of the Creed). Can we recite these words without feeling imbued with respect and gratitude towards the good God [le bon Dieu], who gives us so many means of returning to him, when we have had the misfortune of straying from him through sin? In the Rosary, the first mysteries which we call joyful, and which we meditate for the conversion of sinners, represent to us the humiliations, the annihilation of Jesus Christ, his Birth, his Circumcision, his Presentation in the temple, his flight into Egypt, its loss in the temple. (Explain all this...) Can we find, my brethren, something more capable of touching us, of detaching us from ourselves and the world, of making us bear our sorrows in a spirit of penitence, than contemplating the divine model, in the meditation of these mysteries? The saints made it their entire occupation. Two young students, the story relates, were always together meditating on the hidden life of Jesus Christ. One of them, after his death, appeared to the other, according to the promise he had made, and told him that he was in heaven for having communed with much fervor and with a very pure conscience; for having had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, something which is very pleasing to God; for having often meditated on the hidden life of Jesus Christ and having imitated him as much as he could. It is recounted in the life of Saint Bernard that the Blessed Virgin always protected him in such a particular way that the demon lost all his control over him. Having lost his mother while still very young, he asked Mary to adopt him as her child; later, his devotion ever increasing, Bernard prayed to the Blessed Virgin to show him what to do to be more pleasing to her, and he heard a voice which said to him: “Bernard, my son, flee the world and seek a retreat in some solitude, there you will sanctify yourself. » He spent his whole life there in penance and tears, and from there he ascended to heaven. Do you see what his trust in the Blessed Virgin earned him? We read in the life of Blessed Marguerite by C., that she made all her devotion consist in imitating the poor and unknown life of the Holy Family; she never wanted to own anything, not even for the next day; she was abandoned by all her relatives and friends, but the good God [le bon Dieu] took care of her himself. She did all her practices of piety to honor the Holy Family in the establishment of Bethlehem, she watered the pavement with her tears, when she thought of these mysteries of poverty and abandonment.

When she died, her heart was opened and three small stones were found on which the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph were written. Do you see how meditation on these mysteries is pleasing to God?... It is also reported that a great sinner had spent his life in all kinds of disorders. At the hour of death, as we see things very differently from when we are in health I Seeing that he had done so much harm, he gave way to despair. No matter how hard they tried to inspire him with confidence in the mercy of God, nothing could win him over. They spoke to him about Saint Augustine. “But,” he said, “Saint Augustine had not yet been” He was told to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin, but he replied that he had despised her all his life; we represented to him Jesus Christ who suffered so much to save us. — “It’s true,” he said, “but I persecuted him and put him to death every day. » They said to him again: “My friend, do you believe that a very young child remembers, when he grows up, the little troubles that were caused to him in his childhood? » — “No,” he said. » — “Well, my friend, let's go to the nursery, and there we will find this young Child whom you offended, it is true, but he will tell you that he no longer remembers it now. » He entered into such great confidence and such great sorrow for his sins, that he died with visible signs that the good God [le bon Dieu] had forgiven him. Do you see, my brethren, how pleasing these meditations are to God, and how capable they are of drawing His mercies upon us? There is no prayer that brings us closer to the life of Jesus Christ than this pious practice. However, our devotion must be enlightened and sincere, and not a devotion of habit and routine. Saint Caesar gives us an example, to show us that the Blessed Virgin hardly receives these devotions which are not sincere. “There was, in the order of Cîteaux, a religious who, acting as a doctor, went out against the will of his superior and his confessor. But, through a certain devotion he had for Mary, he returned to the monastery on all the feasts of the Blessed Virgin. One day of the Presentation, as he was in the choir with

the other monks to sing the holy offices, he saw the Blessed Virgin walking in the choir, and giving all the monks a certain liquor which inflamed them with such love that they no longer believed they were on earth, such sweetness did they experience. When the Blessed Virgin came next to him, she passed by without giving him any, telling him “that those who wanted to seek the sweets of earth did not deserve to taste those of heaven, and, although he went to the monastery on his feast day, it was not pleasant to him. » This reproach was so sensitive to him that he began to cry, and promised not to go out again. Another time when the Blessed Virgin reappeared, she granted him, as to the others, the same grace, because he had kept his promise. He spent his life in great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and received great graces from her; he could not be content with saying how much he who loved the Mother of God received great help in achieving his salvation and in vanquishing the devil. Saint Stanislaus had such great devotion to the Blessed Virgin that he consulted her in everything he did. This young man often imagined the happiness that the holy old man Simeon had in taking the holy Child Jesus in his arms. One day when he was in prayer, occupied with this thought, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him holding the Holy Child Jesus, she gave him to him, to give him the same advantage. Saint Stanislaus took him like Saint Simeon, and he was so happy that he could not speak about it without shedding abundant tears, his heart was so filled with joy. Do you see, my brethren, how attentive the Blessed Virgin is to obtaining graces for us as soon as we ask for them? Ah! My brethren, that we would ensure our salvation, if we had great confidence in the Blessed Virgin 1 How many sins we would avoid, if we had recourse to her in all our actions, if every morning, we unite ourselves to her, praying her to present to us her divine Son! If we pass to the second mysteries which we call painful, what powerful motives are capable of touching us, of making us understand the infinite love of a God for us! Indeed, my brethren, who would not be touched by seeing a God who falls in agony, who covers the earth with his adorable blood? A God bound, garotted, thrown to the ground by his enemies, and this to deliver us from the slavery of the demon! Who will not be moved to see a God crowned with thorns which cross his forehead, a reed in his hand, in the midst of a people who insult him and despise him! Oh! who can understand all the horrors he endured during that terrible night he spent with scoundrels? He was tied to a column, where he

was beaten with so much cruelty that his poor body was nothing more than a piece of cut flesh! O my God, what cruelties you have endured to merit forgiveness for all our sins! Oh! My brethren, who among us would not rather fear sin than death!... Oh! we have much to console us in our sufferings, and a very just reason to mourn our sins!... A missionary preaching in a large city learned that there was an unfortunate man in a dungeon who was grieving; his tears and his groans made those who heard him shudder; he thought of going to see him to console him and offer him the help of his ministry. Having entered the prison, he himself was frightened by the lamentations of this poor wretch, he saw clearly that the painting that had been painted for him was nothing compared to what he saw. He said to him kindly: “My dear friend, what is the subject of your pain? » As the prisoner made no response, the missionary said to him: “Is it your position that afflicts you? » — “No, I deserve much more. » — “Have you left someone in the world who suffers compared to you? » — “No, none of that worries me. » — “So it is the thought of death that afflicts you? » — “No, certainly, I know very well that I will not live forever: a little sooner, a little later, death will come enough; provided I can atone for my sins I will be too happy. But since you want to know the subject of my tears, here it is. » And while sobbing, he pulled a large crucifix from under his clothes and showed it to the missionary: “This is the subject of my tears. Oh!, can a God who suffered so much and who died for me, despite my offenses, still forgive me? The greatness of his sufferings and his love for me are the cause that I cannot hold back my tears; since I have been here everyone has abandoned me, there is only my God who thinks of me, who still wants to give me the hope of heaven. Ah! how good it is! How can it be that I was so unfortunate to offend him?..." My brethren, agree with me that if we are so little affected by the meditation of these mysteries, it is because we pay no attention to them. My God! what misfortune for us!... If we continue, we see a God loaded with a big cross; he is led between two thieves by a troop of scoundrels, who overwhelm him with the most bloody outrages. The weight of his cross brings him to the ground; with great kicks and punches he is lifted up, and, far from thinking about his sufferings, he seems to think only of consoling the people who take part in his ills. Oh! could we not be touched and find our crosses heavy, seeing what a God suffers for us? Do we need more to excite us to the pain of our sins? Listen: they nailed him to the cross, without letting a word come out of his mouth to complain that he was enduring too much suffering. Listen to his last words: “My Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they do. » Was I not right to tell you that the Holy Rosary represents to us everything that is most capable of leading us to repentance, love and gratitude? Alas! My brethren, who will ever be able to understand the blindness of these poor impious people who mistrust value a devotional practice so capable of converting them, so capable of giving us the strength to persevere when we are happy enough to be in the grace of God! Now let us speak of the third mysteries which we call glorious. What can we find more pressing to detach us from life and make us long for heaven? In these mysteries, Jesus Christ appears to us without suffering, and taking possession of an infinite happiness that he has merited for us all. To make us feel a great desire for heaven, he goes up there in broad daylight, in the presence of more than five hundred people. If you still meditate on these mysteries, you see the Blessed Virgin, whom her divine Son himself comes to seek with all the celestial court; the angels appear visibly and sing songs of joy which all those present hear; she leaves the earth where she suffered so much, and goes to join her Son, to be happy in the happiness of him who calls us and who awaits us all. Can we find something in our holy religion that can better lead us to the good God [le bon Dieu] and detach us from life?

Well, my brethren, this is what the holy Rosary is, this is this devotion that we blame so much and of which we make so little regard. Ah! beautiful religion, if people despise you, it is because they do not know it... However, let us not stop at that; we must also, as much as we can, imitate the virtues of the Blessed Virgin to merit her holy protection, and above all her humility, her purity, her great charity. Ah! fathers and mothers, if you had the good fortune to often recommend this devotion to the Blessed Virgin to your children, what graces she would obtain for them! what virtues they would practice! You would see born in them everything

that is most capable of making them pleasing to the good God [le bon Dieu]. No, my brethren, we will never be able to understand how much the Blessed Virgin desires to help us save ourselves, how great is the care she takes of us. The slightest trust we have in ello is never without reward. Happy is he who lives and dies under his protection, we can well say that his salvation is secure and that heaven will one day be given to him! It is happiness that I wish you.

Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels

Angeli eorum in cœlîs semper vident faciem Patris met, which in cælis est. The angels of these little children continually see the face of my heavenly Father. (S. Matth., xvui, 10.)

part of our God! Not content with having given us his only Son, the most tender object of his complacency, to sacrifice him to the most cruel death; not content with having rescued us from the tyranny of the devil, with having called us to the glorious quality of children of God and with having chosen us as co-heirs of his kingdom, he also wants to send to each of us, an angel from heaven to guard us all the days of our life. This angel must not leave us before having appeared with us at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, to give him an account of all that we have done during our life. Yes, my brethren, our guardian angels are our most faithful friends, because they are with us day, night, at all times and in all places. Faith teaches us that we have them always by our side. This is what makes David say: “That nothing can harm us, because the Lord has commanded his angels to take care of us; » and, to show how great is the care they take of us, the prophet says that they carry us in their hands, as a mother carries her child. Ah! is that God foresaw the countless dangers to which we would be exposed on earth, in the midst of so many enemies, all of whom seek only our destruction. Yes, my brethren, it is our good angels who console us in our sorrows, who warn us when the devil comes to tempt us, who present our prayers and all our good deeds to God, who assist us at death and present our souls to their sovereign Judge. Oh! My brethren, what good things we receive through the ministry of our good guardian angels. In order to encourage you to have great confidence in them, I will show you: 1° how great is the care they take of us; 2° what we must do to show them our gratitude.

L Wanting to prove, my brethren, that there are angels would be a waste of time. Since the beginning of the world, the commerce of angels with men has been so frequent that Holy Scripture makes mention of it at all times. You would have to not have a single good sound to doubt it. When Adam was in the earthly paradise, the Heavenly Father sent his angels to him to inform him of his wishes. When Adam had the misfortune of sinning, it was an angel who chased him out of paradise. Almost all the patriarchs and prophets were instructed by angels about the wills of the Lord. Often we even see that God has made himself represented by angels.

But, you will tell me, if we saw them, we would have much more confidence? — If it had been necessary for the salvation of our soul, the good God [le bon Dieu] would have made them visible. But that matters little; for in our religion we only know by faith, so that all our actions may be more meritorious. Besides, we are as sure of their presence as if we saw them with our own eyes. If you wish to know the number of angels, their function, I will tell you that they are without number; some are created to honor Jesus Christ in his hidden, suffering and glorious life, or to be the guardians of men, without ceasing [sans relâche], for this reason, to enjoy the divine presence. The others occupy themselves in contemplating the perfections of God, or else, watch over our preservation, by providing us with all the means necessary for our sanctification. Although the good God [le bon Dieu] is sufficient in himself, he nevertheless uses the ministry of his angels to govern the world. Some are established as protectors of kingdoms, others of empires, etc. If we see God taking so much care of our life, we must conclude that our soul is something very great and very precious, so that he uses for its preservation and sanctification all that is greatest in his court. He gave us his Son to save us. This Son himself gives his body and his blood to make them the food of our souls [nourriture de nos âmes], he

agrees to remain night and day in our midst, he gives each of us one and even several angels, who are solely concerned with asking him for us the graces and help necessary for our salvation. Isn't it true, my brethren, that we have never really thought about what we are, what our soul is worth? Oh! that man knows for what he is, and the end for which he was created I... We read in Holy Scripture that the Lord said to his people: “I will send you my angel, that he may guide you in all your steps. " Oh! My brethren, who could count the graces that we receive through the protection of our guardian angels! Yes, they are the ones who console us in our sorrows. When Hagar, says the Scripture, was driven from her master's house, she withdrew into a desert, and there, as she gave way to sadness, the Lord sent her an angel to comfort her and say to her: "Do not give way to despair, but return to your master's house, and be more submissive. » It was an angel that the Lord sent to Lot to tell him to leave the city of Sodom quickly, before the Lord caused fire to fall there from heaven. It was the angels who preserved the three children in the furnace of Babylon from the flames, and who closed the mouths of the lions to prevent them from devouring the prophet Daniel. The angels, my brethren, take great pleasure in assisting us in our undertakings, when they are according to God; we have a good example of this in the person of young Tobit. His father sent him to Rages to get his money; not knowing the way, the good God [le bon Dieu] sent him the angel Raphael, who presented himself to him in the form of a young man. Tobias asked him if he knew the way to Rages. The angel told him that he knew him and even the uncle he was going to. The young man, very happy, went to tell his father that he had found a man who knew the way to Rages and who knew his uncle. So the angel left with Tobias, and gave him all the information necessary for his journey. During their journey, Tobias having gone to the bank of the Tigris,

A huge fish seemed to come towards him to devour him, he immediately had recourse to his protector, not knowing that he was an angel. He said to him: “Fear nothing, pull him to you. » Instantly the fish died (1). He said to him again: “Take the gall to carry it away, you will rub it into your father’s eyes and thus restore his sight. » He took him to his uncle, where everything went well. He saved his life again by chaining the demon. When they returned, young Tobias, not knowing how to pay so many fees, said to his father: "My father, if we gave half of everything we brought, it would not be enough to reward him for all the services he rendered me on my journey: he led me and brought me back safe and sound, he delivered me from a monster who was going to devour me, he himself obtained the money that my uncle owed us, he also made me marrying a woman after God's own heart, he finally stopped the devil from destroying me, as he did the seven husbands who married her before me. » The father wanted him to accept half of everything they had brought, the angel made himself known and disappeared. But to show their gratitude to God, they prostrated themselves with their faces to the ground for a long time. Do you see, my brethren, how much the angels take care of us, when we trust in them?... We see yet another beautiful example of this protection of our good guardian angel, in the person of Saint Agnes, virgin and martyr. She belonged to a great family in Rome, so she was asked to marry by Procope, son of Symphrone, then prefect of this city. Agnes, who had already given herself to Jesus Christ, refused this.

(i) Died.

gone, although advantageous for her. She did not fear to say to Procopius, who had come to find her himself: “Begone, tyrant, sting of sin, stone of scandal, and flesh of death, do not believe that I am unfaithful to my husband Jesus Christ. He has my whole heart, he is good, he is beautiful, he has all the qualities one could desire. » The prefect called her, and implored her not to reject her son's alliance; or else, upon her refusal, he would have her dragged to an infamous place, where she would lose the purity she was so keen to preserve. Agnès replied to the prefect: “Don’t worry, I fear nothing; I have to protect me an angel who will take good care of me, and who will defend me in a marvelous way. » Seeing that he could not achieve his goals, the magistrate gave orders to strip her of her clothes, and to drag her throughout Rome, to be delivered to libertines. By a miracle of God's power, his hair grew so wonderfully that it was enough to cover all his limbs. Arriving in this infamous place, her guardian angel visibly appeared to defend her and clothe her in a

dress white as snow; at the same time, this den of impurity was illuminated with a light more brilliant than the sun. The libertines entered this dungeon; but, surprised by all these wonders, and struck with terror by the sight of this angel of incomparable beauty, they all converted. Procopius thought he was coming in his turn to defy all these prodigies, but the angel who guarded Agnes struck him, and he fell dead at the saint's feet. The prefect of the city hearing that his son had just died in this dungeon, came to find Agnes, calling her a “fury from hell, a monster born for the destruction of mortals. » Agnès said that she had not caused Pro to die.

cope, but that he himself was the author of his death by his effrontery. Also his guardian angel had struck him at the moment when this unfortunate man was going to take away his purity. However, the saint wanting to show the magistrate the power of her husband, and that the Christians knew how to return good for evil, resurrected Procopius, who ran throughout the city of Rome, constantly repeating that the God of the Christians was the only true God... This example proves to you how great are the help and graces that we receive from our good guardian angels, if we have the good fortune to have great confidence in them, especially in our temptations and in perils. But, you will ask me, when does the good God [le bon Dieu] send us our guardian angels from heaven? It is, my brethren, when our souls are created, that is to say when our bodies are in the position to receive them, so that a pregnant mother has her guardian angel, and she also has that of the child she carries in her womb to ensure that nothing can take her life before having received holy Baptism. We should, my brethren, be able to understand how great the joy of our good guardian angels is, when we are taken to church to receive this sacrament. They eagerly write our name in the book of life! It is very certain that we have many demons around us to make us fall into sin; and, if our guardian angel were not there with us to defend us, we would succumb to all the attacks that the demon delivers to us. It is our good angel who makes us see temptation; it is he who inspires us to have recourse to God, who makes us remember his presence to make us fear sin. If we have the misfortune of sinning, it is our good guardian angels who will throw themselves at the feet of the good God [le bon Dieu] to ask him for our grace. Indeed, after each sin, we usually feel remorse for having done evil, and we promise the good God [le bon Dieu] not to do it again. It is surely our guardian angel who, through his prayers, deserves this grace for us. If he sees that we are insensitive to the outrages we have done to God, he threatens us with the punishments of divine justice; It makes us think of death, of the regret we will have, at that moment, for having done evil. It makes us think of some sudden or frightening death. The thought of judgment will pursue us, and that of hell will lodge itself in our heart to tear our souls, and thus, in some way, force us not to remain in sin any longer. Our guardian angels, my brethren, accompany us everywhere. It is reported in the story that a young man saw, in a sensitive way, his guardian angel. When he entered the church, his angel always entered before him; when he was a priest, his angel no longer wanted to go first; he was sometimes seen talking and remaining at the door for a long time. We asked him why. “Before I was a priest,” he said, “my angel always preceded me, now he no longer wants to enter until I enter first. » Ah! My brethren, if we had the thought, when we come to church, that our angels walk before us, with what respect would we not come!... with what modesty we would attend holy mass, thinking that we are next to a guardian angel prostrated before the God of all greatness? With what eagerness would we not charge him to present our prayers to Jesus Christ? It is also reported that a young English prince abandoned his palace to retire into a desert. God, for him witness-hinder his joy, gave him the happiness of seeing his guardian angel every morning and every evening. It is said of Saint Frances that she continually saw her guardian angel, in the form of a child of incomparable beauty, and whose face was so resplendent that she often read her office during the night in the clarity of the light it shed. Her angel took so much care to lead her to perfection that if, at times, she indulged in useless thoughts in her solitude, or if some idle word escaped her in conversation, this good angel would make her aware of her fault by disappearing. Then, filled with confusion and pain at having herself distanced her faithful guardian, she wept bitterly, praying to the good God [le bon Dieu] to have pity on her, and promising him that she would correct herself. After a few moments of tears, she saw her guardian angel reappear, to whom she expressed her pain at having forced him to move away. If, sometimes, those who were with the

saint said something to her that could hurt charity even a little, she showed the pain she felt by covering her face with her hands My brethren, although we do not see, like this saint, our guardian angel, we are no less sure of having her near us to watch over the preservation of our soul. Alas! with what tortures and bitterness must we not inflict it, by leading such a miserable life? What must the guardian angel think of a person who does neither Easter nor confession? of an elderly person who continually rolls around in the sin of impurity? Ah! my God, if they were capable of suffering, would they not be as miserable as the reprobate who burn in hell? How can the angels, who are so pure, remain near these infamous people?

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Can our charitable angels stay with the vindictive and resentful? Can the angels, so humble, accompany the proud? How can an angel, who loves the good God [le bon Dieu] so much, be happy with an impious person, an unbeliever who denies everything, who believes in nothing? Is it really possible that we are so bad, so ungrateful, towards such beneficent friends, so faithful in not leaving us for a single moment?... We know that our guardian angels take great care to console us in our pains and sufferings. We read in Holy Scripture that Jacob, fleeing from the fury of his brother, fell asleep on the way. The good Lord, to console him, showed him in a vision a ladder, which rose from the earth to heaven; he saw the angels ascending and descending to offer our prayers to God and bring back the graces we ask. The angel who had led and brought back the young Iobic, having made himself known, said to his father: “When you prayed and buried the dead, it was I myself who brought your good deeds to the Lord. » It is said in the life of Saint Nicholas Tolentin that, during the two months of his illness, four angels stayed in his room all night. They sang a melody so pleasant that he forgot his suffering. The last six days before his death they remained day and night; all those who had the pleasure of entering the room also had the pleasure of hearing their songs. The angels took his soul with them into heaven. Saint Liduwinc suffering from very violent pains, an angel appeared to her in such great beauty that she forgot her sufferings. We can say that the angels delight in rendering us all the services of which they are capable, and that they are very keen to have us participate in their happiness. Through them, heaven carries out holy commerce with earth. God often employed the ministry of holy angels in the most important events. It was through them that he instructed the patriarchs and the prophets, through them that he spoke to his people. We read in Holy Scripture that the Lord sent his angel to speak to the Israelites in his name: “I took you out of Egypt and brought you into the Promised Land, promising you that I would never abandon you, but on condition that you would be faithful to me. You didn't want to hear my voice, why did you behave this way? It is because of your infidelity and the contempt you made of my graces that I did not defend you against your enemies. » The Israelites, hearing these words of the angel, began to cry out lamentably, and shed abundant tears, begging him to have pity on them and not to abandon them. iWe see that all men who were great on earth were announced by angels. It was an angel who announced the birth of Samson, the avenger of God's people. It was an angel who announced the conception of Saint John. It was an angel who announced the conception of the Savior, it was an angel who announced his birth to the shepherds, it was an angel who told Joseph to flee to Egypt. It was another angel who consoled Jesus in his agony in the Garden of Olives, it was the angels who buried and accompanied the body of the Blessed Virgin after her death. They will be angels who will accompany the Lord to his last judgment. “According to this, my brethren, if each of them must be honored according to their dignity,” Saint Bernard tells us, “what honor and what praise should we not give to our guardian angels, whose nature is so perfect, whose holiness is so eminent, whose glory is so dazzling? » But what should lead us above all to great veneration towards them is their inviolable fidelity to the good God [le bon Dieu]. Their innocence has never been sullied by the slightest stain, their love and their zeal have never suffered the slightest alteration. If we truly loved the good God [le bon Dieu], my brethren, what joy would we not have at what he receives from these blessed spirits, such perfect praise? Alas, how imperfect are the praises of those who, even among us, love him most! How many distractions in our conversations with God! For the angels, on the contrary, nothing is capable of distracting them from the presence of God, so absorbed are they in the contemplation of

his greatness. They continually make the vault of heaven resound with this song of joy: “Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord, the God of hosts; May honor, glory and adoration be returned to him, for ever and ever! » I say that our guardian angels are very exact in helping us in our troubles. We read in the Acts of the holy Apostles the following trait. Saint Peter having been put in prison by the order of Herod, he fell asleep between the two soldiers who guarded him at night, it was the day before the day on which he was to be put to death; an angel suddenly appears to him, awakens him, breaks his chains and opens the doors of the prison, saying to him: “Rise quickly... and follow me. » Being guided by the angel, he left his prison and knocked at the door of the house where the disciples were gathered. A servant having heard Pierre's voice, unable to contain her joy, ran without opening the door to announce that Pierre was there. We didn't want to believe it; some treat it

Although it was foolish, the others said it was an angel. And Peter having entered, told all his brothers what his guardian angel had done to deliver him. We see that God often sent his angels to help the martyrs. Thus, it was the angels who brought the crowns to the forty martyrs of Sebaste, which caused the very one who kept them to convert at the sight of this prodigy. The holy King David, who knew how pleasing their praises are to the Lord, invited the angels to praise and bless him, saying to them: “Bless the Lord, all you who are ministers of his will. » Let us follow, my brethren, the example of this holy king, let us often pray to the angels to praise and adore God for us; let us ask them to take our place with him, to thank him for all the graces he has given us during our lives. Let us ask them to pray to the good God [le bon Dieu] to change our hearts, and to make them heavenly hearts.

II. To deserve this happiness which is the protection of our guardian angels, we must often invoke them, respect them well and, above all, try to imitate them in all our actions. The first thing we must imitate in them is the thought of the presence (of God); following their example, let us never lose it. Ah! AI. F., if we had this happiness, how many fewer sins!.. Indeed, if we were truly penetrated by the presence of God, how could we do evil? Oh! that our virtues and all our good works would be (much) more pleasing to God! We would have no more human respect, no more human views. If we always remembered the presence of God, how would we have the courage to remain in sin, seeing how much suffering we cause?

SESSIONS.

Jesus Christ? How could we wish harm to our neighbor, thinking that the good God [le bon Dieu], whose goodness is infinite, considers, reads and listens to all the movements of our heart? Also, wanting to elevate the patriarch Abraham to high perfection, God said to him: “Abraham, do you want to be perfect? Walk in my presence. » How can it be that we forget so easily the good God [le bon Dieu], while we always have Him before us? Why are we not filled with respect and gratitude towards our angels, who accompany us day and night? Of the princes of the celestial court 1... oh my God, how happy we are!... but also, how far we are from understanding it! “I’m too miserable,” you might say, “to deserve that!” » Not only does God not lose sight of you for an instant, my brethren, but he gives you an angel who never ceases to guide your steps. Oh! happiness too great, but too little known to men! We must also imitate their love for God. They have His glory so much at heart that when we have the misfortune of sinning, they would throw us into the depths of hell if God did not forbid them from punishing us (1). They would rather be thrown with the damned than displease God in the slightest thing. Also, Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that they feel immense joy when a sinner is converted. If therefore the conversion of a sinner rejoices the entire heavenly court, what joy, my brethren, for these ministers of peace, when they see reigning among us this charity which unites them so closely to God in heaven. It is true that we must have great devotion (1) Example of IIeliodorus beaten by the angels. (Note of the Venerable.)

towards all the angels, because they are all concerned with our salvation; but we must have a special devotion to our holy guardian angels, because of the great care they take of us and the great desire they have to lead us to heaven. They cannot leave us alone for a moment, for fear that the demon will deceive us. Oh! what happiness and what consolation, when we go to bed, to know, by faith, that our good guardian angel

watches over our preservation during the night, and that he will spend the entire night praying for us! What a joy to know that when we leave home, we are never alone on the road. The elders were so imbued with the presence of the guardian range that they never greeted a person without also greeting their good angel; and this is where this old habit of saying to a person, even if alone, comes from: “I greet you and the company. » What is this company, if not that of the good guardian angel? But we say it without thinking about it... Our guardian angels never abandon us, we must be docile to the advice they give us. A solitary man had taken his penances to such a high degree of rigor that he could no longer stand on his feet. As the water he was going to fetch was very far away, he said to himself: “Since I am having so much trouble fetching my water, I am going to move my cell closer to the fountain. » While his mind was occupied with this, he heard a voice saying, “One, two and three,” like a person counting something. Astonished at this language, he turns and sees his guardian angel counting his steps, telling him that the Lord had ordered him to do so, and that none was lost. The saint seeing that this was pleasing to God, far from approaching his 6 cell, removed him further, so as to deserve more. Alas! how miserable we are not to do everything we do for the good God [le bon Dieu]! That we would win for heaven and that we would please our guardian angel! How rich we would find ourselves at the hour of death! Alas! My brethren, how many times our sins have forced our good angels to move away from us, that is to say, to abandon us to our enemies, who are the demons and our passions! Another grace that we receive from them is when, finding us in sin, they never cease to give us remorse, and, as they are continually with the good God [le bon Dieu], (they) beg him not to let us die in this state. They take opportunities away from us, and take all kinds of means to bring us into grace. They console us in our sorrows, our persecutions. We have a beautiful example of this in the story of Saint Victor. His good guardian angel appeared to him visibly to encourage him to suffer martyrdom, by showing him the greatness of the glory which was prepared for him in heaven, and how much he made himself pleasing to God. So we see few martyrs who suffered with such courage and joy. This great saint was a soldier and lived in the time of Diocletian and Maximian. These two emperors published the edict that all those who did not worship idols would die in the most cruel tortures. Seeing that several Christians were beginning to falter, Victor went from prison to prison, where several were already confined, in order to inflame them with the desire for martyrdom; he even accompanied them to the place of their torture. His words had so much force and grace that the martyrs seemed to suffer nothing, provided that soldier Victor was at their side.

He said to them: “Courage, my friends, heaven awaits you. See Jesus Christ who extends his hand to you; despise life which lasts so short; lift up your hearts to heaven, and Jesus Christ will give you the strength to fight and overcome. » The Emperor Maximian, guided by hatred of the Christian name, summons Victor and orders him to be tied to an untamed horse, which drags him throughout the city; then he had him beaten with rods, so that the body of the saint was nothing more than a scrap of flesh. In the midst of these torments, he prayed to God to support him with his grace. Jesus Christ, touched by his sufferings, appeared to him with his cross: “Courage, Victor,” he said to him, “I am Jesus Christ, I am your refuge, fear nothing; I will be with you until the end, take courage. » Some time later, his guardian angel appeared to him in his prison, removed his chains, and consoled him by making him taste in advance the sweets that the Lord was preparing for him in heaven. Then he said to him: “Come out of the prison and show yourself to the emperor, that he may see how the Lord cares for those who serve him. » He did indeed go out. The tyrant, surprised to see him again, asked him who had delivered him: “It was Jesus Christ,” he said, “who broke my chains, through the ministry of his angels. » More furious than ever, Maximien has Victor taken back to his prison. But the same angel appeared again, and filled the prison with such a bright light, that all the prisoners who were there urgently asked for holy Baptism. The emperor, informed of all these miracles, had Victor crushed by an enormous millstone. Then his angel led his soul in triumph into heaven, where God awaited to reward him. Why then, my brethren, do we have so little courage in our temptations, in persecutions? Ah! that's because we don't count only on ourselves, and that we do not have recourse to our guardian troughs, who would ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for grace to make us victorious in our battles. I say that we must unite with our

guardian angels when we pray, because they are so pleasing to God that Jesus Christ cannot refuse them anything. We are sure that they are next to us when we pray, and especially when we hear Holy Mass. A disciple of Saint John Chrysostom tells us that, many times, while he was serving him mass, he saw the house of God filled with a multitude of angels; some were prostrated before the adorable Body already present on the altar, and others went into the church to inspire in the faithful the respect and love they should have for Jesus Christ. The deacon Peter reports the following from Saint Gregory: “One day, during the holy mi'sso, when the celebrant said these words: Paz Domini sit semper vobiscum: May the peace of the Lord be always with you, the angels were heard saying in a resounding voice, so as to be heard by all present: Et cum Spivitn tuo: And with your Spirit. » This is why, since that time, when the Sovereign Pontiff celebrates in public, no one responds: Et cum Spiritu tuo, in order to preserve the memory of this miracle. Our guardian angels will not fail to mark all our good deeds in the book of life, to present them to God at the moment when we are judged. It is they who are the depositaries of all the good that we have done during the course of our lives, it is they who will inspire us, in the terrible moment of death, with great confidence, and who will give us the happiness of receiving the last sacraments. It is our angels who dominate

FESTIVAL OF THE HOLY ANGELS GUARDIANS. (33 express great regret to the good God [le bon Dieu] for our sins. Let's say everything, my brethren, in two words: they are our good guardian angels, who, after having kept us company throughout our lives, after having used all possible means, either to bring us out of sin, or to make us persevere in grace, take our souls in triumph into heaven. If you doubt this, listen to Jesus Christ tell you that the angels took the soul of Lazarus into the bosom of Abraham, which is heaven. Saint Anthony tells us that he saw the soul of Saint Paul, a hermit, led into heaven by the angels. Alas! My brethren, who among us can sufficiently deplore the misfortune of these Christians who do not know if they have a guardian angel; or who, perhaps, will spend a considerable time, without thanking the good God [le bon Dieu] for the graces he grants them through the protection of their guardian angel, without saying a Pater and an Ave in his honor. Ah, let us not be surprised to have so little zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of our souls; it is that our guardian angel, as punishment for our ingratitude, abandons us to ourselves. So we do much harm and little good. Alas! How many Christians are damned for having despised their guardian angels! What reproaches at the hour of death, when, imploring his help, he will say to us, as well as to this dying man of whom the story speaks: “Go, unhappy one, you have had nothing but contempt for me, so the good God [le bon Dieu] has commanded me to abandon you to the power of the demons, of whom you have been the faithful servant,” Alas, my God, how the number of these people has grown... See, my brethren, how much the Church is keen that we have great devotion to the angels. In October, each year, she celebrates a festival in honor of the holy angels, and in particular the holy angels (guardians).

There is still a pious practice, which is to dedicate Tuesdays in honor of the holy guardian angels. How, my brethren, can we forget these protective angels, who are always next to us, and who never leave us for a single moment? Let us try to thank the good God [le bon Dieu] often for this grace, and to often have recourse to them in our sorrows, in our illnesses, in our sorrows and afflictions. They are our best friends, they love us, and never leave us until they have led us into heaven. Let us try from time to time to say some prayers, an alms, to have (a) mass said in their honor; let fathers and mothers especially do this, to attract the protection of angels to their children, their servants. Oh! if they are faithful to it, they will soon see peace reign in their family, union between all the members, but above all religion, which will make them happy in this world, while waiting for them to be happy in the other. It is happiness that I wish you.

All Saints — On Holiness

Sancti estote, quia ego Sanctus sum. Be holy, because I am holy [sancti estote, quia ego Sanctus sum], (Levit., xix, 2.)

Be holy, because I am holy, the Lord tells us. Why, my brethren, does God give us a similar command? It is because we are his children, and if the Father is holy, the children must be holy too. Only the saints can hope for the happiness of going to enjoy the presence of God who is holiness itself. Indeed, being a Christian and living in sin is a monstrous contradiction. A Christian must be a saint. Yes, my brethren" this is the truth that the Church never ceases to repeat to us, and in order to engrave it in our hearts, she represents to us an infinitely holy God, sanctifying an infinite multitude of saints who seem to say to us: "Remember, Christians, that you are destined to see God and to possess him; but you will only have this happiness as long as

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you will have traced in yourself, during your mortal life, his image, his perfections, and particularly his holiness, without which no one will see him. » But, my brethren, if the holiness of God seems beyond our strength, let us consider these blessed souls, this multitude of creatures of every age, sex and condition, who have been subjected to the same miseries as us, exposed to the same dangers, subject to the same sins, attacked by the same enemies, surrounded by the same obstacles. What they were able to do, we can also do, we have no excuse for exempting ourselves from working for our salvation, that is to say, to become saints. I therefore have nothing else to prove to you, other than the indispensable obligation to which we are called to become saints; and for this, I will show you 1° in what holiness consists; 2° that we can acquire it as well as the saints, having like them the same difficulties and the same help.

I. Worldly people, in order to exempt themselves from working to acquire holiness, which would undoubtedly hinder them too much in their way of living, want you to believe that, to be saints, one must perform brilliant actions, apply oneself to extraordinary devotional practices, embrace great austerities, do many fasts, leave the world to sink into the deserts, in order to spend the days and nights there in prayer. No doubt this is very good, it is indeed the path that many saints have followed; but this is not what God asks of everyone. No, my brethren, this is not what our holy religion demands of us; on the contrary, she tells us: "Lift up your eyes to heaven, and see if all those who fill the first places have made wonderful things. Where are the miracles of the Blessed Virgin, of St. John the Baptist, of St. Joseph? "Listen, my brethren: Jesus Christ himself says that many, on the day of judgment, will cry out: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name; have we not cast out demons and performed miracles? » "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity," the righteous Judge will answer them; What! you commanded the sea, and you did not know how to command your passions? You have delivered those possessed by the devil, and you have been his slaves? Have you done miracles, and have not kept my commandments?... Go, you miserable people, into the eternal fire; you have done great things, and you have done nothing to save yourself and deserve my love. » You see then, my brethren, that holiness does not consist of doing great things; but to keep faithfully the commandments of God, and to fulfill his duties in the state where. the good God [le bon Dieu] has placed us. We often see a person of the world, who faithfully fulfills the little duties of his state, being more pleasing to God than those who are solitary in their deserts. Here is an example that will convince you: There were two solitary people in the desert... (1). This, my brethren, is what holiness is, and what a saint is, in the eyes of religion. Tell me, is it very difficult to sanctify yourself in the state in which the good God [le bon Dieu] has placed you? Fathers and mothers, imitate these two saints; here are your models: follow them and you will also become saints. Do like them; in everything, try to please God, to do everything for his love, and you will be predestined.

(i) This feature is recounted in the same terms in the Sermon for the 17th Sunday after Pentecost, volume III, p. 217.

Do you still want to know what a saint is in the eyes of religion? He is a man who fears God, who sincerely loves him and who serves him faithfully; he is a man who does not allow himself to be puffed up by pride, nor dominated by self-love, who is truly humble and small in his own eyes; who, being deprived of the goods of this world, does not desire them, or who, possessing them, does not set his heart on them; he is a man who

is enemy of all unjust acquisition; he is a man who, possessing his soul in patience and justice, is not offended by an insult done to him. He loves his enemy, he does not seek revenge. He renders all the services he can to his neighbor, he willingly shares his property with the poor; he seeks only God alone, despises his goods and the honors of this world. Aspiring only to the goods of heaven, he becomes disgusted with the pleasures of life and finds his happiness only in the service of God. He is a man who is diligent in divine services, who frequents the sacraments, and who is seriously concerned with his salvation; he is a man who, having a horror of all impurity, flees bad company as much as he can, to keep his body and his soul pure. He is a man who submits himself in everything to the will of God, in all the crosses and difficulties that come his way; who accuses neither one nor the other, but who recognizes that divine justice weighs on him because of his sins. He is a good father who only seeks the salvation of his children, by setting an example for them himself, and never doing anything that could scandalize them. He is a charitable master, who loves his servants like his brothers and sisters. He is a son who respects his father and mother, and who considers them to take the place of God himself. It is a servant who sees, in the persons of his masters, Jesus Christ himself, who commands him through their mouth. This, my brethren, is what you simply call an honest man. But this is what God calls the man of miracles, the saint, the great saint. “Which one is that?” says the Wisdom, we will fill him with praise, not because he did wonderful things in his life, but because he was tested by tribulations, and was found perfect; his glory will be eternal. » What should we understand by a holy girl? A holy girl is one who flees pleasures and vanity; who makes it his happiness to please God and his parents; who likes to attend offices and the sacraments; a girl who loves prayer; she is, in a word, the one who prefers God to everything. I will dare to cite a surprising but true example, taken from ecclesiastical history, and on which all can take a model. During the time of the persecution which raged in the city of Ptolemaides, Christian girls shone for their virtue. There were a very large number of them of distinguished birth; they were so pure that they preferred to suffer death than to lose their chastity; They cut their own lips and part of their face, to appear more hideous to those who approached them. They were torn with iron nails and by the teeth of lions. These incomparable girls preferred to endure all these torments, than to expose their bodies to the passion of the libertines. Oh! that this example will one day condemn these fickle girls, who only think of appearing, of attracting the attention of the world, to the point of becoming contemptible!... Would I not also cite to them the example of Saint Colette, this virgin so pure and so reserved, who was as afraid of being seen as the girls of this century are concerned about

140 SERMONE show off. One day, in a company, she heard praise being given to her beauty; she blushed, and immediately went to prostrate herself before her crucifix. “Ah! my God, she cried, weeping, will this beauty that you have given me be the cause of the loss of my soul and that of other people? From that moment, she left the world and went to shut herself up in a monastery, where she subjected her body to all kinds of macerations. When she died, she gave visible marks that she had preserved her soul (pure), not only in the eyes of the world, but also in the eyes of God. I recognize that these two examples are a little extraordinary, and that there are few who can imitate them; but here is the one that suits you perfectly. Listen carefully, young people, and you will see that, if you want to follow the attraction of grace, you will soon be disillusioned with the pleasures and vanities of this world which distance you from God. It is reported that a young lady from FrancheComté, named Angélique, had a lot of wit, but was very worldly. Having heard a preacher preach against luxury and vanity in clothing, she came to confess to this preacher. He made her understand so well how guilty she was and how many souls she could lose, that the next day she left all her vanities and dressed in a very simple and Christian way. Her mother, who was like most of these poor blind people, who seem to have children only to throw them into hell by filling them with vanity, reprimanded her because she no longer dressed as she used to. “My mother,” she replied, “the preacher to whom I went to confession forbade me to do so.” Her poor mother, blinded by anger, goes to find the confessor, and he asks if it was true that he had forbidden his daughter to dress in good fashion. “I don’t know,” said the confessor, “what I said to your daughter; but, it is enough for you to know that God forbids dressing according to

fashion, when this fashion is not according to God, when it is criminal and dangerous for souls. » — “My Father, what do you call criminal and dangerous fashion? » — “It is, for example, wearing clothes that are too open, or which show the shape of the body too much; to wear clothes that are too rich and more expensive than our means allow. » He then showed him all the dangers of these modes, and all the bad examples they gave. “My Father,” this woman said to him, “if my confessor had told me as much as you, I would never have given my permission. daughter to carry all these vanities, and I myself would have been wiser; However, my confessor is a very learned man; Now, what does it matter to me that he is learned, if he lets me live in my freedom, and in danger of losing myself for eternity. » When she returned, she said to her daughter: “Bless the good God [le bon Dieu] for having found such a confessor, and follow his advice. » This young lady subsequently had to endure terrible battles from her other companions, who mocked and ridiculed her. But the harshest attack she had to endure came from certain people who attempted to make her change her feelings. “Why,” they said to him, “don’t you dress like the others? » — “I don't have to do like the others,” replied Angélique, “I dress like those who do well, and not like those who do badly. » — “What are we doing wrong by dressing the way you see? » — “Yes, no doubt, you are doing wrong, because you scandalize those who look at you.” — “As for me,” said one of them, “I have no bad intention; I dress my way, too bad for those who are scandalized by it. » — “So much the worse for you too,” replied Angélique, “since you are the occasion; If we must fear sinning ourselves, we must also fear causing others to sin. » — “Whatever your good reasons,” replied another, “if you no longer dress like us, your friends will leave you, and you will no longer dare to appear in fine companies and at balls. » — “I prefer,” replied Angélique to them, “the company of my dear mother, my sisters and a few good girls, than all these beautiful companies and these balls. I don't dress to look nice, but to cover myself; A girl's true charms should not consist of clothes, but of virtue. Besides, Ladies, if you think like that, you are not thinking like Christians, and it is shameful that, in a religion as holy as ours, we allow ourselves such abuses against modesty. » After all these speeches, a person from the company said: “Truly, it is shameful that a young girl of eighteen years (teach) us a lesson: her example will one day be our condemnation. How blind we are for doing so much to please the world, which, subsequently, makes fun of us. 1 » Angelique always persevered in her good feelings, despite everything that could be said to her. Well, my brethren, who would stop you from doing what this young countess was doing? She sanctified herself by living in the world, but not living for the world. Oh! that this example will be a subject of condemnation for a large number of Christians on the day of judgmentl

One can become a saint, even in the state of marriage. The Holy Spirit, in Scripture, takes pleasure in painting the portrait of the holy woman; and in accordance with the description he gives, I will tell you that a holy woman is one who loves and respects her husband, who watches carefully over her children and her servants, who is attentive to instructing them and bringing them closer to the sacraments, who takes care of her household, and not of the conduct of her neighbors; she is reserved in her speeches, charitable in her works, enemy of the pleasures of the world; a woman of this character, I say, is a just soul, the Lord praises her, canonizes her; in a word, she is a saint. So you see, my brethren, that to be a saint, it is not necessary to leave everything; but to fulfill well the duties of the state in which God has placed us, and to do all that we do, with the thought of pleasing him. The Holy Spirit tells us that to be holy, we must only distance ourselves from evil and do good. This, my brethren, is the holiness that all the saints have had and that we must have. What they did, we can also, with the grace of God; since like them we have the same obstacles to our salvation, and the same help to overcome them.

IL I say 1° that the saints had the same obstacles as us to achieve holiness; obstacles outside, obstacles within. Obstacles on the side of the world: the world was then what it is today, as dangerous in its examples, as corrupt in its maxims, as seductive in its pleasures, always enemy of piety and always ready to ridicule it. The proof is that most of the saints carefully despised and shunned the world; they preferred retirement to

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worldly assemblies, and even, several, fearing to get lost there, abandoned it entirely; some, to spend the rest of their days in monasteries, and others, in the depths of the deserts, such as a Saint Paul, a hermit, a Saint Anthony, a Saint Egyptian Mary and so many others. Obstacles on the side of their state: many were, like you, engaged in the affairs of the century, overwhelmed with the embarrassments of a household, the care of children; obliged, for the majority, to earn their living by the sweat of their brow; now, far from thinking, like us, that they would escape more easily in another state, they were convinced that they had more graces in the one where Providence had placed them. Do we not see that in the tumult of the world and in the midst of the embarrassments of a family and a household, the greatest number of saints were saved, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Tobias, Zechariah, the chaste Susannah, the holy man Job, Saint Elizabeth: were not all these great saints of the Old Testament engaged in the world? Under the new law, can you count the number of those who have become sanctified in ordinary life? Also, Paul tells us that the saints will judge the nations. Is this not saying, then, that there will not be a man on earth who does not find some saint in his state to be the condemnation of his cowardice, by showing him that he could, as well as he, have done what earned him heaven? If we now pass from external obstacles to those within, we will see that the saints had as many temptations and struggles as we can have, and perhaps even more. First, on the side of habits; do not believe, my brethren, that the saints have always been saints. How many have started out badly and lived a long time in sin? See the holy King David, see Saint Augustine, Saint Magdalene. Let us therefore take courage, my brethren, although we are indeed sinners, we can nevertheless become saints: if not through innocence, it will at least be through penance; for the greatest number of saints have sanctified themselves in this way. But, you will tell me, it costs too much! — Does it cost too much, my brethren? do you believe that it cost the saints nothing? See David, who soaks his bread with his tears, who waters his bed with his tears. Do you think it cost nothing to a king like him? Do you believe that it was indifferent to him to make a spectacle of himself to his entire kingdom, and to be a laughing stock to everyone? See Saint Madeleine: in the middle of a numerous assembly, she throws herself at the feet of the Savior, publicly accusing her crimes in the abundance of her tears; she follows Jesus Christ to the foot of the cross, and repairs, through long years of penance, a few years of weakness; Do you think, my brethren, that such sacrifices cost him no effort? I have no doubt that you call blessed the saints who have done such penance and shed so many tears. Alas! if like these saints, we could understand the greatness of our sins, the goodness of the God whom we have outraged; if, like them, we thought of the hell that we deserved, of our soul that we lost, of the blood of Jesus Christ that we have profaned! Ah! if we had all these thoughts in our hearts, what tears we would shed, what penances we would do to try to appease the justice of God whom we have irritated! Do you believe that the saints arrived without work at this simplicity, this gentleness, which carried them SEKMONS. — Tome TV. 7 to the renunciation of their own will, whenever the opportunity presented itself? OhI no, my brethren.! Listen to Saint Paul: “Alas, I do the evil that I would not, and I do not do the good that I would; I feel in my members a law that revolts against the law of my God. Ah! how unhappy I am. Who will deliver me from this body of sin? » What struggles did the first Christians not have to endure, leaving a religion which only tended to flatter their passions, to embrace one which only tended to crucify their flesh? Do you believe that Saint Francis de Sales did not have to do any violence to become as gentle as he was? How many sacrifices he had to make!... The saints were only saints after many sacrifices and much violence. Secondly, I say that we have the same graces as them. And first of all, does not Baptism have the same virtue of purifying us, Confirmation of strengthening us, Penance of forgiving our sins, the Eucharist of weakening concupiscence in us and increasing grace in our souls? As for the word of Jesus Christ, is it not always the same? Do we not hear this advice at every moment: “Leave everything and follow me. » This is what converted Saint Anthony, Saint Arsenius, Saint Francis of Assisi. Do we not read in the Gospel this oracle: “What does it profit a man to gain the universe if he loses his urn? » Were it not these words which converted Saint Francis Xavier, and which, from an ambitious man, made him an apostle? Do we not hear every day: “Watch and pray always. » “Love your neighbor as yourself. » Is it not this doctrine which formed all the saints? Finally, my brethren, as for good examples, however disordered the world may be, don't we still have some before our eyes, and well

more than we could keep up with? Finally, do we lack grace more than the saints? Do we therefore compel for nothing these good thoughts, these salutary inspirations to renounce such a sin, to leave such a bad habit, to practice such a virtue, to do such a good work? Is it not a grace that these remorse of conscience [remords de conscience], these troubles, these worries that we experience when we have sinned? Alas! My brethren, how many saints in heaven today have received fewer graces than us! How many pagans, Christians (are) in hell, who, if they had received as many graces as us, would have become great saints... Yes, my brethren, we can be saints, and we (must) all work to become one. The saints have been mortal like us, weak and subject to passions like us; we have the same help, the same graces, the same sacraments; but we must do like them, renounce the pleasures of the world, flee the world as much as we can, be faithful to grace; take them for our models; for we must never lose sight of the fact that we must either be saints or reprobate, live either for heaven or for hell: there is no middle ground. Let us conclude, my brethren, by saying that if we want, we can be saints, because the good God [le bon Dieu] will never refuse us his grace to help us become one. He is our Father, our Savior and our friend. He sighs with ardor to see us delivered from the evils of life. He wants to fill us with all kinds of good things, after having given us, already in this world, immense consolations, a foretaste [avant-goût] of [avant-goût de] those of heaven, which I wish for you.

Second Sermon for All Saints — Cult of Saints and Holy Images

Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis. God is admirable in his saints. (Ps. lxvii, 36.)

WHEN the holy King David contemplated the sky, the earth and all that they contain, he exclaimed with transports of admiration: “Oh! How admirable is God in his works! » But when he considered what God had done for man, the masterpiece of his power, his wisdom and his mercy, he cried out: “Oh! How good is the God of Israel! » Yes, my brethren, God is so good to men that he gave his Son to save us, and he traced in the saints all the virtues that Jesus Christ practiced during his life. The saints are like so many little mirrors in which Jesus Christ contemplates himself. In his apostles he contemplates his zeal and his love for the salvation of souls; in the martyrs he contemplates his patience, his sufferings and his painful death; in the solitary, he sees his obscure and hidden life; in the virgins, he admires his spotless purity, and in all the saints his boundless charity; so, my brethren, that in admiring the virtues of the saints, we only admire the virtues of Jesus Christ, virtues of which he himself gave us the example during his mortal life. What happiness for us, my brethren, to have before our eyes models and protectors in the person of the saints of heaven! They are always ready to come to our aid when we call on them; but to deserve this happiness, we must 1° have great confidence in their protection; 2° respect what belongs to them, fully convinced that the honor we give them relates entirely to God.

I. The worship we render to God is very different from that which we render to the saints; it is a cult of adoration, of dependence; we honor the good God [le bon Dieu] by faith (detail...), by hope (detail...) and by charity (edifying stories, p. 170) (1). We honor God by a profound abasement of our soul before his supreme majesty, as our creator and our last; but the worship that we render to the saints is a feeling of respect and veneration for the graces that the good God [le bon Dieu] gave them, for the virtues that they practiced, and for the glory with which God crowned them in heaven. We commend ourselves to their prayers, because God has given them great power with him. When we honor the saints, we only- (1) The three notes in parentheses are from the Venerable.

gilding Jesus Christ, that is to say, we thank the good God [le bon Dieu] for the graces he gave them during their lives, and that he gives them throughout eternity; we recognize them as the friends of God and our protectors. We can say that it is for the saints that God did everything he did. It is for them that God created the world, that he governs and preserves it, it is for them that he sacrificed his life by dying on the cross, it is for them that he worked so many miracles, it is for them that he established this beautiful religion, by which he lavishes us with so many graces. But to better understand the love that the good God [le bon Dieu] has for

them, let us see the degree of glory and honor that he gave them in heaven. Jesus Christ associates them with the company of angels, he chooses them for his children, his brothers and his friends, he establishes them as co-heirs of his eternal kingdom, he frees them from the slavery of the devil, he purifies them from all their pollution in his adorable Blood, he enriches them with his grace and adorns them with his glory. "That, my brethren, is enough to delight us with admiration, seeing the degree of glory to which Jesus Christ elevates them. Let us console ourselves, however, we are destined for the same happiness, if we want to imitate what they did on earth. The good God [le bon Dieu] wants to save us too, he loves us as much as his saints. They suffered for a while, it is true, but now everything is over for them; they have been slandered, humiliated, put in prison, they have deprived themselves pleasures, they renounced their own will, they died to themselves; some spent their lives in deserts, others in monasteries, but, once again, what is all this in comparison with the happiness and glory which they enjoy in heaven?... Which is a very precious grace for us;

that God wanted them to be our protectors and our friends. Saint Bernard tells us that the worship we give them is less glorious for them than it is advantageous for us, and that we can invoke them with great confidence, because they know how exposed we are to getting lost on earth, remembering the dangers they themselves ran during their lives. To have the happiness of deserving their protection, we must thank the good God [le bon Dieu] for the graces he gave them during their lives, and strive to practice their virtues. We must honor the patriarchs and the prophets, in their simplicity and their ardent love for God; the apostles, imitating their zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; we must honor the martyrs by imitating their patience in suffering; we must honor virgins by imitating their purity so pleasing to God; we must do everything we can to earn their friendship and protection. We see that a large number of sinners were converted through the association they had with the saints; see this young man whom Saint John confided to the bishop... without him he was lost to all appearances. See the change that took place in Saint Augustine, through the connection he had with Saint Ambrosio! See again how happy Saint Mary, niece of Saint Abraham, was to have as a friend such a saintly uncle!... How happy we are to have for friends saints who love us; who, hoping to save our souls, make it their duty to make us aware of our faults in order to have the happiness of correcting them; here is an admirable example. A young girl, named Apolline, was dating a young man, without thinking of the danger to which she was exposing herself. A pious companion, who wanted to bring her back to God, came one day charitably warn her of the harm she was doing by her too free manners with this young man: “Believe me, my dear friend,” she said, “being older than you, I know your fragility better. In conversations and familiar liberties with people of another sex, the demon always gains more than he can be known; we never leave this type of company without it leaving certain pernicious impressions in our soul; modesty gradually weakens, and as soon as this virtue is weakened in a girl, she soon loses the fear of God. The taste for virtue is no longer felt, everything that religion was sweet and consoling for us, becomes annoying and painful. The sacraments no longer have any attractions, and if we receive them, it is without fruit, sometimes even with sacrilege. » Apolline initially appeared indifferent to this speech, but touched by the grace of God, she decided to go and consult her confessor. He revealed to the young girl all the harm she had done, and the danger she had run. “You have done more harm than you think,” said the confessor. The friendship of this young man for you, and that which you had for him, was more fatal to you than if someone had plunged a dagger into your heart; at least we would have only made you lose the life of your body, while this friendship made you lose the life of your soul, which cost Jesus Christ so much suffering. It is high time to withdraw from this abyss into which you have plunged. » Apolline, touched with regret at having offended God, burst into tears, thanked her friend for the charitable advice she had given her, and asked her forgiveness for her scandals. She spent the rest of her life in regret and penitence. You see, my brethren, that if this young girl had not had the happiness to have a holy companion as a friend, perhaps she would never have opened her eyes to her state, so blinded had she been. But if the saints who are on earth are already so charitable, what charity do they not have in heaven where this virtue is perfect? I say we must call on the saints with great confidence; these invocations are a

continuation of the communion which unites the faithful on earth and the saints who reign in heaven. The holy Council of Trent tells us that, through prayer, we make holy commerce with heaven. For us who are on earth, we must invoke the saints in a suppliant manner; so that they use their power with God, and obtain all the graces that are necessary for us to live holy on earth. The saints, in heaven, reign with Jesus Christ, and offer Him our prayers when we have recourse to them. You see then, my brethren, that we have the happiness of having a holy commerce with heaven, although we are still on earth. Yes! let us love the saints and we will deserve their protection. They love us even more than we can love them; the charity of the saints is much more perfect in heaven than that which we can have on earth. Saint Cyprian tells us that the saints find their happiness in praying for us and helping us to save ourselves, because being assured of their glory, they remember how many dangers they ran during their lives. They received full power from Jesus Christ; so let us ask them whatever we want. Let us be sure, my brethren, the saints we invoke always have their eyes on us: we have a fine example of this in the life of Saint Louis Gonzaga. A young man, named Wolfgang, who became blind, had recovered his sight through the intercession of Saint Louis Gonzaga. He wanted to go to Rome to visit his tomb, and, passing through a deserted place, he was attacked by men who stripped him of everything he had, and who were going to take his life. The pilgrim, before entering this path all covered with wood, had implored the help of Saint Louis de Gonzague, his favorite saint; he heard a voice which said to him: “Be calm, do not fear. " Then seeing that he was going to be mistreated, he had recourse to his protector. Immediately he heard a voice telling him not to fear, and that no harm would come to him. At the same moment a young man appeared, dressed as an ecclesiastic, who said to him: “My friend, do you need anything?... Where are you going? » — “I am going to Rome,” replied Wolfgang, “I am going to venerate the precious remains of Saint Louis Gonzaga, who made me recover my sight. » — “And I too am going to Rome,” said the stranger. » Then, turning towards the criminals, with a single word, he put them to flight. Wolfgang no longer doubted that this stranger was sent from heaven, and did not dare ask him if he was an angel, or even Saint Louis Gonzaga. They set off. Arriving in Florence, Wolfgang saw a person with an extremely beautiful face enter the apartment where he was resting, and he began to sing. Our pilgrim was so delighted that he would have happily spent the night without sleeping. The vision disappeared soon after, but leaving him with a heart burning with love for God. In Rome, the heavenly envoy led Wolfgang to the very tomb of Saint Louis Gonzaga, then separated from him, promising him other services for the future. Returning to his country, he recounted the graces he had received through the protection of Saint Louis, in order to inspire a tender desire.

devotion to this good saint. Do you see, my brethren, how attentive the saints are to helping us, when we have the happiness of having recourse to them with great confidence?

IL We say that not only must we have great devotion to the saints, because they have the happiness of being the friends of God, and of forever enjoying his holy presence, but also, we must have great respect for all that belonged to them. The Church has always greatly honored the relics of the saints, because they are the living members of Jesus Christ, the temples of the Holy Spirit, the instruments of all the good works that God wrought through them during their life and after their death: which greatly consoles us, and revives our faith concerning the resurrection and the reward of the next life. Yes, my brethren, there is another life happier than this, and which is reserved for us, if we are happy enough to imitate the saints who lived before us. What miracles has the good God [le bon Dieu] not done through the relics of the saints? How many dead people are resurrected, how many sick people are healed. See the apostles, their shadow alone healed the sick. The garments which had touched the body of Saint Paul healed the lame, restored sight to the blind and health to the sick. See the cross of Jesus Christ, the most precious of relics; when it was touched to a dead man (1), he got up as if he had only been sleeping. It is reported in history that the good God [le bon Dieu] revealed to a religious saint the place where the head of Saint John the Baptist was. The monk found her, in fact, and, passing (1) See note A, at the end of the volume.

in a place where a battle had just taken place, the dead rose, as if they had only been sleeping. We must therefore (find ourselves) very happy to possess things which belonged to the saints. Oh! My brethren, we who have so many relics and graces would receive from the saints, if we had the happiness to pray to them, to ask what is necessary for us to save ourselves! What faith, what love would we not feel within ourselves? We must still have great respect for everything that represents them. The holy Council of Trent wants us to have great veneration for all the images which remind us of the saints, here is the reason. These images instruct us, they remind us of the mysteries of our holy religion; Sometimes all it takes is the sight of an image to touch us and convert us; To prove this, I will tell you a striking fact. A young man, named Dositheus, was early entrusted to a great lord, to be raised among the pages of his court. Having heard of the holy places, he went to Jerusalem, hoping to obtain some graces. As he passed through Gethsemane, he saw a painting depicting hell, with the torments that the demons made the damned endure. Seized with fear, he stopped. As he sought the meaning of what he had before his eyes, he asked a venerable lady, who apparently was the Blessed Virgin, who were these unfortunate people who were being made to suffer so much. She replied that it was the reprobate, whom the good God [le bon Dieu] was punishing, for not having wanted to observe his commandments and for having neglected to save themselves. The young man, completely frightened, asked what he should do to save himself and not be among these unfortunate people. “Mortify yourself,” she said to him, “pray and fast,” and in the very moment she disappears. The young Dositheus, from that moment, embraced penance, he henceforth spent a large part of the time in prayer. A young lord who had accompanied him on his journey, surprised at this change, told him that a life of prayer and mortification was only suitable for a good solitary man, and not for a young man of quality like himself. Dositheus, thinking that it was a trap of the devil, and not wanting to resist the movement of grace, secretly asked where there were solitary people and how they lived; he was taken to the famous monastery where the abbot commissioned Saint Dorothy to examine him. After a long interview, Dorothée believed she saw a true vocation in him: “Come on, my friend,” he said, kissing him tenderly, “the good God [le bon Dieu] who has given you such good thoughts will bless you. » He was received, and spent the rest of his life in penance and tears. He died as a saint. Well! My brethren, you see that the mere sight of this painting touched him, converted him, made him live and die as a saint. Without this painting, perhaps he would be in hell?... The images instruct us in the holy mysteries of our religion and strike our imagination. We read in the life of Saint Thérèse that having seen a picture of the agony of Jesus Christ, she was so touched that she almost fell dead. She thought about it all her life; he seemed to continually see Jesus Christ in his agony in the Garden of Olives, ready to expire. Moreover, the good God [le bon Dieu], to show us how much the respect we have for the images of the saints is pleasing to Him, used them precisely to perform a number of miracles. It is reported that in the city of Rome one year the plague caused such terrible devastation that it seemed to leave no one, despite all the penances and all the good works that we did. Seeing that nothing could stop this devastation, Pope Saint Gregory thought of having an image of the Blessed Virgin carried in procession, which had been painted, it is said, by Saint Luke. Wherever this image passed, the plague ceased; and God, to show how much this honor given to the image of his Mother was pleasing to Him, sent an angel who made these words heard: “Regina cœli> lœtare; alleluia. » At the same time the plague ceased everywhere. The respect which we pay to images therefore relates to the saints whom they represent, and the honor which the saints receive relates to God alone. It is also said that the emperor Leo the Isaurian had such an aversion to the holy images that he ordered them all to be burned. Saint John Damascene, then Patriarch of Alexandria, etc.. (1). This miracle proves to you how much the Blessed Virgin takes pleasure in the honor given to her holy images; and this example teaches you the respect that we must have for the images of the saints; so you must never leave your homes without having some, to attract upon you the protection of the saints. Images sometimes seem to show us things in their reality, and often they strike us almost as strongly as the very things they represent. See what happened to Bogoris, king of the Bulgarians (2). See again what happened to Saint Mary Egyptian, she received the grace of her conversion by going to present herself before an image of the Holy Virgin. It is quite certain that we must not put (1) Trait recounted in the sermon for the feast of the

Nativity, p. 83. (2) Trait reported in one of the preceding sermons.

our confidence in the images, as the pagans did, of their idols; but we must know that the honor we give them relates to the Lord, so that in honoring the images we are only worshiping Jesus Christ and honoring the saints whom the images represent. Indeed, M-F., it often only takes a look at a painting to touch us and remind us of the virtues they practiced during their lives. Here, my brethren, cast your eyes on the image of Jesus Christ in his agony in the Garden of Olives; He is represented to us weeping our sins with tears of blood; can we find something more touching to make us cry for our indifference? How many sinners have been converted by considering the picture of the scourging of Jesus Christ? What was the cause of Magdeleine's tears in her desert, if not a cross that the angel Gabriel placed in front of her cell? What made Saint Catherine (of Siena) cry so much? Was it not because she saw Our Lord present himself to her, as at the moment of his flagellation? Go through all the paintings in this church, and you will see that the slightest reflection will touch you, and will give you the happy thought of doing better and converting; you will see at the same time what you cost Jesus Christ, what he did for your salvation, and how unhappy you are not to love him. If you look at the painting of Saint John the Baptist, your mind is immediately transported to his desert, where you see him fed and served by the angels, given over to all kinds of penances. Do you not seem to see him, (when) his head is cut off? Don't you think you see the executioner in front of Herod, ready to hand over this head to the shameless girl? If you see Saint Lawrence, don't you immediately think of all his torments? don't you think you heard him say to the executioner: "Turn me over to the other side, I'm pretty burned from this one." » See Saint Sixtus, our good patron: what does his painting tell you? Nothing, my brethren, is more capable of touching us and even converting us than the sight of a painting, if we are willing to meditate on the virtues of the saint it represents. We must also greatly respect everything that is capable of reminding us of the saints and their virtues, but we must honor their relics even more, when we have the good fortune to have them. We are sure that the saints in heaven love us, and long for us to join them. They want us to resort to their protection; they will not abandon us during our lifetime. They are our friends, our brothers: let us therefore have great devotion for them; so that their prayers and the little efforts that we will make on earth will one day give us the happiness of uniting with them for all eternity: this is what I wish you.

Commemoration of the Dead

Come nox, quando nemo potest operari. The night comes when no one can work anymore. (5. John, ix, 4.)

Lest, my brethren, [we come to] the cruel and awful position where our fathers and mothers are now, we go out of this world without having completely satisfied the justice of God. He condemned them to spend many years in these dark prisons of purgatory, where his justice weighed down rigorously on them, until they had fully paid their debts to him. “Ob! how terrible it is, the holy King-prophet tells us, to fall into the hands of the living God! » But why, my brethren, did I go to the pulpit today; what am I going to tell you? Ah! I come from God himself; I come on behalf of your poor parents, in order to awaken in you this love of gratitude that you owe to them; I come to place before your eyes all the kindness and love that they had for you while they were on earth; I come to tell you that they are burning in the flames, that they are crying, and that they are asking with loud cries for the help of your prayers and your good works. I seem to hear them cry out from the depths of these fires which devour them: “Ah! say well to our fathers, to our mothers, t tell our children, to all our parents, how cruel are the evils we suffer. We throw ourselves at their feet to implore the help of their prayers. Ah! tell them that since we have been separated from them, we have been here burning in flames! Oh! Who can be insensitive to so many evils that we endure? Do you see, my brethren, do you hear this tender mother and this good father, and all these parents who hold out their hands to you? “My friends,” they cry, “save us from these tortures, you can. » Let us see then, my brethren, 1° the magnitude of the torments that the souls in purgatory endure, and 2° the means that we have to relieve them, which are: our prayers, our good works, and above all the holy sacrifice of the mass.

I. I do not want to stop at proving to you the existence of purgatory; that would be a waste of my time. None of you have the slightest doubt about that. The Church to whom Jesus Christ promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, cannot deceive itself or deceive us, teaches us this in a fairly clear and evident manner. It is certain and very certain that there is a place where the souls of the righteous complete the expiation of their sins, before being admitted to the glory of paradise which is assured to them. Yes, my brethren, and it is an article of faith: if we have not done a penance proportionate to the greatness and enormity of our sins, although forgiven in the holy tribunal of penitence, we will be condemned to atone for them in the flames of purgatory. If God, justice itself, does not leave a good thought, a good desire and the slightest action without reward, in the same way he will not leave a fault unpunished, however slight it may be; and we will go and suffer in purgatory as long as God's justice requires, to complete our purification. In Holy Scripture, a large number of texts show that, although our sins are forgiven, the good God [le bon Dieu] still imposes on us the obligation to suffer in this world, through temporal punishments, or in the next, through the flames of purgatory. See what happened to Adam: having repented after his sin, God assured him that he had forgiven him, and yet he condemned him to do penance for more than nine hundred years; penance that surpassed anything one could imagine. See again: David orders, against the will of God, the numbering of his subjects, but, driven by the remorse of his conscience, he recognizes his sin, throws himself on his face and prays to the Lord to forgive him. God, touched by his repentance, indeed forgives him; but, despite this, he sends Gad to him to say: “Prince, choose one of the three plagues that the Lord has prepared for you as punishment for your fault: pestilence, war and famine. » David said: “It is better to fall into the hands of the Lord, whose mercy I have so often experienced, than into those of men. » He therefore chose the plague, which lasted three days, and which took away more than seventy thousand subjects; and, if the Lord had not stopped the hand of the angel already extended over the city, all Jerusalem would have been depopulated. David, seeing so many evils caused by his sin, asked the good God [le bon Dieu] to punish him alone, and to spare his people who were innocent (1). Alas! My brethren, what will be the number of years that we will have to suffer in purgatory, we who have hurried so much; who, under the pretext that we have confessed them, do not do penance and do not shed tears? How many years of suffering await us in the next life! But how can I give you a heartbreaking picture of the evils these poor souls endure, since the holy Fathers tell us that the evils they endure in these places seem to equal the sufferings that Jesus Christ endured during his painful passion? However, it is certain that if the slightest torture of Jesus Christ had been shared among all men, they would all have died from the violence of the sufferings. The fire of purgatory is the same as that of hell, the difference is that it is not eternal. Oh! It would be necessary for the good God [le bon Dieu], in his mercy, to allow one of these poor souls who burn in these flames to appear here in my place, surrounded by the fires which devour her, and for her to tell you herself the story of the evils of her enduro. It would be necessary, my brethren, that she make this church resound with her cries and her sobs, perhaps that would finally soften your hearts. " Oh! how we suffer, they cry to us, oh our brothers, deliver us from these torments; you can! Ah! if you felt the pain of being separated from your God!..." Cruel separation! Burn in a fire kindled by the justice of a God... to suffer pains incomprehensible to mortal man!... to be devoured by regret, knowing that we could so well avoid them!... “Oh! my children, cry out (1) See again the penance of Saint Madeleine, perhaps it will soften your hearts a little. (Note of the Venerable.)

these fathers and mothers, can you abandon us, we who loved you so much? Can you lie down in weakness and leave us lying on a fiery blaze? Will you have the courage to indulge in pleasure and joy, while we are here suffering and crying night and day? You own our goods and our houses, you enjoy the fruit of our sorrows, and you abandon us in this place of torments where we have suffered such terrible evils for so many years!... And not an alms, not a mass that helps us to free ourselves!... You can relieve us, open our prison; and you abandon us? Oh! how cruel our sufferings are!..." Yes, my brethren, we judge very differently in the flames, of all these light faults, if indeed we can call light, what makes us endure such severe pain. “O my God,” cries the King-prophet, “woe to man, even the most just, if you judge him without mercy. » If you

have found spots in the sun and malice in the angels, what will this be of sinful man? And for us, who have committed so many mortal sins, and who have still done almost nothing to satisfy God's justice, only years of purgatory... “My God,” said Saint Teresa, “what soul will be pure enough to enter heaven, without passing through the avenging flames? » In her last illness she suddenly cried out: “0 justice and power of my God, how terrible you are! » During her agony, God made her see her holiness, as the angels and saints see it in heaven, which caused her so much fear that her sisters, seeing her all trembling and in extraordinary agitation, cried out in tears: “Ah! our mother, what happened to you; do you fear

death again, after so many penances, tears so abundant and so bitter? » — “No, my children,” Saint Thérèse replied, “I do not fear death, on the contrary, I desire it, in order to unite myself forever to my God. » — “Do your sins frighten you, after so many macerations? » — “Yes, my children,” she said to them, “I fear my sins, but I fear something more. » — “Is this then the judgment? » — “Yes, I shudder at the sight of the formidable account that we will have to give to the good God [le bon Dieu], who, at this moment, will be without mercy; but there is still something the very thought of which makes me die of fear. » These poor sisters were desolate. — “Alas, would this be hell? » — “No,” she told them, “hell, thank God, is not for me; oh! my sisters, this is the holiness of Godl My God, have mercy on mel My life must be compared with that of Jesus Christ himself! Woe to me if I have the slightest stain, the slightest stain! Woe to me if I have even the shadow of sin! » — “Alas,” cry these poor nuns, “what will be our fate (1)1…” What will it be for us, my brethren, for us who perhaps in all our penances and our good works, have not yet satisfied a single sin forgiven in the tribunal of penance? Ah! how many years and centuries of torment to punish us 1... How dearly we will pay for all these faults that we consider as nothing, such as the little lies that we tell to entertain ourselves, the little backbitings, the contempt for the graces that the good God [le bon Dieu] gives us at every moment, these little murmurs in the sorrows that he sends us! No, my brethren, we would never have the strength to commit the slightest (1) See section J at the end of the volume.

sin, if we could understand how much it outrages the good God [le bon Dieu], and how much it deserves to be rigorously punished, even in this world. We read in Holy Scripture that the Lord said one day to one of his prophets: “Go and find King Jeroboam for me, to reproach him for the horror of his idolatry; but I forbid you from taking any food at his house, or on the way. The prophet obeyed immediately, he even exposed himself to the obvious danger of perishing. He presented himself before the king, and reproached him for his crime, as the Lord had told him. The king, furious at the fact that the prophet had the boldness to take him back, stretched out his hand and ordered him to be seized. The king's hand withers at this very moment. Jeroboam, seeing himself punished, returns to himself. God, touched by his repentance, forgives him his sin and returns his hand. This benefit changed the heart of the king, who invited the prophet to eat with him. “No,” said the prophet, “the Lord has forbidden me; Even if you gave me half your kingdom, I wouldn't do it. » As he was returning, he found a false prophet claiming to be sent from the Lord, who invited him to eat with him. He let himself be deceived by this speech, and took a little food. But, as he left the house of the false prophet, he encountered a lion of enormous size which pounced on him and killed him. Now, if you ask the Holy Spirit what was the cause of this death, he will tell you that the disobedience of the prophet merited this punishment. See again Moses, who was so pleasing to the good God [le bon Dieu]. For having doubted his power for a moment, by striking a stone twice to make water come out of it, the Lord said to him; “I promised to bring you into the Promised Land, where honey and milk flow in streams; but, as punishment for what you have struck the stone twice, as if once had not been enough, you will go to the feet of this land of blessings, and you will die before entering it. » If God, my brethren, punishes so rigorously such light sins, what then will be a distraction in prayer, turning one's head in church, etc.?. Oh! how blind we are!... How many years and centuries of purgatory we are preparing ourselves for, for all these faults that we regard as nothing!... How we will change our language, when we are in these flames where the justice of God is felt so

rigorously!... God is just, my brethren, in everything he does; when he rewards us for the slightest good deed, he does it beyond anything we could desire; a good thought, a good desire, that is to say, desiring to do some good work, even if we could not do it, does not leave us without reward; but also, when it comes to punishing us, it is with rigor, and we would only have a slight fault, we will be thrown into purgatory. This is true, because we see in the lives of the saints that many only went to heaven after having passed through the flames of purgatory. Saint Peter Damien relates that his sister remained in purgatory for several years, for having listened to a bad song with some pleasure. It is reported that two monks promised each other that the first to die would come and tell the survivor what state he was in; in fact, the good God [le bon Dieu] allowed the one who died first to appear to his friend. He told him that he had remained in purgatory for fifteen days for having loved too much to do his will. And as this friend congratulated him for having stayed there so little; “I would have much preferred,” replied the deceased, “to have been flayed alive for ten continuous years, because this suffering could not yet have been compared to what I suffered in the flames. » A priest told one of his friends that the good God [le bon Dieu] had condemned him to stay in purgatory for several months, for having delayed the execution of a will intended to do good works. Alas! My brethren, how many of those who hear me have such a fault to reproach themselves with? how many are there who, perhaps, for eight or ten years, have received from their parents or friends the responsibility of having masses said, of giving alms, and who have left everything! How many are there who, for fear of finding some good works to do, do not want to take the trouble to look at the will that their parents or friends have made in their favor? Alas, these poor souls are held in the flames, because they do not want to fulfill their last wishes! Poor fathers and mothers, you sacrificed yourself to make your children or your heirs happy; you may have neglected your salvation to increase their fortune; you reflected on the good works that you would leave in your will 1... Poor parents! how blind you were to forget yourselves!... You will perhaps tell me: “Our parents lived well, they were very wise. » Ah! how little it takes to get into these fires! See what Albert the Great says on this subject, he whose virtues shone in such an extraordinary way; he revealed one day to one of his friends that God had led him to purgatory, for having had a small thought of complacency because of his knowledge. What is even more astonishing is that there have been saints, even canonized ones, who have passed through purgatory. Saint Scverinus, Archbishop of Cologne, appeared to one of his friends long after his death, and told him that he had been in purgatory, for having postponed until the evening, prayers which he should have prayed in the morning. Oh, what years of purgatory for these Christians who have no difficulty in postponing their prayers to another time, under the pretext that they have work in a hurry! If we sincerely desired the happiness of possessing the good God [le bon Dieu], we would avoid small faults as well as big ones, since separation from God is such a terrible torment for these poor souls! The Holy Fathers tell us that purgatory is a place close to hell. This is very easy to understand, since venial sin is close to mortal sin; but they believe that not all souls are detained in this place to satisfy the justice of God, and that many suffer in the very place where they have done evil. Indeed, Saint Gregory the Pope gives us quite strong proof of this. He reports that a holy priest, infirm, went every day, by order of his doctor, to take baths in a remote place; Each time he found an unknown person, who helped him take off his shoes, and, after he had taken his bath, presented him with a cloth to dry himself with. The holy priest, touched with gratitude, coming one day to say holy mass, presented his stranger with a piece of blessed bread. “My Father,” replied this man, “you present to me something which I do not use, although you see me with a body. I am the lord of this place, who makes my purgatory here. » And he disappeared, saying: “Minister of the Lord, have mercy on me! Oh, how I suffer! you can deliver me; Please offer for me the holy sacrifice of the mass, offer your prayers and your infirmities, the Lord will deliver me. » If we were truly convinced of this, could we forget so easily our poor parents, who are perhaps continually around us? If the good God [le bon Dieu] allowed them to show themselves, we would see them throwing themselves at our feet. “Ah! my children, these poor souls would say, have pity on us! Please do not abandon us! » Yes, my brethren, in the evening, when we go to bed, we would see our poor fathers and mothers asking for the help of our prayers; we would see them, in our houses, in our fields. These poor souls follow us everywhere; but, alas, they are poor beggars

among the poor rich. They may expose their needs and their torments to them, but unfortunately these poor rich people are not affected. “My friends,” they cry to us, “a Pater and an Ave!” a holy mass! » Why would we be ungrateful enough to refuse to a father or a mother such a small part of the goods that they have acquired or preserved with so much effort? Tell me, if your father, your mother or one of your children were in the fire, and they held out their hands to you to beg you to deliver them, would you have the courage to be indifferent to it and let them burn before your eyes? Now, faith teaches us that these poor souls suffer what mortal man will never be able to understand. If we want, my brethren, to secure heaven for ourselves, let us have great devotion to pray for the souls in purgatory. We can even say that this devotion is an almost certain mark of predestination, and a powerful means of salvation. Holy Scripture provides us with an admirable comparison in the story of Jonathan. Saiil, his father, had forbidden all the soldiers, under penalty of death, to take any food until they had defeated the Philistines. Jonathan, who had not heard this defense, being exhausted with fatigue, dipped the tip of his wand into a comb of honey and tasted it. Saiil consulted the Healer to find out if anyone had violated the defense. Learning that his son had raped her, the father ordered that he be seized, saying: “I want the Lord to punish me, if you do not die today. » Jonalhas seeing himself condemned to death by his father, for having violated a prohibition which he had not heard, turned his gaze towards the people, and letting his tears flow, he seemed to remind them of all the services he had rendered them, and all the kindnesses he had shown them. The people immediately threw themselves at Saiïl’s feet: “What! you would put Jonalhas to death, he who has just saved Israel! he who delivered us from the hands of our enemies! No, no, not a hair will fall from his hair, we are too keen to preserve it, \\ has done us too much good to forget him so soon. » This is the sensitive image of what happens at the hour of death. If we have the good fortune to pray for the souls in purgatory, when we appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ to give account of all our actions, these souls will throw themselves at the feet of the Savior saying to Him: “Lord, grace for (this soul)! grace, mercy for her. Have pity, my God, on this very charitable soul, who rescued us from the flames, and who satisfied your justice! My God! my God! forget, we beg you, her faults, as she made you forget ours! " Oh! How powerful are these motives to inspire you with tender compassion towards these poor suffering souls!... Alas! they are soon forgotten. We are right to say that the memory of the dead goes away with the sound of bells. Suffer, poor souls, weep in this fire kindled by the justice of God, it is in vain; we don't listen to you, we don't relieve you!...

This then, my brethren, is the reward for so much kindness and charity that they had for us during their lives. No, let's not be among these ungrateful people; since, working for their deliverance, we will work for our salvation.

II. But, you will ask me, how can we relieve them and lead them to heaven? If you wish, my brethren, to help them, I will show you that it is easy, 1° through prayer and alms; 2° by indulgences, and 3° above all, by the holy sacrifice of the mass. I say 1° through prayer. When we pray for the souls in purgatory, we yield to it everything that the good God [le bon Dieu] would grant us if we prayed it for ourselves; but, alas, our prayers are of little value, since it is still a sinner who prays for a guilty person! My God, how great your charity must be!... We can, every morning, offer all our actions of the day, all our other prayers for the relief of these poor suffering souls. All this is very little, it is true; but there you go; we treat them as if they were a person whose hands were tied and who were burdened with a heavy burden, from whom we would come from time to time to take away a little of this burden; little by little she would find herself free from everything. It is the same for the poor souls in purgatory, when we do something for them; once we will shorten their sentences by an hour, another time by a quarter of an hour, so that each day we will bring them closer to heaven. We say 2° that we can deliver them through indulgences, which lead them with great strides towards heaven. The good that we communicate to them is of infinite price; because we apply to them the merits of the adorable Blood of Jesus Christ, of the virtues of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints, who did more penances than their sins deserved. Alas, if we wanted, how soon we would have emptied purgatory, by applying all the indulgences that we can gain for these suffering souls!... See, my brethren, one can gain fourteen plenary indulgences by

making the journey from there to the cross(1). We do it in several ways (2)... Oh! that you are guilty of letting your parents burn, when you could so well and so easily free them! 3° The most powerful means to hasten their happiness is the Holy Mass, because then it is no longer a sinner who prays for a sinner, but a God equal to his Father who will never refuse him anything. Jesus Christ assures us of this in the Gospel when he says: “My Father, I thank you, because you always listen to me! » To better convince you of this, I will give you a most touching example, which will show you how great is the power of the Holy Mass. It is recorded in the history of the Church that, shortly after the death of the Emperor Charles, a holy man of the diocese of Reims, named Beraold, having fallen ill and having received the last sacraments, remained almost a day without speaking, it could hardly be noticed that he was alive; he finally opened his eyes, and ordered those who guarded him to bring in his confessor as soon as possible. The priest ran and found the sick man all in tears, who said to him: “I was transported to the other world, I found myself in a place where I saw the bishop Pardule of Laon, who appeared dressed in filthy and black rags, and was suffering.

(1) See note J at the end of the volume. (2) him, a marginal drowning of the venerable, unfortunately erased burns horribly in the flames; he said this to me: “Since you have the good fortune to return to earth, I ask you to help me and relieve me; you can even deliver me and give me the great happiness of seeing the good God [le bon Dieu]. — But, I replied, how can I give you this happiness? — Go find those to whom I have done good during my life, tell them that in return they pray for me, and the good God [le bon Dieu] will have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi]. » After having done what he ordered, I saw him again as handsome as the sun, he no longer seemed to suffer, and, in his contentment, he thanked me saying: “Look how much good and happiness the prayers and the Holy Mass have brought me. » A little further on, I saw King Charles, who spoke to me in these terms: “My friend, how I suffer! Go find Hincmar, tell him that I am suffering for not having followed his advice, but that I am counting on him to help me get out of this place of suffering; also recommends to all those to whom I have done good during my life, to pray for me, to offer the holy sacrifice of the mass, and I will be delivered. » I went to find the bishop, who was preparing to say mass, and who, with all his people, began to pray with this intention. I then saw the king again covered in his royal clothes and all shining with glory: Look, he said, what glory you have given me, now here I am happy forever. » At that moment, I smelled the smell of an exquisite perfume, which came from the abode of the blessed. I approached it, says Father Bernold, I saw beauties and delights that human language cannot express (1). » This proves to us how much our prayers and our (1) See Fleury, t. XI, year. 877. (Note of the Venerable.) 8

Good works, and especially the Holy Mass, are powerful in bringing these poor souls out of their suffering. But here is another example, which we also find in the history of the Church: it is even more striking. A holy priest having learned of the death of his friend whom he loved solely for the good God [le bon Dieu], found no more effective means for his deliverance than to promptly go and offer the holy sacrifice of the mass. He began with all possible fervor and the sharpest pain. After having consecrated the adorable Body of Jesus Christ, he took it in his hands, and, raising his hands and his eyes to heaven: “Eternal Father,” he said, “here I offer you the body, the soul of your most dear Son, 0 Eternal Father! give me back the oar of my friend, who suffers in the flames of purgatory! Yes, my God, I am free to offer you your Son or not, you can grant me what I ask of you! My God, let us exchange: deliver my friend, and I will give you your Son; what I present to you is infinitely better than what I ask of you. » This prayer was made with such lively faith, that at that very moment he saw the soul of his friend leave purgatory and ascend to heaven. It is also reported that a priest, saying holy mass for a soul in purgatory, was seen coming out in the form of a dove and ascending to heaven. Saint Perpetua strongly recommended praying for the souls in purgatory. In a vision, God told him to see his brother burning in the flames, and who, however, had died at barely seven years old, after having suffered almost all his life from a cancer which made him scream night and day. She made many prayers and penances for his deliverance, so she saw him ascend to heaven shining like an angel. Oh! How happy they are, my brethren, those who have such friends!

As these poor souls approach heaven, they seem to suffer even more. They do like Absalom: after having remained in exile [pendant son exil] for some time, he returns to his country, but without having permission to see his father who loved him tenderly. When he was told that he would stay near his father, but that he would not see him: “Ah! he cried, I will see my father's windows and gardens, and I will not see him himself? Tell him that I would rather die than stay here without having the happiness of seeing him. Tell him it's not enough to have forgiven me; but he must still grant me the happiness of seeing him. » Likewise also these poor souls seeing themselves close to leaving their exile, their love for God, the desire to possess him become so ardent, that they seem no longer able to resist it. “Lord,” they cry, “look at us with the eyes of your mercy, here we are at the end of our sufferings. Oh, how happy you are, they cry to us from the depths of the flames that burn them, you who can still avoid these torments 1..." I still seem to hear these poor souls who have neither parents nor friends: "Ah! if you still have a little charity left, have pity on us, who, for so many years, have been abandoned in these fires kindled by the justice of God! Oh! if you could understand the greatness of our suffering, you would not abandon us as you do! My God! will no one have compassion on us? » It is certain, my brethren, that these poor souls can do nothing for themselves, but they can do a lot for us. This is so true that there is almost no one who has invoked souls (from purgatory), without having obtained the requested grace. This is not difficult to understand: if the saints who are in heaven and have no need of

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we are interested in our salvation, how much more so are the urns of purgatory, which receive our spiritual benefits in proportion to our holiness. “Do not refuse this grace, Lord,” they say, “to these Christians who take all their pains to rescue us from the flames! » Could a mother refuse to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for grace, for children whom she loved and who pray for her deliverance? Can a pastor, who, during his life, has had nothing but zeal for the salvation of his parishioners, not ask for them, even in purgatory, the graces they need to save themselves? Yes, my brethren, whenever we have some grace to ask, let us address ourselves with confidence to these holy souls, and we are sure to obtain it. What happiness for us to have, in devotion to the souls in purgatory, such an excellent means of securing heaven for us. Do we want to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for the pain of our sins? let us address these souls, who, for so many years, have mourned in the flames those they have committed. Do we want to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for the gift of perseverance? Let us invoke them, my brethren, they feel the full value of it; because it is only those who persevere who will see the good God [le bon Dieu]. In our illnesses, in our sorrows, let us turn our prayers towards purgatory, they will obtain their effect. What can we conclude from all this, my brethren? Here it is. It is certain that there are very few elect who have not passed through the flames of purgatory, and that the punishments endured there are beyond what we can ever understand. It is also certain that we have in our hands everything we need to relieve the souls in purgatory, that is to say our prayers, our penances, our alms and above all the Holy Mass; and finally, we are sure that these souls being full of charity, they will get a thousand times more than we give them. If one day we are in purgatory, these souls will not fail to ask the good God [le bon Dieu] for the same grace that we have obtained for them; because they felt how much one suffers in this place and how cruel the separation from God is. Let us give a few moments, during this octave, to such a well-placed work. How many will go to heaven through the Holy Mass and our prayers 1... Let each of us think of our own parents, and of all the poor souls abandoned for many years. Yes, my brethren, let us offer all our actions to relieve them. We will thus please God, who so desires to deliver them, and we will procure for them the happiness of the enjoyment of God himself. This is what I wish you.

Another Sermon for All Souls Day

Misereminimei, miseremini mei, saltmvos amici mei, quia manus Domini tetigit me. Have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi], you at least who are my friends, for the hand of the Lord is heavy on me, (/0 6., ix, 21.)

Where do these touching prayers, these sad accents come from, my brethren? Could it be from the depths of a tomb? No, because if the tombs teach us, it is about the nothingness of human greatness; the dead lying there speak to us only through their silence. Could it be from the top of this beautiful sky, the happy abode of the elect, that these sad groans capable of splitting the hardest rocks are heard? No, my brethren, the same hand which distributed these brilliant crowns to them, at the same time wiped their tears; All we hear there is songs of joy and eternal joy. Could it be from the depths of hell, from these places of horror and torment, that these tender and heartbreaking cries are heard? Alas! My brethren, no; the black inhabitants of these places of darkness ask neither hope for no relief; they are damned, they are separated from their God, they will be forever. They bid an eternal farewell to heaven and all its blessings; they are very assured that they will never escape from these abysses; the hand of the Lord not only touches them, but strikes them down and crushes them. It is therefore from purgatory that these pressing solicitations, these tender groans, are heard. But to whom, my brethren, are these tears and sobs addressed? Listen to the Church, this tender mother who cries bitterly over the torments her children endure.... She prays and begs us to have pity on them and to help them. Yes, after having painted for us the picture of the happiness enjoyed by the blessed in heaven, she transports us to this region of tears and torment, to give us a sad picture of the sorrows which these poor souls endure there. What could be more worthy and more capable of softening our hearts than the cries of these suffering souls? Listen to them: “0 you, my friends, tear us away, tear us away from these flames which devour us 1” Do you see this mother? She holds out to you these hands which have carried you so many times. Do you see, this poor child whose separation was so cruel to you? By kissing him for the last time, you promised to never forget him... We can, my brethren, relieve them, what am I saying? we can open the doors of heaven to them, and make them enjoy a happiness that will have no end. To engage you in this, I will show you, as much as I can, 1° the magnitude of the torments they endure, and 2° the ease of the means that we can use to relieve them.

L If I spoke, my brethren, to impious people, to unbelievers, or to people languishing in [croupir dans] gross ignorance, who believe in nothing and who deny everything, I would begin by proving to them the existence of this place intended to atone for venial faults, and mortal sins which have been forgiven in the tribunal of penitence, and which have not yet been entirely expiated by temporal punishments; but since I speak to educated Christians, and perfectly convinced of this great truth, I therefore give no other proof than those which you found in your catechism. I will tell you that it is certain, very certain that there is a purgatory, that is to say a place of torment, where the souls of the righteous finish expiating their faults, before being admitted to the glory of paradise which is assured to them. Nothing is better proven than the existence of this place. We read in Scripture that “nothing filthy shall enter into heaven.” » “There are sins which will not be forgiven neither in the present age nor in the age to come,” but in purgatory. Saint Paul also tells us that many will only be saved after having passed through the flames of purgatory. Oh! how many souls righteous, death surprises in some venial faults! Where are they going, these poor souls, since they are not pure enough to enter heaven? Will they be thrown into hell? If that were the case, where would the chosen ones be? No, no, they are just souls, and the flames of the abyss are not for those who burn with the fire of charity; it is therefore in the flames of purgatory that they will complete the expiation of their faults, before being reunited with their dear and celestial Spouse, whom they love and by whom they are loved. Yes, my brethren, it is a truth of faith that, although our sins are forgiven us in the tribunal of penance, we are not therefore exempt from suffering.

temporal punishments. See the holy King David, to whom God himself sent his prophet to assure him that his sin was forgiven. The Lord, however, caused the child to die, who was for him the hope of a happy old age. The justice of God, not content with this punishment, still struck his entire kingdom with the most terrible plagues. The plague seems to want to leave him alone in the world, he sees himself chased from his throne by the very man to whom he had given birth. This unfortunate son does not fear pursuing him; he wants to take the life of the one whom God used to give it to him. Until his death, David spent the days and nights in tears

and penances. He carried them to such severity that his feet could no longer support him. See again the pious king Hezekiah; for a slight thought of pride, the Lord made his kingdom a prey to a thousand misfortunes. (See Saint Peter and Saint Madeleine). No one should doubt that although our sins are forgiven in the tribunal of penitence, we still have temporal punishments to suffer, either in this world or in the flames of purgatory. It is as necessary for us to believe this truth for others to be saved as the mystery of the Incarnation (1). Let us stop there, my brethren, let us descend in spirit into these places of torment; let us be witnesses to the evils these poor souls endure, they themselves will give us a sad picture of the sorrows which gnaw and devour them. Two punishments are very sensitive to them: 1° the pain of death, that is to say the deprivation of the sight of God, and the pain of sense. The love they have for God is so great, the thought that they are deprived of it through their fault, causes them such violent pain, that it will never be (1) See note K at the end of the volume.

given to a mortal to conceive the slightest idea of ■■it. From the midst of these flames which burn them, they see the thrones of glory which are prepared for them and which await them, a voice seems to cry out to them: “Ah! that you are deprived of great goods. If you had had the good fortune to redouble your penances and your tears, today you would be seated on these beautiful thrones all radiant with glory; ah! that you were blind to delay such happiness through your fault! » This language alone increases their pain and the desire to be reunited with their God; they attack heaven and earth; they invoke both angels and men. “Ah! my friends, we cry, if you still have any friendship for us, have pity on us, tear us away from these flames: you can!... Beautiful sky, when will we see you? » It is reported in the history of Cîteaux that a monk, after having been a model of virtue all his life, appeared to a monk, telling him that he had been in purgatory; and the greatest suffering he felt there was the deprivation of the sight of God. 2° The other pain of these poor souls is the pain of sense, that is to say of fire. The holy Fathers assure us that it is a material fire, or rather that it is the same as that which burns the unfortunate damned. This fire is so violent that an hour seems to those who endure it, like millions of centuries. Yes, they tell us, if we could understand the magnitude of their tortures, night and day we would cry out for mercy for them. Another saint goes even further, telling us that their sufferings even surpass those that Jesus Christ endured during his cruel and painful passion; and yet, if the sufferings that Jesus Christ endured had been shared among all men, no mortal could have borne them. Ah! poor souls, who will ever be able to tell the greatness of your sorrows? We read in ecclesiastical history that a saint remained six days in purgatory before entering heaven. He then appeared to one of his friends telling him that he had endured such great sufferings that they surpassed all those that all the martyrs together had endured and will endure until the end of the centuries. O my God, how formidable is your justice for the sinner!... However, my brethren, who can hear without shuddering the story of what the martyrs endured, each in particular. Some are immersed in boilers of boiling oil, others sawn with wooden saws; this one lying on an easel, torn with iron hooks tearing out his entrails, others trampled underfoot. This one lying on burning braziers, to which only his bones remained, all blackened and burned; finally, others were placed on tables armed with sharp blades, which pierced these innocent victims right through. Can we think all this without feeling penetrated with pain to the depths of our soul? Ah, if a soul in purgatory suffers even more than all the martyrs combined, who can stand it?... My God, my God, have pity on these poor souls!... But to convince us even more clearly, let us listen: Saint Bridget, to whom God made known the pains these poor souls endure, assures us that their sorrows are so great and their pains so violent, that man will never be able to form the slightest idea of ■■them. God showed him some who were condemned to stay there until the end of the world. Pope Innocent III appeared after his death to Saint Lutgarde in a sensitive form. Frightened by such a vision, she threw herself face down on the ground, asking the good God [le bon Dieu] to tell her what it could be. The dead man replied that he was the recently deceased pope. “My God,” she cried, weeping bitterly, “if a pope who was a model of virtue suffers from such evils, woe to me.” The pope told her that, without the Blessed Virgin for whom he had built a church, he was damned and condemned to burn in hell; but before dying the Blessed Virgin had prayed to her son to obtain true contrition for his sins. “I will remain

in the flames until the end of the world," he added. » Saint Vincent Ferrier tells us that God showed him a soul condemned to a year in purgatory for a single venial sin. Listen again to what Saint Louis, of the Order of Saint Dominic, tells us. His father appeared to him in a sentient form, uttering terrible cries and deep groans. He came to implore the help of his prayers. Immediately Saint Louis gave himself over to tears and penance, to the most terrible macerations; he celebrated Holy Mass for himself every day, and did not remain a day without imploring the help of the Blessed Virgin. Despite this, every morning his father appeared, uttering the same cries and the same sobs: "Ah! how I suffer! my son, have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi]! » Saint Louis never stopped asking day and night for mercy for his father. "My God, my God," he cried, "won't you let yourself be touched by my prayers and my tears? » Only seven years later, God made known to him that his father was delivered. But, you might ask me, what could this unfortunate father have done to suffer so much? Oh! my friend, if you know well what sin is, I would not dare to tell you, for fear of throwing you into despair. Saint Louis reports that his father had done little: a person had rendered him great services, and he sought to show his gratitude, perhaps not thinking enough that it was God he had to thank for his benefits. How many years of purgatory, my brethren, for us, who commit these kinds of faults so often and with so little scruple? How many lies to avoid a little humiliation or to serve as entertainment! How many little gossips! So much good inspiration that we haven't responded to! What voluntary distractions in our prayers! How many times has the good God [le bon Dieu] given us the thought of lifting up our hearts to Him, when we wake up, during the day, and we have not done it! or if we have done it, with what difficulty and negligence? How many times have we not had the thought of doing some mortification in our meals, in our itch to speak? How many times we could have gone to mass, but, out of laziness or fear of losing a moment, we didn't go! How many times has the good God [le bon Dieu] given us the thought of no longer remaining in sin, of going quickly to confession! How many times have we thought about correcting ourselves, to have the happiness of approaching more often the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist! What good works, what penances we could have done, and which we did not do! O my God, how many years, or rather centuries, we will have to suffer in these flames! My God, how blind we are! We read in the story that a person, after having lived a Christian life, appeared to one of her friends, all surrounded by flames, and suffering cruelly, for having neglected to frequent the sacraments. God, in fact, had often given him on earth the desire to correct his little venial faults, and to receive more often the sacrament of his love; so he had allowed her to appear to her friend to exhort her to do what she had not done herself, to lead a purer and holier life; to offer his communions for her, and that thus God would have mercy on her. Indeed, after several communions, she appeared to her again, but all radiant with glory, and thanked her for the communions she had offered for her deliverance. A day will come, my brethren, that we will regret not having led a life pure enough and Christian enough, to give us the happiness of coming to sit more often at the table of the angels, which would greatly shorten the penalties of purgatory. But let us return to our poor prisoners, who, from the midst of the flames, hold out their pleading hands to us, and beg us not to let them suffer any longer. Who are these poor souls, on whom the justice of God weighs? Alas, they are perhaps our parents, whom a cruel death separated from us only a few days ago. They are dear friends, who have just descended into the tomb where we will soon follow them. These poor souls are held in torrents of flames which flood and devour them; the hand of the Lord pursues them, strikes them and punishes them rigorously. "0 you, our friends," they cry to us, "be sensitive to the evils we suffer! » See, do you hear these poor souls? Each one addresses those she loved and protected during her life, to bring them to have pity on her. Do you hear this bride who looks up and stretches out her pleading hands towards her husband: "Ah! If you could, she said, understand my sufferings, could you forget a wife who loved you so tenderly! Have you forgotten my last goodbyes, when, clasping you in my arms, I gave you the last proofs of my tenderness? You promised to never forget me; Do you cry out, insensitive to the torments I endure? Ah! please, tear me away from this fire which is devouring me, you can... ah! how I suffer! » Listen to the heartbreaking cries of this poor mother to her son: "My child, why do you let me endure such terrible torments? have you already forgotten everything I did for you? I who had so much difficulty in dying, fearing that, separated from me, you would be unhappy! You abandon me in

a place where I suffer cruelly. Please deliver me, deliver her who shed so many tears for you, who so often asked God to make her suffer in your place! My son, have pity on your poor mother who loved you so much, and who is worthy of being repaid!..." Listen to this poor child, whose separation made you shed so many tears: "Ah! my mother, she cries to you, have you forgotten our last goodbyes, have you forgotten that moment when we mingled our tears together, when death forced us to separate? Do you leave me in these flames which devour me, while it would be easy for you to deliver me! Oh please, do not abandon me! When your turn comes and you are judged, I will not forget you, I myself will throw myself at the feet of your judge, whose friend and beloved child I will then be. If I myself am not powerful enough, I will call the entire heavenly court to my aid, in order to ask your grace. »

But who will these poor souls turn to who have neither parents nor friends to think of them? It seems to me that I hear them cry: “Charitable Pastor, tell all Christians how long and cruel our sufferings are, no, only God knows the rigor of the tortures we endure; ah! tell them that we will not be ungrateful. » Alas! these poor souls are in the flames like prisoners, who, for many years, have been groaning in the depths of dark dungeons, longing for the moment of their deliverance. But it is in vain, they are abandoned, they suffer from point to point the decision of their condemnation; they see souls coming who are much more guilty than themselves, and who are delivered sooner, because they have friends to satisfy the justice of God. “My God,” they cry out every moment, “will we have no one to deliver us? » How long will the sorrows of these poor souls last? — Alas, my brethren, if such torture lasted only a day, an hour, or half an hour, it would seem infinitely longer to them than millions of centuries in the most rigorous tortures that one can suffer in this world. —And why is that? — My friend, here he is. When God punishes someone in this world, it is only under the reign of his mercy and goodness; for, if God sends us an infirmity, a loss of goods [une perte de bien], or other miseries, all this is given to us only to (make) us avoid the penalties of purgatory, or to bring us out of sin. Indeed, if the Lord treated the holy man Job so harshly on this earth, was it not because he loved him in a special way? Does not this holy man himself say that “the tip of the Lord’s finger touched him?” » The angel said- it not also to Tobit, that if God had afflicted him, it was only because he was pleasing to him? So, if in this world God makes us suffer, it is only out of love and charity. In the other, on the contrary, God is led only by his justice and his vengeance; we have sinned, we (have) passed the time of his mercy; he had threatened us a thousand times, his justice must be accomplished and his vengeance satisfied. Oh how terrible it is to fall into the hands of a vengeful God! But what should lead us to neglect nothing to deliver these poor souls is that we are the cause of the misfortune of most of them. Here is the reason. This wife will be in flames, because she showed too much weakness for her husband, perhaps even complacency contrary to the law of the Lord. This poor father, this poor mother is suffering in purgatory, because they did not correct their children enough, and allowed them what they should never have allowed them. This friend or neighbor also suffers, because being in your company, he did not dare to rebuke you, when you slandered your neighbor or said less than decent words. Finally, a multitude of others are burning in these fires, because you gave them a bad example, which led them to sin. Ah! poor souls, it is we who are the cause of your torments, and we leave you, we abandon you!... Ungrateful, one day will come when we will cry our insensitivity for these poor suffering souls! What I we let them burn, being able so easily to lead them to heaven! Ah! My brethren, let us be touched, since God has placed their deliverance in our hands (1).

(1) The second part of this Sermon being almost identical to that of the preceding one, we believe it is unnecessary to reproduce it.

Feast of the Patron Saint

Quœsivide eis virum, qui interponeret sepem; et starei oppositum contra me pro terra, ne dis si' parem earn. I sought among them a man who would present himself as a bulwark between me and them, who would oppose me in defense of this land, so that I would not destroy it. (Ezech., xxu, 30.)

God could not show his love and his tenderness for men in a clearer way than in these words: “When my justice forces me to punish you, seek among you one of my friends, so that he may oppose my vengeance, and prevent me from punishing you.” Who can then relate the wonders of the love of a God for his creatures? He was not content with sending his Son unique, the object of his most tender complacency; he consented to lose his life to save us, and deliver us from his eternal vengeance. Not content with having born us in the bosom of his Church, which nourishes us with the adorable Body of Jesus Christ and drinks us with his precious Blood;

happy to have entrusted us to an angel of the celestial court, who, from the first moment of our life, lavishes us with his care; he also wanted to give each of us a Patron Saint to continually watch over us, to be our model, our defender. Not content with giving each of us a protector, his love also requires that each parish be dedicated to a saint from heaven, who serves as his patron, and to whom the faithful can turn like children to their father. Our Patron Saint is a good king, desiring only the happiness of his subjects, and forgetting nothing to provide them with everything that can make them happy. He removes from us the scourges of God's justice, which we have deserved by our sins, and provides us with the necessary means to bring about our salvation. What is my plan, my brethren? here it is. It is first of all to show you all the benefits that we receive through the protection of our Patron Saint, and then to examine how we correspond to them.

I. To make you understand the need we have for the protection of our Patron Saint during our life, at the hour of our death, and after our death, we should also be able to make you understand the dangers to which we are exposed during our life. Do you want to know our most formidable enemies? It is, the world, by its bad examples; the devil, by his temptations; our flesh, by its inclination to evil. All hell has sworn our eternal doom, and as long as we remain on earth we must expect to fight; We are very assured that our struggles will only end with our lives. Job, this great saint of the Old Testament, gives us the most beautiful portrait of human life, saying that “we are born weeping, we live groaning and we leave life suffering; » which makes him say that the moment of our death is preferable to that of our birth. We live little, we suffer a lot, and our life is just a continual war. We will not have left one cross until we find another. Elijah, fleeing the anger of Queen Jezebel, went to hide in a cave; There, overwhelmed with troubles and miseries, he turned to God saying: “My God, why do you let me suffer so long? You have removed my fathers from this world, remove me too, since separated from you we only suffer. » The Lord answered him: “You still have many years to suffer. » One day when Jeremiah was considering how miserable man is in this world, he cried out in tears: “Oh! Lord, will you leave me much longer on earth; Please let my ills end soon." The holy King David said as he went to bed (1): "Ah Lord, if at least this night were the last of my life! My God, how long will you prolong my exile; since the enemies of my salvation only seek my destruction; whichever way I turn, I see only sins. Ah! who will give me wings like a dove to come out of this foreign land, to fly towards you. » If we read the Gospel, we see Jesus Christ promising only crosses, persecutions and suffering. One day a mother presented herself to him, saying: “Lord, I have a favor to ask of you: make my two children be one on your right and the other on your left in your kingdom. » The Savior looked at her with an air of compassion, and said to her: “You do not know what (1) See note L, at the end of the volume.

that you ask; this grace belongs to my Father, for me, this is all I can give you: it is my cross, my chalice of bitterness and all my sufferings. » One day when Jesus Christ was followed by a multitude of people, wishing to show him in what man's happiness consisted, he sat down and said: “Blessed are those who weep, because one day they will be comforted; blessed are the poor, blessed are those who are despised and persecuted, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and groan, while the people of the world will rejoice; but their joy will turn into sadness, and your sadness will turn into everlasting joy. » Dilesmoi, my brethren, which of us will be able to escape so many dangers, so many artifices of the world and the devil? “Alas! cries Saint Anthony, who is there who will not fall into the traps that Satan and the world continually set? » But what happiness for us, to have as Patron such a great saint (1),

whose entire occupation is to watch over (us), to keep away from us the dangers into which we could fall; a Patron, I say, who is responsible not only for this parish, but also for the entire Christian world! He is so powerful now in the sky! God, who loves him infinitely, will grant him whatever he asks. He shed his blood for his God; he only ascended the first throne of the Christian world in the hope of giving his life there for his God; if he is rich, it is because he was poor in the goods of this world; if he is so high in dignity, it is because he despised himself; so he is now raised to the first throne (1) Saint Sixtus, pope and martyr, as we will see later.

of the celestial court, awaiting the happiness of seeing us all with him in heaven. He says to us all, to encourage us: “Do as I have done, live as I have lived, despise the world [mépriser le monde] as I have despised it myself. » Does it not seem to you that all year long, our Patron Saint has never stopped collecting treasures of heavenly graces, to have the pleasure of enriching us, on the day dedicated to honoring the triumph of his martyrdom and all his penances? Don't you feel an inner voice within yourself that tells you that everything will be granted to you? Ah! happiness! ah! precious grace and day of blessing! How many goods, favors and strengths are granted to us on this day! Our Patron not only watches over our salvation, by providing us with all the necessary means to save us; but still, he watches over our property and our health. The devil, our enemy, is so furious to see us gain the heaven he has lost, that he does everything possible to make us unhappy, even in this world. Often God, as punishment for our sins, gives him the power to cause hail, storms, torrential rains, droughts; all this, in order to (make) us perish from misery. Many (diseases) that we experience come, for the most part, only from the devil, and if we did not have our Patron Saint who opposes the justice of God, we would be reduced to the utmost misery, by plagues which would destroy our crops, and diseases which would continually afflict us. See what the devil did to the holy man Job, by this little power which he had received from God. Satan caused fire to fall on his flocks from heaven, which burned them all; he raised up thieves who took away all his other animals; he excited a storm so furious that it overturned his house and crushed all his children; he himself struck him with an ulcer, which affected him from his head to his feet; his body rotted, his flesh fell off in pieces, he spread such a stench that no one dared approach him; the worms I ate everything alive; he was forced to go and stand on a dunghill, there he removed with the heads of broken pots the worms which were eating him: all this only happened to him by the permission of God, and yet he was a great saint, since God himself said to the demon, that Job was then without equal on the earth. Alas! how many times, without our Patron [que de fois, sans notre saint Patron] Saint, God would have punished us, either in our possessions by causing our crops to perish, or by overwhelming us with illnesses or infirmities! And what does our Patron Saint do when he sees that God is going to punish us? He runs to throw himself at her feet, reminding her of the torments he endured, and the blood he shed for her love. He asks him for grace for us, so that we may convert and change our lives. After that, he inspires us with good thoughts, with the desire to leave sin and convert. But how worried is he when he sees that, despite everything, we continue to sin? Saint Bernard is right to say that the Patron Saint is the mediator between [le médiateur] Jesus Christ and the faithful: “We are too criminal,” said this great saint, “to be able to address ourselves directly to God; we need to have recourse to a mediator other than Jesus Christ to ask for our grace. » “I have sought among them, says the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel, a man who will put up a hedge and who will oppose me, lest I lose this land. » This land is the parish, which often deserved to be destroyed because of the sins committed there.

FESTIVAL OF THE PATRON SAINT 20i put. But God chose in our Patron Saint, a man after his heart, to oppose his wrath, as Moses did in the past. God, angry with his people because of their sins, wanted to destroy them; but Moses prayed to the Lord to have compassion on his people, preferring to be punished in their place. “Moses,” says the Lord, “do not pray, because I do not want to forgive him. » — “Lord,” Moses said to him, “please forgive this people” — “Well! I forgive him, said the Lord to him. " Oh! how many times has our Patron Saint not obtained the same grace for us! Saint Cyprian says that the patron saints of the churches have great care for the salvation of our (soul). Alas! how many people in a parish are given over,

some to anger, others to gluttony, others to impurity or drunkenness; God has resolved to lose them by destroying them in hell. What does our Patron Saint do, seeing so many evils ready to overwhelm us? He acts like the gardener spoken of in the Gospel. His master, finding no fruit on a certain tree for several years, said to the gardener: “Cut down this tree and put it on the fire, since it bears no fruit and occupies the place of another. " The gardener throws himself at his master's feet: "Lord, give him another year! I will smoke it, I will work the earth, I will take care of it, perhaps it will bear fruit; if another year it bears nothing, I will cut it down and throw it into the fire. » Alas! How many years has God been waiting for you to bear good fruit, and he only sees bad fruit in you? How many times had he decided to throw you into the fire, if your patron saint had not, like the gardener, asked for mercy for you, always in the hope that you would convert? Our Patron Saint, my brethren, is not satisfied with us 9 helping during our life, he still redoubles his care at the hour of death, in order to defend us against the demon, who makes his last efforts to destroy us. We read in the history of Canada that a good nun saw the Patron Saint of her parish come, with several saints and even the Blessed Virgin, to the aid of a dying man; They prayed so much to God for him that they obtained his grace. Let us put it better: our Patron Saint looks at all the inhabitants of the parish as a father looks at his children, loving them all with an unrivaled love; he has no rest until he has led us all into heaven with him. If we go to purgatory, he will pray for us, he will come to visit us to console us, and make us hope that one day we will enjoy the happiness of the saints. It will inspire our parents, our friends to pray for us, to have masses said. You will agree with me, my brethren, that we are blessed to have such a protector, to solicit God's mercy in our favor; because, without him, God would have long since overwhelmed us with evils as punishment for our sins.

IL You have just seen the eagerness and desire that our Patron Saint has to make us happy, either by keeping the storms away from us, or by doing everything that depends on him to make us recover friendship (of God), when we have had the misfortune of losing it, or to preserve it within us, when we have the happiness of having it. But what, my brethren, are our obligations towards our benefactor? Here they are. We must spend his feast day holy, and celebrate it like Easter or Christmas; occupying ourselves in praying to the good God [le bon Dieu] and doing good works; we will thus deserve the graces which are promised to us in this great day of triumph. Let us not fail on this day to confess and receive communion. We must talk about the virtues that the saint practiced, and try to imitate them. As our Patron is a holy martyr, we must imitate his patience in suffering. He suffered death with so much courage and joy that he seemed to envy Saint Lawrence, because God had made him know that the martyrdom of this saint would be more rigorous. When some difficulties come to us, let us remember the sufferings of the Patron Saint whom we have taken as a model, and let us pray to him to obtain for us the grace to make good use of our trials; let us thank him again for the graces he obtains for us during the year, graces which we will only know well after our death; let us pray to him not to regard our ingratitude, but to receive us under his holy protection. Above all, let fathers and mothers urgently ask him to receive under his protection their children, their servants and all their property; that God may bless them, and that the devil may not have dominion over them. Finally, let us ask him to assist us at the hour of death, because it is certain that at this moment when we will have to give an account of our entire life, we will be seized with fear. Let us then ask him for this great love which will give us the strength to die for God, as he himself did. In the early days of the Church, the faithful from the same region came in crowds on the feast day of a saint, to have the happiness of participating in the graces that God granted on that day. The service began the day before; in the evening and at night, people prayed at the tomb of the saint, they heard the word of God, they sang hymns and canticles in his honor. After spending the night if piously, we heard mass, where all those present had the pleasure of receiving communion; then everyone withdrew praising God for the victories he had won for the saint, and thanking him for the graces he had granted through his intercession. According to this, my brethren, who could doubt that God would not pour out his graces abundantly on this gathering of faithful, and that the saints themselves would not be happy to protect them? This is the way in which the feasts of the patron saints were once celebrated. What do

you think of this? Is this right how we celebrate them now? Alas, if the first Christians reappeared on earth, could they recognize us as their imitators? Would they not tell us that our celebrations differ in no way from those of the pagans? Is it not usually in these holy days that God is most offended? Do we not seem to combine our goods and our strength to multiply sin almost to infinity? What do we take care of the day before and even several days in advance? Isn't this about making crazy and superfluous expenses? And during this time, the poor are dying of hunger, and our sins call down the wrath of God on us, to the point that eternity will not be enough to satisfy them. You should spend the night groaning, considering how little you have imitated your Patron Saint; and yet you devote this time to preparing everything that will satisfy your gluttony. Wouldn't one say that this day is a day of debauchery? Do parents and friends come, as in the past, to have the happiness of participating in the graces that God grants us through the intercession of the Patron Saint? They come, but to spend almost the entire day at the table. In the past, holy services were much longer than today, and yet they always seemed too short; Now you even see fathers of families who, during services, are at the table filling their bodies with meat and divination. The first Christians invited each other, in order to multiply their good works and their prayers; today, does it not seem that we are inviting ourselves to multiply sins through orgies, the excesses that occur in drinking and eating? Do we really think that God will demand accounting for even a penny spent ill-timed? Does it not seem that we only celebrate to outrage our Patron Saint, and to multiply our ingratitude? Let us look more closely, my brethren, and we will recognize that we are far from imitating the one whom God gave us as a model. He spent his life in penance and tears, he died in torments; Now, I am sure that there are parishes where more sins are committed on these days than in the whole year. The Lord told the Jews that their festivals were an abomination to Him, and that He would take the filth of their festivals and throw it in their faces. He wants us to understand how much he is offended in these days which should be spent in tears and prayer. We read in the Gospel that Jesus Christ came to earth to kindle in souls the fire of divine love; but we can believe that the devil also rolls on the earth, to kindle the impure fire in the hearts of Christians; and what he provokes with the most fury are balls and dances. I hesitated for a long time whether I would speak to you about a subject so difficult to understand, and so little thought about by Christians today, blinded by their passions [aveuglé par ses passions]. If faith were not extinguished in your hearts, at a single glance you would understand the magnitude of the abyss into which you are rushing, abandoning yourself with so much fury to these unfortunate pleasures. But you will tell me: Wanting to talk to us about dance and the harm that we do there is a waste of time; we will do neither more nor less.—I truly believe it, since Tertullian assures us that many refused to become Christians, rather than deprive themselves of such pleasures. I still hear someone say to me: What harm can there be in recreating for a moment? I'm not wronging anyone, I don't want to be nun or religious. If I don't attend dances, will I remain in the world like a dead person? — My friend, you are wrong: either you will be religious, or you will be damned. What is a religious person? It is nothing other than a person who fulfills his duties as a Christian. You say that I will gain nothing by talking to you about dancing, and that you do not drill more or less about it. You are wrong again. By disregarding your pastor's instructions, you will attract new punishment from God, and I, by fulfilling my duty, will gain a lot. God will not ask me at the hour of death whether you have fulfilled your duties; but if I taught you what you should do to fulfill them well. You still say that I will never be able to make you believe that there is harm in recreating yourself for a moment while dancing? You don't want to believe there is harm? it's your business; For me, it is enough for me to tell you in such a way as to make you understand it, if, however, you want it. By doing this I am doing everything I need to do. This must not irritate you: your pastor is fleeing his duty. But, you will tell me, the commandments of God do not prohibit dancing, neither does Holy Scripture? — Perhaps you didn't examine it carefully. Follow me for a moment, and you will see that it is not a commandment of Dinu that dancing does not cause people to transgress, nor a sacrament that it causes to be profaned. You know as well as I that these kinds of madness and extravagances are usually only done on Sundays and holidays. So what will a girl or a boy do on such a day who has decided to go (dancing)? What love will they have for God? will not their minds be entirely occupied with their adornments, in order to please the people

with whom they hope to be with? Suppose they pray, how will they pray? Alas, only God knows!... Besides, what love of God can a person have who only breathes the love of pleasures and creatures? You will agree with me that it is impossible to please God and the world; no, that will never happen. God forbid we swear. Alas! what quarrels, swearing and blasphemy, caused by the jealousy that young people give rise to when they are in such assemblies? Don't you often have arguments or fights there? Who could count all the crimes committed in these infernal meetings? The third commandment commands us to keep holy the holy day of Sunday. Can we believe that a boy who has spent several hours with a girl whose heart is like a furnace will thus satisfy the precept? Saint Augustine is very right to say that men would do (much better) to plow their land, and girls to spin their distaff, than to go dancing; the harm would be less. God's fourth commandment commands children to respect their parents. Do these young people who attend dances have the respect and submission they owe to their parents? No doubt: they make them die of grief, either by despising them, or by spending their money inappropriately, or even by reproaching them for their past conduct. What sorrow must these parents not conceive, if their faith is not yet extinguished, by seeing their children given over to such pleasures, or to speak more clearly to these libertinages? these children are no longer for heaven, but victims fattened for hell. Suppose that the parents have not yet lost their faith.... alas, I dare not go further than blind parents!... only reprobate children!... Is there a place, a time, an occasion, where so many sins of impurity are committed as in dances and following dances? Is it not in these assemblies that we are most violently inclined to sin contrary to the holy virtue of chastity? Isn't this where all the senses are taken to pleasure? Could we examine this a little closely, and not die of horror at the sight of so many crimes being committed? Is it not in these assemblies that the devil furiously lights the impure fire in the hearts of young people, to destroy in them the grace of baptism? Isn't that where hell makes as many slaves as it wants? If, despite the remoteness of the occasions, and the help of prayer, a Christian still has so much difficulty in maintaining the purity of the heart; how could he preserve this virtue, in the midst of so many objects capable of making it succumb. “See,” Saint John Chrysostom tells us, “see this worldly and fickle girl, or rather this infernal firebrand, who, by her beauty and her vain adornments, kindles in the heart of this young man the impure fire of concupiscence. Don't you see them, both of them, trying to charm each other with their looks, their gestures and their other manners? Count, unhappy, if you can, the number of your bad thoughts, your bad desires and your bad deeds. Is it not there where you hear these tunes which flatter the ears, inflame and burn the hearts, and make these assemblies furnaces of fornication? » Is it not there, my brethren, that boys and girls drink from the source of crime, which will soon, like a torrent or an overflowing river, flood, waste and poison all the surroundings?... Go, reprobate fathers and mothers, go to hell where. the fury of God awaits you, and the beautiful deeds you have done, letting your children run (1). Come on, they will soon join you there, since you have paved the way for them so well! Go count the number of years that your boys and girls have lost, go before your judge to give an account of your life, and you will see if your pastor was right to defend these kinds of infernal joys! Ah! you will tell me, you say more than there is! — Am I saying too much? Well! listen; do the holy Fathers say too much? Saint Ephrem tells us that dancing is the perdition of girls and women, the blindness of men, the sadness of angels and the joy of demons. But, my God, can one's eyes be so fascinated as to want to believe that there is no evil; while it is the rope by which the devil drags the most souls to hell? Go, poor parents, blind and reprobate, go and despise what your pastor tells you! Come on 1 continue on your way! listen to everything, and take advantage of nothing! Is there no harm? But tell me, what did you give up on the day of your baptism? or rather, under what conditions was it given to you? Isn't it by making you take an oath to (1) Go to parties.

face of heaven and earth, in the presence of J. -G. on the altar, that you renounce for all your life, Satan, his pomps and his works, that is to say, sin, pleasures and all the vanities of the world? Isn't it by making you promise that (you) want to walk in the footsteps of a crucified God? Tell me, is this not truly violating the promises of your baptism, and profaning this sacrament of mercy? Do you not also profane that of Confirmation, by changing the cross of Christ that you received there, against vain adjustments, by blushing

at this cross which should (be) your glory and your happiness? Saint Augustine assures that those who go to dances truly renounce Christ to give themselves to the devil. What a horror! chase away Jesus Christ after having received him in your heart! “Today,” Saint Ephrem tells us, “they unite with Jesus Christ and tomorrow with the devil. » Alas, how Judas, after having received it, will sell it to Satan, in these assemblies where all the most vicious people meet! As for the sacrament of Penance, what a contradictory life! A Christian who, after a single sin, should do nothing but cry all his life, thinks only of indulging in all these worldly joys! Do not many profane the sacrament of Extreme Unction, by making indecent movements of the feet, hands and the whole body, which must be sanctified by holy oils? Do we not outrage the sacrament of (the Order) by disregarding the instructions of our pastor? But for the sacrament of Marriage, alas! what infidelities do we not meditate in these assemblies? it seems that then everything is permitted. How blind one must be to believe that there is no evil! The Council of Aix-la-Chapelle defends dance, even at the wedding; and Saint Charles Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, said that three years of penance were given to a person who had danced, and if they returned, they were threatened with excommunication. If there is no evil, then the holy Fathers and the Church were wrong? But who tells you that there is no evil? It can only be a libertine, a fickle and worldly girl, who tries to stifle the remorse of their conscience as much as they can. There are, you say, priests who do not say it in confession, or who, without allowing it, do not refuse absolution. Ah! I don't know if there are such blind priests, but I believe that those who seek easy priests will seek a passport that will lead them to hell. For me, if I went to the dance, I would not want to receive absolution, not having a real desire to never return. Listen to Saint Augustine, and you will see if dancing is such a good action. He tells us that “dancing is the ruin of souls, a reversal of all honesty, a shameful spectacle, a public profession of crime. » Saint Ephrem calls it “the loss of (good) morals and the nourishment of vice. » Saint John Chrysostom: “a public incontinence school. » Tertullian: “the temple of Venus, the consistory of impudence and the citadel of all turpitude. » “Here is a girl who dances,” says Saint Ambrose, “but she is the daughter of an adulterer; because a Christian woman would teach her daughter modesty, modesty, and not dancing! » Alas, how many young people, since they go to dances, no longer attend the sacraments, or only profane them! How many poor people have lost their piety and faith! How many people will open their eyes to their misfortune only to fall into hell! Tell me, my brethren, is this the life that the Patron Saint led whom we took as model and protector? he who lived only in tears and penance; who made all his happiness consist in praying, in groaning, and in giving his life to please God? Will we find anything that can reassure us, when God presents Him in judgment, to see if our life has been consistent with His? No, my brethren, our Patron Saint did not frequent worldly pleasures [plaisirs mondains], our Patron Saint did not indulge in gluttony or wine; but to penance. “Go,” he will tell us, “when we ask for his protection, go to the tribunal of God; Come on, wretches, you only lived to (be) seen by men, in your all-pagan festivals; these are the graces that I obtained for you from God and which you despised; Go, now, seek help from him to whom you have obeyed so well! You have despised me, I in turn despise you! Come on, God commands me to abandon you, you are no longer my children, but those of the devil. " Oh! My brethren, can we think about this well, and not changing deviates? Shall we not imitate our Patron, so that he may recognize us for his children? Now, will he recognize his children, when he confronts his penances with our weakness, his tears with our worldly pleasures [plaisirs mondains] and joys, his fear of offending God with this fury in running to evil? Let us never forget that if Saint Sixtus is our protector, he is also our model, and that our life will one day be confronted with his. Let us end, my brethren, by recognizing that our festivals, far from being Christian, rather resemble those of the pagans, who made them consist of honoring their gods through pleasures, drunkenness and gluttony. Let us leave the pleasures of the world and gluttony, these are two chains by which the demon leads many in hell. It is reported in the life of Saint Madeleine de Pazzi that God showed her a large number of religious people burning in a lake of fire, telling her that they had deserved this misfortune for having abused the recreations that the rule granted them. “0 souls,” she cried, weeping bitterly, “you who are still on earth, tremble at the time that you do not use solely for the good God [le bon Dieu].” The demon told Saint Dominic that he gained a lot in the place where his monks took

recreation, and yet these monks were very austere. Alas! if a few lost moments are so severely punished, what can we say about these dances and these debaucheries, where. so many crimes are committed, and where so many souls are delivered to the devil? So what should we do on this holy day? Redouble our good works, our prayers and our penances. Let these poor blind people say that there is no harm. Listen to the voice of your pastor, he knows the dangers better than you; he is keen to lead you to heaven, and you would regret for all eternity not having listened to him. 0 our Patron Saint, help us to despise the world [aidez-nous à mépriser le monde] and its pleasures, to do penance like you, so that we may have the happiness of going to see you one day in paradise. Amen [Ainsi soit-il].

FOR

Dedication of the Church — Respect Due in Churches

About the respect that we must have in churches.

And iniravit Jesus in icmplum Dei, and cjiciebal omnes vendes et ementes in templo. Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling. (S. Malth., xxi, 12.)

My brethren, can we attribute this air of "? What is the zeal and indignation that Jesus Christ lets burst forth on his face today? We see him elsewhere establishing himself as judge of the adulterous woman, but only to have the sweet consolation of not condemning her; we see him kindly forgiving all the scandals and the most frightful disorders of a sinner; he shows us his mercy towards all repentant sinners in the parable of the prodigal son. When he sees Jerusalem, this ungrateful city, he is touched with compassion, and his eyes adore

They let bitter tears flow. “Ah! criminal city which killed the prophets that my Father had sent to announce to you the greatness of his benefits I You are going to put the height of barbarity, by putting to death your God and your Savior l Ah! if you wanted at least, on this day given to you, to receive the grace that I present to you! But no, it's in vain that I urge you! » You see, my brethren, there is nothing but kindness and love everywhere. Who can today, tell me, take away this clemency from him, and arm his beneficent hands with the rods of justice? Ah! it is that we desecrate his Father's house, it is that we make it a den of thieves, a house of trafficking. This profanation is for him a sword which keenly pierces his tender heart. Love for his Father and zeal for his glory can no longer be contained; Barely had he entered the city of Jerusalem when he immediately went to the temple to reproach the Jews for the horrible desecration they were making of the place intended for prayer. He doesn't even give them time to flee; he himself takes the tables, the goods, and spills everything on the ground. Ah! My brethren, must the irreverences committed in the churches be terrible, of which the temple of Solomon was only the figure! With what respect, with what recollection and what devotion should we not come to our churches? To help you understand this better, I will show you what thoughts should occupy us 1° when coming to church, 2° while we are there, and 3° when we leave.

I. Who will ever be able to understand our blindness, if we consider, on the one hand, the graces that the good God [le bon Dieu] prepares for us in his holy temple, the need that we have for them, the ardent desire that he shows us to we want to give them; on the other, our ingratitude and our lack of eagerness to correspond to its benefits? When our duty calls us to such a holy place, would we not say that we resemble criminals brought before their judges to be condemned to the last torture, rather than Christians whom love alone should lead to God? Oh! how blind we are, my brethren, to have so little interest in the goods of heaven, while we are so inclined towards the things of the world! Indeed, when it comes to temporal affairs, or even pleasures, one will be very preoccupied, one will think about it in advance, one will reflect on it; but, alas! when it comes to the service of our God and the salvation of our poor soul, it is only a kind of routine and an inconceivable indifference. Do we want to speak to a great person in the world, to ask him for some favor? We take care of it well in advance; we will consult people who we believe to be more educated, to

know how we should present ourselves; we appear before him with that air of modesty and respect which the presence of such a person usually inspires. But when we come to the house of the good God [le bon Dieu], ah! that's not it anymore. No one thinks about what they are going to do, what they are going to ask of God. Tell me, my brethren, who is the one who, when going to church, says to himself: Where am I going? is it in a man's house, or in a king's palace? Oh! no, it is in the house of my God, in the dwelling of him who loves me more than himself, since he died for me; who has his merciful eyes open to my (actions), his ears attentive to my prayers, always ready to hear me and forgive me. Penetrated by these beautiful thoughts, what do we not say like the holy King David:

“O my soul, rejoice, you are going to go to the house of the Lord,” pay your respects to him, explain your needs to him, listen to his divine words, ask him for his graces; Oh! How many things I have to say to him, how many favors I have to ask of him, how many thanks I have to show him! I would talk to him about all my troubles, and I am sure he will console me; I will confess my faults to him, and he will forgive me; I will tell him about my family, and he will bless it with all kinds of benefits. Yes, my God, I will adore you in your holy temple, and I will return full of all kinds of blessings. Tell me, my brethren, is this really the thought that occupies you, when your duties call you to the church? Are these really the thoughts you have, after having spent the whole poor morning talking about your sales and your purchases, or at least, about (things) which are entirely useless? You come in haste to hear a holy mass, which is often half-said, liólas! if I dared to say it, how many go to visit the god of drunkenness before their Créatour, and, coming to the church with their heads full of wine, discuss temporal affairs all the way to the Omon Dion gate! are these Christians, who must live like angels on earth?... And you, my sister, are your feelings better, when, after having occupied your mind and part of your time thinking how you are going to dress yourself to better please the world, you then come to a place where you should only come to mourn your sins? Alas! very often, the priest goes up to the altar while you are still contemplating yourself in front of a mirror, turning and turning, O my God! are these really Christians, who have taken you for their model, you who have spent your life in contempt and tears!... Listen, young daughter, what Saint Ambrose, bishop of Milan, teaches you. Being at the door of the church and seeing a young person dressed with great care, he addressed her with these words: “Where are you going, woman?” She replied that she was going to church. “You go to church,” said the holy bishop, “one would rather say that you go to dance, to comedy or to a show; Go, sinful woman, go and weep for your sins in secret, and do not come to church to insult, with your vain adjustments, a humiliated God,” My God, this century provides us with! How many young people, when they come to church, are only concerned with themselves and their adornments? They enter the temple of the Lord saying in the depths of their hearts: “Look at me. » Seeing these sad dispositions, should we not shed tears? And you, fathers and mothers, what are your dispositions when you come to church, to mass. Alas, it must be said with pain, it is most often fathers and mothers who we see entering the church while the priest is already at the altar or even in the pulpit! “Ah! you will say to me, we come when we can, we have other things to do. » — No doubt, you have something else to do; but I also know that if you had not left for Sunday (a thousand things) of your household that you had to do on Saturday, and if you had gotten up a little earlier in the morning, you would have done all this before Holy Mass, and you would have arrived before the priest went up to the altar. It would be the same for your children and your servants, if you did not order them until the last stroke of mass, they would get there at the beginning. I don't know if the good God [le bon Dieu] will accept all these pretexts, I hardly believe it.

But why, my brethren, speaking in particular, is not the majority who act in this way? Yes, when you are called into church to distribute the graces of the good God [le bon Dieu] to you, do we not see in you this lack of eagerness, this nonchalance, this disgust which devours you, this almost general dissipation? Tell me, do we see a lot of people when we begin holy services? Are not vespers often half said, when you have all arrived? “We have work to do,” you tell me. Hey! my friends, if you told me that you have neither faith, nor love of God, nor desire to save your poor soul, I would believe you much better. Alas! what can we think of

all this?... There is reason to groan when we see such dispositions in the majority of Christians! Many seem to only come to church against their will, or, if I dare say, it seems as if they are being dragged there. From home to church, we only talk about temporal affairs; some young girls together talk only about vanity, beauty, and the rest; young people, games, pleasures, and other things even worse; the fathers or masters of houses will talk about their property, their sales or their purchases; mothers will only be busy with their household and their children: no one would dare deny that. Alas! not a single thought about the happiness they are going to have, not a single reflection about the needs of their poor soul, nor that of their children and their servants! They enter the holy temple without respect, without attention, and many, as late as possible. How many others do not take the trouble to enter, and stay outside, in order to better find something to dissipate? The word of God does not trouble their conscience: they look at those who come and go... My God! Are these Christians for whom you suffered so much, in order to make them happy? So this is all their gratitude?... With such dispositions, how many sins are committed during the holy services! How many people commit more sins on Sunday than in the whole week!... Listen to what Saint Martin teaches us. While he was singing Holy Mass with his disciple Saint Brice, he noticed that the latter was smiling. After it was all over, Saint Martin asked him what had made him smile. Saint Brice answered him: “My father, I saw something extraordinary while we were singing Holy Mass: I saw behind the altar a demon, he was writing on a large sheet of parchment the sins that were committed in the church, and his sheet was rather filled than the Holy Mass was completed; This demon then took this paper with his teeth, he pulled so hard that he tore it into several pieces. This, father, is what made me smile. » How many sins, even mortal ones, we commit during the holy services through our lack of devotion and contemplation! Alas! What has become of those happy times when Christians spent not only the day, but also the greater part of the night in the church, weeping for their sins, or singing the praises of the Lord? See even in the Old Testament, see Saint Anne the prophetess, who had retired to a tribune, never to leave the presence of God. See the holy old man Simeon; see again Zechariah and so many others, who spent the greater part of their lives in this temple of the Lord. But also, how great and precious are the graces that the good God [le bon Dieu] granted them. God, to reward Saint Anne, wanted her to be the first to know Jesus Christ. The holy old man Simeon was also the first after Saint Joseph who had the happiness, the great happiness of carrying the Savior of the world on his arms. Saint Zacharias was chosen to be the father of a child destined to be the ambassador of the Eternal Father, to announce the coming of his Son into the world. What graces does the good God [le bon Dieu] not grant to those who make it their duty to come and visit him in his holy temple as much as they can? In the New Testament do we not see that the saints made all their happiness consist in coming to adore Jesus Christ in his temple? Why, my brethren, do so many communities spend part of the night in prayer, in their church, while we sleep? It is to keep company with Jesus Christ in his tabernacle. Also see how much this pleases Jesus Christ. It is reported that a holy priest slept every night on the footstool of the altar, in order to be closer to Jesus Christ. The good Lord allowed him to die there; he was buried in the same place. Another slept in the sacristy for the same reason. When Saint Louis was traveling, instead of spending the night in a bed, he spent it in a church: if they told him that he would not be able to stay there, he replied that he felt better than when he spent it in his bed, so much consolation did he enjoy in the company of such a good Master. If, my brethren, we are not inclined to actions so pleasing to God, at least spending the little time we spend in church, let us be well penetrated and convinced that we are in the holy presence of our God, who only calls us there to fill us with his benefits and make us work for the salvation of our poor soul. Let us go there with holy eagerness, but also with great respect, in fear of bringing upon ourselves the punishments of God, through our lack of devotion.

and our irreverence. Here is a very striking example. We read in Holy Scripture that Heliodorus. one of the first officers of the king of Assyria, sent a troop of soldiers to desecrate the temple of Jerusalem; but they were all thrown to the ground, and fled with haste. He went there himself to commit all kinds of impieties. But he had barely entered it when two angels took him and struck him so severely that he would have

remained under the blows, had it not been for the priest Onias who asked for mercy for him. How many times, my brethren, would the angels, seeing you appear with such dissipation, not to say impiety, strike us with death, if Jesus Christ, whose goodness is infinite, did not stop them? Saint Paul tells us that God would destroy and rigorously punish those who dared to desecrate his temple. So what should we do when we come to church? Here it is. We must take care, along the way, of our miseries, of the graces that we are going to ask from the good God [le bon Dieu], and of the greatness of the One before whom we are going to appear. Our preparation should begin as soon as we wake up in the morning, speaking as little as we can, and our minds should be occupied only with what relates to God. Let us leave aside temporal things, because this day is for our soul. But what thoughts should occupy us while we are in the house of the good God [le bon Dieu], that is to say with Jesus Christ who is our Father, our Savior and our Mediator? We will see it.

II. Oh! what a spectacle, my brethren, for a Christian who has not entirely lost his faith! so many objects capable of touching and softening his heart! When we enter a church, let us imbue ourselves with the thought that it is the house of the good God [le bon Dieu] and the place where all the graces of heaven are contained. Whichever way we look, everything will speak to us about God, our vocation, our hopes, what we have been, what we are and what we will become. Can we, my brethren, find something more capable of capturing our attention and inspiring us with feelings of the most tender devotion? Let us enter: we will first find holy water there, which has been sanctified by the prayers of the Church, it seems to show us with what purity and holiness we must enter this holy place to please Jesus Christ; for, if we are (guilty) of sins, we must only come there to weep for them, full of fear that God will punish us for them in this holy place where the angels only tremble. Another reason which should encourage us to take this holy water with great respect and sorrow for our sins is that it will begin to put in our soul a very good disposition to hear the holy mass. If we raise our eyes higher, the first object that presents itself to our eyes is the crucifix. Oh! My brethren, how capable this image is of softening our hearts and making us weep for our sins! What great truths it reminds us of! Doesn’t Jesus Christ seem to be saying to us from the top of this cross where he is attached: “Ah! my children, see and consider whether there is any pain similar to mine; see and consider how enormous sin is and my love immense; see this poor body all in tatters and bruised by the sufferings of my painful passion; see this head pierced with horrible thorns! Ah! Christians, can you consider this body all covered with wounds, without crying for your sins which are the cause? My children are my love and your sins which attached me to this cross, and (you) continue to outrage me! Stop, stop! my children. Ah! at least stop persecuting me by insulting me in my temple! » Can we look well at this tender Savior, stretched out on this cross, without being penetrated with respect and agitated with a holy trembling?... If we turn in another direction, we see there the sacred font of baptism which seems to say to us: “Ah! Christians, remember that before you were brought here you were children of wrath, vile slaves of Satan, banished forever from the presence of your God; yes, it is here that you have been washed by the adorable blood of Jesus Christ. Yes, it is here that heaven has been opened to you, and the Savior himself has become your reward and your happiness. " Oh! My brethren, what joy and what gratitude must we not have, in turning our eyes to these sacred facts which have brought us so much good? Let us not forget it; at the tribunal of God, they will be shown to us, as if to reproach us for our prevarications. We will see the promises we have made, and, at the same time, the number of times we have violated and trampled on them. This thought alone must be able to cover us with confusion. If that is not powerful enough to touch us, let us turn our eyes to this confessional; is it not the asylum and the hope of sinners who want to return to God? Should not a Christian exclaim, upon seeing this fountain of graces and mercy: Yes, it is there, in this salutary bath, that I can come with confidence to recover the grace of my God if I have had the misfortune of losing it. Oh! what happiness, what confidence and what gratitude, for a Christian who has lost his God through sin, to have such a sure way of finding him again. But 10 also, what reproaches does he not make to these hardened sinners, who would rather die and be damned than take advantage of this means which would restore to them the friendship of God and the enjoyment of heaven? Oh! who can ever understand the misfortune of the sinner?

God mourns his loss, offers him everything to save him, without being able to succeed!... This pulpit, my brethren, even though I am not speaking to you, can you look at it without remembering the truths which were announced to you there, and the numerous means which were given to you to reach heaven, your true homeland? Don't you also seem to reproach yourself for your ignorance, the hardness of your heart and the disorder of your life, despite so many instructions that you have heard? Let's look at it carefully; this same pulpit on the day of judgment will rise to accuse us, if we continue to despise this word which has converted so many others, while this has only served to make us more guilty by the contempt we have made of it. What does the Holy Table tell us? My brethren, can we consider these extended sheets of paper without feeling our hearts burning with love and gratitude? Tell me! Have we really thought that it is here that we have the happiness of eating the Bread of Angels, that there, our God gave himself to us as food, that there, Jesus Christ took possession of our soul and our heart? Have we carefully reflected that it is at this Holy Table that we received the kiss of peace? 0 happiness too great, but too little known to Christians these days!... But, go higher, my brethren, and you will see another spectacle even more touching. This altar! will it be possible to look there without wetting the pavement with our tears?... 0 Holy Religion, how beautiful you are, how you are rich and capable of making a Christian who knows you happy! Oh, how this new Calvary alone reminds us of mysteries! Tell me, have you ever really thought that this is where the Eternal Father consummates his justice, by immolating his divine Son every day? Have you ever thought carefully that it is on this same altar that this same Father consummates his mercy, by sacrificing there each day this beloved Son, for the salvation of our souls, that it is there that he pays all the debts for which we are indebted to the justice of his Father? Ah! let's say better: this altar is like Mary's womb, where a God is incarnate every day in the hands of the priest. Yes, it is the manger where he takes a second birth, it is on this altar that he immolates himself as before on Calvary. What did I say? it is truly a second heaven where he sits at the right hand of his Father to be our Mediator. O my God! what great wonders this altar announces to us! I could still tell you that it is here that J. - Cdestroys the death of sin, to give us the life of grace, and that he pays, by the shedding of all his adorable blood, all that we owe to the justice of his Father. Tell me, how, at the sight of so many benefits from a God, should we not (feel) our hearts burning, melting with love before this altar like wax before the fire? Does not the lamp itself seem to tell us that Jesus Christ is truly present in the tabernacle, and that if we are sinners, we can come there to weep for our sins, there we will find our forgiveness? These images which are exposed to our eyes, do they not tell us that the saints they represent spent their lives in humility, contempt and suffering, and that they ended it for the most part in the most torments?

awful? “Oh these saints from heaven cry out to us, if you could understand how much our sufferings are (rewarded), with what ardor would you not follow in our footsteps? What do these dead tell you, my brethren, over whom you are now, since in the past people were buried in churches? Do they not say to us: “Oh, how foolish you are to cling so strongly to life and lose sight of your eternity? In a few moments you will leave the earth with regrets; the world is a deceiver, which, after having seduced us, throws us into the flames forever. » Yes, my brethren, the very stones of this church, (united by cement), show us the charity and the love that we must have towards each other. Let us say more: everything that is in the church instructs us and brings us to God. The candles which burn in the presence of Jesus Christ present in this tabernacle, show us that a Christian must use his whole life in the service and salvation of his soul. The burning incense seems to tell us that our hearts must be all ardent for God; that all our thoughts and desires must turn towards heaven, our homeland. Singing, as Saint Augustine says, must soften our heart, and make it shed tears of love, as it happened in the church of Milan, when hearing hymns and canticles sung to the glory of God. “O my God! exclaimed this great saint, what will be the joy we will experience when we hear the angels sing their beautiful songs of eternal joy! Agree with me, that if we paid attention to all this, we would have true devotion, and great respect during the holy services. If we loved the good God [le bon Dieu] even a little, shouldn't such touching objects inflame our hearts with love and gratitude, and fill our minds with holy thoughts? Should we not say like the holy King David: “O my God, how good it is to dwell in your holy

temple, one day, makes us more happy there, than a thousand in the assemblies of the great of the world. » Yes, my brethren, if we seriously thought that our churches are another heaven, where Jesus Christ deigns to dwell among us, and that he is the same God as the one whom the angels only adore by trembling; tell me, my brethren, would we dare to stand there without respect, in an almost scandalous dissipation, laughing, turning our heads, holding completely worldly conversations, and perhaps, having meetings there? Ah! My brethren, how they outrage the good God [le bon Dieu], those who speak in our churches, where we must only pray! We read in the story, that a woman had the habit of speaking in church when the opportunity presented itself. After his death, his body was found without any stain, but a snake and several toads were seen coming out of his mouth and eating his tongue. The good Lord performed this miracle, to show us how guilty are those who dare to speak in our churches, without great necessity. Ah! if we loved the good God [le bon Dieu], we would not (need) to be made aware of the greatness of this sin! Being well convinced that this is where our God dwells, that there he holds the throne of his mercy and the channel of his graces, we could only enter it by trembling. Tell me, my brethren, how long will we respond to so many benefits with deadly indifference and new outrages? Oh! how happy would we not be, if we (attended) our holy services, with respect and confidence! what graces and blessings we would receive! what change would we not see in our way of living?

III. It is said in Holy Scripture that the Queen of Sheba, having heard such beautiful things about Solomon and the wonders that were happening with him, wanted to see them for herself. But when she saw the beauty of the tomplo and the beautiful order that reigned there, she returned, the Scripture tells us, confessing that everything she had been told was nothing compared to what her eyes had seen. These wonders remained deeply engraved in his heart. This, my brethren, is precisely what is happening to us.

would be when leaving our churches, if we paid close attention to everything that happens during our holy and formidable mysteries. What could there (be) in the temple of Solomon that could approach the slightest ceremony of our churches? He was a man whom God made to act; here it is God himself who acts and works miracles to infinity. Solomon's temple was intended to contain a little manna, the tables of the Law; but in our churches, oh great God! it is J.C. himself, who sheds his blood, and immolates himself every day on our altars to the justice of his Father, for our sins. Oh! no, my brethren, let's not penetrate into the grandeur of the wonders that take place every day; they are so big, so beyond our knowledge, we can only get lost in them! The more we examine them, the more we find them incomprehensible. We only talk about what can strike our eyes. A Christian, coming out of the holy services, touched by the word (of God) that he heard there, by the holy thoughts that the sight of the ceremonies and the prayers that he made gave birth to him: “I have just attended the holy messo,” he must say to himself, “a God sacrificed himself for me, he shed his blood for the salvation of my soul, what more could he do? Ah! miserable! I who, for so many years, have refused him my heart that he created only for himself, and that he asks of me in order to make him happy! I have just sung the praises of God, with this same mouth that I have so many times soiled with lies, swearing and dishonest words. O my God! will my tongue always serve, sometimes to praise you, (sometimes) to despise you? No, Lord, I only want to bless you and love you. I have just heard the (divine) word, oh how beautiful and true it is! I sincerely recognized myself in everything that was said; yes, it is indeed for me that they preached; It has been so many years since I heard this holy word, and I am still the same! My God, so many instructions that I hear will only serve to condemn me? Will you not remind me of them on the day of judgment, to know what profit I have made from them? What good deeds, what good works, what good prayers I would have made; if I had wanted to do what I was taught!..." Yes, my brethren, this is the language that a good Christian must use when leaving holy services, and any Christian who does not have these thoughts in his heart when leaving, has not attended holy services with the dispositions he should have. We also say that the Queen of Sheba, returning home, could not be satisfied with recounting all that she had seen in the temple of Solomon; she always spoke of it with new pleasure. The same thing must happen to a Christian who has attended Holy Mass; being back in his house, he must talk with his children and his servants, and ask them what they

remembered, what touched them more. Alas! my God, what am I going to say?... How many fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, who, if we wanted to talk to them about what they heard at Holy Mass, would laugh- laugh at all this by saying that we bore them, that they know enough. 1. However, generally speaking, it seems that we still listen to this holy word; but, as soon as we leave the church, we indulge in all kinds of dissipation; we get up with haste; we run, we rush to the door; Often the priest has not yet come down from the altar when one is already outside, and there one indulges in all sorts of foreign things. Do you know, my brethren, what results from this? Here it is. We benefit from nothing, and we draw no fruit from all that we have heard and seen in the house of the good God [le bon Dieu]. How many despised graces! what means of salvation trampled underfoot 1 0 what misfortune! to turn to our ruin what would help us so well to save us! Alas, you see it yourselves, how much these holy offices are burdensome to the majority of Christians. During these moments, they remained in the church as in a kind of prison, and as soon as they came out, you heard them shouting at the door, like prisoners who have just been given freedom. Aren't we often obliged to close the port if we don't want to be stunned by their continual cries? My God, are these Christians who should only withdraw from your holy temple with a mind filled with all kinds of good thoughts and good desires? Should they not try to engrave them well in their memory, so as never to lose them again, and put them into execution, as soon as the opportunity presents itself? Alas! the number of those who attend the services attentively and who try to benefit from them is approximately the same as the number of those elected: ah! how small he is! What should we conclude from all this, my brethren? If you want the worship you render to God to be pleasing to Him and beneficial for the salvation of your soul, put put it into practice: begin to prepare yourself for the Holy Mass as soon as you wake up, by uniting yourself to all the masses that are said at that moment. When the bell rings to call you into the house of the good God [le bon Dieu], think that it is Jesus Christ himself who is calling you; leave immediately, in order to have some time to reflect on the grandeur of the action you are about to witness. Do not say, like these people without religion, that you have plenty of time, that you will always be there soon enough; but rather like the holy prophet: “I rejoiced when they told me that we would go to the house of the Lord. » As soon as you leave your house, worry about what you are going to do, and what you will ask of the good God [le bon Dieu]. Begin to clear your mind of earthly things, to think only of God. Avoid all kinds of useless conversations, which only make you miss the Holy Mass. As you enter the church, remember what the holy Patriarch Jacob said: “Oh how terrible this place is 1 oh how holy it is; it is truly the house of God and the gate of heaven [porte du ciel]. When you are in your place, humble yourself deeply at the sight of your unworthiness, and of the greatness of your God, who is willing, despite your sins, to suffer you in his holy presence. Take a leap of faith with all your heart. Ask God to give you the grace to lose nothing of all the favors he grants to those who come with good intentions; open your heart, so that the word of God may enter into it, take root there and bear fruit for eternal life. Before leaving the church, never fail to thank the good God [le bon Dieu] for the graces he has just given you, and go home occupied with what you have seen and heard. Yes, my brethren, if we behaved in this way, we would never leave holy services without feeling filled with a new taste for heaven [un nouveau goût pour le ciel], with a new disgust for ourselves [un nouveau dégoût pour nous-mêmes] and for the earth. Our heart and mind would be all for God and nothing for the world [rien pour le monde]; then the house of the good God [le bon Dieu] would truly be the door to heaven for us: that is what I wish for you [c'est ce que je vous souhaite].

On Religion

Dixit insipiens in cordon suo: non est Deus. The wicked has said in his heart, No, there is no God [non est Deus]. (Ps.f XIII, 1.)

The fool, my brethren, seduced by the demon [séduit par le démon] and confessed by his passions, exclaims: “No, no, there is no God [non est Deus]. » He would like there to be none, in order to be able to abandon himself with more freedom to the fury of his corrupt inclinations [la fureur de ses penchants corrompus];

because if he admitted the existence of a God, he would also have to admit the justice of this God, and, consequently, that sin be punished and virtue rewarded. This fool does not notice that the name of God is engraved in his heart with the very finger of his Creator. It is in vain that he denies the existence of his God; his conscience will always demonstrate it. Where do these words come from, which we say even without thinking about them? “My God, I’m so unhappy. My God, have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi]!..." If God did not exist, would this not be the greatest of all misfortunes? What would be the use of all the tears, the penances and the sacrifices of so many Christians? No, no, my brethren, far from us a thought too desperate. There is a God who sees us and who will judge us, to reward us if we have done good and avoided evil; to punish us, if we have abandoned ourselves to [s'abandonner à] the whim of our passions. Yes, there is a holy religion, which brings all the happiness to those who observe what it commands. Let us, let us let the impious cry out in their frenzy and their madness; let us rest quietly in the bosom of our divine religion, and in the shadow of our Creator. O my God, send down a ray of your light into the hearts of these poor blind people, and they will see what they have not yet seen, and they will know what they have not yet wanted to know. To want to prove to you, my brethren, that there is a God, would, I believe, be an affront to you; I am speaking to good Christians and not to atheists, that is to say, to people who believe in nothing and who deny everything. If unfortunately there were someone among you (which I do not believe) whose mouth was impious enough to vomit such blasphemies, even if only in a moment of despair, he would immediately hear the cries of his conscience giving him the lie. Yes, my brethren, let us be convinced that if there are impious people unfortunate enough to say it, they do not believe it: I will show you that later.

I. The religion into which we had the good fortune to be born is very ancient. It was God himself who brought it to us from heaven to give it to Adam our first father, when, placing him in the earthly paradise, he promised him infinite goods if he was faithful to his commandments, and threatened him, if he came to transgress them, with rigorous punishment for him and all his descendants. Adam sinned, the Lord condemned him and his race to all kinds of evil. Adam repented and did penance, God pardoned him, and returned his friendship to him as well as to all his posterity. Then, this holy religion was transmitted to us from generation to generation, by the patriarchs and the prophets, until the coming of the Messiah; from the Savior, through the apostles and their successors; and thus it will continue until the end of the centuries. Jesus Christ told us that it would last as long as the world lasts, despite the fury of hell, of idolaters and bad Christians, who are its most cruel enemies; Jesus Christ promised us that it would continue among us uninterrupted until the consummation of time. She (1) is one, holy, catholic, apostolic and Roman; she has always (believed) what she will believe until the end of the world, she has always commanded and defended what she will command and defend; it will neither add nor change anything of what it has already established: qualities which are found only in the Catholic religion, built on Jesus Christ himself, and, like him, forever invariable. But a proof which is no less strong and less convincing, in support of this truth, is the homage paid to the Catholic religion, almost all of its cruelest persecutors, by publicly disapproving, at the hour of death, all the horrors and blasphemies which they had vomited against it during their life. If it were necessary, I would give you an infinite number of them. But no, let's leave the d'Àlemberts, the Diderots, the Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and so many others who lived so close to us: let's content ourselves with a single line, which will be enough to convince you perfectly. It's the tragic end of this godless last century, I mean
(1) See note N at the end of the volume.

Voltaire, whom you perhaps know only too well, through the infamous and infernal writings that he spread for more than thirty years. In his writings, his entire occupation was to display everything that fury could suggest to him, to blacken and destroy religion. He does not hesitate to say in the preface to one of his works that the young person who reads his book would not have yet finished, that his heart would be perverted. When he wrote to his friends, that is to say, to impious people, he almost never failed to include these horrible words: “Let us crush the infamous!” » he was talking about our holy religion! meaning with these words: Let us do everything we can to destroy a religion which is waging a cruel and continual war against

us? If you had heard it, you would perhaps have said to yourself: “Here is a man who knows how to read and write, who is learned, rich and noble; could he then get lost? Ah! my friends, follow me for a moment to this man. He is ill, we are going to speak to him; ask him if now he has no fear; if he believes that when he is dead everything will be over, as he so often repeated during his life: ask him if his conscience is at peace; if he thinks that after this world, there is another where we will be punished or rewarded according to the good or evil we have done. Ask him if he would be happier now to have loved, respected and observed everything that the Catholic religion commands us, instead of having despised and degraded it as much as he could. My God! what regrets!... what despair devoured his poor soul at this last moment! Stay a moment by his bed, before he vomits his soul into hell. Listen to what his mouth, guided by his conscience, will tell you. His friends are gathered near him. These ungodly have taken an oath that if one of them falls ill, no priest will be called to him. Now, do you hear this wretch: “My God! to die abandoned!... Ah! my friends, have no regard for what I said... Please, bring a minister of the Lord as soon as possible. Oh! I repent of everything I have said and done against God and religion! My God, my God, will you not still have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi]? Oh, please, bring me a priest! » The good Lord wanted that Father Gauthier could reach out to the sick man, not for the salvation of this soul, but only so that he could affirm in a more authentic way that the unfortunate man repented of everything he had (done) in his days of frenzy and fury. Voltaire therefore made a written retraction; it is taken to the Archbishop of Paris. But God did not allow such an impious person, after having spent his life vomiting against religion everything that the corruption of his heart could have generated; he did not allow, I say, that he could profit from it. His friends took him to a country house... Do you see, my brethren, how this atheist soon found a God and a religion? He invokes God and asks for a priest: he thus proves to you the existence of God and the necessity of religion. Listen to him a moment longer, and he will teach you that there is, for the sinner, a judgment to undergo and a hell to fear. Closely guarded by his friends or rather by his executioners, losing all hope of ever seeing Father Gauthier again, he cries: “Alas! So am I abandoned? Do I have to go appear before my Judge? I will therefore have to go to hell?... O beautiful religion, which I persecuted so much during my life, you who bring happiness (to the one) who follows the path that you trace for him!... Farewell, beautiful sky, I will not see you never!..." He gives himself up to despair, and dies a reprobate. Well! My brethren, what do you think of this? Have you paid attention to how this impious man proved to you the existence of God, the truth of our holy religion, and the certainty of a judgment that we must all undergo at the hour of our death? Have you seen how he proved to you the truth of hell for sinners, and the certainty of heaven for good people? Do you now believe what atheists tell you when you hear them spewing their impieties? Do you know what to answer them? — No, you might tell me. Here it is: “Go, poor blind man, you will do well like the others; when death holds you a little closer, you will change your language and your feelings. » Do you know, my brethren, why these unfortunate people spout all these impieties? it's not that they believe them; you have just seen that at death they publicly disavow them; but this is what they would like it to be, because if there is a God and a holy religion, sin must certainly be punished: this is what throws them into the depths of despair. Do you want to know, my brethren, what I think? This is because despite everything that libertines may say, I am sure that if I observe everything that religion commands me, I will have the happiness of going one day to heaven, to be happy forever; that is my whole belief, “There is no God [non est Deus]!” " can such blasphemy come from the mouth of a Christian! Tell me, unfortunate impics, if there are any who listen to me (which I do not believe), tell me, who created you? —They are our fathers and our mothers. — Are these your fathers and mothers? Well! who then created your fathers and mothers? — These are their fathers and mothers. —Who then created Adam? he had neither father nor mother; did he come into this world by chance? Who then created heaven and earth and everything in them? Person? — No doubt?... There was a time when that wasn't the case; — Lower your eyes, old impious people, and go and hide in the depths of the forests, where the rays of the sun have never been able to penetrate. These Ak monsters would like to pass themselves off as learned; while they publicly display that their brains are turned upside down, and that they are steeped in the crassest ignorance that sin can engender 1... O my God! can we use such language?...

II. Let us come, my brethren, to another proof, stronger and more satisfactory, which will show us, which will prove to us very well, the holiness, the divinity of our religion. These are the works and sufferings endured by those whom the good God [le bon Dieu] used to establish it. You will agree with me that there is not a man on earth who would have wanted to give his life to support something false. This is very certain, you will tell me. Well! I'm going to give you a little insight into what those who founded or maintained our religion endured. I don't need to prove to you that Jesus Christ came to earth, suffered and died for us. If I spoke to idolaters, I would begin to make them understand all that the prophets predicted concerning the Messiah, and they would see that there is not a letter which has not had its fulfillment; but, speaking to Christians, that would be a waste of time. I am only going to put before your eyes the strength, the courage that this holy religion gives to those who profess it with all their heart [de tout son cœur], in order to awaken a little in you this almost extinct faith. I therefore say that nothing better proves the divinity of our holy religion, that this crowd of martyrs delivering their bodies to the fury of tyrants; presenting himself and mounting the scaffolds with more joy and pleasure than kings on their thrones. We see them in both the Old Testament and the New. We read in Holy Scripture that the Jews, returning from the captivity of Babylon, passed their days in peace and tranquility, until the impious Anthioclius ascended the throne. This cruel and barbaric prince made them experience everything his rage could inspire; the design of this cruel prince was, if he could, to annihilate the worship of the true God. He ordered to desecrate all the days consecrated to the Lord, to erect altars of idols, memorized in the holy temple, and to burn all the Holy Scriptures. This sad news spread fear throughout the kingdom. Almost all of them fled at once. The towns were abandoned by their inhabitants, the temple was deserted, the trees changed into sadness and mourning; However, despite all these threats, many resolved to suffer everything rather than violate the law of the Lord, and among this number was a good old man named Eleazar (1). It was necessary, my brethren, for this old man to be very sure of the existence of a God, of the truth of a holy religion, and of another life where the righteous will be rewarded forever and sinners punished forever, to endure torments so long and so rigorous? Who is the impious, who would die to support his impieties? Not one, my brethren, no, not one. Nothing proves to us better the truth of our religion than the courage and constancy of (1) Trait recounted in the same terms in the Sermon on the Mnrtyro of the Machabces, p. 44.

martyrs of both sexes, in the torments they endured so as not to displease God. An impiety, as long as he has nothing to fear, will speak his impieties well; but, as soon as the slightest danger approaches, he immediately disavows what he has said. Never a Christian (I do not mean a cowardly Christian, whom an unfortunate human respect will cause to transgress the laws of God and the Church as many times as the opportunity presents itself), who, fearing to be despised and mocked, or in the hope of having some service from a neighbor, will lend himself to whatever he wants, despite his remorse of conscience [remords de conscience]; he is not a good Christian, but only a ghost of a Christian, whom the wrath of God will punish by the flames); I mean a good Christian who loves God and his soul more than himself, this one will never disavow what he has said; on the contrary, you will see him climb the scaffold with incredible courage and joy. No, he will never repent of having observed what his holy religion commanded him. Let us go, my brethren, from scaffold to scaffold, and we will convince ourselves more and more of the truth of religion which we pay so little attention to, or, to put it better, which we seem to abandon and despise. After the same emperor had put to death the holy old man Eleazar, it was announced to him that a woman and her children publicly disregarded (his orders) and led a large number of others to do the same. Anliochus ordered this mother to be brought before his tribunal with all her children (1) So were these martyrs well convinced of the existence of a God who saw them, who would punish them or reward them according to whether they had done well or badly? They were therefore very sure that (1) Line already cited, p. 46.

244 SERMONS» their religion was holy and divine? However, it is the same that we profess. O beautiful religion of Christians, how happy are those who know you!... What great blessings you are preparing for us for the other life!... If we move from the Old Testament to the new, the persecutions, the executioners and the

martyrs are no less numerous. Travel the world, my brethren, since the coming of the Savior; everywhere you will find tortures prepared and Christians to undergo them with joy, giving their lives in order to support the religion they profess. Yes, all these gallows, all these instruments of torture are so many monuments which affirm to us the holiness of our religion. See what the cruel Nero made the first Christians endure: sometimes he had them sewn into animal skins, and carried into the woods to serve as bait for wolves; sometimes he had them dressed in a robe dipped in pitch, hung them from trees along the main roads, and had them set on fire to light passers-by. He carried cruelty so far that he planted trees in his garden where he tied a Christian to each, also covered with pitch, and set them on fire, in order to have the barbarian pleasure of walking during the night in the light of these torches. If you go further, you see a Saint Ignatius devoured by animals, a Saint Bartholomew skinned alive, a Saint Peter and a Saint Andrew nailed to a cross, a Saint Vincent lying on the easel where his entrails are torn out with iron hooks. Why so much torment, my brethren? if not to support the truth of the religion that they had the pleasure of professing. O my God! Can we hear without shuddering the impieties that we vomit with so much fury against a religion so holy and so consoling? “O beautiful religion, cries Saint Augus- tin, that you make happy those who have had the good fortune to follow the path that you trace for them. See also, my brethren, the difference that there is between a people who know, who practice what it commands, and another who does not live according to its rules. See a mother who has this religion well engraved in her heart; see the care she takes of her children; they are still in her bosom, and she has already given them a thousand times to the good God [le bon Dieu]; see his eagerness to make them receive holy baptism. See her attention, as soon as they begin to speak, how attentive she is to teach them to pray to the good God [le bon Dieu], to speak to them of the greatness of their destiny, of what their God suffered for them, of the greatness of the reward reserved for him who avoids sin and does good; she never stops wishing them all kinds of blessings. This child will one day be the consolation and happiness of his parents, through his submission, his love and his obedience. A good Christian is not jealous of the blessings that the good God [le bon Dieu] (spreads) on his neighbor and on his property; on the contrary, they all unite together to bless the good God [le bon Dieu] with his gifts. If we had the good fortune to carefully observe what our holy religion commands us, we would truly begin our paradise in this world. See in another country, a kingdom, a parish or even a family which does not want to follow the rules prescribed to us by our holy religion, how unhappy they are! A mother will have already cursed her child a thousand times before giving birth to him; see these hatreds between neighbors, between relatives; listen to these slanders, these slanders; how many children go so far as to wish for the death of their father, their mother, in order to have the little good they have! Oh! what a misfortune for a Christian not to knowing (one's religion) or not practicing it is real hell in this world! I confess to you, my brethren., that I was greatly mistaken in giving you this instruction; I have (proved) to you that there is a God. Which of all those who listen to me doubted it? — Nobody, you will tell me. — You are right; I proved to you that we would see at the hour of our death that there is a heaven for those who have fought their inclinations and the devil, and a hell for those who have followed the path of their passions; no one doubts that, if there were anyone to have any doubt about it, it could only be an immodest or a drunkard, and no one believes what these kinds of monsters say; we flee them, we despise them... Yes, I was wrong in giving you this instruction; rather, you should have put before your eyes what your religion requires of you and what you do, and you would have seen that your life is entirely opposed to your belief. Let's look at this a little more closely, and you will see that you behave as if you believed in nothing. You know very well that your religion tells you that the first movement of your heart must be to think of God, and your first work, to say your prayers; however that is not what you are doing. Your religion tells you not to swear the name of God, prohibits you from blasphemy, you do not abstain from it for the sake of it; she forbids you from working on the holy day of Sunday, you are commanded to spend it in prayer and good works. Do you have the slightest scruple about working or spending this holy day dancing, playing, making sales or purchases? Are you doing less than if your religion were false? She tells you that if you are ashamed of appearing Christian, you will be rejected from the face of the good God [le bon Dieu] for all eternity. Well! tell me: doesn't simple company make you blush, to the

point that you dare not say your blessings or your graces in front of the world? Your religion forbids you from eating meat on certain days of the week, and tells you that, if you do, you are guilty of a sin which will destroy you for eternity. Don't you do the opposite as often as you find the opportunity? She tells you not to let thoughts of hatred, revenge, impurity, etc. occupy your mind.; Don't you take pleasure in them almost as often as the devil presents them to you? She tells you not to harm your neighbor, either in his property or in his reputation; do you do it3? Aren't you always deceiving him in your sales and purchases, slandering him and often even slandering him with a certain malignant pleasure? It tells you that as long as you remain in sin, you have Jesus Christ nailed to the cross of your heart, and that your poor soul is always ready to fall into hell; However, you have no problem going for years and even ten or twenty years without even going to confession... You can therefore see clearly that you do not believe everything that your religion teaches you. According to the teachings of this religion, your children are a deposit that the good God [le bon Dieu] has entrusted to you, and for which he must one day ask you for a very rigorous account; if they are damned and it is your fault, you are sure to be too. Do you behave as if this were the case? They do neither Easter nor confessions, and in order not to want to help them save themselves or, to put it better, to help them to damn themselves, you agree to do like them. You see clearly that you behave as if you were convinced that everything that religion teaches you is only farce and lies. Oh! you might say, this is not entirely true. — My friend, examine the thing closely. So what would you do less if you believed the complete opposite of what religion teaches you? From all this, my brethren, we must conclude that, if we are sure of the truth of what religion teaches us, if it is true that all those who wanted to go to heaven did what it commanded them, we too must do the same. O my God! what a misfortune is the blindness regarding the salvation of our poor soul! Be certain and very certain that by living as we live, we will never have heaven, and, despite this, always continue to do the same!... Let us return, my brethren, from our errors; there is still time: the good God [le bon Dieu] offers us his mercy, his friendship and the graces necessary to leave sin and return to him. Let us avoid the regrets [évitons les regrets] of these poor unfortunates of whom we spoke at the beginning; and since religion alone makes us happy on earth, let us attach ourselves strongly to it, and do everything it commands us: thus we will be happy not only in this world, but also in the next. This is what I wish you.

On Confirmation — Dispositions Needed

Dispositions one must have to receive this sacrament.

Deus dedii pignus spiritus in cordibus no s tris. God has shared with us his divine spirit which will be our pledge of eternal life [le gage de la vie éternelle]. (IL Cor., i,22.)

What feelings of joy and love you should feel, my brethren, at the news of such happiness!... Oh! Who among us will not feel his heart filled with love and gratitude, having the hope that, in a few days, the Holy Spirit will have chosen his dwelling in his soul [aura choisi sa demeure dans son âme]? O my God it seems to me that I already see our soul (experience) the rapture of Elisabeth, when the Mother of God came to visit her, and when she was filled so abundantly with this Spirit of light and this hearth of love. Oh! no, you have never known the greatness of this sacrament, and the benefits it provides us if we receive it holyly. Listen to Jesus Christ telling us as he did his apostles:

before ascending to heaven: “A little more time, and you will receive the Holy Spirit, prepare yourselves by prayer and retreat, and you will see the fulfillment of my promise. "Several of you, my brethren, have received this sacrament; but, oh my God! how did they receive it?... Some without knowing its greatness, others without being very ready, or perhaps even in a state of sin! My God, my God, in what state are they in your eyes?... It makes you tremble. Alas, even among those who have received him worthily, how many times, and for how many years have they not cast out the Holy Spirit from their hearts? 0 losses! 0 incomprehensible misfortune!... And what remedy for this? nothing else, my brethren, than tears and penance. Poor soul, since this Spirit of light has left you, in what darkness have you not been enveloped?...

Happy is he who has not yet received You! Why cola? This is because he can still prepare for it, and receive all the light that he produces in pure souls. Tell me, you who had the good fortune to receive him, did you understand all the obligations he imposed on you? Ilelas! no, you say to yourself. Well! Listen to me for a moment, you will understand, and let go of repairing the harm you have done by violating such holy and sacred promises. But for you, my brethren, who received it with bad dispositions, that is to say, sin in the heart; who have hidden, disguised or diminished the number (of your faults), sought detours so as not to make them appear so enormous, who have confessed them without contrition, without pain and without desire to correct yourself, making no effort to break your bad habits; for you, (I say) what language shall I speak to you, which is worthy of you, who can make you understand your misfortune? Omy brother, after such an attack, can you still live? O my God, would Christians be guilty of such a terrible murder against your adorable person?... Ah! my friend, weep bitterly. If you are insensitive to such a crime, give me your heart and your eyes, so that joining them to mine, night and day (I shed) torrents of tears, and that I cry because I do not cry!... My friend, what have you done? What will become of you?... O my God since the treasures of your mercy are still open to us, (touch) the heart of this poor wretch who has outraged you, so that he may cry, and that you give him back what he has lost. Ignite with your divine Spirit all these young hearts which will serve as your home. Come, Spirit of light and love, come to my aid; so that I can make them understand the greatness of their happiness, and the obligations they will contract.

I. If the provisions must be proportionate to the greatness of the gift that God gives us in the sacrament of Confirmation, I do not really see what I can tell you; I would gain just as much, I believe, from remaining silent as from talking to you about it; because the graces communicated to us in this sacrament are infinite. My God, forgive our weakness and our ignorance 1... But, you ask me, my brethren, although it is impossible to bring to this sacrament as much purity and love as it deserves, what we must do to make ourselves worthy of it, as much as is in our power, or at least, to avoid the misfortune of profaning it? — My child, have confidence, if you are able to make your efforts to make yourself worthy, God will have compassion for the weakness of your soul, he will hear your sighs, and the Holy Spirit will not fail to come into you, to establish his dwelling there. Here are 1° the provisions absolutely necessary to properly receive this august sacrament. One must be sufficiently instructed in everything that is important to know to be saved; we must know the main mysteries of our holy religion, the first principles of the catechism, the end for which God put us on earth, the reward he assures to those who practice virtue, and the punishment of those who live in sin. We must know which of the three persons of the Holy Trinity was incarnated in the womb of the most holy Virgin Mary, and who formed her body in the womb of this Mother; why God the son came to earth, what was his occupation, what he suffered; what was the cause of his sorrows, and why he instituted the sacraments; what are the effects of each sacrament in particular, and the dispositions that must be taken to receive them. You should know that the sacrament of Baptism is the one that erases original sin from us, that is to say the sin that we contracted through the fault of Adam, and that without this sacrament, we could never see God in heaven, nor (receive) other sacraments. You should know that the sacrament of Confirmation is a sacrament by which the Holy Spirit is communicated to us in a (manner) more abundant than in all the others; that the sacrament of Penance is instituted to remit and erase the sins that we have had the misfortune to commit after the agony of reason, that is to say, when we can know that we are offending the good God [le bon Dieu], and that we only obtain the effects, as long as we are angry at having offended the good God [le bon Dieu], and in a sincere resolution of everything suffer, even death, rather than fall back into sin. We must not ignore that to receive the Eucharist, (one must have) the happiness of being in a state of grace, preserved or repaired by a good confession. We must be instructed in what we receive in holy communion, that is, Jesus Christ, the second person of the most holy Trinity, who was conceived by the operation of the Holy Spirit; Son of Mary, who gave birth to him without ceasing [sans relâche] to be a virgin. Let us also know that Extreme Unction was (established) to provide us with relief and extraordinary graces, when we approach death, a moment when the demon tries to tempt us more strongly, in order to ruin

us. The sacrament of Order only concerns priests: it communicates to them the power to forgive sins, to bring Jesus Christ down from heaven onto the altars, and the power to administer the other sacraments. Finally, we must know that the sacrament of Marriage is instituted to sanctify the legitimate union of man and woman, to give them the strength to endure the penalties that God attaches to this state. The Christian who is going to receive Confirmation must know the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the I believe in God, the three acts of Faith, Hope and Charity. If your child does not know this, or instruct him, or he does not show up for Confirmation; because lack of instruction would make him profane this sacrament, which would be an infinite misfortune, since he can only receive one king. 2° Confirmation is a sacrament which gives us the Holy Spirit with the abundance of his graces, and makes us perfect Christians. This sacrament gives us a spirit of light, strength and courage, which makes us vigorously reject temptations and trample on human respect. A Christian who has received You worthily is always ready to give his life to support the interests of God and (effect) the salvation of his urn; he fears sin, that is all his fear, as for the rest, he tramples it under his feet. But if we want this sacrament to produce these happy effects in us, we must receive it in a state of grace, and therefore, having confessed, having received absolution from our sins, such as we know them, without ever using detours, nor (omitting any sin), under the pretext that it is a small thing, and that it is not worth saying. You must, in confession, talk about your doubts, because there are often big sins that your ignorance prevents you from recognizing. Be careful, if you had the misfortune to hide or diminish some sin, you would commit three most horrible sacrileges. O my God! my God! can we think about it well and not die of horror?... If you want your confessions to be good, you must confess as if, after your confession, you had to appear before the tribunal of God, to give an account of your life. If you have contracted some bad habit, you should not ask for absolution before having completely corrected yourself, because if you are not corrected, falling back into sin, all your confessions would only be sacrileges (1). What should we do to destroy our bad habits? Should we do some penances, some prayers, some mortifications? No, my brethren, that is not enough. We must be filled with regret for having offended God, we must be (i) See note 0 at the end of the volume.

in a sincere resolution to suffer everything rather than fall back into it; we must mock, despise, in a word, what the devil or the impious may say to us, to lead us into vice. If you are not in these dispositions, go no further, or else, fear that the thunderbolts of heaven will fall on you and throw you into hell. O my God! how many will receive this sacrament and will not change anything in their way of life! Can we think about that?... And they are Christians?... Saint Cyprian tells us: “My children, if you receive the Holy Spirit worthily, you will receive all kinds of good things, that is to say Wisdom, Intelligence, Science, Counsel, Strength, Piety and the Fear of God. » All these graces, my brethren, consist above all in a bright light which illuminates our souls, and in a divine fire which sets our hearts on fire. See how you need this Holy Spirit to come within you; see how limited and blind your mind is when it comes to salvation, how weak, cold and frozen your heart is when it comes to virtue. Saint Gregory of Tours tells us that he who has received the Holy Spirit is stronger than all demons together. And here is the proof that this great saint gives us. “Julian the apostate, (he was called an apostate because he had been a Christian and had renounced his faith;) to show his impiety more openly, ordered a sacrifice to be publicly offered to his idols, that is to say, to demons. In order to give more splendor to this impious ceremony, he went with his entire court to the temple intended for this sacrilegious action. When the time comes, the emperor gives the signal to begin. All the priests, all the priests set themselves to duty. But extraordinary prodigy! neither they nor their well-prepared instruments can do anything. The very fire that was on the altar suddenly goes out. Oh! exclaim the emperor and the priests, there is some foreign person here who opposes our ceremony. There is undoubtedly some Christian in this assembly? The emperor ordered to see if there were any Christians in the temple; in fact, there was a young man there who had just received Confirmation, and who, far from fleeing, presented himself to the emperor saying that he was a Christian and a disciple of Jesus Christ, of this God who died on the cross to redeem us: “I recognize him as my God,” he said, “and pride myself on belonging to him; yes, it is I, or rather the God whom I serve, who has made your idols mute and without strength. “0 emperor, how

blind you are! cried the young man, you who have been a Christian, who know how powerful our God is, and that your idols are only demons who deceive you and drag you to hell. This young man, full of joy at having confounded everyone gathered by the virtue of the Holy Spirit, hastened to publish these wonders. Many pagans left their religion to embrace that of the Christians which is so holy and so beautiful! These, my brethren, are the happy effects that the sacrament of Confirmation works in us, if we are happy enough to receive it worthily. Yes, if we receive it with good dispositions, nothing will be able to distract us from our duties as Christians. If the wicked criticize you for what you practice your religion, you will listen to them, but you will despise them and trample underfoot their taunts; you will pity them when you see that they are lost, and you will pray to God for them. If the demon tempts you, you will do like Saint Macarius, you will spit on him, to show him that you despise him, like the mud that is under your feet. O my God, how strong and capable of great things is he who has received the Holy Spirit!

II. This sacrament was instituted on the day of Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. The Blessed Virgin and the Apostles were the first to experience the happy effects of this Spirit of love, when it descended on them with the sound of an impetuous wind. He descended on their heads in the form of tongues of fire, while internally he enlightened their minds, set their hearts on fire, and clothed their souls with a character of zeal and courage which they displayed until death. Yes, my brethren, this Spirit of purity and love, will communicate itself to all those who receive it worthily. Although invisible, his graces will not be less abundant. Through Confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the Holy Trinity, Oh! what happiness for a vile creature to receive within herself this God of love 1... When he descended on the apostles, he changed them so much that they could no longer be recognized; everyone said to themselves: “Are these really the disciples of this prophet of Nazareth whom our doctors put to death and crucified? See with what courage and firmness they speak in public; we saw them a few days ago abandon their Master and betray him; today, they even confuse our doctors. » O my God! how admirable you are in your operations!...

Well My brethren, after Confirmation will we be able to say the same about you? Will we have to ask ourselves if it was really you we saw some time ago? Will we be delighted to see change? Will we hear you singing the hymns and praises of God, in place of these infamous and dishonest songs?... Will we see in you, my sister, this simplicity, this modesty, this modesty which is the ornament of your sex, taking the place of these worldly adornments and this air of affectation in your manners. Do we have to ask ourselves if it is really you who we saw so proud and so full of vanity? You who we saw... O my God, my God, what was I going to say, what! quagmire was I going to descend?... You are going to be confirmed, my brother, that's very good; but that's not all. After having received this sacrament you must no longer be the same. Like the apostles, you no longer need to be recognized; it is necessary that assiduity in the holy offices, delicacy regarding Sunday work and exactitude in frequenting the sacraments, must take the place of your indifference to the service of God, of your little respect in his house, and, finally, of your coldness and your negligence. Ilcius I how many Christians will receive this sacrament, without it effecting this happy change in them! therefore how many Christians will receive it unworthily! O my God, how many damned Christians! And you, my brethren, who had the good fortune to receive him in the past, has this change taken place in you?... No, my brethren, no, I won't say any more... The first time you were mocked, isn't it true, you became discouraged, you left everything behind? At the slightest illness, at the slightest loss, you despaired, instead of think that everything comes from God, both evil and good. Have you not wished for death, because of the crosses that God was pleased to send you?... O my God, how weak and capable of little things [peu de choses] is he who has not received the Holy Spirit worthily, compared to him where your Spirit of light dwells! Yes, each sacrament produces its own particular effect. Baptism makes us Christians, children of God, brothers of Jesus Christ; it gives us a right to the celestial kingdom, which the sin of our first parents had closed to us; he delivers us from the demon of which we were the slaves, and makes us pass into the sweet and happy freedom of the children of God. Oh! My brethren, how precious these advantages are! Can

we thank God enough for such happiness? The sacrament of Penance is a sacrament where God shows his mercy in an admirable way; because it was not enough for us to have died, to have instituted the sacrament of Baptism, without which we would never have seen heaven, he still had to establish a second one, which would have the virtue of erasing all our current sins. O my God, how good you are!... The sacrament of the Eucharist is the sacrament of his love; Oh! My brethren, a God giving himself to us!... a God sighs after this moment!... 0 happiness! O precious grace!... The sacrament of Extreme Unction was instituted to strengthen us in the last moments of our life. The sacrament of Orders is established to communicate to priests the light and graces necessary to lead us in the paths of salvation; that of Marriage is intended to sanctify the actions, the legitimate union of man and woman. I call legitimate union the union of those who marry according to the laws of Church and State. Well! My brethren, the sacrament of Confirmation is the perfection tion of all others; it is precisely this which makes us perfect Christians, and those who can receive it do not receive it, deprive themselves of many graces and commit a great sin. Yes, my brethren, we can compare the baptized Christian to a child who has just been born and who is subject to all weaknesses; but he who has been confirmed is like a man in the prime of life, full of courage and strength, who can bear arms, and is able to defend himself vigorously against his enemies. You have done everything a child does so far. The slightest thing has discouraged you, the slightest temptation has made you fall, the smallest penance has frightened you; but if you have truly received the Holy Spirit, nothing will be able to stop you: you will trample everything under your feet, you will only be content in combat, and, to put it bluntly, you will do like the apostles after they had received the Holy Spirit, you will pay no more attention to the world than if you were alone in it. See, my brethren, what the apostles were before the descent of the Holy Spirit: weak, timid; at every moment, human respect prevailed over the interests of God; they had abandoned their master, even after having seen him several times after his resurrection, drinking and eating with them. They kept themselves hidden, for fear of the Jews, in the very place where they were preparing to receive the Holy Spirit; not one dared to publicly repeat the wonders he had witnessed. But, O my Dicul, what an astonishing change as soon as they received your Holy Spirit! They left the upper room, they ran the streets of Jerusalem, they openly published everything they had seen and heard of the Savior. The people, whom the Easter celebration has brought together from all parts of the world, go there in crowds. Saint

Peter, all inflamed with the divine Spirit: “My children,” he cries, “listen to me: This memo Jesus whom you put to death by the hands of your executioners, God has resurrected. » Is this really there, my brethren, this apostle who turned pale and trembled at the mere voice of a servant, and who so cowardly denied his divine Master? Yes, it is himself, but since that time he has received the Holy Spirit, who changed his weakness into strength, and his fear into invincible courage; he feared being seen as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and now he only longs for the moment to give his life for him. Contempt, prisons, persecutions are his delights. 0 Holy Spirit, whom you give with strength to those who are happy enough to possess you! But, think for yourself, what are the gifts that the Holy Spirit communicates to us in the sacrament of Confirmation?... Here they are, my brethren, all I ask of you is to put them into practice. I already told you that there were seven. The first gift of the Holy Spirit is Wisdom, grace which detaches us from the world. It makes us despise pleasures, which can only seduce us, deceive us and lose us. This virtue leads us to attach ourselves to lasting goods, that is to say, to the goods of heaven; to consider this world only as a place of exile and misery, where, as long as we are there, we will live unhappy, without achieving that perfect happiness for which our heart sighs. The second gift of the Holy Spirit is Intelligence: that is to say, a supernatural light which makes us understand the beauties of our holy religion, the help and the consolations that we find there. She therefore shows us the attachment that we must have for her; it makes us make efforts to know it so that our ignorance is not the cause of our loss, and that, delighted with so much beauty, we despised everything else. The third gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift of Counsel. It is a Christian prudence which makes us always choose the surest means to go to God, and the most perfect state to arrive in heaven. The fourth is that of Science, which leads us to examine whether all our actions are done with very pure intentions, whether we live in such a way

as to have the assurance that we are on the road which leads to heaven. He also makes us aware of the dangers and opportunities that can ruin us by leading us to evil. The fifth gift is Strength. It is a character of vigor and courage which places us above all human respect; it is precisely this virtue which supported the martyrs in their torments; see Saint Barthélémy, alive from head to toe. Ehl My brethren, who gave him this strength, if not the Holy Spirit? Who gave Saint Vincent this invincible courage to the point of tiring his executioners? It is still the Holy Spirit. In fact, a Christian who has received this virtue despises and tramples on everything that the wicked can say to him: he only thinks about pleasing God, and nothing else. The sixth gift is that of Piety. It is a holy eagerness for everything that relates to the worship of God and the salvation of our souls. Who led so many saints to render the most disgusting services to the sick? Who still brings so many people there today, who spend their lives serving the unfortunate? It is the Holy Spirit. It is he who leads us to listen eagerly to the word of God, to pray fervently, and to make our happiness consist of frequenting the sacraments.

The seventh gift is the Fear of God. It is a delicacy of conscience, which leads us to carefully examine whether our actions are in conformity with the law that God prescribes to us in his commandments. A Christian who possesses this virtue fears sin horribly, and continually trembles at falling into it; he acts like Saint Philip of Neri who was found one day sobbing. He was asked what threw him into this sort of despair? “Alas! said he, I do not despair; on the contrary, I hope very much; but when I think that the angels who were in heaven fell, that Adam and Eve sinned in the earthly paradise, that Solomon, according to the Holy Spirit, the wisest of the kings on earth, stained his white hair with the most abominable crimes, the thought of all this, I say, makes me ceaselessly fear that this misfortune will happen to me. Oh! he added, that he who knows the greatness of sin must fear falling into it!..." My God, we need this Holy Spirit to come within us to change our hearts! But to whom, my brethren, should the Holy Spirit communicate himself with his seven gifts? I answer: To all those who have prepared themselves for it through prayer and retreat; that is to say, who will have, as much as possible, turned their hearts away from the objects and things of the world; who will have sincerely confessed their sins with the necessary pain; who will have made true resolutions to no longer commit them and to suffer everything rather than fall back into them. In fact, the Holy Spirit was given only to those who had spent a few days in the upper room, that is to say in retirement. Whenever God wants to grant some extraordinary grace, it is only after a few days of retreat. See Moses: God did not give him his law until after forty days of fasting and re- deals. See the prophet Elijah. The Lord commands him to go to the mountain of Horeb, because it is there that he must teach him his wishes; he wants to make him understand that it is not in the worries of the world that he distributes his precious gifts. When the prophet is on the mountain, he begins to hear a rushing wind that seemed to overturn everything, but the Lord is not in this wind. After this, there was a terrible earthquake: the Lord was not there either; finally, he hears a gentle wind blow!; Then Elijah covers his face with his cloak and begins to enter his cave: that is where the Lord is. God wanted to show that when he wants to come into our hearts, they must be free from the external things of the world, that is to say, we must have left our sins and our bad habits. O my God, do not allow us to have the misfortune of receiving your Holy Spirit unworthily! completely change our hearts and our souls I... Lord, descend into our hearts by your grace, deign to dwell there through the sacrament of Confirmation!... 0 Holy Virgin, who prepared the apostles for this happy moment, prepare us also yourself, so that we can receive and keep this Spirit of purity and love... Amen [Ainsi soit-il].

On Extreme Unction

Dominus opem forât Uli super ledum doloris ejus: Universum stratum ejus versasli, in infirmitate ejus. The Lord will help the sick on his bed of pain [lit de douleur]; You, God, changed his diaper in his infirmity. (PS.

Can any of us, my brethren, ever understand the great mercy of God, his eagerness to provide us with all the necessary means to soften our sorrows and assure us of heaven? Are we sick? He is willing, this tender and

amiable Savior, to stoop so low as to come and visit us, console us and help us to suffer, so as to make these sufferings worthy of an eternal reward. Do we want, my brethren, to be imbued with the greatness of his love for us? Let us consider his eagerness to accompany us with his mercy, every day and every moment of our lives. As soon as we enter the world, he presents to us the sacrament of Baptism to open to us the heaven that the

Adam's sin had closed us off, and, by returning his friendship to us, he makes us participants in all the merits of his passion. Do we have the misfortune of losing this precious grace? he offers us, to repair this loss, the sacrament of Penance, which we can receive as many times as we have sinned. It goes even further; in order to revive in us the faith, without which we cannot please God, he gives us, in the sacrament of Confirmation, his Holy Spirit, who enlightens us and guides us in all our actions, so as to make them meritorious for heaven. Not content with all these gifts, he still wants, to strengthen us in our battles, to give us his adorable body and his precious blood, in order to nourish our souls, and to make us taste in advance the happiness of the saints. This then is all that is necessary for us to preserve or repair in us the grace of God; but as Adam's sin brings upon us all kinds of misery, and especially the punishment of suffering death; we need, in our last moments, powerful help, to soften our sufferings and make them meritorious; to strengthen us against the attacks of the devil, who, wanting to destroy us, redoubles his efforts. We need, I say, extraordinary help, to reassure us against the terrors of death and the fears of judgment, the very thought of which made the greatest saints tremble. So what does our loving Savior do? He establishes a sacrament which gives us all the graces and help necessary in this terrible moment; a sacrament, which makes us consider our illnesses, not as a punishment, but as a very precious grace, and death, not as a punishment, but as a great reward. The hands dies, in fact, are very effective means to make us satisfy divine Justice, and death delivers us from all kinds of misery, by giving us the possession of all kinds of goods. But to make you understand it better, I believe (must) show you, 1° the advantages of the sacrament of Extreme Unction; 2° the faults we commit on the occasion of this sacrament; 3° the provisions that we must make.

I. To speak to you about the sacrament of Extreme Anointing, my brethren, is to remind you that our life here on earth is not eternal, and that soon we will leave this world. Our life is only a small passage, where we are placed to fight the devil, the world and our inclinations, in order to secure heaven; it is to tell you that our bodies, which we seek so much to please, which we fear so much to cause suffering, will be destroyed by the violence of suffering, by the power of death, and that we will appear before our judge, to give him an account of all the good and all the evil that we have done during our life. After that, we will go and bury ourselves in the house of our eternity. Ah! My brethren, how beneficial this thought would be to us, if we had the happiness of engraving it in our hearts! Indeed, how could we commit sin? how could we live in sin, if we said within ourselves: A day will come when sickness and death will destroy this body; a day will come when I will have to give an account of all the actions of my life, and, after this judgment, my home will be either heaven or hell. O my God, that he who would make this thought his daily bread, would live holy!... The sacrament of Extreme Unction was instituted by

Our Lord Jesus Christ, for the spiritual and even bodily relief of the poor sick. For our soul, it is sure to always find health there, if it is well prepared; and, in the same way, our body also finds health there, if it can be useful to the glory of God and to our salvation. Saint James tells us: “If anyone is sick, call for the minister of the Church, who will anoint him, and the Lord will blot out his sins and restore his body to health. » So that not only do we receive the health of our soul, that is to say the forgiveness of our sins, but also a grace of strength, to defend us against the devil, who redoubles his attacks in these last moments, always hoping to destroy us before our death. Moreover, this sacrament spreads a sweet consolation into our souls; he revives our confidence in God, he makes us consider him, not as a severe judge, but as a good Savior and a tender Father, who comes to console us, and encourage us with the hope of the reward that he prepares for us in

heaven. Illness is a very precious grace, it calls us back to God, and makes us return to ourselves; it detaches us from life; it makes us consider all created things, goods, pleasures and honors, as vile and contemptible things, unworthy of attaching our heart to them. Precious moment, my brethren.! It is usually at this time that we put our whole life back in front of us: I mean the good and the bad that we have done. Is it not at this moment, my brethren, that we regret not having lived in friendship with God? Is it not when we lie on this bed of pain [lit de douleur], when we weep for sins, that perhaps without a long illness, we

ON I/EXTHEM- ■■would never have cried. Is it not at this moment that we make resolutions to change our lives, if God is good enough to restore us to health? Is it not at this time that we develop an infinite aversion for everything that has led us to sin, whether pleasures or bad company? Is it not at this moment that we begin to think of the torments that God's justice prepares for sinners? Isn't it a disease that makes us reconcile with our enemy? who makes us return the good that is not ours? Is it not still in these last moments that we experience how rich the good God [le bon Dieu] is in mercy? Isn't that where the thought of judgment makes us tremble, at the sight of our eternal destiny? Oh! My brethren, that a long illness is advantageous for a Christian who knows how to take advantage of it; because it provides him with effective and powerful means to return (to God), return to himself, and satisfy divine justice for his sins! Alas! how many souls are in hell, and who would be in heaven if they had had long illnesses! How many, on the day of judgment, will see that illnesses have earned them (1) a large number of years of purgatory! Death itself is a great blessing from God and a means capable of uniting us to him; because, wanting to live a long time is wanting to prolong one's miseries here below. Saint Augustine tells us: “He who fears death does not love the good God [le bon Dieu]. » Indeed, if we love someone, we must love what can lead us there; therefore, he who loves God does not fear death. But let's not go any further, let's get busy (i) Spared, shunned.

of what directly concerns Extreme Unction, which is the sacrament of the dying. This sacrament is a sensitive sign which produces invisible effects in us. These signs are the anointings that the priest does on the sick with holy oil, blessed by the bishop, and the prayers that accompany them. If you don't know why this sacrament is called Extreme Unction, here it is. This is because these anointings are the last that we do on a Christian. The first are done when we receive Baptism; the second, when the bishop gives us Confirmation, and the last, when we are sick. We see that Jesus Christ, in instituting the sacraments, chose the signs most capable of making us aware of the effects that each sacrament produces in us. In the sacrament of Baptism, we receive water, the ordinary use of which is to wash something dirty, to show us that the grace received in this sacrament purifies our soul from its sins. In that of the Eucharist, we receive Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine, to make us know that he nourishes our souls, as bread and wine nourish our bodies. In that of Extreme Unction, we receive holy oil. Now, the property of oil is to heal wounds, to soften sores, to strengthen the members; moreover, olive oil is still the symbol of peace. You know that Noah, after the flood, sent a dove to find out if the waters had receded; she brought him an olive branch, to tell him that the anger of God had been appeased, and that peace had been restored to the earth. These are precisely, my brethren, the effects that the sacrament of Extreme Unction produces in those who receive it with good dispositions, after having been well prepared by the sacrament of Penance.

It is true that through the sacrament of Penance, all our sins are already forgiven; but the sacrament of Extreme Unction completes the purification of us from all the venial sins that we may have committed since that time. Alas! what mistakes these poor patients are guilty of! Sometimes they murmur in their sufferings, sometimes they do not submit well to the will of God; another time, they occupy themselves too much with temporal affairs; another time they will be in a bad mood against those who care for them. These are the mistakes that a poor sick person usually commits. They are light, it's true, but they will still lead him into purgatory for many years. This is why the holy Fathers call this sacrament: “the perfection of the sacrament of Penance.” » You see that he provides us with a very precious grace by giving us the happiness of going to see God, immediately after our death. In addition, it strengthens us against the temptations of the devil,

which at this time are stronger and more frequent. Indeed, it is mainly in our illnesses that the demon, as Saint Peter tells us, rolls around us to devour us; either by leading us to despair, by making us consider our sins as too great to be forgiven, thus he wants to make us lose all hope; or again by presumption, by persuading ourselves that we have nothing to fear, that God did not create us to damn us; with this vain hope we die in our sin, and we are lost. This sacrament, on the contrary, makes us maintain a happy medium: it gives us a salutary fear, which, by making us amend, not only makes us hope in the mercy of God, and urges us to take all the means that the good God [le bon Dieu] has given us to ensure our salvation. Another good that this sacrament produces in us is to reassure us against the fears of death. He makes us consider it as a good, because by separating us from life, it leads us to our true homeland; we then accept it in a spirit of penance. If the fear of the judgment to be suffered frightens us, this sacrament reassures us, by making us think that in view of the adorable blood of Jesus Christ with which we are completely covered, it is impossible that the Eternal Father does not want to recognize us for his work, for his sons, his children and the Christians of his kingdom. This sacrament further strengthens the sick, it makes him bear his sufferings with patience and resignation to the will of God; moreover, it softens his pains, and they seem less violent to him. We know well, it is true, what suffering is; several of us experienced very violent pain; but none of us knows what we suffer to die. At this moment especially, we need this sacrament to soften our pain. Listen to Saint James: “Is anyone sick? let him bring the minister of the Lord, and the prayer of faith that he prays over him will relieve him. » Indeed, how many sick people, after having received this sacrament, have found themselves better. What makes death so frightening for us is that we must go and give an account of our poor life, which was perhaps only a chain of sins. What sacrilege! what profanations of the holy day of Sunday! How many times have we not profaned our mind, our heart and our body with impurity? It is true that we have confessed all this; but, my God! did we ap- kno carried enough preparation? have we had enough contrition? 0 terrible moment for a Christian, who has not thought seriously about his salvation! Well! if we receive this sacrament holyly, we have great certainty that God will forgive us. Yes, my brethren, when we see the priest come to give us this great sacrament, it is as if we see an angel coming to announce to us that heaven is going to be reconciled with us, and that Jesus Christ awaits us in the greatness of his mercy. Let's say something more consoling. In this sacrament, Jesus Christ truly descends into our souls by his grace, he comes to make his home there, and himself to lead us in triumph into heaven, as he did to this cenitent, whose soul Saint Simeon Stylite saw carried to heaven by the Savior himself. How many times, my brethren, do we see sick people, whom the thought of death frightens almost to the point of despair, and who end up saying, after having received this sacrament: “I did not believe that it was so sweet and so consoling to die. » From this, I conclude that in this sacrament everything is a consolation for us, because it provides us with the greatest good for time and for eternity. Yes, my brethren, this must commit us to ask God, every day of our life, for the grace to receive this sacrament before dying. I know it is not absolutely necessary to be saved; but, if we neglected to receive it, we would make ourselves guilty, we would deprive ourselves of great graces; we would, in fact, seem to despise the means that the good God [le bon Dieu] presents to us to help us achieve our salvation. Moreover, we would greatly expose ourselves to having a bad death, which is the greatest of all misfortunes. 12

I I. If you ask me at what time should I have recourse to this sacrament? I will tell you that it is when we have an illness that seems to want to lead us to the grave. You know that this sacrament can only be received once in the same illness; but whenever we return to health and become ill again, we can receive it again. If you now ask me at what age one can receive this sacrament? I will answer you: As soon as we have the age of reason, that is to say as soon as we can distinguish good from evil; Also, when your children begin to distinguish good from evil, you must never fail to make them confess, so that they are able to receive this sacrament. I will show you roughly the faults of which we can be guilty on this point. We are guilty when we neglected to ask God, during our life, for the grace to receive this sacrament at the hour of our death, or if we considered it as a small thing. Alas! My brethren, if I dared, I would tell you that there are Christians who, in

all their lives, have never asked the good God [le bon Dieu] for this grace. We are still guilty if we do not pray for those we are going to administer; if we neglect to go to them who can do so; if, being near the sick, we hide their condition from them; if we turn away those who want to bring the priest, or if we did not call him when the sick asked for him; if we neglect to instruct them about this sacrament, to teach them who instituted it, the effects it produces in us, why it is given to us, and what are the dispositions that we must bring to it; finally, if we have not prayed for these poor sick people, during that this sacrament was administered to them. We must not just attend them, but we must, as much as we can, seek God's mercy for them. Those who guard them must, as much as possible, wash their feet and hands with lukewarm water, out of respect for the sacrament. If it is a girl or a woman, never leave them without putting a handkerchief around their neck; these poor patients don't think about it! Alas! how many masters are guilty of sending their servants to the hospital almost dead; they sometimes die on the way, or, arriving at the hospital, they receive this sacrament without knowledge, and, consequently, without fruit! How many others have poor sick people at home, and let them die, without notifying the parish priest!... Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, must still see if they have neglected to instruct their children and their servants in what concerns this sacrament, as soon as they are able to receive it; if they neglect this, they will cause their children and their servants to profane it. My God, where are those who fulfill their duties well? Alas! how few there are!.. You must also examine yourself if you have not taken pleasure in hearing, or in saying these impious words yourselves: “He can go, his boots are fat, or again: He is” is to mock holy things. We still have to see if you have not accompanied the good God [le bon Dieu] more out of curiosity, than to pray with the sick. As for the sick, they must never wait for these moments to put their temporal affairs in order; they must think about it while they are in health: so that, in sickness, they concern themselves only with the salvation of their soul. Never fail to remember m e s s e s, do not rely on the promises of your heirs, you know what they say in the world, and it is very true: “The memory of the dead goes away with the sound of bells. » The saints, my brethren, considered it a great sin to let a person die without the sacrament. There are those who are afraid of frightening the sick, and do not dare talk to them about (receiving the) sacraments; what cruel friendship! It is reported in history that a poor father being on the verge of death, no one talked to him about confessing; a little girl who came from catechism said to him: “Father, the doctor says you are going to die; my mother is crying in her room, no one talks to you about confessing; the priest told us that it was a great sin to let a person die without the sacraments, do you want me to send for him? » — “Ah! my child, said the father, go and get him, I didn't think of it; I suffer so much! » The priest came, and (the sick man) confessed in very good spirits. Before dying, he called his daughter to his bedside, saying to her: “Ah! my child, how I thank you! without you, I was damned; I didn't think about confessing. » Alas! how poor sick people die without the sacraments and damn themselves through the fault of those around them, who do not have the charity to make them confess! We must still have great devotion to Saint Barbara, to ask the good God [le bon Dieu], through his protection, to receive our last sacraments. It is reported in history that an exiled saint, having no means of receiving the sacraments, the Blessed Virgin came with angels, etc. We must also never fail, if the priest did not think of it, to have him apply the sick the plenary indulgences, which are the remission of all the penalties that we must suffer in purgatory.

111. But what are the dispositions that we must have to receive this sacrament worthily? I found three. The first is to be in a state of grace, the second is resignation to the will of God, the third is to suffer illness with patience. I say that one must be in a state of grace, that is to say, have confessed; because if one received this sacrament with a (mortal) sin on one's conscience, one would commit a horrible sacrilege. Omon G i u, what a misfortune 1... If you are in a state of sin and you cannot speak, you must excite yourself to contrition, and confess by signs, as much as you can. Alas! how difficult it is to confess well at this moment, when one has neglected to do so during the period of health!... However, we must not let ourselves go to despair, however miserable we may be; even if we have committed great and numerous sins, we must always hope in the goodness of God. We must place a crucifix before our eyes, so that when we look at it, we see the greatness

of God's mercy for sinners. This image will give rise to great confidence in us, thinking that God's mercy is still infinitely greater than our sins, and that, although we are very sinners, we can hope for forgiveness. It is true that we must fear for so many graces despised and so many sins committed; but we must remember that God has promised that he will never refuse forgiveness to anyone who asks it properly. 2° Another disposition that the sick person must have is to submit himself entirely to the will of God, and to not to worry about his recovery; he must know that if health is necessary for the salvation of his soul, the good God [le bon Dieu] will heal him. It is true that it is not forbidden to have recourse to the doctor or to remedies, since God established the doctors and created the remedies. We see that Jesus Christ himself sought some consolation in his sorrows, when he went to his apostles saying to them: “My soul is sad unto death; » and when being on the cross he also said: “My Father, why have you forsaken me? » It is not that he needed help, but only to show us that it is not forbidden to seek some relief in our illnesses, and some consolation in our sorrows. But following the example of Jesus Christ, let us say to God: “My God, may your holy will always be done, and not mine,” let us always be content, whatever way people behave towards us, we are sure that the salvation of our soul will be found there. Everything therefore obliges us to have the last sacraments received by those who are in our homes; first of all there is a particular blessing that Jesus Christ brings by coming there. Then, we cannot render a greater service, that is to say, do a greater work of charity, than to provide a sick person with the means to secure heaven. Finally, we are sure that the good God [le bon Dieu] will not refuse us the same grace, when we are at the hour of death. We must never neglect to bring a priest; it is better that the priest (comes) twenty times too often, than if you let your sick person die without the sacraments. Besides, a priest always takes great pleasure in seeing a sick person, and the sick in turn must feel the happiness of this visit. Saint Bernard tells us that Saint Malachio, archbishop of

Cologne, had been called by someone sick. When he arrived, he was told that the patient was not in danger, that he could wait until the next day; and with that the archbishop continued on his way. A few moments later, people run after him, saying that the patient is dead. “Ah! unfortunate, he cries, it is indeed my fault. » He went to him, even though he was dead, prostrated himself with his face to the ground, shed tears in abundance, and urged all those who were with him to pray also. “No, my God, I will have no consolation until you have restored this dead man to life! let us redouble our tears, my children, he said to those who were with him, perhaps the good God [le bon Dieu] will let himself be touched. » After having spent the whole night in prayer, he looks at the dead man, he sees him moving his eyes and lips. “Ah! my friends, he cries, the good God [le bon Dieu] restores his life. » He then administered the sacraments to him: he had no sooner received them than he expired. There is no more salutary spectacle for us than that of seeing the last sacraments administered to a sick person. When, being in health, we hear the Viaticum bell ring, let us leave our work for a moment; Let's see what we will be one day, and what we can at this moment in our lives. Let’s go, my brethren, to hear this poor patient cry to us: “Ah! my friends, come to my aid, ask the good God [le bon Dieu] to have pity on me [ayez pitié de moi], come and see, he seems to tell us, what you yourself will be one day. » If, when we see a patient being administered, we make these reflections: Yes, one day will come when I will be in the place of this poor patient, what will my thoughts be at that moment? what will I think and what will I say of my pleasures, of my attachment to these goods which have lost so many others? What will I think of my coming -

geances, my injustices and my drunkenness? What a life, to appear before a God who will not spare me for a minute, and who will want to know how I used it! Alas! we will say in all the bitterness of our soul, ah! terrible moment, which brought the greatest saints almost to despair. Ah! sad moment for a Christian who has done evil!... What spectacle is more capable of converting us than the presence of a dying person who is going to leave this world forever?... Look at him for a moment, my brethren, see those poor dying and almost extinct eyes, he seems to say to us: “Ah! my friend, don't wait to be like me to do good!... if God restored my

health, oh! that my life would be much more Christian than it has been until now! If the good God [le bon Dieu] takes me from this world in this illness, what will become of me?... since in my life I see only evil and almost no good. Ah! pray to God that he will forgive me!..." When we see the priest enter the room of a dying person, (we say): what will be the fate of this sick person? Or heaven, or hell! My God, this moment is terrible!... Yes, in this moment, the good God [le bon Dieu] will either receive him in his bosom, or vomit him out of his presence forever. Oh! what a misfortune to have lived only to create a hell for himself!... The priest, before administering the sacraments to him, says several prayers to implore God's mercy on him; he takes the holy oil to perform the anointings, and seems to say to him: “My friend, take note of the little time that remains for you, if you do not return, it is the last grace that the good God [le bon Dieu] grants you in this world. » He implores the prayers of those present, to ask for mercy for the sick man; then he performs the anointings. It starts with the eyes, like if he said to him: “Close these eyes which, so many times, have opened on impure objects, and which have thus lost your soul; deny them light for a moment, since they have profited so badly from it. » “My God,” said the priest, “forgive him for so many evil looks, and so many curiosities, through which sin entered into his soul and gave him death. My God, forgive him all the sins he has committed through the sense of sight. » Consider, my brethren, these eyes which once were ardent for evil, whose gaze shone with an impure fire, see them, I say, under the hand of the priest, whose presence strikes him with terror; see and consider under the hand of the minister of the Lord the poor head of this young girl who took so much care in adorning herself, who so many times spent whole hours looking at herself in front of a mirror, who, in all her manners, only sought to please and attract the attention of the world. His eyes, which once lit flames in the heart of the young libertine, now strike fear into the souls of those around him. The priest anoints the ears. Alas, see how we turn and turn this failing head which was the idol of the world and which believed to be the only one well made, These ears formerly decorated with gold or diamonds, whose brilliance she took so much care to make shine before the rays of the sun. See the hair that the priest brushes aside, the hair that she once arranged and curled with so much care, there they are all streaming with the sweat of death. “My God,” said the minister of the Lord, “forgive this poor dying woman for all the sins she has committed through her ears, through the gold and diamonds with which she took so much care to embellish this head of iniquity. » Let us leave, my brethren, this head decorated with so much artifice; let-

Sounds like hell seems to await her, and death presses on her. The priest anoints his nose, this nose which, so many times, has sought good odors and which now already exudes corruption (1). The priest anoints his lips, instruments of so much pleasure, of so much slander, of slander, of infamous words and songs. “My God,” said the priest, “may this mouth be purified by this anointing from all the bad words spoken. Give this sinner the grace of never hearing these thundering words that every reprobate will one day hear come from your mouth: “Get rid of me, you cursed, go to the eternal fire. » The priest takes his hands, these hands which have committed so many iniquities, these poor hands which are at this hour soaked with the sweat of death! “My God, forgive these hands stained with so many sins! » From there the priest anoints the chest, this chest decorated with so much care, and care so often repeated, always in the guilty hope of attracting eyes and pleasing the world; this is the moment when the Lord seems to descend into this heart, with the torch in his hand to examine all its folds and folds. “My God,” said the priest, “forgive this unfortunate woman for all the sins she has committed, through so many thoughts of pride, hatred, vengeance, through all the bad thoughts and bad desires that have corrupted her poor heart! » Finally, the priest anoints the feet, these feet which formerly were active in running to evil; these feet which have carried her so many times in games, dances and balls; so here they are as if bound in these sheets, incapable even of (1) Here, and in the following paragraph, we attenuate some of the Venerable's expressions.

stir. Here is this body already entwined in the arms of death... Yes, consider for a moment, my brethren-, the body of this young girl of vanity, who only sought the means to enhance her beauty. See this face, which she once washed with so much precaution, in order to preserve its freshness; here it is all decomposed. See this

neck, which was embellished with so much art with rich jewels and which wore these two or three rows of collars; Alas! he can no longer only support his poor head. What has become of this beauty that was further enhanced by these clothes of such well-chosen shape and color? And in this body, my God, what has become of this poor soul, which you had made through Baptism as beautiful as an angel?... My God, my God! what route will she take? will it be heaven, will it be hell, which must be his eternal abode? Yes, my brethren, it will be heaven, if this poor soul receives the sacrament of Extreme Unction with the provisions that I indicated to you above; If, sincerely penitent for her criminal life, she receives these last sacraments as she should and throws herself into the arms of [se jeter dans les bras de] God's mercy. But for us, let us try to live holy, and we are sure that in return, the good God [le bon Dieu] will not deprive us of the happiness of having a good death. This is what I wish you.