

¡Adorada sea la Santa Faz de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo!

**IGLESIA CRISTIANA PALMARIANA
DE LOS CARMELITAS DE LA SANTA FAZ**

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One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian Church

EIGHTEENTH APOSTOLIC LETTER

Further considerations on death.

The Last Things, and the way to die a good death.

Calling for the 12th and 13th of October 2020



We, Peter III, Sovereign Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Saint Peter, Servant of the servants of God, Patriarch of Palmar de Troya, *de Glória Ecclesiæ*, Herald of the Lord God of Hosts, Good Shepherd of souls, Aflame with the Zeal of Elias and Defender of the Rights of God and Church.

In the Holy Gospel, Our Lord Jesus Christ warns: "When you see wars and hear rumours of further wars and rebellions, do not be troubled... Because first peoples shall rise up against peoples, and kingdoms against kingdoms; and there shall be loathsome diseases and ravaging epidemics... And all this shall be but the beginning of grief."

Now that we are at the "beginning of grief", this is the moment for us to prepare ourselves well for all the sufferings awaiting us in the apocalyptic times, when the cups of divine wrath shall be poured out. The synagogue of Satan, namely freemasonry or anti-church, controls the governments of the world. We already know that it infiltrated the roman church in order to destroy her, and how it achieved its purpose by way of cunning, saying that it was charitable to dialogue with heretics and that the false religions were good; it turned Holy Mass into a lutheran banquet on the pretext of fomenting participation by the faithful. At the very moment it was "made rigorously binding, the Holy Sacrifice of Mass or Perpetual Sacrifice was officially abolished. At the establishment of the 'novus ordo', the churches or places of sanctification were overthrown and profaned by sacrilegious worship." (Daniel). Furthermore, freemasonry "continued its work of destruction in an official way, with greater vigour, through dispositions and decrees, forging Pope Saint Paul VI's signature and misusing his seal; and often compelling him to sign by means of drugs and threats" (Daniel). Machinations proper to the children of the devil, father of lies, which expose the malice of those satanic conspirators, aspiring to form a world government under the tyranny of the devil.

But they have not yet finished their task. These satanists continue to prepare antichrist's tyrannical reign. They are now pressing all the inhabitants of the world to receive obligatory vaccines. Perhaps the simple-minded in times of Saint Paul VI who believed that those changes were for the good of the Church will think that those satanists are now concerned for the good of our bodily health.

We should take into account that the devil is 'God's ape', and so imitates Him, blasphemously presuming to be His equal. You already know that soon are to come the days of antichrist, who will propose to be adored as God. Christ, to prepare His ways, had His Precursor, Saint John the Baptist, to administer the Baptism of Penance to dispose souls better for reaching Jesus purified and strengthened by imperfect justice and thus accept His Baptism.

Antichrist too has his precursors, preparing his ways. They are by now ready to administer the opposite to the Baptism of Penance: the 'baptism of corruption' which, instead of purifying with clean water administered by the Baptist, contaminates people with uncleanness. We can already see it: the severest control over movement of people and production of raw materials, almost completely paralyzing the economies of all the nations of the West, by imposing slavery on the entire nation, house arrest, a ban on working, impoverishment

and total vigilance; and all this tyrannical despotism is in the name of 'democracy' or government by the people. People will soon be crying out for a remedy that allows them freedom to work and travel, and even to buy or sell: this remedy will be the vaccine. We cannot vouch for the satanists; like their father, they are enemies of mankind and work for the perdition of souls. Why do they seek to inject repugnant components into every human being? Will it perhaps be like a satanic-sacrament the better to dispose people to accept the infamous 'mark of the beast' later on?

We should recognize that, being the only members of Holy Church, Palmarians have an important mission to fulfil in the midst of the cataclysm. Our responsibility is great, for God has given us the most excellent of all that exists, His Divine Grace, and in justice He demands much of us. He demands love, fidelity, prayer and penance, and the faithful keeping of the Commandments. We have to placate Divine Wrath, make reparation for sins, and dedicate ourselves especially to obtaining the salvation of the countless poor sinners who will soon have to present themselves at God's tribunal to receive their eternal sentence. Times of great death tolls are coming, and so We must speak to you again of preparing for death, as a continuation of all We said in our Seventeenth Apostolic Letter.



Remember the words of Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great: "We declare, as Universal Doctor of the Church, that we are in the Last Times, that we are in Apocalyptic Times, that the last trumpets are sounding, and that the last seals and the cups of Divine Wrath are close at hand. The universal reign of Antichrist too is imminent. Also close at hand is the Return of Christ, Who with His Divine Breath will destroy Antichrist. We live in terrible and obscure times, but let us not fear, because Christ has said that He will be with His Church, assisting Her until the consummation of the ages."

On the indescribable good that is Divine Grace and of the great evil that is enmity with God: Whoever can separate the precious from the vile is in accord with God, who can cast aside evil and choose good. Let us see how great a good is Divine Grace, and how immense an evil is enmity with God. Men do not know the value of Divine Grace. Hence they exchange it for trifles, for a wisp of smoke, for a clod of earth, for a senseless pleasure. And yet it is a treasure of infinite value, which makes us worthy of God's friendship, so that the soul in the state of Grace is a blest friend of the Lord.

Pagans, deprived of the light of Faith, believed it impossible that a creature could enjoy God's friendship. Speaking as their hearts moved them, they were not mistaken, for friendship, as Saint Jerome says, makes the two friends equal. Still, God has declared in several places that, by means of His Grace, we can become His friends, if we observe and fulfil His law: "You are My friends as long as you do the things I command you." At which Saint Gregory exclaims: "What goodness of God! We do not merit even to be called His servants, and He deigns to call us His friends."

How lucky we would think someone enjoying the friendship of his king! But if it would be rash for a subject to seek the friendship of his lord, not so for a soul to seek the friendship of his God. Saint Augustine tells of two courtiers of the emperor who found themselves in a monastery. One of them began to read the life of Saint Anthony Abbot, and as he read on, his heart began to free itself from worldly attachments in such fashion that he spoke thus to his companion: "Friend, what do we seek? By serving the emperor, the most we can hope for is to win his friendship. And though we were to get that far, we would put our eternal salvation at great risk. Only with great difficulty can we become his friends. But if I want to be a friend of God, right now I can be one."

Whoever, then, is in Grace is a friend of the Lord. And far more still, because he becomes a son of God. Such is the ineffable happiness which divine love won for us by way of Jesus Christ. "Consider the tender love the Heavenly Father has had for us, willing that we be His children and that our name be that of sons of God" (I John).

The soul in Grace is also a spouse of the Lord. Hence the father of the prodigal son, on receiving and welcoming him back, gave him a ring as sign of espousal. That happy soul is, besides, temple of the Holy Ghost. Saint Mary of Oignies saw the devil leave the body of a child who had just received baptism, and saw the Holy Ghost surrounded by Angels entering the new Christian.

When your soul, to your benefit, is in God's Grace, it is His temple and friend, daughter and spouse of God. But if you sin grievously you lose all, and become God's enemy and a slave of Hell. With deep gratitude consider that God gives you time to recover Grace if you lack it, and to love Him above all things, for the all-important thing is that God reign in you by His Grace, and that you serve God alone, love God alone, and live for God.

Saint Thomas Aquinas says that the gift of Grace exceeds all the gifts which a creature can receive, given that Grace is a participation in Divine Nature itself. And Saint Peter previously said that God gave us graces so that “we might be partakers in divine nature”. Our Lord Jesus Christ, by His Passion, merited so much for us! In a certain way, He communicated to us the splendour that He had received from God the Father, so that the soul in Grace unites intimately to God and, as the Redeemer said, the Most Blessed Trinity comes to dwell in her.

So beautiful is a soul in the state of Grace that the Lord delights in her and praises her lovingly: “How lovely You are, My spouse, how lovely You are!” It could be said that the Lord cannot take His eyes off a soul who loves Him nor cease to grant all that she asks. Saint Bridget said that no one would be able to see the beauty of a soul in Grace without dying of joy. And Saint Catherine of Siena, on contemplating a soul in that happy state, said that she would rather give her life than see that soul lose so much beauty. Hence the Saint kissed the ground where Priests had trod, considering that by their means souls recover God’s Grace.

And what a treasure of merits a soul in the state of Grace can acquire! At each moment she is able to merit glory; for, as Saint Thomas says, every act of love done by such a soul merits eternal life. Why then envy the powerful of this world? If we are in God’s Grace, we can continually conquer considerably greater heavenly glory.

In his ‘Menology’ of the lives of members of his Order who had died in the odour of sanctity, Father Patrignani tells of a coadjutor brother of the Company of Jesus who appeared after death and revealed that he had saved himself, as too had Saint Philip II of Spain, and that both already enjoyed eternal glory; but that he was as far above the king in Heaven as he had been below him on earth.

Only one who enjoys it can understand how sweet is the peace enjoyed, even in this world, by a soul in Grace. This is confirmed by the words of the Psalm: “Those who love Your Law enjoy great peace”. The peace born from union with God exceeds all the pleasure our senses can give us in this world.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, who let Himself be crucified to give life to His sheep. When you fled from Him, He sought you out with loving pains to grant you His Grace again, miserably lost through your own fault.

Let us now consider the unhappy state of a soul fallen from God’s grace. She is separated from her supreme Good, namely God: so that she is no longer God’s nor God hers. And not only does He not see her as His, but moreover abhors her.

The Lord does not detest any of His creatures, neither the wild beasts, nor the reptiles, nor the vilest insect. Yet He cannot but detest the sinner. As it is impossible for Him not to hate sin, enemy completely opposed to the Divine Will, He must necessarily detest the sinner with the will to sin. The Psalm says: “You are a God of goodness and detest wrongdoing... You detest all who do wrong”.

O my God! If anyone has a prince of this world as enemy, he can scarcely rest in peace, fearing death at each moment. So how can an enemy of God enjoy peace? From a king’s anger you can flee and hide or emigrate to another faraway kingdom; but who can escape God’s hands? If you rise up to Heaven, there He is; if you descend into Hell, there He is by His justice. Wherever the sinner goes, the divine hand will reach him.

Unhappy sinners! Accursed of God, accursed of the Angels and accursed of the Saints. Besides, to be in God’s disgrace means the loss of all merit.

Though a man may have merited as much as Saint Paul the Hermit, who lived for ninety-eight years in a cave; as much as a Saint Francis Xavier, who according to Saint Alphonsus Mary de Liguori, conquered ten million souls for God; as much as Saint Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles; if that man committed one single mortal sin, he would lose them all: such is the ruin produced by falling into disgrace with the Lord!

From son of God, the sinner becomes slave of Satan; from predilect friend he turns into hateful enemy; from heir to glory, into candidate for Hell. Saint Francis de Sales said that if the Angels could weep, on seeing the wretchedness of a soul committing a mortal sin and losing divine Grace, they would weep with compassion.

But the greatest misfortune lies in that, though the Angels would weep if they could, the sinner does not. Whoever loses a horse or a sheep, says Saint Augustine, does not eat, does not rest, groans and laments. But if he loses God’s Grace, he eats and sleeps as if nothing had happened!

God, to make you worthy of His Grace, spent thirty-three years of labour and sorrow, and you, perhaps, in an instant, for a moment of poisoned pleasure, have scorned and lost Grace irremediably. Now He gives you the time to recover Grace, if you truly want to.

God, who condemned the whole human race to suffer death, has hidden from us the day and the hour, so that we make sure to live in holiness all the days of our life, and thus merit a happy death, ablaze in His divine love.

Madness of the sinner: Saint John of Ávila said that there should be two vast prisons in the world: one for those who have no faith, and the other for those who, having faith, live in sin separated from God. For the latter,

he added, the right place is the madhouse. But the greatest misery of these wretches consists in that, being the most blind and insensate in the world, they deem themselves wise and prudent. And the worst of all is that their number is so very great: “the number of fools is incalculable” (Ecclesiastes). Saint Gregory explains: “Not all are saved, since not all turn to the saving work of Reparation and Redemption by Christ and Mary on the Cross of Calvary. Not all turn to it, lamentably. There are many, many, many, many, men in the eternal fire of Hell. Poor fools!”

Some are mad for honour and power; others for pleasure; not a few for earthly trifles. They then dare to brand as mad the Saints, who despised the vain goods of the world so as to conquer eternal salvation and the Sovereign Good, that is, God. They call it madness to embrace mockery and forgive offences; madness to deprive oneself of sensual pleasures and prefer mortification; madness to renounce honours and riches and love solitude, the humble and hidden life. Yet they do not observe that God calls that worldly wisdom of theirs folly (I Corinthians): “Is it not true that to God worldly wisdom is foolishness?” The wisdom of this world is madness in God’s eyes.

Ah! Some day they will confess and acknowledge their dementia. When? When there is no longer any possible remedy, and they have to exclaim in despair: “Unhappy are we, who counted as insensate the life of the Saints! Now we understand that we were the madmen. They are now counted in the happy number of the sons of God, and share the fortune of the Blessed, which will last eternally for them and make them forever happy, while we are slaves of the devil and condemned to burn in this dungeon of tortures for evermore! We deceived ourselves, then, for having sought to close our eyes to the divine light, and our greatest misfortune is that there is no remedy for our error as long as God is God!”

What immense madness it is, therefore, to lose the Grace of God in exchange for a wisp of smoke, a brief pleasure! What does a vassal not do to win the grace of his prince? And, O my God! For a vile satisfaction, to lose the Sovereign Good, lose glory, lose as well peace in this life, leaving sin to reign in the soul and torment it with unending remorse. To lose all, and damn oneself voluntarily to never-ending misfortune!



Would you give yourself up to that illicit pleasure, if you knew that afterwards your hand would be burnt or that you would be shut up in a tomb for a year? Would you commit that sin if, by committing it, you were to lose your money? And nonetheless you have faith and believe that by sinning you will lose Heaven, lose God and be damned to eternal fire. How can you dare to sin?

What would become of you now, poor sinner, if God did not have so much mercy? Perhaps you would already be found in Hell, with all the insensates whose tracks you followed. Give thanks to the Lord, and implore Him not to abandon you in your blindness, as you well deserved. Our Saviour wants to welcome you as a child of His, though you do not deserve that He call you ‘child’, for having brazenly outraged Him. But He delights in seeking out the little lost sheep and embracing the wayward child.

Unfortunate sinners! They strive and struggle to acquire worldly learning and procure the goods of this life, which has shortly to end, and forget the goods of that other life which is never to end.

They lose their judgement to such a point that not only are they mad, but reduce themselves to the condition of brutes; for living as irrationals, without considering what is good or evil: they follow only the instinct of their senses’ fancies, they give themselves up to what immediately satisfies the flesh without considering the loss and eternal ruin they risk. This is to act as a beasts, and not as men.

“We call a man,” says Saint John Chrysostom, “someone who preserves the essential image of a human being.” But what is that image? The rational being. To be a man is, consequently, to be rational; that is, to act in accord with reason, not in accord with sensual appetites. If God gave the use of reason to a beast and it were to act in accord with reason, we would say that it acts like a man. On the contrary, if a man proceeds in accord with the senses, against reason, it should be said that he acts like a beast.

Ah! If only they had wisdom and intelligence and foresaw the Last Things! The man who guides himself reasonably in his acts looks into the future, that is, at what is to happen to him at the end of his life: death, judgement and, afterwards, Hell or Glory. How much wiser is the labourer who saves himself than a monarch who damns himself! Better is a poor wise youth than a foolish old king who does not consider the future awaiting him.

O God! Would we not take someone to be mad who, to gain a single cent on the spot, risked losing all his property? Well, whoever in exchange for a brief pleasure loses his soul and places himself in danger of losing it forever, should he not be considered mad? That is the cause of the damnation of so many souls, to look no further than the present good or evil and not to think of the eternal. Thus Saint Paul said: “Were we not to

believe in the resurrection of the dead, we would have to say like those who have no hope in the other life: 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die'." (I Corinthians).

God has not placed us on this earth to become rich or seek honours or satisfy our senses, but so that we gain eternal life. And to reach that objective is the one thing that should concern us: "One thing alone is necessary."

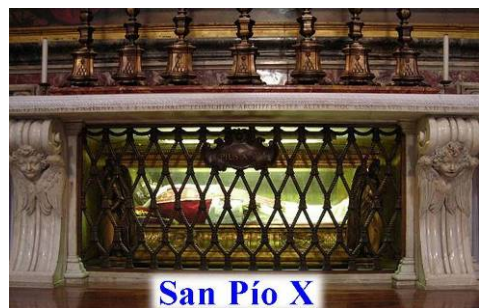
But sinners scorn this objective and, looking no further than the present, make their way to life's end and approach eternity unaware of where they are heading. "What would you say of a pilot", says Saint Augustine, "who, when asked to which port he was sailing, replied that he did not know? All would say that he was on his way to shipwreck. Such are those worldly wise who can gain properties, give themselves up to pleasures, obtain high posts, and do not succeed in saving their souls."

Wise in this world was Alexander the Great, who conquered countless kingdoms; but before long he died, and damned himself forever. Wise was Epulon, who grew rich; but died and was buried in Hell. Wise in this way was Henry VIII, who succeeded in keeping his throne despite his rebellion against the Church. But at the end of his days recognized that he had lost his soul, and cried out: "All is lost!" How many unfortunates now cry out in Hell! They say: "See how all the goods of the world have passed for us like a shadow, and now nothing is left to us but unending pain and eternal lament!"

"God respects the human freedom bestowed by Himself, for man to decide between good and evil, between eternal life and eternal death; and both the righteous and the sinner will be judged according to God's just judgement, and sentenced to opposing destinies" (Ecclesiasticus). Man has life and death before him; let him choose whatever pleases him most, and that will be given him. O Christian! Life and death are before you, that is, either deprive yourself voluntarily of things illicit to win eternal life, or give yourself up to them to suffer eternal death. What do you say? Which do you choose? Act as a man, not as a brute. Choose as a Christian who has faith and says: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and then lose his soul?" (Gospel).

God gave you reason, the light of the Faith, and yet how many times have you acted like an irrational brute, exchanging His divine Grace for vile worldly pleasures, which vanished like smoke, leaving you only with remorse of conscience and debts to divine justice. What happiness it would be to die of deepest sorrow and contrition, so as to go to Heaven and there extol God's infinite mercy!

Let us understand well that the truly wise man is the one able to obtain divine grace and glory, and let us pray to the Lord that He grant us the science of the Saints, which He gives to as many as ask for it. What a beautiful science it is to be able to love God and save our soul! That is, to succeed in choosing the path of eternal salvation and the means to acquire it. The treatise on salvation, without any doubt, is the most necessary of all. If we knew everything, except how to save ourselves, our knowledge would be useless, we would be forever unhappy.



But, on the contrary, we will be eternally fortunate if we know how to love God, though knowing nothing else, as Saint Augustine said.

One day, Friar Gil said to Saint Bonaventure: "Happy are you, Father Bonaventure, who know so much. I, poor and ignorant, know nothing. Doubtless you can become holier than me." "Be quite sure", replied the Saint, "that if a poor ignorant old woman can love God better than I, she will be holier than me." On hearing this, holy brother Gil cried out loud: "Oh, poor little old woman, know that if you love God you can become holier than Father Bonaventure!"

"How many rustics there are", says Saint Augustine, "unable to read, but able to love God, who are saved, and how many learned of this world damn themselves!" Oh, how wise were Saint Pascual and Saint Felix, Capuchins, Saint John of God, though ignorant of human sciences! How wise all those who, withdrawing from the world, enclosed themselves in the cloister or lived in the desert, like Saint Benedict, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Louis of Toulouse, who renounced the throne! How wise so many martyrs and virgins who renounced honours, pleasures and riches to die for Christ!

Even the worldly themselves acknowledge this truth, and praise and call happy whoever gives his life to God and busies himself in the salvation of his soul. In a word: if those who abandon the goods of this world to give themselves to God are called 'undeceived'; what should we call those who abandon God in exchange for the goods of this world?: 'Deceived'.

To which number do you want to belong? To choose wisely, Saint John Chrysostom counsels us to visit the cemeteries. Tombs are a great school for acknowledging the vanity of the goods of this world and for learning the science of the Saints. "Tell me", says the Saint: "Do you know how to tell the prince from the noble or the learned? I see nothing but rot, bones and worms." All classes of the world will shortly pass away, will vanish

like fables, dreams and shadows. There was a cemetery with a notice saying: “We, the bones recumbent here, are awaiting yours.”

But if you, Christian, want to acquire true wisdom, it does not suffice to know the importance of your end, but it is also necessary that you use the means established to obtain it. All want to save and sanctify themselves, but as they do not employ the right means, they do not sanctify themselves and damn themselves. It is essential that you flee from the occasions of sin, frequent the Sacraments, do prayer, and above all engrave this and other like Gospel sayings in your heart: “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and then lose his soul?”

That is, it is fitting even to lay down our life, if necessary, to save our soul. “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself.” To follow Christ it is needful to deny our self-love the satisfactions it demands. Our salvation is based on the fulfilment of the Divine Will.

Recognize your past madness so that you weep over it, and value and love the infinite goodness in its compassion for you. Jesus, who gave His Blood to redeem you, does not want you to go back to being a slave of this world, as perhaps you have been. Repent and reprove every moment in which your will consented to sin, and embrace God’s holiest will, which only desires your good. Trust in Mary Most Holy, and that She obtain strength for you to fulfil and carry out whatever pleases God, and grant you death before opposing His Will.

Unhappy life of sinners and happy life of one who loves God: “Those who love Your Law enjoy great peace” (Psalm). All men strive in this life to find peace. The merchant, the soldier, the litigant, all labour because they think that with their goods, their decoration won or the lawsuit gained they will obtain the favours of fortune and win peace. But, oh!, wretched mundane, who seek peace in the world, which cannot give it to you! God alone can give it to you. May God give His servants that peace which the world cannot give.

No, the world cannot, with all its goods, satisfy the heart of man, because man was not created for this kind of goods, but solely for God; so that only in God can he find happiness and rest.

The irrational being, created for the life of the senses, seeks and finds peace in the goods of the earth. Give a donkey some hay, a dog a piece of meat, and they are happy, without desiring anything else. But the soul, created to love God and unite to Him, does not find her peace in sensual delights; God alone can make it fully happy. Hence there is no peace for the wicked.

That rich man the Gospel speaks of, having gathered a splendid harvest from his fields, said to himself: “Soul, you have many goods stored away for very many years; take your rest, eat, drink, give feasts.” But this hapless rich man was called a fool, and with good reason, says Saint Basil: “Wretch!” exclaimed the Saint, “Do you perhaps have the soul of a pig, or other beast, and try to content it by drinking and eating, with sensual delights?”

Man, writes Saint Bernard, can fill, but not satisfy himself with the goods of this world. The same Saint, commenting on the Gospel text: “See, we have left everything”, says that he has seen many madmen with different madnesses. He adds that they all suffered from a devouring hunger; but some satiated themselves with earth, symbol of the miser; others with air, figure of the vainglorious; others about the mouth of a stove, stoking up the fleeting flames, representing the irate; lastly, those on the banks of a foul-smelling lake, with the drinking of its waters, symbol of the licentious. And then, addressing them all, the Saint tells them: “Do you not see, insensates, that all these things add fuel to your hunger rather than appease it?”

The goods of this world are apparent goods, and hence cannot satisfy man’s heart. Thus the covetous, the more he hoards, the more he wants to hoard, says Saint Augustine. The licentious, the further he sinks into the mire of his pleasures, the greater his bitterness, and, at the same time, the more terrible his desires; how can his heart be at peace with sensual filth?

The same thing happens to the ambitious man, who aspires to satisfy himself with the subtle smoke of vanity, power and wealth; for he looks more to what he lacks than to what he possesses. Alexander the Great, after having conquered so many kingdoms, lamented at not having acquired dominion over other nations.

If earthly goods were enough to satisfy man, monarchs and rich people would be completely happy. Yet experience demonstrates the contrary. Solomon so affirms, assuring that he had denied nothing to his desires, and withal exclaims: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”; that is, whatever there is in the world is mere vanity, falsehood, madness.

What have the offences you gave to God left you with, other than bitterness and suffering and demerits for Hell? The sorrow you feel for them should not crush you, rather console and relieve you, for it is a gift of grace, joined to the hope that God will forgive you. You should be afflicted at the degree to which you have offended God, your Redeemer, who has loved you so much. What a pity to have offended God, infinite Goodness, and what happiness it would be to die of pure contrition.

Besides, Solomon says that the goods of this world are not only vanities that do not satisfy the soul, but pains which afflict her. Hapless sinners pretend to be happy with their guilt, yet acquire nothing but bitterness and remorse. There is no peace or rest for the wicked.

Firstly, sin brings with it deep fear of divine vengeance. Someone who has a powerful enemy cannot rest or live in peace, so how can God's enemies rest in peace? To think of God brings dread to those who act badly.

When the earth trembles or thunder booms, how terrified a man in sin feels! Even the gentle movement of the branches in the shade sometimes fills him with dread. He flees without seeing his persecutor, for his own sins run after him. Cain killed his brother Abel, and then exclaimed: "Whoever finds me will kill me." And though the Lord assured him that no one would harm him, Cain, says Scripture, always lived "errant and fugitive". Who persecuted Cain, if not his sin?

Besides, guilt is always united to remorse, that gnawing worm which never rests. The poor sinner gathers at banquets, parties or comedies, but the voice of conscience goes on telling him: "You are in God's disgrace; if you die, where will you go?" Remorse is such anguish, even in this life, that some wretches, to free themselves, do themselves to death.

Such a one was Judas who, as is known, hanged himself in despair. And it is told of another criminal that, having killed a boy, had such terrible remorse that to pacify it he became a friar; but not even in the cloister did he find peace, and so ran off before the judge to confess his crime, for which he was condemned to death.

What is a soul deprived of God but a stormy sea? If someone was taken to a party, dance or concert, and kept there with hands and feet tightly bound, would he be able to enjoy that diversion? Well, such is the man who lives amid the goods of this world without possessing God. He can drink, eat, dance, wear elegant clothing, receive honours, obtain high posts and offices, but will not have peace. Because peace is only obtained from God, and God gives it to those who love Him, not to His enemies.



The goods of this world, says Saint Vincent Ferrer, are external, they do not enter the heart. That sinner will perhaps wear embroidered clothes and diamond rings, will have a splendid spread; but his poor heart will remain full of gall and thorns. And so you will see him among such wealth, pleasure and diversion living always in anxiety, and at the least obstacle becomes impatient and furious like a rabid dog.

Whoever loves God is resigned and conformed to the divine will in adversity, and finds peace and solace. But whoever is an enemy to God's will cannot do this, and hence finds no way to act calmly.

The wretch serves the devil, cruel tyrant, who repays him with hard labour and bitterness. Thus it is always fulfilled that those who refuse to serve the Lord their God with joy, will serve His enemy with hunger and thirst, despoiled, and in every kind of need. How that avenger will suffer after having taken revenge! How much that unchaste, scarcely having achieved his design! How much the ambitious and avaricious! Oh, if only they suffered for God what they suffer to be damned, how many would be saints!

Oh, the time you lost! If to serve God you had performed the toil and labour you performed to offend Him, how many merits for glory would you now have gathered! Ah! Why did you abandon God and lose His grace? For brief and poisoned pleasures that, scarcely enjoyed, disappear and leave the heart full of wounds and anguish. Look at the vileness of the goods the devil offers you to get you to lose Grace. Curse and detest those sins a thousand times; and bless the mercy of the Lord, who put up with you with such patience.

Given that all the goods and delights of the world cannot satisfy the heart of man, who can? God alone. The heart of man is always in search of goods to satisfy him. He obtains riches, honours or pleasures, and is not satisfied, since such goods are finite, and he has been created for the infinite Good. But if he finds God and unites to Him, he is calmed and consoled, and desires nothing else.

Saint Augustine, while immersed in the sensual life, never found peace; but when he gave himself up to God, confessed and said to the Lord: "Now I know, O God!, that all is sorrow and vanity, and that in You alone is true peace of soul." And thus, taught by experience, he wrote: "What do you seek, little man, looking for goods? Seek the One Good, in which all others are enclosed."

King David, after having sinned, went to hunt in his gardens, and to banquets, and to all the pleasures of a monarch. But the feasts and attractions and other creatures he was enjoying, spoke to him in their way: "David, do you want to find peace and contentment in us? We cannot satisfy you. Seek your God, He alone can satisfy you." And so David groaned amid his pleasures and exclaimed: "Tears are my bread day and night, while my enemies afflict me saying, 'where is your God in whom you trust so much?'"

And on the contrary, how God knows ways to make the faithful souls who love Him happy! Saint Francis of Assisi, who had left all for God, found himself unshod, half dead from cold and hunger, dressed in rags, yet by just exclaiming: “My God and my all”, felt inexpressible and heavenly joy.

Saint Francis Borgia, on his journeys as a religious, had often to sleep on a pile of straw, and felt such great consolation that it deprived him of sleep. Likewise, Saint Philip Neri, detached and free of all things, did not succeed in resting due to the consolations that God gave him in such a degree, that the Saint said: “My Jesus, let me rest.”

The Jesuit Father Charles of Lorraine, from the house of the Princes of Lorraine, sometimes danced for joy at being in his poor cell. Saint Francis Xavier, in his apostolic work in India, bared his chest exclaiming: “Enough, Lord! No more consolation, my heart cannot bear it.” Saint Teresa said that a drop of heavenly consolation gives greater joy than all the pleasures and amusements of the world. And truly, the Lord cannot fail in His promises; and He offered to give those who leave the goods of this world for love of Him, still in this life, a hundredfold in peace and joy.

What then do we go about looking for? Let us seek Jesus Christ, who calls us and says: “Come to Me all you who are weary and are burdened, and I will relieve you.” The soul that loves God finds this peace which exceeds all the pleasures and satisfactions the world and the senses can give us.

The truth is that in this life even the Saints suffer; for earth is a place to merit, and there is no merit without suffering; yet, as Saint Bonaventure says, divine love is like honey, which makes the bitterest things sweet and agreeable. Whoever loves God, loves the divine will, and hence spiritually enjoys trials, because by embracing them he knows that he pleases and gratifies the Lord.

O my God! Sinners despise the spiritual life without having tried it. They only consider, says Saint Bernard, the mortifications God’s lovers undergo and the pleasures of which they deprive themselves; but do not see the ineffable spiritual delights with which the Lord regales and caresses them. Oh, if sinners could taste the peace enjoyed by the soul that loves God alone! “Taste and see how sweet is the Lord”, says David.

Begin, then, to meditate daily, to commune frequently, to visit the Most Blessed Sacrament devoutly; begin to leave the world and give yourself up to God, and you will see how the Lord, shortly after consecrating yourself to him, gives you greater consolation than the world with all its pleasures gave you. “Try for yourself and you will see.” Whoever does not, cannot understand how God contents a soul that loves Him.

O how blind you were when you abandoned your Redeemer, Sovereign Good and fount of all consolation, and gave yourself up to the miserable and fleeting pleasures of this world! Your blindness should astonish you, but even more His mercy, and how He left nothing undone so that you might love Him and to show you how much He yearns for your love. Be it a glory of His omnipotence to make your heart, previously captive of earthly attachments, from now on blaze with love for God.

Bad habits: One of the greatest misfortunes which Adam’s fall brought us, is our leaning towards sin. The Apostle lamented this, seeing himself moved by concupiscence towards the same evils he abhorred: “For the good I wish, I do not do; but the evil I do not wish, I indeed do. And if I do what I do not wish, that is under the impulse of the law of sin or law of the flesh dwelling within me” (Romans). From this it follows that for us, contaminated by this concupiscence and surrounded by so many enemies moving us to evil, it will be difficult to reach glory without fault.

Acknowledging this frailty we have, I now ask: What would you say of a traveller who, having to cross the sea during a frightful storm in a ship half wrecked, wanted to load it with such a heavy cargo that, even without storms and though the ship were the most seaworthy there can be, the load would be enough to sink it? What prediction would you make for the life of that traveller? Well, think the same of the man of bad habits and morals, who has to cross the stormy sea of this life, in which so many lose their souls, and has to use a flimsy and ruinous boat, his body, to which his soul is united.

What would happen if we load it further still with the irresistible weight of sinful habits? It is hard for such sinners to be saved, because bad habits blind the spirit, harden the heart and probably lead to complete obstinacy at the hour of death.

Firstly, a bad habit blinds us. Why did the Saints always ask God to enlighten them, and feared to become the world’s most abominable sinners? Because they knew that if they were to lose divine light they could commit frightful crimes.

And how many Christians live obstinately in sin until, refusing every remedy, they damn themselves? Because sin blinds, and hence they are lost. All guilt bears with it blindness, and with sins on the increase, the sinner’s blindness increases. God is our light, and the further the soul withdraws from God, the blinder she becomes, and will be filled with vices.

Just as in a vessel full of earth the sun's light cannot enter, so divine light cannot enter a heart full of vices. Therefore we frequently see certain sinners, with no light to guide them, go from sin to sin, without even thinking of amendment. Those unhappy ones, fallen into a dark ditch, know only how to commit sins and talk of them; they think of nothing but sin, nor hardly know how great an evil sin is.

“The sinful habit itself,” says Saint Augustine, “does not allow the sinner to see the evil he does.” Hence they live as though they did not believe in the existence of God, glory, Hell and eternity.

And it happens that the sin which at first caused horror, owing to the bad habit, no longer causes horror. They are like straw before the wind. See how easily straw is wafted along by any light breeze; well we shall also see many who, before falling, resisted, at least for a time, and battled against temptation; but then, with the bad habit acquired, fall at once in any temptation, at any opportunity they are offered to sin. And why? Because the bad habit deprived them of light.

Saint Anselm says that the devil acts with certain sinners like someone who has a little bird tied by a ribbon. He lets it fly, but when he wants, brings it down again to the ground. Such are those dominated by a bad habit, says the Saint.

And some, adds Saint Bernardine of Siena, sin without the need for any occasion. They are, as this great Saint says, like windmills, which any breeze can turn, and continue turning, though without grain to grind, and even at times when the miller does not want them to turn. These sinners, observes Saint John Chrysostom, go on forging bad thoughts without any occasion, without pleasure, almost against their will, tyrannized by the strength of the bad habit.



Because, as Saint Augustine says, the bad habit later becomes a need. The habit, as Saint Bernard notes, turns into nature. So that, just as man needs to breathe, to those who continually sin and become slaves of the devil, sinning seems necessary to them.

I said slaves, because servants work for their wages; but slaves serve by force, without any pay. And some wretches reach that point – they sin without desire or pleasure.

The godless man, after having reached the depths of sin, does not mind; that is, the sinner, obstinate in bad habits, sunk in that tenebrous chasm, despises any correction, sermon, censure, Hell, and even God: he despises

all, and becomes like the voracious vulture that, so as not to leave the carcass it feeds on, prefers to let the hunters kill it.

Father Recúpito tells that a man condemned to death, on his way to the gibbet, raised his eyes and, for having glanced at a girl, consented to a bad thought. And Father Gisolfo narrates that a blasphemer, also condemned to death, proffered a blasphemy at the same moment that the executioner turned him off the ladder to hang him.

With what insistence we should pray for habitual sinners, and have compassion on them as in dire danger of damnation. Will they want to leave the precipice into which they have fallen, if they neither look nor see it? A miracle of grace would be needed, for if not, they will not even open their eyes at particular judgement, but in Hell, when the knowledge of their misfortune will solely cause them to weep their madness more bitterly. Here are included those who sin against the Holy Ghost, consciously obstinate in evil, out of scorn for the means of salvation. Obstancy in sin is when the inspirations of grace and the wholesome counsels of virtuous persons are rejected with refined malice and rebellion against God. Deliberate impenitence is when a man continues so fixedly in his bad habits that he arrives at the obstancy of never repenting for his sins and of resisting any inspiration of grace which could move him to repentance. When any sin against the Holy Ghost reaches the maximum degree of obstancy, it is in practice unforgivable, not because God is not ready to forgive, but because the impenitent person closes off the channels of grace in such a way that it becomes impossible for him to receive it; for decidedly he does not wish to be saved, and God necessarily respects his free will.

“Christ desires the salvation of all men; but lamentably not all men are saved. Many go to Hell, to the eternal fire of Hell. But it is not the fault of Christ; it is the fault of man, who is a fool; it is the fault of man who, through pride, rejects grace”, Saint Gregory XVII said in a sermon.

The Lord has bestowed His benefits upon you, favouring you more than others; whereas you perhaps have showered Him with offences, insulting Him more than many others. You forgot God, but God has not forgotten you; He is to be recognized by the light with which He now illuminates your soul; and since He gives you that divine light, ask Him too for strength to serve Him faithfully. Though you be full of vices, Jesus is omnipotent and can well fill your souls with His holy love, if you ask Him trustingly.

Besides, bad habits harden the heart. God allows this in justice as chastisement for the resistance made to His callings. The Apostle says that, “even though God’s mercy is at the disposal of all, without excluding any man at all, nonetheless He often abandons the hard of heart obstinate in evil to their own iniquity” (Romans). Saint Augustine explains that God does not abandon the habitual sinner at once, but deprives him of graces as punishment for the ingratitude and obstinacy with which he rejected the graces He had previously granted him; and in this state, the sinner’s heart becomes as hard as if it were of stone.

Thus it happens that while some are touched and weep at hearing preach on the rigour of divine judgement, the pains of the damned or the Passion of Christ, those sinners with hardened hearts are not even moved. They speak and hear speak of it all with indifference, as though dealing with things which do not matter to them; and with the bad habits, their conscience hardens ever further.

Hence neither sudden deaths, nor earthquakes, thunder and lightning succeed in shaking them up and bringing them back to their senses; they would rather settle into the torpor of death, in which, lost, they repose. The bad habits gradually destroy remorse of conscience, in such a way that, to those who habitually sin, the most enormous sins appear as nothing. By sinning, as Saint Jerome says, they lose even that certain shame that sin by nature produces.

Saint Peter compares them to the pig that wallows in the mire, for just as this unclean animal does not notice the reek of the mire it wallows in, so those sinners are the only ones unaware of the stench of their guilt, which everyone else perceives and detests. And given that the mire takes away including their ability to see, what marvel is it, says Saint Bernardine, that they do not come to their senses, even with God’s hand scourging them? Hence, instead of sorrowing for their sins, they rejoice, laugh and boast of them.

What do these signs of such diabolical hardness mean? asks Saint Thomas of Villanueva, the Holy Almsgiver. They are all signs of eternal damnation. Fear then, lest the same happen to you. If you have some bad habit, make sure to free yourself from it now that God is calling you. And while your conscience troubles you, rejoice, for it is a sign that God has not yet abandoned you. But amend and leave that state swiftly, for if not, the wound will become gangrenous and you will be lost.

How often has the Lord called you, and you resisted! And instead of serving Him and loving Him for having freed you from Hell and for having sought you out so tenderly, perhaps you continued to provoke His indignation and responded with offences. Must you go on offending Him always? No, no more. You have offended Him enough; do not choose to outrage His patience further. Only God, Infinite Goodness, has been able to bear with you up till now, but He could, with good reason, suffer you no longer. Ask God to have pity on your soul, not for your merits, of little worth, but for those of His Son, our Redeemer, in Whom lies our hope.

Having lost our guiding light, with heart hardened, is it surprising that the sinner comes to a bad end dying obstinate in his delinquency? The righteous go ahead by straight paths and, on the contrary, those who habitually sin always go by wayward paths. If they abandon sin for a short while, they soon relapse; so that they are in imminent danger of damnation.

Some of them might want to amend before death arrives. But this is precisely where the difficulty lies: that someone so used to sinning amend even in old age. The youth, having gone his own way, will not leave that way even when elderly; and the reason for this, says Saint Thomas of Villanueva, consists in that our strength is so pitiful, that the soul deprived of grace cannot go on without committing new sins.

And besides, would it not be great madness for us to propose to play a match and voluntarily lose all we possess, hoping that we will be compensated in the final game? Well it is no less folly for one living in sin to hope that at the last moment of life he will put everything right. Can the Ethiopian change his skin colour or the leopard its spots? Well neither can one who has perverse and deep-rooted habits lead a virtuous life, but in the end will yield himself up to despair and end his days disastrously.

Saint Gregory I says that anyone assaulted by enemies, though he be wounded once, can usually continue to defend himself; but if he is wounded again and again, he starts to lose strength, until finally he dies. Thus it is with sin. The first time, the second, leaves the sinner with some strength (always by way of the grace assisting him); but if he continues to sin, the sin becomes a giant, while the sinner, on the contrary, ever weaker and with so many wounds, cannot avoid death.

Sin can be compared to a great stone that crushes the spirit; and for one with the habit of sinning to be converted, Saint Bernard says, is as difficult as for a man buried under great rocks and lacking the strength to move them, to free himself from the weight crushing him.

Am I then damned and without hope? one of those unhappy sinners might perhaps ask. No, not yet, if you truly wish to amend. But grievous ills require heroic remedies. If a sick man in danger of death does not want to take his medicine, since he is unaware of the gravity of his illness, the doctor tells him that, by not taking the

remedies he orders, he must die without fail. What will the patient reply? "I am ready to obey in everything. My life is at stake!" Well, you must do the same. If you habitually fall into any sin, you are ill, and from that illness, as Saint Thomas of Villanueva says, there is seldom a cure. You are in great danger of damnation.

Nevertheless, if you want to get well, here is the remedy. You should not wait for a miracle of grace. You should resolutely force yourself to avoid dangerous occasions, flee from bad company and resist temptation, commending yourself to God. Make use of the means: frequent confession, daily spiritual reading, and devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, imploring Her continually to help you gain strength not to relapse. You have to dominate and do violence to yourself. Otherwise the Lord's warning will apply to you, "your sin will lead your souls to eternal death." And if you take no remedy now, when God is enlightening you, later you will hardly be able to find the cure.



Listen to the Lord, who tells you as He did Lazarus: "Come forth". He tells you: "Poor sinner already dead! Come forth from the sepulchre of your bad life." Respond quickly and give yourself up to God, and take care lest this be His last calling.

Must you wait until God abandons you and sends you off to Hell? Be swift and resolve to change your life and give yourself up to God. Consider what you should do, and put it into practice. Ask the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Advocatrix of sinners, to succour you and show you the way to Heaven. Since God granted you so many graces when you were living so far from Him, you can hope now for many more, when you turn to Him resolved that He be your one love, your life and your all.

Deceits that the enemy suggests to the sinner: Imagine that a youth, guilty of grave sins, has confessed and recovered divine Grace. The devil again tempts him to relapse into his sins. The youth still resists; but soon wavers at the deceits the enemy suggests to him. To him we would say: "What would you do? For a vile satisfaction are you to lose God's sublime grace, which you have reconquered and whose worth exceeds that of the entire world? Will you sign your eternal death sentence yourself, damning yourself to everlasting suffering in Hell?" "No," he will reply, "I do not want to be damned, but to save my soul. Were I to commit that sin, I will confess it later." See the tempter's first deceit: Confess afterwards! But meanwhile the soul is lost!

Tell me: if you held a beautiful gemstone of great price in your hand, would you throw it into the river, saying: tomorrow I will look for it carefully and hope to find it? Well, in your hand you have the precious gem of your soul, which Jesus Christ purchased with His Blood; you deliberately throw it into Hell, for by sinning you are on the way to damnation, and say that you will recover it by Confession.

But if you don't recover it? To recover it requires true repentance, which is a gift of God, and God may not grant it to you. You need the firm will not to offend God, something that today you don't have. And if death arrives and robs you of the time to confess?

You assure yourself that you will not let a week go by without confessing your faults. And who has offered to give you that week? You say you will confess tomorrow. And who promises you the day of tomorrow? God, says Saint Augustine, has not promised you the day of tomorrow; perhaps He will grant it to you, perhaps not, as has happened to many, who went to sleep healthy the night before and at daybreak were dead. How many, in the very act of sinning, the Lord sent death, and at particular judgement damned themselves to Hell! And if the same were to happen to you, how would you be able to remedy your eternal perdition?

Be persuaded then that with this deceit of saying, 'I will confess afterwards', the devil has taken thousands and thousands of souls off to Hell. For hardly a sinner can be found so desperate as to want to damn himself. Very many, on sinning, sin with the hope of later being reconciled with God. Hence so many unhappy souls have been damned, and thus made any remedy impossible.

Perhaps you will say that you cannot resist the temptation you are offered. This is the second deceit the enemy suggests to you, making you believe that you don't have the strength to combat and overcome your passions. In the first place, you should know that, as the Apostle says (I Corinthians.): "God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength."

Besides, if you lack the will to resist now, how can you hope to do so later, with the enemy induces you without cease to fresh sins, he stronger than before, and you weaker? If you believe you cannot extinguish the flame now, how can you hope to do so later, when it will far more violent? You affirm that God will help you. But He gives His powerful help to you right now; why not make use of it to resist? Do you hope, perhaps, that God will increase His help and His grace when you have increased your guilt?

If you want greater succour and strength, why not ask it of God? Do you perhaps doubt the Lord's fidelity, who promised to grant everything asked of Him? God does not forget His promises. Turn to Him and He will

give you the strength you need to resist temptation. God, as the Council of Trent says, does not command the impossible. On giving the precept, He wants us to do what we can, with the actual help He offers; and if that help is not enough for us to resist, exhorts us to ask for more which, asking as we should, He will grant us.

God has been so benevolent towards you. Is that why you have been so ungrateful towards Him? You separated from God, and God sought you out. He lavished you with goods, and perhaps you offended Him. Though solely for the goodness He has shown you, you should be enamoured of God, for in the measure you increased your guilt, He increased the graces for you to amend.

An ancient Latin hymn called 'Memento mori' (remember that you are to die), said: "Life is short and will soon end. Death comes swiftly and respects no one. Death destroys all and pities no one. All rush quickly towards death; let us cease to sin. If not converted and you be not like a child and live a better life, you shall not enter blessed into the Kingdom of God."



You say that "the Lord is a God of mercy." Here the third deceit is concealed, very frequent among sinners, and for which no few are damned. A wise author writes that God's mercy sends more souls to Hell than His justice, because sinners, rashly trusting in His mercy, cease not to sin, and are lost.

The Lord is a God of mercy, who denies it? And yet how many souls plunge into Hell every day! Truly He is merciful, but also just; and is therefore compelled to chastise one who offends Him. He shows mercy to those who fear Him: "Et misericordia ejus a progénie in progénies tíméntibus eum."

But with those who despise Him and abuse divine clemency to offend Him further, only God's justice can respond. And with grave motive, for the Lord forgives sin, but cannot forgive wilfulness to sin.

Whoever sins, says Saint Augustine, thinking that he will repent after having sinned, is not a penitent, but a mocker and scorner of God. Besides, the Apostle warns us (Galatians) that "no one mocks God"; And what greater mockery can there be than to offend Him however and whenever we wish, and then aspire to glory?

"But just as in my past life God has been so merciful to me, I hope He will be so in the future as well." This is the fourth deceit. So, because the Lord has been compassionate towards you up till now, must He always be clement and never chastise you? On the contrary, however greater His clemency has been, the more you should fear that He will not pardon you again, and chastise you rigorously scarcely after offending Him once more. Do not say that you have sinned, and received no chastisement, for in the end the Most High will give us our deserts, as Ecclesiasticus teaches: "Neither say: 'I sinned: and what evil has befallen me for that?' Because God, though patient and long-suffering, will give you your deserts."

When His mercy reaches the limit He has determined for each sinner, He then chastises for all the faults the ingrate committed. And the punishment will be so much the keener the longer the time God awaited the culprit, says Saint Gregory.

If you see, then, that despite your multiple offences to God, you have still not been chastised, you should say: "Lord, great is my gratitude, for You have freed me from the Hell which I so often deserved." Consider that for faults in life considerably less grave than yours, many sinners have been irremissibly damned, and try moreover to satisfy for your sins by the practice of patience and other good works.

The benevolence God has showed you should encourage you not only to cease offending Him, but also to serve and ever to love Him, since He has shown you immense compassion, denied to many others.

What a pity to be a poor sinner, an infamous traitor, ashamed to appear in the presence of your Jesus crucified, your Redeemer and your God. How often you have scorned Him! How often have you promised to offend Him no more! But perhaps your promises were so many more betrayals, for as soon as you were offered the chance to sin, you forgot God and abandoned Him again. Decide to change your life and love Him as much as you have offended Him.

"I am still young. God has compassion on the young. I will give myself up to Him later." Let us consider this fifth deceit. You are young: but don't you know that God doesn't count the years, rather only the sins of each? How many have you committed? There will be many elderly who have not done the tenth part of all you have.

Saint Alphonsus Mary: Are you unaware that the Lord has determined the weight and number of the faults He is to forgive each sinner? The Lord is patient and suffers and waits up to a certain point, but as soon as the measure of sin reaches the limit He wills to forgive, pardon ceases and chastisement is executed, sending

sudden death to the sinner in the state of disgrace in which he is found, or abandoning him to his sin, which is a punishment worse than death.

If you have land to cultivate and you fence it in, and despite having worked for many years and spent considerable sums on it, you see that, despite all, it yields no fruit at all, what will you do? You will tear down the fence and leave it abandoned.

Fear that God may do the same to you. If you continue sinning, you will gradually lose remorse of conscience; you will not think of eternity or of your soul; you will almost completely lose the light that guides us, and end up by losing all fear. Well, with that, the barrier that protected you is now torn down. God's Holy Wrath will now strike.

Finally, let us examine the last deception. You say: "It is true that by this sin I will lose God's grace and probably be condemned to Hell. It may happen that I damn myself; but it could also happen that later I will confess and save myself." That may be. Perhaps you will be saved. We can't be sure that after this fresh sin God will not still forgive you, but you are now closing the gates to grace by that sin against the Holy Ghost, namely presumption, which can even prevent you from repenting.

But don't deny that, if after so many graces as the Lord has granted you, you still offend Him again; it is only too easy that you be lost forever. This is made patent in Sacred Scripture: "The man of obstinate heart will



fare badly on the day of judgement" (Ecclesiasticus). "Those who proceed with malice aforethought will be wiped out" (Psalm). "Whoever now sows to excite his fleshly appetites will afterwards reap fruit of eternal death" (Galatians). "We well know that vengeance is reserved to God, and that it is He who is to wreak that vengeance when He judges those who work iniquity" (Hebrews). "The perverse heart will become increasingly hardened in evil; and the obstinate sinner will pile up sin upon sin" (Ecclesiasticus).

Thus does Sacred Scripture speak of the obstinate sinner, and thus do reason and justice require. And yet you say that, despite all, perhaps you will be saved. It is not impossible, but is it not utter madness to trust eternal salvation to a "perhaps", and to a "perhaps" so risky? Is this a business of such little importance that we can place it at such grave risk?

How many, who will have offended God less than you, have not received the inspirations He now gives you! You well see that God desires to save you, and you must unite your desires to His, so as to be able to extol His mercy eternally in Heaven.

It is highly important to accustom yourself to overcoming the deceptions and temptations of the devil, thus to fortify yourself, and so be able to overcome the terrible battles at the hour of death. *'Ars moriendi'*, a popular book in the fifteenth century, explained the art of dying well, and showed that dying has its advantages, and that whoever imitates the life of Christ and loves God should not fear it; but said that it is needful to overcome the temptations which generally assault the dying: lack of faith, despair, impatience, spiritual pride, presumption and avarice.

On Particular Judgement: "All must obligatorily appear before Christ's tribunal at Particular Judgement." (II Corinthians). Let us consider the appearance by the culprit, the accusation, examination and sentence at this trial. Firstly, the appearance of the soul before the Judge: Particular Judgement takes place the very instant a man expires; in the same place where the soul separates from the body, that soul is judged by Our Lord Jesus Christ, who will not delegate His power, but will Himself come to judge the case. "At the hour you least expect the Son of Man will come" (Gospel). "He will come lovingly for the good," says Saint Augustine, "and terrifyingly for those obstinate in evil."

Oh, what frightful fear will take hold of one who, on appearing before the Redeemer, also sees His divine wrath! "At His indignant Face, who can survive? Who shall be able to resist the Wrath of His fury?" (Nahum). Meditating on this, Saint Louis de la Puente trembled in such a way that his cell shook. Venerable Father Juvenal Ancina was converted by hearing the singing of the *'Dies irae'* (poem describing the day of the Last Judgement, with the last trumpet calling the dead up before the divine throne, where the elect will be saved and the damned immersed in the eternal flames). Because on considering the consternation of the soul in sin going up to judgement, he resolved to leave the world; and in effect did so, saying: "I fear that when I appear before God, He will compare my life to the example of the Saints, and say to me: See what you should have done, and out of negligence omitted; judge for yourself – what do you deserve?"

For whoever rejects the Divine Mary's discourse, the anger of the Judge will announce eternal misfortune; and will grieve souls more than the very pains of Hell, says Saint Bernard.

Fear sometimes causes icy sweat to break out on criminals appearing before the judges of the earth. The conspirator Pison, dressed as a criminal, appeared before the Senate, and such was his confusion and shame, that right there he killed himself. What deep affliction strikes a son or a good vassal on seeing his father or lord deeply irate!

Well, far greater affliction will take hold of the damned soul when he sees the indignation of Jesus Christ, whom he despised! Angered and implacable, this Divine Lamb, who in the world was so patient and loving, will appear to him, and the soul, despairing, will cry out for the mountains to fall upon him and hide him from the ire of God: "Many of the Earth's inhabitants, kings, princes, tribunes, rich, influential, slaves and freemen, overcome by dread, took to flight, and hid in the caverns and rocky crevices in the mountains, and said to the mountains: 'Fall upon us and hide us from the presence of the Almighty who is seated on the white horse, for He is letting His divine justice fall implacably upon us, and who shall be able to keep to his feet?'" (Apocalypse).

Speaking of judgement, the Gospel says that "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn. And they shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of Heaven with great power and majesty." To see their Judge in human form will increase the grief of sinners; for the presence of that Man who died to save them will remind them deeply of the ingratitude with which they have offended Him.

After the glorious Ascension of the Lord, the Prophets said to His disciples: "This Jesus, who in your sight has ascended into Heaven, will return in His Second Coming as you have seen Him go up into Heaven." The Saviour, then, will come to judge us displaying those same sacred Wounds He had when He left the earth. "Great joy for those righteous who contemplate Him, great fear for those sinners who put off their conversion", says Rupert. Those blessed Wounds will console the righteous and fill hardened sinners with dread.

What will the sinner reply to Jesus Christ? Will he perhaps dare to ask Him for clemency when he realizes how much he despised that same clemency? What will he do, then when he sees Hell wide open beneath, to one side the sins accusing him, on the other the devil prepared to take him, and within him conscience gnawing and chastising? Will he then listen to the Most Holy Virgin when She exhorts him to be humble and beg forgiveness? And if he continues stubborn in his sins, how will he flee from the angered Judge?

Always call on your Jesus, for His Name consoles and heartens, reminding you that He is your Saviour and that He died to redeem you. Humble yourself at His feet, and ask pardon of Him now, before He comes to judge you. Now is when you can implore clemency and hope for it with assurance. His sacred Wounds, which will then terrify hardened sinners, now give you hope.

Besides, Extreme Unction works in a very special way when those who receive it are seriously ill and dying. They become exceedingly fortified for the last combat and for facing the ordeal of death with Christian resignation; and in this way gain greater glory in Heaven.

Consider the accusation and examination: the trial begins and the books are opened. There will be two books: the Gospel and the conscience. In the Gospel will be read what the culprit should have done; in the conscience, what he did. On the scales of Divine Justice, men's wealth, rank and nobility will not enter, only actions, nothing more. "You have been weighed in the balance and found wanting in good works", says Daniel to king Balthassar. That is, according to Father Álvarez' commentary, "his gold and riches were not placed on the scales, only the king."

Then the devil will arrive with his deceitful discourse. Satan, as seducer, will seek to incline the balance in his favour by praising the culprit and telling him that he did well to sin, and thus seduce him so that he later reject the Divine Mary's discourse and decide to be damned. As prosecutor, Satan, in his lying discourse, will tell Christ that the culprit did wrong and detested the light and Graces of salvation; and in this way endeavour to have the Supreme Judge give sentence of damnation.

Saint Augustine says that the enemy will be at Christ's tribunal, to seduce the soul so that it damn itself eternally, and will bring up all the promises made and then forgotten and afterwards left unfulfilled, and will adduce his faults, indicating the day and hour he committed them. "He will remind us of all we have done, the day, the hour in which we sinned." Then he will say to the dying man: "I have suffered nothing for you. But you abandoned Christ, who gave His life to save you, and have become a slave of mine. You belong to me." He will also remind him of all his Guardian Angel did over the years seeking the salvation of the sinner who yet despised every inspiration and warning. And will present before the culprit the examples of the Saints, all the lights and inspirations which God gave him, and all the years of life He granted him to do good. Thus will Satan incite the dying man to rebel against God and fall into despair, and thus reject salvation.

Even the walls, witnesses to the sins of the culprit, will be his accusers: "The stones of the walls of the building in which he dwells shall raise an outcry against him" (Habacuc); and his own conscience will accuse

him. The sins, says Saint Bernard, will cry out saying: “You committed us, we are your work and we will not abandon you.”

Then comes the discourse of the Divine Mary and, for the soul in mortal sin, this discourse is to indoctrinate, convert, and thus give him the possibility of saving himself. Mary Most Holy will tell him all that Christ suffered to save him, and thus encourage him to be humble and ask forgiveness, and make an act of love for God who, desiring the salvation of all, now gives him this last saving opportunity.

There is also the examination. The Lord says “Meticulously shall I scrutinize the city” (Sophonias): He will do so with the light of a lamp which penetrates every corner of the house, writes Mendoza. “I tell you that for even an idle word spoken by men, they shall have to render an account on the day of judgement; for by your words you shall be acknowledged as righteous and by your words you shall be damned,” said the Lord. You will even have to give an account of glances, declares Saint Anselm.

Just as gold is purified and assayed, separating it from the dross, so will confessions, communions and other good works be assayed and examined. In brief, Saint Peter says that at judgement with difficulty will the just be saved: “If the righteous person, even with his prayer, labour and affliction, has great difficulty in obtaining salvation, how much more so the ungodly!”

If an account must be given for every idle word, what then of so many bad thoughts consented, so many impure words? Especially those who scandalized, who robbed the Lord of countless souls, will clearly see how abominable their deeds were.

What then will the sinner do, having to render accounts to God, and find himself immersed in the mire of his crimes? We hope that, at this supreme moment, he be able to humble himself sincerely and implore forgiveness, as did the Good Thief on Calvary, and so die in an act of love for God and save himself. If he does not so act, he is rejecting eternal salvation and choosing to live with the other reprobates, separated forever from God. This acceptance or rejection of salvation by the one judged is the auto-determination of his eternal destiny.



For the actions of the culprit, the Supreme Judge will give him the fruit of his hands, that is, will repay him in accord with his deeds: “I will judge, says the Lord, each according to his works” (Ezechiel).

If Jesus wanted to repay you now according to your works, perhaps your recompense would be Hell. How often have you written out your own sentence to that abyss of torments. What would become of you if you were judged at this moment? Trustingly ask Mary Most Holy to look upon your great misery, and take pity on you.

In short, for the soul to attain eternal salvation, judgement has to make plain that the life of that soul is in accord with Christ's. For that reason we should tremble on thinking: “What shall I do when God rises up to judge me? And when He asks me, what am I to reply?” What then shall the sinner do, what shall he reply to Jesus Christ the Judge? He will do the same as that man the Gospel speaks of, who turned up at the banquet without a wedding suit. He did not know what to answer, and kept silent. His very guilt closed his lips. Shame, says Saint Basil, will be a greater torture for the sinner than the very flames of Hell.

Particular Judgement is the mysterious and merciful last salvific opportunity given by Christ at the hour of death to every human being. At that moment, the deceased who reaches the presence of Christ, Supreme Judge at clinical death in mortal sin, will first hear Satan's deceitful discourse, which is to seduce the soul, in order that he damn himself eternally. He will then hear the Divine Mary's discourse, which is to instruct and convert, and thus give the soul the opportunity to save himself. Thanks to the discourse of the Divine Mary, no one is saved or damned without having known the true Faith, since outside the true Church there is no possible salvation.

The person who reaches clinical death in mortal sin must decide his eternal destiny. If he accepts the Divine Mary's discourse rejecting Satan, his mortal and venial sins are forgiven him and he receives Sanctifying Grace, is confirmed in Grace and will save himself. But if he accepts Satan's discourse rejecting the Divine Mary, he will be confirmed in disgrace and damn himself.

Once the soul being judged decides his own eternal destiny, Christ, as Supreme Judge, gives the sentence: salvation, if the soul accepted the discourse of the Divine Mary, rejecting Satan; damnation, if the soul accepted the discourse of Satan, rejecting the Divine Mary.

Immediately after sentence comes true death, when the soul and essential body separate, and the soul goes to her eternal destiny: to Heaven, if saved, and not in need of purification first in Purgatory; to Hell, if damned.

In this last case, the Judge will dictate the sentence: “Depart from Me, accursed of My Father; go to the everlasting fire.” “Oh, how terrible that thunder will sound,” says Dionysius the Carthusian. “Whoever does not tremble at that horrendous thunder, is not asleep, but dead,” exclaims Saint Anselm; and Saint Eusebius adds that the terror of the damned on hearing their sentence will be so immense, that if they were not by then immortal, they would die at that instant.

“Then,” as Saint Thomas of Villanueva writes, “it will no longer be time to implore, there will no longer be intercessors to have recourse to. And to whom will they turn? Perhaps to the God whom they despised? Perhaps to the Saints, to the Virgin Mary? Ah, no! Because that is the day of retribution.”

“O God!”, exclaims Saint Thomas of Villanueva, cited above, “with what indifference we hear speak of judgement, as if we could not deserve the sentence of damnation, or as if we did not have to be judged. What madness to be unconcerned amid such risks!” Do not say, Saint Augustine warns us: “Ah! will God want to send me to Hell?” Don’t ever say that.

Neither did the Hebrews let themselves be convinced that they would be exterminated, and many of the reprobate boasted that they would never receive the eternal pains. But at last the chastisement came: “The end is coming, the end is now coming... I will unleash My just fury and judge you according to your bad actions, and lay all your abominations before you” (Ezechiel).

Well, the same will happen to you. At the day of judgement you will see that God’s threats are real.

Now it is still for us to choose the sentence we prefer. And to do this, we have to settle our souls’ accounts before judgement arrives, for, as Saint Bonaventure says, prudent merchants, so as not to err, frequently revise and adjust their accounts: “Before judgement we can placate the Judge; but at judgement, it is not so easy.”

Let us, then, say to the Lord as did Saint Bernard: “I want to present myself to You already judged and not to be judged.” I want, O Judge of my soul! that You judge and chastise me in this life, for now is the time of mercy and forgiveness; after real death there will only be time for justice.

If you do not placate God’s wrath now, perhaps it will be impossible later. But how can you do so, having despised His friendship so many times for vile and wretched pleasures? If you offer Him the Blood and Death of Jesus Christ, His Son, His justice will be placated and superabundantly satisfied. Necessary, as well, is your repentance, and that you sincerely detest your guilt.

On universal judgement: In the world, if we think about it well, no one is more despised than Our Lord Jesus Christ. A poor labourer is attended better than God Himself; out of fear that the labourer, if he feels too insulted or oppressed, might take vengeance, moved by violent rage. Yet God is offended and outraged without scruple, as though unable to chastise when He so wishes.



For these reasons, the Redeemer has destined the Day of Universal Judgement, with reason called in Scripture ‘the Day of the Lord’, in which Jesus Christ is to be acknowledged by all as Universal and Sovereign Lord of all things. The Lord who imparts Justice will be known.

That day is not called day of mercy and forgiveness, but “Day of Wrath, that tremendous day: day of tribulation and of affliction, day of calamity and of misery” (Sophonias). Because on it the honour and glory which sinners tried to rob from the Lord in this world will be justly compensated. Let us see how judgement is to occur on that great day:

Before the Divine Judge appears, a terrible fire from Heaven will precede Him, which will burn the earth and everything on it (II Peter). Hence the palaces, temples, cities, peoples and kingdoms will all become a heap of ashes.

This world, contaminated by sin, must needs be purified by fire. Such is the end of all the riches, pomps and delights of the earth. The trumpet will sound and the dead will arise.

Saint Jerome said: “When I consider the day of judgement, I shudder. It always seems to me that I hear that trumpet sounding: ‘Arise, O dead, and come to My judgement’.” At the frightful sound of that voice the all beautiful souls of the Blessed will descend and unite to the bodies with which they served God in this world, and the hapless souls of the damned in Hell will unite to their accursed bodies, instruments for offending God.

What a difference will there then be between the bodies of the just and those of the damned! The just will appear beautiful, innocent, more resplendent than the sun. Happy the one who knew how to mortify his flesh in this life, denying it forbidden pleasures; and to restrain the flesh yet further, as did the Saints, maltreated it and rejected as well the licit pleasures of the senses!

How much will he rejoice for this reason!, as did Saint Peter of Alcántara, when shortly after death he appeared to Saint Teresa of Jesus and told her: “O happy penance that won for me so great a glory.” And on the contrary, the bodies of the reprobate will appear deformed, black and foul-smelling.

Ah! What grief will the damned feel on uniting to their bodies! The soul will say: "Accursed body, to satisfy you I am lost." And the body will say: "Accursed soul, you who were endowed with reason, why did you grant me those delights which have caused your ruin and mine for all eternity?"

Ask your Redeemer Jesus, who is to be your Judge one day, to forgive you before that terrible day arrives. You did wrong by offending God and forsaking Him, undeserving of your detestable conduct. Be remorseful and repent of it with all your heart. Do not wish for any other Judge than Jesus, for, as Saint Thomas of Villanueva said: "Gladly do I submit to the judgement of the One who died for me, and who so as not to condemn me, willed to be condemned Himself to the Cross." Saint Paul already said: "As it is God who justifies and defends His elect, who shall dare to condemn them? Because Christ Jesus Himself, who died for us... is the One who intercedes for us." But if He does not help you, you will be unable to love Him.

Hardly will the dead have risen, than the Lord will ordain that all gather in the Valley of Josaphat to be judged, as the Prophet Joel announced, and there will separate the righteous from the reprobate, as the Gospel says: "And when the Son of Man shall come in His Majesty, and all the Angels and other Blessed with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And all the peoples shall be gathered before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He shall place the sheep at His right hand, and the goats at His left." Anyone who finds himself ostracized from society or from the Church feels deep grief. How much more so to be excluded from the company of the Saints! What confusion will the impious feel when, separated from the righteous, they find themselves abandoned!

Saint John Chrysostom says that if the damned had no other pains, that confusion would be enough to give them the torments of Hell. There will be children separated from parents; husbands from wives, masters from servants. Say, where do you think you will be then? Do you want to be at the right? Well then, forsake the way that leads to the left!

In this world, princes and the wealthy are deemed fortunate, and the Saints, the poor and the humble are despised. O faithful who love God! Do not be pained on being so tried and disparaged on earth. "Your sadness will turn to joy" (Gospel).

Then truly will they call you happy, and will honour you by admitting you into Christ's court. With what heavenly beauty will shine out a Saint Peter of Alcántara, who was insulted as if he were an apostate, or a Saint John of God, ridiculed as a lunatic! What glory will those martyrs win who were torn to pieces by the executioners! And on the contrary, how horrible will be Herod, Annas, Mohammed, Henry VIII, and other potentates of the earth, forever damned!

O lovers of the world! To the valley, to that valley, I summon you. There, doubtless, you will change your tune; there you will weep over your madness. Wretches! For playing a briefest part in the scenario of the world, you will then play the role of reprobates in the tragedy of Universal Judgement!

The elect will be at the right, and for greater glory will be raised up in the air, upon clouds, and with the Angels will await Jesus Christ, who is to come down from Heaven. The reprobate, at the left, like cattle fated for the slaughterhouse, will await their Judge, who is to make public the damnation of all His enemies.

Of a sudden, the Heavens open and the Angels appear to attend Judgement, bearing the signs of Christ's Passion, says Saint Thomas. The Holy Cross will be singularly resplendent, since three and a half years before the Return of Christ "in the immense vault of the Heavens there will appear the sign of the Son of Man, which will be the great Cross of our Redemption, to announce to all peoples the imminence of Christ's Return" (Creed).

"Oh, and how the sinners who despised their eternal salvation, so costly to the Son of God, shall weep on seeing the Cross!" says Cornelio a Lápide. Then the Wounds of the Lord will accuse sinners, as Saint John Chrysostom says: "The nails will complain of you, the Wounds will speak out against you, the Cross of Christ will cry out against you."

Assessors at this judgement will be the Holy Apostles and all those who imitated them and, with Jesus Christ will judge the peoples. There too will be the Queen of Angels and of men, Mary Most Holy. And, finally, the Eternal Judge will appear on a luminous throne of majesty. "And they shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of Heaven with great power and majesty" (Gospel). Christ says of the transgressors of His Holy Law: "I will banish them from My presence, and they shall be tormented by eternal fire" (Zacharias).

Christ's presence will bring the elect inexpressible consolation, and the reprobate greater pains than those of Hell itself, says Saint Jerome. Saint Teresa used to say: "My Jesus, give me any toil, but do not show me Your Face angered on that day." And Saint Basil says: "That confusion surpasses all pain." Then will occur that foretold by Saint John in the Apocalypse: that the damned will call on the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the sight of the angered Judge.

Ask your dearest Redeemer, Lamb of God, who came into the world not to chastise but to forgive sins, to forgive you, before the day arrives on which He is to judge you. Love your Judge, who has loved you so dearly. Ask Him, by the love He has shown you by dying for you on the Cross, to give you so lofty a grace that from a sinner you become a saint.

“The time is coming when all who are in their tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God: and the bodies of those who did good shall rise to eternal life; but the bodies of those who did evil shall rise to eternal damnation, to be manifested as reprobates at Universal Judgement” (Gospel). [Christ] thereby taught that the bodies of those who die in the state of Grace will rise in Eternal Blessedness then glorious, since on being informed by their glorified souls they will partake in the soul's essential glory from the very instant of their resurrection, and thus all the saved will shine forth joyous with their souls and bodies at Universal Judgement, and be publicly acknowledged as righteous, without their possible faults appearing on any account, having all been forgiven and atoned for. The bodies of those who die in mortal sin, however, will rise then in Hell, since on being informed by their cursed souls they will partake, from the very instant of their resurrection, in the soul's eternal pains, and thus all the damned will appear reprobate in their souls and bodies at Universal Judgement with all their evil deeds, including those forgiven in life, publicly exposed, for greater shame and confusion; therefore Jesus says of them that they will rise to eternal damnation.” (Treatise on the Mass)

The very consciences of men will be the next to accuse, wrote the Apostle to the Romans. Then the places in which sinners offended God will give testimony, calling for vengeance; and lastly as witness will be the Judge Himself, present at every offence made to Him.



Santa Maria Mazarello

Saint Paul says: at that moment the Lord “will reveal in broad daylight what is hidden in darkness, and unmask the intentions of wicked hearts” (I Corinthians). He will reveal to all men the faults of the reprobate, down to the most secret and shameful they concealed from their own Confessors in life.

The sins of the elect will not be unmasked, but will remain hidden, as they will have already been blotted out. Blessed are those whose iniquities have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered over, by means of the Holy Sacrament of Confession.

And, on the contrary, says Saint Basil, the faults of the reprobate will be seen by all at a simple glance, as though represented in a picture. Saint Thomas exclaims: “If in the Garden of Gethsemani, when Jesus said: ‘I am’, all the soldiers who had gone to seize Him fell to the ground, what will happen when, on His throne as Judge, He say to the damned: ‘I am that One you so scorned’?”

The time for sentencing having arrived, Jesus Christ will say to the elect those sweet words: “Come, blessed of My Father, possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Gospel). When Saint Francis of Assisi knew by revelation that he would be saved, he felt the loftiest and ineffable consolation.

With what consolation will they hear the Judge tell them: “Come, blessed children, come to My kingdom. No more hardships or fears. You are with Me and will be so forever. I bless the tears you shed for your sins. Let us go to glory, where we shall live together for all eternity.”

The Most Holy Virgin will bless Her devotees and invite them to enter with Her into Heaven. And thus the righteous, joyfully intoning ‘Alleluia’, will go to heavenly glory to possess, praise and love God eternally.

The reprobate, on the contrary, will say to Jesus Christ: “And we, wretches, what are we to do?” And the Eternal Judge will reply: “You, since you scorned and rejected My grace, ‘depart from Me, accursed of My Father; go to the everlasting fire’. Depart from Me, I want neither to see nor hear you. Flee, flee, accursed, who despised My blessings.” Where, Lord, will those hapless go? To the fire of Hell, to burn there in body and soul. And for how many years or centuries? For all eternity, while God is God, which is forever..., forever.

After sentence, says Saint Ephrem, the reprobate will separate from the Angels and the Saints; never to see God, Mary Most Holy, nor their parents and children, nor glory.

The demons and reprobate will then remain forever in the chastisements of Hell, and will see how that door which is never to be opened closes behind them. Never for all eternity! Oh, cursed sin! To what a wretched end will you lead away so many poor souls! O hapless souls who await such a frightful end!

From the Palmarian Creed we draw the following phrases: “The Last Judgment will be the universal manifestation of the glory and majesty of Christ and Mary; of the glory of all the Blessed and other saved; and of the eternal wretchedness of all the damned. At Universal Judgement, Christ will publicly proclaim the salvific and condemnatory sentences passed by Him at each Particular Judgment.” “At the end of the Messianic Kingdom will take place the Nuptials of the Lamb, with the direct enthronement of Joseph Most Holy and the other Blessed in the Heart of Christ, and therefore in the Most Blessed Trinity itself. This enthronement is the

greatest degree of espousal each can acquire, and implies the final increase of essential glory. At the Nuptials of the Lamb, Christ will deliver up to the Eternal Father all that pertains to the Kingdom of God. Since from the Father all things come, and to Him all things must return.” “At the moment of the Nuptials of the Lamb, will also take place the Nuptials of the Dragon: in which all the damned will dwell directly in the heart of Satan, and therefore in satanicy. At that instant, God will expel all the reprobates from the Great Orb of the Universe, creating for them an immense unknown thing in which they will drift about for all eternity.”

“Likewise, when the Nuptials of the Lamb takes place, at the very instant when Christ delivers the Universe up to the Father, the first thing that God will create outside the great Orb of the Universe, and all the Blessed will co-create, will be an immense thing till then unknown, where all the damned will drift about for all eternity, as Christ is not to deliver up to the Father a Universe inhabited by reprobates, who do not pertain to the Kingdom of God. This till then unknown thing that God will create outside the Universe will issue from His Infinite Hands with great beauty and perfection, as He cannot create anything ugly; though for the damned it will be chaotic, in accord with the horrifying vision they have of everything created. God and all the Blessed will be present by way of justice, moreover, in that new created thing, so as to make evident to those accursed the weight of God’s just Wrath at their reprobation, and at the same time so that His infinite Goodness and Mercy towards the saved shine forth. Following the Nuptials of the Lamb, though the damned will drift about exclusively in the immense thing created for them, yet for their greater chastisement they will also be present in the interior of the immense Orb of the Universe by way of hatred for God, for the Blessed and for the Universe, and because they will continue to see the Universe in a chaotic and indefinable manner, since they cannot elude their own wickedness and chastisement.” (Treatise on the Holy Mass).



What sentence will you be given on the day of judgement? If the Lord were to ask you now to account for your life, what would you reply, but that you deserve a thousand Hells? Jesus, our God and Saviour, condemns obstinate sinners, but not those who repent and want to love Him. Present yourself at His feet, repentant, desirous of hearing Him say that He forgives you; but He already told you through His Prophets: “Turn back to Me sincerely repentant, and I shall turn back to you benevolently” (Malachias).

On the pains of Hell: The sinner commits two evils when he sins: he forsakes God, Sovereign Good, and he gives himself up to creatures. “Whenever My people transgressed, she committed two evils: to abandon Me, the Source of living waters; and to go after and adore idols, which are like empty cisterns from which you cannot slake your thirst” (Jeremias). And because the sinner gave himself up to creatures, offending God, he will rightly be tormented in Hell by those same creatures: fire, cold and devils; this is the pain of sense. But as their chief fault, in which the evil of sin consists, is to have separated from God, the greatest pain in Hell is the pain of loss, to lack the vision of God, to have lost Him forever.

Let us recall the Palmarian Catechism on Hell, which is one of the Last Things of man:

Hell is the state of eternal damnation suffered by reprobates: demons and damned men.

Hell, then, is not a place, but a state of total suffering commensurate with each person's degree of demerit. The reprobate of Hell are scattered about the immense space of the Universe; but their freedom of movement is subject to divine permission.

Each reprobate is an individual kingdom of infernal hatred, disharmony and unspeakable suffering, forming together with the other reprobates an abominable brood by virtue of their execrable enthronement in one another.

Among all the reprobate, reign the most utter hatred, anarchy and discord, with complete insubordination to Lucifer, chief of Hell. But at the same time, because of their hatred for God, common accord exists among them for battling against the Most High and all that He loves.

To Hell go those who, at particular judgement, reject the Divine Mary's discourse and accept that of Satan, the father of lies.

The pains suffered by the damned are of three kinds:

Essential pain of loss, which is to be deprived forever of the vision of God, which is the greatest suffering of all.

Essential pain of sense, which is to suffer simultaneously the most terrible torments of fire and cold.

Accidental pain, which is to suffer all other evils.

The fire and the cold are produced by the Soul of Christ in each soul that damns itself.

The demons and other damned in Hell see the Universe from the fourth dimension, a vision which is for them chaotic and amorphous according to the degree of reprobation of each. This harrowing contemplation of the Universe forms part of their accidental pain.

The demons and other damned in Hell have yet to receive two increases in the essential pains of loss and of sense: One at the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. And another at the Nuptials of the Dragon.

Accidental pain will increase in Hell for all eternity.

Hell is: Eternal, since it is unending. Utter wretchedness, since there is no possibility of any good (Palmarian Catechism).

What then is Hell? It is to be in torment, as indicated by the wealthy Epulon, that he was ablaze in tormenting flames, where all the senses and powers of the damned have to have their own chastisement, and where that sense which served most to offend God will be the most grievously tormented. The damned are to be found dwelling in the fourth dimension, dispersed throughout the vast expanse of the Universe, whose vision is chaotic and ghastly as corresponds to their state of reprobation. Moreover, this vision is also with bodily eyes for those in Hell with their bodies, so that their sight will undergo the torment of the kingdom of infernal darkness.

Worthy of deep compassion would be the hapless man who spent forty or fifty years of his life enclosed in a tenebrous and cramped dungeon. Well, Hell is worse than being in a completely enclosed and dark dungeon, where no ray of the sun or any other light ever penetrates.

The fire that gives light on earth will not be luminous in Hell. That is, as Saint Basil explains, that the Lord will separate the light from the fire, so that those horrendous flames will burn without giving light. Or as Saint Albert the Great says more briefly: "He will separate the heat from the radiance." And the smoke which that furnace produces will form a thick tenebrous cloud which will blind the eyes of the reprobate. There will be no more clarity than that required to increase their torments. A pallid glow to let see the ugliness of the damned and of the devils, and the horrendous aspect they will take, to cause greater terror.

Smell will suffer its own torment. It would be unbearable to be enclosed in a cramped room with a fetid cadaver. Well, the damned have ever to be among millions of reprobates, alive for suffering, foul-smelling cadavers for the stench they give out.

Saint Bonaventure says that if the body of someone damned were to leave Hell, it alone would suffice for everyone in the world to die from the stench. And some insensate still says: "If I go to Hell, I will not go alone." Wretch! However many more reprobates there are, the greater will be your sufferings.

"There", says Saint Thomas, "the company of the other wretches does not relieve, rather increases the common misfortune." They will doubtless suffer far more from the foul stench and from the howls of that despairing throng, like grapes pressed out in the winepress of God's wrath: "against whom He will tread in the winepress of His Holy Wrath" (Apocalypse).

After the resurrection of the dead, the bodies of the damned will share forever in the eternal disgrace of their respective souls, when infernally informed by them. They will always suffer terrible torments in body and soul, and can never die.

Hearing will be tormented by the continuous howls and cries of those despairing wretches, and by the frightful uproar produced by the devils. Sleep often eludes us when we hear close by the groans of the sick, the crying of children or the barking of some dog. Unhappy reprobates, forced to hear the fearful howling of all the damned for all eternity!

Gluttony will be chastised by devouring hunger. But not even a crust of bread is to be found there. The damned will suffer burning thirst, not to be slaked by all the water in the sea, yet not a drop will they be given. The rich miser asked for just one drop of water, did not obtain it and never will.

What health, what strength exist able to resist God, who with only a little sickly sweat lays the most robust out in bed, forcing him to groan with grief and pain? This is to wound with a lance, but when the sword is unsheathed in the other life, what fury is that of His justice, without anyone escaping from Hell? Millions and millions of angels and men are there, unable to escape that endless darkness; which will torment them forever since, as God is Omnipotent, He does not weary in the execution of such immense torments; and as He is eternal, He will not die, and will forever torment them with eternal death. No one is exempt from chastisement for being a spirit, since His Omnipotence is able to make the spiritual be tormented by the material. There the laws of nature are broken, and He acts in accord with His infinite power. To fire he joins ice; to hunger, surfeit; to rot, entirety; to death, eternity. Who does not fear this wrath? Who does not shudder at this all-just and all-holy fury, for He is Sovereign Sanctity? How is it possible that, God's justice being so tremendous, so many despise it? Certainly, if only one man among all those born and to be born, were to be damned, that would be sufficient to make the rest tremble; because eternal damnation is something so horrendous that its mere mention

should be enough to make everyone's hair stand on end, wanting not to be that one. So how can we laugh and eat and rest untroubled, when so many are damned? Hell is horror, and it is horrifying not to fear it.

Reparation has to be made to the Eternal Father for sins committed and never forgiven. But the reprobates have withdrawn their sins from Calvary on choosing eternal damnation, and Christ was unable to make reparation for them there, so that the reprobates keep their sins enthroned in their hearts without reparation. Hence in Hell, Christ makes reparation for them by the fire He ignites in each one of them, to the point that they feel forced to confess their guilt and God's justice, without their being repentant. And as the sins remain in the damned and the reparation is finite, the victims being finite, this has to continue always, always, without cease, so that God be given the reparation He must necessarily receive. "Just as in the Temple, by the Law of Moses, every victim is to be sprinkled with salt, likewise those who are damned are seasoned with fire, victims of Divine Justice by their impenitence" (Gospel).

Unhappy you, who scarcely took into account the gifts and chastisements of the Lord! If your Jesus had not shown mercy, perhaps many years ago you would have been in that pestilential furnace, where so many sinners like you burn. Since your Redeemer has drawn you out of the mire of your faults and has so lovingly invited you to love Him, make sure that the time He now gives you be employed wholly in serving Him. How dreadful will be the torments of the damned for not having made good use of one day, one hour of that time you are granted, to obtain forgiveness! And you, what will you do? Will you continue misspending it in things displeasing to God? May the Lord not so permit.

The pain of sense that most torments the reprobate is the fire of Hell, torment of touch. The Lord will specially mention it on Judgement day: "Depart from Me, accursed of My Father; go to the everlasting fire."

Even in this world torture by fire is the most terrible of all. But such is the difference between flames on earth and those in Hell that, according to Saint Augustine, in comparison with them, ours are like picture flames; or as though they were of ice, adds Saint Vincent Ferrer. And the reason for this is that earthly fire was created for our utility, but that of Hell, only to chastise. Very different is the fire for man's use from that which serves for God's justice. God's wrath enkindles those flames of vengeance; and so the fire of Hell is called 'spirit of zeal'.



The reprobate will be amid the flames, surrounded by them on every side, like a log in a furnace. He will have an abyss of fire beneath his feet, immense masses of fire above his head and all around him. All he sees, touches or breathes, will be fire: which he must breathe, touch and see. He will be immersed in fire like a fish in water. And these flames will not only be found around the reprobate, but will penetrate inside of him, into his very bowels, to torment him.

The body will be pure flame: the heart will burn in the breast, the entrails in the belly, the brain in the head, the blood in the veins, the marrow in the bones. Every damned will become a blazing furnace.

There are some who cannot bear a floor heated by sunlight, or to stand beside a lighted brazier in a closed room, or a spark jumping out of the fire, but do not fear that fire which devours. Just as a wild beast devours a tender lamb, so will the flames of Hell devour the damned. They will devour without putting them to death.

"Carry on, then, insensate," says Saint Peter Damian speaking of the voluptuary, "carry on satisfying your flesh, for the day will come when your unchastity will turn into burning pitch in your entrails and will make the infernal flames in which you are to burn more intense and scorching."

And Saint Jerome adds that this fire will bear with it all the pains and ills which afflict us here on earth; even icy cold will torment them there. And all with such intensity that, as Saint John Chrysostom says, the sufferings of this world are a pale shadow compared to those of Hell.

The powers of the soul will also receive their proper chastisement. Memory will be tormented by the lively remembrance of the time the damned had in life to save themselves and spent in perdition, and the graces God gave them and were scorned. The understanding will suffer considering the great good they have forfeited by losing God and Heaven, and reflecting that this loss is now irremediable. The will shall see that everything it desires is denied.

The unhappy reprobate will never have anything he wants, and always what he most detests: evils without end. He will want to free himself from torments and enjoy peace. But he will always be tormented and never find a moment's rest.

Jesus died to free you from eternal death. By freeing you from Hell, He wanted you to burn, not in the eternal flames, but in the sweet fire of His love. Now that you can love, resolve to love your Redeemer, who

has so loved you. You should thank Him deeply for not having forgotten you. Otherwise you would now be found in Hell, or feel no sorrow for your sins. This hearty sorrow for having offended Him, this desire you feel for loving Him dearly, are gifts of His grace, which help and enliven you. Keep impressed on your soul the remembrance of the Hell you deserved and the grace God gave you, so that you do not turn back and condemn yourself to the infernal torments.

All the pains spoken about are nothing in comparison with the pain of loss. The darkness, the stench, the wailing and the flames do not constitute the essence of Hell. True Hell is the pain of having lost God.

Saint Bruno said: "Let the torments be multiplied, as long as we are not deprived of God." And Saint John Chrysostom: "If you were to say a thousand Hells of fire, you will have said nothing in comparison to that pain." And Saint Augustine adds that if the reprobate were to enjoy the vision of God, "they would feel no torment at all, and Hell itself would become a paradise for them."

To understand something of this pain, let us consider that if someone loses, for example, a precious stone worth a hundred gold coins, he would be very upset; but if that jewel were worth two hundred, he would feel the loss far more, and yet more if it were five hundred.

In a word: however greater the value of what is lost, so much the greater the pain of having lost it. And given that reprobates lose *the infinite good*, who is God, they feel, as Saint Thomas says, a pain in some measure infinite.

In this world only the just fear this pain, says Saint Augustine. Saint Ignatius of Loyola said: "Lord, I will suffer all, but not the pain of being deprived of You." Sinners feel no fear at all for such a great loss, because they are content to live long years without God, sunk in darkness. But at the hour of death they will acknowledge the great good they have lost.

The soul, on leaving this world, says Saint Antonine, knows that she was created by God, and irresistibly flies to unite to and embrace the Sovereign Good; but if living in sin, not sincerely repentant, God rejects her.

If a dog, fastened and chained, sees nearby delicious prey, it tries to break the chain holding it and launch itself upon the prey. The soul, on separating from the body, feels naturally drawn towards God. But sin stops her and hurls her far from Him.

All Hell, then, is summed up and resumed in those first words of the sentence: "Depart from Me, accursed.". Depart, the Lord will say, I will that you do not see My Face. Not even imagining a thousand Hells will anyone ever be able to conceive the pain of being detested by Christ!



Santa Margarita María Alacoque

Philip II, on seeing a noble of his court in Church with gross irreverence, told him severely: "Do not present yourself before me again"; and such was the confusion and grief of that man, that on reaching home he died: What shall it be when God dismisses the reprobate forever? He will hide His Face from them, and they will feel every evil and affliction. "You are not mine, nor am I yours," Christ will say to the damned on Judgement Day.

Immense pain afflict a son and a wife when they think never to see the father of the family again, just deceased. Well, if on hearing the lamentations of the soul of a reprobate we were to ask him the cause, what profound pain will that soul feel on telling us: "I weep because I have lost God and will never ever see Him."? And if, at least, the wretch could love God in Hell and be conformed to the divine Will! But no; if he could do that, Hell would no longer be Hell. He can neither resign himself nor will it be given him to love his God. He will live hating Him eternally, and that has to be his greatest torment: to know that God is the Sovereign Good, worthy of infinite love, and be forced to detest Him forever. "I am that rogue dispossessed of God's love", a devil replied questioned by Saint Catherine of Genoa.

The reprobate will hate and curse God, and cursing Him will curse the benefits received from Him: Creation, Redemption, the Sacraments, especially Baptism and Penance, and, above all, the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. He will detest all the Angels and Saints, and with implacable hatred his Guardian Angel, his Patron Saints and the Most Holy Virgin. He will curse the three Divine Persons, especially the Son of God, who died to save us, and the Wounds, Labours, Blood, Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.

God is the Sovereign Good, the infinite Good, and you, voluntarily, have so often lost Him? You knew that by your sins you outraged Him and lost His grace, yet you committed them! Ah, if you did not know that nailed to the Cross He died for you, how would you dare ask and hope for His forgiveness!

On the eternity of Hell: "They shall go to everlasting punishment" (Gospel). If Hell came to an end it would not be Hell. A short pain is no great pain. If a tumour is cut out, or a wound cauterized, the patient cannot but feel fierce pain; but as that pain is soon to end, it cannot be considered a very serious torment. But it

would be a grievous ordeal were the cutting or burning to continue for weeks or months on end without respite. When pain, even if very slight, is long-lasting, it becomes unbearable. And not only pains, but even pleasures and amusements lasting too long, a comedy, a concert, going on and on without interruption for many hours, becomes an insupportable tedium. And if it were to last a month, a year?

What will happen, then, in Hell, where it is not music and comedy that are always to be heard, nor is the pain suffered only slight, nor the wound minor nor the torment of burning with red-hot iron brief, rather it is the sum of all evils, of all pains, not for a limited time but for all eternity.

This eternal duration is of Faith, not a mere opinion, but truth revealed by God in many places of Scripture. "Depart from Me, accursed of My Father; go to the everlasting fire... Go to Hell, where the gnawing worm of desperate remorse never dies, and the fire is never extinguished... Whom they shall cast into eternal fire." (Gospel). "The pain of eternal damnation as payment for their wickedness." (II Thessalonians.) Just as salt conserves foods, the fire of Hell torments the damned and at the same time serves as salt, preserving life. "There the fire consumes in such a way that it always preserves", says Saint Bernard.

Insensate would be whoever, to enjoy a pastime for a while, wanted afterwards to be condemned to spending twenty or thirty years enclosed in a pit! If Hell were to last, not now a century, but no longer than two or three years, it would still be incomprehensible madness if we were to condemn ourselves to those two or three years of grievous torments for an instant of pleasure. But it is not a question of thirty, or a hundred, or a thousand, or even a hundred thousand years, but of suffering terrible pains, unending pains, frightful evils, without any relief, forever.

With good reason then even the Saints groaned and trembled, while in this temporal life, at the danger of damnation. Blessed Isaias fasted and did penance in the desert, and lamented exclaiming: "Ah, unhappy am I, still not free of the infernal flames!"

If God had sent you to Hell, which you have so often deserved, and then by His great mercy had done the impossible and freed you from it, how thankful you would have been, and how holy a life you would have endeavoured to lead! Well, now that with even greater clemency He has preserved you from eternal damnation, what will you do for the Lord? Will you go back to offending Him and provoking His anger so that He chastise you together with the reprobate, many of whom were damned for having committed in life lesser faults than yours? Instead of employing the time your Redeemer gave you to weep over your sins, you used it to offend Him. Rightly should you fear that, for another mortal sin, He abandon you. May the Lord place before your eyes that most just fear, whenever the devil provokes you to offend Him.

Saint Gregory XVII teaches that the gates of Heaven remained hermetically closed ever since Adam's and Eve's sin until Christ opened them by His Death. So too will the gates of Hell's eternal torment close when the damned enter: they will hermetically close after them, but never ever again open. There is a door to enter Hell, but none to leave, says Eusebius Emisenus.

Whoever enters Hell will never leave. At this thought, many of the Saints trembled. While he lives, the sinner can preserve some hope of remedy, but if death surprises him in sin and he is damned, all hope will then end for him. If the damned could, at least, forge some deceitful illusion that might alleviate their horrendous despair!



The poor sick patient, with ulcers and disabled, prostrate in bed and given up by the doctors, perhaps forges the consoling illusion of the arrival of a doctor or of a new remedy to cure him. The unhappy criminal condemned to life imprisonment also seeks some relief for his woes with the remote hope of escaping to freedom. If the damned could succeed in deceiving themselves in this way, thinking that one day they might leave their prison! But no; in Hell there is no hope, neither sure nor illusory; there is no *'who knows'* to console.

The wretch will always see his sentence written before him, forcing him ever to lament despairingly amid his torments. Some are sentenced to eternal blessedness and others to eternal shame, for them to see at all times. The Prophet Baruch says that for those who keep the Divine Law there is eternal life; and for those who break it, there is eternal death.

The reprobate not only suffers what he has to suffer at each moment, but also at all times suffers the pain of eternity, and says: "What I suffer now, I will have to suffer always." The damned bear the weight of eternity.

Let us pray then to the Lord, as Saint Augustine prayed: "Burn me and cut me and pardon me not here, so that You may pardon me in eternity." The chastisements of this life are transitory; but the eternal chastisements of the other life are never-ending.

Let us fear it then. Let us fear the voice of thunder with which the supreme Judge will pronounce His sentence against the reprobate on the Day of Judgement: "Depart from Me, accursed of My Father, go to the everlasting fire." Remember the wheel, since this curve is symbol of eternity, which has no end. Great is the chastisement of Hell, but the worst of all is that it is irrevocable.

The incredulous will say: Where is God's Justice, chastising a sin that lasts a moment with an eternal pain? And we reply: God chastises eternally those who reject salvation at Particular Judgement, a sin against the Holy Ghost in maximum degree. At that moment, those who damn themselves definitively reject God, saying "we want nothing to do with You", a decision they can no longer change. So the eternal chastisement is just. Besides, how can the sinner dare offend a God of Infinite Majesty for a pleasure that lasts a moment? Even in man's judgement, says Saint Thomas, the pain is measured, not by its duration, but by the gravity of the offence. Not because a murder is committed in a moment, has it to be chastised with a moment's pain.

For mortal sin Hell is little. An offence against Infinite Majesty necessarily requires an infinite chastisement, says Saint Bernardine of Siena. And as the creature, writes the Angelical Doctor, is incapable of receiving an infinite pain, God rightly ordains that the pain be infinite in duration.

Besides, the pain has necessarily to be eternal, because the reprobate can never satisfy for his fault. In this world the repentant sinner can satisfy, in that the merits of Jesus Christ are applied to him; yet the damned cannot share in those merits. Therefore, unable ever to satisfy God, the sin being eternal, eternal too must be the chastisement.

There, the fault can be chastised; but never expiated; because as Saint Augustine says, "there the sinner cannot repent", and so the Lord will be forever angered against him. And even if God might wish to pardon him, the reprobate would not want pardon, for his will, obstinate and rebellious, is confirmed in hatred for God.

Saint Innocent III says: "The damned do not humble themselves; rather, the malignity of hatred will grow in them." And Saint Jerome affirms that, "in reprobates, the desire to sin is insatiable." The wound of such wretches has no cure, they themselves refuse the cure.

If you were now damned, as perhaps you have so often deserved, you would find yourself obstinate in hatred against your Redeemer and God, who gave His life for you. Oh! What a cruel Hell it would be to detest God, who has loved you so much, who is infinite beauty and infinite goodness, worthy of infinite love! And being in Hell, you would find yourself in so helpless a state that you would not even want the pardon offered you! Since you can now still love Jesus and be forgiven, then desire His love and pardon, for He offers them to you. What evil did He do to you that you always abhor Him as an enemy of yours? What friend has done and suffered for you what Jesus has done and suffered?

In the life of Hell, death is what is most desired. The damned will seek death, and not find it. They will desire to die, and it will not be possible to them. So that Saint Jerome exclaims: "O death, how pleasing would you now be to the same for whom you were so bitter!"

Death will graze on the reprobate, for just as the flocks on grazing eat the blades of grass and leave the roots, so does death devour the damned: it kills them at each moment and, at the same time, preserves life to go on tormenting them with eternal chastisement.

Hence, Saint Gregory says, the reprobate dies continually, without ever dying. When a man dies of pain, people commiserate with him. But the damned has no one to commiserate with him. He will always be dying of anguish, and no one will take pity on him.

It is told of the emperor Zenon that, buried alive in a pit, he cried out and implored for pity's sake to draw him out again, but no one heard him, and he was afterwards found dead there, and the bites in his arms, doubtless by himself, evidenced the dreadful despair he had felt.

Well, the damned, exclaims Saint Cyril of Alexandria, cry out in the abyss of Hell, but no one comes to free them, or take pity on them ever.

And how long will such wretchedness last? Forever, forever. In Father Séñeri's 'Spiritual Exercises', he says that in Rome he questioned a devil (in the body of a possessed), and asked him how long he had to stay in Hell, and the devil replied, giving signs of rabid despair: "*Always, always!*" Such was the terror of the bystanders, that many youths from the Roman Seminary, there present, made general confessions, and sincerely changed their lives, converted by that brief sermon of just two words.

Unhappy Judas! Almost two thousand years have gone by since he is in Hell, and yet it could be said that he has only just begun his chastisement! Hapless Cain! More than six thousand years has he been subject to infernal torture, and it can be said that he is still at the start of his pains!

A devil was asked how long he had been in Hell, and replied: "Since yesterday". And as he was answered that it could not be so, because more than five thousand years had gone by since his damnation, he exclaimed: "If you knew what eternity is, you would know that, in comparison, fifty centuries are not even an instant."

If an Angel were to say to a reprobate: “You will leave Hell when as many centuries have passed as drops in all the waters of the earth, leaves on the trees and grains of sand in the sea”, the reprobate would rejoice like a beggar receiving the news that he was to become king. For all those millions of centuries will pass, and countless others afterwards, and yet the time of Hell is just beginning.

The reprobate would desire to obtain that God increase the intensity of their pains to extreme, and prolong them all He might wish, provided that He brought them to an end, however remote. But this limit does not exist nor ever will. The voice of divine justice in Hell only repeats the words ‘*forever, never.*’

In mockery, the devils will ask the reprobates: “Is the night far gone? When will dawn break? When will those cries, that weeping and that stench, the torments and the flames all end?” And the wretches will reply: “*Never ever!*” Well, how long are they to last? “*Forever, forever!...*”

O Lord! Enlighten so many blind, who when urged not to be damned, reply: “Let us be. If we go to Hell, what are we to do? Patience!”

O my God! They have no patience at times to bear up with the heat or cold or a little bruise, and will they afterwards have the patience to bear with the flames of a sea of fire, diabolical torments, utter abandonment by God and by everyone, for all eternity?

God, who is Father of mercy, never abandons whoever seeks Him. If in past life you separated from God so often, and He did not abandon you, He will not do so now, if you turn to Him. How can you not burn with love for your Jesus, thinking that from many years ago you ought to be blazing in the infernal flames for all eternity, and that He died to free you from them, and with such great clemency freed you?

Remorse of the damned: “The gnawing worm of desperate remorse never dies, and the fire is never extinguished” (Gospel). This worm that does not die, according to Saint Thomas, is the reprobates’ remorse of conscience, which is to torment them eternally in Hell. Great will be the remorse with which conscience will gnaw the hearts of the damned. But remorse will cause more vehement grief in three matters: consideration of the nothingness of the things for which the reprobate damned himself; the little he had to do to save himself; and the great good he has lost. We already told you in Our Eleventh Apostolic Letter, and it seems opportune to Us to remind you, further on, of other exhortations from the same Letter, as convenient.

When Esau found himself disinherited forever for having taken that dish of lentils for which he sold his firstborn rights, it grieved him so much to have consented to that loss that, as Scripture says, he “broke out in cries and bitter weeping.” Oh! With what groans and cries the reprobate will complain on pondering that for brief, momentary and poisoned pleasures they have lost an eternal kingdom of happiness and find themselves forever condemned to a continuous and unending death! They will weep more bitterly than anyone ever sentenced to death.

What deep pain will the memory of the cause of such tremendous ills bring! Our past life seems to us the dream of a moment. What will the fifty or seventy years of his earthly life seem to the reprobate when he finds himself in eternity, and a hundred or a thousand million years pass, and he sees that his eternal life of chastisement is just then beginning? And besides, the fifty years of life on earth, are they perhaps fifty years of pleasure?



The sinner who lives without God, does he always rejoice in his sin? One moment does the guilty pleasure last, the rest, for one living apart from God, is a time of pain and affliction. What will those moments of delight then seem to the unhappy reprobate? He will cry out: “For a vile pleasure, which lasted but an instant, and vanished like smoke, I have to burn in these flames, desperate and abandoned, as long as God is God, for all eternity!”

Consider your malice in offending God, and the eternal pain you deserved for it. If He had sent you to Hell, as you deserved, your remorse there would be one of your worst chastisements, on considering the misery and vileness of the things which resulted in your endless misfortune. Yet now, your sorrow revives and consoles, and infuses the hope of winning forgiveness, given that the Lord offers pardon to one who repents.

Saint Thomas says that the consideration of the true nothingness of the things for which they were lost, and that, if they had so wished, they could easily have won the reward of glory, has to be a singular torment for the damned. The second remorse of their conscience will consist, then, in thinking of the little they had to do to save themselves.

A reprobate appeared to Saint Humbert, and revealed to him that, after losing God, his greatest affliction in Hell was the knowledge of the vile reason which had led to his damnation, and the ease with which he could

have avoided it (11th Letter). The reprobate, then, will say: “If I had mortified myself and not looked at that object, and overcome human respect, and fled from that occasion, dealings or friendship, I would not have been damned. If I had confessed each week and often attended the pious exercises in church, and read every day in that spiritual book, and commended myself to Jesus and Mary, I would not have relapsed into my transgressions. I often proposed to do all of this, but did not persevere. I began to practise it, and then left off. Hence I am lost.”

The pain caused by such remorse will increase on remembering the examples of the reprobate’s many good companions and friends, the gifts which God granted him for his salvation: some, natural, like good health, long years, possessions and talents, which well employed, as God wished, would have served to sanctify him; others, gifts of grace, like lights, inspirations, and callings, to remedy the evil he had done.

Yet the reprobate will see that in the state he is in, there is no remedy. They “will be cast out into hellfire, whose torments they will suffer for ever and ever, without having any rest either by day or by night.” (Apocalypse).

Like sharp swords for the heart of the damned will be the remembrance of all the graces he received, seeing that reparation for his endless ruin is no longer possible. He will cry out with his other desperate companions: “The time of trial is over. Oh, if the time and labour I employed in damning myself I had used in God’s service, I would have been a saint! And now, what do I find, but remorse and pains without end?”

Doubtless, thinking that he could have been eternally happy, and that he will be eternally disgraced, will torment the reprobate more than almost all the other infernal chastisements.

A thousand times you separated from Jesus, and as many times He came looking for you, and forgave you; you offended Him again and still He granted you forgiveness. Let it pain you to have scorned the love of your beloved Redeemer so unworthily, and consider His deep sorrow with the sweat of Blood He endured for your sins in the Garden of Olives. Oh, accursed delights; curse and detest them, for they have robbed you of God’s grace!

To consider the wonderful good they have lost, will be the third remorse of the damned, a pain which, as Saint John Chrysostom says, will be greater for the privation of glory than for the other pains of Hell.

“Let God give me forty years to reign and I renounce paradise gladly”, said the unhappy princess Elizabeth of England. She had forty years and more to reign. But in the other life, what will her soul say now? She will surely not think the same; for after her death a voice was heard over the river Thames: “For forty years of reign, an eternity in Hell!”. How afflicted and desperate will she feel seeing that for forty-four years of reign amid worries and fears, enjoying a temporal throne, she lost the kingdom of Heaven forever (11th Letter). Yet greater affliction will the reprobate feel on knowing that he lost glory and the Sovereign Good, namely God, not by chance owing to misfortune or to others’ ill-will, but through his own fault. He sees that he was created for Heaven, and that God allowed him to choose freely between eternal life and eternal death. He sees that he had it in his power to be forever happy, and that despite all he chose to plunge into that abyss of ills, from which he can never depart and no one will ever free him.

He will see how many of his companions who, though among identical or greater dangers of sin, were able to overcome by commending themselves to God, or if they fell, delayed not in rising up and consecrating themselves again to the Lord’s service. But he did not want to imitate them, and went disastrously on to fall into Hell, sea of pains where hope does not exist.

If up till now you have been so insensate that you preferred to lose the Kingdom of Heaven rather than renounce a wretched delight, make sure to remedy the damage in time. Do not linger in your madness, and fear to weep for it in Hell.

Perhaps these considerations you are reading are God’s last callings. Maybe, if you do not change your life but commit another mortal sin, the Lord will abandon you and, as consequence, you reject salvation and God send you off to suffer forever among those crowds of the insensate who now acknowledge their error, though confessing it despairingly, for they are not unaware that it is irremediable.

When the enemy leads you into sin, think of Hell, and turn to God and the Most Holy Virgin. The idea of Hell can free you from Hell itself. “In all your actions, remember your last things, and you will never ever sin” (Ecclesiasticus), because that thought will make you turn to God (11th Letter).

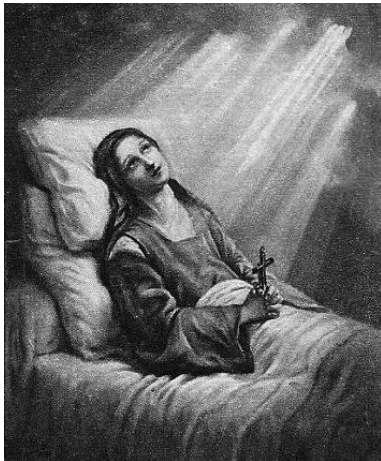
Ah! How often you have lost the Sovereign Good for nothing, and how often have you deserved to lose Him forever! But may the goodness of the Lord revive and console you. You should not, then, doubt that you will recover His grace and friendship, if you truly seek them. Sigh for the Grace of God, more than for any other good. Prefer to be deprived of everything, even life itself, rather than lose His love.

God's infinite mercy: Should not almost everyone go to Hell, since they live in mortal sin and reach death in that state? Divine justice and God's wrath against sinners are so great, that by themselves alone they would be enough for us to die of fear and sorrow, if we did not see the other side, the greatness of God's mercy; for by this and the hope of receiving it, fear is tempered, and the soul encouraged with the wings given her by God's infinite goodness to protect ourselves from His very justice. Therefore Saint Gregory I says: "In the heart of the sinner, hope and fear should be continually joined; for in vain does man hope for mercy if he does not fear His justice as well; and in vain will he fear justice, if besides he does not trust in His mercy." It will profit him little that fear leads him to dread his sins if he does not want to give them up, for which hope opens the door. Let no one lose heart, however many sins he may have and however terrifying God's Justice may be, for Divine Goodness is of the meekest; and however much His justice has done to chastise sins, it cannot do more than His mercy has done to forgive them; for, in God, mercy surpasses the rigour of justice.

All divine wrath discharged against sinners, both Angels and men, not only in this life but as well in Hell, from the beginning of the world until it ends, and even for all eternity, cannot be compared with a single work of mercy performed in an instant. Justice is left far behind, if compared with God's mercy. God did not do all He could to chastise; but to forgive He did the infinite, and many times over. He wrought the Incarnation, in which God Himself became Man; and having become Man, performed countless works, each of infinite value and merit. God has never sought to chastise; He desired and anxiously sought to forgive and to do good. To chastise He never took a step that cost Him sweat; to forgive He laboured and sweated up to the shedding of His Blood, suffered torments, affronts and even the Cross itself. God does not chastise by nature, rather, let us say, forced by our sins; on the other hand, doing good is natural to Him, and forgiving highly pleasing. So that, if there is reason to fear God's terrible wrath, there is greater reason to hope in His pity and mercy.

To chastise, God's omnipotence does not do all He could; since He could perform many far greater acts of justice; but to forgive He has used all His omnipotence. For there is no work of greater omnipotence than for God to become Man to forgive men; no greater work of mercy than for God to suffer misery in order to be merciful. This sole work of mercy surpasses however many works of rigour and justice there are and will be – possible and imaginable. It is true that God wills to chastise sinners; but He yearns to forgive, and is pleased and happy to do so, so much so that at the cost of His own torments He frees us from our torments.

Who does not see here that the works of God's mercy surpass those of His justice? Because not only in the Work of the Incarnation, but in any sinner whose sins He forgives, God does more than in chastising men and angels, however many. To chastise, God does not use all the greatness of His divine attributes, as He does to forgive. God performs a more costly and excellent work in one whom He forgives, than all His chastisements of sinners. In one whom He forgives He infuses His Grace, which is a share in His divine nature and holiness; He infuses Charity, which is also a loftiest share in the Holy Ghost; He places infused virtues, which are all supernatural and divine; He places the gifts of the Holy Ghost; all great riches and treasures. They are all supernatural. Goodwill to forgive He has indeed, by granting so much to the one He forgives.



The crowds of those who are damned need not surprise us, but those who will be in Heaven far outnumber those who will be in Hell. The citizens of the City of God will far surpass the prisoners in eternal darkness. Very many are lost; but innumerable are those saved. And the citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem are not only men, but Angels as well. Join together the masses of men and of Angels, and the saved far outnumber those who are lost. The saved are more, and far more, than the reprobates.

But though the damned are many, we know that a time will come in which all wayfarers will be saved, which is to happen when the whole world will be one single flock, all under one single Shepherd; for all who are born in the Messianic Kingdom, on the Earth then renewed, will be saved, and they will be far more than the men who have damned themselves.

Though at present the number of men damned to everlasting Hell is counted in thousands of millions, we know that, by God's infinite mercy, the number of men saved is very much greater than that of those who are damned, since Grace superabounds over sin. The Treatise on the Holy Mass explains that, in the period from the Creation of the world up to the Return of Christ to Earth, the number of men who die after the use of reason and are saved is very much greater than the number of men who die after the use of reason and are damned. As is obvious, to those who are saved must be added the vast number of the members of the Church Expectant or Children's Limbo; and also baptized children who die before the use of reason, all of whom go straight to Heaven.

Even now, those who are saved form no small part, as the efficacy of Holy Mass and Christ's Sacraments is great. And even in the case that in the total of men and angels, the damned were more, which is by no means the case, it is a greater wonder for one to be saved than for all to be damned; the work of divine mercy in saving Saint Paul alone is greater than the work of justice in damning all the devils. Sin is proper to the creature, and after sin comes the due chastisement owed, for it is something natural that the pain correspond to the guilt; but to be restored to Grace is something beyond all human strength.

Well, if God does more to forgive than to chastise, and the works of His mercy and goodness are infinitely greater than those of His rigour and justice, and, besides being greater, are more numerous, His ever-loving goodness can give us wings, for the sinner to trust in and help him to forsake sin.

Now then, what to say of the wonderful inventions God has ordained to forgive, instituting such admirable Sacraments, and singularly the Most Blessed Sacrament, and the sacrifice of His Body and Blood? This work alone is so wonderful, that it surpasses all the appalling ways by which reprobate souls will be tormented for all eternity.

Besides this, there is an infinite motive to persuade God to have pity and compassion on us; and no such to persuade Him to use rigour and sternness. Where in the Blood shed by the Son of God is there justice to chastise sinners, as there is mercy to forgive them? Where do the infinite merits of Jesus Christ have rigour to urge God to take vengeance on the wicked, as there is pity for Him to practise indulgence? The reason is that the Blood shed by the Son of God clamours to God the Father for mercy towards sinners and not for Him to exercise justice. The infinite merits which Jesus Christ presents to God the Father are for Him to act with indulgence and compassion towards sinners, and not to incite Him to rigour. The death of Christ was not for God to be rigorous, but merciful. Justice does not have the treasures that mercy possesses; so that God is said to be rich in mercy, not in justice. Mercy has great treasures of infinite merits in the Blood of the Son of God, in His Life, Passion and Death. Severity has none of this, since none of it was for God to be severe, rather compassionate. No one whispers in His ear calling for justice, no one incites Him to it; but the Son of God nailed to the Cross cries out and clamours for mercy, and rouses and intensifies it.

Only God's abhorrence for sin has justice on its side; but mercy has this same abhorrence on its side and yet more so. For the same reason that God cannot bear sin, we have to ask that He forgive us. God abhors sins more than man can abhor them. So if man with a lesser hatred wants to see his sins destroyed, how much more does God, with greater abhorrence, wish to see them cast aside and destroyed? If justice damns someone to Hell, the sin is not destroyed, rather remains eternally. But if mercy forgives the sinner, it crushes and destroys the sin.

The work of justification, in which sins are forgiven and grace is given, is so arduous and sublime, and entirely supernatural, that there is no strength in either human or angelic nature that can by itself obtain it. It is necessary that God's powerful arm reach out His omnipotent hand to raise us up to claim the state of divine grace, and that our will be raised up and comforted by the divine virtue of hope.

Grace, then, rises up above all nature, and is so divine, that merely to desire it requires divine strength; and to actually acquire, God's omnipotence is needed. Who, trusting in his own strength, can obtain the least thing wholly beyond all the forces of nature? Who, unless by invitations given him by divine goodness and hoping in His omnipotence, would dare to entertain the thought of placing himself in the same order as God? It would be diabolical presumption, the pride of Lucifer. But since God's goodness itself encourages us, and His omnipotence guarantees it, and the divine word has promised His help, and to desire it infuses faculties and strength, who will not be moved to seek his own welfare? Certainly, insolent as it would be to seek Grace by our own strength, it would be just as insolent, trusting in divine omnipotence, not to seek it.

Who is there who does not thereby confide that God wants to and can draw us out of sin, and has already done so much to draw us out, and asks and commands us to do so? If a man has fallen into a deep well, where neither sun nor moon shine, nor is there any way or device to get out, considering his own strength, what can he do but despair of escaping. But if a powerful king had a way of raising him up to the well rim, and then promised to give him a helping hand to leave, and that if he left would give him half his kingdom, how could that man but be heartened, and then do all he could with great joy and hope to make his escape and to obtain such wonderful goods? This is what happens to the sinner, whose own fault it was to fall to an immense depth, from where it is impossible to rise up by himself. God raises him up to a state in which, helped by His grace, he can now leave. He has promised him His powerful hand to draw him out, and has besides given His word, that on leaving He will make him heir to His kingdom: Why should that sinner not make use of this great good of His?: Hope, then, to reach freedom and become more than a king.

God cannot fail in His word. Let the sinner do his part to leave, and God will help him and finally draw him out. Let him not perceive the things of earth; let him not perceive anything, but be heartened to do everything to free himself from eternal danger. Let man do his part, and God in turn will do the rest. God will continue to

favour us, as He anticipates us with His helps. Let man do what he can and should, and God will do more than He ought.

God forgave Adam and Eve and, having given them a temporal punishment, announced the future Redemption of the human race to them. Oh! How we see here the merciful heartstrings God has and how it costs Him to chastise us! How swift to give us the good we do not deserve, and how tardy to chastise the evil we do! To enjoy what He enjoys and has in Himself, He gives us freely and without measure; and this out of pure goodness, without any merit of ours. But to chastise the evil we do, always within limits and by measure.

God does not deny His friendship and grace to anyone who does what he can to deserve it. It is true that we can do nothing without divine help; but God will not deny that help to whoever profits from it and prepares himself as is only right and proper for indwelling Grace, for God Himself has pledged His word on this. By Zacharias He says: "Be converted to Me and I shall turn back to you." By Ezechiel He clamours: "Do I by chance desire the death of the godless, and not that he be converted and live?" And again says: "I do not desire the death of the sinner, rather that he be converted and live." God is so anxious to give us the life of Grace when we are prepared for it that He does not delay one day, or one hour, or one second. It is something infallible: the Lord does not deny Indwelling Grace to anyone who prepares for it. This should hearten us greatly: so that the sinner seek it with great confidence; for, if he does what he can, God will not fail in His promise. And to whoever did what he could with the first helps he receives, God gives him not only Grace, but also other particular helps. God begins; and if man helps himself, God carries on giving grace upon grace, not denying a second grace to whoever did what he could with the first. Hence we must feed our hope, seeking God's Grace, using His own graces.



The other disposition to obtain grace is true contrition. After confidence in God follows contrition. Since the same goodness of our Creator, which gives wings to the human heart to ask of Him forgiveness for sins, hoping for their remission through His infinite mercy, invites the soul to love so good a Lord and Father Who, so good in Himself, for He is so towards those who have offended Him, granting them forgiveness for their offences so easily and restoring them to His friendship, as though nothing had happened.

From this love of God, a great sorrow for having offended Him is born in the sinner, with heart-piercing grief for having behaved so badly towards One so infinitely good; and so, with firm resolve, propose never again to give displeasure to such a Father and Lord. All of this is to be done for God being He who is, sovereignly generous and supremely good; since the very motive for the Christian to love God truly, namely for Him being He who is, infinite goodness, the Christian has that same motive to detest sin, grieving over it and resolving never to commit it again. This is contrition: which embraces love for God, hatred for sin, purpose of amendment with the observance of all the Commandments, and intention to confess.

To this disposition then follows Grace; so that at the very moment when the sinner has true contrition for his sins, at that same instant they are forgiven him, and Grace is infused, transforming him from slave of the devil into son of God. And thus David, at the very moment when with true contrition he said: "I have sinned most grievously against my Lord and God," the Prophet Nathan replied that God had forgiven his sin: "The Lord, who has also seen your deep sorrow and repentance, has forgiven your sins."

Contrition is an admirable thing, a most excellent and divine work of our will, far above all our strength; but helped by divine virtue and the supernatural habit of charity, it performs so great a work: it restores life to the soul, converts it to its Creator, and yields it up to God, makes it divine and sovereign, and a new creature of Heaven, not of the earth, and all this in a instant.

And this glorious instant can come in the mysterious and merciful last opportunity for salvation given by Christ at the hour of death of each human being, during Particular Judgement.

How many sinners repent at some time, but at a later temptation are so weak as to fall again, so that, in the words of the Gospel, "the last state of that man is worse than it was before". But whoever is converted in the mysterious and merciful last opportunity for salvation at the hour of death is free from the danger of relapsing, as the time for merit and demerit has ended for him. By this the wonders of divine mercy shine out brighter still, by giving the sinner that great opportunity to choose between Heaven and Hell just at the most decisive moment. And so that he win eternal happiness, God solely demands that he repent for having offended Him and implore His forgiveness. And how is that grace obtained? You already know: by Holy Masses, by the intercession of Mary Most Holy, and by your acts of love for God; that is, by prayer and penance.

When we look at the world, it is evident that almost all should damn themselves eternally, as they reach death in mortal sin. Yet the majority are saved, as God performs miracles to save souls. This is where God's mercy shines forth. He wants all to save themselves, and gives opportunities to all; but He wills our collaboration, since many souls go to Hell because no one prays for them. We recommend that you go back to reading Our Fifth Apostolic Letter, which explains in detail this matter of the prayer apostolate to save souls.

The Palmarian Holy Bible says that during the Universal Flood, the Holy Ghost covered with the fire of His charity the Church contained in the Ark: "Inside, Noah and his family remained in continuous prayer and sacrifice, in order thus further to placate the wrath of God and to draw down His mercy on that perverse humanity. Thanks then, to the intercession of Noah and his family, many of those [eight thousand million] who perished during the Flood acknowledged their guilt, asked pardon of God and were saved."

Human perversity unceasingly clamours out for the flood of exterminating fire which is to fall upon the earth. Amid this flood, the Holy Palmarian Church is the Mystical Ark of the Apocalyptic Noah, the one bearer of salvation, having taken shelter in the desert from where Her supernatural light shines forth.

The faithful redoubt of the Church of Jesus Christ is within the New Ark of Noah, freed from the apocalyptic flood: prevaricating mankind's flood of sins and consequent flood of divine chastisements.

The Order of Carmelites of the Holy Face in Company of Jesus and Mary, with the Most Holy Virgin Mary and Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph as Patrons, is preparing the Glorious Return of Christ to Earth. The Order of Carmelites of the Holy Face, or Crossbearers, are the Marian Apostles of the Last Times, chosen by God to save the Church and re-establish spiritual and temporal orders in the World; and battle tenaciously against Antichrist and his hordes.

They will have to convert and save many souls when the triumph of the Church comes; but first they will have to save so very many, for the majority of the world's population will die in the calamities to occur before that triumph.

Seeing how the world offends God, we remember the following Gospel teaching: "The Apostles James the Greater and John, seeing the contempt shown to their Master [by the Samaritans], said to Him: 'Lord, do You wish us to command fire to come down from heaven and put an end to them?' ... He, however, turning towards them, reproved them saying: 'Do you not realize you are acting in a bad spirit? The Son of Man has not come to ruin souls but to save them'."

The prayers and sufferings of Christ during His life on earth, as also those of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Co-Reparatrix and Co-Redemptrix, obtained the conversion and salvation of innumerable souls.

Just as the Lord loved us and suffered for us on the Cross, and spent His whole life praying and labouring for our salvation, He thus wishes that we sacrifice ourselves for Him, to win for Him souls who will love Him eternally. How to do this? By prayer, by Holy Masses, and by our life of love and commitment to God's Will: to love Him intensely, with a sincere and disinterested love; to do everything to please God at all times; and overcome our own self-love – God's love's greatest enemy. We Christians should imitate God as beloved children, and love Him as Christ loved us; and as He offered Himself up to God the Father in Oblation, so too should we consecrate ourselves to Him.

Let us be very conscious that the sacrifices performed by members in the state of Grace in the Church Militant acquire infinite value on being united by the Priest at Holy Mass; and that when they acquire infinite value, they become acts of Christ, since He makes them His own. That is, that you yourselves, without for now being able to see the fruits, are saving many souls by way of your prayers, sacrifices and practice of virtue, since your good works, performed in God's Grace, are finite sacrifices which, united by the Priest Celebrant to the Infinite Sacrifice of Christ and Mary at the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, acquire infinite value, reparatory and redemptory.

To sanctify our works and sacrifices, they have all to be channelled to the sole end of pleasing God, and be done solely for His love, and that they all serve to profit souls, labour on which God sets His eyes, and where His greatest honour and greatest glory lie. For all the works done for His love are agreeable to Him, but those done in intimate union with Him for the welfare and salvation of souls are those that glorify Him most.

This is the work God asks of us, so that in our labour we may be children of so Holy a Father and disciples of such a Master. Oh! What powerful reasons impel us ever to act for this purpose! Whose are we? To Whom and by Whom are we securely led? To whom do we owe more than to Him? Who loves us more than He does? Who is more concerned for our temporal and eternal welfare? Who like Him has sacrificed himself for us? Well, may He meet with our response, and from today on, ever greater; let even our breathing be for His love, to please and delight Him in everything. Save souls! Save souls! That is the greatest honour and glory we can give God! Prayer for the salvation of the whole human race is the beating of the Divine Heart, being the continuous activity of Jesus' Loving Heart. With that prayer He constantly glorified God the Father. Let us

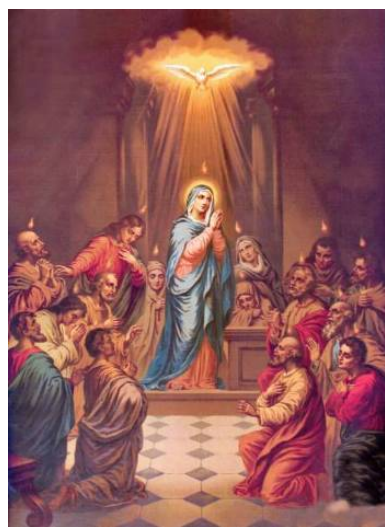
imitate Christ, and may the beating of our heart also be the salvation of the whole human race; so that, by beginning to glorify God in this life, we may never lose the friendship of our Master and Lord; and having begun to love Him in this life, we may continue to love Him with perfect love, ever greater, for all eternity.

To hearten us to labour for the salvation of souls, Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi said: “Do you know why you are so sad? Because you do not love God. It would be better for you to think of the salvation of some soul, and try to snatch it from the clutches of the devil by prayer and win it for God. Ask for it with faith, and He will grant it to you... God has called you to be saints not only for your own benefit, but also to help souls by prayer and penance, and placate His Divine Wrath, for the benefit of sinners. To stir up zeal for the salvation of souls in you, consider the love God has for them, and what Jesus Christ suffered for them... If you succeed in understanding how great is the value of a soul in Grace, and how God takes pleasure in her, you would be inflamed in desires of saving so many poor souls who live in sin... If you could contemplate the beauty of a soul in Grace, you would become so enamoured of her that you would do nothing other than ask God for souls; and on the contrary, if He were to show you another in mortal sin, you could do nothing but weep, and hate sin more than you do the devil himself, striving at the same time to pray unceasingly for the conversion of sinners, without it mattering to you any suffering that may be necessary for this cause... If you consider how frightfully deformed a soul in mortal sin is, and the wretchedness of that state, you would not be so negligent in asking God for souls... You have great motives for humbling yourselves, since perhaps by your negligence many souls are in Hell; and if you had been more zealous in commending them with great love, and in offering up the Blood of Jesus Christ for them, far from being immersed in those torments, they would be rejoicing in eternal blessedness.”

We were created for one purpose: to enjoy the happiness of God, and enjoy Him, and together with Him, His beauty and glory, for ages without end. But the whole human race having been called by God to enjoy this happiness, the number of those who live with the dispositions He requires to arrive at this is very reduced. Not so much out of malice as out of ignorance, as many of them do not know God. If they did they would not do all the evil they do; but minds are so darkened today that they cannot know the truth about His existence. It is necessary that the Holy and Divine Spirit come down to Earth and enlighten the intelligences of all men, since with the clarity and beauty of His Light, many minds will surely know, serve and love Him.

May we thus have the consolation of seeing God known and loved by all His creatures. May His loving designs be fulfilled in His creatures in time, so that we may continue fulfilling them in eternity. Let the Holy Ghost come like fire and set hearts ablaze, so that all burn with divine love.

On glory: Let us now suffer with patience the trials of this life, offering them up to God in union with the dolours which Jesus Christ underwent for our love, and let us be heartened by the hope of glory. Some day these labours, pains, sorrows, persecutions and fears will come to an end, and, if we save ourselves, turn into indescribable joy and bliss in the kingdom of the blessed.



So does the Lord encourage and refresh us: “Your sadness will turn to joy.” Let us meditate then on the happiness of glory. But what shall we say of this happiness if not even the most inspired Saints have been able to express the delight which God reserves for those who love Him? They could only say that this glory is a good that is infinitely desirable.

And you, eminent Saint Paul, who had the happiness to be rapt up to Heaven, tell us even a little of what you saw there! The great Apostle replies that what he has seen is impossible to explain. So lofty are the delights of glory that only one who enjoys them can understand. He simply says that no one on earth has known the beauty and harmony and joy of Heaven: “Neither has eye seen nor ear heard nor has it entered the mind of man what God has prepared for those who love Him” (I Corinthians).

Here below we cannot imagine the goods of Heaven, for we can only form an idea in accord with the goods this world offers us. If by a miracle an irrational being could reason, and knew that a wealthy lord was to celebrate a splendid banquet, it would imagine that the delicacies prepared would be delightful and select, but similar to those it eats, as it would be unable to conceive anything better as nourishment.

So do we reason ourselves, thinking on the goods of glory. How beautiful it is to contemplate on a serene summer’s night the magnificence of the heavens sprinkled with stars! How pleasing to admire the placid waters of a transparent lake, and in the depths perceive fish swimming and rocks covered by moss! How beautiful a garden full of flowers and fruit, surrounded by fountains and rivulets and filled with pretty birds fluttering through the air and delighting with their harmonious trilling. It would be said that so much beauty is paradise.

But no: very different are the goods and beauty of glory. To understand vaguely something of it, consider that Almighty God is there, overwhelming, enrapturing the souls He loves with untold joy.

“Do you want a glimpse at what Heaven is?” said Saint Bernard, “well, know that there is nothing there displeasing to us, and every good that delights.”

O God! What will the soul say when it reaches that happiest of kingdoms? Let us imagine that a youth or a virgin, having consecrated their whole life to Christ’s service, has just died and then leaves this vale of tears. The soul appears at Judgement; the Judge embraces the soul, and assures that it is sanctified. The Guardian Angel accompanying the soul congratulates her and the soul shows him the gratitude she owes him for his assistance. The Angel tells her: “Come, then, beautiful soul; rejoice because you are saved; come and contemplate your Lord.”

And the soul rises up to a loftier dimension, and enters Heaven. O my God! What will the soul feel on entering that happy kingdom for the first time, and seeing the city of God, insuperable model of beauty?

The Angels and Saints receive her joyously and give her the most loving welcome. There she will see her Protector Saints and the relatives and friends who preceded her into eternal life. The soul will wish to yield them veneration, but they prevent her, reminding her that they too are servants of the Lord.

They will bring her next to kiss the feet of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, and the soul will feel an immense ecstasy of love and tenderness on seeing the exalted and Divine Mother, who helped her so much to save herself, and now stretches out Her loving arms and lets her know how many graces She obtained for her.

Accompanied by this sovereign Lady, the soul will come up before our King, Jesus Christ, who will receive her like a beloved spouse, and will tell her: “My spouse... come, and you will be crowned”; rejoice and be consoled, your tears, pains and fears are now over; receive the unfading crown I won for you by My Blood.”

Jesus Himself will present her to the Eternal Father, who will bless her, saying: “Enter in the joy of your Lord,” and will grant her endless beatitudes, with happiness akin to the one He enjoys.

When they spoke to Saint Thérèse of the blessedness of Heaven, she interrupted to say: “It’s not that which attracts me”. “And what is it that attracts you?” asked the other. “Oh! It’s love! To love, to be loved and return to the earth to make Love loved!”

But why wait till death to enjoy Heaven, if we can live in Heaven already in this life? We can do this if we live united to God present in our heart. We can gaze at Heaven in this life, in certain measure; we can have the happiness to be in God’s Grace, in His friendship; the happiness of loving God and being loved by God. To have God present in our heart is a foretaste of Heaven. Whoever bears trials patiently already enjoys Heaven, and whoever flies from them, already has a foretaste of Hell.

The Lord created you for glory, and you renounced it so many times for the most abject delights, and preferred to be damned to Hell. Repent and, just as the Lord renews His forgiveness, will to feel sorrow for those offences until death. You well know that your beloved Saviour desires your salvation, that He calls you to the Heavenly Fatherland so that you may love Him there forever; but you also know that to attain it, He wants you to give Him your love in this world. Your soul is immortal, and that being so, you must love Him or hate Him eternally. What can you prefer but ever to love Him, to give Him your love in this life, so that in the next that love may last without limit or end?

Hardly does the soul begin to enjoy divine blessedness, then no longer will there be anything to afflict her. “They will never again be hungry or thirsty, or suffer the rigours of sun and cold, since the Divine Lamb, who is at the right of God the Father, is forever their Shepherd, and the Holy Ghost slakes their thirst in the fount of living waters, and God the Father wipes away their tears with eternal consolation” (Apocalypse).

In Heaven there are no sicknesses, nor poverty, nor any ill. There will be no succession of days and nights, of heat and cold, but an eternal day ever serene, a continuous delightful Spring without end. There are no persecutions or jealousies, since in that kingdom of love all love each other most tenderly, and each rejoices at the wellbeing of the rest as if it were his own.

Anxieties and fears are unknown there, since the soul confirmed in Grace cannot sin or lose God. All things display a transformed fullness of beauty, and all satisfy and console. The sight will rejoice, admiring that city of perfect beauty.

It would seem to us a delightful spectacle to see a town paved with polished limpid crystal, dwellings of sparkling silver, covered with purest gold and adorned with wreaths of flowers. Well, far lovelier is the city of glory!

And what would it be to see those happy dwellers with royal garments, because, as Saint Augustine says, all are sovereigns! What to contemplate the Virgin Mary, lovelier than Heaven itself; and the Lamb without stain, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Divine Spouse of souls!

Saint Teresa just glimpsed a hand of the Redeemer, and marvelled to see such beauty. In the Heavenly Mansions there will be delightful perfumes, glorious aromas; music and canticles of sublime harmony will be heard. For a few moments Saint Francis once heard the sound of that angelic harmony, and believed that he would die of sweetest joy. What will it be then to hear the joint choirs of Angels and Saints singing the divine glories, and the purest voice of the Immaculate Virgin praising Her God! Like the song of the nightingale in the woods excels and surpasses that of the other songsters, so does the voice of Mary in Heaven surpass all others. In brief: in glory there will be as many delights as can be desired.

And these delights considered up till now are the lesser goods in Heaven. The essential good of glory is the Sovereign Good: God.

The reward the Lord offers us does not consist only in the beauty and harmony and delights of that happy city; the chief reward is God Himself, it is to love Him and contemplate Him face to face, and possess Him, Lord and Creator of all things.

Saint Augustine says that if God allowed His Countenance to be seen by the damned, Hell would at once turn into a delightful paradise. And adds that if a soul, on rising out of this world, had to choose between seeing God and being in Hell, or not seeing Him and freed from infernal pains, “she would without doubt prefer the sight of God even with eternal torments.”

In this world we cannot understand this happiness of loving God and seeing Him face to face. But we are given to feel something of it, knowing that the allure of divine love, even in mortal life, comes to raise above the earth not only the souls but even the bodies of Saints.

Saint Philip Neri was once raised up in the air with the stair on which he stood. Saint Peter of Alcántara also rose up above the earth clutching a tree, whose trunk became separated from the roots.

We know as well that the martyr Saints, from the gentleness and sweetness of divine love, rejoiced while suffering terribly. Saint Vincent expressed himself in such a way under torment, says Saint Augustine, “that he seemed to be the one who spoke and the other who suffered.” Saint Lawrence, stretched out on a red-hot grid over fire, told the tyrant with amazing serenity: “Turn me over and devour me,” since, as that Saint adds, Lawrence, “blazing in the fire of divine love, did not feel the flames which burnt him.” Besides, how sweet is the sweetness the sinner finds on weeping for his falls! “If it is so sweet to weep for You,” said Saint Bernard, “what will it be to enjoy You?”



And what consolation does the soul not feel if a ray of Heavenly light in prayer reveals something of divine goodness and mercy, of the love Jesus Christ had and has for him. It seems to the soul that she is consumed and faints from love. And yet, on earth we do not see God as He is; we see Him among shadows.

We are now as though blindfolded, and God hides from us behind the veil of faith. But what will happen when the blindfold disappears and the veil is torn, and we may see how beautiful God is, how great and righteous, perfect, kindly and loving?

The Lord, to take pity on you, had no compassion on Himself, and let Himself be condemned to die of dolour on an infamous and shameful rood. But now that you are in danger of losing Him forever, or have perhaps lost Him by your sins, what will you do for the remainder of your life? Will you go on offending Him? Repent of having offended Him, and love Him with all your heart. Our beloved Redeemer cannot reject those who return to Him repentant.

The greatest tribulation in this world to afflict timorous souls that love God is the fear of not loving Him and of not being loved by Him. But in Heaven the soul is certain that she finds herself happily plunged into divine love, and that the Lord embraces her tightly, as a predilect daughter, with a love that can never end. Quite the contrary, it will grow in her with the loftiest knowledge she will then have of the love which moved God to die for us and institute that Most Blessed Sacrament, in which God Himself becomes man’s nourishment

The soul will clearly see all the graces that God gave her, freeing her from so many temptations and dangers of perdition, and acknowledge that those trials, persecutions and disappointments that she called misfortunes and held to be chastisements, were signs of God’s love, used by Divine Providence to lead her along the way to Heaven.

She will above all know the patience with which God awaited her after being so offended by her, and the sublime mercy by which He forgave her and showered her with lights and most loving callings. From those

happy heights she will see that in Hell there are many souls damned for committing in life lesser faults than hers, and her gratitude will grow for being in Grace, in possession of God, and sure of never ever losing the sovereign and infinite Good.

The Blessed will rejoice eternally in this incomparable felicity, which at each instant will appear new to her, as though only then did she begin to enjoy it. She will always desire this happiness and will possess it incessantly, always desirous and ever satisfied, always athirst and ever satiated. Because the desire, in glory, is not accompanied by fear, nor does possession generate tedium.

In brief: just as the reprobates are vessels of wrath, the elect are vessels of jubilee and bliss, in such a way that nothing is left for them to desire. Saint Teresa used to say that even here on earth, when God admits souls into that privileged cellar of wine, that is, of His divine love, He enraptures them so happily that they lose all attachment and affection for the things of earth. But on entering Heaven, as David says, God's elect will be intoxicated with the abundance of their home far more perfectly and completely.

Then the soul, seeing the Supreme Good face to face and uniting to Him, prey to loving rapture, will be absorbed in God and, forgetful of self, her only thought will be to love, praise and bless that infinite Good she possesses.

When the crosses of this life afflict us, let us make the effort to suffer them patiently in the hope of Heaven. Remember what we told you about Saint Mary of Egypt, whom Abbot Zosimus asked at the hour of her death how she had been able to live so many years in that desert, and how the Saint replied: "In the hope of glory". Saint Philip Neri, when offered the dignity of Cardinal, throwing the cardinal's hat far from him, exclaimed: "Heaven, Heaven is what I desire." Friar Gil, a Franciscan, rose up in ecstasy whenever he heard speak of 'glory'.

Thus we, when the pains of this world worry and torment us, let us raise our eyes to Heaven, and console ourselves sighing for eternal felicity. Let us consider that if we are faithful to God, these labours, miseries and fears will shortly end, and we will be admitted into the heavenly homeland where we shall live in utter blessedness as long as God is God. The Saints await us there, the Most Holy Virgin is there, Jesus Christ is there preparing our imperishable crown in that enduring kingdom of glory. Do not set your eyes on the cost; set them on its worth; it has always been so: what is worth a great deal, costs a great deal.

Our beloved Redeemer Himself taught us to pray and say: 'Advéniat regnum tuum.' So then, implore the Lord that His kingdom come to your soul, and wholly possess the soul, and the soul possess Him, Sovereign and Infinite Good. Though you have strayed from God so many times, you know that He will not hesitate to embrace you eternally in Heaven with as much love as if you had never offended Him. And believing this, that God desires to give you glory despite so often deserving Hell, can you cease to love Him above all things? You can but consecrate the rest of your life to Him; give yourself up wholly to His service. Let worldly attachments vanish from your heart, and make way for your God and Lord, who wants to possess it without rivals! From now on, think only of pleasing Him

On prayer: "Ask, and it shall be given to you... For everyone who asks, receives." Not only in these words, but in many places in the Old and New Testaments God promises to hear those who commend themselves to Him: "They shall invoke My Name and I will hear them favourably" (Zacharias). "Before they cry out, I will hear them; and while the words are yet on their lips, I will grant their petition" (Isaias). "Everything that you ask of the Father in My Name I will do" (Gospel). "You can ask for whatever you wish and it will be given to you" (Gospel). And several other like texts.

Prayer is one, says Theodoretus; and yet it can obtain all things for us; for as Saint Bernard affirms, the Lord gives us: either what we ask in prayer, or another grace more convenient for us.

For this reason, the Prophet David moves us to pray, assuring us that the Lord is of great mercy for all who invoke and turn to Him. When we pray to God, He grants us more than we ask, without reproaching us for the offences we have given Him. It seems that, on hearing our prayer, He forgets our faults.

Saint John Climacus says that prayer in a sense does violence to God, and forces Him to grant us what we ask. This forcing is highly pleasing to the Lord who desires it from us, for as Saint Augustine says, God has greater desires to give us good things than we to receive them, since God, by nature, is infinite Goodness, as Saint Leo observes, and is always pleased to communicate His goods to us.

Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi says that God becomes in a way obliged to the soul that prays to Him, as the soul thus offers the Lord the occasion for Him to satisfy His desire of dispensing graces and favours to us. And another Saint said that this goodness of the Lord, on hearing us and gratifying us whenever we address our petitions to Him, shows that He is the true God.

Some wrongly complain that they find God unfavourable, notes Saint Bernard; but with greater reason the Lord laments that many offend Him by not turning to Him to ask for graces.

Hence our Redeemer told His disciples: “Until now you have asked for nothing in My Name as My ministers. Ask and you shall receive so that your joy may be complete.” That is: “Do not complain of Me if you are not fully happy; complain of yourselves that you have not asked of Me the graces I have prepared for you. Ask, then, and you will be content.”

The ancient monks affirmed that there is no exercise more profitable for attaining salvation than continuous prayer, saying, “help me, Lord”; “Come quickly to My aid, Lord My God” (Psalm). And the Venerable Father S  neri tells of himself that he used to devote a long time in his meditations to pious affects; but that afterwards, convinced of the great efficacy of prayer, endeavoured to spend the greater part of the time in supplications.

May we always do the same, as Our Lord loves us to extreme, greatly desires our salvation and is solicitous in hearing what we ask. The princes of this world give audiences to few, says Saint John Chrysostom; but God grants one to all who ask.

Adore everlasting God, and give Him thanks for all the benefits He has granted you: by creating you, by redeeming you by way of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by making you a child of Holy Church, by awaiting you when fallen into mortal sin and forgiving you many times. You would not have offended God if you had turned to Him in temptation. All your happiness is founded on prayer, in asking Him for the benefits you need. Ask Him, by the intercession of Most Holy Mary, that He grant you great sorrow for your faults, perseverance in His Grace, a good and pious death, and eternal glory; and, above all, the supreme gift of His love and of perfect conformity to His most holy Will.



Let us consider, besides, the need for prayer. Saint John Chrysostom says that just as a body without soul is dead, so the soul without prayer is likewise lifeless, and that plants need water so as not to wither as much as we need prayer so as not to be lost.

God wants us all to save ourselves, and does not want anyone to be lost, “rather He awaits with great patience, for love of men, before coming as Supreme Judge, since He does not wish any sinner to perish, but that all be converted to penance and be saved” (II Peter) But He also wants us to ask for the graces necessary for our salvation! given that, on the one hand, we cannot observe the divine precepts and save ourselves without actual graces from the Lord, and, on the other hand, God does not in general want to give us those graces if we do not ask for them.

For this reason, says the Holy Council of Trent, God does not impose impossible precepts, because either He gives us the proximate actual grace necessary to keep those precepts, or gives us the grace to ask Him for that actual grace. And Saint Augustine teaches that, except for the first graces that God gives us, like the calling to the Faith, or to penance, all the rest, and especially perseverance, God only grants to those who ask Him for them.

Theologians here deduce, with Saint Basil, Saint Augustine, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Clement of Alexandria and many others, that for adults prayer is necessary, being a necessity as means, that is, it is an obligation absolute, without which salvation cannot be obtained! So that, without prayer, no one can be saved! And this, the very learned Lessius says, should be considered to be of faith. Yet the members of Holy Church can pray for poor sinners and attain those graces they need to save themselves. Hearts must be moved to save themselves; because “God, who created us without us, will not save us without us” as Saint Augustine says.

Testimonies of Sacred Scripture are conclusive and numerous: “Let nothing prevent you from praying at all times... It is necessary ever to pray and never to lose heart... Pray so that you do not fall in temptation... Ask, and it shall be given to you... Pray ceaselessly so as not to fall in temptation.” The above words “is necessary, ask, pray”, according to the general sentence of the Doctors, with the angelical Saint Thomas, impose prayer as a precept under grave sin, especially in two cases: firstly, when a man is in sin; secondly, when he is in danger of sin.

To which theologians commonly add that whoever ceases to pray for a time is not free of mortal sin. And this whole doctrine is founded, as we have seen, on prayer as a means without which it is not possible to obtain the necessary helps for salvation.

“Ask, and it shall be given to you.” Whoever asks, obtains. Hence Saint Teresa said that whoever does not ask does not obtain. You do not obtain because you do not ask. In particular, prayer is necessary to obtain the virtue of continence, for otherwise it cannot be obtained, if God does not grant it: “I asked her of God, and He granted her to me” (Wisdom).

We resume the above considering that whoever prays saves himself, and whoever does not pray damns himself. Whoever does not pray, doesn’t need the devil to carry him off to Hell, he himself hurls himself there.

All who have been saved obtained salvation by means of prayer. All who have damned themselves were damned for not having prayed. And the consideration that they could have saved themselves so easily by praying, and that there is no longer time to remedy the evil, will augment their despair in Hell.

How have you been able to live up till now so forgetful of God? The Lord had prepared all the graces you should have sought; He only waited for you to ask for them; but perhaps you only thought of gratifying your sensuality, without it mattering to you to be deprived of His love and grace. Enough! Enough now of falls! You should decide to love God for the rest of your life.

Lastly let us consider the conditions for praying well. Many ask and do not obtain, because they do not pray as they should. To pray well, humility above all is necessary. God resists the proud and gives His Grace to the humble: “God confounds the proud and gives His Grace to the meek and humble of heart” (Saint James). God does not hear the petitions of the proud; but He never spurns the petition of the humble, though sinners in the past, for the Lord never despises the contrite and humbled heart: “The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and does not rest until it reaches God, and does not withdraw until the Most High has fixed His gaze upon it” (Ecclesiasticus).

Secondly, trust is necessary. “No one who trusted in the Lord was ever confounded” (Ecclesiasticus). To this end, Jesus Christ taught us that, on asking God for graces, we give Him the name of “Our Father”, so that we ask Him with the same confidence as a son does on turning to his own father.

Whoever asks trustingly, obtains everything. “All things that you ask for in prayer, believe with lively faith that you shall receive them, and they will be granted to you unfailingly” (Gospel). Who can fear, says Saint Augustine, that God, who is truth itself, will fail in His promises? God is not like men, who sometimes do not fulfil their promises, either because they lie on promising, or because they change their minds.

How was the Lord going to exhort us so much to ask Him for graces if He did not wish to give them to us?, adds the Saint. On promising, He obliged Himself to grant us the gifts we ask of Him.

Perhaps someone thinks that, being a sinner, he does not deserve to be heard. Yet Saint Thomas replies that the prayer by which we ask for graces is not founded on our merits but on divine mercy. “Everyone who asks, receives” (Gospel); that is everyone, be they righteous or sinners.

The Redeemer Himself took away all our fears and doubts on this when He said: “Everything that you ask of the Father in My Name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son”; that is: “If you lack merits, mine will serve you before My Father. Ask Him in My name, and I promise that you will obtain what you ask.”

Yet it is needful to understand that this promise does not refer to temporal gifts like health, property and so forth, because the Lord often rightly denies us such goods, foreseeing that they will harm the soul. The doctor knows better than the patient what is good for him, says Saint Augustine, and adds that God mercifully denies to some what He angrily grants to others. Hence we should only ask for temporal things on condition that they be for the good of the soul.

And on the contrary, spiritual things, like forgiveness, perseverance, love of God and other like graces, should be besought with absolutely firm trust in acquiring them. “So if you, who are inclined to evil, know how to give your children good things, how much more so will your Father who is in Heaven give to those who ask Him, not only Sanctifying Grace, but as well all that is not contrary to the good of their souls!”, says Jesus Christ.

Above all, perseverance is necessary. Cornelius a Lápide says that the Lord “wants us to persevere in prayer to the point of importunity”; something already expressed in Sacred Scripture: “Watch then, praying at all times” “Pray ceaselessly”; likewise in the following text: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.”

It was enough to say ‘ask’: but the Lord wanted to show us that we should act like beggars, who do not cease to ask and insist and call at the door until they receive their alms. Final perseverance, especially, is a grace not to be won without continuous prayer. We cannot merit this grace by ourselves, but Saint Augustine says that, by prayer, we merit it after a fashion, pestering God to grant it to us. Christ Himself showed us how our prayer ought to be when in a parable He contrasted the presumptuous prayer, full of hypocrisy, of the pharisee with the contrite and humble prayer of the publican. Let us pray then as the latter did, with humble and sincere repentance.

Let us pray, then, always, and let us not cease to pray if we want to be saved. Let Confessors and Preachers constantly exhort to prayer if they want souls to be saved. And, as Saint Bernard says, let us always turn to

Mary's intercession. "Let us seek grace, and seek it by the intercession of Mary, who obtains all She desires and cannot be deceived."

Your enemies will not cease to battle against you up to the hour of death, and if God does not help you, you will again fall. Ask Him for holy perseverance: "Never permit me to be separated from Thee." You should ask the same gift for all who are in Grace. And trusting in the divine promises, be assured that God will grant you perseverance if you continue to ask for it. Ask for the grace to pray without cease; and that in danger of sin you invoke the names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, so that they come to your succour.

On perseverance: On this it is well to remind you of some teachings from Our Eleventh Apostolic Letter. Saint Jerome says that many begin well, but few persevere. Saul, Judas, Tertullian, all began well; but they ended badly, as they did not persevere as they should have. In Christians it is not the beginning that counts, but the end. The Saint continues saying that the Lord does not demand just the beginning of a good life, but its conclusion as well; the end is what will obtain the reward. From this Saint Lawrence Justinian calls perseverance "Gateway to Heaven". Whoever does not find this gateway will be unable to enter glory.

You, who left off sinning and rightly hope that your sins will have been forgiven, enjoy God's friendship; but you have not yet reached safety nor will you as long as you have not persevered unto the end, for only "whoever perseveres to the end shall indeed be saved" (Gospel). You have begun to lead a good and holy life. For this give a thousand thanks to God; but note that, as Saint Bernard says, the beginner is merely offered the reward, yet it is only given to the one who perseveres. It is not enough to run in the stadium, rather to press on ahead until winning the crown, as the Apostle says: "Do you not know that of all those who run in stadiums, only the first to reach the finishing line wins the prize? You, then, run in such fashion along the road of virtue, that you may succeed in obtaining the eternal reward."

You have put your hand to the plough; you have begun to live well; now more than ever you should fear and tremble. Why? Because if, God forbid, you were to look back and return to a bad life, God will exclude you from the reward of glory, as the Gospel says.

Now, by the grace of God, you flee from occasions of danger and evil, you frequent the Sacraments, each day you do spiritual meditation. Happy are you if you continue this way, and if Our Lord Jesus Christ finds you thus when He comes to judge you. But do not believe that, for having resolved to serve God, temptations have come to an end, never to trouble you again. Listen to the Holy Ghost: "Child, when you enter God's service, persevere firm in virtue and in holy fear, and prepare your soul to face temptation" (Ecclesiasticus).

Know then, that now, more than ever, you should be prepared for battle; because our enemies, the world, the devil and the flesh, now more than ever, will prepare to give you battle with the aim that you lose all that you have won. Saint Denis the Carthusian affirms that the more a man gives himself up to God, the more Hell strives to overcome him.

And this truth is clearly expressed in the Gospel, where it says: "When an unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he wanders about arid places seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says: 'I will return to my house which I left'. And when he comes, he finds it vacant, swept and decorated. Then he goes and brings with him seven spirits worse than himself, and they enter within and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than it was before;" that is, when the devil is expelled from a soul, he finds no rest or repose, and employs all his strength in trying to overcome that soul again. He asks for help from other evil spirits, and if he succeeds in entering that soul again, he will produce a second downfall, more serious than the first.

Consider, then, the arms you should employ to defend yourself from those enemies and preserve God's Grace. To prevent being overcome by the devil, there is no better arm than prayer.

Saint Paul says (Ephesians) that we have to fight not only against our flesh and blood, or against men, but also against the prince of darkness and other infernal lackeys, by which he seeks to warn us that we lack the strength to resist so much power, and that consequently we need God's help. With His help we can do everything, said the Apostle, and we should all repeat the same. But that help is not to be attained other than by asking for it in prayer. "Ask and you shall receive." Let us not trust in our own resolutions, for if we do, we will be lost.

When the devil tempts us we have to place all our trust in God's help, commending ourselves to Jesus and to Mary Most Holy. And very especially we should do so in temptations against chastity, as they are the most terrible and those which offer the devil his most frequent victories.

Of ourselves we have not the strength to preserve chastity. God has to grant it to us. We must understand that there is no other way of attaining continence, hence we must turn to the Lord and implore it of Him.



It is essential, then, in such temptations, to turn at once to Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother, and frequently invoke the holiest names of Jesus and Mary. Whoever does so will overcome. Whoever does not will be overcome.

The Lord will not cast you from His presence or forsake you if you do not first forsake Him. But experience of your frailty should inspire you with fear; so that you should ask God to give you the strength you need against the powers of Hell, which is so desirous of reducing you again to its odious servitude.

Let us now see how the world is to be overcome. The devil is a great enemy, but the world is worse. If the devil did not make use of it, of bad men, who make up what we call world, he would not win the triumphs he does.

Our Redeemer does not warn us to beware of the devil as much as He does of men. They are often worse than the devils, since devils are driven away by prayer and invoking the names of Jesus and Mary; bad people, however, if they incite someone to sin, and are answered with good and Christian words, do not flee nor are held back, rather incite and tempt further still, mock the person and call him a coward or a fool; and when unable to do anything else, treat him as a hypocrite making a pretence of holiness. And no few timid or weak souls, so as not to hear such gibes and insults, follow those ministers of Lucifer and sin miserably.

Be convinced, then, that if you want to live devoutly, then the godless, the wicked, will despise you and make fun of you. The man who lives badly cannot abide those who live well, for their lives are a continual reproach to him and because he would like everyone to imitate him so as to silence the remorse he feels at the Christian life of others.

The Apostle says that whoever serves God has to be persecuted by the world: “All those who wish to live virtuously according to Jesus Christ have to suffer persecution” (II Timothy). All the Saints suffered harsh persecutions. Who holier than Jesus Christ? Well, the world persecuted Him as far as dealing Him the shameful death of the Cross.

This should not surprise us, because the maxims of the world run wholly counter to those of Jesus Christ. What the world esteems, Christ calls folly. And on the contrary, the world deems folly what our Redeemer praises and values, such as crosses, dolour and scorn.

But let us be consoled, that if the wicked curse and censure us, God blesses and exalts us. Is it not enough for us to be praised by God, Mary Most Holy, the Angels and Saints, and all the good?

Let us therefore leave sinners to say what they please, and we continue to serve God, so faithful and loving towards those who love Him. However greater the obstacles and contradictions we meet on doing good, so much the greater will be the Lord’s pleasure and our merits.



Let us imagine that only God and ourselves exist in the world, and when the wicked censure us, let us commend them to the Lord, and go on our way in peace, giving Him thanks for the light that illumines us and is denied to them, as they reject it. Let us never be ashamed at being and seeming Christians, for if we ever were, Jesus Christ will be ashamed of us, as He declared.

If we want to be saved, it is needful that we be firmly resolved ever to make efforts and do ourselves violence. “How narrow the way that leads to eternal life” (Gospel). The kingdom of Heaven is only won by efforts, and “those who strive hard will attain it” (Gospel). Whoever does himself no violence will not be saved. And this is certain, for if we want to practise good, we have to battle against our own rebel nature. In particular, we should do ourselves violence at the beginning to stamp out bad habits and acquire good ones, given that afterwards a good habit becomes easy, and sweet the observance of the good law.

The Lord told Saint Bridget the Great that whoever, practising the virtues with valour and patience, suffers the first thorn pricks, those same thorns later turn into roses.

Attention, then, and listen to Jesus, who tells you as to the paralytic: “Listen, you are now well; sin no more, lest something happen to you and you become worse than you were before” (Gospel). Understand, then, that if to your shame you relapse, your ruin will be worse than all those of your first falls.

Alas for those who set out on the way to God and then forsook Him! They will be chastised as rebels to the light; and the pain for those unhappy ones who were favoured and enlightened with lights from God, and were later unfaithful, will be to become completely blind, and end their days sunk in their faults. “And if one who is righteous afterwards strays from the right path... will he by chance possess true life? Not only will he not possess true life, but none of his good works will be taken into account” (Ezekiel).

Ah! How often have you deserved a like chastisement, since you have so often left off sinning thanks to the lights and mercies God sent you, and then miserably relapsed again! Let your past ingratitude serve as an incentive to bemoan the offences you gave Him and to inflame you with love for God. Ask Him for final perseverance in His love and grace, for you know that He will grant it to you if you continue to ask for it.

Let us consider what concerns the third enemy, the flesh, the worst of all, and see how we should combat it. In the first place, by prayer, as we have already seen. In the second place, by fleeing from occasions, as we shall now see and ponder carefully.

Saint Bernardine of Siena says that the best of all counsels, fundamental in the spiritual life, consists in always fleeing from occasions of sin. Forced by exorcisms, the devil once confessed that no sermons are more hateful to him than those which exhort to flee from occasions of evil.

And with great reason; because the devil laughs at all the promises and resolutions the repentant sinner makes, if he does not withdraw from such occasions.

The occasion, especially in matters of sensual pleasures, is like a blindfold, not allowing him to see either resolutions, or instructions or eternal truths; in brief, it blinds man and makes him forgetful of everything.

That was the perdition of our first parents: not to flee from the occasion. God had prohibited them to stretch out their hand to the forbidden fruit, which “God commanded us neither to eat nor to touch,” said Eve to the serpent, yet the imprudent woman saw it, took it and ate. She began by admiring the fruit, later took it in her hand, and in the end ate of it. Whoever voluntarily exposes himself to danger, perishes in it: “whoever loves danger will perish in it” (Ecclesiasticus).

Saint Peter warns that the devil prowls about us seeking whom to devour. Hence, to re-enter a soul that threw him out, says Saint Cyprian, he only awaits the opportune occasion. If the soul lets herself be seduced to go into a dangerous occasion, the enemy will again take possession and devour her without fail.



Unhappy one raised to life by confession but who fails to avoid the occasions! Despite resurrection, he will become subject to death and die again. Whoever wants to be saved needs to renounce not only sin, but also the occasions of sin; that is, he should forsake that companion, that house, that contact and friendship.

Someone could say that, on starting a new life, he abandoned all illicit purposes in his relations with certain persons, so that there can be no more fear of temptations. I will opportunely recall what is told of certain bears in Mauritania, used to hunting monkeys. These animals, on seeing their enemy, climb up into the trees. But the bear lies down on the ground, pretending to be dead, and hardly do the monkeys trustingly climb down, than it jumps up, seizes and devours them.

The devil thus pretends that temptations are dead and, when men descend to dangerous occasions, suddenly presents them with the temptation, by which he overcomes them. How many unfortunate souls who frequented prayer and Communion, and could be called holy, came to fall prey to Hell for not having avoided occasions of evil!

Remember the case of that saintly lady, devoted to the pious work of collecting and burying the bodies of martyrs, who found one still alive. She brought him to her home, cared for him and cured him. And it later happened that, owing to the proximate occasion, these two saints, for such could they be called, lost the grace of God, and then the Christian faith itself.

Saint John Chrysostom says: “All flesh is hay. Is it possible that hay fail to burn if set on fire? Impossible to be in a fire and not be burnt. Our strength is like that of tow amid flames. And Solomon too tells us: “Can a man by chance conceal fire in his bosom without his clothes being burnt, or walk over live coals without the soles of his feet being scorched? Well, whoever seeks sinful dealings with his neighbour’s wife, will no longer be clean from the moment he desired her” (Proverbs). It would be madness to try and walk over live coals without being burnt. Well, it is no lesser madness to seek occasions and not fall in them.

“As from the sight of a snake, flee from sins; for if you go up close to them, they will strike you.” (Ecclesiasticus). It is needful to flee from sin as from a poisonous snake, for it is needful to avoid, not only the bite of a snake, but also touching it and even approaching it.

You will perhaps say that a certain house, a certain friendship, favour your interests. But if that house is the way to Hell for you and you do not renounce your salvation, it is absolutely necessary that you resolutely abandon it. The Lord says that “If your right eye is an occasion of sin to you, pluck it out and cast it far away from you.” Note the words of the Gospel, “far from you”: you must throw it not close by but far away, that is, all occasions must be avoided.

Saint Francis of Assisi said that the devil tempts spiritual persons dedicated to God in a very different way from those who live badly. At the beginning he does not tie them with a string but with a hair; later with a thread; then with a cord, and finally with a rope, with which he draws them into sin.

Whoever then desires to free himself from such risks, let him cast aside those bonds of a hair, by fleeing from all dangerous occasions, dealings, greetings, gifts and the like; and above all, whoever had the habit of impurity is not to be content with avoiding proximate occasions; if he does not also flee from remote ones, he will fall again.

Whoever truly desires to save himself has to form and renew very frequently his resolve never to forsake God, often repeating that Saint's phrase: "Lose everything, but never God."

But such a resolve not to lose God is not enough if we do not make use of the means ordained so as not to lose Him.

The first, as already said, is to flee from occasions.

The second, is to frequent the Sacraments of Confession and Communion, for in the house often cleaned dirt does not reign. By Confession the soul is kept pure; and not only remission of sins, but also strength to overcome temptations is obtained.

Holy Communion is called the Bread of Heaven, for just as the body cannot live without earthly nourishment, so the soul cannot live without this Heavenly Fare. "Unless you shall eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you" (Gospel). And, on the contrary, whoever eats this Bread frequently is promised that he will live eternally. Hence the Holy Council of Trent calls Communion 'medicine which frees us from venial sins and preserves us from mortal ones'.

The third means is meditation, that is, mental prayer: "In all your doings, remember your last end, and you will never ever sin" (Ecclesiasticus). Whoever keeps the eternal truths present, death, judgement, eternity, will not fall into sin. God illumines us in meditation and speaks to us interiorly, teaching us what we must do and the things from which we must flee. "Those who are faithful to Me, I will bring to the desert, and speak to their hearts with loving intimacy" (Oseas). Meditation is the blessed blaze in which we flare up with divine love.

And finally, as we have already considered, to keep in God's Grace it is absolutely necessary for us to pray at all times and ask for the graces of which we stand in need. Whoever does not do mental prayer will ask with difficulty; and not asking will surely be lost.

We should, then, use all these means to save ourselves and lead a well ordered life. In the morning, on rising, we have to make the Christian exercises of thanksgiving, love, offering and resolutions, with prayers to Jesus and to the Virgin to keep us from sin that day. Afterwards we will do the meditation and hear Holy Mass. During the day we shall have spiritual reading and make the visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Divine Mother. And at night we should recite the Rosary and make an examination of conscience. We ought to commune frequently. It would be very useful to do some spiritual exercises.

We have as well to honour Mary Most Holy with some special gift, such as, for example, fasting on Saturdays. She is Mother of perseverance and offers this gift to whoever serves Her: "Those who are guided by Me will not sin" (Ecclesiasticus).

Lastly, and above all, we must ask God for holy perseverance, especially in times of temptation, by then invoking the Most Holy Names of Jesus and Mary more often, if the temptation persists. If you do this, you will surely be saved; and if not you will surely be damned.

Employ the means of salvation God offers you. He wants you to be saved, and you too should so desire and put into action, chiefly to please His most loving Heart, so desirous of your good. The Lord invites you to love Him, and to love Him has to be your one desire.

To enjoy, an eternity is already prepared for us; to suffer for God, we have no more than the present life: Let us employ it well and suffer for Jesus Christ, our Divine Redeemer, all that we can. Oh, how much He had to suffer and how dearly it cost Him to love us, solely to make us happy for all eternity! Well, cost what it may to our nature, let us resolve to sanctify our soul and give pleasure to God in everything.

On confidence in the protection of Mary Most Holy: "Whoever finds Me will find life, and will obtain salvation from the Lord" (Proverbs). How many thanks we should give to God's mercy, exclaims Saint Bonaventure, for having obtained for us the Virgin Mary as advocate, whose petitions can win us all the mercies we desire!

Sinners!, though we be culpable before divine justice, and consider ourselves already damned to Hell for our wickedness, let us not yet despair. Let us turn to this Divine Mother, let us shelter beneath Her mantle, and She will save us. She demands of us the resolve to amend our lives. Let us take Her, then; let us truly confide in Mary Most Holy, and She will obtain our salvation. For Mary is the powerful advocate, the most clement advocate, advocate desirous of saving us all.

Let us consider, firstly, that Mary is a powerful advocate, who can do all with the Sovereign Judge, to the benefit and welfare of those who serve Her devoutly: a singular privilege granted by the Judge Himself, who is Son of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. “It is a great privilege that Mary be so powerful before Her Son!”, said Saint Bonaventure as well.



The Blessed Virgin obtains from God all that is asked of Her with firm decision, and as Queen sends the Angels to enlighten, perfect and purify Her devotees. Hence the Church, in order to inspire us with confidence in this great Advocate of ours, calls us to invoke Her under the name of powerful Virgin: “Virgo potens, ora pro nobis.”

And why is Mary Most Holy’s protection so efficacious?, Because She is God’s Mother. The prayers of the Virgin Mary, says Saint Antonine, Mary being as She is Mother of the Lord, are, in certain manner, orders to Jesus Christ; so it is impossible for Her not to obtain whatever She asks, whenever She asks.

Saint Gregory, Archbishop of Nicomedia, says that the Redeemer, to satisfy the obligation He owes to this Holy Mother for having received His bodily human nature from Her, grants all that Mary requests. And Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, writes these words: “The Son desires that His Mother make requests of Him, because He wants to grant Her all that She asks, to recompense Her thus for the favour He

received from Her.”

With reason, then, the martyr Saint Methodius exclaimed: “Be glad and rejoice, O Mary, who struck up a fortune by having as Debtor the Son, to whom we are all debtors, for all we have is His gift!”

In the same way Saint Cosmas of Jerusalem repeats that Mary’s help is all-powerful, and Richard of Saint Lawrence confirms this, noting how right it is that the Mother share the power of the Son, and He being Omnipotent, communicates omnipotence to His Mother. The Son is omnipotent by nature; the Mother is omnipotent by grace, so that by Her prayers She obtains all that She desires, according to that famed verse: “Quod Deus império, tu prece Virgo, potes:” ‘You, by Your prayers O Virgin, can obtain all that God can by His commands.’

The same doctrine appears in the Revelations of Saint Bridget. That Saint heard Jesus tell His Blessed Mother to She ask for all that She wished, and that whatever Her petitions might be, She would never ask in vain. And the Lord made known the reason for this privilege saying: “You never denied Me anything on earth; I will deny You nothing in Heaven.”

In conclusion, there is no one, however wicked he may be, whom Mary cannot save by Her intercession. “O Mother of God!”, exclaims Saint Gregory of Nicomedia, “nothing can resist Your power, since Your Creator esteems and appreciates Your glory as though it were His own.” “You, Lady, can do everything,” says Saint Peter Damian as well, “given that You can even save desperados.”

Your beloved Queen and Mother is omnipotent for saving sinners. Turning to Our Lady, you should not despair of your salvation because of the weight of your sins. By Her petitions She obtains all She wants, and if She prays for you, you will surely be saved. You are a sinner, but make up your mind to amend, and be happy to be Mary’s loving servant. She can and wants to save you. How much more ought you to trust in Her clemency now, if you consecrate yourself to Her service! Ask Mary Most Holy to pray for you and make you a saint.

Let us consider, secondly, that Mary is an advocate as clement as She is powerful, and that She is unable to deny Her protection to anyone who turns to Her. The eyes of the Lord are attentive to the glances of the just, says David. But this Mother of Mercy has Her eyes fixed both on the just and on sinners, to prevent them falling; and if they do fall, to help them rise up.

It seemed to Saint Bonaventure that, when he contemplated the Virgin, he was seeing mercy itself, and Saint Bernard exhorts us to turn to this powerful advocate in all our needs, sweet and benign in extreme to all who commend themselves to Her.

Hence we call Her a lovely as the olive. “I am uplifted as fair Olive tree in the fields” (Ecclesiasticus); for just as from the olive flows a suave oil, symbol of piety and clemency, so from the Virgin emanate graces and mercies which She dispenses to all who have recourse to Her help.

Denis the Carthusian spoke well by calling Her advocate of the sinners who take refuge in Her. O God, what pain will a damned Christian feel on considering that he could have saved himself so easily by turning to this Mother of Mercy, and that he did not put this into practice, nor is there now time to make this good any more!

The Blessed Virgin said to Saint Bridget: “They call Me Mother of mercy, and truly I am, since God’s clemency has so disposed.” Well, who has given us such an advocate to defend us, but divine mercy, which

seeks to save us all? The Virgin added: “Eternally wretched will be whoever can turn to Me, who am so pious and benign to all, but does not seek My help and damns himself.”

Do we perhaps fear, says Saint Bonaventure, that Mary may deny us the succour we ask? No; She cannot nor ever will gaze without compassion on the unfortunates who appeal to Her and leave them without assistance. She cannot nor ever will, because She was destined by God to be Queen and Mother of Mercy, and as such has to attend to the needy: “You are Queen of Mercy”, Saint Bernard tells Her; “and who are the subjects of Mercy but the miserable?” And then the Saint, out of humility, adds: “Given that You, O Mother of God, are Queen of Mercy, You have so often to attend to me, who am the most miserable of sinners.”

With motherly concern, do not doubt, She will free Her sick children from death, for Mary’s goodness and clemency makes Her Mother of all those who suffer.

Saint Basil calls Her House of Health, for just as in hospitals the most needy are attended first, Mary, as that Saint says, welcomes and cares with more painstaking and loving compassion the greatest sinners among all those who have recourse to Her.

Let us not doubt, then, the mercy of Most Holy Mary. Saint Bridget heard the Saviour say to the Virgin: “If he were to ask with humility, You would even show mercy to the devil himself.” The proud Lucifer will never be humble; but if he were to humble himself before this Sovereign Lady and ask Her help, the intercession of the Virgin would free him from Hell.

With those words, Our Lord gave us to understand the same as His beloved Mother later told the Saint: that when a sinner, however great his guilt, sincerely commends himself to Her, She does not look at his sins, but at the intention that moves him; and if he has the goodwill to amend, She receives him and heals him of all the evils that crush him, as if She were to say: “However much a man may have sinned, if he turns to Me truly repentant, I hasten to receive him. I do not look at the number of his faults, but at the spirit with which he comes. I do not refuse to anoint and heal his wounds, for I am called, as I really am, Mother of Mercy.” To Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great, in his life in the world as Clemente Domínguez, the Mother of God said in 1971: “The Father always has Justice, and the Mother, mercy. I do not understand about justice, only mercy. Turning to Me, you will obtain Jesus’ forgiveness and appease the Heavenly Father’s Wrath.”

With all reason, then, Saint Bonaventure heartens us by saying: Do not despair, poor and wayward sinners; raise up your eyes to Mary, and breathe again, trusting in the piety of this good Mother. Let us seek the grace lost, says Saint Bernard, and let us seek it by way of Mary; for this lofty gift, lost by us, adds Richard of Saint Lawrence, was found by Mary, and to Her, therefore, we should turn to recover it.

When the Archangel Saint Gabriel announced to the Virgin Her Divine Maternity, he told Her: “Do not be troubled, Mary, for You have found Grace before God.” But Mary, always full of Grace, was never deprived of it, so how could the Angel say that She had found it? To this Cardinal Hugh replies that the Virgin did not find Grace for Herself, for She always possessed and enjoyed Grace, but for us, who had lost it; from which he infers that we should present ourselves to Mary Most Holy and tell Her: “Dear Lady, goods must be restored to whoever lost them. This divine Grace You found is not Yours, because You have always possessed Grace; it is ours, and by our fault we lost it. To us, dear Lady, You should return it.” “Gather, then, gather hastily before the Virgin all sinners who have lost Grace through their own fault, and say without fear: return to us our good which You found.”

Though you may be an unhappy sinner who often and deliberately lost divine Grace, turn to the Mother of Mercy, and ask Her not to despise you on seeing the state you are in; rather look upon you with greater compassion and hasten to your succour. By Her intercession you must obtain salvation. There is no case, however desperate, that is not won if Mary defends it. Never cease to serve and love the Virgin Most Holy and to turn to Her, so that She never cease to succour you.

Thirdly, let us consider that Mary Most Holy is so pious an advocate that She not only helps those who have recourse to Her, but desires to save us all, and Herself goes out looking for unfortunates to defend and save.

See how She calls us all, with the aim of heartening us to hope for all kinds of goods, if we turn to Her protection. “In Me is all Hope of life and of virtue. Come to Me all you who love Me” (Ecclesiasticus). She calls us all, righteous and sinners. “The devil, your adversary, like a roaring lion prowls about you seeking prey to devour,” says Saint Peter (I Peter). But this Divine Mother is always looking out for someone to save.

Mary is Mother of Mercy, since the compassion and clemency with which She attends us oblige Her to take pity on us and continually try to save us, like a loving mother, unable to see her children in danger of perdition without rushing to succour them.

“And, after Jesus Christ, who strives more anxiously than You for the salvation of our souls?”, says Saint Germanus. And Saint Bonaventure adds that Mary shows Herself so concerned to succour the wretched, that it seems that Her most lively desires are centred in this. Certainly She helps those commended to Her, and

forsakes none of them. So benign is She that She rejects no one. But this does not suffice Mary's most clement Heart, rather She anticipates our pleas and helps us even before we ask; and is so merciful that wherever She sees misery, She comes up at once, unable to see anyone in need without giving help.

Thus did She act in Her life on earth, as is shown in the events at the wedding in Cana, Galilee, where hardly had She noted the lack of wine, without waiting to be asked, and pitying the affliction and affront to the spouses, requested Her Son to remedy it, and told Him: "They have no wine," obtaining from the Lord the miraculous transformation of water into wine. The Most Holy Virgin Mary "not only concerned Herself with the spiritual needs and tribulations of Her children, but with their corporal ones as well... She was most perfect model of Christian charity towards all the children of the Church, since She often served them in person, visiting, teaching and comforting them" (Acts of the Apostles).

Well, if Mary's concern was so great towards the afflicted when She was in the world, surely the mercy with which She succours us from Heaven is greater, says Saint Bonaventure. From there She sees our miseries better, and has more compassion on us. And if Mary, without being asked, showed Herself so ready to give Her help, how much more will She attend to those who pray to Her!

Let us never cease to turn in all our needs to this Divine Mother, whom we always find ready to help whoever asks Her. You will always find Her ready to help you, for the Virgin's desires to grant us mercies is greater than ours to receive them; so that when we have recourse to Mary we surely find Her full of mercy and of grace.

And Saint Bonaventure says that Her desire to favour and save us is so lively that She feels offended, not only by those who deliberately insult Her, but also by those who do not ask for Her help and protection; and on the contrary surely saves all those who commend themselves to Her with the firm resolve to amend, so that the Saint calls Her: "Health of those who call upon Her."

Let us then turn to this sublime Mother, and say with Saint Bonaventure: 'In te Dómina, sperávi: non confúndar in aetérnum!' O Mother of God, Mary Most Holy, having placed my hope in You, I trust I will not damn myself!

Prostrate yourself at the feet of Mary Most Holy imploring clemency, though you be a miserable slave of Hell, undeserving of any benefit. Mary is Mother of Mercy, and mercy can be shown to the undeserving. She is hope and refuge of sinners, so that She is your refuge and hope.

Saint Joseph, Help of the dying: When death approaches, the devil attempts with all his wiles to sow despair in the hearts of the dying. At the hour of death, your imagination, disturbed by frightful fantasies, feels plunged into mortal distress, and your spirit, disturbed by the fear of Divine Justice at the sight of your iniquities, will have to battle against the infernal enemy, who will want you to lose your hope in God's mercy and plunge you into an abyss of despair. Your heart will then be weak, oppressed and frightened by the pain of your illness and by the pain of death, wearied and worn out by the efforts you have made against the enemies of your salvation. So that Saint Thérèse said: "Dear sisters, pray for the poor dying. If you knew what they suffer!"

And to whom must we pray for them?



The 'Patron of a Good Death' is Joseph Most Holy, as he died of love in the arms of Jesus and Mary. At his death, Saint Joseph was not deprived of the beatific vision. The natural death of Saint Joseph was only that of his accidental body, that is, clinical death, and he was besides exempt of Particular Judgement. His Essential Body, united to his Soul, was immersed in gentle dormition and awoke when Christ expired. His accidental Body rose from the dead when Christ arose.

Joseph Most Holy is also 'Help of the dying'. If in the tempestuous sea of the world, it is so important in life to have a powerful protector, how much more so at the supreme and decisive moment on which eternity depends.

For the righteous person, a holy death is the crown of his good works and of all his virtues; for the repentant sinner it is the rejection of and solemn reparation for all the sins he committed; for both, it is the end of all evil and the beginning of unending bliss. But from among all God's Saints, the one to whom we should turn with preference to attain the most precious of all blessings, eternal life, is without doubt Saint Joseph, the father of our Judge. He will obtain forgiveness for us. His power is terrible in the face of the enemies of our salvation; he will send them flying. Never was there a death so gentle and so privileged as that of Saint Joseph; he will obtain for us as well the grace of a gentle and holy death.

Saint Joseph offers all men the help of his protection. The Jesuit Father Etienne Binet said that the words which Saint Bernard spoke on the August Queen of Heaven, apply as well to Her holy spouse: By invoking him, the righteous receive grace; the sinner, forgiveness, the afflicted, solace; the sick, recovery or patience in suffering; the dying, sweet consolation in the merits of the Saviour; in a word, all receive of his abundance, and are lavished with his benefits.

The persecuted attain patience and the righteous a glorious perseverance; since Joseph Most Holy is like that luminary which sheds the gentle heat of its influence over the whole orb of the earth inhabited by those placed by Heaven under his care. He thus protects and succours all in accord with the measure of the calamities which afflict them; but at that tremendous moment, which made the Hilarys and the Jeromes tremble in their deserts, is when the Holy Patriarch seems to add the greatest measure to his power of intercession and all his authority as Father and Spouse to his purposes, as though he had reserved his power for that terrible hour of agony for those who in life have venerated him with special demonstrations of devotion.



According to Father Joseph Ignatius Vallejo, of the Company of Jesus, “these attentions of the Lord Saint Joseph towards his devotees when about to pass on to the other world, can be confirmed by four cases, namely four favours of his gratitude and his love, which show him more liberal towards those who, having chosen him as their advocate, have placed their hope, their happiness and relief in their anguish, in his intercession, principally at that hour when we cannot remember without feeling a torrent of bitterness in our minds. The first beneficiary we read is in the life of Sister Pudenciana of the Order of Saint Francis, who, about to die, received from the Lord Saint Joseph, as reward for her devotion, the greatest

consolation that she could wish for at that hour; for Saint Joseph with the Child Jesus in his arms appeared to her and placed Him in hers, and thus Pudenciana received her Divine Spouse and began to enjoy in advance the delights God had reserved for her in Paradise. The second is told by Saint Vincent Ferrer, who says that a merchant in Valencia devoutly used to invite to dinner on the day of the Birth of the Child God, a poor man and a woman with a nursing child in honour of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The pious merchant died, and appearing to certain persons who had commended him to God, gave them to know that at the very moment of his death and transit to the other life, Jesus, Mary and Joseph came down to visit him, saying to him: ‘When you lived you received Us into your home in the person of three of the poor, for which We have come now to receive you into Our home.’ The third benefit was the Lord Saint Joseph coming down from Paradise in company with Saint Teresa and other Saints, to assist at the death of Mother Anne of Saint Augustine. A nun who lived in another convent was an eyewitness to this grace, when at the same time as she prayed to the Lord to prolong Mother Anne’s life, she saw her rise up to Heaven between the Lord Saint Joseph and Mother Saint Teresa of Jesus. The fourth was a favour in which the Lord Saint Joseph, besides his patronage towards those who venerate him, also showed zeal for souls, of whom he is Universal Father and Protector. The person graced was a friar of Saint Augustine, who some months after his death appeared to another friar of the same Order and said that he was suffering the most terrible torments in Purgatory, and that he had been in grave danger of damnation; but that the Lord Saint Joseph, having great influence at Christ’s tribunal as His Putative Father, had helped him greatly to accept the discourse of the Divine Mary and had thus freed him from Hell, thanks to the devotion with which he had venerated him in this world.”

The love of God: “Let us love God, then, since God first loved us” (I John). Consider before all that God deserves your love, for He loved you before you loved Him, and is the first of all who have loved you. Those who first loved you in this world were your parents, but they could not feel or show you love until after you were conceived.

But before you came into being, God already loved you. Your father and mother had not been born, and God loved you. And how long before creating the world did God begin to love you? Perhaps a thousand years, a thousand centuries before? Let us count neither years nor centuries. God loved you from all eternity.

In a word: ever since God was God, He has always loved you; ever since He loved Himself, He also loved you. Rightly the virgin Saint Agnes said: “Another lover won me first.” When the world and creatures demanded her love, she would reply: “No, I cannot love you. My God was the first to love me, and it is right that I consecrate my love to Him alone.”

God has loved you eternally, and only out of love did He choose you from among so many men He could have created, and gave you being, and placed you in the world, and besides formed countless beautiful creatures to serve you and remind you of that love He professes for you, and of the love you owe Him. “Heaven, the

earth and all creatures invite me to love you,” said Saint Augustine. When the Saint contemplated the sun, the moon, the stars, the hills and rivers, it seemed to him that they all spoke to him, saying: ‘Love God, who created us for you, so that you might love Him.’

Father Rancé, founder of the Trappists, could not see fields, springs and seas without remembering, in those created things, the love God held for him. Likewise Saint Teresa said that creatures reproached her for her ingratitude to God.

And Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi could scarcely contemplate the beauty of some flower or fruit, than she felt her heart transpierced by the darts of God’s love, and exclaimed: “From all eternity the Lord has thought of creating these flowers so that I might love Him!”

Remember what we told you in Our 15th Letter, on speaking of the Way of the Cross:

Consider, besides, with what singular love God willed you to be born in a Christian land and in the bosom of Holy Church. How many are born among idolaters, jews, muslims or heretics, and thereby are more easily lost! Few are those who have the happiness to be born where the true Faith reigns, and the Lord placed you among them.

Oh! What a great gift, that of the Faith! How many millions of souls do not enjoy the Sacraments, or sermons, or examples of holy persons, or the other means of salvation the Church provides for us!

And God wanted to grant you all these great helps without any merit on your part, even foreseeing your demerits. On thinking of creating you and granting you these graces, He already foresaw the offences you were to give Him.

God is the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and earth, so how can men scorn God, who has loved them so? Ask the Lord to give you His love, a fervent love to make you forget all creatures, a mighty love, by which you can overcome however many obstacles stand in your way, a lasting love, never to end.

And the Lord not only gave us so many beautiful creatures, but did not feel His love satisfied until He gave us and yielded Himself to us. Accursed sin had led us to lose divine Grace and glory, making us slaves of Hell. But the Son of God, to the amazement of Heaven and earth, willed to come into this world and became man to redeem us from eternal death, and conquer Grace and lost glory for us.

It would be a wonder if a powerful monarch wished to become a worm for love of those miserable beings. Well, we should marvel infinitely more to see God become Man for love of men. “He humbled Himself taking the form of servant and living in the state of man” (Philippians). God in mortal flesh! “And the Divine Word was made flesh” (Gospel). But amazement and shock increase on considering all the Son of God later did and suffered for our love.

To redeem us a single Drop of His Most Precious Blood was sufficient, or a Tear of His, a single prayer, since this prayer by a Divine Person had infinite value and was sufficient to rescue the world and any number of worlds there might be. However, says Saint John Chrysostom, to satisfy God’s immense love for us, what was sufficient to redeem us was not enough. He did not want solely to save us, but also that we might love Him deeply, for He loved us deeply, and to achieve this chose a life of toil and affronts and the bitterest death of all, so that we might know His infinite and ever-ardent love for us. “Christ made Himself obedient for us unto death, and death on the Cross” (Philippians).

Oh! Excess of divine Love, that neither Angels nor men succeed in comprehending! The Passion of Christ can be called an ‘excess’: “Excess of dolour, excess of love”, says Saint Bonaventure.

If the Redeemer had not been God, rather a relative or friend of ours, what greater proof of appreciation could he have given us than that of dying for us? “Nobody has greater love than one who lays down his life for his friends” (Gospel). If Jesus Christ had needed to save His own Father, what more could He have done for His love? To make reparation to God the Father and Creator, what else as abnegated and generous as to sacrifice His life in a sea of affronts and dolours is possible? If the vilest man on earth had done for you what the Redeemer did, could you live without loving Him?

Do you believe in the Incarnation and death of Jesus Christ? Do you believe and not love Him? And can you even think of loving other things, outside of Christ? Do you perhaps doubt that He loves you? Very well, but He came into the world to suffer and die for you, to demonstrate the love He bears you! says Saint Augustine.

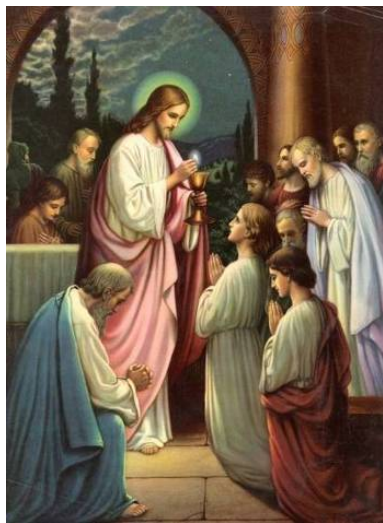
Maybe prior to the Incarnation of the Word a man could doubt that God loved him tenderly; but after the Incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, how can he doubt it? With what clearer and tenderer proof could He show us His love than by sacrificing His own life for us? We are used to hearing speak of creation and redemption, of a God born in a crib and dying on a cross. O holy Faith, illuminate our souls!

You can see that your Jesus left nothing undone to oblige you to love Him, and that you, by your ingratitude, have sought to oblige Him to abandon you. Ask the Lord to teach you how He deserves to be loved and the duty you have to love Him. Knowing that He died for you, how come you lived forgetful of God for so many

years? But, ah! The years do not return. At least may you dedicate the rest of your existence completely to His love and service; for, whom are you to love if not your God, who died for you and bore with you patiently and, instead of chastising you deservedly, turned the chastisement into mercies and graces?

Our admiration will grow if we consider the burning desire Our Lord Jesus Christ had to suffer and die for our welfare: “By baptism of blood it behoves Me to be baptized, and what anguish I feel until it be accomplished!” He has to suffer baptism in His own Blood, and feels anguish desiring that the hour of His Passion and Death soon arrive, so that man may know the love He bears him. The Son of God said just that in His earthly life. Hence He exclaimed on the night preceding His Dolorous Passion: “With eagerness have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer.” It would be said that our God cannot satiate His love for men, writes Saint Basil of Seleucia.

Ah, my Jesus! Men do not love You, because they do not ponder the love you profess for them! O Lord! The soul that thinks of a God dead for his love, so desirous of dying in order to show the immense sympathy He has for him, how can he possibly live without loving Him?



Saint Paul says that not so much what Jesus Christ did and suffered, as the love He showed us on suffering for us, obliges and almost forces us to love Him. Considering this lofty mystery, Saint Lawrence Justinian exclaimed: “We have seen a God mad with love for us.” And, in truth, if Faith did not so affirm, who would believe that the Creator wanted to die for His creatures?

Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, in an ecstasy she had with a Crucifix in her hands, called Jesus ‘mad with love’. And the gentiles said the same when the death of Christ was preached to them, deeming it incredible folly, according to the Apostle’s testimony: “I preach a Crucified Christ, scandal to such jews and madness to such gentiles.”

They say, how can a God, utter happiness in Himself, in need of no one, come into the world, become man and die for love of men, His creatures? To believe this is the same as to believe that God went crazy with love. And withal, it is of Faith that Jesus Christ, true Son of God, gave Himself up to death for love of us: He “loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

And why did He do so? He did so in order that we might not live for the world, but for that Lord who for us willed to die. He did so in order that the love He showed us win all our heartstrings; hence the Saints, considering Christ’s death, thought it little to lay down their lives and give all for love of their most loving Jesus.

How many illustrious men, how many princes, abandoned wealth, family, country and kingdom to shelter in the cloister and live in Christ’s love! How many martyrs sacrificed their lives for Him! How many virgins, renouncing the nuptials of this world, ran joyfully to death to recompense, in the way they might, the appreciation of a God who died for their love!

And you, what have you done up till now for love of Christ? Just as the Lord died for the Saints: for Saint Lawrence, Saint Lucy, Saint Agnes..., so too He died for you.

What are you thinking of doing, if only for the remainder of the days God grants you, so as to love Him? Look often and contemplate the image of Jesus crucified; remember how much He loved you, and say within: “My God, You died for me!” Do this at least, do so frequently, and thus you will feel sweetly moved to love God, who so loves you.

You have not loved your most loving Redeemer as you ought, for you have not dwelt on the love He bears you! When the devil or the world offer you their poisonous fruits, remember the pains Your beloved Saviour underwent for your love, so that you might love Him and not offend Him. Is it possible that someone who considers how our beloved Redeemer lay in the Bethlehem crib, on the Cross of Calvary, and now in the Sacrament of the Altar, be not inflamed with love for Him?

On Holy Communion: “Take and eat: This is My Body” (Gospel). On this beautiful subject, let us repeat some teachings from the precious booklet “Good Communions.” Let us consider the grandeur of this Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, the immense love Jesus Christ showed us by such a precious gift and the lively desire He has that We receive Him sacramented.

Let us see, firstly, the great mercy the Lord performed for us by giving Himself to us as food in Holy Communion. Saint Augustine says that Jesus Christ, being Almighty God, could give us nothing better, for what greater treasure than the Sacrosanct Body of Christ can a soul receive or desire? Let us admire so loving an invention of the Lord.

And in truth, if our Redeemer had not favoured us with such a lofty gift, who could have asked for it? Who would have dared to say to Him: “Lord, if You will to show us Your love, conceal Yourself under the species of bread and allow us to receive You as our fare?” The mere thought would have been taken as madness. “Doesn’t it seem insanity to say: eat my flesh, drink my blood?”, exclaimed Saint Augustine.

When Jesus Christ announced to His disciples this gift of the Most Blessed Sacrament that He thought to bestow upon them, many could not believe Him, and abandoned the Lord, saying: “How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?... This sermon is hard, who can bear it?” But what is not given to man even to imagine, Christ’s great love thought and wrought.

Saint Bernardine says that the Lord left us this Sacrament in memory of the love He showed for us in His Passion, as He Himself told us: “As often as you shall do this, you shall do so in memory of Me.” Christ’s divine love was not satisfied by sacrificing His life for us; that same insuperable love obliged Him, before death, to make us the greatest of all His gifts: giving Himself to be our food.

In this Sacrament, then, He wrought the most generous work of love, as the Council of Trent says in eloquent words, Jesus Christ in the Eucharist lavished all the riches of His love upon men.

Saint Francis de Sales says: Would it not be thought a very loving consideration that a prince should regale a poor man with some delightful fare from his table? And if he sent him his whole meal? And finally, if the gift consisted in a particle of the prince’s own flesh, to serve the poor man as food?... Well, Jesus in Holy Communion feeds us, not just with part of His food or a particle of His Body, but with His whole Self: “Take and eat: This is My Body.” And together with His Body gives us His Blood, Soul and Divinity.

In such a way – as Saint John Chrysostom says – that Jesus Christ, by giving Himself to us in Communion, gives us everything He has and keeps nothing back for Himself. Or as Saint Thomas expresses it: “God in the Eucharist gives Himself wholly, all that He is and all that He has.” See, then, how this Most High Lord, whom the world cannot contain – exclaims Saint Bonaventure – in the Eucharist becomes our prisoner. And by giving Himself to us really and truly in the Sacrament, how can we fear that He will deny us the graces we ask for.”

What could have moved Jesus to give Himself to us as our nourishment? And what more can He grant us, after this gift, to make us love Him? The Lord becomes divine fare so as to unite to us poor sinners. But if He gives Himself wholly to you, it is only right that you give yourself wholly to Him. How could you have offended your Redeemer, who loves you so and left nothing undone to win your love? For you He became Man; for you He died; for love of you He became your food! What else is there for Him to do?

Let us consider, secondly, the immense love Jesus Christ showed by granting us this loftiest gift. The most precious donation of the Most Blessed Sacrament is daughter of love alone. It was necessary in order to save us, according to God’s decree, that the Redeemer die.

But what need did Jesus Christ have, after His death, to stay with us to be the food of our souls? His love so willed it.

Solely to manifest the immense love He has for us did the Lord institute the Eucharist, says Saint Lawrence Justinian, expressing the same as Saint John wrote in the Gospel: “Jesus, knowing that His hour to pass from this world to the Father had now come, having loved His own who were in this world, loved them to the utmost instituting Holy Mass.”

That is, when the Lord saw that the time had come to leave this world, He wished to bequeath to us a wonderful display of His love, giving us this Most Blessed Sacrament, which is the meaning of the above words: He “loved them to the utmost”, that is, “He loved them beyond measure, with supreme and limitless love”, as Theophilactus and Saint John Chrysostom explain.

And let us note, as the Apostle observes, that the hour chosen by the Lord to make us this inestimable benefit was that of His death. On that night when He was betrayed, He took bread and, giving thanks, broke it and said: “Take and eat: This is My Body.”

While men were preparing the scourges, the thorns and the cross to deal Him the cruellest death, it was then that our loving Jesus wished to regale them with this most excellent pledge of His love.

And why did He institute this Sacrament at that hour so close to His death, and not beforehand? He did so, says Saint Bernardine, because the proofs of love given at the point of death by one who loves us are more readily kept in mind and remembered with more lively affection.

This Saint says that Jesus Christ had already given Himself to us in several ways: He had given Himself as Master, as Father and as companion; as light, as model and as victim. The definitive degree of love was lacking, namely to give Himself to be our food, to unite wholly to us, as a food unites and becomes part of the one who receives it, and He wrought this by giving Himself to us in the Sacrament.

Thus our Redeemer, not satisfied at having united Himself solely to our human nature, sought moreover to unite Himself to each one of us in particular, intimately, by means of this Sacrament.

“It is impossible – says Saint Francis de Sales – to imagine our Saviour acting more lovingly or more tenderly than this, by which, so to speak, He humbles Himself and becomes food to penetrate our souls and unite intimately with the hearts and bodies of His faithful.”

Thus Saint John Chrysostom says, to this same Lord, whom the Angels serve, “we unite and become one single body and one single flesh with Him. What shepherd feeds the sheep with his own blood? Even mothers at times arrange for wet nurses to suckle their children. But Jesus in the Sacrament sustains us with His own Body and Blood, and unites Himself to us. And what is His purpose in becoming our food? To become one with us by means of this ineffable union, for He loves us ardently.”



Jesus Christ, then, in the Eucharist, performs the greatest of all miracles. He left the memory of His wonders and gave sustenance to those who love Him, to satisfy His desire to remain with us and unite His Sacred Heart with ours.

“O admirable miracle of Your love, my Lord Jesus Christ, who wished to unite us to Your Body in such a way that we might have one single heart and one single soul inseparably united to You!” exclaimed Saint Lawrence Justinian.

Saint Claude de la Colombière, great servant of God, said: “If anything could shake my faith in the mystery of the Eucharist, I would never doubt the power, rather the love shown by God in this sovereign Sacrament. How does bread become the Body of Christ? How can the Lord be found in several places at once? I simply reply that God can do all things. But if they ask me how God can love men so much as to give Himself to be their food, I know not what to reply. I say that I do not understand, that Jesus’ love is beyond our understanding.”

Someone will exclaim: “O Lord, this excess of love by which You become our food, does not suit Your Divine Majesty.” But Jesus Christ replies: “That matters not; if not suiting My Majesty, it suits My love.” For Saint Bernard tells us that for love’s sake the lover forgets his own dignity. And Saint John Chrysostom adds that love does not seek reasons of convenience when it tries to show itself to the beloved; love does not go to where it suits but to where its desires lead.

Quite rightly Saint Thomas called the Eucharist ‘Sacrament of love’. And Saint Bernard, ‘love of loves’. And with truth Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi named Holy Thursday, when the Sacrament was instituted, “the day of Love.”

Jesus’ infinite love is worthy of infinite love! When will you love the Lord as He loves you? He could do no more so that you might love Him, and you dared to leave Him to give yourself up to vile and miserable goods.

Consider, lastly, the great desire Jesus Christ has that we receive Him in Holy Communion. Jesus, knowing “that His hour had now come;” but why does Jesus Christ call “His hour”, that night on which His dolorous Passion was to begin? He so called it because on that night He was to leave us this divine Sacrament, so that Jesus Himself might unite to the beloved souls of His faithful.

This sublime purpose moved Him then to say: “With eagerness have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer”, words by which the Redeemer indicates the ardent desire He had for this union with us in the Eucharist. “With eagerness have I desired...” His immense love for us moves Him to speak in this way, says Saint Lawrence Justinian.

He wished to remain under the species of bread, so that anyone might receive Him; since if He had chosen some costly delicacy for this portent, many would have been unable to receive Him so often. Another kind of food, though it were not select and precious, would perhaps not be found in all parts. So the Lord preferred to remain under the species of bread, because bread is readily found everywhere and all men can obtain it.

The Redeemer’s lively desire that we receive Him frequently in this Sacrament moved Him not only to exhort us or invite us to receive often; He even imposed it as a precept: “Take and eat: This is My Body.”

And so that we might go up to receive Him, He encourages us with the promise of eternal life. “Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life... Whoever eats this Bread will live eternally.” And should we not obey Him, He threatens us with exclusion from His glory: “Unless you shall eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you.”

Such invitations, promises and threats are born of Christ’s desire to unite with us in the Eucharist; and this desire proceeds from the love Jesus professes for us, since – as Saint Francis de Sales says – love has no other end than to unite to the beloved, given that in this Sacrament Jesus Himself unites to our souls: “Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood dwells in Me, and I in him.” And that is why He desires so much that we receive Him. “The loving impetus with which the bee goes up to the flower to draw out the honey – said the Lord to Saint Matilda – cannot be compared to the love with which I unite to the souls who love Me.”

Oh! If only the faithful were to understand the great good which Holy Communion brings! Christ is the owner of all wealth, and the Eternal Father made Him Lord of all.

Thus when Jesus enters the soul by Holy Communion, He brings with Him the richest treasure of graces. “All good came to me together with Her”, says Solomon, speaking of eternal Wisdom.

Saint Denis says that the Most Blessed Sacrament has supreme virtue for sanctifying souls. And Saint Vincent Ferrer wrote that one Communion avails the faithful more than fasting on bread and water for a whole week.

Communion, as the Council of Trent teaches, is the great remedy that frees us from venial faults and preserves us from mortal ones; hence Saint Ignatius, martyr, calls the Eucharist “medicine of immortality”. Saint Innocent III says that Jesus Christ by His Passion and Death freed us from the pains of sin, and by the Eucharist frees us from sin itself.

This Sacrament inflames us in the love of God. Saint Gregory Nisene says that in Holy Communion the soul becomes so enraptured in divine love that she forgets the things of earth and everything created; and in the end faints away from intense charity.



Venerable Father Francis of Olympus, Theatine, also said that nothing inflames us so much in God’s love as does the Sacred Eucharist. God is charity; He is consuming fire. And the Eternal Word came to set the earth ablaze with the fire of Charity.

And in truth, what most ardent flames of divine love does Jesus Christ set ablaze in the soul of whoever receives Him in the Sacrament with burning desire!

Saint Catherine of Siena saw Sacramented Jesus one day in the hands of a Priest, and the Sacred Host appeared to her the brightest furnace of love, leaving the Saint in wonder at how men’s hearts were not completely burnt up and reduced to ashes by such a great blaze.

Saint Rose of Lima assured that on receiving Communion, she felt as though receiving the sun. The countenance of the Saint shone with such clear light that it dazzled those who saw her, and her mouth breathed out intense heat, so that

the person who gave Saint Rose to drink after Communion felt her hand scorched as though near a furnace.

Duke Saint Wenceslaus, just by visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, was so inflamed even exteriorly by such an intense ardour, that a servant of his accompanying him, walking one night behind the Duke in the snow, just by treading in the Saint’s footprints felt no cold at all.

Saint John Chrysostom said that, the Most Blessed Sacrament being blazing fire, on retiring from the Altar, we should feel such flames of love that the devil dare not tempt us.

Perhaps you will say that you do not dare to commune with frequency because you do not feel within that fire of divine love. But that excuse would be the same as saying that you do not want to go up to the fire because you are cold. The greater the tepidity we feel, the more often we should receive the Most Blessed Sacrament, providing we desire to love God.

Saint Francis de Sales in his ‘Introduction to the devout life’ writes: “If perhaps the worldly ask you why you receive Communion so often, tell them there are two kinds of people who should receive Communion often: the perfect, because, being well disposed, it would be bad for them to stay away from the source and fount of perfection; and the imperfect, to have the just right to aspire to perfection.”

And Saint Bonaventure says analogously: “Though you be lukewarm, go up just the same to the Eucharist, trusting in God’s mercy. The greater our illness, the more we need the doctor.” And finally, Christ Himself told Saint Matilda: “When you go up to receive Communion, desire to have all the love of the most fervent heart, and I will accept your desire as though you had the love you aspire to.”

Jesus, most loving Lord of souls, can no longer give us greater proof to show us the love He bears us. What more could He invent for us to love Him? Whom should your heart love with greater affection than your Redeemer, Infinite Goodness, who after having given His life for you, gives you Himself in this Sacrament? Ever remember the Lord’s sublime love, forget everything and love Him without cease and without reserve!

On the loving permanence of Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar: “Come to Me all you who are weary and are burdened, and I will relieve you” (Gospel). Our most loving Saviour, on leaving this world after having crowned the work of our Redemption, did not wish to leave us alone in this vale of tears. “There is no tongue to declare – said Saint Peter of Alcántara – the greatness of the love Jesus has for souls; and so, this Divine Spouse, wishing to leave this life, and in order that His absence might not be occasion of

forgetfulness, gave them in remembrance this Most Holy Sacrament, in which He Himself dwells; and did not wish there to be any other pledge between Himself and us to keep His memory alive.”

This precious benefit of Our Lord Jesus Christ deserves all the love of our hearts, and for this cause He disposed that the feast of His Sacred Heart be instituted, as He revealed to His servant Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, so that we might render Him some worship by our homage of love for His adorable presence on the Altar, and make reparation, besides, for the contempt and affronts He has received and still receives in this Sacrament of the Eucharist from heretics and bad Christians.

Jesus remained in the Most Holy Sacrament: firstly, so that we might all find Him without difficulty; secondly, to give us audience, and thirdly, to dispense us His graces. In the first place, he remains on so many different altars with the aim that as many as desire may always find Him.

On that night when the Redeemer bade farewell to His disciples before dying, they wept, transfixed by pain, because they had to separate from their beloved Master. But Jesus consoled them by saying, not only to them but to us as well: “I am going, my children, to die for you to show you the love I bear you; but not even after My death do I want to deprive you of My presence. While you are in this world, I will be with you in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I leave you My Body, My Soul, My Divinity and, in brief, My own Self. I shall not depart from your side.” So that we might be sure of His presence, He said: “See, I am with you all days until the consummation of the world” (Gospel).

“The Spouse Redeemer wished to leave His Spouse the Church company, so that in so lengthy an absence she might not be left alone, and therefore He bequeathed this Sacrament, in which He Himself resides, which was the best company He could give Her,” says Saint Peter of Alcántara.

The Gentiles, who forged themselves so many gods, never succeeded in imagining any as loving as our true God, who is so close to us and attends to us with so much love. No people has its gods so close to it as our God, present to us all in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

See, then, Jesus Christ who lives on Altars as though shut away in a prison of love. The Priests take Him reverently from the Tabernacle to expose Him before the faithful or for Holy Communion, and then reserve Him again. And the Lord is pleased to be there day and night.

And why, my Redeemer, do you wish to remain in so many Chapels, even when men close the doors and leave You alone? Is it not enough that you dwell there with us during the daylight hours? Ah, no! The Lord wishes to dwell in the Tabernacle even in the darkness of night, and despite no one then accompanying Him, patiently awaits so that when dawn breaks whoever wishes may find Him at once and be at His side.

The Spouse went about seeking her Belovèd, and asked those she saw on her way: “Have you, by any chance, seen Him whom My Soul loves?” And not finding Him, raised her voice saying: “Tell me in which lush meadows He pastures His sheep or under which spreading tree He reposes come noontide.” The Spouse did not find Him because the Most Blessed Sacrament did not yet exist; but now, if a soul desires to unite to Jesus Christ, his Beloved awaits him in many Chapels.

In the Chapels of the true Church is the Most Blessed Sacrament. In all those places the King of Heaven rejoices to remain a prisoner in a poor metallic abode, where He is often unattended and scarcely illuminated by an oil lamp.

Oh! With what tender sentiments pilgrims visited the Virgin’s House in Loreto, or the Holy Land: the Bethlehem stable, Calvary, the Holy Sepulchre, the places where Christ was born, died and was buried! Well, how much greater should our love be on finding ourselves in the presence of Jesus Christ Himself, in the Most Blessed Sacrament! Saint John of Ávila said that for him there was no sanctuary of greater devotion and consolation than a church in which Sacramented Jesus abides.

Father Balthassar Álvarez lamented at seeing royal palaces full of people, and the Churches, where Christ dwells, alone and abandoned. O my God! If the Lord were in just one single Church in the whole world, and there allowed Himself to be seen just one day in the year, how many pilgrims, how many nobles and monarchs would strive for the happiness of being in that Church on that day to reverence the King of Heaven, come down again to earth! What a sumptuous Tabernacle of gold and precious stones would be prepared for Him! How many lights would illuminate the Church to solemnize Christ’s presence!

“But no”, says the Redeemer, “I do not wish to remain in one single Church, nor only for one day, nor do I seek ostentation or riches, but desire to live continuously, daily, there where my faithful are, so that all may find Me easily, always and at all hours.”

Ah! If Jesus Christ had not thought of this ineffable gift of love, who would have been capable of thinking it up? If close to the hour of His Ascension into Heaven, someone had said to Him: ‘Lord, to show your affection, stay with us on the altars under the species of bread, so that we can find You whenever we please’, how rash that petition would have seemed!

But this, which no man could even have imagined, our most loving Saviour thought and wrought. And where, Lord, is our gratitude for such sublime mercy? If a powerful prince were to arrive from a faraway land for the sole purpose of having an ordinary worker visit him, would that man not be utterly ungrateful if he did not want to see the prince, or just in passing?

What a high price Jesus, our Redeemer, paid for dwelling in the Eucharist! First He suffered dolorous death before coming to live on our Altars, and then numberless affronts in the Sacrament in order to assist and regale us with His Real Presence. And, in return, we neglect and forget to go and visit Him, though we know that our visit pleases Him and that He fills us with good things when we spend time before Him. From now on, often visit your Jesus, and stay all you can in His presence to give Him thanks, love Him and ask Him for favours, for that is the aim that moved Him to stay on earth, make His home in the Tabernacle, our prisoner of love.

Secondly, let us consider how Jesus Christ gives all of us an audience in the Eucharist. Saint Teresa said that it is not given to all men to speak to the kings of this world. When they so need, poor people scarcely succeed in communicating with their sovereign through an intermediary. But the King of Glory needs no intermediaries. Everyone, be they nobles or ordinary people, can speak to Him face to face in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

We can all speak at any hour of the day with Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Saint Peter Chrysologus, considering Christ's Birth in the Bethlehem stable, observes that kings do not always give audiences to their subjects; on the contrary, it often happens that someone, when he wants to speak to the sovereign, is sent away, told that it is not the time for an audience and should come back later. But the Redeemer wanted to be born in an open stable, without door or guard, in order to receive whoever wanted to see Him at any time. There were no servants to say, 'it is not yet time.'



The same happens with the Most Blessed Sacrament. The doors of the Church are open. It is given to all of us to speak with the King of Heaven. And Jesus Christ is pleased that we speak to Him there with limitless confidence, for which He conceals Himself under the species of bread; for if Christ were to appear on the Altar on a splendid throne of glory, just as He will present Himself on the day of the Last Judgement, who would dare to approach Him?

However because the Lord, says Saint Teresa, desires that we speak to Him and ask Him for favours with absolute confidence and without any fear, He concealed His Divine Majesty under the species of bread. He wants to be treated as a brotherly friend, says Saint Thomas á Kempis.

When the soul at the foot of the Altar has loving colloquies with Christ, it seems that the Lord tells him those words from the Song of Songs: "Rise up... Show me Your countenance and let your voice sound in My ears: because your countenance is lovely and your voice sweet. Make haste, My Spouse, My Dove, My Fair one, and come." 'Rise up', soul, He tells her, and fear not. 'Hasten', come to Me. 'My spouse, My dove', you are no longer My enemy, nor will be as long as you love Me and repent of having offended Me. 'My fair one', you are no longer deformed, but beautiful, for My grace has made you so. 'And come', come and ask Me what you will, for I am on this Altar to hear you, 'let your voice sound in My ears.'

What joy would be yours if the king were to summon you to his palace and tell you: "What do you want, what do you need? I appreciate you highly, and desire only to favour you." Well, Christ, the King of Heaven, says the same to all who visit Him: "Come to Me all you who are weary and are burdened, and I will relieve you" (Gospel). Come, poor, sick, afflicted, for I can and want to enrich you, heal you and console you, since for that purpose I am here on the Altar."

Given that Jesus resides on our Altars to hear the petitions made to Him by the unhappy sinners who turn to Him, trust that He will hear your prayer. Ask Him to grant you the grace of His divine love in such a fashion that you forget yourself in everything and strive only to serve and please His Sacred Heart.

Jesus, in the Most Holy Sacrament, hears and receives us all in order to communicate His graces, for the Lord desires to favour us with His gifts more than we to receive them. God, who is infinite Goodness, generous and expansive by His own nature, is pleased to communicate His goods to everyone and grieves if souls do not come to ask Him for favours. Why, says the Lord, do you not come to Me? Have I perhaps been like late or sterile fields when you asked Me for benefits?

In the Apocalypse, the Apostle Saint John saw the Lord with His visage resplendent like the midday sun, and that He was girded with a golden belt, symbol of Christ's Mercy and the loving concern with which He desires to dispense His graces to us

The Lord is always swift to help us; but it is especially in the Most Blessed Sacrament that He grants and gives out the most abundant gifts. Saint Henry Suso said that Jesus in the Eucharist attends to our petitions and supplications with greater pleasure.

Just as some mothers find solace and relief by caring generously, not only for their own child, but also for other little ones, the Lord in this Sacrament invites us all and tells us: “As a mother caresses her young child, thus will I, Your God and Lord, take you into My lap... I will console you” (Isaias). Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament appeared visibly to Father Balthassar Álvarez and showed him the innumerable graces He had ready to give out to men; but there was no one to ask for them.

Blessed be the soul who at the foot of the Altar stays to entreat the Lord’s graces! The Countess of Feria, who was afterwards a nun of Saint Clare, stayed before the Most Holy Sacrament all the time available to her, for which they called her ‘spouse of the Sacrament’, and there continually received the richest treasures. They once asked her what she did so many hours prostrate before the Lord in the Sacrament, and she replied: “I would be there for all eternity. You ask what you do in the presence of the Most Holy Sacrament. And what do you not do? What does a poor man do in the presence of a wealthy man? What does a sick person do before a doctor? Receiving graces, loving and praying.”

The Lord lamented to His beloved servant Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque at the ingratitude with which men treated Him in this Sacrament of love; and showing her His Sacred Heart on a throne of flames surrounded by thorns and with the Cross above, to give her to understand the loving presence of Christ Himself in the Eucharist, told her: “See this Heart, which has so loved men, and has omitted nothing, not even self-abasement, to show them Its love, but in response receives nothing but ingratitude from the majority of them, by the irreverence and scorn with which they treat Me in this Sacrament. And what I most deplore is that no few souls of those specially consecrated to Me do likewise.”

Men do not go to converse with Christ because they do not love Him. They enjoy talking with a friend for hours on end and are bored when they spend a few moments with the Lord! How can Jesus Christ grant them His love? If they do not cast out earthly affections from their hearts beforehand, how can divine love enter there? Ah! If only you could say from the heart as Saint Philip Neri said on seeing the Most Blessed Sacrament: “There is my love!” – you would never tire of spending hours and days before Sacramented Jesus.

For a soul enamoured of God, those hours seem like minutes. Saint Francis Xavier, worn out by the daily tasks of dealing with the salvation of souls, at night found delightful rest staying before the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Saint John Francis de Regis, famous French missionary, after having spent the whole day in preaching, went to Church, and when he found it closed, stayed at the door, bearing with the inclemency of the weather just to please his beloved Lord, even from afar.

Saint Louis Gonzaga desired to be always in the presence of Sacramented Jesus; but as his Superiors forbade him to stay for lengthy acts of adoration, it happened that when the youth passed before the Altar, feeling Jesus drawing him sweetly to stay with Him, went on his way compelled by obedience, and lovingly said: “Let me go, Lord, let me go; do not draw me to Yourself; let me leave You, because I should obey.”

Well if you do not feel such deep love for Christ, try to visit Him daily, and He will succeed in inflaming your heart. Are you cold or lukewarm? Go up to the fire, as Saint Catherine of Siena used to say; and happy will you be if Jesus were to grant you the grace to burn with His love! Then you will not love the things of earth, but will despise them all, for, as Saint Francis de Sales observed: “When there is fire in the house, we throw everything out of the window.”

Let us ask Jesus to make us know and love Him. So amiable is He that this of itself is enough for men to love Him. Then how come so few give Him their love? Oh! perhaps you as well have been among those ingrates. You did not deny your gratitude to creatures from whom you received kindnesses and favours. Only to God, who gave Himself to you, have you been so ungrateful that you often came to offend Him grievously and affront Him by your faults. And the Lord, instead of abandoning you, still sought you out and claimed your love. So, given that God wills that you love Him, despite your ingratitude, then love Him, who is your love and your all.

On conformity to God’s Will: The whole basis of the health and perfection of our souls consists in the love of God. “Whoever does not love God and neighbour is dead to charity” (I John). “Attire yourselves above all in the virtue of charity, which is the bond of perfect union one with another and of all with God” (Colossians). But the perfection of love is the union of our own will to the divine will, for this is held to be, as Saint Denis the Areopagite says, the principal effect of love, the union of the wills of the lovers in such a way that they have but one heart and one desire.

Our labours, penances, alms, Communions, please the Lord insofar as they are conformable to His Divine Will, for otherwise they would not be virtuous, but viciousness, fruits of self-love and worthy of censure.

Very especially, this is what Our Saviour showed by His example when He came down from Heaven to earth. As the Apostle teaches, the Lord said in a psalm before He came into the world: "Sacrifice and oblation you no longer desired, and you appropriated a Body for Me. Holocaust and victim for sin you no longer besought. Then I said: 'Behold I come. At the beginning of the Law it is written of Me: To do your will, My God, is My delight, and Your Law is in My Heart.'" (Hebrews). And He often declared the same in His mortal life, saying that He had not come except to fulfil His Father's Will.



By which He wanted to make plain His infinite love for the Father, given that Jesus came to die in obedience to the Divine Command. He said besides that He would recognize as His only those who do God's Will. Owing to this, the one aim and desire of the Saints in all their labours has been the fulfilment of that Will. Saint Henry Suso exclaims: "I would prefer to be the vilest worm on earth by God's Will rather than a Seraphim by my own will."

Saint Teresa says that what we must try to do in prayer is to conform our will to the divine, and in this lies the highest perfection, so that whoever strives uprightly to do this, will receive loftier gifts from God and progress further in the interior life.

The blessed in glory love God perfectly, since their will is united and completely conformed to the Divine Will. Hence Jesus Christ taught us that we should ask for the grace to fulfil God's Will on earth as the Saints do in Heaven: "Fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra."

Whoever does so will be a man after God's own Heart, as the Lord called David, for he was always ready to do God's Will, and continually besought Him to teach him to carry it out: "I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after My own heart, who will fulfil all My desires" (Kings).

How much a single act of perfect resignation to God's dispositions is worth! It would be enough to sanctify us. Paul goes out to persecute the Church, but Christ appears to him, enlightens him and converts him by His grace. The Saint offers to fulfil what God requires of him: "Lord, what would You have me do?" And Jesus Christ orders him to become the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Whoever fasts and gives alms and practises mortifications for God's sake, gives part of himself; but whoever yields his will up to God, gives Him everything he has. This is what God asks of us: our heart, our will.

Such, in a word, has to be the aim of our desires, of our devotions, Communions and other pious works: the fulfilment of God's Will. This should be the guide and intention of our prayer: impetrate the grace to do what God wills of us.

To do so we have to ask for the intercession of our Patron Saints, and especially Mary Most Holy, to obtain for us light and strength, with the aim that our will be conformed to that of God in all things, and above all in those which mortify our self-love. Saint John of Ávila said: "Better a 'Blessed be God' in adversity than a thousand thanksgivings in prosperity."

All your misfortunes proceed from refusing to yield to God's Holy Will. Give Him your whole will now, and ask the Lord to receive it, and unite it to His love in such fashion that it can no longer rebel. Love God and glorify Him and, impelled by the desire to obtain the greatest merits and save very many souls, offer yourself wholly to Him, so that He may dispose of you and of all that is yours as He please, and resign yourself to His Most Holy Will with pleasure in everything. On this your salvation depends.

We must needs conform ourselves to the divine will, not only in the things we receive directly from God, like sicknesses, spiritual desolation, loss of property or of parents, but also in those which proceed only indirectly from God, who sends them by way of men, such as dishonour, scorn, injustice and all kinds of persecutions. And observe that when we are offended in our honour and harmed in our property, God does not will the sin of whoever offends or harms us, but He does will the humiliation or poverty that results. It is certain, then, that whatever happens, all takes place by the divine will. Good and evil, life and death, come from God. After suffering terrible persecution from the pagans in Ephesus, Saint Paul says: "All this was permitted by God in order that we might not put our trust in ourselves, but in Him, who has power including to raise the dead." In a word, all comes from God, good things and bad.

Certain accidents are called evils, because we ourselves give them that name, and so turn them into evils, for if we accepted them as we should, resigning ourselves into God's hands, they would not be evil for us but good. The most precious jewels of greatest splendour in the crowns of the Saints are the tribulations they accepted from God as coming from His hands.

When Job knew that the Sabians had robbed his goods, he did not say: “The Lord gave me all, and the Sabians have taken it from me”, but “The Lord gave me all, and the Lord has taken it away. What has been done is to His pleasing: blessed be the Name of the Lord.” And saying this, he blessed God, for he knew that all happens by Divine Will.

The Communist Revolution in Russia in 1917 and the establishment by Lenin of the accursed and tyrannical communist regime in October 1917 was all permitted by God as chastisement for the great injustices by the nobility and bourgeoisie, and the many sins of the Russian people in general. Likewise the Third World War will be permitted by God so as to unleash His Holy Wrath upon the world of impiety; the same as He did directly on another occasion at the Universal Flood.

Pope Saint Peter II said: “You can form some idea of the divine curse that now weighs upon corrupt mankind. This universal flood of heresy and of sin, in all its species and degrees of malice, by divine permission, is the greatest chastisement that has befallen the universe up till now, since it is immensely superior to any physical death toll, however great. In turn, this flood of human perversity unceasingly calls for the flood of exterminating fire that is to fall upon the earth.”

The holy martyrs Epictetus and Aton, tormented by iron hooks and lighted torches, exclaimed: “Lord let Your holy will be done in us,” and on dying, these were their last words: “May You be blest, O Everlasting God, for You gave us the grace that Your Holiest Will be accomplished in us!”

Caesarius tells that a certain monk, though his life was no more austere than the others’, performed many miracles. The abbot, wonderingly, asked him what devotions he practised. The monk replied that he, without doubt, was more imperfect than his brethren, but that he put special care into always conforming himself in everything with the divine Will. The abbot replied: “And that damage the enemy did in our lands, does it cause you no pain?” The monk said: “O Father! I rather give thanks to God, who does or allows all things for our good,” reply that revealed the great sanctity of that good religious to the abbot.

We should do the same when adverse things happen to us: let us receive all as coming from God’s hands, not just with patience, but with joy, imitating the Apostles, who were pleased to be ill-treated for love of Christ: “They withdrew from the council’s presence greatly rejoicing at having been found worthy to suffer affronts for their Divine Master.” So what greater contentment can there be than to have suffered a cross and know that by embracing it we please God?

If we wish to live in continuous peace, let us be sure to unite to the divine will and always say in all that happens to us: “Lord, if this is to Your pleasing, let it be so.” To this end we should direct all our meditations, Communions, prayers and visits to the Lord in the Sacrament, praying continually to God to grant us that precious conformity to His divine will.

Let us always offer ourselves up to Him, saying: ‘Here I am, my God; do with me as You please.’ Saint Teresa offered herself up to the Lord more than fifty times a day, that He might dispose of her as He pleased.

Give up your will entirely to the Divine King of your soul, so that you do not desire nor wish otherwise than God wishes, and that He do with you as He please. You know well how much you have offended Him by opposing His Holy Will, and repent of it from the heart. You deserve chastisement, do not reject, rather accept it, only begging Him not to impose the pain of depriving you of His love. Let the Divine Will be your compass and guide, your love and your peace! Desire to rest and to live in It. In all the happenings of your life, say that you want nothing other than what God wants; let His will be done in you: ‘Fiat volúntas tua,’ following the example of our Heavenly Mother, who said: “Be it done in Me according to your word.”

Whoever is united to the Divine Will enjoys, even in this world, admirable and continuous peace. Whoever truly loves the Will of God is not saddened by anything that happens to him, for the soul is happy and satisfied seeing everything she wants happen; whoever only wills what God wills, has all he can desire, given that nothing happens unless moved by the divine Will.

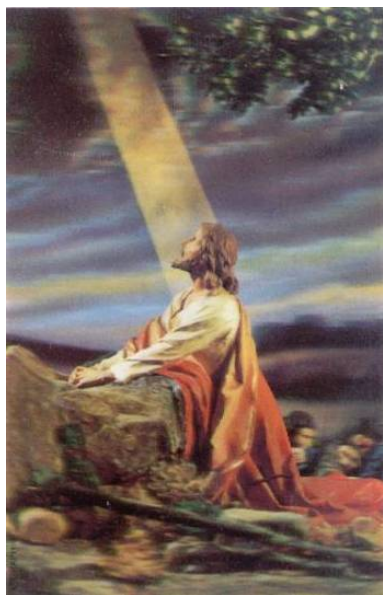
The resigned soul, says Salviano, if she receives humiliations, wants to be humiliated; if combated by poverty, the soul is pleased to be poor. In brief: she wants whatever happens to her, and so enjoys a happy life. She suffers the inconvenience of cold, of heat, of rain or wind, and is conformed and rejoices at it all, because God so wills. If that person suffers losses, persecution, sicknesses and death itself, he wants to be poor, persecuted, sick; and wants to die, because this is God’s Will.

Whoever thus rests in the Divine Will and delights in whatever the Lord disposes, is like someone upon the clouds of heaven seeing beneath his feet a furious storm without he himself being upset or harmed. It is that peace which surpasses all the delights of the world; continuous, serene, permanent, unchanging peace. The sinner is changeable like the light of the moon, which today waxes and at other times wanes. Today we see him laugh; tomorrow, weep; now cheerful and quiet; later troubled and irate. He changes and varies according to prosperity or adversity. But the just, like the sun, stays firm in himself with balance and constancy. No event

deprives him of his happy composure, since that peace he enjoys is daughter of his perfect conformity to God's Will. "On earth peace to men of good will."

"May I want what God wants me to want; may I speak as God wants me to speak; may I act as God wants me to act. That is my one aspiration." Thus spoke Saint Peter Poveda.

No sooner did Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi hear speak of God's Will than she felt such deep consolation that she was rapt up into an ecstasy of love. Withal, our human nature will not prevent us from feeling some pain at adversities; but in the soul's will, if united to God's, deep and indescribable peace will always reign. "No one shall take your joy away" (Gospel)



The folly of those who oppose God's Will is unspeakable. God's Will has to be fulfilled with all certainty. Those hapless who resist God's Will have to bear their cross by force, yet without peace or profit.

And what else does God desire for us but our good? He wants us to be holy in order to make us happy in this life and blessed in the next. Let us realize that the crosses that God sends us contribute to our welfare; neither are temporal chastisements for our ruin, but for us to amend and attain everlasting happiness.

God loves us so dearly that He not only desires our salvation but also shows His concern to procure it for us. And what will He, who gave us His own Son, deny us?

Let us abandon ourselves, then, always into the hands of God, who never ceases to watch out for our welfare. "Think of Me, and I will think of you," said the Lord to Saint Catherine of Siena. Let us always say as did the Spouse: 'My beloved for me, and I for Him. My beloved watches over my good, and I have to

think of nothing but to please Him and unite to His Holy Will.'

We should not ask, said Abbot Saint Nilo, that God do as we please, but that we do as pleases Him. Whoever acts thus will have a happy life and a holy death. Whoever dies completely resigned to the Divine Will leaves the moral guarantee of his salvation. But whoever does not live thus united to God's Will, will neither be at death, and so how will he save himself?

Let us then endeavour to be familiar with certain passages from Sacred Scripture, which serve to preserve us in that incomparable union: "Lord, what would You have me do?" Tell me, Lord, what you want me to do, for I would well do it; behold your servant: command and You shall be obeyed. "Guide me along the way of Your commands, because that is the path I wish to follow." "I find my joy only in Your Law." "To do Your will, My God, is My delight, and Your Law is in My Heart": Lord, do with me as You will; Yours I am, not mine.

And when some adversity occurs to us, let us say at once: "Let it be thus, my God, for You so wish." Chiefly, let us not forget the third petition of the Our Father: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven." Let us say it often, in great earnest, and repeat it often. Happy are we if we live and die saying: 'Fiat volúntas tua!'

Jesus, your Redeemer, gave up His life on the Cross, by force of dolours and with so much love, to save and redeem you, so that you may not go to hate Him eternally in Hell. He left nothing undone to oblige you to love Him, as He showed us before expiring on Calvary when He spoke those loving words: "All is consummated." And how have you responded to His love? For your part, perhaps you have left nothing undone to offend Him and oblige Him to forsake you. Give Him thanks for the patience with which He has suffered you and for the time He grants you to make reparation for your ingratitude, and love Him and serve Him before you die. You should love Him, yes, and do all He wishes; and give Him your whole will, your freedom and all that is yours. From now on consecrate your life to Him, and accept the death He may send you, with all the pains and circumstances that may accompany it, uniting this sacrifice to the Great Sacrifice of His Life which your Jesus made on the Cross for you. Desire to die, so that His will be done. Ask Him, through the merits of His Most Sacred Passion, to grant you the grace that in this life you may be ever resigned and ever conformed to His dispositions; and that at the hour of your death, the Lord will that you may embrace it and accept it with entire conformity to His Most Holy Will. Desire to die to please Jesus; die saying: 'Fiat volúntas tua.' May Mary, our Mother, who ever embraced the Divine Will, win for you the inexpressible happiness so to die, through the intercession of Most Holy Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death. In any case, We repeat: from now on accept from God's hands, resigned and gladly, whatever kind of death He wills to send you, with all its bitterness, pains and sufferings.

This year, owing to the restrictions imposed by the governments, it has not been possible to celebrate all the pilgrimages as usual. Nonetheless, We, by way of the present Apostolic Letter, call all the faithful of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian, so that those who are able, come on pilgrimage for the

coming 12th of October, Feast of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar, Illuminatrix of the Palmarian Holy Councils; and Feast of the Holy Face of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Light and Strength of the Palmarian Crossbearers; and for the 13th of October, Feast of Corpus Christi; the Body of Christ, Bread of Angels come down from Heaven onto the Altar of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Remember as well that on the 11th of October there will be the ceremony of Adoration of the Holy Face, which will take place, God willing, at 11.30 am. Let all the members of Holy Church who can, come to prostrate before the Holy Face of Our Lord Jesus Christ in this glorious Holy Year of the Holy Face. Make good use of the opportunities you have to come, as we do not know if there will be many more.

Given in El Palmar de Troya, Apostolic See, on the 29th of June, Feast of the Apostles Saint Peter I the Very Great and Saint Paul the Great, and Day of the Pope, in the Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ MMXX and fifth of Our Pontificate.

With Our Apostolic Blessing
Petrus III, P.P.
Póntifex Máximus



Petrus III P.P.