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# Postscripts to the Epistles

Reflections on the Epistles of the Sunday  
Masses and some of the greater Feasts.

by *Placidus Kempf, O.S.B.*

*Price twenty-five cents*

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a **Orail** Publication

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**St. Meinrad, Indiana**



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## **POSTSCRIPTS TO THE EPISTLES**

We sometimes fail to think of the "Epistle" at Mass as a "letter." Of the 67 Epistles listed herein for the Sundays and principal feasts, 51 are excerpts from letters written by St. Paul to the various congregations of Christians. Zeal made the ardent Apostle of Christ inventive.

"When Silas and Timothy came to St. Paul at Corinth, Timothy was able to give an excellent report on the Church in Thessalonica. But, there were also some shadows in the picture. The people were especially worried about the great day of the return of the Lord, some trying to calculate the exact day and hour when it would come.

"Paul gave the matter thought. 'Timothy,' he said, 'I wish I could go to Thessalonica tomorrow. But, that will not do; I cannot leave this Church. Tomorrow morning go out and buy writing material; we will write a letter to Thessalonica.'

"It was a happy moment when Paul decided to write that letter, for it was the beginning of one of the most important achievements of his life; an important moment in the world's history as well. Paul had no inkling that after thousands of years

men would think gratefully of that little workshop in Corinth where his first letter was written. This was the beginning of the New Testament, and the first page of the book was a letter born of the need of the moment. It was A.D. 51, some twenty years after the Lord's Resurrection." (Holzner, Paul of Tarsus, p. 243)

The New Testament begins with the words: "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church assembled at Thessalonica in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace be yours. We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you continually in our prayers; such memories we have of your active faith, your unwearied love, and that hope in our Lord Jesus Christ which gives you endurance, in the sight of him who is our God and Father. Brethren, God loves you, and we are sure that he has made choice of you" (1 Thess. 1:1-4).

The "Postscripts to the Epistles" are added as after-thoughts for your reflection and with the hope that St. Paul will not condemn the humble scribbling appended to his written masterpieces.

P. K.



## **MOTH BALLS OR MOUTH BALLS**

"To live . . . a life of order" (Tit. 2:12).

Today you will take last New Year's resolution from the dark closet of your memory where you stored it after a week or two, adding a few mental moth balls to keep the moths (of neglect) from making it "a part of themselves," as they do to the fur coat in the wardrobe. If that is the length of life of your good resolutions, why waste so much energy in racking your brain for a plan of living that dies so soon? Why does it not work? Because *you* do not. Possibly your method of approach is false. A New Year's resolution is not a dress or hat to be put on or off at will. Its purpose is not to make you *look* dressed up or different, but actually to *be* different. To accomplish that end it must become a part of you. It must not be stored in "moth balls," but it must be a "mouth ball," an all-year sucker that both delights you and at the same time nourishes (becomes a part of) you. We never fail in accomplishing the things we *like* to do. If your resolution is definite, practical, and according to your liking, there is all likelihood that you will keep it, if you are not ashamed of the stem of your all-year-sucker usurping the place of your favorite brand of cigaret.

## *Feast of the Most Holy Name*

### A FOUR-CORNERED STONE

"The chief stone at the corner" (Acts 4:11).

The corner stone of a building has one of its four corners exposed, the lines of two are visible where they join the wall, whilst the fourth is hidden within the wall. This hidden corner of Christ, our Corner Stone, may be considered a symbol of the veiled prophecy concerning Him in Ps. 117:22, to which Christ (St. Matth. 21:42), St. Peter (in today's Epistle), and St. Paul (Rom. 9:33), refer. Concerning this "stone" each gives a different "corner." Jesus says of it: "As for the stone, when a *man falls* against it, he will break his bones; when *it falls* upon him, it will scatter him like chaff." And St. Paul says it "is a stone to *trip* men's feet, a boulder to catch them *unawares*." And St. Peter: "Prized by you, the believers, he is something other to those who *refuse* belief . . . They *stumble* over God's word, and refuse it belief" (1 Pet. 2:7-8). "He is that stone that has become the chief stone at the corner. Salvation is not to be found elsewhere" (Ep.). As a proof of his words, St. Peter points to the Name carved on this Stone—IHS (Jesus—Savior)—by the invoking of which Name he had cured the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. O Jesus, crush our pride to pieces that we may not refuse humble belief in Thy Word, so that Thou mayest be to us not a stern Judge but a merciful Savior!



**OUR GIFTS**

"Bringing gold and frankincense" (Is. 60:6).

St. Matthew (2:11) adds "myrrh" as the third gift that the wise men offered the new-born Savior. According to eastern customs the servant shows his fidelity and attachment to his master by offering gifts. He wishes to express thereby that, through the generosity of his master, he has been placed in a position where he possesses something of his own of which he can dispose as he pleases. The gifts of the magi not only presage the nature, dignity, and future life of the Infant King, but they also betoken the sentiments with which we should offer God the gifts we have received from His generosity. Gold symbolizes fidelity; incense, veneration, and myrrh, the readiness to endure bitter sufferings and privations. But these three gifts also remind us of the bait the world uses to attract foolish men. Gold is a symbol of greed; incense, of pride, and myrrh of lust. Wealth holds the first place. "I heaped together for myself silver and gold" (Eccles. 2:8). Pride offers incense to the idol of self. "He that remembereth incense (is) as if he should bless an idol" (Is. 66:3). Lewd women used sweet-smelling herbs to entice men. "I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon" (Prov. 7:17). Detachment from these three "roots of all sin" is the best offering you can make to the poor, humble, and suffering Babe of Bethlehem.

## *Feast of the Holy Family*

### **SUNDAY CLOTHES**

"The livery you wear must be . . ." (Col. 3:12).

Worn out clothes should not be worn out. Why? Because they reveal, not your nakedness, but your character. You wear clothes not merely to protect your body against the elements, especially against the biting cold, but also to show your respect for others. On Sunday, in fact whenever you go to God's house, you don your best suit in honor of the Lord before whom you appear in order to worship. When company comes to your home or you go visiting, you dress up according to the dignity of your invited guest and the solemnity or formality of the occasion. That is good taste. Today St. Paul reminds you that there is also a spiritual livery or suit that you should wear to please, attract, and win your neighbor to the service of God. It should be "full dress"—"be generous to each other, where somebody has given grounds for complaint" (3:13). He leaves no doubt how "full" it should be. "The Lord's generosity to you must be the model of yours." That is the cut of the coat. This generous pardoning of the faults of others must be more than the mere outward observance of the rules of good breeding—it must come from the heart as all the Lord's acts do.

## *Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany*

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

"This is the worship due from you as rational creatures" (Rom. 12:1).

Nowhere do "actions speak louder than words" than in the silence of God's house during divine worship. The tales they often tell there are neither edifying nor stimulating to devotion. As a rational creature man owes God worship that comes from the whole person, from his body as well as from his soul. The body worships God by assuming a *reverent* posture—kneeling, standing, or sitting, and by performing symbolical actions, such as making a genuflection or the sign of the cross, that are expressive of the interior acts of the worshipping soul. God, who can make something out of nothing, can make "nothing intelligible" out of some of the thoughtless gestures that are palmed off on Him as bodily worship. Can your neighbor in church, a convert, learn from your making them the proper way to make a genuflection or the sign of the cross? Does your action show that when you genuflect your right knee *touches the floor* alongside your left instep, whilst you hold your *body erect*? Do you sign yourself with the fingers of the right hand, extended but joined, touching your forehead, breast and left and right shoulders? Do you use the *soft* side of the thumb (not the nail) for signing your forehead, lips, and breast at the (last) Gospel?

**I'M DIFFERENT**

"The spiritual gifts we have differ" (Rom. 12:6).

The asthmatic, puffing Pharisee, who went up into the temple, not to pray, but to "bray," was truthful when he exclaimed: "I thank thee, God, that I am not like the rest of men" (St. Luke 18:11). Every man may make the same claim. There are no two snowflakes, no two flowers, no two men (even if they are twins) that are just alike in every respect. Due to the different amount of "spiritual gifts" offered to each according to the generosity of a wise Creator and the cooperation (or lack of cooperation) with these graces, every human being is different. There is much comfort in this truth. Each person can say: "I can offer something to God that no one else can—that, which in me is different." But I should say the same to my neighbor. Just because I possess qualities and abilities that he does not have is but a hint from God that He wants me to furnish to my neighbor just that which he does not possess or cannot provide because of his lack of this "gift" or ability. This wonderful variety of gifts, if properly used, will make for a beautiful harmony among the different members of Christ's mystical body. One member helps the other by performing his own task well, the task for which he is especially fitted.

## DOUBLE DUTY

"Provide good things" (Rom. 12:17).

From time to time, in the labyrinthine ways of life, when we come to a dead end lane, or become hopelessly entangled in a maze of crossroads, we retrace our steps to some definite starting point and thence cautiously and patiently try to find a way out. One such definite starting point for solving one of life's great mysteries was given us by Jesus when He told the ruler: "Why dost thou call me good? *None is good except God only*" (St. Luke 18:19). God is goodness by essence. Hence all His acts must be good. We become good by imitating God's acts, by keeping the double commandment of love of God and love of (God in) neighbor. Here is one of life's great mysteries. We strive to be good in our actions towards God, and to love Him with our whole heart and soul, whilst, at the same time, we *hate* our neighbor. We cannot be half good and half evil. God is not good towards us and evil towards others. To imitate God's actions means to *be good* always and everywhere, and to *do good to* everyone. Hence St. Paul, in today's Epistle, wisely counsels: "Study your behavior in the world's sight as well as in God's." If we were to be good to our neighbor around us, we should find it easier to be really good to God in us.

## 4th Sunday after Epiphany

### ALL DEBTS PAID

"Owe no man anything except to love one another" (Rom. 13:8).

When the Jewish lawyer asked the Master which commandment in the law was the greatest, Jesus replied: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and thy whole mind. This is the greatest of the commandments and the first. And the second, its like, is this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (St. Matth. 22: 37-39). At first sight it seems that a lawyer will be needed to explain this fine distinction, not to say, apparent contradiction in the words of the Savior. If I love God with my *whole* heart, what power of it is left for love of self, and, still less, for love of neighbor? If the love of God fills my whole heart and every cranny thereof, what room is left for the smallest particle of self-love or love of neighbor? And yet, the solution is quite simple. If we love God *entirely*, we shall love self *as God loves us*, and our neighbor *as He loves him*. We love man for the sake of the love of God. Our love of God is expressed by our service of our fellowmen. God's love for us must not be kept to ourselves, but must be allowed to flow through us out to others, unchecked and undiminished. If we really love God, we shall love those whom He loves. In this way we pay our double debt.



## 5th Sunday after Epiphany

### MELODY IN "G"

"Learn to be grateful" (Col. 3:15).

The human heart is the metronome that beats time for the music of life. It is more. It is the harp that can play charming melodies that will captivate the ear even of God Himself. Although the ears of Christ's glorified body are charmed by the "harpers, playing on their harps, as they sing a new song before His throne," His "delights are to be with the children of men" and to hear their "harping and singing." In the Sacred Host His Sacred Heart beats out its melody of love in the hope that, by sympathetic vibration, our own heart will respond with the refrain. When the bony fingers of death stopped the ticking of the Sacred Heart on the Cross, It set man's dead (in sin) heart beating with new-gained, supernatural life. On Easter morning the Sacred Heart again resumed its deathless pulsing, beating out the melody: "Give! Give!" It says: "I give *freely* (gratis)," and our refrain should be: "I give *thanks* (gratias)." Gratitude is the melody that Jesus longs to hear coming from the harp of our hearts. If eternity will be too short to thank Him for all His graces (free gifts), had we not better begin in time? Life will then take on a new meaning and new interest.

## 6th Sunday after Epiphany

### NOT ACCORDING TO PATTERN

"You have become a pattern to all" (I Thess. 1:7).

To many non-Catholics the actions of some Catholics speak louder than their glib words, and they do not say the same thing. In word they profess to believe one thing, and in deed they may profess just the opposite. Faith is not merely the cleaving of the mind to the light of divine Truth, but also the action of the will using this divine fire to generate the steam that makes men "go up on high." Faith is not merely the rule of the only correct way of life; it does not merely point out the way, but it also causes the firm believer to walk on this one, true way. Reduced to its simplest analysis, our life does not correspond with our belief, because God's holy will, as manifested by the teachings of our faith, is contrary to our own will and wishes as to what we want to do and how we want to do it. Thus, besides being Catholics in name only, we incur the further commendation of the Lord by keeping others from professing the true faith, since, as they proudly boast, their private and public lives are "more on the level" than the lives of those who profess to know the only way *to* and true manner *of* life. What do *your* actions say?



## **KNOCK-OUT BLOWS**

**"Not like a man who wastes his blows on the air"  
(1 Cor. 9:26).**

From the day of his own "knock-out" on the road to Damascus, when the Lord "closed" both his eyes so that He might open them to see that his title was to consist, not in fighting "against" but "for" Christ, St. Paul was ever in the ring, battling for his Master. With what success he did so he will tell us (with just chest expansion) in next Sunday's epistle. What made St. Paul such a successful fighter was not shadow boxing—"I do not fight my battle like a man who wastes his blows on the air"—but in the knock-out blows that he landed on his opponent in his daily workout. "I was given a sting to distress my outward nature, an angel of Satan sent to rebuff me" (2 Cor. 12:6). Whether this "sting of the flesh" was a strong desire for sexual gratification, or some physical ailment, or the persecution from his fellow countrymen, matters little. Whatever this opponent was, it furnished him with the occasion to learn strategy whereby to outwit his adversary. There is the lesson for us. Faith teaches us "how" and grace gives us the "punch" to "knock-out" every adversary, whether from within or without.

**DOUBLE DARE**

"If any man dare . . . I dare also" (2 Cor. 11:21).

In childhood great feats of courage are achieved by a taunting—"I dare you!" or "I *double* dare you!" (for emphasis) from a companion or group of playmates. The fair maid of our own honor pleads for speedy delivery from shame, and we surprise ourselves at the untapped resources and undiscovered resourcefulness thus brought to light and into play. Does St. Paul, perhaps, considering us as "children of God," use this means to draw us out of our shell of fearfulness of effort and courage to strive to keep up with his daring feats? If he wants us to play "follow the leader" with him, we shall be kept on the jump until he gets up to "third heaven" whither he was "carried out of himself in Christ." Yet, it is not to these high things that he dares us to follow him, but rather that we, as he did, should delight to boast of the "weaknesses that humiliate me, so that the strength of Christ may enshrine itself in me." Today's Epistle ends with these words, but the next verse really gives the reason for his boasting. "I am well content with these humiliations of mine, with the insults, the hardships, the persecutions, the times of difficulty I undergo for Christ; when I am weakest, then I am strongest of all" (12:10).

## BALLOON HEARTS

“Charity . . . is not puffed up” (1 Cor. 13:5).

Charity, according to St. Paul, is not “inflated” (according to the Latin text) nor does it “blow up” the human heart like a balloon. This latter figure, however, will serve as a good carrier of some “lowly” thoughts on this virtue. Let us call that ceaseless puffer, our heart, our balloon. At baptism, when the spirit chamber, the soul, was emptied of its foul inhabitant and was taken possession of by the Deity, there were infused into it, together with divine life, the three theological virtues—faith, hope, and love. These, and especially love, like the gas in the balloon, are destined to be expanded and to carry the soul up into the rarified regions of ever greater love, perfection, and nearness to God. Although the soul tends ever upward, like the balloon, it is chained to earth by the cables of sensual attachments and the ballast of earthly possessions. Before there can be an ascension, these cables (or even mere threads) must be severed with the knife of mortification, and the ballast must be left behind (or cast overboard) by generous renunciation. For, the Divine Pilot bids us: “None of you can be my disciple if he does not take leave of all that he possesses” (St. Luke 14:33). It is not sufficient that we know what to do; we must also use our will and do it.

**PARDON, PLEASE**

"We are careful not to give offense to anybody"  
(2 Cor. 6:3).

From the taut nerves of every Catholic, who takes the grave duty of fasting and performing works of personal penance during Lent seriously (and what *good* Catholic does not?) an empty stomach, a depleted purse, an empty ash tray, and an unlit screen are apt to entice anything but a pleasing melody to enchant all about him. Lenten mortification is apt to make him grumpy, sour, jittery. It is not without good reason that Jesus counsels us: "At the times of fasting anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thy fast may not be known to men" (St. Matth. 6:17). Remove from your person all that might give your neighbor offense. Put the oil of cheerfulness and gracious bearing on your head, wreath your mouth with smiles. In a word, do not let your mortifications mortify others. Your neighbor has the same personal duty as you have. He, also, is trying to hide his fasting. It is not your duty to supply him with new and unsought means of killing off the sordidness of selfish self-centeredness. By trying to look more pleasant than your neighbor, and by thinking of him rather than of your cruelly martyred and tortured self, you will almost forget that you are doing without your usual three (or was it more?) square meals a day.

## **CORNS AND CALLUSES**

**"You are walking" (1 Thess. 4:1).**

Before the days of the gas buggy and the science of hitch hiking, a knight of the road (known then as a tramp) would find this boast on a billboard: BLUE JAY CORN PLASTERS MAKE HARD ROADS EASY. Small comfort for a man who had nothing in his pocket but a hole! St. Paul reminds us that we "are walking" to heaven, and he wants us to "make even greater progress" on this way during these balmy (grace-laden) days. He realizes that our walking may be made difficult, if not stopped altogether, by the calluses and corns on the feet of our souls. These he designates as personal impurity and injustice to our neighbor. Remove the callus of personal impurity by walking in the presence of the all-seeing God, Who has called us "unto holiness in Christ Jesus." Since "the love of money is the root of all evil things" (1 Tim. 6:10), excise this painful corn by the roots by restoring ill-gotten goods to the person to whom they belong (if known) or by giving alms to the needy members of Christ's mystical body. The blood stream carries health and nourishment to that part of the body that needs it most.

### SPICED SAUCE

"No ribaldry or smartness in talk" (Eph. 5:4).

St. Benedict wishes his sons to refrain from "superfluous talking" and "mirth" during the penitential season of Lent, and to "lead lives of the greatest purity" thus to atone during this holy season for all the negligences of other times" (Holy Rule, ch. 49). St. Paul, in his letter to you today, calls attention to a kind of "spiced seasoning" that should not be found among your Lenten fare—"ribald or smart speech." The ability to entertain company with witty, spicy words is a special social virtue. To laugh away cares and to unbend the tensed bow of the mind after the day's toil is a good rule of health and long life. St. Paul does not condemn innocent quips. He condemns the wanton sense of humor that relishes only such conversation as is seasoned with the spiced sauce from the devil's pantry. Lewd, suggestive, double-meaning, slanderous, libelous words give pleasure only to those whose taste has become so deadened by repeated repasts from hell's kitchen that they need something "hot and spicy" to excite the sin-dulled tastebuds of their mind and heart. Sin is not humorous, it is tragic. Again, *wit* laughs at you; *humor* laughs with you. Remember, "In the day of judgment men will be brought to account for every *thoughtless word* they have spoken" (St. Matth. 12:36).



## TRUE LIBERTY

"Such is the freedom Christ has won for us" (Gal. 4:31).

With the price of His Precious Blood Christ bought us back from the slavery of Satan, thus making us "liberi"—*children* of God, and "liberi"—*free men*. Hence, we enjoy true liberty only if we serve God faithfully. Liberty is often confused with "license," the right(?) to do as you please. That is the spirit of lawlessness. Liberty is the spirit of God; "where the Lord's spirit is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). Liberty of spirit, therefore, consists in keeping your heart (made to be filled by God alone) totally disengaged (free) from every created thing, that it may follow the known will of God. If you have attained to this freedom you will seek only that the Name of God should be glorified in you, that His Majesty should reign in you, that His Will should be done in you. You will then not be attached to any consolation whatsoever, but, having done your duty conscientiously, will remain indifferent to everything else. The effect of this true liberty of spirit will be a great sweetness of spirit, a gentle condescension to whatever is not sin, a disposition easily moved to all acts of virtue and charity. You will be a pliable and useful tool in God's hands, offering no resistance to His Will. Therein you will find true and lasting peace of heart.

**DEAD AND ALIVE**

"To serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14).

The sacrifices of the Old Law were offered because God had so *commanded* them. Christ, Who in His own Person represents mankind, offered Himself *freely* as an atoning sacrifice for men's sins. A free-will offering is of higher value than a sacrifice offered under compulsion. To assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass out of free choice is more pleasing to God (and more meritorious) than to be driven to attend it by the fear of incurring the guilt of grievous sin. In the Jewish sacrifices it was impossible to combine life and death in such a manner that the sacrificial victim could also be brought to God as a *living* offering. It had to be killed because it was offered in atonement for the death of sin, but this dead victim of itself could not be pleasing to God, "for God made not death, neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living" (Wisd. 1:13). This contradiction in the victim was done away with in Christ, Who "offered Himself through the Holy Spirit." As a Lamb, offered for our sins, He had to die. But, as Jesus had given His enemies the promise: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again" (St. John 2:19), by His glorious resurrection the "Victim that had been slain" entered into the divine Holy of Holies as an eternal, *living* sacrifice.



## THE GOD-MAN

“Fashioned in the likeness of man” (Philip. 2:7).

To be “fashioned in the likeness of man” means to be “true man.” To Christ’s true human nature belongs all that pertains to the nature and being of man; from which it follows that what does not pertain to it strictly *did not have to be present in Jesus*. It is not necessary that man be born of the carnal union of man and woman, for God made Adam and Eve without carnal conception. Adam was a true man before His grave sin robbed him of his preternatural gifts and made him and his posterity subject to concupiscence, and, because of these evil tendencies, to be drawn to commit sin, and, finally, to be subject also to physical death and bodily corruption. Jesus has been “fashioned as we, only sinless” (Heb. 4:15). If Jesus, the sinless One, still was mortal and actually submitted to death, it was because He wished to become like His creatures even in this. Jesus freely assumed the lowliness of human nature. The Creator became a creature, the Eternal a being of time, the Lord a servant, the Almighty, weak, the Infinite, small, the Omniscient, a docile pupil of man. Could He descend any lower in the scale of your misery and nothingness? He did all this for you!

**POSITIVE PERFECTION**

“With purity and honesty of intent” (1 Cor. 5:8).

Perfection of soul is sometimes considered as being free from sins and faults. That would be *negative* perfection. But perfection is something *positive*, and not the mere absence of imperfection. To illustrate. Take, for example, a plot of ground that is completely covered with grass and weeds. This is a good picture of the human soul filled with the fruit of the seed of Adam’s sowing. By persevering, painstaking labor you may succeed in uprooting every weed and the smallest blade of grass. The fruit of your toil would be—a plot of ground on which there is—nothing. When you pull up a weed you must put in a seed if you wish to have flowers and vegetables on your plot. The same holds for the plot of your soul. St. Paul reminds you that an important part of your life’s work consists in the cultivation of purity and perfection of soul. You attain to purity of soul by confessing your sins and renouncing all attachment to them. That is your negative perfection, Your *positive* perfection consists in the adornment of God’s renovated house (Easter cleaning) with *all* the Christian virtues. But these must be genuine to please the appraising eye of the risen Savior. Hence the necessity of “purity and honesty of intent”—the practice of these virtues, not for vanity or profit, but solely to please and glorify God.

## WATER AND BLOOD

“Whose coming has been made known to us by water and blood” (1 St. John 5:6).

That our faith may be “the triumphant principle which triumphs over the world,” we must believe “that Jesus is the Son of God.” As proof that He is we are reminded of His coming “by water and blood.” The whole earthly life of Christ proves that He, the Son of God, became Man to redeem mankind. The two poles of His earthly life are designated by “water” (His baptism) and “blood” (His bloody death on the Cross). These two acts are singled out because by them Jesus manifested Himself especially as the Savior of sinful humanity. Both acts recall the humiliations of Him “Who never knew sin” but Whom God “made into sin for us, so that in him we might be turned into the holiness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). By permitting Himself to be baptized Jesus sanctified baptismal water, which received its cleansing and vivifying power by coming in contact with Him Who came, “not in water only, but in blood as well,” that is, from His death on the Cross. He comes in water and blood for *you today*. The Asperges before the High Mass, called “the little baptism,” reminds you of your own baptism, the beginning of your salvation, and the Mass that, until your own death, it will be your life’s work to make your lively faith triumph over every obstacle to your soul’s salvation and sanctification.

**BLASTING BOMBS**

"He was ill spoken of" (1 Pet. 2:23).

To keep you from going astray like a senseless sheep, the Good Shepherd has marked life's highway with the "bloody footprints" of His own beautiful and *imitable* example. Contrast your conduct with His on this single point. St. Peter tells you that Christ "was ill spoken of and spoke no evil in return." And you? Does the least slur cast upon your good name serve as a spark that causes your pride-bomb to explode and a barrage of hot words to blast the speaker's reputation? "Christ was ill spoken of." In the current vocabulary of His enemies there was no term of vilification that the Jews did not hurl into His face. They called Him—a man possessed by the devil; a Samaritan; a sinner; a friend of public sinners; a rabble-rouser; a Sabbath-breaker; a deceiver; one who forbids the payment of tribute to Caesar; a usurper. Although conscious of His perfect innocence, Jesus either replied to all these calumnies by keeping silence (which is the strongest refutation) or by calmly putting things in their proper light, and by asking pardon for His accusers and revilers. "I am not possessed; Father, forgive them!" It was only when His Father's honor was attacked or when He wished to warn the innocent victims of these ravening soul-wolves that Jesus hurled the blasts of His "Woe upon you!" and "Hypocrites!" against His enemies.

## ACTIONS SPEAK

"To silence, by honest living, the ignorant chatter of fools" (1 Peter 2:15).

"Actions speak louder than words," and "talk is cheap," are proverbial truths. It is easy to say that you are a follower of Christ; it is a more difficult matter to live as such under all circumstances. Jesus told the multitudes and His disciples concerning the scribes and Pharisees: "Continue to observe what they tell you, but do not imitate their actions, for they tell you one thing and do another" (St. Matth. 3:3). Are you a scribe or a Pharisee? Do you profess your faith with your lips on Sunday, but deny it in your actions during the six "work" days? The world in which you live and move reverses the Savior's rule. It pays little heed to your words, but keeps an eagle eye cocked on your daily deeds. For, hypocrisy can make a person himself believe that he, after all, is a model Catholic, but eventually it will drop its mask when it is caught off guard or thinks that "no one is looking." The best reply to the "ignorant chatter" that the enemies of the Church have carried on since the days of her infancy is—*not to do* the things of which they accuse her. And the refutation of the stock accusation, "Why are Catholics not better than non-Catholics and non-believers" is—to *be better*.

## HOUSE CLEANING

"Rid yourselves, then, of all defilement, of all the ill-will that remains in you" (St. James 1:21).

This is your advance notice for undertaking a thorough house cleaning, from attic to cellar, in your soul for the coming of the Spirit of purity and love. You must remove all "uncleanness" and all "ill-will." By "defilement" St. James means the love of a life of sensual enjoyment and a shying away from the sacrifices demanded of a true follower of Christ, the attempt to combine a Christian (mortified) life with an ease-loving, voluptuous existence. Christ did not die upon an upholstered Cross. All "ill-will" includes the remnants of a former life of sin. The poisoned fruit has been carefully plucked and removed from the garden of your heart, but the root of evil-doing, pride, still remains deeply imbedded there. One of its swift-sprouting shoots is "anger," which "does not bear the fruit that is acceptable to God" (v. 20). Pride manifests itself in wishing to have the floor, to do all the talking, to insist upon your personal opinion, and to take offense at the least sign of opposition to your views. You must, therefore, learn to be a ready listener, slow to speak your mind, and slow to take offense. Meekness and patience are the best antidote to this hidden poison.



## YOUR MIRROR

“One who gazes into that perfect law” (St. James 1.25).

This morning you did not use your mirror merely to see “the face you were born with” (which you know by heart), but rather to steer aright the scraper or hedge clipper or to apply the artificial blush to either modest cheek. At Mass Holy Mother Church holds up a “soul-mirror” to your mind’s eye in the Epistle and Gospel in order that you may gaze “into that perfect law, which is the law of freedom.” Eternal Truth is the crystal clear Mirror in which every flaw and defect of your soul’s face is clearly seen. The words of St. James may be applied to two classes of persons who look at this face in the mirror. One “looks at himself, and away he goes, never giving another thought to the man he saw there.” Either the face that looks back at him from the Mirror of Truth is too terrifying, or he thinks it is not his own, but that of the man or woman in the seat behind him—that is, he does not apply God’s word to himself. The other looks long and intently at that face in the Mirror; “he does not forget its message, he finds something to do and *does it*, and his doing of it wins him a blessing.” To which class do you belong?

## LOOKING HEAVENWARDS

"They strained their eyes towards heaven" (Acts 1:10).

Humanly speaking, God had a hard time to direct His chosen people, the Jews, to do His bidding, for again and again He refers to them as a "stiffnecked" or stubborn people. This was a soul ailment—stiff-heartedness, rather than a physical disability. A stiff neck is brought about by straining (craning) it to watch some aerial display of skill or deviltry. Because God does not want you to incur this painful inconvenience, He has made you to sit, stand, and walk in an upright position so that it does not require much effort to *raise your eyes often* to your true home—above. The animal, whose life will end on and in the earth, is so built that it constantly is looking at its end. By looking less upon the earth, from whose lowly dust you were formed as a child of Adam, and more up to heaven, your destiny as a redeemed and sanctified child of God, many cares about earthly things would vanish, to be replaced by a clearer, fuller view of life. When the disciples turned their eyes towards heaven, whither their beloved Master had ascended, did their mind mull over the thought as to where they would spend the rest of that day and what the menu for luncheon or dinner had in store for them?



## *Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension*

### STEWARDS OF GOD

"As befits the stewards of a God so rich in graces" (1 Peter 4:11).

"I can do as I please" would be true if you had made yourself and given yourself all the gifts of body and soul with which you are endowed. But, God made you and gave you all that you have. Hence you are not the proprietor of His manifold gifts, but only the steward entrusted with the commission to use these gifts for the purpose for which they are *loaned* to you. This purpose, St. Peter tells you, is to "share with all whatever gift you have received." Bodily health is a gift of God. You share this gift with others if you work to support them, especially the sick and the disabled. A good mind and memory are gifts of God. You share them with the ignorant and forgetful by imparting to them a share of your acquired knowledge and experience. Natural beauty is a gift of God. You can make others profit by it if it spurs them on to strive for supernatural beauty of soul. Life is a gift of God. It should be spent in the service of God and of your neighbor. Thus, you are not merely the receiver, who profits by God's manifold gifts, but also the almoner to your needy brother.

## STRANGE LANGUAGES

"Hearing them tell of God's wonders" (Acts 2:11).

The radio is considered one of man's great and rather recent inventions. Yet God, from the very dawn of creation, has used the ether waves to broadcast His message to His ever-increasing family. Man is both a receiving set and a broadcasting unit. Through his eyes and ears he should receive the "strange language" broadcasts of inanimate creation, and, after translating them in the studio of his mind, broadcast them on the ether waves of love through his will to the ever-open ears of God as a never-ending program of adoration and thanksgiving. If you are too busy on weekdays to listen to the harmonious voice of nature (it is only man's broadcasts that produce the static), at least take time out on the Lord's day to tune in with your appreciative eyes to the language of the green fields, of flowers and blossoms of every design and tint, of dwarf shrub and giant tree, of the ever-shifting scene on the sky's cyclorama, and with your attentive ear to the songs of the birds in the air, to the distinctive call of the animals on the earth, and to the whispering breezes and boisterous chatter of the winds. All creation tells of God's wonders and expects you, its king and interpreter, to give utterance to its broadcast by intelligent praise in its name.

**THREE**

“Who has understood the Lord’s thoughts?” (Rom. 11:34).

The mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity is, according to St. Paul, the “most unfathomable, inscrutable, and undiscoverable.” Let us apply these three terms to the three Divine Persons. “Unfathomable” is what has no bottom, no moving cause, but is its own cause of being. “The Father is from no one” (Athanasian Creed). “As the Father has within him the gift of life, so he has granted to the Son that he too should have within him the gift of life” (St. John 5:26). “Inscrutable” is what cannot be clearly grasped as to its origin and distinctiveness. Of the Second Person Holy Scripture asks: “Who shall tell the story of his age?” (Acts 8:33). Who shall be able to form a clear idea of how an infinite Spirit can give birth, truly and actually, to another infinite Spirit, without having the generated One outside Himself, but so that both remain in the indivisible unity of Being? “Undiscoverable” is that actuality or truth whose content is so rich that one can never finish contemplating it. Of the Third Person Holy Scripture says: “There is no depth in God’s nature so deep that the Spirit cannot find it out . . . No one else can know God’s strength, but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:10-11). It is this truth-giving Spirit that serves as the light in which we see the light, but only His own infinite eye can fathom His own light.

**NOT WORTHY**

"A man must examine himself first" (2 Cor. 11:28).

There is a difference between being "worthy" and being "pure" as a proper preparation for receiving Holy Communion. The latter lies in our power; the former can never be attained. For, even after the best and longest preparation the communicant must still strike his breast three times and say: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come into the lowly dwelling of my heart. But, purity of conscience can be attained and is demanded of us. Just as we stain our conscience by an act of the will in choosing evil, so, by an act of the will we must turn away from the evil and all attachment to it. Although freedom from the guilt of grave sin is all that is required in order to receive Holy Communion fruitfully, the holiness of our Guest, Who comes to make us one with Himself, demands that we be free also from wilful venial sin. The moment of receiving Holy Communion can well be made the goal of all our striving to become better. I shall deny myself this pleasure, I shall practice this particular virtue, I shall refuse my consent to this temptation, that I may be better prepared to receive my Savior tomorrow morning, the soul may well say. By thus stimulating your spiritual appetite, the Divine Bread will be all the more effective in making you more one with Christ and in imparting a more abundant measure of His stimulating Life.

## *Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus*

### **BRACE UP !**

"Let there be no discouragement" (1 John 3:13).

Discouragement is a temptation and should be treated as such. It is not a temptation to do something wrong, but to avoid doing much good. It saps our spiritual vitality and makes us subject to other temptations, especially to sins of impurity. When we are "down in the dumps" the devil likes to suggest that we seek some consolation in sins of the flesh. Discouragement almost invariably springs from hidden self-love and pride. Because it springs from pride it is, by that very fact, unreasonable, because pride is unreasonable, as it is the product of falsehood. All that God asks of us is good will, not success. This latter does not lie in our power. We have, therefore, but to do our best. If we fail or fall, we get up again. Our relapses are stepping stones to something higher. A humiliating relapse into sin evokes new efforts, and these efforts, prompted and sustained by grace, give increase to God's glory. According to Father Faber, "Many heroic and saintly lives will be found at last to be simply an entanglement of generous beginnings. There is true heroism in always beginning over again." Father William Doyle says: "There is one fault which should not be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come, and that is **DISCOURAGEMENT.**"

## **SUICIDAL MURDER**

"A man cannot hate his brother without being a murderer" (1 John 3:15).

A conscienceless gangster, quick on the trigger, will snuff out the life of another as nonchalantly as the streamlined altar boy extinguishes the candles on the altar. But he will think twice before he turns his gun upon himself. He loves himself too much for that, and the law of self-preservation is too deeply ingrained in his nature. The hater, however, with this deadly weapon takes his own life. He might well stop to think twice. His hate, unless it goes over into action, will do no harm to his neighbor. The object of his hate may not even be aware of it. But he does snuff out the spiritual life in his own soul. Love is a fire. To burn like the fire in the stove it must breathe by ventilation. Close the air vent, smother the fire, and it will extinguish itself. That is what hate does to the soul. The fire of love must "breathe" in acts (ventilation) towards God and neighbor. When denied this natural outlet, it dies, only to be kindled by the fire of hell, the jail from which there is no bail for this capital offense. Hate, therefore, is not only foolish, it is fatal. If this collar encircles your heart, take it off before it chokes you.



### **FREE PARKING**

"Throw back on him the burden of all your anxiety; he is concerned for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

The pastor of a rural parish overheard a group of boys during recess discussing the deep question—"Was God happy before He created Adam?" A lad of a family of ten children thought that He was. When asked for the reason of his conviction, he naively replied: "Because there was no one around to bother Him." True! But, perhaps God wanted someone to bother Him. God was infinitely happy before creation. He did not need to create man. Yet, though He knew beforehand how much bother and grief animated clay was to cause Him, He still created man to be the recipient of His infinite mercy. The Latin word for mercy is—"misericordia." God takes our "misery" (miseria) "into His Sacred Heart" (in corde), the seat and symbol of His infinite Love. In the presence of misery His goodness and love become "mercy." Jesus can feel compassion for (suffer with) us because He has a human Heart. He has made that Heart the infinite parking space for all human miseries, cares, worries, troubles. He took our pains upon Himself once and atoned for them all. The open door (wound) in His Sacred Heart invites us now to enter and find rest and relief from our cares.

## TRUE LIBERTY

"To share in the glorious freedom of God's sons"  
(Rom. 8:21).

I can do as I please! Please, do as you can! As a creature you *must*, therefore you can and do obey. You obey either God, your Creator and loving Father, or the devil, a hateful slave-driver, or yourself, a hard-headed fool. Will it be hard to choose to which master you will give your whole-hearted service? Your heart longs for true freedom, but it can be free only when it plays its part as a loving son of God. To free us from the slavery of Satan and sin, the heavenly Father demanded of His only and well-beloved Son the most exacting obedience, obedience to the most cruel death on the Cross. In this terrible sacrifice this Son poured out the last drop of His Precious Blood. With such an example ever before our eyes and with God's accompanying grace it becomes easy to do our little, God-assigned task faithfully and cheerfully. It is because we have not yet acquired the perfect obedience of God's saintly children that we find it hard to say in daily practice, "Thy Will, O Lord, be done on earth as it is in heaven." Practice makes perfect, and more perfect obedience means a higher degree of liberty and a deeper sense of true peace of heart.



## HEIRS OF BLESSING

"You will inherit a blessing in your turn" (1 Peter 3:9).

When your clumsy neighbor steps on your corn—be it the horny protuberance on your little toe, caused by crowded housing conditions, or the sensitive little peak of pride in your soul—it is like pressing the button at your front door—it rings a bell. The physical or spiritual pain, like an electric current, charges your soul with the heat of anger that seeks exit in a storm of hot and blistering words. Right here St. Peter steps in and bids you say to the unfortunate victim of your scorching wrath—"God *bless* you!" instead of "God damn you!" Say it, even if you do not mean it. At first you will not. But you will still be a channel of blessing instead of an instrument of cursing. By constant repetition these words will also work this blessing in your soul, that you will readily pardon the clumsiness of your neighbor and bear the pain in silence, yes, even joyfully. For, to be an heir to the blessing of God you must imitate the patience and longsuffering of God. How often have you offended God, and He has blessed instead of cursed you! And, how often has not your forgiving neighbor called down *blessing* on your own thoughtlessness and clumsiness? You are indeed an heir of untold blessings.

## OUR OLD MAN

"Our former nature has been crucified with him"  
(Rom. 6:6).

A woman may refer to her husband as her "old man." But that is not a woman's sole privilege, but the sad state of every child of Adam. It is our family heritage. We have been wedded to this "old man" for life, and it has been said that self (our old man) will die a quarter of an hour *after* we do. Hence there is no chance of a divorce, but there is a possibility of living together amicably, provided "he" is kept in his place. Our parents furnished the elements for our body, the seed of Adam. God created our soul, good and beautiful, but as soon as it was wedded to our body for life, it not only contracter the fatal germ of original sin but also spiritual death, in which our soul remained until reborn in the life-giving waters of baptism. Our nature, because of its inherited weakness tends downward, away from God, but our true purpose and end in life is to strive upward to God. We cannot go in both directions at the same time. We cannot divide our lower and higher nature and let each go its way. We are one, and so there must be unity of striving and achievement attained by "crucifying self" and "annihilating the living power of our guilt."

## HIGHER WAGES

"Sin offers death for wages" (Rom. 6:23).

Philosophy defines man as "an animal endowed with reason." When he sins, he is not only "unreasonable," but he is even worse than the senseless beast, for the latter does nothing to its own harm or destruction. Self-preservation is the first law of a creature. Sin violates this first, in-born law by causing spiritual suicide, or death to the deathless soul. Taking a selfish view of the gravity of "deadly" sin, this alone should make us avoid the folly of signing up to work for temporal misery and eternal torment. The ordinary workman may have to wait until the end of the week for his pay envelope. Despite the saying that "Sin does not pay," sin *does* pay off its slaves immediately with the wages of the contract, freely agreed upon before the work was started—spiritual death, though this be a mere flashing thought. The energy expended in working for eternal death and spiritual bankruptcy could so easily be made productive of ever-deepening spiritual life and eternal blessedness by merely turning the little lever that decides on which payroll our ever-active soul shall be—our human will. Do not strike for higher wages, work for them. Join the Union of Wills—God and man. Your first pay-check for doing good will be "fatter" than all the promises of sin.

**HEIRS OF GOD**

"If we are his children, then we are his heirs too" (Rom. 8:17).

According to the Psalmist, with the Lord there is "plentiful redemption" (Ps. 129:7). Not content with buying us back from the slavery of sin and of Satan, and making us free men, Jesus raises us even to the dignity of His brothers, children of His heavenly Father, and as such enabling us to share in the boundless riches of His own true Son. St. Paul sums up the extent of our riches when he says: "Everything is for you . . . it is all for you, and you for Christ, and Christ for God" (1 Cor. 3:23). Our treasures are Jesus—His own Sacred Humanity, Body and Soul, His childhood, hidden life, public life, sacred Passion, the Blessed Sacrament, His glory at the right hand of the Father, His Mother, all He is and has, the nine choirs of angelic spirits, all the good works and penances on earth, all the Masses that are offered, the sufferings of the Poor Souls in Purgatory, the sanctity of the Saints, all the praises of the birds and beasts and the orderly elements, God's past mercies through the Old Testament history down to the present moment, the love which the three Divine Persons bear to each other and the incommunicable love wherewith God loves Himself eternally—for, our inheritance is God, to be possessed totally and individually. Could we desire more?

**TURN IT OFF**

**"As some of them complained" (1 Cor. 10:10).**

When the volume of sound, issuing from your radio, is too great, you tone it down. If static wrecks the harmony of the music, or the program is uninteresting, you turn it off. Each human heart is a broadcasting station to the omnipresent, all-seeing and all hearing God. There is one program that He does not like, for it is an insult to His Person—that of murmuring or complaining. This is the static that wrecks the harmony that should exist between the Creator and His creation. But He does not tune down the radio or shut down the broadcasting station. In olden times it was different. St. Paul warns us not to complain "as some of them complained till the destroying angel slew them." These were the representatives of each tribe that Moses had sent to view the promised land. Because of their ill report they had caused all the people to murmur. Ten of these reporters (Josue and Caleb did not participate in their sin) "died and were struck in the sight of the Lord" (Num. 14:37). Since then God has been listening with divine patience to all the murmuring, complaining, gripping broadcasts, not only from one human heart, but from millions of men. What "volume" that must be! Is there anything you can do about it? Definitely! You can shut down your own little complaint station, and open up the continuous praise program put on by your patient resignation.

## DUMB IDOLS

"You let yourself be led away . . . to worship false gods" (1 Cor. 12:2).

Ridiculous, is it not? To make an idol with your own hands, and then fall down on your knees before it in worship and call it your god, who made you! If man-made "dumb" idols and false gods could speak, they would laugh at foolish man. Yet, he takes his folly seriously. If not, he would become an idol smasher. Each man has his own idol. There is, first of all, the supreme deity of self. Grouped about this deified dragon are the lesser deities in greater or less numbers, just as self-will decrees. These rise or topple with the supreme god, for they are merely his manifold manifestations, such as pride, anger, vanity, selfishness. Destroy self-love, and the true God is ready to come into the temple of your heart, there to take possession of His lawful throne, for He made you to be a god. But how shall we destroy the idol of self? By the recipe used by Daniel to kill the great serpent that the Babylonians worshipped. "Daniel took pitch, and fat, and hair, and boiled them together: and he made lumps and put them into the dragon's mouth and the dragon burst asunder" (Dan. 14:26). By means of pitch (detachment from sin to which self-will clings), fat (fasting), and hair (humility) you will cause the dragon of self to burst—and don't put the pieces together again.



**CHARACTER BUILDING**

"Unless your belief was ill-founded" (1 Cor. 15:2).

Some commentators explain these words of St. Paul to mean, "unless your belief has been ineffectual," that is, has not succeeded in forming a true Christian character. St. Paul clearly shows that the foundation of our faith, Christ, is solid; He is truly God and Man, the Savior. On this solid foundation we must erect the superstructure of a Christian character. Faith furnishes the blueprints or plans, and grace the crew of eager workmen. All that is needed still is the foreman to erect the edifice—good will. This superintendent of construction must study the plans thoroughly and then carry them out consistently. We use the word "character" often to denote a person of exceptional will power. In general, character is synonymous with the distinctive stamp of personality. It is made up of man's inherited nature, the influence of his surroundings, and personal endeavor. By the latter, aided by grace, he aims at achieving an equilibrium of the perfected parts of his nature, for that is the ideal, the goal for which he should strive. The superstructure that he is to erect on the foundation of faith is to raise his thinking and acting (hence being) from the natural level to the supernatural plane. This is a lifelong task that demands great courage and hard work. Man will not see the result until he views his life in the spotlight of eternity.

## HIGHEST COMMON DENOMINATOR

"All our ability comes from God" (2 Cor. 3:5).

There is no doubt about it, you *do* have exceptional *gifts*. This last word is the sharp sword that severs the Medusian head of proud self-will with her permanent wave of self-satisfaction. A gift supposes a giver. "Whatever gifts are worth having, whatever endowments are perfect of their kind, these come to us from above; they are sent down by the Father of all" (James 1:17), "who distributes (divides) his gifts as he will to each severally" (1 Cor. 12:11). If, then, you have a keen mind, did you win it by your shrewdness at the races? If you possess distinctive executive ability, did you inject it with a needle, as the diabetic gives himself a "shot"? If the artist in you parades before the gaping public on the colorful canvas or in cold (because nude) marble, or if your inventive genius has devised the latest gadget for the modern streamlined kitchen or office—do you claim all the credit? Once you were nothing; now you are something; hence there must have been a Creator. That you have made something out of yourself with the gifts that God gave you (and the raw material) shows that you have only done your duty to the highest common Donor. "We are servants and worthless; it was our duty to do what we have done" (St. Luke 17:10).

**PROMISED BLESSING**

“To impart the promised blessing to all who believe in him” (Gal. 3:22).

To all but a lawyer a legal document seems to be an agglomeration of strange terms that aim at making hair-splitting distinctions, and seem merely to make the point at issue more unclear. In today's Epistle St. Paul takes an “argument from common life—a valid legal disposition.” The “argument” is expressed in verse 14, “In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham was to be imparted to the Gentiles, so that we, through faith, might receive the promised gift of the Spirit.” Four hundred and thirty years after God had promised Abraham that in his “seed (Christ) all the nations should be blessed” (Gen. 22:18), God gave His law to Moses “to make room for transgression,” to make His children aware of many things they did as being contrary to God's will, and also that the law was powerless in itself to prevent these transgressions. This could take place only through faith in the promised Redeemer. The fulness of blessing of God's (new) covenant of law and grace rests on the human nature of Christ, the “seed of Abraham.” Because Christ is a Divine Person, these blessings go back to Abraham and reach forward to the end of time. We, born “under the bondage of sin,” share in these blessings through birth in His Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

### WHAT DOWRY ?

"Learn to live more and more in the spirit" (Gal. 5:16).

The human soul is a spirit, hence it has no sex or gender. In the Latin, Greek, and German languages, the word for "soul" is considered feminine. Hence we may say "she" when speaking of our soul. Our virgin soul is created as a bride-to-be by God. She cannot remain single, but must freely choose her husband as soon as she has reached marriageable age, the age of reason. Two suitors, to speak figuratively, will then sue for her hand, the Holy Spirit, who is already wedded to each baptized soul, and the evil spirit. Of the first union will be born angelic beings, of the second, demoniacs. As a dowry each suitor will offer you that for which you were created—to have a superabundance of true pleasure. The Holy Spirit offers you Himself as dowry or surety for your highest joy here, and everlasting, perfect happiness in His mansion above. The evil spirit offers you what appears to be luscious fruit, pleasing to the eye of desire, but full of worms and the poison of death. If it is hard to choose between the two, just look at the children you will have, depending on your choice, as portrayed by St. Paul today. If you have made a mistake and have been unfruitful in the past, you can get a divorce by an act of perfect love and the promise to be faithful to your first Love in the future.

IN DUE TIME

"We shall reap" (Gal. 6:9).

Into the contrite hearts of Adam and Eve, after their sin, God sowed the seed of hope by promising them and their posterity a Redeemer. It took 4000 years of patient waiting and eager longing before this seed sprouted and the earth opened to "bud forth a Savior" (Is. 45:8). We sow in the morning, and expect to reap the harvest in the evening of the same day. Impetuous St. Paul, who went places and did things, had to confess: "It was for me to *plant the seed*, for Apollo to water it, but it was God who gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). That is our duty—to plant the seed. If we were to use all our time in sowing, there would be no leisure to waste in looking for the fruits of our labors, so that we might congratulate ourselves on how much we have accomplished. The eternal day of rest in heaven is planned just for that. We must be content to sow the seed, but only *good* seed. If the seed is good it *must* produce fruit according to its kind in due time, otherwise it would not be good. A kind word, a word of encouragement, of sympathy, of instruction, of deserved praise, is the good seed that we can sow all the day long and all life long. Only let us do it lavishly as the Lord does. We shall reap in due (God's set) time.

## **TAKING MEASUREMENTS**

**"To know what passes knowledge" (Eph. 3:19).**

It seems that we are doomed to failure from the start. St. Paul would have us attempt to measure the immeasurable, the infinite. "May you be enabled to measure, in all its breadth, and length, and height, and depth, the love of Christ." But, why should we try to take measurements? Merely for the sake of theoretical knowledge? No, but in order that we may have a rule or guide for our love of God and man. Like Christ's love for us, so our love for Him (and Him in our neighbor) should be as high as heaven, as deep as the sea, as broad as the earth, and as long as life lasts, or rather, until death transforms our imperfect love into perfect love. These measurements give work aplenty for the longest life. Love of neighbor is not merely a proof and tangible measure of our love of God; it is also the laboratory in which we may test or try out our love of God. No one objects to being made the test tube for experiments in the still not yet fully explored field of charity. Opportunities are not lacking for making daily tests. Once we forget self and think first of our neighbor and of how we might help him, our love of him must go deeper and grow broader.



ONE

"Eager to preserve that unity the Spirit gives you"  
(Eph. 4:3).

One! Two! Three! We need go no further. There always was ONE God. He created TWO human beings. In this act of creation the Three Divine Persons cooperated. "Let *us* make man to *our* image and likeness" (Gen. 1:26). There always was perfect unity between the three Divine Persons. The trouble is with the TWO, with you and your neighbor. Often there is only one at fault, and that one may be you. St. Paul urges us to preserve that unity "whose bond is peace." It takes two to fight; when one does not strike back, the fight is off. Some people resemble the book worm (the real worm) and must always be "boring in." Put a book worm in a glass with a piece of paper and it will die of starvation and inactivity; it must "bore" for a living. A fight often begins by one person insisting on his real (or supposed) rights. The fact that you are right is not the gong to fight. You need not uphold your rights by knocking down the one who opposes or disagrees with you. He, also, has rights. By letting right and justice stand their own ground you show that you are the wiser, not a coward, and that you let the Supreme Umpire decide who wins.

## TAKING STOCK

"There is no gift in which you are still lacking" (1 Cor. 1:7).

The value of the various material elements of which man's body is composed has been set at a few cents. It is but the plastic container of our priceless soul, purchased at the infinite price of the Precious Blood from the infernal jailer. Through our Redeemer's sufferings we have "become rich in every way," so much so that "there is no gift in which we are still lacking." Only in the light of eternity shall we be able to enumerate and rightly evaluate all God's spiritual gifts to us. With the initial grace of baptism we may say what the Holy Spirit says of Wisdom, "All good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands. She is an infinite treasure to men: which they that use become the friends of God, being commended for the gifts of discipline" (Wisd. 7:11,14). By this initial grace we participate in the uncreated, Divine Nature, which effects a supernatural similarity to this Nature, conferring upon us the highest perfection, and making us partakers of the sanctity of the Divine Nature, wherefore it is rightly called "sanctifying grace." By grace we receive the Person of the Holy Spirit into our soul. He infuses the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, His seven gifts, His twelve fruits, and so on.

*19th Sunday after Pentecost*

## **THE CHRISTIAN CUT**

"Justified and sanctified through the truth" (Eph. 4:24).

False religions sometimes dictate a distinctive style of dress for their adherents. God is not interested in the latest fashions in dress. He merely asks that your clothes modestly cover and protect your body against the elements—and fit the size of your pocketbook. But He does prescribe a definite cut for the robe of your soul, and His tailor, St. Paul, today gives you the distinctive style of this soul-garment. "You must be clothed in the new self, which is created in God's image, justified and sanctified through the truth." God is a God of truth. He hates all lies, deceit, injustice. Hence the distinctive cut of all Christians, of all followers of Christ, the true God, ought to be seen in their just dealings with all men in all circumstances. It is for them to set the fashion in this matter by looking often into Christ, our mirror, and then becoming mirrors for others. Others will like the sharp, distinctive lines of this soul-dress and have a suit like it made to order. Are you setting the style for your neighbor's soul-dress?

**IN EVIL TIMES**

"Hoarding the opportunity" (Eph. 5:16).

The weather and the times in which we live are ready-made topics of conversation, and come in for a great deal of blame and bewailing. Yet, come to think of it, the times are made by men. As men are, so are the times, good or bad. We may not be able to make the weather as we should like to have it for our own little pet project, but we can do something positive towards making the times better—by making ourselves better. The difficulty lies in the fact that we like to reform others, but dread to undertake this distasteful task on ourselves. Yet, whereas we cannot expect to accomplish much in remaking others according to our blueprints of goodness or perfection, simply because men resent this meddling in their personal affairs, we can effect much by confining our efforts at improvement to the little back yard of self. We live in a little world, and by making self the center of radiating goodness, this would grow like the ripples encircling a stone cast into the water. Each ripple imparts its motion to the next until the last is stopped by the bounding shore. If we were wise we should use the present opportunity for doing something constructive for the betterment of the times by bettering ourselves. All investment of time and energy in self-improvement pays immediate dividends in peace of conscience and joy of heart.

## GOD'S SWORD

"The sword of the spirit" (Eph. 6:17).

"You must wear all the weapons in God's armory, if you would find strength to resist the cunning of the devil," St. Paul admonishes us today. Then he lists this spiritual armor that we are to use in our struggle "with those who have mastery of the world in these dark days." We must match cunning with cunning, in fact, outwit cunning, if we would "be found still on our feet when all the task is over." Our cunning will consist in making use of God's *word* as a *God-sword*. St. John saw one who seemed like a son of man . . . "from his mouth came a sword sharpened at both its edges" (Apoc. 1:16). This is the word of God which St. Paul assures us "is something alive, full of energy; it can penetrate deeper than any two-edged sword, searching the very division between soul and spirit, between joints and marrow, quick to distinguish every thought and design in our hearts" (Heb. 4:12). Thus, whilst, like our Divine Model, we repel the attacks of the wily tempter with this two-edged sword, we must also use it as a scalpel to cut out the tumor of self, to outwit our greatest tempter and traitor, the enemy within the castle of our soul.

## CUT TO SUIT

"With the tenderness of Jesus. Christ himself"  
(Philip. 1:8).

We know that St. Paul was a tent-maker by trade, but we do not often think of him as being a tailor. Yet, he is constantly taking measurements of our Divine Model—the breadth and length and height of Christ—for the garment of our souls. Tradition tells us that Mary wove the tunic of her Son in one piece, which grew with Him. When St. Paul takes measurements of Christ's virtues for you and me, the garment at first fits our littleness, but as we "grow into Christ" by daily, earnest effort, we are filled with the completion God has to give" (Eph. 4:19). As special cut for our soul's suit or dress our tailor suggests: "The livery you wear must be tender compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; you must bear with one another's faults, be generous to each other, where somebody has given grounds for complaint; the Lord's generosity to you must be the model of yours" (Col. 3:12-13). A daily look at Christ, Who is our mirror, will enable us to see whether we "be clothed in the new self, which is created in God's image, justified and sanctified through the truth" (Eph. 4:24). Because of that daily "renewal in the inner life of their minds" God's saintly children are always well-dressed.



## **GREAT BEL**

"Their own hungry bellies are the god they worship" (Philip. 3:19).

He laughs best who laughs at himself first. Often our own stupidity is greater than that of our neighbor, which so often makes us smile, or even laugh boisterously. Bel, the idol that the Babylonians worshipped, was not on a starvation diet. "There were spent upon him every day twelve great measures of fine flour, and forty sheep, and sixty vessels of wine" (Dan. 14:2). Daniel, the king's guest, smiled when the king said to him: "Does not Bel seem to thee to be a living god? Seest thou not how much he eateth and drinketh every day?" (v. 5). But he laughed outright when the king really believed that the idol had "licked the platter clean." "Behold," he said, "the pavement; mark whose footsteps these are!" (v. 18). The next serving that Bel got was a "plate of hash," composed by royal mandate of the priests, their wives and children, "after they had shewed him the private doors by which they came in and consumed the things that were on the table" (v. 20). Your guardian angel, your unseen guest at each meal, does not smile or laugh when you make your belly your "Bel." For then your mind is too dull to heed his admonition: "In eating, in drinking, in all that you do, do everything as for God's glory" (1 Cor. 10:31). That is God's truth.

## IN LIFE'S LEDGER

"May you live as befits his servants, waiting continuously on his pleasure" (Col. 1:10).

A husband, examining the expense account of his wife, found many items listed in the family expense book as GOK. When asked to decipher this code, she explained: "God only knows!" At the end of the ecclesiastical year we naturally think of balancing our account book with God. Many items therein are known to Him alone and the recording angel. There may be a vast difference between the debit and credit side. St. Paul in today's epistle suggests a very simple means by which we can be sure that everything will be entered on the credit side of our life's ledger by our conscientious and all-seeing recorder, that we be "in all things pleasing,"—that whatever we do, be it great or small, be pleasing to God; that we live as befits His servants, waiting continuously on the manifestation of His will and executing it properly and "as directed." (After all, He has promised us a reward for doing "His" will, not for following "our" will and fancy.) We must choose to be on God's payroll and then execute the particular work assigned to us. By putting all our attention on "what" we do and "how" we do it, we shall have no other cares or worries as to our expense account—the use of God's advanced funds, His actual graces.

## *Feast of the Assumption*

### **TRANSPLANTED**

"I took root" (Ecclus. 24:16).

Instead of the customary likening of Mary to a flower, Holy Mother Church today changes the resemblance to a tree, in fact, to five varieties of trees—a cedar, cypress, palm, olive, and plane tree. The cedar tree is a symbol of Mary's greatness as Mother of God. Comparing the greatness of the chosen people of God to a tree, the Psalmist sings: "How the cedars, divinely tall, are overtopped by its branches" (Ps. 79:11). Mary "overtops" angels and saints, because from the "top of the branches God has cut a tender twig" (Ez. 17:22), the human nature of Christ, His Son. The cypress tree, used to beautify the temple that Solomon built to the Lord, reminds us of Mary's glory as Virgin-Mother. "I will glorify the place of my feet" (Is. 60:13). The palm tree, a symbol of beauty and perseverance, since some trees live 200 years, is a fitting emblem for a Saint and Martyr. Mary is their Queen. The evergreen olive tree is a symbol of enduring happiness. "The Lord called thy name, a plentiful olive tree, fair, fruitful, and beautiful" (Jer. 4:16). The plane tree (resembling our sycamore) is cultivated as an ornamental tree and for its wood, which is used in cabinet work. Because Jesus has taken His human nature from Mary's flesh, He did not let this undergo corruption, but "transplanted" it to heaven today.

## *Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*

### **COME OVER TO ME**

"Be filled with my fruits" (Ecclus. 24:26).

Eve tempted Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that caused their death. Mary, the second Eve, gave us the fruit of her virginal womb, the fruit of the Tree of Life, that we may "eat and live for ever" (Gen. 3:22). Today she invites us to come into the "enclosed garden" of her Immaculate Heart to eat of the special fruit she keeps there for our refreshment and nourishment. But we must pluck it ourselves, she does not serve it to us on a silver platter. What is this fruit? Not an apple, but the pomegranate. This fruit, with the shape of an orange and the color of an apple has nine or ten compartments that contain in all about 1000 seeds. Its sweet-bitter taste makes it a pleasant fruit. The pomegranate is a symbol of Mary's eminent virtues. If we object that we cannot practice the virtues of Christ, because He was both God and Man, this excuse will not hold with regard to Mary, who was all human. The consideration of her virtues will be at first "sweet to the palate" of our mind by contemplation, but when we crush these seeds (by imitation) we find them bitter because of the seeds of Eve's fruit in our nature. Let us "get up early to the vineyards; let us see . . . if the pomegranate flourish" (Cant. 7:12).

## *Feast of Christ the King*

### **A DOUBLE CROWN**

"Transferring us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Col. 1:13).

When St. John writes in the Apocalypse that the twenty-four elders "threw down their crowns before the throne" (4:10), he tells us that they did so as a sign of worship. Out of reverence, and as a sign of subjection, a man removes his hat before the earthly throne of his God and King. When God created man a microcosm or "little world" He crowned him king of all creation. But he was destined to wear a second crown—that of a child of God, should he stand the simple test in the garden of pleasure. Adam there threw away this second crown by his own free (bad) choice. Christ, the Son of God and second Adam, picked up this discarded crown and gave it back to him. But, He did still more. By assuming human nature and uniting it to His Divinity He added new lustre to man's first crown and made possible again the second. It is our human nature that is crowned here with the merits of Christ, our royal, elder Brother, and that will be crowned one day in the kingdom of our Father, as Christ Himself was, with a crown made of the gold and jewels of our personal merits, or good use made of the royal gifts of God.

## *Feast of the Immaculate Conception*

### **OUR BACK YARD**

"Playing before him at all times" (Prov. 8:30).

These words call up a picture of a carefree, healthy, and, consequently, happy child at play in its paradise—the back yard. Sheltered by the high fence from all intruders, it finds no end of enjoyment in its playthings, its pets, the flowers, the birds, the glad sunshine. Adam was such a happy child, the first child in his paradise of pleasure. As he lacked a playmate, God gave him Eve. Both were to play in God's back yard until this would be too small for their growing family. Then they might have the rest of the world as playground. The work of keeping the grass cut, the flowers tended, the trees trimmed, and the animal pets fed and watered, was to be mere play, an endless round of exciting experiences, revealing always more of the wisdom of Him who had made all things for man. One day an intruder came who envied these two children with such happiness. He made them wish to be "grown up." Well, you know the rest of the story. Sin has changed the backyard of our soul from a cheerful, inviting paradise, where God plays with His children all day long, into a yard filled with noxious weeds, discarded tins of forbidden sweets (?), rags, rubbish, and rats—the devil's playground. Would we invite our Immaculate Mother to set her spotless foot there and even play with us?



## HIGH TIME

"It is high time for us to wake out of our sleep"  
(Rom. 13:11).

Mike, coming back from the Land of Nod a moment before Big Ben cleared his throat for his "rousing" cheers, smilingly greeted his morning caller with, "I fooled yez that time! I wasn't aslape at all!" If our alarm clock had a mind to see the ridiculous it would chuckle repeatedly at that apparently super-human feat of rising promptly in the morning. For, no sooner has it promptly recalled us from the anaesthesia of deep sleep than we use the first rays of consciousness to invent reasons for "lying just a moment longer." After all, the opiate of sleep *does* kill the dread of tackling tasks that we dislike. (We need no alarm when we plan to spend the day at a picnic.) But, experience has proved beyond a doubt that lying just a little longer makes the getting up and doing all the harder. Hence St. Paul, fearing that we may pay no heed to the Baby Ben of our conscience, comes in person today to our bed of spiritual sluggishness and sinful sleepiness and fairly shouts into our ears: "Get up at once! Throw off the covers of habitual sin, discard the nightclothes of actual sin, and dress in your Sunday best—*put on* the white innocence of *the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

**SOUL-SALVE**

"That through the patience and the consolation afforded by the Scriptures" (Rom. 15:4).

St. Benedict requires of the Abbot that "he must be well-versed in the Divine Law, that he may know whence to bring forth new things and old" (Ch. 64), for the needs of his subjects. In correcting them he must apply "the ointment and unction of his admonitions, the remedies of the Holy Scriptures..." (Ch. 28). According to St. Paul's method of expression, the Scriptures, the unction and ointment of God's admonitions to the soul, are like a medicine chest from which we are to take the remedy for any soul-need. The sacred writings do contain a remedy for every soul-need, but we often fail in the patience necessary until the applied remedy takes effect. Material salves and ointments assist nature in her slow process of replacing diseased bodily tissue. In our bodies we can see and feel the effects of this healing process, a consolation denied us with regard to the workings of our souls. Here all the more patience is required until God's word produces its salutary effect. Again, it is necessary that we know what remedy to use and how to use it. That is acquired by careful reading and experimentation. Our soul is not merely the patient, but also the laboratory for testing the effects of the Word of God as administered in Holy Mass.

## **POLISH OR PAINT**

**"Give proof to all of your courtesy" (Phillip. 4:4).**

Polish may be called the soul of the gold, silver, or marble, brought to the surface by a process of intensive rubbing. Paint is the skin stretched over the surface of one kind of material to simulate another. Thus, it may be spread over wood to make it resemble marble or onyx. In this sense good manners may be either polish or paint. They may be the outward, perfumed flowering of a beautiful soul, produced by a long process of rubbing off the rough surface of self, or, a mere camouflage that is donned "when company comes." It is not hard to guess which type is more attractive and lasting—the soul-deep, or the (less than) skin-deep variety. As a powerful factor in attaining to the genuine type of courtesy, St. Paul suggests the constant remembrance that "the Lord is near." He is as near to you as your neighbor in whose soul He dwells. More than that, by dwelling in your own soul, He is nearer to you than you are to yourself. He sees through all sham, as most men and women also do. God detests sham, man condones it; possibly because he has enough strength of character to admit that he also is addicted to this weakness. Will you not strive for the genuine type of courtesy, which, when shown to your neighbor, is really a worship of God in him?

## THE LORD'S SCRUTINY

"I am not even at pains to scrutinize my own conduct" (1 Cor. 4:3).

"That is where St. Paul and I agree," you say. But, do you, really? St. Paul does not mean to say that he never examined his conscience. In fact, he has done this task so often and well that he can truthfully say: "My conscience does not, in fact reproach me; but that is not where my justification lies." Even if a most careful checking of his personal accounts reveals nothing on the debit side of his soul's ledger, he does not feel that he can trust that auditing of his own books. He knows that, due to human weakness, many factors work together to falsify man's judgment of the true state of his soul. We are constantly acting in a responsible way, yet so often pay no heed to our actions, not to speak of weighing them in God's just scales as He does. By the habit of sinning we have succeeded in silencing or bribing our conscience. We are not free from the bias of self-love that puts many of our doings in a favorable light, and so on. If we are such poor judges of ourselves (and what man could know us better?) how shall we dare to sit in judgment on our neighbor, whose external actions, indeed, we see, but not the motives that prompted them?

## *Feast of the Nativity (I Mass)*

### **NO SACRILEGE**

“To ransom us from all our guilt” (Tit. 2:14).

Our pocketbook belongs to our Sunday outfit. We contribute our tithe to the Sunday collection, not because the pastor must live, the teachers must be paid their meager salary, and the interest on the church debt must be met, but because our gift of money is our ambassador to God, to speak for us at His throne, to ask in our name, for it really represents ourselves, whom we offer with it—our worship of God. We come to give back to God His gifts in gratitude. But, we have also come to *take*, to empty the church's treasury, which cannot be emptied, by giving back to the Father His greatest gift to us, His new-born Son. He came for us. He belongs to each of us. He wishes us to use Him, not only to repay God's goodness, His gifts to us which are without number, but also in payment to His justice for the debt we owe Him by our numberless sins. This is the only sterling coin that the Father will accept. Minted on earth in Mary's chaste womb, this heavenly Coin bears the stamp of divinity which gives It infinite value. To take Him is not robbery; not to take Him is the greatest folly. He came as an eager Babe to be “taken up.”

## **BORN TWICE**

"Giving us new birth and restoring our nature through the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

A second time today we come to the Crib to "see" the Babe of Bethlehem. He begins His work of redemption by the very form He has chosen as Savior. Of the countless forms Jesus could have chosen in which to come as Redeemer, Jesus chose that of a lovely, new-born Infant. That is the first step to salvation, the "A" of the soul's alphabet that Nicodemus could not understand. A man cannot see the kingdom of God without being born anew. "Believe me, no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless birth comes to him from water, and from the Holy Spirit" (St. John 3:5). A twofold spiritual birth is necessary, one by immersion and one by infusion. The soul, immersed in the life-giving waters of baptism, is reborn from the death of original (and personal) sin to a new life in God. The ebb tide of sin gives place to the flood tide of sanctifying grace. That is the cleansing and birth by water. The second birth, the "restoring of human nature" takes place by fire—the Holy Spirit, who comes into the soul to cleanse it more fully and to anneal it to Himself. Can you read this lesson from the mute lips of the smiling Babe in the Crib?



## TELEVISION

"With a Son to speak for him" (Heb. 1:2).

A third time today we kneel at the Crib, this time to "hear" the Christmas message of the Infant Savior. St. Paul, our radio announcer, gives us the message whilst faith takes the place of television. The message is—this speechless Babe is the "Eternal Word," and the vision is—in this Son we can see the Father. "To see me is to see him who sent me" (St. John 12:45). Faith sees the eternal Father forever speaking this "Eternal Word." As Father Faber so poetically puts it, "He is the first Word ever spoken, and He was spoken by God, and He is in all things equal to Him by whom He was spoken. He was uttered from eternity, uttered without place to utter Him in, without sound accompanying the utterance, and the Father who uttered Him, or rather who is for ever uttering Him, is not prior to the Word He utters." In the Gospel St. John tells us: "At the beginning of time the Word already was; and God had the Word abiding with him, and the Word was God. He abode, at the beginning of time, with God. It was through him that all things came into being, and without him came nothing that has come to be" (1:1-3). This Word resounds over our own "void and empty" hearts to make them a new creation.

## **GOD'S KINDERGARTEN**

"We toiled away at the school-room tasks" (Gal. 4:3).

Scarcely is a child born into this world of a thousand mysteries when it curls itself up into the shape of a twitching question mark and cries: "Why, why?" A little later, when it can propel itself on hands and feet, it begins its tour of investigation. Everything within reach must be touched, tasted, and swallowed, if at all possible. Later still, with open eyes, ears, and mouth it drinks in the wonders of this world on its chair in the kindergarten. St. Paul reminds us today that we are all children who have but one word to learn—Abba—backward and forward, until we know the depth of meaning of this simple word—Father. When the appointed time came, God, our Father, sent His Son on a mission to us to give us the answer to the philosopher's sevenfold questioning. WHO, The Father, sent WHAT (WHOM), His Son, WHERETO, to earth on Christmas night, WHY, to redeem man, BY WHAT MEANS, by His death, IN WHAT MANNER, on the Cross, WHEN, on Good Friday, and daily at Holy Mass. This lesson is always the same, but our mastering of it should become more perfect each day that we attend the school of the Holy Sacrifice. It is our fundamental lesson, our ABC's.

**DRY YOUR TEARS**

"Tell one another this for your consolation" (1 Thess. 4:17).

In a humorous article, entitled "The Niobites," a chaplain of a certain convent proposed to found a new order for sad-faced nuns "to atone by incessant weeping for the abundant joy and happiness to be found in all the convents of the world... The more gifted nuns will be chiefly occupied in writing letters of "desolation" that will plunge the recipient in gloom." St. Paul's letter is not one of these. He has "a message from the Lord himself"—"Who comforts us in all our trials" (2 Cor. 1:4), which he would have broadcast to all mourners by the fiery tongues of the six burning candles that flank the coffin. We (1) "*believe* that (2) Jesus underwent death and (3) rose again. When He (4) comes back (5) God will bring back those (6) who found *rest* in Him." "Faith" in the mourner and "rest" for the deceased. What the mourner now sees by faith, the departed sees by vision; and the rest of those who "died in Christ" should be the peace and joy of the living. St. John, also, has a message of comfort, in fact, a command, for the mourner: "Write thus: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yes, for ever henceforward, the Spirit says: they are to have rest from their labors; but the deeds they did in life go with them now" (Apoc. 14:13).

## MASS YEAR REFLECTIONS

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*Each year the Reflections from THE MASS YEAR are printed separately in pamphlet form. Below is the list:—*

**LITURGICAL ESSAYS** by Benedictine Monks, 25¢

Some of the symbols and ceremonies of the Church are the subjects of these essays which demonstrate the beauty and the influence of the Liturgy on the spiritual life of the Faithful.

**DIGEST OF THE LITURGICAL SEASONS**, compiled from the works of Dom Prosper Gueranger, O.S.B., by Bernard Beck, O.S.B., S.T.D., 25¢

The Six Seasons of the Church Year are explained and a brief history of each given.

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