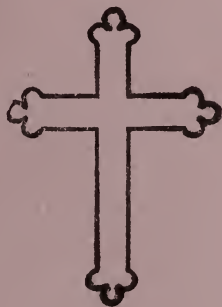


SERMON SKETCHES

from

Advent to Lent



Submitted to his priests by their Bishop,

✠ JOHN F. NOLL.

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SERMON SKETCHES FROM ADVENT TO LENT

“Knowing that now is the hour for us to rise from sleep”—From the Epistle.

If there be one glaring fact, which needs no proof, of which, however, you must often be reminded it is that (1) Catholics individually and as a body are asleep spiritually; (2) inactive in the cause of God; (3) uninterested in the eternal welfare of others.

(1) Individually they pass a sleepy, unconscious existence as far as the spiritual and supernatural are concerned. They are not spiritual-minded, not grace-minded, hardly sin-conscious. Their souls are lightly fed once a day by mechanical prayer, occasionally washed in the sacrament of penance, then dressed beautifully by God Himself, Who visits them in Holy Communion. The intervening time, which is not given to the “world, the flesh and the devil,” is consumed in spiritual torpor or sleep. The Divine Lover within them is ignored; there is scarcely any struggle for supernatural merit; little thought of spiritual self-improvement. How many of you think of improving daily? How many of you have a conversion to your credit? How many of you can even boast of never scandalizing another?

As a body Catholics, whether of this nation or universally, are more profoundly asleep. They are not articulate, scarcely move. They leave entirely to the Supreme Pontiff, to the Hierarchy, to the priesthood, the burden of defending the faith, of combating error, of improving society. Professed soldiers of Christ, they let the generals do all the fighting while they sleep. Is it any wonder that the Holy Father is actually begging Catholics to unite and work together openly under the banner of Catholic Action?

(2) Not only do Catholics seemingly recognize no spiritual or religious obligations to others, but they in-

sist on being *children* in the faith. They manifest no initiative, they want to be told what to do and what not to do. When asked questions about their faith, they convey the impression that they know no reason for believing or acting as they do, except that they were so taught. Child-like faith is commendable, but the ability to defend the faith, zeal for its spread, activity in the kingdom of God, are a need of our times. Protestants are often surprised to see Catholics so wed to their religious beliefs and practices without being able to explain why. It leads them to speak of the power the Church has over her people. They are shocked when they see fidelity to mechanical practice coupled with sinful living.

To let the light of his faith shine before others, and then to be prepared to give a satisfactory account of it is the duty of every follower of Christ, and surely of every soldier of Christ.

(3) The soul of your relative, or friend, or neighbor, is worth more than all the world. Like your own, it is destined for bliss eternal in God's everlasting home. But at present its possessor has either not been started on the road to Heaven or has strayed away from that road. Whether he is traveling along the wrong route unconsciously or wilfully, do you, who pretend to love him, feel justified in not warning or advising him? Do you act on the theory that only the clergyman is expected to "talk religion" to others?

You meet frequently with others and converse about everything else, but, as by a concerted understanding, the discussion of religion is tabooed. It is of such as you that the inspired writer thought when he wrote: "I wish thou wert cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm behold I shall begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." It is such as you that Jesus had in mind when

He declared "He that will deny Me before men, I shall deny him before My Father Who is in Heaven." Indifference towards the spiritual welfare of others is inexcusable in one who possesses the truth; it is certainly unworthy of one, to whom God has been so good.

CONCLUSION: Arouse yourselves from your deep sleep and pursue spiritual things for your own good with even greater interest than you pursue temporal things. Follow the advice of your confessor, the directions you receive from the pulpit, the admonitions proffered by the Catholic press.

Join others in an effort to bring a knowledge of your faith to some of the 100,000,000 Americans who would embrace it if it were properly presented to them, and who would feel everlastingly indebted to you for the service rendered.

Take an interest in reclaiming Catholics who have given up the practice of their faith.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

"Hail full of grace"—The Gospel.

Last Sunday we were reminded of our slothfulness in all that relates to the salvation of our own souls, and of our supine indifference towards the interests of God in this world.

Today's feast presents to us a perfect creature, whose philosophy of life is in direct contrast with our own. From her we learn (1) Almighty God's attitude towards sin; (2) The need of perseverance and growth in grace, and (3) the value of contributing to the salvation of others.

(1) God, by His very nature, is infinitely perfect and holy, and must, therefore, be infinitely opposed to

sin. The souls of the first man and woman came from His hands not only free from all sin, but by the beauty of divine grace, with which they were clothed, reflected God's own image and likeness. Such a supernatural state of soul was opposed to and could not coexist with sin. But our first parents did sin, and thereby forfeited the supernatural completely. Having lost God's favor as well, the gates of Heaven, the land of supernatural bliss, were closed against them. There is not, and never has been, anything of sin in Heaven. The doctrine of Hell, which teaches eternal banishment, and of Purgatory which teaches temporal exclusion from Heaven, are perfectly logical in the light of God's necessary attitude towards sin.

Such must be our attitude because it is the only true one. The world is filled with people who make light of sin, because they fail properly to understand their relationship to God; because they do not advert to His essential holiness and justice, and think of Him only as uninterested in us and indifferent towards our conduct.

(2) When we recall that God chose Mary to be the instrument of the Incarnation, that He destined her to be the mother of Him, Who was to atone for mankind's sin, it is easy to understand why her soul should be created, as were the souls of our race's protoparents, immaculate and "full of grace." If God was to have a mother as worthy of Him as a human being could be, then evidently her soul must not only be free from sin, but supernaturally more beautiful than all other creatures, including the angels.

Because Mary faithfully cooperated with every actual grace she received, her soul not only persevered in the grace of its creation, but it grew steadily in grace, so that she endeared herself more and more to her God and

merited far more than any other creature. It is, therefore, easy to understand how she became entitled to the honor which was conferred on her at death, namely, coronation in Heaven as its Queen.

Everyone of us, conceived in original sin, became immaculate through our baptism, remained immaculate throughout the first six or seven years of our lives, but most of us then began to abuse our free will, to wilfully oppose actual grace, to yield to our evil inclinations, and to violate the commandments of God. Fortunately for our sakes the sacraments were instituted for the removal of sin and for the restoration of the supernatural life after its loss through sin. Unlike Mary, we do not strive sufficiently to remain in that state, to grow in grace and in merit and in the love and favor of God. Many of us would have been more prepared for Heaven ten years ago, and five years ago, and last year, than today, whereas we should be better prepared for Heaven with each succeeding year we live, so that a long life should actually be to our eternal benefit.

(3) Mary had a very intimate part in our Redemption, which she could even have prevented by not consenting to the request of the angel of the Annunciation. She sorrowed when Christ sorrowed, she suffered when He suffered—and all the while she realized that she was cooperating with Him in His great work of atonement for our sins.

Today she is regarded as the mediatrix of all graces. She is the only human being in Heaven with both body and soul. The Son of God, Who came to us through her, dispenses His graces and divine gifts through her. Is it not therefore, easy to believe that her intercession in our behalf in response to our daily petition that she “pray for us *now*” should be granted? She, “Blessed among

women," is sympathetically interested in every child of God, her brothers and sisters less favored.

To be a true child of Mary we must, however, not only pray to her and honor her, but imitate her loyalty to her Divine Son by the faithful observance of the Commandments, and by the practice of those moral virtues which insure sinlessness.

CONCLUSION: Resolve to live in an immaculate condition of soul. Therefore, not only avail yourself of the first opportunity to procure pardon for your sins, but resolve to live in accordance with the conscience which you have had formed; and strive to grow in grace and holiness, both by avoiding sin and by following the inspirations of grace. By doing this you will not only improve yourself, but convince many others that a life of virtue is not only possible, but happiness-promoting.

Take an interest in the sinner by praying to Jesus through Mary for him, by placing good literature within his reach, by offering up some of your good works for him as Mary did for you.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"Art thou he who is to come, or do we look for another?"—From the Gospel.

For 2000 years God prepared a special nation for the Incarnation of His Divine Son. Israel had grown accustomed to inspired teachers, to prophets and leaders, who spoke in the name of God, and who wrought many miracles; but they "looked for another," a greater prophet. The people longed and prayed that the Promised One might come, but they never dreamt that He would come in lowliness and poverty, yet the followers of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, impressed

by his sanctity, thought that he might be the long-awaited Messiah.

Despite the thousand evidences we have that the Expected of Nations has come, that He dwelt long in this world, that He is still with the world in His mystical body, (1) the fact of the Incarnation, (2) the genuineness of Christ's Divinity, (3) the identification of His world-wide religion are not apparent to the majority of mankind.

(1) Most Orientals, such as Mohammedans and Buddhists, regard and respect Christ as another prophet. Protestants, who proclaim His divinity in word and writing, unconsciously deny it in fact by following other leaders, such as Luther, Calvin and Wesley, who rejected much of His doctrine, most of His sanctifying ordinances. The people of nations still pagan are more excusable. Why? Because the pantheistic religions to which they are committed, and to which their ancestors were committed for thousands of years, being a part of the very national life and government, have become deeply rooted. Moreover, the religion of Jesus, having been refused entry into their midst until recent years, is regarded as a novel thing.

There is still another reason why they have not taken kindly to the Christian religion, namely, because of the confusion of mind created among them by the various and mutually contradictory forms of Protestantism, each claiming to be genuine Christianity.

The Jews, resenting the claim that the Messiah had come, and that they had rejected and crucified Him, have not accepted the fact of the Incarnation, preferring to believe that the Messiah is yet to come. The uniqueness of their attitude manifests the power of prejudice.

There are no conceivable good grounds for a refusal

to accept the fact of the Incarnation on the part of people who have been reared in Christian countries. Only a perversity of will can explain the attitude of those who do deny the fact.

(2) The incredulity of the infidel towards the Christian faith and his extreme credulity in relation to so many unproved facts outside of religion, are most astounding. He cannot honestly deny the fact of Christ's existence, or the evidence furnished for His divinity by the holiness of His life, of His doctrines, of His miracles recorded by men (themselves slow to believe) who were eye-witnesses of them. The spread of His religion, the unexampled devotion of millions of martyrs, the conversion of the powerful Roman Empire struggling with all its might to crush Christianity over a period of 300 years, should certainly impress and convince any person of unprejudiced mind and heart.

The fact of Christ's miracles, and even of His Resurrection, than which no fact of history is better attested, are not more difficult to believe than many of the teachings of science, accepted without any investigation by the same individuals. Who, for instance, has satisfied himself by personal investigation and enumeration that there are 30,000,000,000 heavenly bodies, millions of times larger than our own, in the small portion of the heavens known as the Milky Way? Yet which infidel does not say "credo" to this pronouncement of the astronomer? Do you know anything more mysterious than the facts brought home to us day by day by the radio? Were they unexperienced, but reported as facts only by revelation, they would be rejected as ridiculous and impossible.

(3) The Catholic religion has so many outstanding arguments in its favor that its identification as the religion of the Son of God should be extremely easy. It is

the only religion which goes back to the time of Christ and His Apostles, and, therefore, can alone rightfully claim Christ as its direct Author. It is the only religion which claims authority to teach, and Christ certainly commissioned His Church to teach with authority. Did He not aver that He would bind in Heaven what His Church would bind on earth? It is the only religion which has actually converted the nations. Protestantism has never converted a single nation.

Protestantism was introduced into several nations by civil rulers, and although promoted and supported by the civil power, it has disintegrated everywhere. The Catholic religion alone has the mark of unity, which we should look for in any important work of God. The martyrs and saints of history were the fruits of Catholicism. Today the Catholic Church counts a membership greater by 100,000,000 than all forms of Protestantism combined. Only those intellects which are swayed by prejudices can fail to identify the Catholic Church with Christianity.

CONCLUSION: The unbeliever needs prayer more than he needs argument; he needs a conversion of will rather than of mind; he needs expositions of Catholic teaching prepared by Catholics rather than by their enemies. Therefore, pray particularly for our own countrymen, that they may have a change of heart. Acquaint yourself with the soundness and beauty of Catholic teaching and practice for the strengthening of your own faith, and in order to be prepared to match your wits with those of the skeptic, with those who seem to be satisfied with bits of Catholic teaching severed from the whole, who seem to be satisfied with branches lopped off the tree of life. Join a Study Club and become informed in all matters pertaining to your faith.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“And may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, preserve your hearts and your understandings in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—From the Epistle.

The most precious thing in this life, after the enjoyment of the favor of God, is absent in the hearts and in the minds of most individuals, as it is absent in human relationships, in national and international life. That precious thing is peace.

Christ offered peace, in all its phases, in and through His Church; therefore if Catholics do not enjoy it, it is because they, like other people, look for it elsewhere.

What is the peace of God which is capable of preserving (1) our hearts; (2) our minds; (3) our whole lives “in Christ Jesus Our Lord”?

(1) As Jerusalem did not “know the things that were to her peace,” so neither does the modern world, of which Jerusalem, after its rejection of Christ, was a figure. I need not spend any time in an attempt to prove to you that internationally there is no peace; that nationally there is general dissatisfaction with economic conditions; that discord reigns in millions of homes; that hundreds of millions of individuals are on the verge of despair.

The very friendly greeting “Peace be to you” was uttered by Jesus to His Apostles after and only after the world had been reconciled to Heaven through His Redemption; and only to those truly devoted to Him could He say: “My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world gives do I give unto you.” The fruits of Christ’s redemption are repudiated today, and the number of His loyal devotees is shamefully small.

Today the havens of the greatest peace are monas-

teries and convents, whose occupants have left the world, so filled with strife and anxiety and sin—all inconsistent with peace.

This does not mean that individuals in the world cannot have peace of heart, which is another name for peace of conscience. But they cannot enjoy it if they follow the ways of the world, if they look for their happiness in material things, if "they seek not first the Kingdom of God and His Justice."

True peace of heart comes from the consciousness of union with God, of being safe for eternal salvation. You can readily perceive that there would be no peace in a family if children were entirely estranged from their parents, if they ignored them and disregarded all their commands. Neither can there be peace between the Heavenly Father and those of His children who have driven Him out of their hearts, who openly defy Him and make a mockery of His moral law, who nurture their animal instincts.

The state of sanctifying grace is a state of union with God, which produces a peaceful condition of soul, resulting from the conviction that all is well and may be well forever.

(2) Those who live in religious error cannot have true peace of mind. They may enjoy that sort of peace which comes from deceiving themselves into believing that their opinions are convictions, or that it is futile to try to learn what objective truth is. But the fact remains that if their beliefs are not in harmony with the revelation of God, their minds must be enslaved to error.

The mind was made for truth generally and is not free if it be controlled by error. The highest, the most important truths are those propounded by God Himself for the regulation of our conduct, truths of which He

would not have us ignorant. Consistency required that He reveal such truths and that He commit their promulgation and explanation to an infallible Church. From such a source Catholics receive them and are, therefore, assured of "peace in believing."

The average Protestant, who reads his Bible and books dealing with religious controversy, is frank to admit that he is "searching for the truth." He is aware that his religious beliefs differ from others who also call themselves Protestants, and actually accords to these the liberty to believe differently.

This certainly means that their beliefs are nothing more than opinions, and that they may be out of harmony with the mind of Christ. Because Catholics "think with the Church," and the Church is assured of the guidance of the Holy Ghost, Who, as God, can neither deceive nor be deceived, Catholics have very definite convictions upon which a consistent philosophy of life can and should be built.

(3) Christ Jesus Our Lord was the embodiment of the Godhead. He came into this world as the Supreme Teacher, as the Prince of Peace, as the Mediator between the Heavenly Father and all mankind, whom He would unite into a huge family having one mind and one heart. Earth should resemble Heaven in its harmony of belief and of worship, and in the possession of the peace of God.

Union with God must evidently be the greatest glory of the creature; to attain it, preserve it, to cement it, should be his highest ambition. When the soul is in union with God, it enjoys peace; when it is separated from Him it is enslaved to Satan.

The non-Catholic, honest and sincere as he may be, never experiences the peace which is produced by the supernatural means of salvation; he can live in union

with God only because of that infinite goodness which respects his sincerity, and condones his error because it is unwilful.

This does not mean that every Catholic is better off than all Protestants, that his salvation is more secure than that of good Protestants, simply because more is expected of Catholics, who were instructed by an unerring teacher, and within whose easy reach are the means of grace which create and promote union with God.

CONCLUSION: Be grateful to Almighty God for the gift of the true faith, and strive to appreciate it more. Show your appreciation by being more devoted to God, by making more frequent use of His holy Sacraments, by living less worldly, by doing your part through prayer, example and the dissemination of expository literature. There are many ways of bringing the knowledge of the truth and of the supernatural things of your Church to the attention of others less favored—and you should employ some of hem.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A Charity Sermon

(to be preached, or read to the people as the Bishop's Pastoral)

On this Sunday before Christmas, when we are reminded of the infinite charity of God towards mankind, we ourselves should be reminded of our own obligations of charity to our fellowmen, particularly to "those who are of the household of the Faith."

Christian charity, an essential characteristic of Christ's Church, and beautifully exemplified by her and her people from the days of the Apostles, is little known in society today. You will better understand what I mean if I make a few observations on (1) what the world

now regards as charity; (2) the Church's concept of charity; (3) our own favorite Diocesan charity.

(1) Despite the generous contributions of Americans to Community Chests, to various forms of relief work, there is very little genuine charity in the land. Works of relief, and contributions to humanitarian purposes usually lack the charity motive, especially that motive which gives a supernatural character and merit to the alms of the people.

Organized relief effort may be the most practical means of alleviating community distress; through it a burden, which would otherwise be imposed on all by taxation, is accepted by the local manufacturer, the merchant, the professional man and the employed, in favor of the unemployed, the dependent, and the infirm. But we fear that neither Christ nor His destitute brethren are often considered by the contributor to a charity or relief fund.

Relief work on a large scale, such as we have witnessed, and of which many of us have been the beneficiaries during the past few years, has been a civil and business necessity. Citizens must not be left to starve; communism and radicalism must not be encouraged, but rather checked; people must be protected in their life and property rights. To prevent the former, and to aid the latter are clearly the duties of government.

That our Government should become Santa Claus under present conditions was a real necessity, dictated by the very instinct of self-preservation.

(2) During the days of the Apostles, and of their immediate successors the followers of Christ were conspicuous for their real love for one another, for the manner in which the more prosperous looked after the less fortunate, whether the aged, or the widow, or the orphan, or the sick. Religious Communities of men and women

were founded in almost every succeeding century for the express purpose of looking after the destitute, of nursing the sick in their own homes, of ransoming the slaves, of elevating the condition of the underprivileged.

Our modern hospitals, in which business must play so large a part, were born of our material age; they are an outgrowth of hospitalization work instituted by civic communities or private enterprises. If Religious Communities would continue their ministrations to the sick they must have hospitals today, and they must evidently have institutions as efficient as their competitors, institutions with which the best medical and surgical physicians will cooperate. This means that the builders of Catholic hospitals must spend a fortune on an institution, and largely with borrowed money, which they must repay with interest. But most Religious Communities in charge of our present day hospitals were founded for the purpose of nursing the sick, and especially the destitute sick, in their own homes.

Under the auspices of the Catholic Church there are more hospitals and homes for the aged, for the poor and widow, for the waif and orphan than under the auspices of all Protestant organizations combined. Infidelity never erected such institutions, never interested itself in works of charity.

(3) The favorite charity of this Diocese—and that means of all the Catholic people—is the care of dependent children, whether orphaned by the death of one or both parents, whether thrown on charity through the divorce court or through the desertion or imprisonment of the breadwinner.

During the long period of unemployment, when offerings for the support of the dependent child were quite curtailed, the number of dependent children quite natur-

ally increased, requiring the collection of larger rather than of smaller funds for the housing, schooling, clothing and feeding of these unfortunate little ones.

Retrenchments may be made in other works fostered by the Church, but the care of the orphan and dependent child must go on, even though the former generous givers must become more generous, even though every Catholic must give until it hurts his slender purse.

The value of charity is so great in the eyes of God that His Providence has actually designed that there should be a large number of people dependent on the voluntary alms of others; and the Holy Ghost declares him blessed "who understandeth concerning the needy and the poor."

CONCLUSION: You never had such an opportunity to merit by works of charity and by contributions to the support of the dependent child as you have today. Therefore, let your Christmas offering be worthy of you, let it represent a real sacrifice, which your Faith assures you will be rewarded one hundredfold by Him Who, as the self-sufficient God of Heaven, became a dependent Child on earth, and Who has pledged Himself to regard as done for Himself what is done for "His least brethren."

CHRISTMAS

"Peace on earth to men of good will"—From the Gospel.

Heaven, whence the angel came to announce "the glad tidings of great joy" had been from the beginning of eternity a Paradise of the most blissful peace.

Before a single creature was fashioned Heaven was the home of harmony and peace, proceeding from the infinite bond of love uniting Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

After the admission into that blessed land of the myriads of angels, who, while on probation, had demonstrated their "good will" once the will of their Creator was revealed to them, there was not only seraphic love for the Creator to the fullest capacity of each angel, but that perfect harmony and reciprocal love among the various choirs of angels themselves, which spells sweetest peace.

Then at the beginning of what we call "time," the Almighty created other creatures, composites of flesh and spirit, who, in the course of centuries, would number many billions. Because part flesh they dwell in a material world until dissolution; but because part immortal spirit, they were destined to dwell forever in a world of spirits. A separate eternal realm might have been created for them, but their Creator having loved them no less than the bodiless angelic creatures of His hands, sent His only begotten Son to earth to elevate the sons of men to the rank of sons of God, so that they might become sharers of bliss supernatural as well as eternal—this after mankind had incurred the Creator's displeasure by "bad will." In restoring humankind to the Father's favor, God incarnate became truly a Savior; the announcement of His appearance among men became truly "good tidings of great joy"; His condescension gave infinite "glory to God in the highest," and was the pledge of "peace on earth to men of good will."

This very condition emphasized in the angel's message made it clear that (1) in the world there is much bad will; (2) God became man to promote good will; (3) we must cultivate the spirit of good will.

(1) The freedom of will of earth's Heaven-destined dwellers was not revoked. Man, as always, would be capable of either good will or bad will; and despite the

“plentiful redemption,” man’s welfare here and hereafter would ever depend on the display of “good will.”

Yes, peace on earth and everlasting felicity in Heaven are the fruits of “good will”; unhappiness on earth and everlasting banishment from Heaven to the place “prepared for the devil and his angels” are the fruits of “bad will.”

Analyse any unsatisfactory situation or condition here on earth and you will discover that it is traceable to “bad will”—to the perversity contained in the attitude “I will not.”

What is the explanations of wars? Certainly “bad will.”

Why are there incessant conflicts between capital and labor? Certainly because of the absence of good will.

Why are not the nations, as during the Middle Ages, united in a happy family under the benign rule of Christ? Because of the bad will, which rebels against the authority of Christ.

Why has the unity of the Savior’s faith been broken with the consequent multiplication of sects? Because proud rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, opposed their wills to the will of Christ.

Why do governments antagonize religion generally in this “enlightened” age? Because their spirit is not different from that which incited leaders in Christ’s own day to declare “*we will not have this man rule over us.*”

Why are there skeptics and agnostics? Because of the bad will of those who *will not* honestly examine the credentials of Christianity.

Why are there so many indifferentists in relation to the things of the soul? Because many choose not to become interested.

Why do members of the modern sects turn a deaf ear to the convincing defense of the nineteen century-old Mother Church? Because prejudice of the mind begets *bad will*.

Why do one-time Catholics cease to practice their religion? Because they *will not* square their conduct with their beliefs.

Why are there sinners generally? Because people *will not* subordinate the temporal to the eternal, the concupiscences of the flesh to the yearnings of the spirit.

Even temporal success results from "good will"—from ambition, self-discipline, self-control. Similarly all temporal afflictions result from "bad will"—from hatred, envy, insubordination.

Eternal greatness results from the steady effort to conform one's life to the will of God. Eternal affliction must result from rebellion against God, or from such implied defiance as is contained in a life at variance with His will.

The lack of good will in the world might have been excusable before the coming of the Savior, as an inheritance from the original transgression of the proto-parent of the human race. But it has not been excusable from the first Christmas day down to this 1934th anniversary of that day.

(2) Reflect for a moment how the "Word made flesh," while dwelling among us, strove to teach the lesson of good will! See, as a Babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in the manger of the stable, Him Who had basked in glory indescribable, in bliss infinite. See Him during a life of thirty-three years deliberately depriving Himself of the very things for which the generality live—comforts, riches, pleasures. See Him embrace the very things from which the generality of people

shrink—privations, poverty, persecution, suffering. See Him weeping over Jerusalem, because she *would not* learn the things which were to her peace. See Him threatening to withdraw the divine favor from His nation and to deliver it to another because of bad will.

Listen to Him declare that the one, and only he or she, who doeth the will of His Father, is His mother, His sister, His brother, as later He proclaimed to all mankind that only he “that doeth the will of My Father Who is in Heaven, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” See Him prostrate in prayer in Gethsemane, repeating over and over the words: “Father, not My will but Thine be done,” as He had previously implored all His followers for all time to repeat daily: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

(3) If peace on earth be the aspiration of every individual, of every nation, and if its bestowal by Heaven be conditioned on “good will,” then the cultivation of good will must be the set purpose of all. Good will is another word for charity—charity, the promotion of which is the aim of every one of the Ten Commandments. The Ten are reducible to the two precepts which enforce love of God and love of neighbor—and love is the fulfillment of the entire law.

The true lover of God is at peace with God; the true lover of his neighbor is at peace with his neighbor. Love, “good will,” is the lesson of Christmas. Will you promise to learn it from Him Who left the angels above to personify it among sinners here below; from Him, Whose life, Whose death were built upon it; Whose Church, Whose Sacraments, Whose prayers at the right hand of the Father in glory, are occupied with its promotion?

Everywhere in the world there is a concerted clamor for “peace, peace,” but there will be no peace until there

will be a movement towards more love of God and more love of neighbor on earth.

Alas! the movement is quite pronounced in the opposite direction. Therefore, the world needs the prayers, the example, of all who are devoted to Jesus. It needs a definite crusade on the part of all Catholics for the cultivation of good will, the fruit of which will be peace and prosperity.

CONCLUSION: Please Bethlehem's Babe, the Prince of Peace, promised by the prophets, by resolving to cultivate more and more the spirit of good-will both towards God and your neighbor.

LAST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

A Sermon on Finances

The calendar year, 1934, is nearing its end. Practically every business man will measure its importance by the gains or losses he has sustained. Banks, insurance companies, municipalities, all lines of industry and business will balance their books and issue statements for the information of all interested parties.

Presidents of corporations will meet with their Boards of Directors to make observations on achievements accomplished, as indicated by the annual report, and to consider very seriously a plan and program for the year to follow.

There is a business side even to religion, which it is well for you to consider in its relation to (1) the local parish; (2) the Diocese of which it is a part; (3) the Church Universal.

(1) Every parish is a branch institution in a world-wide kingdom of Jesus Christ, the greatest, the most important and useful corporation on this globe. Under a Supreme Head, His Vicar, resident in the Eter-

nal City, God's business on earth is transacted. In order that it may function to the great advantage of every individual in every nation, the territory of the world is divided into some 1200 Diocesan Districts, and these in turn, into 50, or 100, or 500 local units. The 1200 Bishops must necessarily render an account of their stewardships to the Supreme Headquarters at regular intervals. In order that they may be able to do this the 200,000 pastors of the world must make annual reports to their respective Bishops.

These reports deal with the number of families and souls, with the number of schools and colleges and their enrollment, with baptisms, marriages, funerals, with conversions, parish societies and their activities, with a detailed account of revenue received and disbursed. Your pastor is obliged to prepare such a report for his Bishop immediately after the close of this year, and submit it to you as well. More than any agent of a worldly corporation, he is naturally interested, and you should be interested, in having a creditable report go out from your parish.

According to a divine plan you absolutely need the services of the priest, the services of a parish church; your children have an alienable right to a Christian education and, therefore, the parish school is needed; religious teachers are needed, and since the priest and the religious are human beings, they need to be housed, clothed and supported.

One of the Precepts of the Church demands the support of religion locally by those who receive its benefits, and because these benefits to each member are incalculable every Catholic should cheerfully assume his or her small part in meeting the cost of maintenance of the parish unit, including the interest on debts entailed by

building and the speediest possible amortization of the debt itself.

(2) The burden of educating the students preparing for the priesthood for any given diocese, must naturally be borne by the people of the diocese whom they will serve. The orphans, who come from families living within the diocese, must also be supported by the alms of the faithful throughout the diocese.

The Bishop is burdened, unfortunately for himself, but fortunately for the parishes, with the responsibility of all the properties of the diocese. They are held in the Bishop's name not for any benefit of his own, but to establish credit for all parishes, even the weakest ones. It is natural that the title to the property intended for religious use should be held by an ecclesiastic, and not by lay trustees. Of course, the Bishop himself holds the property only in trust or as a trustee, and, therefore, strictly speaking, it actually belongs to the people whom it serves, and who are expected to maintain it and be responsible for its debt. No diocese can be stronger than the sum total of its parishes; and diocesan assessments are figured so closely that there is little left after the expenses of diocesan institutions and obligations are met, for any other purpose. It is for this reason that contributions to the so-called diocesan collections should be generous. If a surplus resulted therefrom, the Bishop would use it to help the poorer parishes.

(3) The government of the Universal Church, as you might surmise, also calls for money, which must be supplied by the people universally. Once a year there is a collection taken up, throughout the world, to meet this need. In addition, the Faith must be propagated in pagan lands, in countries which once had it, but where it was almost destroyed by schism. To meet this need we have

the Propagation of the Faith for foreign missions and also an annual collection for the Missions.

In separate countries there are national religious needs, which must be supported by all Catholics of the country. In our country, for instance, there are the Catholic University at Washington, the work conducted among the Negroes and Indians, the missionary work which must be done in the west and southwest under the American Board of Catholic Missions.

CONCLUSION: This summary of the needs of religion might leave the impression that Catholics are expected to give exorbitantly to religion. As a matter of fact, when each wage-earner does his and her part, the burden is insignificant compared to other expenses which everyone has.

Most families pay more to the State through a gasoline tax alone than they do to the Church. The smoker of one package of cigarettes daily pays \$50.00 a year for that purpose. The money spent by young people for amusements and refreshments and candies would pay their church obligations several times over.

Let there be a proper order to things and sacrifices made by you in relation to the values received. There is nothing in all the world which is worth one-half as much to you as the benefits you receive from your parish; therefore, you should not even need a reminder to give according to your means for its maintenance as well as for the maintenance of the diocese of which it is a part. Be glad to give a mite to the Church Universal, whose machinery of government and whose 170,000 missionaries must be supported.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Your Sentiments at the Beginning of a New Year

The religious rite of Circumcision is not binding in the New Law. But since the feast of Christ's Circumcision synchronizes with the first day of every New Year, and since the counting of years anew began with the birth of Christ, it is quite natural that New Year's Day should be a holyday in the Calendar of the Church. It should be a self-imposed holyday as well, because of the serious reflections which it is calculated to arouse in us.

We are reminded (1) of the speedy flight of time; (2) of our waste and misuse of time; (3) of the value of time in relation to the eternity, which is so close by.

(1) Your Church, whose youth is so fresh in her memory, is 1900 years old—and how many institutions, long forgotten, have risen and disappeared since! How brief his length of days appears to the octogenarian, conscious of nearing his end! How swift the pace from the dawn of reason to graduation from high school and college, to marriage, to the marriage of one's children and children's children!

The average term of life is considerably under forty years. The strongest pass away without a warning. With your every heart beat there is a death. More than 30,000,000, or seventy every minute, were summoned into eternity last year and the number will not be smaller this year. Some of you will surely be taken, and likely those who least expect it. If everyone of you were included in the 30,000,000, who would note it outside this community?

A brief while ago the year 1934 was regarded as future, it is now completely buried in the past. At its beginning you were serious for a moment, reflected on

your mistakes of 1933, formulated a few resolutions calculated to make the New York more profitable to your soul. But that year was lived no better, if it was not actually lived worse, than the previous year.

(2) It is easy to calculate how much of your past life has been wasted, how much time was misused, and therefore became actually a detriment—though it was intended as a blessing. We divide the year into months, weeks, days. The business man who regards time as money takes the month as the measurement of progress. He compares his success during January and March, July and September of one year with that of the same months of the year, previous.

Created for eternity, as we are, time should be regarded as grace. In every moment of time there is the seed of eternal glory, just as in an original atom, according to leading scientists, there was a miniature universe, out of which the mighty heavenly bodies gradually grew. The eternity which will be ours is in process of formation right now. Killing time by sheer idleness, misusing it by harmful reading, by sinful recreation, by postponing repentance, by rejecting the many golden opportunities it offers for merit, is sure to create an ignoble eternity for us, where we shall be separated from God and everlastingly wish that we had never been born. Calculate the average amount of time you devote each day directly or indirectly to God, to your soul, to the performance of unselfish service to others.

(3) For most of us eternity is close at hand. Scarcely a person now living will be on earth in another century; most of you will be unremembered in a few short decades. As the young man goes to college the better to prepare himself for greater fullness of life here; as the father works laboriously to leave a pittance to his

children, so everyone should translate time into profit for his own eternal enjoyment.

Too many people hope to be able to end their life as did the penitent thief, not remembering that along with that sinner another, who had the same opportunity, went into eternity unrepentant. According to the experience of every priest people die as they have lived; those who live well die properly prepared, and those who live badly die unprepared. Sudden deaths constitute a very large proportion of all deaths, and, therefore, it should behoove every person to be ready for such a termination of his life here.

The thoughtlessness of Catholics is never brought home more forcibly than when we see them join the worldly in all night parties and even carousals "to see the old year out and the New Year in" and then attend New Year's Day Mass with less devotion and earnestness than they attend any other Mass of obligation.

CONCLUSION: Let us, in imitation of the saints who were the wisest of human beings, resolve to make better use of our time. Let us show hearts truly grateful to the Heavenly Father for preserving us through the past year when others were called from life at the rate of 100,000 a day. Let us implore His pardon for our sins, for our neglect of prayer, of the Sacraments, of numerous heavenly inspirations and graces, and resolve not only to merit His favor, but to grow from day to day in His love. Many saints vowed never to lose a moment of time, understanding that every moment properly consecrated to God, had immense purchasing power for the only goods worth while, namely, those that are eternal.

EPIPHANY

"We have seen His star in the East"—From the Gospel.

On the occasion of the birth of the God-man only a few persons were present. The good tidings of great joy announced by the angel were heard only by a few shepherds. Judea and the rest of the world must learn about it later. The Magi, following the guidance of the miraculous star, had started on the long journey to find "Him Who had been born King of the Jews," but they were not at Bethlehem on Christmas night.

Christ must be made manifest to the outside world. His mission must be revealed, His Divinity proved. The feast of the Epiphany was instituted to commemorate three important manifestations of the Godhead in Jesus. These are (1) the call of the Magi from the Orient; (2) the attestation of the Divinity of Jesus by the Heavenly Father on the occasion of His Baptism in the Jordan; (3) the great miracle Jesus wrought at Cana at the beginning of His public life.

(1) A tradition of long standing, and therefore quite deep-seated, had prevailed in the Orient, according to which a great world Liberator of Jewish origin, would appear about this time. Three wise-men, believed to be rulers or kings in their respective countries, read in Bethlehem's miraculous star both the announcement of His coming and a call to go and pay Him homage. It is likely that the unusual luminary attracted the attention of many thousands of people, who did not take the trouble to interpret its meaning, much less to start out on a long uncertain journey in search of the One, Whose coming into the world it heralded.

The story of their journey to Jerusalem, their ex-

perience with King Herod, their arrival at Bethlehem, their adoration of the divine Babe, and presentation of gifts, the admonition of the angel to return home over a different route, because of Herod's jealousy, is beautifully told in today's gospel. The call of the Star and the recognition of the divinity of Jesus by the Magi is known as the *Epiphania* or Manifestation, and this feast honors in Christ, what Simeon had in mind when he called Him "light unto the revelation of the Gentiles."

From the Magi we should all learn the lesson of heeding the light of faith, which shines more or less brightly before all intellects, but which fails to move many either to investigate or to pray. From the Magi Catholics should learn to heed and to follow the inspiration and call of actual graces, so often inviting us to come and adore, and to do good.

(2) You recall that Jesus, before He began His public life, spent forty days in the desert in fasting and prayer, and that immediately thereafter He allowed Himself to be baptized by St. John in the river Jordan. On that occasion many people were prepared to believe that the Messiah was on earth, because St. John, who himself was mistaken for the Messiah, told them that he was only the forerunner of the great One Whom they expected, "the latchet of whose shoe he was unworthy to loose."

The Heavenly Father took this occasion to proclaim in a most forcible and miraculous way the divinity of Jesus, by uttering from beyond the clouds the solemn declaration: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." This is also commemorated on the feast of the Epiphany as a certain manifestation of the character and mission of our divine Savior.

On still another occasion, namely, the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Thabor in the presence of only

Peter, James, and John, His favorite Apostles, and of Moses and Elias, who had been the great teachers in the Old Law, now come to an end, the Heavenly Father gave testimony to the divinity of His Son in the same words.

(3) Christ made His first public appearance, following His Baptism by St. John, at a wedding performed at Cana, only a few miles from Nazareth. Jesus, His Blessed Mother, and some of His disciples were invited to that wedding. On this occasion Jesus worked His first miracle which astounded all the guests, and He worked it at the request of Mary.

This is the third event, the third public manifestation of Christ's divinity, commemorated on the feast of the Epiphany.

In accepting an invitation to the marriage at Cana Christ intended to convey a very important lesson, namely, that marriage is something very sacred, an institution of Almighty God Himself, which He, the Founder of the new world-wide religion, intended to elevate to the divinity of a Sacrament. He accepted the invitation also because he wanted to impress on people for all time that God craves to be invited to every marriage in order that He might bless it, and through such blessing make it happy and conducive to the sanctification both of the couple who become united for life and of the children with whom the marriage may be blessed.

CONCLUSION: The divinity of Christ is the fundamental teaching of Christianity; hence it is easy to understand why the world was given such forcible evidence of that divinity for all who are willing to consider it.

We, who so sincerely believe that in the person of Jesus were united both the divine and human nature, should be proud to confess and to declare it. In helping to instruct non-Catholics our first step should be to as-

certain just what they believe about Christ. Many who speak reverently about Him, who quote His words and who pretend to follow Him, have not the same concept concerning Him which we have. Everything rests on the divinity of Christ and, therefore, on the divinity of the Church which He established. These two truths, being accepted, every teaching of our faith must commend itself to the person who uses his intellect.

HOLY NAME

“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow”—

On this second Sunday of January the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, which actually falls on January second, is usually observed for the benefit of the members of the Holy Name Society.

“His name shall be called Jesus” said the angel to both Mary and Joseph, because that name expressed His principal mission in this world, viz: “to save the people from their sins.” You were taught by the little Catechism that the name Jesus means “Savior,” as the name Christ means “the anointed” of God.

Clear lessons taught by this feast, as by the feast of the Circumcision which we recently observed, are (1) that every follower of Jesus should bear a Christian name; (2) that the greatest reverence should be shown to the name of Jesus, to that of His Heavenly Father and to all persons and things sacred; and (3) that profane language and cursing are sinful as well as unbecoming.

(1) A Christian should certainly bear a Christian name. If a Christian be a citizen of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, why should he be named after a pagan, or one who was alien to Christ? If there be anything in a name, why not select a name for your child judiciously,

a name which was borne by a devoted lover or soldier of Jesus?

It is often asked "What is there in a name"? Almighty God gave a great deal of importance to a name. He not only sent an angel both to Mary and Joseph to apprise them of the name which His divine Son was to bear, but St. John the Baptist was named before his birth. Christ changed the name of Simon to Peter; the name of Saul was changed to Paul. Practically every scriptural name in the Old Law had a significant meaning.

How many of you who have Christian names know anything about your patrons? How many of you pray to him or her, or try to take inspiration from his or her example?

(2) St. Peter stipulated the reverence which is due the name of Jesus when he declared: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth." If Jesus is God He is infinitely superior to the angels in Heaven and to all men on earth, and His greatness, His majesty, His holiness, should be so recognized.

If we had no other argument for the existence of Satan, the arch-enemy of God, we would have it in the brazen irreverence towards the Holy Name on the part of so many people, who use the name of God and of Jesus as a by-word, who not only take these names in vain, but use them in anger, in cursing, in blasphemy.

The purpose of the Holy Name Society, to which most Catholic men now belong, is to cultivate and promote reverence not only for the Holy Name of Jesus, but for His religion and everything sacred. That is why Holy Name members obligate themselves to attend Sunday Mass regularly and by a public Holy Communion to

give public evidence of their condemnation of everything unclean, particularly of uncleanness in speech. By this act they edify one another and set an example of clean living and cleanliness in conversation to their children. Every man, young and old, should be a member of the Holy Name Society, be proud of such membership and be willing to show this pride by participation in public Holy Name demonstrations and by unfailing regularity in going to Holy Communion with other members on the Sunday of each month assigned to them.

(3) There is no habit so detestable as that of cursing and profane language. It is the language of hell, of the devils who are represented in Holy Scripture as hating Almighty God and, therefore, of hating and cursing all persons and things closely related to Him.

Holy Scripture tells us that to him who curses will come a curse, just as to him who blesses will come a blessing. It is, therefore, a very risky thing to curse at all, and a greater risk to contract a habit of cursing.

But could anyone addicted to this habit offer even the semblance of a good reason for it? Besides being sinful it is an exhibition of bad taste. It is never used in polite society; it is seldom used in print; it may no longer be used by those who appear in the movies. St. James calls our attention to the fact that the tongue is the greatest offender against the law of God. It is given to untruthfulness, detraction, slander, immoral talk, and is always employed during anger. But contemplate what an offender the tongue is in the person who uses profane language and cursing many times during the day when there is absolutely no provocation.

Everyone of us is destined to sing the praises of God with the angels for all eternity. How ill-fitted for this glorification of God is the tongue of the one who is

ever occupied in the very opposite direction here on earth! Most fathers who use profane language are responsible before God for the habit which is quite naturally copied by children.

Thanks to the Holy Name Society this vicious practice has been almost discontinued among Catholics!

CONCLUSION: Holy Scripture represents that the sinner will be tormented in the other world particularly in the members which were instruments of his sins. Considering that the power of speech is a blessing which might have been withheld from us as it is withheld from a great many, it should never be employed in sin; it should never be abused. Through it we should edify others, encourage them to do good; through it we should engage in prayer and in the praise of God and His works.

Even people who are not addicted to the habit of cursing and profane language should be members of the Holy Name Society to assert their protest against an evil which is shameful, disgusting, and an offense to Christian ears.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

—January 20th

“And Jesus also was invited to the marriage”—From the Gospel.

Two weeks ago we referred to the miracle worked by Jesus at Cana as one of three manifestations of His Divinity honored on the feast of the Epiphany. Today the gospel relates that miracle, but to us who know that it was exceedingly easy for Jesus to change water into wine or bread into His own living body, it is not so much the miracle as His acceptance of an invitation to a wedding that impresses us and teaches important lessons.

Among these lessons three are outstanding. These

are (1) that God is intensely interested in every wedding; (2) that He wants an invitation to come and bless the marriage; and (3) that He cannot accept an invitation to a marriage of which He does not approve.

(1) The average person who enters the marriage state acts as though Almighty God can have no interest in it. He seldom prays for a blessing on his marriage; usually is not careful to win such a blessing during the period of courtship; and leaves his Creator, whence all blessings must flow, entirely out of his calculations.

Should it not be clear that Almighty God must be intensely interested in the marriage of every couple because so much is dependent on it? From it results either a Christian or a non-Christian home and family; future members of the Church and future citizens of the country—in fact, candidates for Heaven, everyone of whom has a right and an obligation to know, love and serve his Maker.

Holy Scripture lays great emphasis on the fact that God Himself performed the first marriage ceremony and, therefore, is the Author of the solemn contract. It lays emphasis on the fact that Christ ennobled this contract when He raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament; that the contract binds both parties until death; and that unfaithfulness is one of the most heinous of sins. If God calls most people to embrace the state of matrimony evidently He is interested, and if the parties to the prospective life-long contract will only make themselves deserving of it, He will have a generous blessing for them which will endure throughout life.

(2) St. Augustine tells us that all Christ's acts were actually precepts; in other words, they contained lessons for us to learn, if not commandments for us to follow. When He accepted an invitation from the young

couple who were to be married at Cana, near His own home, Nazareth, He thought of having recorded for all time the lesson that marriage is a serious affair to be prepared for seriously, by cultivating the interest of Almighty God, and that it should be a religious function during which the blessing of God should be imparted.

In the religion Jesus was about to establish marriage would be one of seven Sacraments, carrying with it a very special sacramental grace, which would offer support to the wedded pair in trials and difficulties, and make it easier for them to sanctify themselves in their sacred vocation.

The Catholic Church, imitating her Founder, makes a great deal of marriage. She unites the couple before the very altar; interrupts the Mass during its most solemn part, in order to implore Jesus there present, to bless the union as He blessed the union of the Cana couple, to prolong the life of the wedded pair, to make it happy with good children.

(3) Marriages known as "mixed" are those between a Catholic and non-Catholic. They have never had the approval of the Church, just as mixed marriages never had the approval of Almighty God in the Old Law. In fact, they were most strictly forbidden among the Jewish people, who belonged to the true faith at that time.

Mixed marriages can only be tolerated, and the Church has no special blessing for them because they are not usually blessed by God.

There can be no union closer than a union of souls by the profession of the same faith which, in turn, enables the married couple consistently to rear their offspring in the same faith.

The soul has value in God's eyes only when it pos-

sesses His grace or lives in a supernatural state. An unbaptized person does not possess this state of grace, and even a baptized adult who has never had the benefit of the Sacrament of Penance, does not likely possess it. In God's eyes, therefore, a mixed-marriage lacks the beautiful union of souls as He loves to note. If husband and wife entertain entirely different views about God, about the terms of salvation, their house is divided against itself, usually with disastrous consequences to the children.

CONCLUSION: Parents should consecrate their young children to Almighty God and beg of Him to guide and direct them through life. The children themselves should pray for direction in the matter of their vocation, and if their destiny be marriage, God will lead them to the right partner at the right time. It is, of course, assumed that the young who thus pray will so live as to merit such consideration from Heaven.

Since it is always much easier to convert a prospective husband or wife before marriage than after, and since a richer blessing will accompany the marriage if it be between two people professing the faith so dear to God, every Catholic who is keeping company with a non-Catholic should make clear his stand on this matter before any consent to marriage is given.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Press Sunday—January 27th

"It is the sacred duty of every Catholic to support the Catholic Press"—Pope Pius XI.

Once a year on a Sunday close to the feast of St. Francis de Sales (January 29th), whom Pope Pius XI designated the heavenly patron of the Catholic Press, the priest is expected to preach a sermon on the need of

Catholic literature in the home, and more especially on the duty incumbent on every family to subscribe to and read an instructive Catholic paper. Every good Catholic parent seems to recognize this need, but the indifferent Catholic parent does not; yet surely the indifferent need the Catholic paper far more than the fervent.

Every reason you might allege for reading secular papers or magazines has far greater force when applied to the religious press. To justify your daily reading of the secular paper you allege (1) I must know what is going on in the world; (2) I must continue my school education by reading; (3) I must be able to discuss problems of the day. Now let us apply these same principles to the world of religion and morals.

(1) You say you read the secular press because you must know what is going on in the world. But the secular press tells you what is going on only in the way of crime and politics. It does not bring to you even a good thought, much less stimulate you to good action. Nor does the secular press carry a report of the good deeds performed by individuals and by groups the day before. It speaks to you about broken homes, but not about the happiness which is in many other homes. It carries to you many stories about irreligion, but little about religion. It carries many a misrepresentation of religious teaching, but no refutation thereof. The secular press has never told the full truth about the persecution of the Church in Mexico; it has repeatedly misrepresented the situation in Spain or in Italy.

But if the secular press truly reported what was going on in the secular world, why would there not be an equally valid reason for you to read the Catholic paper in order to know what is going on in the Catholic world? The Catholic world is a very wide world. It comprises

most of the population of Europe, of South America, and its membership is larger even in Asia and Africa than that of any other religious organization. The record of important Catholic happenings, with which you should be acquainted, would fill as many pages once a week as is devoted to the secular news in the average city daily. The word Catholic, as you know, means universal; to be a Catholic, therefore, means to belong to a world religion. No Catholic should be satisfied to have acquaintance only with the religious happenings nearby.

(2) He who says he must continue his school education by further reading utters a truth, for school education does nothing more than lay a foundation on which one must continue to build, and few there are who do not continue to do considerable reading after leaving school. It is the very demand of people for further secular literature which has led to the publication of thousands of monthly and weekly magazines, to books and pamphlets of all kinds.

But on the same theory should not every Catholic try to continue his religious education by further reading? The full import of most of the truth taught in the little Catechism to the child is not grasped until its mind is more mature. That is why numerous books and pamphlets are published which are devoted to Catholic teaching and practices, to Catholic social and ethical problems; that is why a Catholic paper, full of instruction, is offered to you Sunday after Sunday as you leave the church.

Every Catholic is expected to be a soldier of Christ, and, therefore, a Catholic of action. One cannot consistently be an expounder or defender of the faith without studying his religion more thoroughly than he learned it in school, without keeping in touch with interpreta-

tions of Catholic principles to meet the social trends of the times.

(3) It is true that you should be familiar with the material problems of the day, and would that you could be familiar with their solution. But the minds of those who have always been regarded as experts in finance, in industry, in business, in economics, and government, are so much at variance today that even those who are intensely interested in learning how to speak on these problems, are woefully confused.

Again, if you long to be able to discuss the secular problems of the day, should you not be at least equally desirous of being able to discuss the religious problems of the day? No one can properly discuss religious problems except the Catholic, because he is the only one who is not confused. There is just as much chaos in the religious world as in the economic world. Everyone proposes to have opinions about religion, but each is in conflict with the other. It should be clear to all that an authority is needed for the determination of what is in accordance with the mind of God, yet no Church but the Catholic pretends to speak with authority, pretends to have the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit.

Religious matters are the very things which every Catholic should be able to discuss accurately. But this naturally supposes that they be informed accurately concerning the teaching of their Church, the reason for the practices of their Church, concerning the standards of their Church by which social and moral problems must be settled. Social Justice is probably the greatest need of our day, but no other Church except the Catholic has a constructive social justice program.

Evidently, therefore, every Catholic has much to study, should be eager to study, is obliged to study, and

could do a great deal for others if he were properly informed.

CONCLUSION: Do not, therefore, regard a subscription to the Catholic paper as merely a good thing. It is a necessary thing. Do not regard the study of your religion as a private need, but as a public need. It is the indifference of the generality of the Catholic people in these matters which prevents the Church from becoming properly known. She is now known only as she is caricatured by our enemies, and in that picture she is anything but attractive.

Even in these days of small incomes no parent is justified in offering the "I cannot afford it" excuse for not taking the Catholic paper. At most it will cost two cents a week. The people who offer this excuse pay ten cents for the Sunday edition of any city paper.

Resolve to receive the Catholic paper regularly, to read it yourself and have your children read it. The fifty-two small installments of instruction and information will profit the family immensely, even though unconsciously.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

"And behold, a great tempest arose in the sea"—
From the Gospel.

Probably never before was the world at large so agitated by the raging storms provoked by Materialism, Communism, and the disagreements between Capital and Labor; and never before was the well-minded individual so battered by storms of temptations, both from within and without.

Trials and tribulations, sufferings and temptations, are a consequence of the original rebellion of mankind's

protoparent against God; and despite the Redemption by the Divine Savior these are still permitted and often actually sent by the Heavenly Father for the spiritual good of their victims.

Let us consider what faith teaches (1) about temporal evils; (2) about temptations; and (3) about the ability of man to profit by them.

(1) The natural must always be related to the supernatural. The solution of every difficulty we encounter in this world, the explanation of all material riddles is possible by the application of the principles of faith.

If "by one man sin came into the world and by sin death," it is easy to understand that all lesser things, such as sickness and suffering and trails, the strifes between individuals, and wars between nations, pestilences, famines, must also be traceable the same cause. When man rebelled against his Creator, everything over which man was supposed to be master, became rebellious against him.

Adversities were intended to bring people closer to God, and during the ages of greater faith they always did. Reports from various countries, at the present time, indicate that the present distress throughout the world has had that effect wherever people would not permit themselves to be influenced by the apostles of irreligion. The depression is probably lasting so long because it has not yet had the effect, in a spiritual way, that the Almighty intended that it should have.

The Prodigal Son offers an example of how the individual, straying from God and giving himself up to various excesses, is brought to his senses by adversity. When Holy Scripture reminds us that "God chastiseth

whom He loveth," it lays down a general principle followed by Almighty God, Who would not have people become too closely wedded to the things of this world.

(2) Knowing of the little religion which most of our non-Catholic countrymen have, we are certain that they must be subject to vehement temptations against faith, to which Catholics should not be subject at all.

The truths which we accept by faith are not any more difficult to believe than many truths which we accept on the authority of science, not more difficult to comprehend than the dozen facts which are daily before our eyes, electricity, for instance, or the marvels of the radio.

But the one who has never had instruction in religion, who has never been taught that Almighty God made a definite revelation and committed its interpretation to an institution which He Himself founded, has no good grounds for believing supernatural truths, and, therefore, must easily succumb to the attacks on Christian faith which appear in our day in so much current literature.

But the more dangerous temptations are of a moral nature, the inward ones being provoked by the numerous outward ones, which everybody confronts daily. Not only did the people of the last generation have no motion pictures which catered to their lower instincts, but they dressed differently, their recreation was more innocent, their courtships were more guarded, and the vast majority of the people followed higher moral standards. The Catholic is inwardly agitated far more than the non-Catholic in relation to these matters because his conscience was trained differently, because he was taught of the beauty of divine grace which he must try to preserve in his soul, of his greater nearness to God, not only be-

cause of the possession of grace but because of the frequent visits of Almighty God to his very soul.

The Catholic believes that the devil, the arch-enemy of God, envious of his favor with God, is busily engaged in an effort to sever his allegiance from God. Holy Scripture represents the evil one as our "adversary, going about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." It represents that our conflict here on earth is not altogether against "flesh and blood," that is against our inward inclinations and temptations provoked by other people, but also "against the spirits of wickedness in high places."

To encourage us not to falter on this account, our Divine Savior allowed Himself to be tempted by the devil, and St. Paul assures us that when he felt discouraged under severe temptations, the Lord told him that His grace was sufficient for him.

(3) No one was more severely tried than Job, who never lost confidence in God, who blessed the name of God amid most extraordinary trials and sufferings. In the lives of the saints we read of numerous instances of those who were striving for perfection actually praying to Almighty God to send them suffering and trials, realizing, as they did, that the patient endurance of affliction for love of Him Who suffered so much for them, was probably the greatest means of merit for that interminable life with God in another world, which they craved.

Even in the Old Testament God dealt with His favorites ones similarly. He directed Abraham to leave his country; he commanded Jacob to immolate his son Isaac; he allowed Joseph to be sold into Egypt by his very brothers; deprived Moses of the happiness of enter-

ing the promised land, after he had spent forty years on the journey thereto.

See what trials and persecutions the Apostles endured; the fidelity that Almighty God required of the first Christians, over whose heads the sentence of death hung constantly. St. Paul assures followers of Christ for all time that "the tribulations of this life work for us above measure, exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory."

We, therefore, who try to shirk affliction, who are so impatient in suffering, who are given so little to the practice of mortification and self-denial and sacrifice, need to have our faith enlivened. We should learn to place value only on eternal things, to turn into supernatural merit all our trials in this life; and also learn to make speedy use of every actual grace offered us for the purpose of combating temptations, whether they proceed from our hearts, from our passions, or from without.

CONCLUSION: In order to merit for Heaven we must live in the state of grace. It is this state of grace, of which the devil seeks to deprive us by all his snares and temptations. Try, therefore, to be grace-conscious, so that you will never surrender grace for the momentary satisfaction you might have from any natural or carnal pleasure. If you be grace-conscious, you will, like the man who is money-conscious, be ever eager to have more of it, and, therefore, you will not try to shirk trials, and will learn to keep your lower appetites in submission.

Protestants derive a great deal of comfort from the Twenty-second Psalm (the Twenty-third in the Protestant Bible) which opens with the words "The Lord ruleth me, I shall want nothing." That Psalm should offer even more comfort to us, who understand the supernatural so much better than non-Catholics do.

SEPTUAGESIMA

"I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty"—From the Epistle.

These words of St. Paul harmonize well with the advice of St. Peter: "Brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election"—II Peter I, 10.

St. Peter tells us that we can make sure our election to the heavenly honors and treasures for which we are candidates—but he reminds us that it requires hard work. "Labor the more," he exhorts.

We candidates for Heaven can learn how to win our election (1) from the zeal of the candidate for a political office; (2) from the example of St. Paul contained in today's epistle; and (3) from the misconduct of the generality of people.

(1) You have often observed how the candidate for a political office works for his election. He loses no time, spares no labor, in order to better his prospects. He studies how to gain influence here, how to remove obstacles there; he consults with his friends; his first thoughts in the morning and his last thoughts at night are about "his chances." Yet after all his arduous work, after time carefully employed and perhaps money profusely spent, he may not attain his heart's desire.

Such is a sample of the daily struggle which worldly men wage for worldly honors and worldly goods. If men can be so attracted by the uncertain, empty, passing honors and goods of this world; if they can set their whole hearts and souls on the attainment of such shadows, how irresistibly ought we to be impelled to "labor the more" for the high honors and priceless eternal treasures that "God hath prepared for those who love Him"?

A superficial glance at the conduct of the generality of people makes it plain that very few are working half as hard to become chosen ones for Heaven as men work for an office here on earth; and therefore the truth of Christ's words uttered on two occasions, becomes evident—namely, that of all called "only few are chosen"; and the truth of St. Paul's words, which tell us that all who enter the race by no means win the heavenly prize.

From the enthusiasm he displays and from the earnestness of his efforts to be elected we say that the political candidate "runs" for office. St. Paul uses the same figure of speech to express how deeply interested we should be in the great affair of our salvation; he says we must run, and run hard, for the heavenly prize: "So run that you may obtain."

(2) Then, in order that no one may be too confident of success, this great Apostle, though called a "vessel of election," tells us how he himself runs lest even he might not win. "I run," he says, "not as at an uncertainty; I chastise my body and keep it under subjection." Do you do as much? If all people kept their bodies under subjection, their chances for Heaven would be good. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." You resolve to pray, your body protests; you decide to fast, your body objects. It is your body that wants sinful pleasure, that wants comfort and ease, that objects to fast, to kneel in prayer, to walk to church. Yet do most people chastise their bodies? Do they not rather pamper their bodies? Such will not win.

Considering that Heaven is the greatest gift within the power of God to bestow, it is worth our greatest efforts. If every movement of our lives, if our every act, our every word, were devoted to its attainment, we would be getting Heaven at a low price.

Here is the case then: I am a candidate for Heaven, I can become one of the chosen ones, but unless I take more interest in the work, unless I do more for God and for my soul than the generality of people, I shall not win.

Seeing such bad example on all sides, even we Catholics lose sight of a great truth, which ought always to be uppermost in our minds. It is this: the years we live here are given us for no other purpose than to prepare for ourselves a happy life with God after death.

How many years have you lived? If your chances to become a chosen one were to depend on the years you have lived, do you think you would win? Have you not lost and misused much precious time, many golden opportunities, put many obstacles in your own way? And how many years will still be given you to make certain your election? This may be your last. During the past year the time expired for over 31,000,000 of those called to heavenly honors. How many of them became "chosen ones"?

Enter the race in earnest today; "so run that you may obtain", "labor the more that by good works, you may make sure you calling and election." To win you must be on the "narrow way"; you must run perseveringly; you must win by good works, by sound faith, only after many tribulations, by chastising your body.

(3) Who are sure not to win? St. Paul mentions some. He says Heaven is not for the adulterer, not for the fornicator, not for the unjust, not for the curser, not for the drunkard. It is just as surely not for the Sunday-Mass-misser, not for the Friday meat-eater, in general not for anyone who refuses to comply with God's requirements.

Heaven is offered as a reward for service, and not

as a gift except to baptized infants; much less is it offered in return for misconduct.

It is true that "God will have all men to be saved." Bethlehem, Gethsemane, the Cross, Calvary make this fact plain. As far as God is concerned, He has mapped out the way whereby people may "make sure their election." He offers all the help they need, but He has made the attainment of Heaven to depend largely on their will. If they lose, it is because they are unwilling to comply with His will. His will might be expressed thus: "Keep My Commandments and be a faithful member of My Church."

We hear many say, "I believe that if one does what is right, he will be saved." This is true, but is a person doing what is right unless he does what God requires him to do? And God demands that he be a member of His Church and observe the Commandments. This is the only way to Heaven for anyone who knows where the true Church is; this is the only way for a Catholic to "make sure his election."

CONCLUSION: A person who does not benefit the world by his life, usually benefits it by his death; for one who lives to no purpose lives to a bad purpose. Take hold of the present opportunities, use the present graces.

Looking back on the years that have passed, how consoling it would be, at the close of your life, to feel that you had lived not for passion, appetite and the empty pleasures of the world, but for your soul, for God, for the happiness of Heaven, which would be yours to enjoy with angels in that "Paradise of Delights."

SERMON FOR SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

(This sermon may be read to the people)

Since Pope Pius X, known as the "Pope of the Missions", ordered all Bishops of the world, even those who rule over Mission territory, to have the Society for the Propagation of the Faith organized in every parish, it is important that you, who are requested to become members, should know something about (1) its purpose; (2) its needs in foreign lands; (3) its needs in our own country.

(1) The purpose of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for Foreign Missions is to promote the sowing of the seeds of faith in pagan lands, and to assist newly-received converts in establishing their centers of worship. To this end it seeks to enroll "all followers of the Catholic and Apostolic faith", who will pool their daily prayers that Christ's "Kingdom may come", and become sharers in the merits of the many thousands of missionaries by contributing a mite each year toward their support.

The magnitude of the missionary field is astonishing. It embraces whole continents and a thousand islands in the sea, housing more than a thousand million "creatures" to each of which the gospel must be preached. In the year 1930 there were 477 mission territories, 130 of which had been erected during the first eight years of the pontificate of the present gloriously reigning Pope.

In these mission fields the "laborers" seem not to be "few", numbering as they do at present, 18,028 priests, 8,755 Brothers, 50,939 Sisters, 74,147 Catechists, 62,018 teachers, 20,196 helpers, 250 physicians, 850 nurses—a grand total of 215,000 men and women—who are "spending themselves and being spent" for the salvation of

“other sheep” still bound by the shackles of heathenism and paganism.

Four years ago there were in these mission areas, 1,609 orphanages, sheltering 76,582 children; 667 hospitals, in which 24,382 cases were handled; 2,222 dispensaries, in which 15,538,702 sick people were treated.

The total number of Catholics in missions under the Propaganda is about 14,000,000, served from 46,000 churches and chapels—more than twice the number existing in the United States.

Founded at Lyons, France, in 1882, this Society maintained its headquarters there until 1922, when the general offices were transferred to Rome, where they properly belonged after the Supreme Shepherd of Christ's entire flock decided to designate it the official and best suited Pontifical agency for the collection of mission funds. In Rome the Holy Father has that contact with the Society which is needed for judicious counsel and administration.

In a special *Motu Proprio* entitled “ROMANORUM PONTIFICUM”, Pius XI, in the first year of his pontificate, announced his purpose to the entire Christian world, and besought all his brethern in the hierarchy even those in mission territories, to establish branches of the Society in their respective dioceses. He said:

“The Society for the Propagation of the Faith will be the instrument in the hands of the Holy See for the collection everywhere of the alms of the faithful and their distribution among all Catholic Missions.

So pleasing is this Society to our heart that to all who are enrolled in it we willingly open the heavenly treasures of the Church of which it has

pleased the Most High to constitute us the dispensers."

What a consolation to the "Pope of the Missions" to note that conversions in heathen lands have numbered almost 1,000,000 per year during His pontificate! He has seen 5,000 priest-workers added to the teaching apostolate, of whom more than 1,000 are natives; has witnessed the establishment of 150 minor seminaries; has induced some 20 more societies of men, and some 130 more societies of women to assume foreign mission obligations.

(2) In China, where 440,000,000 live, there are some 9,000 missionary workers, who, last year, received into the Church 69,000 members. The latest report shows China to harbor 2,624,000 Catholics, or one to each one hundred seventy non-Catholics.

China received last year from the Propagation of the Faith fund \$780,923.08, or 22.5% of the total, representing an average allocation of \$87.00 per missionary.

In Russia, included among the Near East Missions, there are about 1,550,000, who would practice the Catholic religion if they had the opportunity. This means about one to every hundred of the population.

One can readily surmise how great became the problem of supporting the missions following the World War. The people of the impoverished nations of Europe, themselves objects of charity, could give little. The United States, which played the role of Santa Claus in numerous ways to most of the world during the long reconstruction period was called on to carry a bigger portion of the burden of the missions. The Holy Father was not disappointed at the response to his plea that in every diocese under the Stars and Stripes the Pontifical Mission Society be organized.

While an analysis will disclose a ridiculously small

per capita contribution from American Catholics during the boom years between 1925 and 1930, yet the sum total dispatched to Rome prevented such a treasury deficit as would have spelled catastrophe. Then came the industrial depression, which dealt a harder blow to ours than to any other nation. Our collections became smaller, memberships in the Pontifical Society were not renewed, Mass intentions declined. The result—all missionaries, foreign and native, have, during the past four years, labored under the handicap of inadequate support.

Recalling that the early Church in the United States was one of the first beneficiaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, that the alms on which the French and Spanish missionaries depended for the spread of the Gospel among our aborigines were European alms contributed to the tune of \$7,000,000.00, and dispensed through this Society, Foreign Missions should have a strong appeal to the Catholics of this country. On the principle "return of the favor" American Catholics should catch the mission spirit—even if to assist in bringing the Faith to others were not the best way of showing one's appreciation for having previously received it.

(3) There is probably a greater percentage of paganism in the United States today than there has been at any time in its history. More than 70,000,000 of our total population are unattached to any religious organization. Millions, who claim affiliation with the churches, have never received the Sacrament of Baptism, and are, therefore, in Catholic eyes, pagans. There are some states in our country in which Catholics bear a smaller ratio to non-Catholics than Catholics in China bear to the total population; several more in which the relative proportion is smaller than in India; and many in which the proportionate strength is far below that of Africa.

The unevenness of Catholic distribution over our forty-eight states is actually remarkable. From the proportion of one Catholic to one non-Catholic in Rhode Island, of two Catholics to five non-Catholics in Massachusetts and Connecticut, of one Catholic to four non-Catholics in Illinois, of one Catholic to six non-Catholics in Ohio, of one Catholic to nine non-Catholics in Indiana, the ratio widens until we find less than one Catholic to one hundred non-Catholics throughout many of the southern and some of the western states, one Catholic to three hundred non-Catholics in Georgia, and one Catholic to three hundred and seventy non-Catholics in North Carolina.

The Diocese of Brooklyn, confined within 1,000 square miles, has more than 1,000,000 Catholics, or 1,000 Catholics to the square mile. Within its 1,100 square mile area the Providence Diocese counts more than 800,000 Catholics.

Contrast the Catholic strength in these dioceses with that of most episcopal jurisdictions of the west and south and you will better grasp what we mean when we say that the Catholic population of the United States is as unevenly distributed as the Catholic population of foreign mission lands. Baker City, for instance, counts 9,000 Catholics in an area of 68,000 square miles, or one Catholic to every $7\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Reno has 9,000 Catholics scattered over 111,000 square miles, or one Catholic to every $12\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Boise and Salt Lake City have one Catholic to every $4\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Cheyenne, one Catholic to every 4 square miles; Montana has one Catholic to every 2 square miles; the States of Tennessee and Mississippi have one Catholic to every $11\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Charleston has one Catholic to every 3 square miles; Raleigh has one Catholic to every $5\frac{1}{2}$ square miles; Florida has one Catholic to each square mile.

But think of Alaska, which is territory under the American Board of Catholic Missions, having only 10,000 Catholics in an area of 586,000 square miles,—territory twelve times the side of the State of New York—or one Catholic to every 58 square miles.

With so much foreign mission territory on our own continent, closed to all assistance from the Society for Foreign Missions, we are not at all surprised that, some twelve years ago, several mission-minded Bishops of the United States met and deliberated on a plan for systematic support of missions both at home and abroad by joint effort. They did devise a plan which, after being proposed to the hierarchical body assembled at annual meeting in Washington in the year 1923, was there formally adopted, and then presented to the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, for the approval which followed.

The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, the Bureau of American Colored Missions, and the Catholic Church Extension Society were expected to supply our home needs, but because their own regulations in relation to the distribution of funds prevented sufficient assistance for either the spread or preservation of the Faith in most of the dioceses in the south and west, the arrangement effected with the Holy See whereby American Catholics could have affiliation with a joint Society for the support of missions, both home and foreign, was sorely needed.

The Organization which provides a joint membership in the society for both Home and Foreign Missions is officially known as The Society for the Propagation of the Faith for Home and Foreign Missions.

The annual membership dues are \$1.00, the Foreign Missions receiving 60c, the Home Missions, 40c.

In addition to the membership dues Pope Pius requires that an annual collection be arranged for the Missions generally, and has designated the third Sunday of October "Mission Sunday". On this day people, who can well afford to give more than \$1.00 the year to the Missions, and those who do not hold membership in the Society, have an opportunity to make a helpful contribution. This collection, the same as membership dues, is divided in the ratio of sixty-forty, and remitted respectively to the National Offices mentioned above. But fifteen per cent. of the sixty per cent. portion of the Mission Sunday collection, forwarded to the National Director of Foreign Missions, is transferred by him to the National Director of the Near East Association.

The fund resulting from forty per cent. of all annual memberships and of the annual church collection is divided once a year among Bishops to whom "Mission territory" in the several countries under the American flag is committed; therefore, not only principally among the Bishops who rule over the dioceses in the south and west and northwest of the United States, but among the Bishops and Prefects Apostolic of Porto Rico, Hawaii, Alaska, and the Philippine Islands.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is more richly indulged than any other Society or Organization—this as an inducement to stimulate general interest in the Mission movement so close to the heart of the Supreme Pontiff, and so dear to Christ, Who would have His gospel preached "to every creature" in all nations.

During the season of Lent every adult Catholic will have an opportunity, from self-denial savings to join or renew his membership in the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. This dollar as well as the dollar for OUR

SUNDAY VISITOR may be paid in installments of 30c a week during Lent.

QUINGUAGESIMA

Lent and Its Demands.

(Including Lenten Regulations.)

Although the Commandments of God and of His Church must be faithfully observed at all times, and the things of the soul must always command far more attention than the things of the body, and one's welfare in eternity must have precedence in one's thoughts over one's welfare in this life, people are expected to be far more spiritual-minded during the season of Lent.

Lent is a season of forty days, during which the Church rallies all her people together to call them to their senses, to have them take an inventory of their accounts with God, to do penance for their past wrong-doing, and to form earnest resolutions of amendment.

Today I can speak only briefly (1) on the significance of Lent; (2) the spirit of Lent; and (3) the Lenten demands of the Church.

(1) Forty days, and not a shorter or longer period of time, has been set aside for penance and prayer and alms-giving, and public exhortations, because our Divine Savior in preparation for his public ministry, went into the desert to fast and pray and meditate for *forty days*.

Holy Scripture insists that everyone who has sinned, and ordinarily that means everyone who has passed the age of reason, must do penance or perish. The Church itself cannot dispense you from penance itself, although it has often dispensed you from particular forms of penance, such as abstinence or fasting. When she dispenses you from one form, she must insist that you

practice another form, because penance is demanded by Almighty God Himself.

Holy Scripture speaks of three kinds of penance, namely, fasting, prayer and alms-giving; and since very few Catholics actually do fast in strict conformity with the law, they should supply the omission by regular attendance at the public devotions of the Church on week-day nights. Public prayer is so much more powerful than private prayer. Then everyone, even the poor, can give a little in the way of alms by surrendering to a good cause some of the money which even they spend for unnecessary things.

Since the head of every Catholic family is bound in conscience to provide a Catholic paper for his family, and since every priest is obliged to urge his parishioners to become members of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, in this diocese some of the self-denial money is asked of every adult to cover these two items.

(2) The most holy people in the world, the members of Religious Orders, the clergy who direct the people in parishes, the Sisters who are engaged altogether in God's work, all Bishops of the world, even the Holy Father, observe an annual retreat, during which time they study themselves in their present relationship to God, meditate on the eternal truths, and reconsecrate themselves to their King with new earnestness and fervor.

Precisely because it is not possible to gather the laity together for a retreat of such intensity, they are invited to attend week-day Mass throughout Lent, if possible, to attend the evening sermons and the Way of the Cross, to prepare for a very earnest confession and to receive Holy Communion frequently—this, while they

strive to prove their grief for past sins by fasting and by voluntary acts of self-denial.

It should be clear to you that outward works have spiritual value only when motivated by inward contrition and love. Where the heart is contrite external discipline and penance will follow most naturally without any exhortation from the pulpit. Christ's soul was "sorrowful even unto death" for your sins. You should often kneel or stand at the side of His cross during Lent and sorrow for your own sins, and assure the crucified Savior that His death will not have been in vain for you.

(3) The Lenten requirements are briefly these: Everyone between the age of twenty-one and sixty is obliged to fast unless excused on account of sickness, or exempted on account of hard work. The law of fasting restricts the person to one full meal each day, at which meat may be had except on the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent, and on Holy Saturday. Of course, the spring Ember Saturday falls in the second week of Lent. In the morning the one who fasts is permitted only a couple of ounces of unbuttered bread with coffee or some other liquid. In the evening he is restricted to ten ounces of food, of which meat may not be a part.

Those who are *excused* from fasting are also excused from abstinence. Those who are *exempted* from the general law of fasting in Lent and out of Lent, because of a special Indult in favor of the working man and his family, may have meat only at the principal meal on the Wednesdays of Lent and on all Ember Days and vigils throughout the year. They may not partake of meat at all on Ash Wednesday, the Wednesday and Saturday of Holy Week (up to noon) and the eve of Christmas.

Eating between meals naturally breaks the fast for anyone who is bound by the law. Liquids, with the ex-

ception of milk, do not break the fast when taken between meals.

CONCLUSION: In these days when so many people are following a diet without meat; when so many are abstaining from starches in order to reduce their weight, the Lenten law should be easy to observe. On the other hand, people who are out of work are often not able to select their own food. If they would go hungry unless permitted to eat the meat served to them they may regard themselves as exempted from the Lenten Law of both fast and abstinence. Those who can fast and abstain without injury to their health could well do so even though they were exempted by the Indult in favor of the working man.

At any rate, let all do more during Lent than at any other time; let all give to the cause of religion or of charity their savings of five cents, or ten cents or twenty-five cents a day, using part of it for a subscription to the diocesan paper and for a membership in the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, so richly indulged.

