The Duties of a Christian to God

LES DEVOIRS
D'UN CHRÉTIEN
ENVERS DIEU,
ET
LES MOYENS
DE POUVOIR
BIEN S'EN ACQUITER:
DIVISÉ EN DEUX PARTIES.

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The Duties of a Christian to God

John Baptist de La Salle

Translated by Richard Arnandez, FSC
Edited by Alexis James Doval

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Introduction

Among the pedagogical works of John Baptist de La Salle, *The Duties of a Christian to God* served as his catechetical text for training teachers and teaching students. As such, it is a valuable source for understanding De La Salle's theology, spirituality, and pedagogy.[1] It is presented here in a new English translation, not to serve as a model for present-day catechisms but as another avenue into discovering more of the spiritual and educational genius of De La Salle. Its particular historical value is that it offers a clear example of what was considered fundamental Church doctrine in seventeenth-century France. However, the views on what was fundamental were inconsistent, and it is of interest to see how De La Salle made his choices.

Another value of the work is in what it contributes to our understanding of how De La Salle integrated the various parts of his mission to provide a Christian and human education to poor children. It can offer much toward answering the question, "What place does religious instruction have in the overall education of the child?" It contains not only basic Catholic teachings but insight into why they are important for living a genuine and full Christian life, as well as guidance on how to do so—thus giving us access to the theological, moral, pastoral, and pedagogical thought and practice of De La Salle.

As with all such works from another age, there are certain challenges for the modern reader. De La Salle was a man of his time, and even the simplest of comparisons of *The Duties of a Christian to God*

1. A much more thorough introduction to these texts is available in Jean Pungier, *John Baptist de La Salle: The Message of His Catechism* (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1999). See also, Manuel Fernandez Magaz, *Un Catecismo de gran siglo frances: Los Deberes del Christiano de San Juan Bautista de La Salle* (Madrid: unpublished doctoral thesis, 1968); by the same author, "Duties of a Christian," in *Lasallian Themes 1* (Rome: Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1992), 164–77; Gerard Rummery, "Catechism," in *Lasallian Themes 1,* 54–65. The bibliography at the end of this present volume provides details about these and other publications cited in this introduction.

with the Church's modern catechism shows a stark difference in style and emphasis in theology and spirituality. Modern readers will be struck by De La Salle's prudishness and his emphasis on distrust of the senses and all forms of pleasure. This is commonly seen as evidence of a Jansenist influence, of which more will be said below. Readers will also be struck by an uncritical use, by modern standards, of apocryphal hagiographic sources, for example, the early life of the Blessed Virgin and the legends of the saints. His use of a minimum of theology and his fondness for story in the material on Jesus, Mary, and the saints probably reflect an attempt to reach the minds and hearts of young boys. Another sign of his time that contrasts with ours is the ease with which he speaks in harsh and negative terms about those who could be a threat to the faith. His references to the Jews, for example, are often colored by his seeing them only as enemies of Christ, and inasmuch as salvation for De La Salle depends on knowing correct doctrine and putting it into practice, he sees anything that interferes with this goal as life-threatening.

The Text

The entire opus is complex in its structure, so care is needed to grasp how its many sections are organized. According to Blain, De La Salle worked on a number of catechisms while at Vaugirard between 1695 and 1698.[2] In 1702, a work was presented for approbation by ecclesiastic authorities under two titles, *The Catechism of the Brothers of the Christian Schools,* or *The Duties of a Christian to God*. The second title was adopted, and its longer form is *The Duties of a Christian to God and the Means to Fulfill Them Properly*. The work is most conveniently divided into three volumes: volume 1 is the catechism in continuous prose (about 500 pages); volume 2 is the same catechism with regard to content and organization, but it is in a question and answer format (about 300 pages containing 1,479 questions); this volume is accompanied by two abridgments, a longer one (127 pages, 478 questions) and a shorter one (35 pages, 170 questions); volume 3 is a collateral catechism on the subject of liturgy and worship entitled *The Exterior and Public Worship That Christians Are Obliged to Offer to God and the Means of Doing So;* this also is in a question and answer format. The custom now is to refer to these parts, or volumes, respectively as *Duties 1, 2,* and 3.[3] Reproductions of the original editions are published in Cahiers lasalliens 20 *(Duties 1),* 21 *(Duties 2),* and 22

2. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle,* (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2000), book 2, chap. 12, 329–30; Cahiers lasalliens 7, 339–41.

(Duties 3), with extensive notes on the history of the editions. The two abridgments of *Duties 2* are published together in Cahiers lasalliens 23. *Duties 1* and *Duties 2* enjoyed immense popularity and appeared in nearly three hundred editions from 1703 to 1928, but *Duties 3* and the abridgments had less appeal and lasted for only a couple of editions.[4] As to authenticity, although many such works were published without author attribution (as was the custom at the time), the consensus of the most recent scholarship is that the work is certainly from the hand of the Founder.

Sources

According to Pungier, the numerous catechisms from the time of De La Salle "were born of the multiplicity of catechisms that appeared at the time of the Reformation and the Counter Reformation in the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century."[5] The impetus behind them was the all-out fight against religious illiteracy. By the time of the Founder, virtually every diocese had produced its own catechism or had adopted one. All show a similarity in content and form, not just because of the established body of Tridentine doctrine but because the authors of these catechisms felt free to borrow from one another without acknowledgment. Although De La Salle surely drew upon his own command of the Scriptures and his theological training, he also used this method of the time for compiling his catechetical

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3. *Duties 1* and *Duties 2* are each divided into two halves corresponding to the two topics of the title: part 1 covers the duties of a Christian to God; part 2, the means of accomplishing them. For *Duties 3,* De La Salle uses the subtitle, *Part 3 of the Duties of a Christian to God,* even though he does not use the term *part* in the titles of *Duties 1* and *Duties 2*. Hence, we should use care when referring to the various "parts" of the work.

4. Cahiers lasalliens 20 lists among the many editions of *Duties* one entitled *Nouveau Traité des Devoirs du Chrétien envers Dieu,* which appeared in many subsequent editions and translations. This work is not an edition of *Duties;* rather, it is a quite distinct catechism compiled by two Brothers, Anaclet (Louis) Constantin and Philippe Bransiet. In the final paragraph of the preface, they dutifully acknowledge that they are compilers and not authors; they cite "MM. de La Salle, d'Humbert, et Lhomond" as their sources. Further confusion results from translations of this work into English under the title of *The Duties of a Christian* and attributed to De La Salle, including the following popular edition: *Jean Baptiste de La Salle, A New Treatise on the Duty of a Christian Towards God: Being an Enlarged and Improved Version of the Original Treatise,* trans. Mrs. J. Sadlier (New York: D. & J. Sadlier, 1851).

5. Pungier, *John Baptist de La Salle: The Message of His Catechism,* 50.

opus: namely, to draw freely from what he would judge the best available catechisms. The three principal sources he used are Claude Joly, *Les Devoirs du Chrétien* (Agen, 1674); Jean Le Coreur, *Les Principaux Devoirs du Chrétiens, ou abrégé de théologie* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1689), and Paul Godet des Marais, *Catéchisme du Diocèse de Chartres* (Chartres, 1699).

Pungier, who carefully compares these sources with *Duties,* is able to illustrate not only what is common among these seventeenth-century French catechists but also what is unique to each one. Joly and Le Coreur offered good structural models. We can find many similarities in the way the material is organized and explicated in a clear, step-by-step fashion that leads the reader from basic knowledge to practical application in life.

The author of the third, Paul Godet des Marais, is the only one De La Salle personally knew. Des Marais acknowledges that his catechism is based on the catechism of the Council of Trent. His description of its structure (he calls it three catechisms in one) is remarkably akin to De La Salle's and no doubt served as his principal model:

> The first is only a very succinct abridgment of the principal truths in which every Christian must be instructed. The second is more extensive; it is the one that is to be taught in all the parishes and schools of the diocese. The third is a longer explanation of the same truths of religion, a kind of commentary on the second. It is meant particularly for the use of parish priests and other persons responsible for teaching catechism. They will find in the questions and answers of the second the same terms but clarified by other questions which go into more detail.
>
> When there are children who are found to have better memories and more leisure time than the others, they can be made to learn this long catechism, particularly the more important sections: this is left to the prudent choice of the catechist. . . .
>
> Finally, one of the main uses for this long catechism is that it can be read in Christian families. Fathers and mothers must be urged to have some lessons read in their presence and with their children and domestics, particularly on Sundays and feast days, so that those who were not able to be present at the parish instructions may make up for this in some way by this means.[6]

6. Quoted in Pungier, *John Baptist de La Salle: The Message of His Catechism,* 112.

We can clearly recognize here, although in reverse order, *Duties 1, Duties 2,* and the abridgments. Blain's account of how De La Salle wrote his catechisms fits this arrangement:

> . . . he thought of enriching the Community with other works which would be of use to the Brothers and to the schools. Among these were . . . catechisms of all sorts: short ones for the children, others for the Brothers which were more developed, thorough, and scholarly and included moral teaching and pious practices. These are the sources where the teachers in the Christian Schools can find material to help them explain the great truths of religion.[7]

Des Marais' manual was written primarily for children, and he included detailed instructions for the catechist on how to conduct the lesson so that the students would be led progressively from a level of simple knowledge to understanding and then to life itself. Such a model was very useful for De La Salle, and he made substantial use of this catechism.

The Theological Context of Seventeenth-Century France

As much as John Baptist de La Salle might have been a pioneer in pedagogy, theologically he was very much a man of his time. We can to a large extent let the text speak for itself as a fair representation of the Church's theological position in seventeenth-century France. In the generations prior to the Founder, controversy between Catholics and Protestants would have influenced the formulation of catechisms, but by the time of the publication of *Duties,* the main issues were Jansenism and Quietism. The latter movement, having to do with the practice of prayer, had little influence on catechisms in general, and such is the case with the treatise on prayer in *Duties 1*. In contrast, the influence of Jansenism is evident in its being opposed or promoted in a number of catechisms. Pungier offers an extensive analysis of the presence of Jansenist influence in *Duties;* it will suffice here to summarize the main points briefly.

Jansenism, representing a long tradition that has its roots in a radical application of Saint Augustine's thoughts about grace and nature, takes a very negative view of fallen human nature. According to the Jansenistic doctrine, free will has been so enslaved by the effects of

7. Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle,* book 3, chap. 12, 329–30.

original sin that humans are incapable of any good act. As a result, the absolute power of grace is necessary, not just for salvation in general but for any and all good acts. Those familiar with Le Coreur's catechism know how strongly Jansenistic it is. Because De La Salle had his own Jansenistic tendencies, we need to consider to what extent he was attracted to this aspect of Le Coreur's thought or even influenced by it. Pungier's assessment is that although Le Coreur's catechism might even be considered a "Jansenist manual," a careful comparison of his text with De La Salle's shows that the Founder consulted Le Coreur's text not because of its Jansenism but in spite of it. According to Pungier, "He found in it a spiritual breath, a mystical depth that the ensemble of the catechisms that appeared at the time doubtless did not offer."[8] Magaz finds that some of De La Salle's most pessimistic texts were taken directly from Le Coreur, but on the whole he avoids his most extreme views or modifies them before inclusion.[9]

Pungier notes two other related aspects of Jansenism that influenced the catechisms of the time, including De La Salle's moral pessimism and his moral and sacramental rigorism. One example of moral pessimism is found in the section on the necessity of grace:

Q. Can Christians fulfill the two duties to God, namely, knowing him and loving him, by their own strength?
A. No, we cannot do this.
Q. What do we as Christians need to fulfill these two duties properly?
A. To fulfill these duties, we need special help from God.
Q. What do we call this special help needed to fulfill these two duties to God?
A. We call this help God's grace.
. . . .
Q. Do we need actual grace?
A. Yes, without it we are not able to have even a good thought or accomplish a good action.[10]

The tension resulting from this teaching is clear. On the one hand, we have total responsibility for the duties that are imposed upon us, and on the other hand, we are totally powerless to acquit ourselves of them. The discerning student is faced with a troubling question: When I do acquit myself of my duties to God? What part in this act do I play? What part does God's grace play? *Duties* provides

8. Pungier, *John Baptist de La Salle: The Message of His Catechism,* 99.
9. Magaz, *Un Catecismo de gran siglo frances,* 349; Pungier, 96.
10. Cahiers lasalliens 21, 139, 142; *The Duties of a Christian to God* (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2002), 299, 300.

no answer to this question, but from elsewhere we know that De La Salle opted for the in-between position of cooperation. The sixteenth-century Jesuit catechist Peter Canisius so resolves it in his catechism:

> Each one, according to his state and vocation, must carefully carry out his responsibility and acquit himself of his duty, and cooperate with the grace he has received from God, with immense gratitude.[11]

In the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat,* De La Salle clearly adopts this position:

> Although Jesus Christ died for everyone, the benefit of his death is, nevertheless, not effected in everyone, because all do not make the effort to apply it to themselves. The response of our will is necessary on our part in order to make it effective. Although the death of Jesus Christ was more than sufficient to wipe out the sins of all and be complete reparation for them, since God has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, nevertheless the grace that Jesus merited for us effects our salvation only insofar as our will is brought to correspond with it. It is up to each of us to achieve and complete the work of our own redemption.[12]

It is from such a perspective that he develops his oft-expressed idea of the Brothers as cooperators with God in securing the salvation of their students and thereby securing their own salvation:

> *You cooperate with God in his work,* says Saint Paul, and the souls of the children whom you teach are the field that he cultivates through you. Since he is the One who has given you the ministry you exercise, when all of you appear before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, each will give his own account to God of what he has done as a minister of God and as a dispenser of his mysteries for children.[13]

The related idea of rigorism stems from the intense pastoral effort of the French clergy to reform and renew the lives of Catholics. It simply involved increasing moral and spiritual requirements and making

11. Cited by J. C. Dhotel, *Les Origines du Catéchisme moderne,* 330; see Pungier, 135.

12. Third Meditation for the Time of Retreat, in *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle* (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1994), 195.1

13. Thirteenth Meditation for the Time of Retreat, *Meditations,* 205.1.

them stricter. This practice was by no means restricted to Jansenists, although they would bear strongest witness to it.

We find a certain degree of rigorism in *Duties* (see, for example, the teaching on the third commandment, the Sunday observance, or the requirements for properly receiving the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist), but it is greatly tempered by the deep pastoral concern of De La Salle.[14]

The Audience

De La Salle ultimately has the pupils' welfare in mind in this overall catechetical project. However, master as he was as an educator, to accomplish this task he first had to train the Brothers as teachers. The primary audience of *Duties 1,* then, was the Brothers. It was not intended for the Brothers' own theological and spiritual formation—this was provided from other sources and at other times. *Duties 1* served principally as a teacher's manual to help each Brother grasp as fully as possible what he would be teaching his pupils. This helps explain the difference in format between *Duties 1* and *Duties 2:* the in-depth prose narrative of *Duties 1* is for the teacher's study and reflection; the question and answer format of *Duties 2* is for the students' mastering of the fundamentals. We would expect, then, that *Duties 1* would not be found in the classroom and in the hands of students, yet the history of its editions and use suggests that it was so used.[15]

Duties 2 and the longer and shorter abridgments were the texts originally intended for daily use because students could conceivably master them. The use of such abridgments, or summaries, was quite common. Canisius included a *minor* and a *minimus* version of his catechism in his 1564 *Summa.* In De La Salle's time, it was customary to include these "summaries" with the catechism. The guiding principle was to distill from the larger catechism the essential truths that Christians must know to be saved. It seems that the abridgments were to serve as the most common daily fare:

> Catechism will be taught every day. . . . The teacher will question all of the students each day. . . . A special effort will be made to question, much more often than the others, those whose minds are slow and dull and who have difficulty in remembering. This is particularly necessary with the abridgment of Christian Doc-

14. Pungier, *John Baptist de La Salle: The Message of His Catechism,* 132–57.

15. See Manuel Magaz, *Lasallian Themes 1,* 168, and *Lasalliana,* 28–8–A–125, 29–6–A–129, and 48–5–A–206.

> trine, especially more so on those questions in it which every Christian must know.[16]

But in fact, as Magaz shows, *Duties 1* enjoyed the most popularity and reprinting over the course of the years. One of its greatest practical values was as a text for teaching reading. As recently as 1979, the Superior General recommended its use by students.

Duties 3 is very much coordinated with *Duties 1* and *Duties 2.* It shows how De La Salle saw the liturgy as providing the external means for shaping and nurturing the internal spiritual and moral life of the Christian outlined in the first two volumes.

Content and Internal Structure

For De La Salle and his contemporaries, religious ignorance was considered a danger to salvation. The importance, therefore, of a catechism is clear. But as thorough as the many different catechisms were in their content, De La Salle's work stands out for the way he carefully integrates its various sections into a logical program.

In its simplest terms, De La Salle teaches that Christians have two fundamental religious duties, to know God and to love God, and that God provides the means for carrying out these duties, namely, grace, which comes to us in the sacraments and in prayer. The internal structure of both *Duties 1* (narrative form) and *Duties 2* (question and answer form) reflects a systematic arrangement of these parts:

Volume 1 The Two Duties of a Christian to God
- Treatise 1 To Know God
- Treatise 2 To Love God

Volume 2 The Means to Fulfill Our Duties to God Properly
- Treatise 1 The Sacraments
- Treatise 2 Prayer

Each volume begins with a preliminary instruction that serves as an introductory preview of what is to follow. In volume 1, the introduction defines the distinguishing characteristics of Christians and their religion and the virtues that guide their actions. The introduction to volume 2 is a brief treatise on grace. Treatise 1 of volume 1 is essentially an exposition of the Creed: what we are to know through the

16. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools* (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 1996), 105, 106–07; see also Pungier, 5.

theological virtue of faith. Treatise 2 of volume 1 uses the commandments for its basic structure and deals with what we are to do by means of the theological virtue of charity. Volume 2 follows a similar pattern, using the seven sacraments as the guide for treatise 1 and the Church's prayers for treatise 2. *Duties 3,* the collateral catechism on liturgy, is essentially an extension of the topic of prayer in *Duties 2.*

The Place and Purpose of *Duties*

De La Salle's clearly stated goal for the schools was to provide a human and Christian education for his pupils.[17] This is commonly understood as meaning more than just a multiplicity of subject matter —catechism along with secular subjects and practical training. Rather, he envisioned a complete and integrated education that forms a whole Christian person in knowledge, faith, and practice.

> To claim membership in a group while not knowing what the group really is and while remaining ignorant of the name given to its members, what this name implies, and the essential duties of membership would seem to be entirely contrary to good sense and sound reason. Yet this is the ordinary situation of most Christians. They are Christians without understanding what being a Christian means, and few take any pains to learn what they must do to live properly as Christians. Therefore, if we wish to bring up Christian children and give them the means of leading a life worthy of their state and the name they bear, it seems necessary to teach them, first of all, what the Christian religion is to which they are so proud to belong.[18]

In treatise 1, on faith, De La Salle clearly states what "truths" every child is absolutely obliged to know "to be saved":

> All are obliged to believe in general, without any doubting, hesitating, or unseemly curiosity, whatever the Church believes and proposes to us for our belief, but this general belief is not sufficient of itself.
>
> We are obliged to know and believe distinctly certain mysteries in particular: that there is only one God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that the Son of God, the second Per-

17. *Rule and Foundational Documents* (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2002), chap 1, art. 3.

18. *The Duties of a Christian to God*, vol. 1, part 1, introduction, 18.

> son of the Holy Trinity, became human and died on the cross to deliver us from sin and the pains of hell; and that after this life there will be a heaven where the just will be rewarded and a hell where the wicked will be punished with a sentence that will last forever. If we do not distinctly and clearly believe all these mysteries, we cannot be saved, for the truths they contain are the first principles and the foundation of our religion.[19]

His final comment about these truths as the foundation for religion helps us see precisely what the connection is between ignorance and salvation. For the Founder, because all knowledge, especially religious knowledge, is integrally related in the formation of the true Christian, ignorance is, as it were, a fatal disease or wound that keeps the Christian from reaching his or her final destiny. Although Baptism is the minimal requirement for being called a true Christian, this does not guarantee that a person is a true Christian—baptized heretics also bear the name of Christian. Rather,

> we must also be a Catholic and believe in God, in Jesus Christ, and in all that Jesus has taught us, whether in person or through his Church. Besides this condition, we must also publicly profess our faith. Even this profession is not enough to be a good Christian; we must also be enlivened by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ and conform our life to his life and the maxims he teaches us in the holy Gospel and in the entire New Testament.[20]

We cannot stop short of fully conforming our life to Christ. The indispensable starting point, however, is complete and sound instruction; hence, the place and importance of the catechism.

Duties 3 fits neatly into this overall plan as well. For De La Salle, a life of prayer is an essential part of the life of all Christians, which includes the liturgical life, the official public worship of the Church. Why this is so is explained clearly at the start of *Duties 3.* Liturgy is obligatory because Christians "must adore God exteriorly as well as interiorly."

> It must be public because as Christians we are a society, and we must gather together 1) to have a chance to live and act as a society, 2) to show that we belong to it, and 3) to render God our collective homage.[21]

19. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* vol. 1, part 1, treatise 1, chap. 1, 23.
20. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* vol. 1, part 1, introduction, 19.
21. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* vol. 3, preliminary lesson, 372.

In answer to the question on what means the Church uses to worship God exteriorly and publicly, De La Salle obliges us with the ends as well as the means:

> 1) by establishing public rites of religion, 2) by adding to these rites many very beautiful ceremonies to encourage us to be diligent in attending them and eager to offer God a more solemn worship, 3) by consecrating to God in a special manner certain periods of the year to honor certain mysteries or prepare for their celebration so that during these sacred times we may come to church more frequently and offer God with greater diligence and fervor the exterior worship due to him, and 4) by instituting various kinds of feast days that we should spend entirely in honoring God and offering him an exterior worship in union with Jesus Christ and the saints who are honored on these days.[22]

Here again we see the Founder looking beyond the mere fulfilling of the duty of Church law; he always has in mind the final goal of a life conformed in all ways with Jesus Christ.

In a larger context, we can see that *Duties* serves as a foundation for other pedagogical works: *Exercises of Piety for the Christian Schools,*[23] *Instructions and Prayers for Holy Mass, Confession, and Communion;*[24] *The Conduct of the Christian Schools,*[25] and *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*.[26]

The first two of these works translate the various doctrines into prayerful acts; the divine mysteries are not just matters for rational thought; they are also objects of contemplation. In the latter two works, we can see doctrine translated into practice, constituting what Pungier calls an apprenticeship to the Christian life:

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22. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* vol. 3, preliminary lesson, 372.

23. *Exercises de piété qui se font pendant le jour dans les Écoles chrétiennes*, Cahiers lasalliens 18 (Rome: Frères des Écoles chrétiennes, 1963); in *Religious Instructions and Exercises of Piety for the Christian Schools* (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2002), 177–225.

24. *Instructions et Prières pour la Sainte Messe, la Confession et la Communion, avec une Instruction méthodique par demandes et réponses pour apprendre à se bien confesser,* Cahiers lasalliens 17 (Rome: Frères des Écoles chrétiennes, 1963); in *Religious Instructions and Exercises of Piety for the Christian Schools,* 31–175.

25. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools.*

26. *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* (Romeoville, IL: Lasallian Publications, 1990).

> Everything combines, everything must combine, in fact, to make each of the children entrusted to the Brothers a true disciple of Jesus Christ, not only instructed in the fundamental truths of the faith but living those truths. The pedagogy used is that used for any apprenticeship: practice what one knows. . . .[27]

Methodology

Finally, since De la Salle is noted for his pedagogical insights, it is worth mentioning what *Duties* reveals about his methodology. The following suggestions to the teacher using the shorter abridgment of *Duties* give us an idea about the structure of the class:

> When teaching catechism, the teachers shall always include the questions in the answers, even though this is not done in this catechism, in order that the answers may be perfectly clear in meaning. After they have put a question to the pupils, they will explain the answer by means of as many subquestions as there are main words in the answer, in order to give a complete explanation. As there are in this catechism many answers which can be broken up to form several short and easy answers—or from which a section can be extracted—the first words of what can be divided or cut out are printed in italics. The words that have the same meaning as other words in the answer are also written in italics, in order to indicate that teachers must use only one or the other. For example, when "sorrow and contrition for sin" are given in the answer, the word *contrition* is put in italics to indicate that it has the same meaning as the word *sorrow;* consequently, it is not necessary to use both, and so on for the others.
>
> The presence of *or* in italics in questions and answers indicates that it is necessary to say only one or the other of the two things expressed.
>
> The teachers will give explanations and point out morals during their lessons as far as possible by means of subquestions, and yet from time to time they will give short talks in an interesting way, of seven or eight lines in length. They will always include at the end of the catechism something practical which can be acted on that very same day, something that has a bearing on the subject that has been treated during the catechism.[28]

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27. Pungier, *John Baptist de La Salle: The Message of His Catechism,* 44.

28. Cahiers lasalliens 23, 431–32; the text, with a few modifications, is cited by Pungier in *The Message of His Catechism,* 159–60.

The general structure of the lesson is typical of parish schools in the late seventeenth century in France. The lesson begins with a hymn "to prepare the students to listen to the catechism lesson well and to benefit from it."[29] A prayer follows, and then the catechism proper begins. The lesson ends with a short prayer.

According to Pungier, the catechism lesson "is not a discourse, not even a sermon. What characterizes it is its simplicity, its familiar conversational nature."[30] In *The Conduct of the Christian Schools,* De La Salle says:

> Teachers will not speak to the students during catechism as though they were preaching but will ask the students questions and subquestions almost continuously.[31]

The lesson is taught with three goals in mind: learning, understanding, and practicing. What is particularly noteworthy is that despite the extensive practice of repetition, it is not a goal to have the student simply memorize the text of the catechism.[32] This seems clear from the guidelines for questioning the pupils. The catechist formulates questions and subquestions suitable to his audience, based on the text, not directly drawn from it:

> Teachers will plan that the questions, the subquestions, and the answers to the subquestions fulfill the following four conditions: 1) they must be short; 2) they must make complete sense; 3) they must be accurate, and 4) the answers must be suited to the capacity of the average and not of the most able and most intelligent students, so that the majority may be able to answer the questions that are asked of them.[33]

This advice suggests that repetitive questioning during the lesson is not for the purpose of memorization but a drilling technique intended to impress an idea strongly on the mind of the students as they move to the level of understanding. The demands on the catechists are twofold. On the one hand, they have to formulate questions and subquestions for each group of students; on the other hand, they

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29. *Religious Instructions and Exercises of Piety for the Christian Schools,* 194.

30. Pungier, *The Message of His Catechism,* 168.

31. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools,* 106.

32. According to Pungier, the expression does not even occur in *The Conduct of the Christian Schools;* Pungier, *The Message of His Catechism,* 169.

33. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools,* 109.

must have a command of doctrinal knowledge (the content of *Duties 1* would suffice for this).

The first level of questions is intended to provide the students with well-ordered, clear ideas and basic doctrinal vocabulary. Then, as the guide to teachers indicates, the subquestions are used to explain the answers and move the students to the level of understanding. Pungier explains that this method is in line with a well-developed tradition of firmly establishing the rudiments of knowledge in the students' memory before moving to the level of understanding.[34]

The final and most important objective of the lesson is to get the students to put into practice what they have learned and understood. It is clear from other writings of De La Salle that the goal of the Brothers in the classroom is not so much to know the faith as to live it. In *The Conduct of the Christian Schools,* he directs that "in every lesson teachers will be sure to indicate some practices to the students and to instruct them as thoroughly as possible concerning those things which pertain to morals and to the conduct which should be observed in order to live as a true Christian."[35] There is also a pedagogical advantage: "they will reduce these practices and these matters of morals to questions and answers. This will make the students very much more attentive and make them retain the answers more easily."[36]

At the end of the suggestions for teachers cited above from the shorter abridgment, De la Salle specially notes that from time to time the teachers should "give short talks in an interesting way, of seven or eight lines in length" and that "they will always include at the end of the catechism something practical which can be acted on that very same day, something that has a bearing on the subject that has been treated during the catechism."[37] Allowing the catechists to depart from the set text when necessary to translate doctrine into practice, and to do so by using their teaching skills rather than a set formula, shows how important this task is. As Pungier observes, this instruction is a good example of putting into practice the well-known exhortation about "touching hearts" from the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat.* The passage describes the moment when the catechist can respond to grace and become a "visible angel" to the students:

> To be saved it does not suffice to be instructed in the Christian truths that are purely doctrinal. As we have said already, faith

34. Pungier, *The Message of His Catechism,* 171–72.

35. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools,* 108.

36. Ibid.

37. Cahiers lasalliens 23, 431–32; Pungier, *The Message of His Catechism,* 160.

without works is dead; it is like a body without a soul; consequently, it is not sufficient to help us achieve our salvation.

It is, then, not enough to procure for children the Christian spirit and teach them the mysteries and doctrines of our religion. You must also teach them the practical maxims that are found throughout the holy Gospel. But since their minds are not yet sufficiently able to understand and practice these maxims by themselves, you must serve as visible angels for them in two things: 1) you must help them understand the maxims as they are set forth in the holy Gospel; 2) you must guide their steps along the way that leads them to put these maxims into practice. For this they need visible angels, who by their instructions and by their good example will encourage them to appreciate and practice these maxims. By these two means, then, these holy maxims will make a strong impression on their minds and hearts.[38]

Alexis James Doval

38. Fifth Meditation for the Time of Retreat, *Meditations,* 197.2.

The Duties of a Christian to God

Volume 1

Part 1

The Two Duties of a Christian to God, Namely, to Know God and to Love God

Introduction[1]

The Christian Religion, Christians, the Marks by Which We Can Know Them, and the Virtues Proper to Them

To claim membership in a group while not knowing what the group really is and while remaining ignorant of the name given to its members, what this name implies, and the essential duties of membership would seem to be entirely contrary to good sense and sound reason. Yet this is the ordinary situation of most Christians. They are Christians without understanding what being a Christian means, and few take any pains to learn what they must do to live properly as Christians. Therefore, if we wish to bring up Christian children and give them the means of leading a life worthy of their state and the name they bear, it seems necessary to teach them, first of all, what the Christian religion is to which they are so proud to belong; what the name *Christian* means, which they feel honored to bear; what the signs are that enable people to discern those who are Christian from those who are not, and what the special virtues are that befit those enrolled in the ranks of such a holy and exalted profession. We propose to treat these topics at the outset so that we can then lead the reader to part 1 of this work, in which we propose to deal with the essential duties of a Christian.

The word *religion*, properly speaking, means a virtue that makes us fulfill the duties we owe to God; therefore, we give the name religion to groups in which people strive to render God the worship due to him. For the same reason, those who recognize a God and gather to honor him claim to be practicing a religion. Nevertheless, only one religion—the Christian religion—truly deserves this name.

We give the name religion (we are speaking here of the Christian religion) to an assemblage or a society made up of a large number of persons, belonging to different nations, who undertake to fulfill their duties to God in public and in private according to the manner that Jesus Christ taught us.

All those who profess this religion assumed this obligation when they received the sacrament of Baptism, which admits a person to our religion just as circumcision admits a man to the Jewish religion.

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1. *Duties of a Christian to God*, vol. 1, introduction to part 1; *Œuvres Complètes,* 829–32; Cahiers lasalliens 20, i–xii.

Our obligations to God include four duties that we discharge in the Christian religion: we must know, adore, love, and obey God. We know God by faith; we adore him by prayer and sacrifice; we obey him by observing his holy commandments and those of his Church and by avoiding sin, which he forbids us. We cannot love God unless we possess the gift of grace, which makes us agreeable to him; this grace is given to us only through prayer and the sacraments. These four duties include everything that we practice and learn in the Catholic Christian religion—the only one in which we can fulfill all our duties to God, the only religion that is true. All others that usurp this name are false and illusory because in them people either do not know the true God or do not honor him as he should be honored and as he commands us to honor him.

We call *Christians* all those who belong to this religion; the name, which comes from *Christ*, signifies a disciple and imitator of Christ.

Nevertheless, not all those who claim to be a Christian are true disciples of Jesus Christ. Many are Christian only in name and appearance. Their evil conduct dishonors Jesus Christ and the sanctity of his religion. Such persons are 1) heretics and schismatics, who have separated themselves from the true Church, and 2) those Catholics whose faith is not enlivened by the love of God, who are attached to riches, the pleasures of the senses, and the vanities of this world and do not make it their principal concern to serve God and work out their salvation.

To be a Christian, it suffices to have been baptized; therefore, heretics and schismatics whose Baptism (provided it is the same as ours) is recognized by the Catholic Church are Christians, just as we are. But this status is not sufficient for belonging to the true religion; we must also be a Catholic and believe in God, in Jesus Christ, and in all that Jesus has taught us, whether in person or through his Church. Besides this condition, we must also publicly profess our faith. Even this profession is not enough to be a good Christian; we must also be enlivened by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ and conform our life to his life and the maxims he teaches us in the holy Gospel and in the entire New Testament.

Because heretics as well as Catholics call themselves Christians, there must be some external signs to distinguish Catholic Christians from those who are not Catholic.

The Church has always recognized as Catholic Christians those who perform the external rites that we most commonly practice in our religion, such as assisting at holy Mass and the Divine Office, receiving the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ, listening to God's word in

Catholic churches, and observing Sundays, feasts, and prescribed days of fasting and abstinence. It would be difficult to claim that a person does not belong to an organization, especially to a religion, when that person does externally what the others do and thus cannot be distinguished from them, even in matters calling for self-sacrifice.

Nevertheless, if we have some reason to doubt whether a given person is a Catholic, especially at a time when troubles arise in the Church or when schism or heresy occurs, it may not be enough that such a person practices the ordinary exercises of our religion. It may be necessary to require a public profession of faith, which is what all heretics are obliged to do when they wish to renounce their errors and before they can be received back into the bosom of the Church. Even though their works may bear witness to the faith, this testimony is surely not sufficient to eliminate all possibility of deception. People ordinarily make known the sentiments they entertain by expressing them outwardly in words.

The Church has always considered the public profession of faith as the most authoritative mark of true Christians and the one most capable of distinguishing Catholic Christians from those who are not. Because it would be difficult for all Catholics to recite at every moment their Creed and their profession of faith to make known their beliefs and their religion—especially when they live in the midst of heretics—the Church has wisely decided that the sign of the holy cross that we make should serve, as a rule, to distinguish Catholic Christians from all others.

We make the sign of the holy cross by placing our right hand on our forehead while saying, "In the name of the Father," then by bringing it to the breast while saying, "and of the Son," then to the left shoulder and finally to the right while saying, "and of the Holy Spirit, Amen," or in Latin, *"In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen."*

The use of this sign is as old as the Church. Tertullian, who lived toward the close of the second century, assures us that Tradition has bequeathed it to us, custom has confirmed it, and faith practices it. The same author bears witness that the Christians in his day were in the habit of making the sign of the cross on their forehead when out walking, when entering a house or leaving it, on rising and retiring, on entering a room, when sitting down at table, on lighting a candle, on seating themselves, when conversing—in short, when performing all their actions. Saint Jerome, in a letter to Eustochius, recommends that in all his actions and undertakings he should make the sign of the cross. No Christian should act otherwise.

The advantage we derive from making the sign of the holy cross is so considerable that Saint Cyril calls it the grace of the faithful and

the terror of the demons. In fact, by this sign we can show at every moment, if we so desire, that we are Christians, just as it is through this sign that we raise our heart to God to offer him our actions, ask for his help and grace, and try to resist temptation. Saint Ambrose assures us that this sign procures our protection against all the demons.

However, we do not obtain all these advantages for ourselves if we make the sign of the cross out of habit or mechanically, as the majority of Christians often do, but only when we sign with faith, respect, and true interior devotion.

Every time we make this adored sign, we should remember we are showing God that we are about to perform an action in the name of the Most Holy Trinity and that we are asking for some special grace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the infinite merits of his Passion. Nothing is more capable of helping us easily obtain what we desire and win rich blessings.

Although external signs enable us all to recognize a Christian, interior practices alone can make us acceptable as such before God. These signs are the virtues proper to the Christian state.

We call the ordinary virtues moral virtues because they regulate our conduct. Heretics and infidels, as well as true Christians, can practice virtues of this sort, at least exteriorly. If these virtues are special to us Christians, it is only insofar as we practice them, accompanied by grace under the movement of God's Spirit and with a pure intention of pleasing him.

Three other virtues, however, are not of this same kind; they belong so strictly to Christians that no one else can practice them. These virtues are faith, hope, and charity, called theological virtues because they refer only to God and have God as their object.

Faith is a supernatural virtue, a light by which we firmly adhere to whatever the Church proposes for our belief in the name of God.

Hope is a supernatural virtue by which we entrust ourselves to God and await from him alone our eternal salvation and the graces we ask to obtain this gift. We do all this in the name of Jesus Christ, God's Son, and through his merits.

Charity is a supernatural virtue by which we love God above all other things, more than ourselves, and love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

These virtues are called supernatural, that is, above nature, because God gives them to us, for by ourselves we cannot acquire, deserve, or practice them.

These three virtues make us Christians, properly so called, and sustain us in our religion. Although all three are always necessary, we can say that only two of them, namely, faith and charity, include our

essential duties. These two virtues make us true Christians. Without them we cannot lead a Christian life, be agreeable to God, or even be happy. In fact, what a Christian needs to do in this world is to know God and to love God; this statement sums up all our duties. We know God by faith, and charity makes us love him. Because these two duties—knowing and loving God—constitute the Christian's basic concerns, they are the topics we treat in part 1.

Treatise 1[2]

The First Duty of a Christian, Which Is to Know God

Chapter 1

Faith, Which Enables Us to Know God in This World

Jesus Christ says in the holy Gospel that eternal life consists in knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ, his Son, whom he sent into the world. Thus, the main duty Christians must apply themselves to fulfill in this life is to know God in himself and all that he has made and to know the Son of God made human and what he has done for our salvation. This statement sums up all the truths we ought to know.

Section 1—What faith is

Because the human mind is too limited to comprehend by itself the mysteries of God's being and God does not wish us in this life to know these mysteries as they are in themselves, we must be satisfied with believing all these truths with entire submission of mind. To do so requires that God enlighten us. We must receive from him a supernatural illumination, which is precisely what we call faith. To have

2. *Duties of a Christian to God,* vol. 1, part 1, treatise 1; *Œuvres Complètes,* 832–62; Cahiers lasalliens 20, 1–88.

faith means to believe what we are taught; to believe something means to accept it only by relying on someone's word.

There are two kinds of faith: divine faith and human faith. Human faith makes us believe things that others affirm. We can be mistaken in believing them, for even the most holy, learned, and enlightened persons are liable to fall into error and even to lie.

Divine faith is a virtue that makes us adhere with submission of mind and heart to whatever God has revealed and to profess with firm conviction whatever the Church proposes for our belief. We believe with submission of mind because God said it and with firm conviction because God can neither be deceived nor wish to deceive us. It is true that we know what God has said and what God proposes for our belief only because the Church assures us of it. We should be as certain of these truths as if God had told us of them, for the Church, being the repository of the holy truths that God wishes to make known to us, wields the same power and enjoys the same authority as God. For this reason, Saint Augustine says that he would not believe the Gospel unless led to do so by the authority of the Church.

God alone gives us faith to enlighten our mind and make known to it things that we could never grasp except thanks to him. We receive this precious gift in Baptism. All are obliged to believe in general, without any doubting, hesitating, or unseemly curiosity, whatever the Church believes and proposes to us for our belief, but this general belief is not sufficient of itself.

We are obliged to know and believe distinctly certain mysteries in particular: that there is only one God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that the Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, became human and died on the cross to deliver us from sin and the pains of hell, and that after this life there will be a heaven where the just will be rewarded and a hell where the wicked will be punished with a sentence that will last forever. If we do not distinctly and clearly believe all these mysteries, we cannot be saved, for the truths they contain are the first principles and the foundation of our religion.

Section 2—Our obligation to make acts of faith

Because we are obliged to know and believe the principal mysteries of our religion, we must from time to time make frequent acts of faith in these divine mysteries. We must not fail to make such acts of faith (especially once we have reached the age of reason) on certain special occasions, such as when we are tempted against faith, when we receive a sacrament, and at the hour of death.

We can make acts of faith in two different ways: in general in all the mysteries of our religion or in this or that particular mystery—for example, the Holy Trinity or the Incarnation.

We make an act of faith in general after this fashion: "My God, because you reveal it, I firmly believe whatever the Church commands me to believe."

We can make an act of faith on some particular mystery of our religion—for example, the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity: "My God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, because your holy Church proposes this to us and because you have revealed it to her."

In like manner we can make acts of faith in the mystery of the Incarnation, in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar, or in any other mystery.

We should not be satisfied with making acts only of speculative faith, that is, in truths that we merely believe. We must often make acts of practical faith, that is, in the truths that we must practice. We should make such acts of practical faith especially when tempted to offend God or to violate one of these practical truths, or when we experience some difficulty or trouble in practicing it.

For instance, when we find it hard to forgive our enemies, it is good to say, "My Savior Jesus Christ, I firmly believe that I must not only pardon my enemies but also love them, pray for them, and do good to them because you said so and taught us this in the holy Gospel." In the same way, when we are tempted against purity, we may well say, "My God, I believe that the impure will not inherit the kingdom of God because you taught us this by the mouth of Saint Paul." We must make similar acts of faith in all sorts of practical truths to impress horror for vice deeply on the heart, to encourage the self to adhere to what is right, and to practice virtue.

It is not necessary that we pronounce these acts of faith with our lips, unless we wish to do so as a means of publicly showing our faith. It is enough that our heart should conceive and form the acts because we are speaking to God and doing so from the depths of our heart. Such acts of faith made from time to time are extremely useful and can help us preserve our faith, our love of God, and our affection for virtue and make these qualities grow in us. Therefore, we should often make such acts. Parents should inspire their children to adopt this custom; they should teach it to them carefully and have them practice it daily.

Section 3—The truths of faith, whether written or not, that we know by Holy Scripture and by Tradition

We must believe two kinds of truths with divine faith and consider them as having been revealed by God to his Church. Some are written, and others we know only by Tradition.

The truths that have been written down and that we must consider as having been revealed by God are all those found in the books we ordinarily call Holy Scripture.

The truths that we know only by Tradition are those taught by Jesus Christ himself but not written down. The Apostles learned them from the oral teaching of Jesus Christ, and they in turn preached them and passed them on to the pastors who succeeded them. The pastors of the Church taught them to the faithful as the teaching of Jesus Christ and handed them on, without a break, from century to century to the present. These teachings also include the explanations given for these dogmas, which are valued like the words of Holy Scripture according to the unanimous teaching of the pastors and the Fathers of the Church.

For instance, Tradition teaches us that there are four Gospels and seven sacraments and that Baptism should be administered to infants; we do not read anything in Holy Scripture about these and many other matters.

Jesus Christ left us a great many truths only by Tradition. Saint John refers to this fact when he says that Jesus Christ did many other things that are not written down in the Gospel. Saint Paul advises the Thessalonians to keep the traditions they had learned from him, whether by word of mouth or by the Epistles he wrote to them. We must believe as matters of faith all that Tradition teaches us because the Church proposes these truths for our belief and Jesus Christ says that we should regard as a pagan and a publican whoever does not listen to the Church.

Holy Scripture—also called the *Bible,* which means *book*—is divided into two parts: the first is called the Old Testament, and the second, the New Testament. The Old Testament contains all the sacred books written under the Old Law, that is, from Moses to Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament has four types of books: books of the law, historical books, wisdom books, and prophetic books.

The books of the law are the five books written by Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Taken together, these five are called the Pentateuch of Moses. The book of Genesis, which means *origin*, contains the account of the creation of Adam and all visible creatures; it also relates the history of the Patriarchs

from Adam to Joseph. Exodus, a word that means *going forth*, retells the history of the Jews' miraculous departure from Egypt and the giving of the Law by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Leviticus deals with everything that refers to the sacrifices and to the Levites, the ministers of the sacrifices prescribed in the Old Law. The book of Numbers is so called because it relates the census that Moses and Aaron made of those Israelites capable of bearing arms. It also contains an account of what the Israelites did after their departure from Mount Sinai up to their entry into the Promised Land. Deuteronomy, a word that means *repetition*, is simply a retelling and a summary of the main topics found in the three previous books.

The historical books recount the history and actions of the Judges, the Kings, others who governed the people, and the famous and best known personages among the Jews. These historical books number seventeen: the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, the four books of Kings, the two books of Paralipomenon[3] (which means *things omitted* from the books of Kings), the two books of Ezra,[4] the books of Tobias, Judith, Esther, and Job, and the two books of the Maccabees.

The five wisdom books inspire the Jews to practice virtue: Proverbs, the Song of Songs, Sirach, Wisdom, and Ecclesiastes.

The prophetic books contain the revelations God made to the Prophets concerning the things to come that involved the Jews, especially whatever referred to the coming of the Messiah. There are eighteen prophetic books: the Psalms of David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

The second part of the Bible is called the New Testament because it contains everything that refers to the New Law. It also includes four kinds of books: the Gospels; the history, or the Acts of the Apostles; the letters, or Epistles, written by some of the holy Apostles, and one book of prophecy.

The Gospels relate the life, teachings, and miracles of Jesus Christ. The four Gospels were written by Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The history of the Apostles was written by Saint Luke in the Acts of the Apostles.

The Epistles of the holy Apostles contain the advice and instructions that some of them wrote to the faithful of their time. Five Apostles wrote Epistles: Saints Paul, James the Less, Peter, John, and Jude.

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3. The books 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, formerly known as Paralipomenon, supplement 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Kings. The titles of the books of the Bible and the numbering of the chapters and verses are according to the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition.

4. In the NRSV, the book of Ezra and the book of Nehemiah.

Saint Paul wrote fourteen letters: one to the Romans; two to the Corinthians; one to the Galatians; one to the Ephesians; one to the Philippians; one to the Colossians; two to the Thessalonians; two to Timothy, bishop of Ephesus; one to Titus, bishop of Crete; one to Philemon, a distinguished citizen of the city of Colossae; and one to the Hebrews, that is, to the Jews dispersed throughout the world and especially to those still living in Judea.

Saint James wrote only one letter, which he addressed to all the Jews dispersed at that time in various countries; therefore, this Epistle is called *catholic*, that is, universal.

Saint Peter wrote two letters: the first was to the Jews living in Greece; the second, to all the faithful.

Saint John wrote three letters: the first, to the Parthians (according to Saint Augustine); the second, to a woman named Electa;[5] the third, to one of his friends, named Gaius, of whom Saint Paul speaks in the Epistle to the Romans (16:23).[6]

Saint Jude wrote one letter, which he addressed to all the faithful.

The prophetic book of the New Testament is the Apocalypse, written by Saint John on the island of Patmos, where he was living in exile. It contains an account of the most important future events, from the coming of Jesus Christ until the end of the world.

The Council of Trent listed all these books and recognized them as having been dictated by the Spirit of God and containing all the written truths that we must believe with divine faith.

Section 4—The Creed, a summary of the truths of faith

The Apostles' Creed contains everything that Christians are obliged to believe and know in particular. This Creed is a summary of the main points of our faith that the Apostles, according to Saint Augustine, left us by Tradition as a rule and profession of faith so that all the faithful might everywhere profess the same beliefs. The general opinion is that the holy Apostles drew up this Creed before separating to go out and preach the holy Gospel throughout the world.

The word *Symbole*[7] means *mark,* or *summary;* the profession of faith we make by reciting the Creed serves both to distinguish Catholic Christians from those who are not Catholic and to summarize the mysteries of our holy religion.

The Creed contains twelve articles that we can divide into three main sections. The first section contains the first article, which deals

5. The wording in the NRSV is "the elect lady and her children" (2 John 1).
6. This scriptural reference is given in the original French text.
7. *Symbole* is the French word for *Creed.*

with God the Father and the creation of the world. The second section includes the next six articles, which refer to the Son of God, the redemption of humanity, and the general judgment. The third section is made up of the last five articles, which deal with the Holy Spirit and the Church, the graces that the Holy Spirit gives us in this life, and the glory he promises us in the next.

When we recite the Apostles' Creed, we make as many acts of faith as the truths contained in it. For this reason it is most useful and strongly advisable to say it often, even daily: on rising, to show God that we wish to live as Christians throughout the day, and on retiring, to prepare ourselves to die in the faith of the Church if we happen to die during sleep. Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine urged their Christians and catechumens to follow this practice, even as a duty. It is no doubt for this reason too that the Church has wisely commanded that all Christians should know the Creed by heart. Fathers and mothers are obliged to teach it to their children. The Apostles' Creed begins: "I believe in God the Father. . . ."

Chapter 2

God and the Three Divine Persons

The first truth we must believe, which is also the basis of our faith, is that there is one God, that there is only one, and that there cannot be more than one because, according to Saint Thomas, only one being can be truly independent and possess sovereign and infinite perfection. We cannot by right know God or what God truly is; God is above all that we can conceive and express in words. All we can say of God is that God is an infinitely perfect spirit possessing all sorts of perfections that are in themselves infinite. This is the idea that Holy Scripture gives us.

God alone possesses being of himself; all creatures enjoy being and life only by dependence on God, who creates all of them, preserves them, and continues day by day to impart being, life, and movement to everything coming into existence successively in time.

All things that we see succeed one another and are subject to change and corruption. God alone does not change; his nature and his governance are always the same. All creatures began to be at some moment, but God is eternal because he has no beginning and will have no end. God is everywhere, filling heaven and earth, which in all their extent are incapable of containing him.

Although God sees and knows clearly and distinctly everything that happens in the world and is present everywhere and in all things by his nature, we cannot see God with our eyes; God does not have a body and is neither material nor sensible. Our eyes can see only those things that fall under our senses.

God directs and governs everything in an admirable manner and with supreme wisdom. God is so good that he provides for all the needs of his creatures; God is so just that he gives all what they deserve, so powerful that he can do whatever he pleases and, in fact, does whatever he wills. Thus, nothing and no one can escape his will.

Although by his nature God is one and unique, there are three persons in God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The first person is called the Father because from all eternity he begets the Son. The second person is called the Son because he is begotten by the Father. The third person is called the Holy Spirit to distinguish him from the Father and the Son; he does not have his own particular name because there is no way to express how the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

These three persons are clearly distinguished from one another, for the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Spirit. But they are not separate: they all share one and the same nature and perfection: the Father's power is the same as the Son's; the will of the Son is the same as the will of the Holy Spirit. Because wisdom, goodness, and justice are all alike in the three divine persons, all three of the divine persons do whatever God causes outside himself and in his creatures. The same is not true of what God does within. The Father alone engenders and begets the Son, and the Father and the Son alone produce the Holy Spirit. What God does and produces within are operations properly and specifically referred to the persons who produce them; none of the other persons shares in this activity in any way.

The Father begets the Son because by knowing himself, he brings into being the outcome of his knowledge, which is the perfect expression of himself, God like unto himself. The Father and the Son produce the Holy Spirit because by loving each other with a mutual love, they bring into being the term and the object of their love, which is the person of the Holy Spirit. Because God is the term and the object of the love of the Father and of the Son, the Holy Spirit is also God, like the Father and the Son. Although the Father produces the Son and the Father and the Son produce the Holy Spirit, none of them exists prior to the others; all three are eternal. Nevertheless, there is only one eternal God: these three persons make up not three gods but one God.

We can neither adequately express what the persons are nor depict them. We sometimes represent the eternal Father as an old man because he appeared under this aspect to the Prophet Daniel in the Old Testament. We show the Son as a young man about thirty years old because he became a man, appeared in this world, and died at about that age. We represent the Holy Spirit under the form of a dove because he assumed this shape at our Lord's baptism.

Chapter 3

The Creation of the World

God created all things, making them out of nothing by his almighty power. He needed only a word to bring all creatures into being and could have done so in an instant, but to manifest his wisdom and his power in so great an undertaking, he made the world in six days.

On the first day, God created light. On the second day, he made heaven and earth. On the third day, he separated the sea from the land and caused the earth to bring forth all its grasses, trees, and plants. On the fourth day, he made the sun, the moon, and the stars. On the fifth day, he created the fish and the birds. On the sixth day, he caused the earth to bring forth all sorts of animals, and then he made human beings separately to rule over all the other animals he had previously created. On the seventh day, God rested, which means he created no new beings. The most excellent and important creatures that God brought into being are angels and humans; in fact, he created all the rest for their sake.

Genesis does not speak about the creation of the angels. Saint Augustine says that God created them on the first day, when he said, "Let there be light!"[8] There is no doubt that they were all created in heaven.

Angels are spirits, having no body and being entirely disengaged from matter. Their appearance at times to people as though having a body was merely a borrowed form. We call them *angels,* which means *messengers,* or *envoys,* because God has often employed them to make his will known to humans. All the angels received grace at the moment of their creation, but not all of them preserved it. A considerable number of these spirits destined to praise God fell into sin as a result of their pride and the satisfaction they took in themselves. At that moment they were cast into hell. Those who remained faithful to

8. Gen. 1:3. Unless otherwise noted, the scriptural references placed in footnotes do not occur in the original French text.

God and persevered in grace were confirmed in grace and remained in heaven, where they have enjoyed eternal happiness ever since.

Some of these blessed spirits stand constantly before God's throne to offer him their homage and adoration. God has entrusted others with guiding us to salvation. For this reason we call them guardian angels. "Everyone," says Saint Jerome, "who lived, lives, or will live—from the beginning of the world even to its end—had, has, and will have one of these angels as a protector."

The rebel angels, whom we call demons, or devils, are occupied in a totally different way. They labor at tempting humans and, as Saint Peter says, go about soliciting them to commit sin so as to make them share in their own misery.

Guardian angels, although they are not in heaven, always enjoy the vision of God; on the contrary, those demons who are on earth tempting humans suffer all the torments of hell and are punished as rigorously as though they were indeed there.

As for us humans, we are rational creatures composed of a body and a soul created in the image of God. Our principal and primary occupation should be to know and to love God; we are in this world for nothing else. We are an image of God also in this regard: we must resemble him in this life and much more perfectly in heaven, seeing God as he is and loving him eternally.

The first human was called Adam; his body was formed from the clay of the earth. The first woman was named Eve; God formed her body from one of Adam's ribs to show that they were indissolubly united: the woman's body was drawn out of Adam's.

Adam and Eve were created with abundant gifts of grace that made them know the truth easily and enabled them to do good without difficulty. We call this state in which they were created the state of original justice; it made them just and holy before God. Their body was not subject to infirmity and pain; all other creatures were obedient to them because they were subject to God. If they had always remained in this blessed state, they would never have died, and they would have ascended into heaven from the place given them to live.

After making this man and this woman, God placed them in a most agreeable garden, appropriately called the paradise of delights. At the same time, he ordered them to love and serve him and to busy themselves in caring for the garden. He forbade them under threat of temporal and eternal death to eat the fruit of a certain tree called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,"[9] not that this fruit was noxious, but God gave the command only to test their obedience.

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9. Gen. 2:17.

Then the demon, under the guise of a serpent, tempted Eve. She tempted her husband, and thus Adam disobeyed God by eating the fruit that God had forbidden him to touch. A movement of pride led him to fall into this transgression that was also out of consideration for his wife, who had urged him to eat the fruit. God punished Adam for this sin by expelling him from the earthly paradise and by condemning him, his wife, and their children to all the miseries suffered in this life and to temporal and eternal death. He also condemned the woman to suffer the pangs of childbirth because she had incited her husband to offend God.

Humans thus became unhappy, for they had lost the grace of God and his holy love, which constitute their true happiness in this life.

The principal penalties and misery that Adam's sin makes us undergo in this world are ignorance of God, of ourselves, and of our duties; aversion to doing the good that God commands us to perform; inclination to do the evil that he forbids, and all the physical infirmities that afflict the body.

What causes all the pains we suffer is the fact that not only did Adam sin but we have all sinned with him and in him. We call this sin that we all committed in Adam *original sin* because we have it and contract it at the instant of our conception, even though we cannot know or explain how this happens.

Chapter 4

The Redemption of Humanity

Section 1—The Son of God made human

God did not abandon humans in their sin as he did with the wicked angels. After showing them his justice, God displayed his mercy to Adam and his descendants by sending his own Son to deliver them entirely from the slavery of sin, even though they did not deserve this and God knew that many would abuse his goodness and his grace.

On entering this world, the Son of God became incarnate by joining human nature in a substantial union with his divine person. The Father and the Holy Spirit did not become human, only the Son, whom in this case we call Jesus Christ, or the Incarnate Word. He is God and human at the same time because he possesses in his own right the divine nature by which he is God and because he has united a human nature to himself by which he is human.

Although there are two natures in Jesus Christ, there is only one person, who is the Son of God, the second person of the Most Holy Trinity. According to his divine nature, Jesus is equal to his Father; according to his human nature, he was born in time, and thus his Father is greater than he is. During his sojourn on this earth, he was entirely like other humans except for ignorance, inclination to evil, and sin, from all of which he was exempt, even from what we call original sin.

When the Son of God became human, the Holy Spirit formed his body in an instant out of the most pure blood of the Most Blessed Virgin and at the same time created and united his soul with the body he had fashioned. At that instant the Son of God personally united himself to this body and soul. Thus was the mystery of the Incarnation accomplished, that is, the union of the body and soul of Jesus Christ with the person of the Son.

Saying that the Holy Spirit formed the body of Jesus Christ, created his soul, and united this soul and body to the Son does not mean that the Father and the Son contributed nothing to this action along with the Holy Spirit. Because God performed this operation outside himself, the three persons together accomplished this mystery. We say that the Holy Spirit performed this action because it is an effect of the love of God for the human race that we attribute to the Holy Spirit, the essential love of the Father and the Son.

As God, Jesus Christ has a father—the eternal Father—who begets him from all eternity. As a man he has no father, only a mother: the Most Blessed Virgin, who bore him in her womb and brought him forth into the world. Although the Holy Spirit formed the body of Jesus Christ, he is not his father; he did not really beget him, nor did Saint Joseph, even though he is sometimes called his father in the holy Gospel. During his life Joseph was only his foster father, entrusted with the care of bringing him up.

The Most Blessed Virgin is truly and really the mother of Jesus Christ because she conceived him and brought him into the world. She is also in all truth the Mother of God, not that she gives birth to the divinity but because, having conceived the body of Jesus Christ, who is united to the person of the Son of God and is God, she is indeed the mother of the one who is both God and human. It was her privilege to be a mother and a virgin at the same time. She always remained a virgin and free from all sin.

Section 2—The birth of Jesus Christ; his principal actions up to the time of his baptism

During the reign of Augustus, Jesus Christ was born in the depths of a winter night in a stable near the town of Bethlehem. Eight days after his birth, he was circumcised. On that same day, the Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, following the orders received from God through an angel, gave him the name Jesus, which means *savior*, because he had come to save all people and to deliver them from sin and hell by offering himself to die on the cross.

To the name Jesus, we add that of Christ, which means *anointed*, or *sacred*, not that he was anointed or consecrated in a physical way but because he was filled with all the graces of the Holy Spirit. We also call Jesus Christ "our Lord" because he has a special right to rule over all Christians redeemed by his precious blood.

A few days after Jesus was circumcised, he was recognized as God and King by the three Magi, who had come on purpose from the Orient to adore him. On the fortieth day after his birth, the Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph brought him to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to God, as the Jewish Law prescribed, because he was a firstborn son. At the same time, the Most Blessed Virgin fulfilled the law concerning her purification and offered everything that the law prescribed for her son and for her, even though neither of them was obliged to submit to this law.

Some time later, an angel warned Joseph to flee into Egypt to avoid the persecution of King Herod and to take Jesus and the Most Blessed Virgin, his mother. Herod had heard the Magi say that a new King of the Jews was born. Because he had learned from the doctors of the law that this King would be born in Bethlehem, he searched for Jesus Christ to put him to death and ordered the massacre of all children in and near Bethlehem who were under two years of age.

When Saint Joseph, again informed by an angel, learned that Herod was dead, he returned with the child Jesus to Judea and eventually settled in the town of Nazareth. For this reason people thought Jesus was born in Nazareth and called him a Nazarene.

The Gospel tells us nothing more of note about Jesus Christ until he reached the age of thirty, except that his parents took him to Jerusalem when he was twelve to celebrate the feast of the Passover according to the custom of the Jews. Once the solemn ceremonies of this feast were over, Jesus' parents started on their return journey. Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem without their noticing it. Later, realizing that he was not with them, his parents looked an entire day for him without any success. They then went back to Jerusalem, where

they found him in the Temple, seated in the midst of the doctors, listening to them and asking them questions in so intelligent a manner that all who heard him were amazed at his wisdom and his replies.

At the age of thirty, Jesus Christ was baptized in the Jordan River by Saint John the Baptist. At the same time, the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove, and the eternal Father spoke from the heights of heaven, declaring Jesus Christ to be his beloved Son. Immediately thereafter, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert, where he fasted for forty days without eating or drinking and slept on the bare ground. To honor this fast of Jesus Christ, the Church instituted the Lenten fast.

He was then tempted three times by the devil, to teach us not to fear temptations and to instruct us how to resist them. By this period of solitude in the desert, Jesus Christ prepared himself to preach the Gospel, which he proceeded to announce in all the territory of Judea for three years, starting at his baptism and continuing until his death.

Section 3—The vocation and mission of the Apostles; the preaching, miracles, and life of poverty of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ came to bring us the New Law. For thirty years he prepared himself to proclaim it, and as soon as he left the desert, he began doing so. One of the first things he did was to select twelve of his disciples, whom he called Apostles, a name that means *envoys,* for he destined them to preach his Gospel alongside him. This Gospel is the New Law that he had come to announce to all humanity.

These Apostles are Simon, also called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James and John, the sons of Zebedee; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James, son of Alpheus, and his brother Jude, or Thaddeus; Simon the Canaanite; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

Simon and his brother Andrew were the first ones Jesus Christ chose to be his Apostles. On the same day, he summoned James and John, the sons of Zebedee, to follow him. He called Philip the next day. They left everything and followed him as soon as he called them. Some time later, passing by the tax gatherer's stall, he called Matthew, a publican (meaning a collector of revenue) and told him, "Follow me!"[10] This he did at once, leaving everything behind. Later, Matthew gave a great feast for Jesus and his disciples and invited several other publicans, with whom Jesus Christ gladly associated, for as he said, he had come to convert sinners and encourage them to do penance. In like manner he selected all the other Apostles. Next, he sent them

10. Matt. 9:9.

from town to town and village to village to preach. He also went on the same mission.

For three years, he traversed all Judea, instructing the people. With him went the Apostles and seventy-two disciples, whom he dispatched two by two into all the towns where he intended to go. They were to dispose the people so that they would profit by his preaching. He spoke everywhere and performed a great number of miracles to confirm his teaching. He restored health to the sick and sight to the blind, and he cured the lame and the paralyzed. He also raised three dead persons to life: the son of a widow at Nain, the daughter of the chief of the synagogue at Capernaum, and Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. In all these miracles his single purpose was the conversion of souls. While curing bodily infirmities, he also pardoned sins and urged sinners to sin no more.

From all over Judea and also from Syria, people brought him those who suffered from various maladies and cruel afflictions: the possessed, the insane, the paralytic. All these he cured. This great number of miracles caused him to be followed in a short time by a huge multitude drawn from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, and beyond the Jordan.

He strove to instruct all these people and to teach them his new doctrine, making known to them by lengthy discourses how much more excellent and perfect this New Law was than the Old Law and what sort of perfection this New Law required of them. The people were so surprised and touched by his teaching that five thousand men, not counting women and children, followed him and remained with him for days on end without eating or showing any concern about their welfare. This obliged Jesus to perform another miracle: feeding them all by multiplying five loaves of bread. All ate their fill. Just as Jesus lived frugally, so too did he feed them sparingly with some barley bread and a little bit of fish.

Although Jesus could have lived without lacking anything and have had whatever he desired, he always lived in such a poor manner that he sometimes had nothing to eat. He did not possess a home to call his own or even, as he said, a stone on which to lay his head. He was accompanied by his twelve Apostles, who were almost all of lowly origin. He required them also to experience severe poverty. On one occasion, they were forced to rub heads of grain in their hands to eat the kernels within.

On a number of other occasions, he showed how little he esteemed the rich and how much he loved poor people. To give public proof of this, he felt obliged to go to cure a centurion's servant but not to visit the home of a royal official whose son lay sick at Caper-

naum, even though the father had begged him to come to heal the boy. For the same reason, he told the parable of the heartless rich man, emphasizing the torments this man endured to show that those who are attached to wealth will be punished in hell and that poor people who have suffered the miseries of this life patiently for the love of God will be happy and filled with consolation in heaven.

During the time Jesus Christ was preaching his Gospel, about a year before his death, he resolved to manifest the glory he enjoyed also in his sacred humanity. His body, although a natural, mortal body, had been from the moment of his conception as glorious as it now is in heaven. Although the splendor of his glory had never appeared outwardly, he retired one day to a high mountain with three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John. While he was in prayer, he was transfigured before them: his face became as bright as the sun, and his clothes as white as snow. Suddenly the three disciples saw Moses and Elijah in glory as they conversed with Jesus about what was going to happen to him and what he would suffer in Jerusalem. Peter, astounded by what he beheld, said to Jesus that he wished they could remain in this spot and that if Jesus so desired, they would build three booths, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

While Peter spoke, a luminous cloud surrounded Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, from the depths of which a voice was heard saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him."[11] The three disciples were so overawed on hearing this voice that they fell to the ground with their faces in the dust. But Jesus immediately told them to get up, and they saw nothing but Jesus alone. As they all came down from the mountain, he forbade them to relate what they had seen until after he had risen. The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ took place in the presence of these three Apostles so that they could give testimony to this mystery in which Jesus gave them an assurance of his own Resurrection and imparted to them the hope that each one's body would also rise again some day, along with the body of the ever blessed one and destined to share in his glory.

Section 4—The principal persons whom Jesus converted

Jesus Christ drew to himself a large number of disciples, and he converted many souls to God by his preaching and the example of his holy life. The principal persons whom he converted are the Samaritan woman, Mary Magdalene, the adulterous woman, and a leading publican named Zacchaeus.

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11. Matt. 17:5.

The Samaritan woman was living with a man who was not her husband. When Jesus sat down by the well where she used to come to draw water, he spoke to her, revealing all the disorderly details of her life. He used the water she had come to draw to make her think of the water of grace she so sorely needed. He managed to make her desire it. This desire was effective, for the woman was so touched by what Jesus had told her that she went at once and called all the people in the town of Sychar, where she lived, urging them to come to see Jesus. They did so and begged him to visit their city and teach them. They willingly accepted what he told them and said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves."[12]

The second notable person whom Jesus Christ converted was Mary Magdalene. She belonged to a prominent family from Bethany but had become a public sinner and was known as such. Her heart having been touched with sincere repentance for her sins, she went to Jesus, who was dining at the house of Simon the Pharisee in the same city. Having prostrated herself at Jesus' feet, she bedewed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair, and then she poured over them an entire alabaster vase of precious ointment. The Pharisee showed his surprise that Jesus had allowed a sinful woman to touch him, but Jesus replied that he had forgiven the many sins of this woman because she had loved much. He then told the woman to go in peace and that all her sins were forgiven.

The third person whom Jesus won to God by his admirable mildness, telling her merely to go and sin no more, was a woman seized in the act of adultery. A number of Jews had come to Jesus, bringing her with them and asking him what should be done with her. The law commanded that she must be killed by stoning, but Jesus replied right away, saying that the one among them who was without sin should throw the first stone at her. Because not one of them dared to do so, they withdrew, leaving the woman alone with Jesus. He did not wish to condemn her any more than her accusers had, but he urged her to change her life.

Jesus also touched the heart of a leading publican, named Zacchaeus. When Jesus was passing through the city of Jericho, this man, who desired to see him but could not because he was short in stature, climbed up a sycamore tree at a spot where Jesus was to pass. On seeing him, Jesus told him to come down because he wished to stay at his house. Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus with great joy and reported to him that he was going to give half his fortune to poor people and was ready to make restitution fourfold to anyone he had defrauded.

12. John 4:42.

Jesus replied that salvation had come to his house, and he consented to dine with Zacchaeus to show him how fully he had restored him to God's favor.

Section 5—The Pharisees' hatred of Jesus Christ; his aversion for them

Although the impressive teachings, innumerable miracles, and extraordinarily holy life of Jesus Christ caused so many people to venerate and follow him, he was bitterly hated and persecuted by the Pharisees, the most outstanding and learned men among the Jews. They tried to destroy the reputation he had acquired, saying that because he cured people and performed other miracles on the Sabbath, he did not observe the law. On various occasions they also attempted to embarrass him in his teaching, for example, when they asked him whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar. Another time they wanted to know who in heaven would be the husband of a woman who had been married seven times. They asked which was the greatest commandment and whether John's baptism was from God. But Jesus answered them each time with such wisdom that he left them confused, so that finally they no longer dared ask him any more questions.

On his part Jesus Christ showed great aversion and deep indignation toward the Pharisees because of their pride and the false and insincere piety by which they led others astray. He showed this repugnance on many occasions. While dining with Simon the Pharisee, he reproached his host for the lack of respect and consideration he had shown him and pointed out the signs of great love that Mary Magdalene had given him, her deep sorrow, and her sincere conversion. He showed how much he esteemed her, the grace he had given her by forgiving all her sins, and his preference for her over Simon in his mind and heart, even though this Pharisee considered her as a sinful woman unworthy to approach Jesus.

Also, to let the Pharisees know what great displeasure he felt for them, he related the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. Both were praying at the same time in the Temple, but the former won for himself nothing but God's condemnation because of his pride, while the latter was justified because of the humility he showed in his prayer and the contrition he felt for his sins.

Jesus gave visible signs of his indignation by the maledictions that he often hurled at the Pharisees, particularly in chapter 11 of Saint Luke's Gospel and in chapter 25 of Saint Matthew's. He violently berated them for their hypocritical conduct. They wished to appear holy before others by observing minor external precepts of the law,

without taking any trouble to make themselves agreeable to God or to cultivate purity of heart, for their hearts were filled with injustice and sullied by sin. Therefore, Jesus Christ several times compared them to whitened sepulchers, outwardly pleasing to the eye but inwardly filled with the bones of the dead and rottenness.

The opposition Jesus Christ showed to the Pharisees and the reproaches he leveled at them because of their hidden sins caused them to seek every means to destroy him and put him to death. But because he knew they could not advance the hour set by his Father, Jesus Christ took no thought about all their plots. Moreover, the Pharisees did not dare try to seize him during the day; they feared the people, who loved Jesus and prized his teaching.

Section 6—The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem; the Last Supper

The Pharisees' obstinacy had reached its climax; their hatred for Jesus had overstepped all bounds. The hour fixed by the eternal Father when he would sacrifice his only Son to satisfy his justice was about to strike. Knowing that his death was near, Jesus wished to have himself recognized as King in the sight of those who hated him the most, thereby confounding the malice of the Pharisees and the impiety of the Jews, who were going to have him put to death as an evildoer in a few days' time. This was why he went to Jerusalem with his disciples.

When he drew near the city, he sent some of his disciples to bring him a donkey and her foal. He mounted the latter, and it was in such a state that he entered the city of Jerusalem and went to the Temple, accompanied by his disciples and a great multitude of people. Some spread their mantles on the road before him; others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the path Jesus would take. The crowds of people who marched ahead of him and followed behind cried aloud and cheered, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"[13]

The entire city was deeply stirred, and many onlookers ran up, asking who this might be. The people replied that this was Jesus, the Prophet from Nazareth. When he reached the Temple, he drove out those who were buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those doing business selling doves for the sacrifices, telling them that they should not thus profane a place that is God's house and therefore should be a house of prayer.

The chief priests and the scribes grew indignant at seeing all these marvelous happenings and hearing the children continually cry-

13. Luke 19:38.

ing out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Jesus Christ asked them whether they had not read in the Scriptures, "Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise."[14]

When Jesus Christ left the Temple, he said to his disciples, who had called his attention to its beauty, that not a stone would remain upon a stone. As they looked out at Jerusalem, he wept with compassion over this city and predicted its complete ruin.

Before he died, Jesus Christ did not content himself with having accomplished this striking action in front of the Jews. He did something else on the eve of his death, immediately before beginning his Passion. On this occasion he showed the deep love he had for his Apostles. With them he celebrated the Passover meal, ate the paschal lamb, and told them how greatly he had desired to share this Passover with them before he suffered. He wished to carry out this ceremony to observe the Law of the Jews, which ordered every family to eat a lamb on the feast of the Passover.

After eating the paschal lamb, he rose from the table, removed his outer garments, tied a cloth around his waist, took some water in a basin, and washed the feet of all the Apostles. Then, resuming his place at the table, as the Gospel tells us, having loved his own so much, he wished to give them at the close of his life the clearest pledge of his love that he could possibly bestow: he instituted the sacrament and the sacrifice of his body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine.

He took bread, and after blessing it and giving thanks to God, he broke it and gave it to his Apostles, saying, "Take this and eat; this is my body, which will be given up to death for you." Next, he took a cup full of wine, and after giving thanks, he gave it to his Apostles, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, which will be shed for many for the forgiveness of sins."[15]

It seems that Jesus Christ willed to wash his Apostles' feet immediately before instituting this sacrament to show us that we must be washed and cleansed by the grace of God and possess great purity of heart to share worthily in Communion. He made use of bread and wine as the material of this sacrament to teach us that he gives himself to us to nourish our soul, just as bread and wine are food for our body. In this sacrament he willed to remain with his Church until the end of time.

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14. Matt. 21:16.
15. Luke 22:19; Matt. 26:26–27.

Section 7—The Passion of Jesus Christ; what he suffered on the Mount of Olives and in the house of Caiaphas

The principal purpose for the coming of Jesus Christ into this world was to suffer and die for the sins of all humanity. For this reason, after spending all his life in suffering, he willed to be condemned to death, and as Saint Paul says, he even offered himself voluntarily, in the following manner.

After Jesus had eaten supper with his disciples, knowing that his hour had come and that he would be betrayed into the hands of the Jews, he went with his Apostles to a garden on the Mount of Olives to pray. Once he had arrived, he was overcome with fear and felt his heart oppressed with a sorrow so piercing and overwhelming that it caused him to sweat blood, which ran down his entire body. His eternal Father then sent an angel to strengthen him.

In this condition he prayed to his Father to let this chalice pass from him, but if this desire of his was not God's will, he prayed that God's will—not his own—be done. The natural repugnance for suffering that he felt as a man made him say the first words of his prayer; the submission that he felt for the orders and will of his Father elicited the last words. Jesus Christ acted thus to teach us that suffering was as painful for him as for others and to give us an example of how to vanquish fully all the repugnance we may feel.

As soon as Jesus had finished praying, Judas, the Apostle who had left the others toward the end of the Last Supper, arrived at the garden, leading a band of men armed with swords and clubs to arrest Jesus. The traitor was brazen enough to go up to Jesus and kiss him: the sign he had agreed on with those who accompanied him. He had told them, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him."[16] Nevertheless, Jesus showed him enough goodness to call him "friend" and to reproach him with his crime, saying, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying me?"[17] Then he told the soldiers accompanying Judas that he was the one whom they sought. At that moment they all fell prostrate on the ground.

This abrupt falling down, as sudden as it was unexpected, should have made them think what they were about and recognize the power of Jesus Christ. It did not affect them at all, for when they rose to their feet again, they laid hands on Jesus and bound him. At the same time, all his disciples, several of whom had protested they would follow him even to death, abandoned him and fled.

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16. Mark 14:44.
17. Luke 22:48.

First, the guards brought Jesus to the house of Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the High Priest for that year. Annas questioned Jesus about his followers and his teaching, to which Jesus replied that Annas should question instead those whom he had taught and who had heard what he had preached. At this response one of the servants gave him a blow on the cheek.

The chief priests, knowing perfectly well that they could not accuse Jesus of any true crime, next sought to find false witnesses to have him condemned to death. This stratagem did not succeed any better than the former ones; the accusations made by these witnesses did not agree. So they demanded that Jesus tell them—and the High Priest also adjured him to declare under oath—whether he was the Christ, the Son of God. When Jesus Christ affirmed that he was indeed such and that one day they would see him sitting at God's right hand, the High Priest rose, tore his garments, and exclaimed that Jesus had blasphemed, that no more witnesses were needed, and that he deserved death. The chief priests and the scribes who were present confirmed this sentence. Then those who held Jesus captive spat in his face. Having blindfolded him, they began striking him with their fists while others slapped him, crying out, "Prophesy, O Christ! Who is it that struck you?"[18] They uttered many other blasphemies against him.

While the soldiers and the servants were inflicting all these outrages on Jesus, Peter, the leader of the disciples, who had followed Jesus to the High Priest's house, caused him an even more bitter pang. The woman guarding the gate said to Peter that he was one of the disciples, but he denied it. The High Priest's servants and the soldiers of the court were warming themselves at the fire; Peter was doing the same. When they told him that he must be one of this man's disciples, he again denied it and declared that he did not know the man.

One of the High Priest's servants added that he had seen Peter in the garden with Jesus, but Peter again swore with an oath that this was not true and that he did not know what they were talking about. Just then, Jesus turned and looked at Peter to try to make him come back to himself. At the same time, Peter remembered what Jesus had told him, namely, that he would deny him three times, and going out, he wept bitterly.

This incident shows us how great human inconstancy is and how unreliable Peter's virtue was. Just a short time before, Peter was resolved to die for Jesus, and yet at a single word from a serving girl, he swore that he did not know him.

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18. Matt. 26:68.

Section 8—What Jesus suffered from Pilate

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people held a council to find a way of putting Jesus to death. They brought him from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium, where they handed him over to Pilate, the governor, and charged Jesus with leading the nation astray, forbidding the people to pay tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be the Messiah–King. Pilate told them to take him and judge him themselves according to their law, but the Jews replied that they were not allowed to put anyone to death. Pilate then asked Jesus whether he was the King of the Jews, and Jesus answered that he was indeed the King. On hearing this, Pilate told the people that he could not find any crime in this man, but they only insisted all the more, saying that he stirred up the people by his teaching, which he had begun in Galilee and continued even in Jerusalem.

Having learned that Jesus was from Galilee and happy to have found an expedient for ridding himself of this affair, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, the king of that country, who happened to be in Jerusalem at the time. After interrogating Jesus on the main accusations brought by the chief priests and the scribes who were present and not having succeeded in eliciting a single word of reply, Herod heaped scorn on him. After having him clad in a white garment in mockery, he sent him back to Pilate.

Because he could clearly see that the chief priests out of envy had delivered him to judgment, Pilate—a much more upright man than the leaders of the Jews—would have liked to free Jesus. However, he did not wish to be seen setting free on his own initiative and by his own authority a man accused of fomenting sedition, disturbing the public peace, and dissuading people from paying taxes to the emperor. Pilate wanted to find a way to win the consent of the Jews for what he wished to do. Therefore, he assembled those who accused Jesus and told them that even though neither he nor Herod had found Jesus guilty of any of the crimes with which he was charged, to satisfy them he was going to have Jesus scourged and then set free. Because the Jews were not satisfied with this proposal, Pilate sought still another means of freeing Jesus that he was certain would work.

It was customary that on the solemn feast of the Passover, the governor would grant the people their request for the freedom of a prisoner, whoever he might be. A celebrated criminal was in jail at the time, a man called Barabbas, who was a thief, a revolutionary, and a murderer. Pilate asked all those present which of the two they preferred to see set free, Jesus or Barabbas. He never thought they would ask for the release of the criminal instead of Jesus, in whom he could

find no fault. But the chief priests persuaded the crowd to demand Barabbas, and they all began to shout that Jesus should be crucified and Barabbas set free. How disturbing it is to see the lengths to which passion led the Jews against Jesus!

Seeing that the chief priests and the mob had rejected all the suggestions he had made and realizing that no other means remained of releasing Jesus, Pilate resolved to have him cruelly scourged. He thought that if he showed Jesus to them, covered all over with his own blood, the sight might move them to compassion.

After scourging Jesus, the soldiers led him to the courtyard of the Praetorium. Once the entire cohort had assembled, they stripped off his garments and put a purple robe on him. They twined together some thorn branches and made a kind of crown, placed it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. Bending the knee before him, they mocked him, crying out, "Hail, King of the Jews!"[19] They spat in his face, and seizing the reed from his hand, they beat him on the head with it. Such was the outrageous manner in which they treated Jesus.

Pilate, seeing Jesus in this pitiable state, brought him out before the Jews, saying that although he had treated him so harshly, he still did not find any crime in him. He hoped in this way to soften their hearts and make them willing to free him, but on seeing him, the chief priests and their servants cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!"[20] Once again, Pilate told them to crucify him themselves, for he found no crime in him, but the Jews replied that according to their law, he had to die because he had claimed to be the Son of God.

To set Jesus free, Pilate sought some further pretext, which Holy Scripture does not explicitly mention. The Jews, to cut short any further delay in putting him to death, cried out that if Pilate freed him, he was no friend of Caesar. These words forced Pilate to condemn Jesus because he feared that failing to do so might incur his own disgrace by the emperor.

Section 9—The death and burial of Jesus Christ

Having brought Jesus out of the Praetorium, Pilate sat down on the judgment seat and said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" He hoped that these words would mollify them, but the chief priests replied, "We have no king but Caesar." So Pilate ordered that what they desired should be done; he abandoned Jesus to them to be crucified.[21]

19. Matt. 27:29.
20. Mark 15:13; Luke 23:21.
21. John 19:14–16.

The governor's soldiers, after severely ill-treating Jesus and making him suffer all sorts of disgrace, removed the purple robe, put his own garments back on him, and led him away to be crucified. Because the cross they laid on his shoulders was heavy and Jesus' extreme exhaustion prevented him from carrying it alone, the soldiers forced a man named Simon, who was returning from the fields, to help Jesus carry the cross.

At a spot near Jerusalem called Calvary, Jesus Christ was crucified between two thieves, one on his right and the other on his left. Above his head they placed an inscription on the cross: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Passersby blasphemed him, wagging their heads and shouting, "You who would destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!" The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders also mocked him, saying, "He saved others, but he cannot save himself."[22] The two thieves crucified with him addressed him with the same reproaches. One of them, however, was in the end converted and begged Jesus to remember him when he entered into his kingdom. Jesus promised him that he would be with him in paradise that same day.

Jesus then prayed to his eternal Father to pardon those who were putting him to death. Toward the ninth hour, he cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,"[23] and then he immediately expired. Some time later, a soldier opened his side with a lance, and blood and water flowed out.

Behold what Jesus Christ suffered out of love for us! He could easily have avoided all these torments and so ignominious a death. One drop of his blood (even a single action of his), being of infinite value, would have sufficed to redeem us and merit for us all the graces that he obtained for us by his death. But the eternal Father willed to hand his only Son over to death on the cross—a death that Jesus voluntarily accepted—to help us understand the enormity of sin, to show us the excess of his love, to give us in the person of his Son a great example of humility and patience, and to stimulate us to love him with all the affection of our heart and to suffer willingly all the pain he will be pleased to send us.

As God, Jesus Christ could neither suffer nor die; nevertheless, we say that God suffered and died for us because we attribute to the person of the Son of God whatever is proper to both his human nature and his divine nature. By his death for us, Jesus Christ merited all the help we need to avoid evil and to do good, as well as the grace to

22. Matt. 27:40–42.
23. Luke 23:46.

be delivered from our sins, preserved from hell, and happy with him in heaven for all eternity.

Shortly after Jesus died, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, a clandestine disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate to allow him to take down the body of Jesus and bury it. When Pilate learned that Jesus had died, he ordered that the body be given to Joseph, who took it down from the cross with the help of Nicodemus, another disciple of Jesus. Having brought a mixture of around one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, they carried the body away, wrapped it in winding sheets along with the perfumes, as was the Jewish custom in burying the dead, and laid it in a sepulchre that Joseph had hewn out of the rock and in which no one had ever been buried. Then they closed the tomb by placing a large rock at the opening of the cave.

While the body of Jesus lay in the tomb, both his soul and his body (although separated from each other) remained united to the person of the Son of God. His soul then descended to the lower parts of the earth, to a place called limbo, and retrieved the souls of saints who had died in the grace and love of God before the death of Jesus Christ. When Jesus entered this place, all those present were bathed in the light of glory and beheld God as though they were in heaven. They entered heaven with Jesus Christ on the day of his Ascension.

Section 10—The Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus Christ; the Descent of the Holy Spirit

It would certainly not have been fitting for the body of Jesus Christ, who is God, to undergo corruption. Because it was most appropriate that Jesus Christ should give us in his own person an assurance of the glorious resurrection of our body, the Father and the Holy Spirit restored him to life, and he brought himself back to life on the third day after his death. He revived in a single instant, early on Sunday morning, but his new life is an immortal one, exempt from all the hardships of this present life. His soul was then reunited with his body, but it did not by this reunion acquire any new glory, for it had always been perfectly happy enjoying the vision of God and remaining united to the Person of the Word.

By his Resurrection Jesus Christ wished to fulfill the prophecies that had foretold this event, to confirm our faith in his divinity and humanity, to give his body the glory it deserves, and to confirm us in the expectation of our own resurrection. After Jesus Christ arose, he remained on earth for forty days, during which time he appeared to the Most Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, and the other disciples to instruct and give them further assurances that he had truly risen.

On the fortieth day after his Resurrection, he ascended body and soul to heaven by his own power and in the sight of all his disciples. He took with him the souls of the just whom he had delivered from limbo. He willed to preserve in his glorified body the scars of the wounds that he had received during his Passion and that point out for us the triumph he had gained over sin, death, the flesh, the world, and the devil. They also confirm our belief in the Resurrection of his body and strengthen our confidence in God by helping us recall these wounds and all that he suffered for us. On the day of judgment, they will also serve both to condemn the malice of sinners who did not profit by his sufferings and to console the blessed at the sight of the sources of grace that brought about our salvation.

Ever since his glorious Ascension, Jesus Christ has remained in heaven. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that he is there, seated at the right hand of his Father—not that God has a right hand or a left, for he has no body—to help us understand that Jesus Christ is equal to his Father and that in heaven he enjoys the same power, honor, and glory as the Father does. The text says that he is seated, indicating that he is resting after all his sufferings and enjoying the undisturbed possession of his kingdom. In heaven Jesus Christ, as the God–Man and our Mediator, offers the prayers of all the faithful to God his Father and presents himself on their behalf as their intercessor with God.

Ten days after Jesus ascended to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to his Apostles and disciples, as he had promised. The Holy Spirit came down on the holy Apostles in the form of tongues of fire. Although they had already received many graces, they still did not have enough zeal, strength, and courage to preach the Gospel fearlessly and to build up the newborn Church. He taught them all the truths they must preach. In a single moment, he imparted knowledge of various languages. He filled them with an abundance of grace and an altogether surprising strength and courage to dispose them to go out and preach the Gospel throughout the world. He also gave them the power of performing miracles and the gift of prophecy, which they needed to establish the faith and to help their converts believe the truths that they were going to announce.

The Holy Spirit no longer communicates himself visibly, as to the Apostles on Pentecost, or usually imparts the gifts of tongues, prophecy, and miracles as he did for several initial converts. He communicates himself invisibly every day to the souls who live in God's grace or dispose themselves to receive it in the sacraments. The Holy Spirit gives them abundant graces in proportion to their motives. As for souls in the state of sin who show no willingness to give it up, the Holy Spirit does not dwell in them; he gives them no share in his gifts.

Chapter 5

The Church

Section 1—The Church; the marks by which we know her

When Jesus Christ came into this world, he did not wish to select for himself, as was the case under the Old Law, a particular nation that he would consider as his own people. Because he came to save, withdraw from sin, and sanctify all people, he gave everyone the same means of salvation and took steps to join them all into one body. For this purpose he established a new religion and gave it the New Law.

His Apostles and his disciples, who had all come together in the same place and received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, began to form a new society of the faithful. Saint Peter converted three thousand people on that day and five thousand a few days later. This society professing one and the same faith and forming a single religion we call *church*, a name that means *family, society,* or *assembly*.

This Church has continued to exist from the time of the holy Apostles down to our own and will continue to the end of time without alteration or change in its beliefs and without interruption. We must believe this truth. Although we obviously cannot know it by our own knowledge, we must rely on the Gospel and on Tradition.

Just as the faithful on earth are united with one another and make up a single body, they also form one society with the faithful departed, who have left this life and have entered into eternal life. However, there is this difference: the faithful who are living in a state of mortal sin still belong to the Church because they have faith and can regain the love and grace of God by turning away from sin, but those who have died in mortal sin are damned and no longer belong to the Church, even if they have faith; they are no longer capable of living by grace and will never be able to love or possess God again.

Even before the coming of Jesus Christ, there has always been a church, from the time of Adam. All who were saved from the beginning of the world down to Jesus Christ were saved only by reason of the merits of this same Jesus Christ, whom they believed to be the expected Messiah promised by God. God sanctified them only through the grace that Jesus Christ was to win for them by his death. They did not make up a society, a visible grouping of the faithful such as the Church is now, but they were simply united to God by faith and by the charity that inspired them.

Broadly speaking, the Church is the society of all the faithful, living and dead, who are united to one another in Jesus Christ. We divide the Church, taken in this general sense, into the Church militant, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant. The triumphant Church is the society of the saints in heaven. The suffering Church is the society of the faithful who died in God's grace and are suffering for a time in purgatory. The militant Church is the society of all those now living on this earth, united in the one true faith. We call this Church *militant* because it must constantly do battle against the enemies of the faith and of religion and because the faithful who compose it are constantly struggling with the enemies of their salvation.

Complete union and continual communication of spiritual goods exist among the three sections of the Church, which share the spiritual benefits of graces, merits, suffrages, satisfactions, and good works. The saints in heaven help us by their prayers; the souls in purgatory can do the same for us while we afford them relief by our prayers. The living honor the saints in heaven and in their need pray to them.

The Church we speak of here as the Church militant has existed since the time of Jesus Christ and still exists. This Church is the assembly, or society, of all those who believe in God and in Jesus Christ and the truths he taught. The members are gathered together in a single body. They are submissive to the pope, who is the Church's visible head, and to their lawful pastors. This Church is not an inert body, for the Holy Spirit enlivens it by the grace and the charity poured into the hearts of the faithful when they receive Baptism, the sacrament that gives them entry into the Church.

Because several other societies on earth, especially those made up of heretics, take up and usurp the name *church*, we need to have some outward signs to help us discern the true Church from those other societies that falsely appropriate the name but are not the true Church of Christ. Four unmistakable marks identify for us the true Church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

The Church is one. There is only one Church outside of which we cannot be saved. All the Catholics who comprise it profess one and the same faith, share in the same sacraments, are filled with the same Spirit, strive to practice the same charity, aspire to the same end, and obey the same pastors.

She is holy because Jesus Christ, her head, is holiness itself; her teaching, her commandments, and her sacraments are holy; all who belong to her are sanctified, some by Baptism and others by the grace that is in them, and all are obliged to tend to holiness.

She is catholic, that is, universal. This is true with respect to the people who make up the Church, for they belong to different nations,

sexes, and social conditions. It is true regarding place and time because she extends throughout the world, is as old as the world, and will subsist until the end of time.

She is apostolic because the Apostles deposited with her all the truths that Jesus Christ had taught them and because she has kept these truths uninterruptedly until the present day.

Section 2—The members of the Church

To belong to the Church, it suffices that a person be baptized and have faith. Thus, the wicked are members as well as the good, and no one who truly believes is excluded except those who have been excommunicated. They have rebelled against the Church and have for a time been separated from her fellowship. They are to be punished for their public and scandalous disobedience until such time as they humble themselves and do penance for their sins. Although it is true that the faithful who happen to be in the state of mortal sin are not joined by charity to the other faithful in the state of grace, they are united with them through Baptism and by faith, and they can share in the Church's spiritual benefits.

Six kinds of people are completely separated from the Church: pagans live without any religious practice whatsoever; atheists do not believe that God exists; idolaters adore false gods; infidels acknowledge a god but do not believe in Jesus Christ; heretics believe in God and in Jesus Christ but do not believe all that Jesus Christ taught or all that the Church obliges us to believe; schismatics (a word that means *divided)* believe the same truths as those of the Church but do not wish to submit to the Church and to the pope, her visible head.

Adults who have not yet received Baptism but are taking instruction in preparation for it were known as catechumens in early times. Although they are not complete members of the Church—they have not yet received Baptism—they are, nonetheless, allowed to come to Church because they are preparing to become members. They can be present and take part in the instructions that are given there, and they can assist at the early part of the Mass, which for this reason was once known as the Mass of the Catechumens.

Section 3—The power and the authority of the Church

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus Christ left to his Church, through his Apostles, two prerogatives that belong to him by right: power and the teaching ministry. He gave the Church two kinds of power: the power of orders and the power of jurisdiction.

The power of orders belongs to priests and other ministers of the Church in virtue of their ordination. By this power the Church can forgive all types of sin, a power Jesus Christ gave to her and to no one else. Priests who are pastors and those, without being such, whom the bishops legitimately approve exercise this power.

The power of jurisdiction, which the pope and the bishops receive and exercise as the successors of the Apostles, includes 1) the power to ordain the ministers needed by the Church, 2) the power to bind and to loose, that is, to censure and absolve from censure the souls committed to their care and to remit the penalties due to sins that have been forgiven by applying to them by means of indulgences the merits of the superabundant sufferings of Jesus Christ, and 3) the power to govern the faithful according to the teaching and discipline of the Church.

By the discipline of the Church we mean the regulations that the Church, under the authority Jesus Christ entrusted to her, makes concerning morals, the conduct of ecclesiastics, customs, and the ceremonies of the divine sacrifice and the liturgical services.

This power of jurisdiction, which resides in the principal ministers of Jesus Christ and the pastors of his Church, extends and applies to all whom the reception of Baptism has made subject to the Church; it does not apply to those who are entirely and notoriously separated from her, such as infidels and heretics.

The doctrine that Jesus Christ left to his Church is his teaching that the Apostles preached to the faithful of their time and bequeathed, whether in Holy Scripture or by oral Tradition, to the pastors who succeeded them.

The Church can neither change nor add to this teaching. The only right she has concerning doctrine and matters of faith is to explain the mysteries and the words of Holy Scripture and to determine for us the books we must accept as belonging to Holy Scripture in the belief that they were written by the action of God's Spirit. This truth made Saint Augustine say that he would not believe the Gospel unless led to do so by the authority of the Church.

The Church received this authority from Jesus Christ when he said of himself, "Whoever listens to you listens to me," and, "If anyone does not listen to the Church, let him be as the publican and the pagan."[24]

The Church speaks to us through the councils, the popes, the legitimate pastors in every century, and the Doctors of the early ages. We hear the words of the Church by submitting to the decisions of the councils and the popes and to the unanimous sentiment of the saints and the ancient Doctors.

24. Luke 10:16; Matt. 18:17.

A Council is a general assembly of bishops gathered in the name of all Catholics to uphold the faith against heretics, to elucidate matters of faith, and to regulate the Church's moral questions, practices, and ceremonies. Because whatever the General Councils, as we call them, decide is a matter of faith, Saint Gregory wished that the same respect be shown for the first four Councils as for the four Gospels.

We must listen to the Church as we would to Jesus Christ and God. We must consider her decisions on belief and doctrine as so many articles of faith because the Church has the same authority as Jesus Christ. She is the pillar and ground of truth and will never fall away from the faith, as Jesus Christ assures us in the person of Saint Peter. We must not doubt anything that the Church proposes for our belief. We ought to submit our mind to all her decisions in matters of faith and religion with as much simplicity as we submit to the Gospel.

Section 4—The government of the Church

When Jesus Christ left his Apostles and visibly departed from his Church by ascending to heaven, he did not thereby give up his rule over her. He has always remained her head, and because he formed her, he continues to do so every day by uniting all his faithful in one society. Because he also gave her his laws, he continues to guide and govern her invisibly by his Spirit.

He likewise communicates life interiorly to his members—who have all received his divine Spirit and are united with him—but in two different ways. The just are united to him by an interior and spiritual union effected by the Holy Spirit, who inspires them, and by sanctifying grace, which they possess. We call this union the communion of saints. Sinners, however, are joined to him only by an external and visible bond through their profession of faith, their possible sharing in the sacraments, and their submission to the pastors of the Church. We call this union the communion of the Church; although it suffices to make a person Catholic and a member of the Church, it does nothing to bring about his salvation unless he is also interiorly united to Jesus Christ.

However, the invisible guidance of Jesus Christ is not sufficient to govern the Church. Because she is an exterior and visible body, she must have a visible head to rule over her, something that Jesus Christ took care to provide immediately after his Resurrection. He handed over the government of the Church to Saint Peter and established him as head and universal pastor of the Church. He commissioned the other Apostles, under the leadership of Saint Peter, to spread the Church and to be pastors of particular nations. He also willed that

there should be other priests and ministers to serve the needs of the Church by applying themselves to instructing the faithful, administering the sacraments, and serving at the holy altars. This external government of the Church has always been maintained, century after century, from the time of the Apostles down to our own day. The popes have uninterruptedly followed one other as successors of Saint Peter and have always exercised full authority over the entire Church.

The bishops who succeeded the other Apostles were made pastors over various smaller areas, called dioceses, and the priests were established to serve the local churches of a city, part of a city, or a village in the countryside. Such has always been the regular and visible government of the Church; all these pastors rule the Church only under the authority of Jesus Christ and as the dispensers of his mysteries.

Section 5—The head and the pastors of the Church; their jurisdiction and rank

Because the Church is supposed to spread throughout the world, she needs a large number of pastors. Furthermore, good order requires a hierarchy among them. Some pastors need to have power and authority over others subordinate to them in rank. This has always been the situation in the Church from the time of Jesus Christ to the present day. The pastors established by Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and Tradition include the pope, the patriarchs, the archbishops, the bishops, the pastors of a parish, and other priests attached to a particular local church.

Clearly, the power of orders is equal in the pope, in bishops, in pastors of a parish, and in all other priests of the Church. The pope and the bishops have no more power than a simple priest when it is a question of consecrating the body of Christ and of forgiving sins. But it is not the same as regards the power of jurisdiction, which is different and more extensive in the former than in the latter because the functions they exercise in the Church are more or less exalted, more or less widespread, and subordinated to one another.

The pope is neither subject nor subordinate to anyone. Patriarchs are subordinate to the pope; archbishops, to patriarchs if these latter are their superior; bishops, to the archbishop who is their metropolitan; pastors of a parish, to their bishop; the priests attached to the parish, to the pastor in charge.

The pope is the bishop of Rome, the vicar of Jesus Christ, the visible head of the Church, and the successor to Saint Peter. Like Saint Peter, he has authority and power over the entire Church. Because of this full authority and power of the pope over all the Church, we call it the Roman Church to stress the submission that all the pastors of

the Church and all the faithful must show to the bishop of Rome and the dependence that all are obliged to have in his regard.

Patriarchs, or primates, are bishops who have jurisdiction over the archbishops and the bishops of a kingdom or several provinces. Archbishops are bishops who have jurisdiction over several bishops in one or more provinces.

Bishops are priests legitimately established and consecrated to be general pastors over a province or part of a province, which we call a diocese. They have full power to ordain priests and other ministers throughout their diocese, and they enjoy full jurisdiction over the souls subject to them. Bishops alone have the power to administer the two sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders.

Pastors of parishes are priests appointed by the bishop in each diocese to govern, under the jurisdiction of the bishop, a particular church in the diocese. They exercise spiritual government over the souls entrusted to them, to whom they must administer the sacraments and preach the word of God. They must watch over the parish to lead the people to live conformably to the rules of the holy Gospel. The pope, the bishops, and the pastors of a parish have no more power than other priests, except with regard to this power of jurisdiction that is proper to them. Priests are ministers of the Church ordained by the bishop. They have the power to consecrate the body of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine, to forgive sins, to administer the sacraments, and to preach the word of God.

Although all priests in virtue of their ordination have the power to forgive all sins, to administer the sacraments, and to preach the word of God, they cannot exercise this power unless they are an appointed pastor or priest or have the bishop's authorization to do so. They do not have any jurisdiction over the souls of the diocese or the parish unless the bishop in whom this jurisdiction resides in its fullness has given it to them.

In the past, bishops ordained only as many priests as were necessary to serve the needs of the local churches in the diocese, to administer the sacraments to the souls they were in charge of, and to give spiritual assistance to all. They assigned to a local church all priests and other ministers they ordained, so that there would not be any unemployed ones or any who did not exercise the duties of their ministry under the bishop's authority and subject to the control of the pastor of the parish to whom the bishop had assigned them.

Section 6—The subordinate ministers of the Church

Jesus Christ willed that there be other ministers of his Church so that bishops and priests would have the help they need, for they cannot by themselves attend to the many functions that must be exercised in the Church, namely, the sacrifice of holy Mass, conducting the divine services, and instructing and sanctifying the faithful. These ministers are deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, lectors, and porters.

Deacons are ministers of the Church who have the power to render the bishop and the priests important services in the course of the Mass, to read the holy Gospel in public, to administer the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, and to preach the word of God. When Holy Communion was given under both species, the bishop or the priest distributed the body of Jesus Christ to the faithful, and the deacons offered them the precious blood; they sometimes also distributed the body of Christ when necessary. In the early Church, deacons were also in charge of administering the Church's goods; they distributed alms according to the directions the bishop gave them.

Subdeacons are ministers of the Church whose functions are to prepare the bread, wine, and sacred vessels used in the sacrifice, to serve the deacon at Mass, and to chant the Epistle. They are called subdeacons because they rank below the deacons.

Acolytes are Church ministers whose duties are to light the candles, to carry the candelabra with lighted candles on it, to present the cruets at the sacrifice of the Mass, and to serve low Mass. They are called *acolytes,* which means *followers,* because they follow and accompany those who carry out the sacred functions during the sacrifice.

Exorcists are Church ministers who are established and empowered to exorcise and drive demons out of the body of the person who is possessed. They also take care of the holy water and the vessels in which it is kept, which they present to the priest when he makes the aspersion. At present, exorcists no longer perform exorcisms for possessed people. Because this function demands great discretion and holiness in those who carry it out, the Church has judged it proper that bishops should assign this role only to priests of great virtue and exemplary piety.

Lectors are ministers of the Church whose task is to read Holy Scripture during the Divine Office and to teach the first principles of Christian doctrine to children and others of the faithful who are ignorant of these principles.

Porters are ministers entrusted with the task of opening and closing the doors of the church, of preventing those who are forbidden to enter from doing so, and of seeing to it that laypeople do not come

too close to the altar. They also decorate and sweep the church and ring the bells.

In times past the bishop directly or the pastor of the parish employed all these internal ministers of the Church as needed for the general good of the diocese and of the parishes and particular churches that depended on the diocese. At present these ministers no longer, as a rule, exercise any functions in the Church other than those related to the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Chapter 6

The General Judgment, the Resurrection of the Body, and Life Everlasting

Although Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, where he lives forever in bliss according to his humanity and equal to his Father according to his divinity, nevertheless, it is certain and beyond doubt that on the last day—a day known to God alone, when the world will come to an end—he will descend from heaven in visible form to judge all who have died: the just as well as the sinners, no matter what century they lived in or their age, sex, social rank, and condition, and all who are living on earth when he comes. The latter will die and rise before appearing at the last judgment.

It is true that all people, immediately after death, are judged in particular by the same Jesus Christ. This judgment is based on all their thoughts, words, actions, and omissions; on all the gifts of fortune, nature, grace, body, and soul that they received during the entire course of life, and on the good or evil use they made of the time God gave them to work out their salvation. This judgment is definitive and irrevocable. Once it is concluded, the good—those who died in the grace of God and have made full satisfaction for their sins—are accompanied to heaven by their guardian angels. Those who have something to expiate for their sins are sent to purgatory, while the wicked—those who died in mortal sin—are cast into hell to be tormented by the devils. Thus all are destined either to eternal happiness or to everlasting woe.

But God, not satisfied with establishing a particular judgment, willed that there should also be a general judgment at the end of the world, where all people will appear and be judged, one after another, as though they had not been judged at the hour of their death. This judgment will take place to make manifest before the entire world

the justice of all the particular judgments and to make known the hidden merits and secret virtues of some souls and the glory that has been their reward. It will disclose the hidden and abominable sins of the damned, as well as their confusion and condemnation, and also give the bodies of all their due reward and punishment, thus making the body share in the eternal happiness or unhappiness of the soul.

Jesus Christ mentions the signs, some of them external and palpable, that will precede this general judgment. Prior to the judgment, there will be earthquakes, pestilence, and famine in various places, and awesome and fearful portents in the heavens. Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

In addition, the Apostle Paul tells us, there will be three other signs of considerable significance: the Gospel will have been preached and accepted throughout the world; nearly all Christians will lack faith and religion, and the Antichrist—who, according to Paul, is a man and the son of perdition[25]—will exalt himself so much against what is called and honored as God that he will cause a throne to be set up for himself in the Temple of God, wishing to make himself be regarded as God.

Other signs will immediately precede the last judgment: signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars. On earth people will be consumed with fear at the unnatural sounds coming from the sea and the waves, and they will wither away for fear and expectation of what is to happen on the earth. Immediately after those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon and the stars will no longer shed their light, and the stars will seem to fall from the heavens. Therefore, we call that day a day of darkness and obscurity.

Then Jesus Christ, coming to judge humanity, will appear on a shining cloud, seated on a throne of Cherubim and holding his cross. Accompanied by legions of angels, he will be overpowering in his majesty, power, and glory. He will send out his angels to gather together all people from the four corners of the world, from the farthest boundaries of the earth to the extremities of heaven.

All those in heaven and hell will come back to earth to be present at this great and final judgment. At the same instant, all people will revive and come back to life, and the same body that they had while living on earth will be reunited with their immortal soul, which had never ceased to live.

The saints will rise with a glorious body brilliant with light like the sun before God. They will no longer be able to suffer hunger or thirst, cold or heat, or any kind of pain whatever. They will be spiri-

25. The NRSV translation of this phrase is "the lawless one" (2 Thess. 2:3).

tual, insofar as this is possible. The wicked, however, will rise with horrible and frightful forms.

The Father and the Holy Spirit will take no part in this judgment. Jesus Christ alone, as the God–man, will be the judge. As he says in the holy Gospel, because he is the Son of Man, he alone has received the power of judging.

It seems eminently fitting that humanity should be judged by a man. One reason why the Son of God made man has been established as judge of all people is so that in judging them he can throw the damned into utter confusion because of their negligence in the service of God and their ingratitude to him. For they did not wish to profit by the death of the one who, as God, was incapable of sinning, innocence itself, but willing to suffer throughout his life and to deliver himself up to a shameful death to bring them back to the right path and confirm them in the possession of his kingdom, which they had unfortunately lost by their sins.

Although all must appear at the last judgment and be examined, this judgment will take but a moment. Jesus Christ will announce publicly and openly his sentence on the elect and on the damned. At the same time, the former will enter heaven, and the others will depart into hell, for purgatory will cease to exist. Those who on that day will not have finished making up for their sins will complete their purification by suffering as much in an instant as they would have endured in purgatory until completely purged of their sins.

A universal conflagration will then consume the earth; the whole universe will be renewed; time will come to an end, and only eternity will continue to exist.

After the last judgment, the saints will dwell in heaven, where they will enjoy eternal life. They will behold God as he is and will love him eternally; they will adore and praise him in a manner worthy of him. There they will enjoy all kinds of good without any evil, and they will possess as much happiness as accords with how much they will have loved God, how perfectly they will have imitated Jesus Christ, and how patiently they will have endured their suffering.

Only those who died in the grace of God will enjoy all these blessings. Those who died in the state of mortal sin will dwell in hell, where they will never see God and will suffer every imaginable woe, unrelieved by any good and with no consolation. They will have no other company but that of the demons, and they will burn eternally, body and soul. They will ceaselessly blaspheme God's holy name. Because they can never repair this tremendous loss, they will curse themselves for losing paradise through their own fault. Such will be the end and the destiny of humanity: the happiness of some and the

total woe of others. There we will find all that we believed in and hoped for in this life; however, we also have reason to fear this end if we are unfortunate enough to live in sin and, being careless about our salvation, to die impenitent.

Treatise 2[1]

The Second Duty of a Christian, Which Is to Love God

Chapter 1

Charity, Which Makes Us Love God

Section 1—The necessity of loving God

It would be of no use for Christians to have faith and to believe the eternal truths that Jesus Christ came to teach and that the Church proposes to them unless their faith were inspired by charity and accompanied by good works. This led the Apostle Saint James to say that faith without works is dead, meaning that it is of no use for salvation. The same Apostle compares faith not accompanied by good works with that of the demons: it produces no effect in those who possess it. It makes them even in this world gravely culpable before God; finally, after this life, it likens them to the devils, who although they believe in God, hate him and will hate him eternally.

Thus Christians have an essential duty to cultivate charity. Everything they must do in this world to bring about their salvation can be reduced to this virtue, namely, to do good by practicing the virtues that lead to heaven and to avoid sin, which if they fell into would make them unworthy of and ban them from heaven if they were to die in this unfortunate state. Furthermore, everything God orders us

1. *Duties of a Christian to God,* vol. 1, part 1, treatise 2; *Œuvres Complètes,* 862–97; Cahiers lasalliens 20, 89–192.

to do consists of the practice of this virtue, for all the commandments of God depend on it, as Jesus Christ assures us in the holy Gospel.

Charity includes two aspects: love of God and love of neighbor. Our Lord helps us to understand this by saying that there are only two commandments, which contain the whole law. The first of these is to love God with all our mind, with all the affection of our heart, and with all our strength; the second is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Thus, charity is a virtue God gives us that makes us love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Of ourselves we cannot possess this virtue. God gives it to us, provided we are properly disposed to receive it. Because he is our center and our true end, he takes pleasure and delight in imparting it to us. He desires nothing more than to see that we have a continual affinity and inclination toward him as we ought, that we fix our heart on him, and that we direct all our affection to rejoicing in him. When he sees us with this holy intention, he cannot fail to give us the gift of charity, which is his holy love. That we even possess these motives is an effect of his goodness.

We can love God in two ways. First, we can love God for himself as the essential good, that is to say, as being in himself infinitely good. We call this loving God with pure love. Second, we can love God for our own sake as being our good, that is to say, our happiness in this life and our reward in the next. We call this loving God with an interested love.

To love God for himself means to love him purely because he possesses to an infinite degree every sort of perfection, which makes him infinitely loveable.

To love God for our sake means to love him because he created us, drew us away from sin, and loves us. It can also mean loving God out of fear of being damned or out of a desire to be rewarded by him. Such love has no other motive than one or the other of those mentioned here.

The first manner of loving God, being entirely detached from self-love, is pure and disinterested; the love that this produces in us is called the love of goodness. The second manner of loving God, being intermingled with love of self, is not exempt from some self-seeking. However, because this self-seeking is basically the pursuit of our salvation, which God wishes to bestow on us and desires us to will it and work for it, the love that flows from this intention is good, just, and holy. According to the Council of Trent, it is a gift of God and a movement of the Holy Spirit.

It is most advantageous for us to adopt these motives that are concerned with the spiritual good of the soul. They stir us to love

God and prevent us from offending him, especially when we are not sufficiently faithful to God and when we do not sufficiently detest the least sins or whatever displeases God. We need to resolve to love God through motives that refer only to him and that make us love him only for his own sake and because of his holiness and his being.

However, it is not right for us to love God merely out of consideration for the temporal goods we have received from him or for the expectation that he will give them to us, thus fulfilling our desires. Such a love would not be love of God but love of creatures. It would be these temporal goods that we love, and our love for God would be subordinated to the love we might have for such goods. Because they would be our true motive and end, it would be our entire goal to possess these temporal goods and not to possess God, who ought to be our unique end and be looked on as our sovereign good.

Section 2—The manner of loving God; the signs that can make known that we love God

We must, says our Lord, love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength.

To love God with all our heart means loving him with all the affection we possess, with no reservations and leaving no room in our heart for anything other than God. He should possess it entirely, just as we also hope to possess him fully in eternity as a reward for this love. We must not, then, imagine that we can share our heart with God and with the world or attach our heart to God and to creatures. Such a sharing would be insulting to God, who cannot abide such a division. We certainly can love creatures and some things in the world, but we must love them only in reference to God; thus, we no longer love the creature but God in the creature.

To love God with all our soul means being constantly ready and disposed not only to give up all things, even our life (which is signified by the word *soul),* to obtain and preserve the love of God but to spend every moment of our life in loving and serving him. To love God with all our mind means to dwell constantly on him or to refer all our thoughts to him so that we think only of what can lead us to love him or maintain us in his holy love.

To love God with all our strength means that we do not retain within us the love we have for God but manifest it outwardly in our actions. Not content with doing some good, we strive to do all the good we can to give proof of the love we have for God.

It is true that all these conditions, thus understood, lead us to the perfection of God's love, and it would seem that this is what Jesus

Christ wanted when he explained this commandment. But to reduce it to what is absolutely demanded of us, let us say that to love God with all our heart (all the other conditions amount to this one) means to love God above all things without preferring anything else to him or loving anything else as his equal. It means being ready to lose everything, even life itself, rather than offend God, and to do this effectively whenever the occasion arises.

We are in this world only to love God, and we deserve to be called religious only insofar as we do love him. We cannot be acceptable to God if we do not love him. This love of God is so necessary for us that it alone can ensure our observance of the commandments of God in a Christian manner. God's love alone can give and preserve the life of our soul, for the soul lives only insofar as it possesses God's grace and charity. Saint John assures us of this when he says that whoever does not love God abides in death,[2] that is, in God's presence he is as though dead.

Although we cannot be certain as long as we live on this earth whether we possess true love for God, there are various signs that to some extent can give us some assurance. The first sign is when we ardently desire to do the will of God in all things. The second is when we fulfill exactly what we know God demands of us. The third is when we often think of and gladly converse with God. The fourth is when we do good to everyone, even those who hate us or do us harm. The fifth is when we feel great contempt for the world and all earthly things.

Therefore, if we wish to love God truly, one of our first concerns should be to strive to perform all our actions for his love. Because habits are acquired and fortified only through acts, we should also make acts of love for God frequently during the day. As soon as we reach the use of reason, we are obliged to make such acts and to love God when assailed by some strong temptation and when in evident danger of death.

This is how we can make an act of love for God: "My God, I love you more than all things and more than myself; because you are infinitely good, I prefer to die rather than offend you."

We should not imagine whenever we say to God, "My God, I love you with all my heart," that we love God. To speak thus shows only that we wish to love God, not that we love him in reality. This sentiment is genuine only when we not only want to love God but also prove this by our actions. Saint John says, "He who says that he loves God but does not do his will is a liar, and truth is not in him."[3]

2. "Whoever does not love abides in death" (1 John 3:14).

3. 1 John 2:3–4.

Section 3—The obligation we have to love our neighbor

We must not be satisfied with loving God; we must also love our neighbor. This is the second commandment of the New Law that our Lord proposes to us; it is like the first, he says, because it includes it. Saint John tells us that whoever does not love his neighbor while claiming to love God is a liar, for if we do not love our brother or our sister, whom we see, how can we love God, whom we do not see?

When we say that we must love our neighbor, we mean that we must love all people, our neighbor as well as our brothers and sisters, for we are all children of one Father. This does not mean, however, that we must love all of them equally. Some we should love more than others, namely, all true Christians who live according to the law and the teachings of Jesus Christ. They belong to us in a far more special manner than the rest of humanity; they are our brothers and sisters through the divine birth they experienced in Baptism, which made them God's children. Others are our brothers and sisters only through their merely natural and human birth. We have contracted another union, a much stronger one, with Christians because we are all members of Jesus Christ and of the Church and make up but one body with them. The Holy Spirit, by giving life to the Church, produces this union among the faithful and joins them all closely to Jesus Christ.

We are obliged to love our parents in a special way because they gave us life and brought us up. We should show them deep gratitude for all the benefits we have received from them. God wills us to fulfill these duties to them and also to love our near relatives more than other people.

Charity to our neighbor obliges us to love him as ourselves for the love of God. We can love ourselves in two ways, one bad and the other good. The first way is to love ourselves in view of satisfying ourselves, taking our enjoyment where we can find it and rejoicing in the love we bear ourselves; it means not loving ourselves for God or with regard to God.

The second manner, the good one, of loving ourselves is to do so for God's sake and to desire the good things that God wants us to desire for ourselves, namely, the benefits of grace and future glory, and whatever can lead thereto, and the avoidance of the evil that God wants us to avoid, which is simply sin and whatever can make us succumb to it.

The first manner of loving ourselves is purely natural because it is only grace that can make us love things with reference to God and not for the mere satisfaction of ourselves in the enjoyment of this life's pleasures. The love we bear ourselves, which makes us desire and se-

cure for our soul all the benefits that can make it truly happy in this life and in the next, is a supernatural love because nothing but grace can make us aspire to the possession of God and take the means leading thereto.

We must not be satisfied with loving our neighbor as ourselves in a purely natural way. To love our neighbor as ourselves means to desire and procure for him the same goods we desire and seek for ourselves. Because the true good we should desire and procure for ourselves is salvation and the means of attaining it, these are also the goods that charity obliges us to desire and procure for our neighbor.

We can and we must desire for our neighbor external and temporal goods such as wealth, success in undertakings and business, health, tranquility, and peace in the various happenings of this life. We are not permitted to wish for and to procure for our neighbor goods of this kind except to the extent that God wills him to have them and that they will further his salvation, not simply in view of giving him human and natural satisfaction.

It is not enough to love our neighbor in our heart; we must also afford proof of this by the results we produce when the occasion arises, depending on his need and our ability. Saint John tells us that we should love our neighbor as Jesus Christ loved us, that is, we should be prepared to lay down our life for him and to contribute to his salvation as Jesus Christ delivered himself to death out of love for us.

Chapter 2

The Commandments of God in General

The main proof we can give that we love God and our neighbor is to keep faithfully and exactly the holy commandments of God, for whoever loves God must will what he wills and do what he commands, and the commandments we have received from God require us to love him in truth and our neighbor as well. The commandments of God are the laws he has given us to pinpoint our duties. Because we have obligations both to God and to our neighbor, it is most fitting that God should give commandments of two kinds, some referring to God, others referring to our neighbor. There are ten commandments of God; the first three indicate our duties to God, and the last seven recall our responsibilities to our neighbor.

Because we are obliged to keep these commandments, we must know them. The Bible expresses the ten commandments as follows:

1. I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods except me. You shall not make yourself carved images, nor any likeness of anything, to adore them or serve them.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day (which is Sunday).
4. Honor your father and mother so that you may have a long life in the land the Lord your God has given you.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his ass, or anything belonging to him.[4]

Those who have not faithfully kept all these commandments of God will be punished in hell, where they will burn eternally and where they will never see God. On the contrary, those who have strictly observed these commandments will be happy in heaven forever; they will see God and enjoy all sorts of delights. They will be exempt from every kind of evil and suffering that can befall humans.

These ten commandments are the same as those God gave to Moses in the Old Law, as found in chapter 20 of the Book of Exodus. From the beginning of the world, God had inscribed them on the human heart. Because the corruption of human nature and the inclination to sin had nearly obliterated them, God wrote them on stone tablets and solemnly gave them to the Jews, through the ministry of Moses, to be their rule in all their conduct. Jesus Christ proclaimed them anew in the law of grace and made them known to his Church through his Apostles and disciples. He taught them how to fulfill these commandments through grace and under the inspiration of charity, which would tend to make them love God in a holy manner and their neighbor as well.

4. Exod. 20:2–17.

Chapter 3

The Commandments of God in Particular

The First Commandment of God
"I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods except me. You shall not make yourself carved images or any likeness of anything to adore them or serve them."

What God commands us by his first commandment is not to recognize any but him as our true God and to adore none but him.

To adore God means to pay him all the honor due him and belonging to him alone. In other words, it means to recognize him as our Creator and our sovereign Lord on whom we depend for all things, and with this in mind, we develop profound respect within us. We can adore God in two ways. First, we adore God interiorly and in spirit by recognizing and honoring God in the depths of the soul as our first principle and last end. Secondly, we adore exteriorly by giving witness through actions of humility and external bodily submission that show the esteem and respect we have for his divine majesty.

To give God the honor we owe him, we are obliged to adore God in both these ways. Because the soul and the body belong to God, we should do him homage for both to show our entire dependence on him for all that is in us and all that we are.

It would not be enough for us to adore God exteriorly if this external adoration were not accompanied by interior worship. If that were the case, we would deserve from God the same reproach that Jesus Christ addressed to the Jewish people, that is, that we honor him by our lips, not by our hearts.

Because every day we receive from God being and life and all that we have, we should also adore him every day. Religion also urges us to do so whenever we hear the holy name of God being blasphemed. This is how we can make an act of adoration: "My God, I adore you as my Creator and my sovereign Lord on whom I depend in all things. For this I wish to give you all the honor due to you."

Because our Lord Jesus Christ is both God and man, we are obliged to adore him. Far from this being a violation of the first commandment of God, we cannot exempt ourselves also from adoring his sacred humanity, for it is united to his divine person; the adoration due to the person of God's Son is also due to whatever is substantially united to him. We can also adore whatever belongs to the humanity of

the Son of God and whatever is related to this humanity. Thus, we can adore the garments and images of Jesus Christ our Lord, the cross on which he was attached, and the nails that pierced his hands and feet, not out of consideration for these objects in themselves but because of the relationship they have with Jesus Christ and his divine person.

The adoration we must offer to God does not prevent us from honoring the Most Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints. Far from offending God by this veneration we pay them, we honor God in their persons. This veneration that we render to the saints cannot truly be called adoration, like the honor we pay to God, because we always recognize them to be creatures and because we consider God alone as our Creator, the one on whom we depend for all things.

Because of her eminent dignity as Mother of God, her exaltation in heaven, the fullness of grace that she received, her power, her benevolence, and her willingness to share these graces with us, we should offer to the Most Blessed Virgin the greatest honor we can pay to any creature whatsoever.

We must also honor the angels and saints as friends of God and faithful servants because of their high sanctity, the glory they enjoy in heaven, and the power God has given them to help us in our need.

We honor the Most Blessed Virgin and the saints by saluting them, praying to them, invoking them, thanking them, and imitating them. We salute them by giving them certain marks of respect and veneration, and we pray to them by asking God to grant us graces through their intercession. We invoke them when we implore their help in our difficulties and temptations, and we thank them when we acknowledge gratefully some gift or favor they have obtained for us. We imitate them when we apply with great care to sanctify ourselves as they did by following their admirable example and by imitating what they practiced.

Although this last manner of honoring the saints is the one most advantageous for us and most agreeable to them, it is still very useful to pray often to the saints, something that all good Christians do. They can greatly help us by their prayers; they obtain for us what we ask of God but cannot obtain by our own supplications unless reinforced by the power and efficacy of theirs. We must not suppose, however, that the saints can hear our prayers and grant us anything by themselves. Only God has this power. All that the saints can do is to intercede for us before God.

It is understandable that the Church permits us to make images of God the Father and of the other divine persons. We cannot, of course, depict God as he is or the three persons of the Holy Trinity as they truly are. Nevertheless, because we are material and sensible

creatures, such images help us to think of God, to keep him more easily in mind, to adore him, and to recall all his goodness to us.

It is also most appropriate to display images in church of the Most Blessed Virgin and the saints. Images help us to remember them, inform us about their principal deeds, incite us to follow the example of the saints, and induce us to pray to them. We should adore the representations of God the Father and the other divine persons, and the honor we show to the images of the Most Blessed Virgin and the saints is the same that we show to their persons.

We must not, of course, imagine that when we honor images, it is the paper, the wood, or the stone that we honor, which would be idolatry. The adoration we offer to images of God the Father and the other divine persons is paid to God; the veneration with which we honor the images of the Most Blessed Virgin and the saints is offered to these persons, not to their images. If we do in a way venerate such pictures and images, it is only with reference to God and the saints thus represented and illustrated.

We honor a statue or a picture of the king in just the same way. Even as it would outrage the king if we offered some disrespect to his statue or his portrait, so too would it be offensive to God if we did not respect the objects that represent him. It would also cause great displeasure to the Most Blessed Virgin and the saints if we did not honor their images. This reasoning is why the Church, in the Seventh General Council, condemned as heretics all those who claimed that no honor should be shown to images, nor should they be publicly displayed in church.

It is also entirely according to the spirit of the Church to honor the relics of the saints, that is, the body or the mortal remains found on earth, because the body contributed to the sanctification of the soul and was a member of Jesus Christ, a living temple of the Holy Spirit destined to enjoy a glorious life in heaven. It is right and just for us to honor these relics, all the more so because God can grant us many graces through them. It is permitted, even good, to kneel and pray before these relics, as well as before the images of the saints, when we are asking God for some grace through their intercession.

At times the term *relics* is extended to include things that the saints made use of or that belonged to them, such as clothes or other objects to which God may have given some particular power because they touched the body or belonged to the saint. We can also pay homage to relics of this kind and obtain favors from God either by touching them or by giving them some sign of veneration.

All those who offend against faith, hope, charity, or religion sin against the first commandment. There are those who do not belong to

the Church, such as infidels, who do not believe that God exists, or those who do not believe the truths of faith. Apostates are those who have given up the faith after embracing it. Heretics, although baptized, obstinately hold to some error contrary to faith, and schismatics have separated themselves from the Church and refuse to obey the pope.

Some, while sinning against the faith, are still considered as belonging to the body of the Church. These persons stubbornly maintain heretical doctrine. Others declare themselves heretics by their exterior actions. Some voluntarily doubt certain articles of faith; others keep company with heretics by reading their books or assisting at their assemblies, thus imperiling their salvation. Some remain ignorant of the principal mysteries of our religion and of the commandments of God and of the Church, and they take no pains to learn about them.

Those who sin against hope despair of their salvation or presume on the mercy of God.

Those who sin against charity hate God, voluntarily remain in mortal sin, do not want to do penance for their sins, boast of and glorify themselves because of the sins they have committed or even those they have not committed, and, finally, murmur against God in their trials.

Those who sin against religion are idolaters, who give creatures worship that is due to God alone, for instance, those who adore false gods. Also among these are sorcerers, who make pacts with the devil to use certain objects in ways contrary to their nature and beyond their natural capacity; those who sell or give magical formulas and talismans; those who for evil purposes make use of sacred objects such as holy water, and magicians, who invoke the devil and, having struck an agreement with Satan, seek to profit by his help. Among this number are also the fortune-tellers, who have recourse to the devil to find out things that are hidden or yet to come; the superstitious, who attribute the effect of some action to the manner in which it is done and not to the power of God, and also those who believe in dreams.

Nor is it any less a violation of the virtue of religion to profane sacred things, as those do who abuse the sacraments, sin against a vow they have made, or make fun of sacred things, such as Holy Scripture, the sacraments, church ceremonies, priests, and religious.

Finally, those sin against religion who do not follow the ordinary practices of religion, such as persons who fail to pray to God morning and night or who neglect to attend divine services, catechism, and sermons on Sundays and feasts. Even worse is the case of the excommunicated persons who refuse to reform themselves of the scandalous crimes for which the Church has cut them off from communion with her and those who make no effort to get the excommunication lifted.

Chapter 4

The Second Commandment of God

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; that is, you shall not swear by the name of the Lord your God."

God prohibits us by this second commandment from swearing by his holy name in vain. By *name of God* we understand all the names by which God is known, the name of Jesus Christ, and also the names of the saints and of all things that have a special relationship with God. By *swear* we mean calling on God as a witness that things we say are true. To swear in vain means to swear about vain and insignificant matters; it is certainly a great sin to do this, for we thereby cause great displeasure to God and profane, insofar as we can, his greatness and his majesty.

We are permitted to swear at times. Swearing can even be a holy action, an act of religion; however, Holy Scripture points out to us that this action must be accompanied by three conditions if it is to be agreeable to God. We must not swear except in truth, in judgment, and in justice. To swear in truth means to swear that something is true and that we know it is true. It may also mean to promise with an oath to do something we can and are resolved to do. To swear in judgment means to swear with discretion, not lightly or by custom but only on occasions when swearing is truly necessary. To swear in justice means to promise with an oath to do some just deed, for if the thing were evil, it would be a sin to swear that we will do it, and it would be another sin to keep that oath.

We must never swear by any creature whatsoever. In the Gospel Jesus Christ forbids us to do this because it would be paying to a creature an honor due to God alone.

The safe rule to avoid swearing when it is not necessary is never to swear unless we are obliged to do so either by an official or by some person with authority who requires us to take an oath. Outside of these occasions, we should be content, as our Lord tells us, with saying "this is so" or "that is not so." He assures us that whatever we say over and above this is evil and hence is not permitted.

We can offend God and violate his second commandment in three ways: by swearing inappropriately, by blaspheming, and by being unfaithful to any vows we have made.

We swear inappropriately when we swear against the truth or have not ascertained the truth of the matter in question, when we swear to do something that is not allowed or swear to do something permitted but without the intention of doing it, when we make oaths to do evil, or when we swear out of habit without any respect or necessity.

Blasphemy is something injurious or insulting said about God or the saints. We can commit this sin in four ways: 1) by attributing to God something improper, for example, "by God's belly," or "by God's head," or "by God's death," for God has neither head, nor body, nor belly, and cannot die, 2) by denying God what is truly his, for example, saying that God is unjust for letting us suffer so much, for by these words we seem to deny him the justice that is eminently his, being that he is infinitely just, and by denying God, for whoever denies God pretends to rob him of his dominion over himself, 3) by attributing to a creature what belongs to God alone, for example, when a person gives himself to the devil or says, "Devil, take me, if this is not true!" 4) by cursing God or the saints or by speaking of them with scorn or mockery.

A vow is a promise made to God to do one good thing to secure something better; thus, if what we vow is evil, the vow is null. Having made a vow, for example, to go on a pilgrimage, if we were to pronounce the vows of religion, we would no longer be obliged to carry out the former vow; the second one is much better.

Vows can only be made to God; a vow is an act of religion that can be addressed only to God, and by the vow we recognize God's sovereign dominion over us and what we offer him. A poorly instructed person who makes a vow to the Most Blessed Virgin or to some saint to give thanks for obtaining some special grace or to ask a special favor should understand that the vow is made to God in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin or of the saint to beg for the grace from God or to thank him for some favor received through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin or of the saint.

We sin against a vow when we make it heedlessly or without piety, when we do not fulfill it either wholly or in part, or when we delay its execution without a valid reason.

Making vows is most advantageous for us and agreeable to God, for in doing so, we oblige ourselves by a sacred bond to do some good thing. The act demonstrates the great desire we have to be of service to God, but it is blameworthy and dangerous to make vows indiscreetly. We should never make any vow without the advice of some wise and enlightened person who thoroughly knows the state of our soul.

Chapter 5

The Third Commandment of God

"Remember to keep holy the Sabbath," which is Sunday.

In the Old Law, God had commanded that the seventh day of the week should be sanctified. He called it the Sabbath to honor the rest that he took on that day after creating the world. But after our Lord's Ascension, the Apostles, to dissociate themselves from the Jews and to honor the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, chose the first day of the week because Jesus Christ had risen on that day. As a result, they called this day of rest the Lord's day, and in time it became known as Sunday.

God wants us to sanctify this day by dedicating and consecrating it to him and by employing it in his service. Of course, we should serve God every day, but the Church wants the faithful to refrain from working on Sunday so that they may devote themselves on this day only to what is proper to the service of God and what concerns the salvation of the soul. To sanctify Sunday properly, we must give up servile work, that is, the kind that is ordinarily performed by artisans and servants in towns and by peasants in the country to earn their livelihood. Furthermore, we must attend Mass in its entirety and spend the day at our parish's divine services and in other works of piety that enable us to pass the time usefully and in a Christian manner.

We should not let ourselves be persuaded that it is enough to hear Mass every Sunday to satisfy this commandment of God and of the Church and that we may then spend the rest of the day amusing ourselves, visiting friends, playing games, eating and drinking in public houses, or indulging in idleness and frivolity. Acting in this manner would be an insult to God. Saint Gregory says that we should cease our physical labors on Sunday only to devote ourselves entirely to prayer, thus making up for the negligence in serving God that we might have shown during the rest of the week.

The Church wishes that the faithful should spend the morning attending the blessing of the water, the procession, the sermon, and the parish Mass and that they should take steps to be in the proper condition for receiving the sacrament of Penance and of the Eucharist frequently and worthily. In the afternoon they should attend the sermon or the catechism lesson and then take part in Vespers and Compline.

If they have any time left over after attending these services in the parish, it would be proper for fathers and mothers either to have someone read a good book to their children for their instruction or to visit other churches, poor people in their hovels, sick people in hospitals, prisoners, or other pious people for conversation and thus foster union and charity with them.

We are sometimes permitted to work on Sunday, but for this a great necessity should exist. It is also necessary that this work cannot be avoided or put off without notable inconvenience either to us or to others. We should not do this unless we have already attended holy Mass and obtained permission to work from our parish priest after explaining the necessity to him.

What the Church orders us to do and to avoid on Sunday applies equally to the feast days she wishes us to observe during the year.

Persons sin against the third commandment of God who fail to attend Mass on Sundays and feasts, do not attend it fully and completely, or do so without sufficient attention, thus failing to hear Mass well.

Poor people who go about begging during Mass no doubt violate this commandment of God, as do parents who neglect to take care that their children and servants attend Mass and the catechism lesson. We must also condemn as transgressors of this commandment artisans and country laborers who work on these holy days and make their employees work; people who transport merchandise; those who open their shops, set out their wares, or hold fairs and markets, as well as those who go to such places to buy or sell.

We should not think that they are without sin who on Sundays and feasts spend most of their time gaming, dancing, visiting, and eating and drinking in public houses with innkeepers who serve drinks during the sacred ceremonies. Nor are the officials without sin who tolerate violations of this commandment. The same is true of people who conduct gambling sessions, welcome gamblers into their home, or gamble during church services. This behavior is also contrary to civil law and royal ordinances.

Chapter 6

The Fourth Commandment of God

"Honor your father and mother so that you may have a long life in the land the Lord your God has given you."

The first three commandments teach us the duties to God that we should fulfill. The remaining seven commandments instruct us in our duties to our neighbor and the way we should behave in his regard.

By his fourth commandment, God orders us to honor our parents. The phrase *father and mother* includes everyone who has authority over us: fathers and mothers, tutors, godparents, guardians, teachers, husbands with respect to their wives, lords, magistrates, prelates, and Church pastors. To explain this commandment properly and to specify all to whom it applies, we must make known the reciprocal duties of fathers and mothers to their children, of husbands and wives, of guardians and tutors to their pupils, of masters and mistresses to their servants, of magistrates to those subject to them, and of persons under the guidance of pastors and spiritual superiors.

Parents owe their children four things: food, instruction, correction, and good example. They must feed them, clothe them, and bring them up in line with their social condition. They should make them learn a trade or obtain for them some honest type of employment. They also have a duty to teach them, either personally or through others, the principal mysteries of our faith, the commandments of God and of the Church, and the prayers ordinarily recited every day. When their children are ready to enter a state in life, parents should consult God and examine carefully whether they are really called thereto and make known to them the obligations attached to this state and the sins they might commit in it. They are bound to correct their children, that is, to reprove and chastise them when they fall into any defect, but they must do so with gentleness and charity, not with anger and harsh language.

Parents must watch carefully over themselves always to give good example to their children and never to do anything wrong in their presence. They should be convinced that many parents are and will be damned because they were the cause of their children's sins, either for not correcting them or for giving them bad example.

In virtue of this commandment, children must fulfill five duties to their parents: they should love them, respect them, obey them, assist

them during life, and pray and cause others to pray for them after their death.

Children ought to love their parents, for they should desire and procure for them all the spiritual and temporal good they can. They should respect them and have much esteem for them, and they should show this by their words. They should overlook their defects and excuse them, and they should never do anything in their presence that might shock or pain them. They must obey their parents, doing promptly and willingly everything they command except what is contrary to the law of God, for we must obey God preferably to our parents. It would be offending God to obey them on such occasions.

Children should assist their parents by giving them relief in their labors, by coming to their help in their old age, in poverty, or in illness, and by consoling them in their trials. They should, above all, take great care that they receive the sacraments when they are in danger of death. Once their parents have died, children should carry out the prescriptions of their will. They should pray and have others pray for the repose of their soul.

Although God promised in this commandment that he would give a long life as a reward to those who honor their parents, we should not think that God has not kept his promise when some who have been respectful and obedient to their parents die young. God made this promise mainly to the Jewish people, to whom he spoke mostly of temporal goods because they were an unspiritual people who considered the advantages enjoyed in this world as the greatest happiness. When God promises a long life to Christians and to all who live under the New Law, he is referring to the happiness of heaven, which indeed is not only long but eternal.

Those who do not love their parents, do not obey them, do so only grudgingly and with complaint, or do not show them the honor due to them draw down on themselves by this unworthy conduct the condemnation and indignation of God.

Husbands owe their wives love, respect, fidelity, and proper support in keeping with their social condition. Wives owe their husbands respect, love, obedience, and fidelity in marriage, and they are bound to preserve the family's resources.

Guardians must see to the instruction of those in their charge. They should correct them, take good care of their financial interests, and faithfully give an account of their administration. Godfathers and godmothers should see to the instruction of their godchildren in all that concerns salvation in case the parents fail in this duty. They should reprove them for their faults and give them good advice and good example. Children should love, honor, obey, and willingly listen

to their guardians, godfathers, and godmothers and follow their wise advice.

Masters and mistresses should provide for their servants, instruct them, and correct their defects. If they fail to do so, they sin grievously. They must take great care not to keep in their service, especially in their homes, vicious and debauched servants. They are obliged to warn them charitably about their duties and to dismiss them if they do not improve their conduct. They should keep them busy during the day, but with discretion and moderation in keeping with their strength. Finally, they cannot dispense themselves from paying them their wages. If they held these back, they would commit a considerable sin, one that cries to heaven for vengeance. Servants should respect their masters and mistresses, love and obey them, serve them with affection, and not waste their money.

Magistrates are obliged to establish and preserve public order and peace, to render justice, to prevent and punish scandals, and to see that the laws of God, of the Church, and of the king are observed. We should give the same honor to magistrates and other persons who hold secular authority as we do to guardians and others who are in charge of temporal interests and the education of children.

The duties of the faithful in a diocese to their bishop, of parishioners to their parish priest, and of all subordinates to their spiritual superiors are to love, respect, and obey them as they would Jesus Christ, whom these persons represent, and faithfully pay the tithes and other taxes due them.

Chapter 7

The Fifth Commandment of God

"You shall not kill."

By his fifth commandment, God forbids us to harm our neighbor in body or in soul, whether on purpose or in fact. We can harm our neighbor bodily by striking or killing, or even by wishing to do so. We can harm our neighbor's soul by giving scandal, bad example, or evil counsel. We can cause scandal by doing wicked deeds or uttering certain words that in themselves lead or might lead our neighbor to offend God.

It is not enough for us to confess the wrong done to our neighbor in either of these two ways; we must absolutely repair the harm

done insofar as we can. If we have harmed someone in body, we must compensate by offering money, if possible, to the person whom we have injured or to the heirs of the person we may have killed, thus repairing the damage incurred when the accident took place. If we have scandalized our neighbor, we must urge him not to imitate our bad example. If we have offered some wicked piece of advice, we must at once dissuade him from following it and also repair the harm he may have already done as a result of our evil counsel.

By this commandment God also forbids us to hate our neighbor, for as Saint John says, "He who hates his brother is a murderer."[5] We cannot hate our neighbor without wishing him evil, for to hate means to wish evil either in body or in soul.

When people hate us or cause us suffering, we must not only pardon them willingly and not speak ill of them but also love them, do good to them, greet them, speak affectionately to them, and even visit them, if necessary, to win back their friendship. We must not fail to pray to God for them. It is not enough to refrain from wishing them any evil; we must wish them well and do so effectively when we have an opportunity. This is the surest sign that we have forgiven them for the harm they have done or the pain they have caused us.

We have an indispensable obligation to pardon our enemies and those who hate us. Jesus Christ commands us to do this, and he wants us to ask him to pardon our own sins only when we assure him that we have forgiven our neighbor for the wrongs he may have done us and the injuries we may have received from him. Before dying, Jesus Christ gave us an outstanding example of this attitude by pardoning those who were crucifying him and by asking his eternal Father also to pardon them.

We sin against the fifth commandment of God when we hate some person, whoever it may be; when we desire or arrange for some evil, even death, either by us or by others; when we strike another, challenge someone to a duel, or kill someone; when we despise others by words, mock them, or insult them; when we procure or advise an abortion or smother little children who sleep with us; when we expose ourselves unnecessarily to the danger of death or imperil our neighbor with the same by failing to give alms when the need is grave. We are also guilty if we refuse to pardon our enemies, see them, greet them, or visit them as we did before the ill feeling started, or if we place ourselves in danger of offending God or contribute to the sins of others in whatever manner this may occur.

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5. 1 John 3:15.

Chapter 8

The Sixth Commandment of God

"You shall not commit adultery."

Although the sixth commandment of God speaks only of adultery, we can be certain that by it God forbids all external actions contrary to purity. These are considered as abominable sins in various passages of Holy Scripture, especially in the writings of Saint Paul. He groups together those who commit impurity, even in secret, and idolaters, and he says that neither the former nor the latter will enter into the kingdom of God.

This commandment, therefore, forbids us to say or do anything at all contrary to decency and purity. It is a mortal sin in itself to use obscene language or to listen to it willingly, to sing lascivious songs, to read books that incite us to impurity or arouse impure sentiments and movements or a liking for such, or to look with sensual pleasure at pictures, images, or statues that show nudity, unbecoming postures, or improper attitudes.

It is also a mortal sin in itself to look at or to kiss a person with an evil intention in mind or to indulge in any looks or touches of an improper kind, whether on ourselves or on another, in view of satisfying ourselves and appeasing our evil inclinations.

It would also be a considerable sin against this commandment to solicit—whether by words, letters, or presents—a girl or a married woman to commit an impure act and then to commit that act with her. If the other person is a relative, this would be incest; if this person is consecrated to God, it would be a sacrilege.

There are other serious sins against the commandment. Confessors should prudently instruct the persons they think need information on this point. Those who are in doubt whether they have committed such sins should find out by asking questions in Confession.

We are obliged to avoid not only these external evil actions but also all the occasions that lead to them, for as the Wise Man says, whoever loves danger and is exposed to it will infallibly perish in it. It would be sacrilegious to receive absolution without a firm resolution to give up the proximate occasions of this sin.

The principal occasions that lead us into this wretched sin are as follows: bad company, frequenting persons of the other sex, luxurious dress, the theater, dances, and idleness. We must deprive ourselves of

and keep away from all these things as being prolific sources that produce or revive the heart's impure tendencies.

To give up all these occasions of sin, we must not wait until we go to Confession or until our confessor obliges us to do so. It is proper and even necessary for us to do this long before we present ourselves to our confessor. This is the best means to show that we are sorry for our sins and truly desire to renounce them.

When making our Confession, we must also take care not to camouflage or dissimulate these sins and the circumstances surrounding them, for they often make up part of the sins. To act otherwise would be to make an invalid Confession and thus place us in peril of damnation.

Those who truly want to correct themselves of these lamentable sins should confess frequently to the same confessor, choosing one who is pious and enlightened. They must avoid the occasions, places, and persons that lead them to sin, take care never to be idle, and have a special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, offering her every day some special prayer for this intention.

Married persons should not imagine that they cannot commit any sin against this commandment or that everything is permissible for them. As regards impurity in marital relations, pastors and those who hear married people confess are obliged to instruct them about their duties and about what is and is not lawful on this point. If married couples fail in their duties, they must seek instruction from some learned and experienced person. If they have not taken this precaution, they should, as a rule, consider as sacrilegious every Confession made without accusing themselves of the sins they may have committed in their marital relations. It is difficult to believe that the ignorance of those married persons is excusable, for all those who enter a given state are strictly bound to learn and to know the duties imposed on them by this state and the sins that can be committed in it. Thus, they cannot dispense and should not have dispensed themselves from obtaining instruction concerning all the obligations they contract on marrying and the occasions on which they may offend God with regard to this sacrament.

Chapter 9

The Seventh Commandment of God

"You shall not steal."

By his seventh commandment, God forbids us to take or to keep unjustly what belongs to another.

Children must not imagine that they may take or keep anything belonging to their parents without the latter's consent, nor should servants act in a similar fashion with the goods of their masters. Neither the former nor the latter can do this without being sinful, and when they are able, they are obliged to make restitution for what they have taken.

It is not sufficient for those who have taken another's property or have kept it, even if they did not steal it, to confess this fact. They are obliged to keep nothing of what they have taken and to return it to the owner or to his heirs if the owner is dead. If they cannot find out to whom restitution must be made, they should make it according to the advice of a wise confessor, have others pray for the persons robbed, or give alms to poor people in their name.

We should make restitution as soon as possible, even before going to Confession, if we can do so. For if it is possible to make restitution and we do not do so immediately, we commit fresh sins every time we think of returning the object and fail to do it.

We must give back the thing taken or its equivalent if we no longer have the thing itself. If the object has lost value since we took it, we are obliged to return its true value, if not the thing itself. If by taking or retaining something, we have caused damage to its owner, we must make compensation for this damage and at the same time return what was taken.

Not only are those who have taken or retained unjustly what belongs to another bound to restitution; so also are those who took part in the theft and those who advised it, if the actual thief does not give back what was stolen.

Those who find something are also bound to return it to whoever lost it, if they know who the person is, or they must do all they can to find out.

This commandment forbids everyone to steal the property of another, but it also obliges rich people and all those who enjoy some means to give a part of their possessions to poor people, according to

the latter's needs and their own ability. The Wise Man assures us of this when he says that we must assist a poor person because of the commandment and not abandon him in his poverty. Saint John declares, "If someone who possesses worldly goods sees his brother in want, yet closes his heart to him, how does charity abide in him?"[6]

The holy Fathers of the Church agree that if we do not give to poor people what we can give according to our state, we are stealing from them, and we commit an injustice in their regard.

Saint Thomas says that we are obliged to give alms to poor people on two occasions: when they are in extremity and when we have more than is needed to provide for ourselves and our family. We are then obliged to give alms under pain of mortal sin. We cannot dispense ourselves either from giving alms when we have more than we need for the requirements of our state or when the pauper is in considerable necessity, even though not in extreme need.

Although we usually understand almsgiving as being the distribution of temporal goods to poor people, we can say that there are two kinds of almsgiving: corporal, the kind we have been speaking about, which aims at remedying the pauper's indigence and the misery of bodily suffering, and spiritual, which is bestowed when we bring relief to our neighbor's spiritual wants and needs. Everyone is not in a position to give material help to poor people, but all can help them spiritually by contributing to their salvation either by good example or by procuring religious instruction for them or imparting it to them. Pastors and those in charge of teaching others are particularly obliged to do this, as are those who are bound to labor to bring about their neighbor's salvation and sanctification.

Among the many who sin against the seventh commandment of God are those who appropriate what belongs to others, whether in secret or by violent means; those who retain others' property; those who do harm or cause damage to their neighbor by negligence, malice, or ignorance, even though they derive no profit therefrom; finally, those who lend money or goods at usurious rates.

Other ways of stealing and robbing our neighbor's goods include making or circulating counterfeit money, using dishonest weights and measures, adulterating products, overcharging customers, or buying at unfairly low prices things whose owners are in dire need of the sale or who are unaware of the true value.

People who do not pay their debts, the wages of their servants, or the salaries of their workers are no less guilty of sinning against this commandment of God. The same is true of those who commit

6. "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (1 John 3:17).

fraud in the administration of other people's property, as sometimes happens with estate administrators and tax collectors. We can say the same of those who promise or receive money for a benefice or who accept a benefice on condition of giving it to someone else. All these persons should be considered as violating this commandment of God and as being obliged to make restitution of all they have received.

Chapter 10

The Eighth Commandment of God

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

By his eighth commandment, God forbids any injustice by our saying anything false or harmful about our neighbor. We can offend our neighbor and cause harm in our words by swearing falsely against him, by deceiving him through our words, and by defaming him with our slanderous statements. To bear false witness means to testify in court against what we know to be true. Whoever has done this is obliged to retract what he said and to repair as far as possible the damage caused.

Those who violate this commandment include false witnesses, who on being questioned by a legitimate magistrate, hide, disguise, or hold back the truth, thus swearing a false oath. Such a witness is obliged to make restitution and to repair the damage he has caused. Lawyers and prosecutors also sin against this commandment when they accept unjust cases or by their negligence cause a client to lose a just case. All are obliged to make restitution with interest for the damage suffered through their fault by those whose cases they undertook to defend. Notaries likewise sin against this commandment when out of ignorance or for some other reason they do not draw up legal acts and contracts in proper form or do not respect the confidentiality of these acts and of other business confided to them. The same sin is true of those who open confidential letters. All are obliged to repair any harm they may have caused.

We can deceive our neighbor in words by telling lies, that is, by speaking contrary to what we know is true. There are three kinds of lies: humorous, meddlesome, and malicious.

Humorous lies are those we tell as jokes to enliven conversation and to amuse bystanders. Meddlesome lies are those we tell without doing harm to anyone and with the intent to do the person a service.

Malicious lies are those that cause spiritual and material damage to our neighbor.

A lie is a mortal sin that can be more or less serious according to the intended or actual damage done in saying it. For this reason the Wise Man says that the one who lies slays the soul,[7] and David declares, "You, O Lord, will destroy all who tell lies."[8] It would be harmful to our neighbor to sell goods for more than they are worth while insisting that they are worth that much.

Although humorous and meddlesome lies are not such serious sins, we should avoid them with great care just the same because they give rise to all sorts of other sins. Because we are skillful in dissimulating them and denying them, we tend to take them lightly and do not strive to correct our behavior; thus, eventually we may come to commit a sacrilegious Confession.

Lying of whatever kind is so offensive to God that Holy Scripture tells us that falsehood is one of the seven things that God hates above all. To show us the horror we should feel for lying, our Lord says that it comes from the devil and is his specialty.

We cause harm to our neighbor by slander when to tarnish his reputation, we speak evil of him in his absence. This sin is all the more serious when the harm done to our neighbor is of greater consequence, for it robs him of a good name, something far more hurtful than being deprived of his goods.

We are not allowed to listen to slanderous talk. Because this conversation amounts to judging and condemning our neighbor rashly, it is also a serious sin to believe it. We are also seriously wrong if we repeat such talk, unless we do so in a spirit of charity by speaking to those who can remedy the evil or who have a duty to punish those guilty of wrongdoing. We may also speak to those who might suffer considerable harm if they are not advised of what is being said about them.

When we have slandered anyone, we are obliged to take back what we have said, whether in public or in private, to say something good on the person's behalf, and to repair the damage to his reputation as far as we can. If what we said is true, we cannot deny it. We should simply let it be known that we were wrong in speaking unfavorably of that person and that we did so out of ill feeling.

In general, we can speak ill of someone in two ways: either by saying something false, which is called calumny, or by saying something true, which is commonly called backbiting. We can sin by backbiting in four ways: 1) by revealing something wrong done by another

7. "A lying mouth destroys the soul" (Wisd. of Sol. 1:11).
8. "You destroy those who speak lies" (Ps. 5:6).

that was not known, 2) by making a fault worse than it is, 3) by misinterpreting some good deed, or 4) by chillingly praising something done well.

When we hear someone speaking ill of others, we should make the speaker keep quiet if we have any such authority; we can suggest that the person may be misinformed, or we can simply change the subject. If we cannot prevent the slander, we should at least show by our silence that we do not care for such talk. If the speaker continues, we can properly leave the conversation.

As regards those persons slandered, they should pardon the slanderer. If they have done something wrong, they should correct themselves; if they are blameless, they should suffer the slander with patience. They should take good care not to avenge themselves or to return slander for slander, for God reserves vengeance to himself, and he will certainly do so when he judges that the time has come.

To avoid falling into the faults we commit against our neighbor in words, we should make sure that our speech is accompanied by these six conditions: 1) truth, by saying things as they are, 2) sincerity, by saying things as we think of them, 3) love of God, by saying nothing that is not agreeable to God and does not redound to his glory, 4) charity for our neighbor, by saying nothing other than what is advantageous, 5) necessity, by speaking only when necessary, and 6) discretion, by saying only what is appropriate in the circumstances.

Those who write lampoons or defamatory songs, cause divisions among people by their false reports, or make rash judgments or interpret unfavorably what others do also sin against the eighth commandment of God.

Chapter 11

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments of God

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; you shall not covet your neighbor's house," and so on.

By his ninth commandment, God forbids all thoughts and words contrary to purity; by the tenth commandment, God forbids unjust desire for our neighbor's property and for all that God has already forbidden by the seventh commandment.

The reason why God forbids these thoughts and evil desires by two special commandments is to indicate to us that the law he has

given us is a spiritual one. God has established it not only to control our outward actions but also to regulate the affections of our heart. A religion as holy as ours cannot tolerate or permit anything wrong, even if it does not outwardly appear so. The purpose is also to make us understand that we should have a great horror not only of these exterior deeds but also of the least thoughts contrary to the law of God. Sin resides in the will; the outward action adds nothing to the thought or the desire other than the scandal we may give or the harm we may do to another.

In fact, if we make up our mind to steal or to do something else that is wrong, and if we seek an opportunity for carrying this into effect but are prevented from doing so because of some unforeseen occurrence, or even by a change in our own perverted will, we would still sin, just as though we had committed the wrong. The only difference would be that if we had actually committed the theft, we would be bound to restitution, whereas if we had only resolved to steal, we would not be obliged to do anything except to go to Confession.

Although we can offend God by desires against the other commandments, what led God specifically to forbid carnal desires and coveting another's property is our strong inclination for sexual pleasure and our natural desire for possessions. Our attraction to all other evil actions is far less vehement. We would, then, sin mortally against the ninth commandment of God if we dwelt voluntarily and complacently on impure thoughts, even though we did not actually perform these evil actions, if we desired unchaste pleasure, or if we wished to take advantage of our neighbor's wife or of any woman.

Evil thoughts and desires are not always sinful, for they may arise in the mind or in the sensitive appetite without any involvement of the will. They are sinful only if we consent to them and if our heart is affected by them and takes part in them.

Saint Gregory says that we should consider three things concerning evil thoughts and desires: suggestion, delectation, and consent. Suggestion takes place when the devil brings into our mind some unlawful thought or desire. Delectation is the pleasure that our corrupt nature and our inclination to evil make us feel in the things thus presented to our mind. Consent is the acquiescence that we give to the evil thoughts and desires that have been occupying our mind or to the pleasure and the attraction we have felt or feel for the object of this evil thought or desire.

Because the mind can have thoughts that are neither free nor voluntary, the mere presence in the mind of a bad thought or desire is not a sin. The pleasure that our corrupt nature makes us experience in a thing is not in itself a sin; we can frequently suffer these feelings

without contributing to them, even in spite of us, as Saint Paul says he did. Therefore, far from offending God, when we undergo these suggestions and the pleasure accompanying them, we gain much merit in the sight of God when we resist these movements. It is only our will's consent to the thought or desire and to the pleasure found in it that constitutes a sin, and then only when we are fully aware of what we are thinking of or desiring and then dwell on it voluntarily.

Disorderly movements of the flesh that occur independently of our reason are not sins in themselves, for sin is not in the body but in the will. Where there is no consent of the will, there is no sin. God does not command anything impossible, as would be the case if he forbade us to feel movements of this sort from time to time. It is always possible, with the grace of God, to withhold consent from them.

The method available to us not to offend God by wicked thoughts and desires is to mortify our exterior senses and passions and to raise our mind to God when we experience such thoughts.

Chapter 12

The Commandments of the Church

Because the Church has the same authority as Jesus Christ and is our mother, she can command us as her children. All Christians who publicly profess to be subject to her are obliged under pain of mortal sin to observe all her commandments, unless for some legitimate reason they have been dispensed from doing so. To disobey the Church is to disobey Jesus Christ and God. Because Jesus Christ has given her his power and authority over all the faithful, he wishes us to consider as pagans and publicans those who refuse submission to the Church.

The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, who governs her in view of regulating the behavior of the faithful and establishing order in her discipline, has issued a number of commandments either by the holy Councils or by custom. These requirements are generally summed up in six commandments that all Catholics are obliged to observe as precisely and faithfully as they do the commandments of God.

The first commandment of the Church is to hear Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation. The Church is not satisfied simply by our being bodily present at the entire Mass. She desires that the faithful observe this commandment by assisting at Mass with piety and by applying themselves to praying to God and rendering him due worship during the entire time the holy sacrifice lasts. To behave

otherwise during this time would not be to conform ourselves to the intentions of the Church and to observe her commandment.

Parents, teachers, and all those responsible for the conduct of others are obliged not only to hear Mass but also to take care that their children and servants hear it on all Sundays and feasts. Because they are charged with and responsible before God for the conduct of the persons under their control, they should see that they do so with the modesty and the religious spirit required by such a sacred action.

We cannot be excused from hearing Mass except in a case of illness or necessity. If sometimes we think we may omit hearing Mass for some reason other than illness, we should consult our parish priest or our confessor to make sure that our reason is valid. We are not allowed to decide for ourselves in conscience matters that are not altogether evident. Those who cannot attend holy Mass on Sundays and feasts because of illness or some other legitimate hindrance should make an effort to unite in heart and intentions with Jesus Christ, the priest, and the faithful who do attend Mass, to offer themselves to God during this time, and to address their prayers to him.

People sin against the first commandment of the Church who without a legitimate reason fail to assist at Mass on Sundays and feasts of obligation or who do not hear Mass entirely; who do not do so in their own parish; who out of negligence, lack of devotion, or contempt do not attend the instructions given at Mass; who hear Mass inattentively and without any piety or religious sentiment.

The second commandment of the Church orders us to sanctify feast days by abstaining from servile work on these days and by spending them in the service of God as we should do on all Sundays. We have explained the manner of fulfilling these duties in our discussion of the third commandment of God.

The Church had various reasons for establishing the feasts she obliges us to solemnize. She has instituted feasts of our Lord to honor God and Jesus Christ, his Son, and to thank them for the sacred mysteries that have taken place on these holy days and are means for helping us attain our sanctification. She has also instituted feasts of the Most Blessed Virgin to give her special honor, to thank God for the graces he bestowed on her, and to draw down on the faithful her special assistance and more abundant graces of God on these days. The Church has established feasts in honor of the saints to thank God for the great graces he has given them, to honor the glory they enjoy and the virtues they practiced, to ask God through their intercession to give us a chance to share in them, and to thank the saints for the help of their prayers and for the spiritual and temporal favors we have received from God through their merits.

Some solemn feasts are observed throughout the Church and are immovable; others are kept only in certain dioceses. Some are observed in several dioceses; others are commemorated only in a few. It is the prerogative of the bishops, to whom the Church grants this authority within the confines of the diocese, to regulate these practices, to establish feasts to nourish the people's devotion, and also to suppress certain feasts to prevent abuses and profanations. All the faithful subject to the bishops are obliged to obey them on these points.

The third commandment of the Church orders all the faithful to go to Confession at least once a year to their own parish priest or to another priest approved by him and by the bishop. This Confession usually should occur during Eastertide so as to join Confession to Communion, which is also obligatory for all the faithful at this holy season.

The Church has judged it proper to enact these commandments to prevent those Christians who care little for their salvation and for whatever can help procure it for them from neglecting the soul to such an extent that they risk falling into impenitence by not receiving the sacraments at all.

Children are obliged to obey this commandment and to go to Confession when they are old enough to offend God and can discern good from evil, which is usually the case at about the age of seven or eight. We should not wait until they have reached this age to have them go to Confession. To teach them how to make a good Confession, they should be accustomed to doing so earlier.

By her fourth commandment, the Church prescribes that the faithful should receive the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist in their parish at least once a year during the two weeks before Easter; however, if he judges it proper, the confessor may delay this Communion until a later time and should be obeyed on this point. Let us not imagine that we have satisfied this commandment of the Church by receiving the body of our Lord Jesus Christ in a state of mortal sin; besides committing a sacrilege, we would sin against this commandment.

Children should receive Communion when their intelligence is sufficiently developed, about the age of twelve, and when they have been properly instructed in the mysteries of our religion. Pastors and parish priests are to decide this.

Those who fail to make their Easter Communion should be warned two or three times by their parish priest. If they do not obey after this, the Church will want to excommunicate them.

The fifth commandment of the Church orders us to fast during the forty days of Lent, on Ember Days, and on the eve of certain feasts.

Fasting means to abstain from meat and to take only one meal, toward noon; if necessary, we may add a light meal in the evening. The Church established the Lenten fast to honor the one that our Lord Jesus Christ observed during his forty days in the desert, to induce the faithful to make satisfaction for their sins, and to prepare them for their Easter Communion by doing penance.

All who are twenty-one years old are obliged to fast and to observe this commandment unless the Church dispenses them from this obligation for some legitimate reason that makes it impossible for them to fast. However, we should not wait until children are twenty-one years of age to make them begin observing the fast. We should accustom them to fasting little by little, even before they become subject to the obligation, so that they can fast readily and completely once they are old enough.

Those ordinarily dispensed from fasting are the sick, pregnant women, women nursing infants, elderly people over seventy, workers whose labor is heavy and onerous, and poor people, who cannot afford the kind of decent meal that would make it possible for them to bear the fast or to continue it.

We should not believe that we are allowed to consume anything we wish and as much as we wish at the light meal. The Church permits bread and fruit in moderate quantities—at most, a fourth of an ordinary meal. We must take care not to exceed these norms by making this light meal a regular one.

The sixth commandment of the Church forbids eating meat on Friday and Saturday. We abstain on Friday to be mindful of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and to show our gratitude to him for dying for us. We abstain on Saturday to honor his burial, to show our devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, to whom this day is especially consecrated, and to prepare by abstinence and bodily mortification to sanctify Sunday.

There are also other commandments of the Church that are applied more rarely. One of the most important of these is not to have any interaction with excommunicated persons, that is, those whom the Church, because of some serious crimes they have committed, has cut off from communion with herself and from sharing in the spiritual benefits common to all the faithful.

Excommunicated persons are not allowed to enter a church, to attend Mass, or to receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ or any other sacrament. They do not share in the prayers of Christians, in the suffrages of the saints, or in indulgences. Far more seriously, they do not participate in the infinite merits of our Lord Jesus Christ or in the graces he won for us by his death. They are deprived of the spiritual

guidance of their pastors and of the help and protection of their guardian angels and the Most Blessed Virgin. All their actions, however good in themselves, are without any merit before God. The excommunicated person's body is deprived of Christian burial, and the soul is consigned to the demons and must burn eternally in hell. Anyone who even frequents a person known in the Church as an excommunicate is also excommunicated. To be excommunicated, then, is a terrible plight, the worst chastisement a Christian can incur in this life.

The pope and the bishops have the power to excommunicate because Jesus Christ promised through his Apostles that whatever they would bind on earth would indeed be bound. They have the power to excommunicate those who stubbornly disobey the laws of God or of the Church, who refuse to tell what they know after having been warned by public admonition, who have spent the entire year without going to Confession, who have not received Communion in their parish, or who have fought a duel.

On Sundays it is the custom in the Church to excommunicate any of the following: heretics; simoniacs, who sell or buy benefices, advise or assist in their sale, or keep them for others; magicians, sorcerers, and fortune-tellers; usurers; those who have maliciously struck an ecclesiastic; those who unjustly refuse to give up property belonging to the Church; those who during divine services assist at the performances given by players in farcical comedies; those who marry without a dispensation a person related to them within the degrees of consanguinity defined by the Church. The reasons why the pope or the bishops are sometimes obliged to excommunicate the faithful are to make them enter into themselves, to help them be converted, and to have them think seriously about their salvation. Excommunication is also a means of warning others and preventing them through fear of so drastic a punishment from offending God.

Those who have incurred excommunication are obliged to repent without delay for their crime, to make satisfaction for it insofar as they can, to repair the scandal they have given, to accept the penance imposed on them, and to have themselves absolved as soon as possible. If their crime is a public one, they must be publicly absolved by the bishop or by a priest authorized by the bishop.

Chapter 13

Sin in General

To oblige us to avoid sin, God gave us his commandments. This brings us to discuss sin at this point so as to instruct the faithful on this matter.

Sin is the greatest evil that can happen on this earth because it offends God, who is infinitely and sovereignly good. Because sin is the cause of all the woes we endure in this world and deserves every imaginable chastisement, we must avoid it more than pestilence, death, hell, or all the pains of hell. We should hold nothing, however terrible or disastrous it may seem, in greater horror than sin. Sin is any thought, word, action, or omission against the commandments of God or of the Church—in a word, disobeying God.

We can fall into sin in three different ways: frailty, ignorance, or malice. We sin by frailty when we are so weak and feeble in an occasion of sin or feeling so inclined to sin by a motion of acquiescence that we do not resist the inclination. We sin by ignorance when we do not care about learning or do not take the trouble to learn whether something is wrong and when we fall into sin because we did not know. We sin by malice when we commit sin on purpose, even if we are not led to it by an occasion or aroused by the violence of a passion but do so merely out of bad will or because of a habit we have neglected to correct.

There are two general kinds of sin: original sin and actual sin. We inherited the former from Adam, the first man, whose disobedience made us culpable. This sin is called original because we receive it from Adam by our origin, we bear it when we are born, and we are infected by it from the moment we are conceived in our mother's womb. As a consequence we are enemies of God, children of wrath, subject to the tyrannical empire and yoke of Satan and committed to eternal damnation.

This dreadful sin has tainted all humanity since Adam, and all will be sullied by it even to the end of the world. Because the sacrament of Baptism has lifted this sin from us, those who die without having received this sacrament are deprived of the vision of God for all eternity.

As a result of original sin, we experience strong inclinations to evil and great weakness for doing good—what we call concupiscence of the flesh, or the old man. This source of all the disorderly movements and desires found in us sometimes leads us, even without our

thinking about it, to a love for creatures and for the enjoyment of sensual goods and pleasures. This concupiscence is born and dies with us; it never leaves us. The saints, who have the greatest horror and aversion for sin, are not exempt from it. God lets it remain in them to give them opportunities for the struggle they must constantly carry on. It also makes us understand God's goodness to us and the power of his grace, which helps us effectively overcome all the obstacles that this enemy of ours creates in us and that threaten our salvation.

Actual sin is the sin that we commit of our own volition, once we have the use of reason. The two kinds of actual sin are mortal and venial. Mortal sin deprives the soul of the grace of God and condemns it to eternal death. We call it mortal for our soul because it deprives us of the grace that makes the soul live. It is true that a soul cannot die; it is immortal and cannot lose its natural life, but it can lose its spiritual life, which consists in the possession of grace and union with God through his holy love.

Mortal sin is something so abominable that it causes great deformations and disorders in us with lamentable consequences. In fact, it makes us enemies of God by depriving us of his holy love. It expels the Holy Spirit from the heart, which ought to be his living temple. It reduces us to a level below that of the beasts and makes us a slave of the demons and of our passions.

Venial sin does not entirely deprive our soul of grace, but it diminishes it and weakens the love of God in us. It makes us slack in God's service and disposes us to fall into mortal sin unawares. It is called venial because God, who is so good to us, pardons it in the other life in those who die in the state of grace. He also pardons it readily in this world when we make reparation for it by some exercise of piety. It is not because this sort of sin is a slight offense that it deserves such prompt and ready pardon.

Because we cannot possibly make satisfaction in strict justice for a single venial sin, however insignificant, by all the good works we might do and all we might suffer in this life, it is most important to avoid it with the utmost care. Even though venial sin does not damn us, it still would be better for the entire world to perish rather than for us to commit a single one. God has often punished venial sins most severely, sometimes even by death. We have examples of this in Holy Scripture, for instance, the death of Lot's wife and that of Uzzah.[9]

The essential difference between mortal and venial sin is that in the former we prefer a creature to God; in the latter, although we do

9. "But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt" (Gen. 19:26). "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God struck him there because he reached out his hand to the ark" (2 Sam. 6:7).

not love the creature more than God, we do love it in a manner other than what is fitting.

Because we are not sure whether the consent given to it was adequate or the matter of the sin itself was sufficiently grave to constitute a mortal sin, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a sin is mortal or venial. An action is a venial sin only when the consent we gave to it is not full or when the matter in question is slight. We know a sin is mortal when we perform an action that God forbids under pain of eternal damnation and do so with fully voluntary consent.

Mortal sin can be forgiven only by the sacrament of Penance, but venial sin can be effaced by various pious actions, such as practicing some mortification, depriving ourselves of some pleasure for the love of God, giving alms, and reciting prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer, the seven penitential psalms, or the *Miserere*. These actions and practices are most useful for this purpose, provided they are accompanied by true sorrow for our sins, trust in God, and love for him.

Chapter 14

The Seven Capital Sins, or Vices

Among all the vices, some are called *capital* because we usually consider them to be the sources from which many others spring. We generally say that there are seven of these capital sins, or vices: pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth.

Because these sins are common enough in the world, it is appropriate for the faithful to be well instructed about them so as to avoid or overcome them if they have fallen into one or another.

Section 1—Pride

Pride, the first and principal of the capital sins, is an immoderate desire to raise us above the state assigned to us by God's providence or the taking of undue satisfaction in this elevation. Pride is a serious sin because it is contrary to reason, which teaches us that we have nothing of ourselves; it robs God of the glory that belongs to him by right, and it makes us set ourselves unjustly over our neighbor.

We sin by pride when we attribute to ourselves and consider as due to us those things that we possess only by God's goodness and grace, when we think we have merited what God has given us, and when in our self-esteem we prefer ourselves to others.

Holy Scripture says that pride is the source and origin of all other sins, whether because pride was the first sin committed by angels and by humans or because all other sins include a revolt of our will against the due submission to and dependence on God's will.

Certain sins, however, are closely allied to and produced by pride because, as we say, they ordinarily precede and accompany it. Examples include vainglory, ambition, presumption, hypocrisy, insolence, and disdain for our neighbor.

Vainglory makes us seek the esteem of others; for this purpose we show off the good that is in us. It makes us accept joyously and complaisantly the praise given us and causes us to suffer keenly when others belittle us or do not show us all the deference we would like.

Ambition leads us to pursue status, employment, and positions that bring distinction with them, whether we are worthy of them or not, merely for the sake of being honored and set apart from the common run of mortals.

Presumption gives us so high an opinion of ourselves that it leads us rashly to undertake enterprises clearly beyond our capacity.

Hypocrisy leads us to deceive others by wishing to look better than we are by means of false piety or by trying to appear good when in fact we are vicious.

Insolence makes us prefer our ideas to those of others, especially our superiors, and reject with disdain their advice, commands, and reproofs.

Disdain for our neighbor consists in not entertaining any consideration for him in the depths of our heart and in treating him disrespectfully and arrogantly in word or in deed.

God punishes the proud and haughty in this life by permitting them to fall into shameful sins and by sending them or allowing them to experience various occasions of humiliation.

The principal remedies for the sin of pride are as follows: to be firmly convinced that we are nothing but emptiness and sin and that we have often deserved hell; to consider the humility of Jesus Christ and of the saints; to do nothing to attract the esteem and admiration of others but on the contrary to prefer simple, lowly, and humiliating actions; to suffer with patience the insults and contempt that people may offer us.

Section 2—Avarice, or covetousness

Covetousness is an esteem for wealth and temporal possessions as though they were truly good, and also a poorly regulated desire for obtaining them.

We sin by avarice when we unhesitatingly offend God to obtain some material advantage, seek worldly goods too anxiously, have an exaggerated fear of losing them, unjustly desire another's riches, neglect to make use of our wealth for our own and our family's needs, fail to give alms to poor people, or practice virtue solely to procure some temporal advantage for ourselves.

Because those who love riches are easily led to commit any sort of crime to amass more wealth and because the possession of riches is accompanied by many cares, worries, and misfortunes, we often say that avarice is the root of all evil. The sins produced by avarice are hardness of heart to poor people and others who need our help, theft, lying, perjury, deceit, and discord that leads to hatred for others.

To avoid avarice or to correct ourselves of it, we should entertain only a moderate concern about preserving our wealth or acquiring more of it. We should desire to acquire more wealth only moderately and without undue anxiety, love poor people and willingly give them alms according to our ability, endure patiently the loss of our goods when it happens, and lend without demanding anything in return.

Section 3—Impurity

Impurity is a disorderly desire for sexual pleasure, or complacency in this type of pleasure. We commit a sin of impurity when we take pleasure in thinking of impure things, entertain impure desires, fail to avoid the occasions that lead to them, use impure language, take pleasure in such talk or listen willingly to it, enjoy reading books dealing with impure topics, sing or willingly listen to lascivious songs, take pleasure in looking at impure objects, indulge with an evil intention in improper fondling and touching of ourselves or others, or perform sexual intercourse outside marriage.

Impurity causes many evil effects in those who are addicted to it. They fall into blindness of mind so that they listen neither to reason nor to good advice, heedlessly throw themselves into the satisfaction of their passions, are filled with self-love and with aversion for God because he forbids and punishes the criminal pleasures they love, are much enamored of this present life as being the only time when they can enjoy these shameful pleasures, and dread the thought of the next life because it will put an end to their criminal enjoyments.

Those who yield themselves up to this vice are much to be pitied; they are abominable in the sight of God and others. They lose their wealth, their health, and their life; they fall victim to shameful maladies that at times bring them to wretchedness and death. The best means for avoiding sins of impurity are resisting temptations,

mortifying the body and its senses, fleeing from occasions of sin, avoiding idleness, going to frequent Confession to the same confessor, and cultivating a special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin.

Section 4—Envy

Envy is a love of our own special advantage that leads us to feel displeasure over the good fortune and success that happen to our neighbor and to experience satisfaction over the misfortune that befalls him.

Envy is nearly always a consequence of pride, which makes us feel it keenly when others rise above us or are in a position to do so. Envy also often comes from a defect of judgment that make us consider temporal goods and worldly honors as the greatest of all rewards and leads us to consider others as fortunate when they possess these advantages and ourselves as wretched when we lack them.

We sin by envy when we are sorry that others are honored, possess wealth, and enjoy prosperity; when we feel chagrin over the fact that they have more intelligence, wit, and skill than we enjoy; when we take it ill that they are preferred, loved, and honored as much as or more than we are; when we regret that they possess more virtue than we do or that God gives them graces that he denies to us.

The sins that flow from envy are the following: hatred for our neighbor because we consider him a rival in obtaining the benefits we would like to have; joy over the misfortune that happens to him, especially when we see that he is despised; slander, which leads us to speak ill of others and to demean them as much as we can; rash judgments and malevolent interpretations of what they say or do.

The means for avoiding envy include detaching our heart from earthly goods, honors, and pleasures; rejoicing over the good fortune, graces, and advantages that belong to others, and speaking well and with esteem of those whose happiness we envy.

Section 5—Gluttony

Gluttony is a disorderly desire for the pleasure found in eating and drinking, or an attachment to such pleasure.

We sin by gluttony when we eat or drink to excess, eat forbidden food, indulge our sensuality by seeking overly fine cuisine, neglect to fast on the days mandated by the Church, or eat unnecessarily, excessively, fastidiously, or overly absorbed in the pleasure of the table.

Because it makes us lose the use of reason, the greatest sin we commit through gluttony is drunkenness. Gluttony often leads to fits

of rage, violent and insulting behavior, blasphemy against God's holy name, and family discord. The sins that ordinarily flow from gluttony are immoderate joy, dissipation, excessive talkativeness, and impurity in word and deed.

Most of the time, this vice tends to brutalize the spirit, and those who indulge in it have little feeling for God or for their salvation. They become incapable of handling any serious business whatever; they incur the scorn of all decent people, ruin their family, jeopardize their health, and bring themselves to an early grave by reason of their excesses.

If we wish to preserve ourselves from this vice and not go to excess in eating and drinking, we should avoid the company of debauched people, stay away from saloons, drink wine only moderately after adding a good deal of water to it, and become accustomed to leaving the table without having entirely satisfied our appetite.

Section 6—Anger

Anger is a movement of the soul that makes us reject with violence the things that displease us and inspires a desire for vengeance because of the injuries we have received. What causes anger is our attachment to pleasures, riches, and honors.

We sin by anger when we cannot endure patiently the least thing that displeases us, when we nourish bitterness to those who do not do what we want them to do, and when we seek revenge.

Anger produces hatred and contempt of our neighbor; it brings on quarrels, insulting words, blasphemies, passionate outbursts of temper, furious agitation in mind and body, calumnies, slander, murder, and all the wrongs we can do to our neighbor to get revenge. Anger spawns serious evil in those who abandon themselves to it. It robs them of reason and falsifies their judgment; it makes them lose peace of soul and all sentiments of piety. Anger makes them like the demons, who live in constant rage and blaspheme the holy name of God. It also causes major disorders in human society and devastates fraternal charity to such an extent that people can no longer live with one another.

There is no better antidote for anger than to restrain its first onset, to turn our back on the things that arouse our anger, to turn a deaf ear to and not believe malicious talebearers, to avoid the company of those quick to start quarreling, and to be convinced that our own defects cause others to suffer a great deal.

Section 7—Sloth

Sloth, or laziness, is a feeling of sadness, disgust, and boredom with God and the things that lead us to God. It is also laxity, languor, and repugnance for fulfilling our duties.

We sin by laziness when we do not carry out well a certain task for which we are responsible, neglect the duties of the state we have embraced, do not take care to serve God well and do so only with repugnance, or do not do all we should with regard to children and servants to make them fulfill their duties properly and show themselves faithful to God.

The sins that flow from laziness are fear of the effort that must accompany virtue, lack of courage in undertaking what is good, great negligence in fulfilling our tasks, inconstancy in our practices of piety and virtue by renouncing and then taking them on again, giving up hope at ever overcoming this unfortunate tendency, idleness and wasting time, dissipation of mind and languor of heart in the exercises of religion, aversion for fervent people, and disinclination for speaking of God and for hearing God discussed.

The victims of laziness are truly unfortunate in that they are lacking in all the virtues because they do not have the courage to practice any of them. Their indolence gives rise to all sorts of temptations and robs them of the merit of their good deeds, which they perform only halfheartedly and negligently.

The most effective methods to overcome laziness are to follow the advice of a wise confessor, to have someone near to spur us on to do good, to cultivate the frequent company of virtuous people, and to read with application and affection the actions and sufferings of Jesus Christ and the lives of the saints, especially those who suffered a great deal or had to do themselves great violence to acquire virtue.

Chapter 15

Some Other Kinds of Sins

Besides knowing the capital sins, or vices, we need instruction about three other kinds of sins: the sins said to be against the Holy Spirit,[10] those that "cry out to heaven for vengeance,"[11] and those we commit by cooperating with the sins of others.

10. Matt. 12:32.
11. Gen. 4:10; Gen. 18:20–21; Exod. 2:23; Deut. 24:14–15.

We sin against the Holy Spirit when we resist the graces that the Holy Spirit offers us to save our soul or when we abuse these graces, especially when we presume so rashly on the mercy and the forgiveness of God that without making any effort to effect our salvation and to make use of the means God gives us to do so, we still expect to be one of the elect and to receive the grace of a sincere conversion all of a sudden at the moment of death.

We also commit this sin when we despair of our salvation because of some unspeakable sin or because of the great number of sins we have committed; when we close our eyes to the truth, even though we know it; when we remain obstinate in our sin, and when we dwell in impenitence, sinning constantly without willing to be converted to God. We also sin against the Holy Spirit when we envy our neighbor because of the graces God gives him, for this is to wrong the Holy Spirit and to be upset at the way he chooses to communicate himself.

Although these sins are said to be against the Holy Spirit, we must not understand this to mean that they are committed only against the Holy Spirit; they are outrages also against the Father and the Son. We say that they are against the Holy Spirit because they are opposed to God's goodness, the special characteristic of the Holy Spirit. For this reason we consider them as particularly injurious to him.

The common opinion is that these sins are the ones that our Lord in the Gospel says cannot be forgiven. Not that it is impossible to obtain pardon for them or that God actually refuses to pardon them, but the fact is that because of the evil intentions of those guilty of them, most of the time he does not pardon them, for they scornfully reject all the remedies and means that the Holy Spirit uses to withdraw and preserve them from such sins.

The sins that cry out to heaven for vengeance are willful murder, sodomy, oppression of poor people, and unjust withholding of the wages of servants and workers. Although all sins cry out to God for vengeance—there is not a single one that does not deserve to be rigorously punished—we make this statement especially of these four sins because Holy Scripture tells us this of these sins alone and because they are so horrendous that nothing can excuse them. They are all so contrary to nature and to reason.

We commit sin by cooperating with the sins of others when we contribute in any way to the sins committed by our neighbor by consenting to them either directly or indirectly, even though we did not commit the evil act.

We contribute directly to sins committed by others when we command or advise them to sin, when we incite them by word or

deed, and when we help them or provide the means of perpetrating sin.

We contribute indirectly to the sins of others when we furnish them with the example or the opportunity of sinning, when we approve or praise what they have done, when we keep silent rather than reprove them or do so only in a listless and halfhearted way, when we try to pass off the sins of others as good deeds, when we criticize those who lead a better life than other people do, and when we lead others away from imitating the good example given them and cause them instead to act in the opposite fashion out of fear of being ridiculed.

Chapter 16

The Virtues and the Evangelical Counsels

Section 1—The virtues

We cannot avoid sins without practicing the virtues opposed to them. Therefore, having spoken about sins, we think it appropriate to make the faithful aware of the virtues and the manner of putting them into practice. A Christian virtue is a supernatural quality that gives us the inclination and makes it easy for us to do right, that is, to perform good deeds for the love of God. There are two kinds of virtues: those that refer directly to God and those that enable us to make proper use of the good and the evil things we find in this life.

Three virtues deal directly with God and have God as their object; for this reason they are called the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, of which we spoke in the introduction to this book.

The virtues that deal with the proper use of the goods and the evils of this life are called moral virtues because they regulate moral behavior. We can list the many such virtues in two main categories.

Some we usually call cardinal virtues because they are the principal and most important moral virtues on which all the rest depend. The others are the virtues opposed to the seven capital sins, or vices. The four cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

The virtue of prudence, thanks to supernatural enlightenment, discerns all that can lead a soul to God and separate it from God. We must distinguish Christian prudence from natural prudence, which judges things only on the basis of the utility and the advantages they

may afford us in this life. Christian prudence judges things according to the maxims and rules of the Gospel and what God thinks of them.

Justice is a virtue that leads us for the love of God to give to our neighbor whatever belongs to him.

Fortitude is a virtue that leads us for the love of God to undertake and endure difficult things with courage.

Temperance is a virtue that causes us for the love of God to repress and moderate the pleasures of the senses.

The virtues opposed to the seven capital sins, or vices, are humility, generosity and detachment from riches, chastity, zeal for our neighbor's well-being, gentleness, sobriety, and attachment to God.

Humility, which is opposed to pride, is an acknowledgement of our nothingness and a willing submission to our neighbor.

Generosity, which is opposed to covetousness, is a virtue that leads us to use gladly and with great disinterestedness our temporal wealth for our own needs and those of our neighbor.

Chastity, which is opposed to impurity, is a virtue that leads us to abstain from carnal pleasures not permitted to us and that helps us control and restrain the movements leading to these pleasures.

Zeal for our neighbor's well-being, which is opposed to envy, is a virtue that makes us desire and procure for the love of God all possible good for our neighbor.

Sobriety, which is opposed to gluttony, is a virtue that causes us to regulate and moderate our appetite for eating and drinking.

Gentleness, which is opposed to anger, is a virtue that leads us to endure with equanimity the evils that may befall us.

Attachment to God and diligence in his service, which are opposed to laziness, are virtues that make us serve God and accomplish our acts of piety with affection; they also cause us to carry out exactly and promptly all our duties in relation to God.

We are obliged to cultivate a number of other virtues according to a variety of circumstances. Holy Scripture and the saints instruct us about these virtues. We should listen to them, do what they teach us, and follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and the saints, who practiced these virtues throughout life.

Section 2—The evangelical counsels

If we wish to live as true Christians and cultivate the obligatory virtues—those opposed to the vices we are commanded to avoid—we cannot be satisfied with practicing only the virtues that are strictly obligatory. We should try to develop a number of others that are only advisory. This practice will help us keep away from and avoid sin.

We find these counsels in various places in the holy Gospel and throughout the New Testament. We can reduce the main counsels to three kinds: 1) the works of mercy, 2) the eight beatitudes, and 3) a great number of maxims that Jesus Christ, personally or through his Apostles, teaches us and recommends to those who wish to serve him faithfully.

With respect to the works of mercy, although they are obligatory for some people, they are only advisory for others; therefore, they are listed among the evangelical counsels.

There are two kinds of works of mercy: those directed to the spiritual needs of our neighbor and those directed to his temporal needs.

The spiritual works of mercy include instructing the ignorant about what they are obliged to know, correcting by word or action those who fall into some fault, giving good advice to those who need it, consoling those who suffer, bearing wrongs and insults patiently, pardoning wholeheartedly the evil done to us, and praying to God for the living, especially those who persecute us, and for the dead who are suffering in purgatory.

The corporal works of mercy include giving food and drink to those who are hungry and thirsty, harboring strangers and travelers who have no lodging, providing clothing for those who lack proper garments, helping poor people affectionately, visiting the sick and prisoners, ransoming captives, and burying the dead.

We call all these actions works of mercy because the mercy and the compassion we feel for our neighbor lead us to relieve his spiritual and temporal needs.

Beatitudes are deeds that are most excellent and perfect in virtue. They lead souls to holiness and to the perfection of the Christian life. Jesus Christ proposes them to us in his Gospel. We call them beatitudes because Jesus, in teaching them to us, promises happiness that begins in this life to all those who practice them and because they are a pledge and an assurance of the consummate blessedness we will enjoy in heaven.

There are eight of these beatitudes and holy practices.[12] The first is "Blessed are the poor in spirit," that is, in heart and in affection, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The poor in spirit are the humble, who are diffident to themselves, detach their heart from all affection for earthly goods, and attach it solely to God; the kingdom of heaven is theirs because we are certain that if they die in this state, they will possess heaven.

12. Matt. 5:3–10. The NRSV translation places as number 2 and number 3 the beatitudes that De La Salle lists here as number 3 and number 2.

The second beatitude is "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." Meek people have such self-possession that far from becoming embittered when they are injured, they do not even experience the least resentment. They will possess the land because by this conduct they will easily make themselves masters of everyone.

The third beatitude is "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." The reference is to those who do penance for their sins, bewail the sins of others, or are sorry to see themselves in exile, far from God. They will be comforted because in heaven they will enjoy an inconceivable happiness with no mingling of sadness.

The fourth beatitude is "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." This refers to those who, seeing themselves so far away from the perfection God demands of them, constantly spur themselves on by the desire and the affection they have for achieving this perfection. Such people will indeed be satisfied because they will fully possess in heaven what they so longed for on earth.

The fifth beatitude is "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." This refers to those who have much tenderness and compassion for their neighbor and strive to help in time of need. They will receive mercy because God will willingly and fully pardon all their faults.

The sixth beatitude is "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." This refers to those who, with hearts free from all vice and all affection for the least sin, are attached to God alone. They will see God because there is no darkness in the soul that would hinder them from beholding the eternal truth and because being pure and detached from all things, they will see God in heaven with clear and penetrating vision.

The seventh beatitude is "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." These are the ones who strive to overcome their passions to obtain and preserve peace with God, their neighbor, and themselves. They will be called children of God because of their resemblance to God and to Jesus Christ, who always enjoyed much peace and came to bring peace to this earth.

The eighth beatitude is "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This refers to those who are persecuted for the faith or for religion by infidels and also to those who, leading a saintly life, suffer raillery, contempt, and ill-treatment from people who live disorderly lives. The kingdom of heaven is theirs because nothing can give us greater assurance of obtaining eternal happiness than persecution suffered on behalf of God's interests.

There are many more maxims proper to Christianity that we have not thought useful to mention here because they can be found easily in many passages of the New Testament. Jesus Christ, calling all Christians to a high degree of perfection, set these principles before them either in his teachings or through his holy Apostles in their writings. Christians should consider it a duty to read them often, to meditate on them, and to put them into practice and thus become perfect Christians.

End of volume 1, part 1

The Duties of a Christian to God

The Duties of a Christian to God

Volume 1

Part 2

The Means to Fulfill Our Duties to God Properly

Introduction[1]

The grace we need to fulfill our duties to God properly

Because of Adam's sin, we are incapable of doing anything to be saved. To gain our salvation and obtain eternal life, we must apply ourselves in this world to knowing and loving God, for which we need special help. This help is called grace, for God gives it to us out of his pure goodness. We cannot acquire it through our own efforts or strength, nor can we merit it by performing any action. Jesus Christ merited grace for us by his sufferings and death, and he gives it to us only as an application of his merits.

Grace in general is a supernatural quality that God bestows on our soul and gratuitously gives us to help us work out our salvation. There are two kinds of grace: habitual grace and actual grace.

Habitual grace, a supernatural gift of God, cleanses our soul of sin and makes us agreeable to God. It is called habitual because it remains and abides permanently in the soul unless we lose it by sin. It is also called sanctifying grace because it drives out sin on entering our heart and makes us holy and agreeable to God. Sometimes this grace is called justifying grace because it causes our justification, our transformation from the state of mortal sin to the state of grace. We cannot merit this grace; God justifies us gratuitously out of pure goodness. We cannot even dispose ourselves to receive it; the Holy Spirit, by means of actual grace, makes us at least able to begin to love God as the source of all justification and to repent of all our sins.

Habitual grace gives us the great benefit of becoming beloved children of God and coheirs of Jesus Christ, thereby enjoying a right to eternal glory. By possessing this grace, the most precious thing in the world, we possess God and enjoy the gift of his holy love even in this life. If we die with this grace in our soul, we will possess God eternally in heaven, but if we die without this grace, we will be eternally damned. We must, therefore, vigilantly strive to preserve it, knowing that just one sin will make us lose it. To possess and preserve this grace, we must give God indications that we truly have this intention. We should show that we are reforming our life, avoiding the occasions of sin, and striving to overcome evil habits.

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1. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 1, part 2, introduction; *Œuvres Complètes,* 898–99; Cahiers lasalliens 20, 193–98.

Actual grace is a supernatural light, or a good impulse, that God sends us to avoid evil and do good. We need actual grace because without it we cannot have even a single good thought or know what or how we should ask God for what we need. By means of actual grace, the Spirit of God makes us know what we need and disposes us to obtain it from God through our prayers. By actual grace we receive the gift of faith, without which we cannot believe.

Actual grace helps us to will and accomplish what is good and to overcome all the temptations and obstacles that the devil and our corrupt nature place in the way of our salvation. This grace also gives merit to our good actions because only the actions we perform under the influence of grace are agreeable to God. Without actual grace all our actions are like a body without a soul: good only in appearance, like those performed by pagans, and entirely useless for salvation.

So urgent is our need for actual grace to continue practicing what is good throughout life that the holy Council of Trent assures us that we cannot persevere in justice without God's special assistance.

If Adam even in the state of innocence needed this grace to help accomplish any good, how much more in need are we, reduced as we are after his sin to a state of such extreme weakness and wretchedness that of ourselves we are unable to love God or to do anything from a motive of love of God! We have, therefore, every reason to distrust ourselves. We must entrust ourselves entirely to God and abandon ourselves to his action so that he may aid us by his holy grace. When we do something good, we should refer all the glory to God alone.

We must do more than realize that we can do nothing without grace; we must strive to obtain it. Prayer and the sacraments are the only two means by which God ordinarily bestows grace on us. We need to beg God for grace in prayer and strive to obtain it by receiving the sacraments. We obtain grace through prayer only in proportion to our heart's intention and through the sacraments, provided that through sin we place no obstacle to its action.

Jesus Christ left us the sacraments as the only ordinary means for acquiring, augmenting, and preserving habitual, or sanctifying, grace. We obtain actual grace especially through prayer.

Having considered in part 1 of this book the two duties of a Christian, namely, knowing and loving God—our sole preoccupations as well as our purpose and happiness in life—in part 2 we will consider the sacraments and prayer.

Treatise 1[2]

The Sacraments, the First Means to Obtain the Grace We Need to Fulfill Our Duties to God Properly

Chapter 1

The Sacraments in General

Section 1—The nature and the number of the sacraments

Humans are so material and such base beings that they willingly and of themselves tend only toward external things and easily neglect what is spiritual and interior. For this reason it was necessary, so to speak, for God to bestow supernatural goods, especially grace, on them by means of sensible things and thereby make it easier for them to apply themselves to interior realities and more readily turn their mind and heart away from their inclination for what is merely external.

If we had been purely spiritual beings, says Saint Chrysostom, God would have directly given us grace and the other favors intended for the soul without making use of any external means or signs, which is how he acted with regard to the angels. But because we are composed of soul and body, God accommodated himself to our nature and imperfection and judged it proper to impart his grace to us only by means suited to us, that is, means that are entirely sensible.

Therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to earth only to procure our salvation in the easiest and most appropriate manner, instituted sacraments to give us grace in an effective manner and to preserve and augment it in us.

The sacraments are sensible and sacred signs of grace established by God to sanctify people. The word *sign* means anything that provides knowledge of something else that we do not directly know. A sensible sign means one that is perceived by the senses. Smoke, for

2. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 1, part 2, treatise 1; *Œuvres Complètes,* 899–970; Cahiers lasalliens 20, 199–404.

example, is a sign because it indicates to us that there is a fire where the smoke rises; it is a sensible sign because we can see it.

The sacraments are sensible signs because by the elements they contain and that strike our senses, they make known the grace that each sacrament produces in us, although we cannot see it. Water, for instance, which is the sensible element used in the sacrament of Baptism, indicates that by the grace received in this sacrament, the soul of the baptized person is cleansed of all stain of sin, just as the body, by means of water, is washed and purified from all the uncleanliness that may have soiled it.

The sacraments had to be sensible signs; if not, they could not have made known to us the effects they produce in us, for we do not as a rule grasp things except by means of the senses.

The sacraments are also sacred signs because they consecrate us to God by means of the grace they bestow on us and because the materials used in conferring them have become sacred through the institution of Jesus Christ and by the application made of them.

God had to establish the sacraments because only God can purify us of our sins and give us grace; only God can give us the sufficiently powerful means of obtaining grace.

According to the Council of Florence, three elements are needed to make a sacrament: the matter, the form, and the intention of the person who is acting. The matter is the sensible thing used in the sacrament, for example, the water in Baptism. The form consists of the words pronounced by the person applying the matter, for example, "I baptize you. . . ." The intention consists of the attentive mind and the deliberate will that the minister of the sacrament has of doing what the Church prescribes for the conferring of the sacrament and what our Lord Jesus Christ had in mind when instituting the sacrament, which are identical.

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted seven sacraments in the Church, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. There are no more, no less sacraments than these. That there should be precisely this number was quite appropriate because just as there are seven things necessary to have and preserve the life of the body on the individual and the social level, so too the soul needs the same number of different things to have and to preserve the life of grace. We must be brought to life, grow, be nourished, be healed if we fall sick, be strengthened, and recover our strength. In our social life we need rulers to govern it, to preserve it, and for this result we must multiply.

With regard to the supernatural life of the soul, we have all these same effects through the sacraments. By Baptism we are born in Jesus

Christ; by Confirmation we receive new strength and an increase of grace; by the Holy Eucharist, our spiritual food, we nourish the soul. Penance brings healing to the soul when sin has wounded it, and by Extreme Unction the traces of sin are forgiven, and we receive special strength to resist and conquer the enemies of salvation at the moment of death. Holy Orders gives to the ministers of the Church the power to guide and govern her, and Matrimony serves to bring children into the world and to educate them in the fear and service of God.

Jesus Christ is the author of all the sacraments of the New Law, for he came to earth to sanctify us. By his death he merited for us an immense number of graces, and he applies them to our soul by means of the sacraments, which he instituted for this purpose. He also gives them their efficacy in time and is their first cause. The persons who administer them are only his instruments in doing so, although they are truly the dispensers of Christ's mysteries. As Saint John says, it is Christ who baptizes.

The Church determines everything for us concerning the sacraments, based on Holy Scripture. Nearly everything about the sacraments is found in Holy Scripture and in Tradition, the constant and unvarying practice followed from the days of the Apostles down to our own times. The Church has changed nothing and has introduced no innovation in the manner of conferring the sacraments, except for certain ceremonies modified when she judged it necessary for the good of the faithful.

Section 2—The purpose, necessity, ministers, character, and ceremonies of the sacraments

Jesus Christ established the seven sacraments only to withdraw us from sin and to confer grace on us, and thus to sanctify us. He instituted them in that precise number to communicate to us the different graces we need. All of them give us sanctifying grace: Baptism confers it on those who lack it; Penance causes those who have lost it by sin to regain it; the other sacraments augment it in those who have once received it and presently possess it.

All sacraments confer a special grace proper to each one; they give us these graces infallibly if we receive them with the necessary intention and do not obstruct them. These graces are given us by the efficacy of the death of Jesus Christ, who merited all such graces.

Although the sacraments, the greatest and most excellent gifts because they contain grace and communicate it to us, are also necessary for the good of the Church because of the various effects they produce, they are not all equal in dignity. The sacrament of the Holy

Eucharist, which is called the Blessed Sacrament *par excellence*, stands out above all the rest in dignity because it contains the author of grace and of all the sacraments.

Furthermore, all sacraments are not absolutely necessary for every one of the faithful. Baptism is necessary for all, but Penance is necessary only for those who have fallen into mortal sin after their Baptism. Holy Orders and Matrimony are not necessary for each of the faithful, but only for the Church.

Nor are all the sacraments equally necessary. Some are of an indispensable necessity, called necessity of means because without them we cannot be saved. Thus, Baptism is necessary for children. Some sacraments are necessary both with a necessity of means—we cannot be saved without receiving them—and with a necessity of precept—God commands us to receive them. Thus, Baptism is necessary for all people, and Penance is necessary for all who have committed mortal sin after Baptism. Some sacraments are necessary only as a matter of precept because God has commanded us to receive them; the Eucharist is such a sacrament. Two sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are not absolutely necessary for the salvation of those who receive them, nor are they required for any of the faithful in particular, but only for the common good of the Church. Confirmation and Extreme Unction are not necessary, but they are useful to the faithful individually; we would sin, however, if we neglected to receive them because of carelessness or contempt.

Bishops and priests are the persons empowered to administer the sacraments. A bishop alone can confer the two sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders. The three sacraments of Penance, or Confession, Holy Eucharist, and Extreme Unction can be administered only by priests, the ordinary ministers of Baptism and Holy Eucharist, although in the early Church deacons also administered solemn Baptism and Holy Eucharist, and any person can baptize in case of necessity. Matrimony is brought into being by the consent of the two persons who contract it, provided that the parish priest is present along with two other witnesses.

A person can receive Baptism at birth; any person can receive the other sacraments provided he or she has the use of reason.

Only men can receive Holy Orders; only the sick in danger of death can receive Extreme Unction.

We distinguish two kinds of sacraments: sacraments of the dead and sacraments of the living. Baptism and Penance are the two sacraments of the dead because they were instituted only for those who are spiritually dead, that is, in mortal sin. The five other sacraments are called sacraments of the living because we must be living the life

of grace to receive them worthily and to obtain the special graces they provide.

Three sacraments can be received only once: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. The reason is that these sacraments produce in the soul and imprint on it a second effect, known as its character. This character, according to the Council of Trent, is a spiritual mark that causes us to belong to God in a special manner and that cannot be effaced. Even in hell, the damned will still be recognized by the character proper to the sacraments they have received. We also say that this character is a spiritual power communicated to the soul, making it capable of receiving or administering other sacraments.

The character imprinted by Baptism is a mark that stamps us as children of God; the character imparted by Confirmation is a mark that identifies us as soldiers of Jesus Christ. The character proper to Holy Orders is a mark that the recipient is a minister of Jesus Christ and an officer of the Church. If the damned remain branded by the character of Baptism, it is so that they may be known as children of God who have risen in rebellion against their Father and have chosen to become children of the devil by their sins. If they also bear the character of Confirmation, it is so that they may be recognized as deserters who have fled from the army of Jesus Christ and enrolled in the ranks of the devil. If priests who are damned still keep the character of Holy Orders, it is so that they may be known as traitors, who like cowards have abandoned the cause of God and of the Church.

The administration of the sacraments involves the observance of many ceremonies that are most sacred and worthy of respect and that inspire great devotion. Tradition has handed these down to us, and it would be a considerable sin to omit them without necessity, even though the sacraments would still be valid without them. These ceremonies do not add anything essential to the sacraments, but they were established only to serve as signs of the religion we profess, thus distinguishing us from heretics, to inspire us with greater respect for the sacraments that are being administered with so much solemnity, and to preserve and increase the devotion of the faithful.

These ceremonies also serve to instruct the people. For instance, the exorcisms performed in conferring Baptism make us realize that the demon, who had previously possessed these infants because of original sin, has now been driven from their heart by the power of the sacrament.

Those who witness these ceremonies or to whom they are applied during the conferring of the sacrament and the exercises carried out in church can certainly receive some graces from them, but these graces are given only because of the people's faith and devotion, not

in virtue of the rites, which in themselves can neither impart grace nor forgive sins.

Some ceremonies produce certain graces in virtue of the prayers of the Church with which they are connected; others draw their main value from the devotion of those who make use of them. Some bring about certain spiritual benefits for which they are practiced, but they procure these only in proportion to the religious intentions of the participants.

Chapter 2

Baptism

Section 1—The necessity of Baptism, its effects, the matter and form of the sacrament, and its institution

Baptism is the first of the sacraments, and for this reason the Council of Florence called it the gateway to the spiritual life. In fact, we cannot receive any other sacrament unless we have previously been baptized, for the sacraments of Jesus Christ are intended for Christians only, and it is through Baptism that we become a Christian. This is also the most necessary sacrament because we cannot be saved unless we are a Christian, and Baptism makes us Christians. For this reason Jesus Christ clearly declares in the Gospel that unless we are born again by water and the Holy Spirit, we cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Baptism is a sacrament that washes not only original sin from our soul but also all the other sins we may have committed before receiving it. Baptism makes us children of God and of the Church, members of Jesus Christ, and living temples of the Holy Spirit.

Because we cannot reach a better understanding of the greatness and excellence of Baptism than by studying the effects it produces in a soul, we define this sacrament by the effects it produces. These effects are indeed notable, for Baptism not only frees the soul from original sin and all actual sins committed prior to it but also entirely remits the punishment due to these sins, as the holy Council of Trent assures us, so that the newly baptized person has no obligation of making satisfaction for them.

This sacrament communicates to the soul a very powerful grace that sanctifies it and makes it agreeable to God. Tertullian affirms this doctrine when he says that the body is washed in Baptism so that the soul may be sanctified.

This same grace makes us children of God because it gives us a share in the holiness that belongs to God; in giving us this grace, God adopts us as his children and assures us that if we preserve this grace, we will be heirs of his glory in heaven.

When we receive this sacrament, we also have the happiness of becoming children of the Church. We acquire at the same time the right to share in all her spiritual blessings, especially the privilege of applying to ourselves the merits of Jesus Christ by receiving the other sacraments. All Christians participate in these favors in proportion to the degree of grace and the love of God found in them.

Baptism also opens for the soul of the recipient the gate of heaven, which was previously shut before it. Baptism expels the demons that up to then possessed it. The Church teaches us this fact by the exorcisms performed by the priest on the candidate for Baptism. As the demons are driven out of the soul, the Holy Spirit takes possession of it; therefore, we say that through Baptism we become the temple of the Holy Spirit.

In this sacrament we also receive the Spirit of Jesus Christ and are united to him in so special and intimate a manner that as soon as we have received it, God looks on us as members of his incarnate Son.

There are two elements in Baptism, as in all other sacraments: matter and form. The matter is the sensible element used to perform the sacrament, that is, natural water, which can be well water, river water, water from a fountain, rain, and so on. This water must not be changed, modified, or corrupted in any way; thus, rose water or water mixed with some other liquid cannot be used to baptize. If such liquid were used, the Baptism would be invalid. A single drop of water would not suffice, for *to baptize* means *to wash,* which cannot be done with a single drop.

The body can be bathed in Baptism in three different ways: by immersion, when the body of the candidate is plunged into water; by aspersion, when sprinkled with water; by infusion, when water is poured on the body. We are truly and correctly baptized if washed in one of these three manners.

The form of the sacrament of Baptism consists in the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In conferring Baptism, we invoke the Most Holy Trinity because this mystery is the principal object and the foundation of our faith, which we profess when baptized to be admitted into the body of the Church.

The water used in the administration of the sacrament of Baptism is water that the bishop or the parish priest, while adding a little holy

oil and chrism, solemnly blesses on the eve of Easter and of Pentecost. For this reason some of this water is constantly preserved in churches in a special receptacle called the sacred baptismal font. It would be a sin to make use of any other water in administering Baptism, although the sacrament would still be valid if the water used is pure and natural. When we must administer Baptism outside of a church, the use of special blessed water is not necessary.

This practice of blessing the water intended for Baptism is very ancient in the Church. The holy Fathers of the early centuries speak of this custom as something observed throughout the Church and not new in their day. For this reason the ceremony has always been considered as invariably observed in the Church, according to apostolic Tradition.

Therefore, it is highly recommended that some of this blessed water be kept in people's homes so that it can be used to baptize in case of necessity and may help people remember the grace they received when they were baptized. When a child is carried to church to be baptized, this water should be brought along instead of rose water, as some do. People follow this custom so that if an accident or some pressing danger should happen along the way, the water could be used to baptize the infant according to the spirit of the Church.

The water of Baptism not only washes our body but also cleanses our soul. Jesus Christ gave this efficacy to the water by his almighty power, and he willed to choose water for this purpose rather than any other created substance. Because water is the most common and available matter in the world and the easiest to procure, we can be certain that no one will be deprived of this sacrament that is so necessary to all. As water is used to wash and cleanse all exterior stains and impurities, so too does Baptism cleanse the soul and wash it pure of all sin.

Saint John also used water to baptize, but his baptism was quite different than that of Jesus Christ, for of itself it did not wash away any sin; it had been instituted only to prefigure that of Jesus Christ and to dispose people to receive the latter.

We do not know exactly when Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of Baptism. If we prefer to follow the opinion of Saint Thomas, it was when he was baptized by Saint John in the Jordan River, with the result, as Saint Ambrose says, that he sanctified the water, not the water him. All we know for certain on this subject is that we learn of the institution of Baptism by the words of our Lord, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."[3]

3. Matt. 28:19.

Section 2—The ministers of the sacrament, the manner of conferring it, who can receive the sacrament, and the character imparted

Because Baptism is so necessary for salvation, Jesus Christ instituted it in such a way as to give us the widest possibility of receiving it. Therefore, although it is normal that only parish priests have the right to administer Baptism and that children should be brought to church to be baptized with the prescribed ceremonies, all persons can and should baptize in case of necessity. The conclusion follows that we are not allowed to baptize anyone who has already been duly baptized, even by a heretic or an infidel, provided that this person poured the water on the candidate's body and pronounced the words "I baptize you. . . ."

Nevertheless, it would be contrary to good order for a woman to baptize if a man were present, a layperson if an ecclesiastic were at hand, or a simple cleric if a priest were available.

Those who need to confer Baptism in case of necessity should take ordinary water and, while pouring it on the child, say the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

For Baptism to be valid, the water must come into contact with some important part of the body, such as the head. If the head has not yet emerged, the ablution must be made on the main part of the body that is visible. If it happened that the water did not touch any important part of the body, the child should be considered as doubtfully baptized and should be baptized again conditionally later on.

The same conditional rite should be performed if there is any doubt as to whether the child is living, whether the newborn is of human nature, or whether someone has been baptized at all or validly. In such cases we should begin the Baptism over again, saying as we pour the water, "If you are capable of Baptism," or "if you are not baptized, I baptize you. . . ."

The custom of the Church has always been to baptize infants. She has always believed that Baptism is absolutely necessary for them to be saved and that by this sacrament they receive—by infusion and special grace—faith, hope, and charity, with all the other virtues.

Those who are converts to the Christian faith and have the use of reason are also obliged to receive Baptism, but the Church's practice in their regard is quite different than her manner of proceeding with infants. Because infants are incapable of being instructed, the Church allows them to be baptized without requiring any special intentions,

seeing that they are not capable of any. But she does not act in the same way with regard to persons having the use of reason and decision. First, they must be taught the sacred mysteries of our religion and whatever else they are obliged to know. They are also urged not to present themselves for Baptism without having a pure intention and a heart fully detached from sin. They should be exhorted to do penance for the sins they have committed. For this reason Baptism was formerly administered to such candidates only twice a year, on the eve of Easter and of Pentecost, unless the person was in danger of death. The water that was going to serve for Baptism was blessed on those days before being used for these catechumens, for such was the name given to those under instruction who were being prepared to receive this sacrament.

We should not believe that the children of Christian parents who die without having received Baptism are saved by the faith of their parents, by the sign of the cross, or by any other ceremony. All these things would be of no avail to them apart from this sacrament. For this reason Saint Augustine says that when the children are in danger of death, it is best to proceed with baptizing them.

However, the Church has always thought differently about those catechumens who died before they could be baptized, for she always considered them as being among the number of the faithful, possessing faith and the love of God in their heart. She has always thought the same of those who before being baptized had suffered martyrdom, thus professing their faith in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we distinguish three kinds of Baptism: Baptism of water, Baptism of tears, and Baptism of blood. Only Baptism of water is a true sacrament, and if we call the other two Baptism, it is only because they provide for the lack of the sacrament when it cannot be received and produce the same effects as Baptism of water.

The sacrament is called Baptism of water because it is conferred by using water. The second kind is called Baptism of tears because it consists in a true and sincere contrition for the sins the person has committed, accompanied by a great love for God and an ardent desire to serve God alone. It is also called Baptism of the Holy Spirit because a person who dies with true contrition for sin while unable to be baptized obtains the grace of this sacrament directly through the Holy Spirit. As Saint Augustine says, if we lack faith, a true turning of the heart to God, or the will to receive the sacrament, such intentions prevent us from possessing the grace of the sacrament.

Baptism of blood consists in suffering martyrdom for the love of God and the faith of Jesus Christ, even before having been baptized. We use this term because we consider those who die while suffering

for the defense of the faith as being baptized in their own blood. The shedding of their blood obtains for them the same graces that they would have received through Baptism of water, along with an entire remission of their sins, a remission more complete than they would have enjoyed had they been baptized with water, for martyrdom represents in a much more natural manner the death of Jesus Christ, from which the Baptism of water draws all its power and efficacy.

Because the Church has so ordained and because this sacrament imprints a character on the soul that can never be effaced, we can receive Baptism only once. We must not imagine, therefore, that when a child is baptized at home and later on is brought to the church, it is going to be baptized a second time. We take the child to church only to perform the ceremonies of Baptism that were omitted and that are never performed at home.

Section 3—The ceremonies of Baptism

Because Baptism is the first and most necessary sacrament, the Church wishes it to be administered with much solemnity to bring out more vividly the excellence of this sacrament and the duties that the person receiving it assumes. To enter into the Church's views and to inspire the faithful with special esteem and veneration for Baptism, it is useful to explain here in some detail the ceremonies in question.

Some of these rites are carried out at the church door before the group approaches the baptismal font; others take place once all have arrived there, and others are performed after the Baptism proper. There are two kinds of ceremonies. Some are external signs of what the Holy Spirit is effecting in the innermost soul of the persons receiving Baptism. Others were instituted to make them understand better the obligations they contract in receiving this sacrament.

Two rites are often used in administering the sacrament of Baptism. To show that the life of a Christian is a life of continual crosses and sufferings, the sign of the cross is made on the forehead, the breast, the eyes, the ears, and the shoulders of the one being baptized. This sign also indicates that by Baptism his body has become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and is consecrated to God, just as material temples are by the sign of the cross.

Various anointings are also made using holy chrism or other sacred oils to symbolize the interior unction of grace that the Holy Spirit imparts to the soul of the candidate. As oil penetrates the body, fortifies it, and soothes wounds, so too the grace received in Baptism penetrates the heart, strengthens it against the passions and the heat of concupiscence, and heals the wounds of the soul. This symbol also

signifies that the life of a Christian is a constant warfare. Just as athletes in ancient times, who had to fight other men or wild beasts, used to cover their bodies with oil before stepping out into the arena—to fortify their sinews, to give their foes less of a grip on them, and to enable them more easily to escape from their hands—so too in Baptism we are exteriorly anointed with the sacred oils and interiorly penetrated by the unction of grace to dispose us to combat vigorously the enemies of our salvation.

For this purpose, in the primitive Church, as an ancient Father attests, it became the custom to anoint the entire body of the candidate. At present, this anointing is performed only on the breast and on the back, between the shoulders. This shows that the heart, represented by the breast, receives strength in Baptism to live in a Christian manner and that the candidate must carry courageously the yoke of God's commandments and the law of the Gospel. Although this struggle is difficult for corrupt nature, it is rendered sweet and light to bear by the grace and the unction given in Baptism.

When we bring an infant to be baptized, it must remain outside for a moment at the door of the church to indicate that as a slave of the devil, it has no right to enter God's house because of the sin with which it is tarnished. There the child is exorcised, and the principal mysteries of the faith that are believed in the Catholic Church are recalled to point out the obligation it is under to know these mysteries.

Because the child cannot answer the questions of the priest concerning the principal points of our faith and the other interrogations that take place during the administration of the sacrament, the Church has decided that others must answer for it. These persons are called godfathers and godmothers; they stand surety before God for the candidate, affirming that the child will faithfully carry out the obligations contracted in Baptism. They also assume the obligation of instructing the child in the duties of a Christian and of seeing that they are practiced. It is no doubt for this reason that the Church also desires that they give the child the name it will carry.

The duties of godparents to their godchild, whom they have held at the baptismal font, are so important that when parents or others who may be in charge fail to instruct the child, they are bound to do so, and they could sin mortally should they fail in this. There must be at least a godfather or a godmother. The Council of Trent permitted both a godfather and a godmother; however, it forbade having a greater number of them, something that was permitted at one time.

Godparents contract affinity, or spiritual parenthood. The same Council decreed that neither the godparents who hold the child at the font nor the minister of the sacrament who performs the Baptism may

marry the child without a dispensation from the pope, nor may they marry the child's parents. In addition, the Church forbids natural parents to act as godparents for any of their own children. The sacrament of Confirmation contracts the same affinity or spiritual parenthood.

To show that the Catholic Church has power to deliver the infant who is about to be baptized from the slavery of the devil, the priest first performs the exorcism to drive out the demon. He begins this ritual by breathing three times on the face of the child to indicate that as God gave the spirit of life to the first human by his breath, it is also by means of the priest's breath, a breath animated by the Spirit of God, that he gives this child the spirit of life and of grace in Baptism. Then the priest says to the demon, "Satan, go forth from this child, and pay honor to the living and true God, to Jesus Christ his Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Withdraw from this child in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Immediately thereafter, he makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead to make known that the person baptized should never hesitate to act like a Christian and to carry the cross, that is, to suffer for Jesus Christ. He then makes the same sign on the child's breast, the lodging place of the heart, to show that the candidate must not desire or love anything but the cross and must not seek rest except in suffering.

After these signs of the cross and the prayers that accompany them, the priest exorcises the salt to purify it and drive away from it whatever it might contain that is evil. After blessing the salt, he places a little of it on the child's mouth, saying, "Receive the salt of wisdom that God may show you favor for eternal life. Amen."

This ceremony indicates that the newly baptized person, having been delivered from all corruption, receives the wisdom of God, which imparts a relish for spiritual things and for the practices of a Christian life.

After putting salt on the infant's mouth, the priest touches the child's ears with his own saliva, saying to the ears, "Be opened," just as our Lord did when he cured the deaf and dumb man. This symbol signifies that by the power of this sacrament, the candidate receives spiritually the same grace given to that deaf and dumb man and that the interior ears of the heart are opened to hear the voice of God. The priest also touches the child's nostrils that they may be opened to draw from sensible things the good fragrance of faith and devotion. Next, he brings the child into the church, saying, "Enter the Temple of God that you may have eternal life and may live forever and ever."

Before the Baptism proper takes place, the priest asks the candidate to renounces the demon, all his works, and all his pomp, meaning

all disorderly desires of the flesh, of riches, and of human grandeur. The Church has always followed this custom. The godparents respond for the child, "I do renounce them." Immediately thereafter, the question is put whether the child believes in God the Father almighty and in Jesus Christ, and his godparents reply, "I do believe." These two points sum up the entire Christian life: giving up sin by renouncing the devil and believing in God and in Jesus Christ, his Son.

The priest then anoints the child's breast, for as Saint Ambrose says, the candidate is a gladiator of Jesus Christ who declares war against the world and is about to begin a struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Then he asks the child to express a desire to be baptized; this shows that we become a Christian only through our own free will and that God forces no one to become such. The godparents reply affirmatively. At this point they give the child the name that the baptized will henceforth bear as a Christian, preferably that of a saint whom the child can imitate and whose prayers he can invoke.

Then the priest baptizes the infant, calling the child by name. Immediately thereafter, he anoints the top of the head with holy chrism to indicate both the union the newly baptized person contracts with Jesus Christ and with the Church and entry as a member into the mystical body of Christ.

After this anointing, the priest places a white cloth on the child's head, saying, "Receive this white robe, and preserve it carefully that you may wear it without blemish before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ and that you may have eternal life and live forever and ever. Amen." This ceremony is a reminder of what was done in the early Church. The newly baptized were clothed in a white robe to show that having been delivered by Baptism from all sin and from the captivity of the devil, they had acquired complete liberty.

This practice had been borrowed from the Romans, who were in the habit of clothing their slaves in white robes when they were freed. On the Saturday or the Sunday following Easter, the newly baptized Christians took off their white garments, and each of them was given an *Agnus Dei* [a lamb] made with wax from the paschal candle. These symbols were blessed by the pope and were worn hung from the neck as a sign of the purity and holiness of life that the wearers were obliged to display.

Today, when babies are baptized, their heads are simply covered with a white cloth, an external sign of the beauty and brightness of the soul whitened and purified in Baptism.

Finally, a lighted candle is placed in the hand of the newly baptized person to symbolize the faith and charity that Baptism infuses. These virtues should shine out and manifest themselves by good

works so that at life's close the candidate may go forth to meet the heavenly spouse with lamp in hand and thus enter with him into the wedding banquet. The words that the priest pronounces at this time express this imagery.

After all these ceremonies have been completed, the child's name is written down to show that the person is numbered among the children of God and of the Church and that the name is written in heaven, just as it is on earth.

Next, the child is brought to the altar and placed on it to signify that he is consecrated to God like a living and holy victim and has by the grace of Baptism entered into union with God, represented by the altar.

Finally, the bells are rung to manifest the joy that the whole Church experiences in union with the saints in heaven because this child has received the grace of Baptism.

Chapter 3

Confirmation

Section 1—Confirmation; its advantages and effects; the minister and the character of Confirmation

The second sacrament is Confirmation, which increases the grace of Baptism in us by giving us the fullness of the Holy Spirit. This sacrament strengthens a Christian's faith and imparts the fortitude needed to profess the truths of the Gospel, even at the peril of our life or by the shedding of our blood if necessary.

This sacrament is called Confirmation because of its main effects, which are to strengthen us in faith and to reinforce strongly the grace that we received in Baptism. In this sacrament we also reiterate and ratify anew the promises we solemnly made in Baptism.

Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament so that we can share in his strength, the fullness of his grace, and his Spirit. The Council of Trent, relying on Tradition, assures us that this is indeed a true sacrament, one that the Church has always recognized.

The advantages provided by this sacrament are so great and so important that the holy Fathers, comparing Confirmation with Baptism, say that the former is the crowning and consummation of the latter. In effect, in this sacrament the Holy Spirit is given to us in great abundance and brings with him all his gifts. We receive invisibly in

this sacrament the same Spirit that the Apostles received in visible form on Pentecost. The fact that he no longer comes down visibly on the faithful as he did at the beginning of the Church is because she no longer needs to be vouched for by miracles and prodigies since she became sufficiently well established throughout the world.

Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit increases in us three kinds of grace. He so strengthens our faith in Jesus Christ that he makes us capable of confessing it even at the risk of our life. He gives us enough strength to overcome whatever threatens our salvation, and he gives us the patience we need to endure for the love of God all the pain and suffering of this life.

Although we live in a Christian country, we need to be strengthened in our faith by this sacrament no less than if we lived in a land where a religion contrary to ours was professed. The bad Christians among us are much more dangerous than the tyrants who persecuted Christians in times past. These tyrants did not pressure people to renounce Jesus Christ all the time and by all means, as do the bad Christians around us. Furthermore, while the tyrants tried to force people to renounce Jesus Christ only in words and under constraint, bad Christians try to get us to renounce Jesus Christ in our actions and to do so willingly.

We have three enemies to combat with respect to our salvation: the world, the flesh, and the devil. The devil is the leader of the fallen angels. He makes use of all these wicked spirits, as Holy Scripture calls them, and through them he has recourse to all sorts of stratagems to tempt us and bring us to perdition. The world means those people who live according to the spirit of the times as well as everything in creatures that can lead us to sin. It also includes the urge we have to display ourselves outwardly and to live for show and vanity. The flesh is the inclination we have toward sensual pleasures, the frailty we experience in doing good, and the inclination to evil that has become natural for us, as it were, since Adam's sin.

Although it is not absolutely necessary to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, nevertheless, because we need great strength and generous courage to resist and overcome all these enemies of ours and because this overabundant grace is given to us in this sacrament, it is most important for us not to neglect it but to receive it as soon as possible. For this reason the Church administers it to children as early as the age of seven because by that time they are beginning to enjoy the use of reason and are capable of offending God. Hence it is proper to afford them the help that this sacrament can provide so that they can thereby receive all the assistance necessary to preserve themselves from sin. The sacrament is not given to them at an earlier age,

and it would not be proper to do so, because they do not have to face temptations against faith or most occasions of sin.

It is true that the primitive Church followed the custom of administering Confirmation to all candidates immediately after Baptism, but this was done only because at that time Baptism was usually administered to large numbers of adults who had converted to the faith. They had all the more need of this sacrament because the Church was persecuted by infidels; they were liable to suffer martyrdom at any moment. People assumed that if Confirmation were delayed, they might lack strength in times of persecution for want of the help that Confirmation might have afforded them.

According to the Council of Trent, a bishop alone can administer Confirmation. We see this to have been observed from the beginning of the Church, for only the Apostles imparted the Holy Spirit, that is, Confirmation, and their successors today are the bishops.

Because it imprints a spiritual mark, called a character, that remains permanently in the soul, we can receive this sacrament only once. Confirmation also confers special graces, but they cannot produce any effect on the soul as long as it remains in a state of sin.

Section 2—The matter and form of Confirmation, the ceremonies that accompany it, and the proper intentions for receiving it

The sacrament of Confirmation is administered by anointing the candidate's forehead with holy chrism, which is composed of olive oil and balsam and is blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday in a solemn ceremony. When anointing the person's forehead with holy chrism, the bishop makes a sign of the cross with his thumb while saying, "I confirm you with the chrism of salvation in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

This sacrament also includes, as was the case in the time of the Apostles, the imposition of the bishop's hands to show that the person confirmed is placed beneath the hand, that is, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and consequently should no longer be guided by personal lights but by the movement of God's Holy Spirit.

The anointing with holy chrism and the imposing of the bishop's hands make up the matter of the sacrament of Confirmation, and the words that the prelate pronounces at the same time constitute the form. Holy chrism is used in Confirmation, rather than some other material, to symbolize the spiritual unction of the Holy Spirit, which we receive in this sacrament much more perfectly than in Baptism.

The oil in the holy chrism signifies that the Holy Spirit penetrates and fills our soul by virtue of this sacrament, just as oil permeates and penetrates whatever it is poured on. The oil also shows that the Holy Spirit strengthens the soul, just as oil fortifies the debilitated muscles of the body, and also calms our passions and soothes the difficulties we encounter in our practice of virtue, just as oil mollifies the roughest things.

The balsam mingled with the oil in making chrism teaches us that confirmed Christians must make themselves agreeable to God and edify their neighbor by a holy life to such an extent that they may be, as Saint Paul says, the good fragrance of Jesus Christ. As balsam preserves our body from corruption, so does the Holy Spirit preserve our soul from the corruption of sin.

When administering Confirmation, the bishop makes the sign of the cross with his thumb on the candidate's forehead to show that the newly confirmed person should publicly profess the faith and the maxims of the Gospel without shame or fear of death; as a rule, it is on the forehead that fear and shame appear. This sign also admonishes us to glory only in the cross, wearing it on our forehead, and indicates that we cannot be saved unless we bear the cross and learn to suffer as Christians should. This cross is traced with the oil to show that although the cross is sometimes difficult to bear, this sacrament gives us the special strength and grace that will make it easy for us. The external use of the sign of the cross is a symbol of the character that this sacrament interiorly imprints on our soul, which thereby remains totally consecrated to God.

The bishop then gives a slight blow on the cheek to the person he is confirming, thereby teaching that henceforth we must be prepared for suffering, and we should consider ourselves highly honored to endure whatever may occur, no matter how shameful and difficult, for the blow on the cheek is a symbol of ignominy and suffering.

At the same time, the bishop says, "Peace be to you," to make the candidate realize that the best means to secure peace with our neighbor in this world is to suffer patiently and that we will enjoy abundant peace in heaven if we willingly suffer in this life.

Afterward, as a rule, a veil is placed over the person's forehead out of respect for the sacred chrism, which has been blessed, and to serve as a reminder of the care we should take to preserve the graces received in this sacrament of Confirmation, for it is given only once, and we need it at every moment.

Ordinarily, a person receiving Confirmation should have a godfather or godmother as a reminder that he is still weak and needs a faithful guide to help live a Christian life. The person's name is also

changed if it is not the name of a saint or if for some reason it is proper to give another name. The bishop then imparts his solemn benediction, which is received kneeling and with much respect.

Such are the sacred ceremonies that accompany Confirmation. They should inspire us with great respect for this sacrament.

Regarding the motives required of the soul when we receive this sacrament, it is very important that they correspond with the holiness of the sacrament and with the graces received through it.

It is not necessary that candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation be fasting, although this was the custom in the early Church. They must, however, have been carefully instructed about the principal mysteries of our religion and about this sacrament. They should be in the state of grace; if not, they could commit a sacrilege. To avoid this, they should go to Confession before receiving Confirmation, something that parents, those responsible for children in their parents' stead, or those in charge of them should see to with care.

Persons waiting to receive the sacrament of Confirmation should remain kneeling in silence and with special modesty and piety. They should beg the Holy Spirit to fill them with his graces and to help them preserve these. They should strongly resolve to live in the manner required by the holiness of this sacrament. After being confirmed, they should thank God for the graces he has given them and spend the rest of the day in works of piety.

Because not many Christians are aware of the dignity and excellence of the sacrament of Confirmation and of the graces received through it, few take any pains about carrying out the obligations they assumed in receiving it. This result is usually because few prepare themselves properly to welcome the grace that God gives in Confirmation or because they do little to utilize this grace.

Those who have received Confirmation without having been sufficiently instructed and without the other intentions they need should try to learn without delay what this sacrament really is and to make up by Confession and penance for the poor motives they had in receiving it. Then, without concern for human respect, they should begin to live the life of a genuine Christian.

Chapter 4

The Eucharist as a Sacrament

We become children of God through Baptism, and we receive in Confirmation the strength that we need. We further require food that will enable us to maintain our vigor. This food is the bread of the children of God, called the Holy Eucharist, the sacrament that Jesus Christ instituted to serve as nourishment for our soul. This sacrament contains the true body and true blood of Jesus Christ under the accidents, or appearances, of bread and wine. These accidents, or appearances, of bread and wine explain how the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist seem to be mere bread and wine to our eyes and to our other senses, that is, in its taste, color, shape, and so on.

Section 1—The different names given to the Holy Eucharist; its matter and form; the body and blood of Jesus Christ present in this sacrament

The sacrament of the Eucharist is the greatest and most sacred of all the sacraments because it contains what is most exalted and holy, namely, Jesus Christ, who is God and man, and produces the most admirable effects in our soul. The word *eucharist* means *grace,* or *thanksgiving.* We call this sacrament grace because it contains the author of all grace and gives grace in abundance. We call it thanksgiving because it was instituted and is offered as a sacrifice to give thanks to God through Jesus Christ for all the good things, bodily and spiritual, that we have received from him.

We commonly give seven other names to the sacrament of the Eucharist.

We call it the Most Holy Sacrament because it contains Jesus Christ, who is holiness itself, and because it imparts great holiness to those who receive it worthily.

We call it the Sacrament of the altar because the altar is the place where it is consecrated and reserved.

We call it Communion because it unites intimately with Jesus Christ all those who receive it and because those who communicate are bound together by sincere and exteriorly manifested charity.

We call it the Sacred Host because it contains Jesus Christ, who offered himself as a sacrifice when he died on the cross, and because

he is still offered every day in this sacrament at the moment of the Consecration.

We call it the Bread of the children of God because it is food for the soul given to the children of God.

We call it the Holy Table because it is a banquet where the faithful are nourished by the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

We call it our Viaticum because it is intended only for us who are pilgrims on earth, but we also call it thus most especially with regard to the sick, who by receiving this sacrament on their deathbed, are spiritually fortified by it to complete their journey and to pass on more surely and easily from earth to heaven. It was also named Viaticum in the early Church because the first Christians were in the habit of not undertaking any journey without bringing along with them the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The Fathers also gave it other names, but these are the main ones most commonly used in the Church.

In the Holy Eucharist, the bread and wine are the matter of the sacrament. Neither of these continues to subsist once the form—the words pronounced over the bread, "This is my body," and those uttered over the wine, "This is my blood"—has been applied to the two elements of the matter. For at that moment the substance of the bread is entirely changed into the substance of the body of Jesus Christ by the words of the Consecration of the bread, and the substance of the wine is likewise changed into that of the blood of Christ by the words of the Consecration of the wine.

This has always been the belief of the Church to which the holy Fathers of the first centuries have borne witness. Saint Gregory of Nyssa says, "It is right for us to believe that the bread has been changed into the body of God's Word when that Word has asserted, 'This is my body.'"

Saint Cyril declares, "Because Jesus Christ said of what was in the chalice, 'This is my blood,' who will dare to doubt it and say that this is not his blood? Once, at the marriage in Cana, he changed water into wine. Is he not worthy of belief when he says that he has changed the wine into his blood?"

Saint Augustine affirms, "Jesus Christ carried himself in his own hands because he carried his own body when in giving himself to his Apostles, he said to them, 'This is my body.'"

Again, Saint Augustine teaches us this truth quite plainly when he says that faith must make us confess that before the Consecration the bread and wine are such as nature made them, but after the Consecration they become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, consecrated by his blessing, that is, by the words of the Consecration.

We should, therefore, be persuaded and firmly believe that after the Consecration there is no longer either bread or wine but the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine and that Jesus Christ is at the same time in heaven and on the altar in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The name *transubstantiation* is given to this change that takes place in the substance of the bread and wine, making them become the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The words of the Consecration, as soon as the priest pronounces them, bring about this change of substance. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as his body, is contained under the appearances of the bread because a living body like that which Jesus Christ now has never exists without its blood. In the same way, this body of Jesus Christ is also contained under the species, or appearances, of the wine because his blood cannot be separated from his body.

We are right, therefore, to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist as we adore God, for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom we must adore as the God–Man, is contained therein.

Although the body of Jesus Christ is sensible, visible, and palpable, it is present in the eucharistic sacrament in a manner that is neither sensible, visible, nor palpable. It does not enjoy the use of its senses and corporal faculties, even though it possesses all of them. No doubt Christ's body is much larger than a host, yet it exists whole and entire in the host and in every particle thereof, however small. Even if a host is divided into as many particles as we may wish, the body of Christ remains whole and entire in each of these. The appearances of bread and wine nourish and strengthen our body as if they were both these substances. All these miracles are wrought by four simple words!

Therefore, we do not and cannot see the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. What we see, touch, and taste are the accidents, or appearances, of the bread and wine, which always remain as long as the sacrament subsists. We touch only the appearances, taste only the appearances, see and break only the appearances, but we truly consume the body of Jesus Christ. No matter how small the particle of the host we receive, we receive him whole and entire. When the appearances have been consumed in our stomach, Jesus Christ ceases to be corporally present in us, but he remains with us by his grace for as long as we avoid sinning mortally.

All these wonders could and can be accomplished with ease because nothing is impossible for God. It was no more difficult for Jesus Christ to confine his body in this sacrament and to multiply it, so to speak, than it was to unite himself personally to human nature. Nor is

it difficult for him to be present in different places, for the Gospel assures us that after his Resurrection he appeared in various places at the same time.

Section 2—The institution of the Holy Eucharist; the minister of the Holy Eucharist

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist on the eve of his Passion; after eating the paschal lamb and washing his Apostles' feet, he said to them, "Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you; this is my blood, which is shed for you."[4]

Jesus Christ chose bread and wine rather than something else for the matter of this sacrament to indicate that just as bread and wine are the main supports of human life, the body and blood of Jesus Christ are a divine food, an excellent nourishment for the soul.

Although Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament under the two species, or appearances, of bread and wine, it is one sacrament, for the two elements make up a single spiritual repast, just as bread and wine make up a single corporal meal.

In instituting this sacrament, Jesus Christ has shown his love for us in a special manner, for he unites us entirely to him in the closest and most excellent union that we can possibly imagine. He gives himself to us as our food, which results in the most intimate union found in nature. He does not change himself into us, but he changes us into him, insofar as this is possible, through the reception of this sacrament. He does not change our substance, but he alters our affections and our way of life to make them like his. Just as bodily food provides a certain vigor to all parts of the body, so too the body of our Lord, while remaining whole within us, diffuses in our soul and body a certain spirit of divine life.

The testimonial of love that Jesus Christ shows us in this sacrament is that he gives himself to us with all he has and with no reservations: his body, blood, soul, and divinity; his graces and merits. As the Council of Trent says, he gives us all this truly, really, and substantially. He also gives us his graces in greater abundance here than in the other sacraments.

Priests alone, acting as the ministers of Jesus Christ, have the power to consecrate the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus Christ gave this power to them through the Apostles when he instituted this sacrament by saying, "Do this in remembrance of me."[5] Priests perform this Consecration of the body and blood of

4. Matt. 26:26
5. Luke 22:19.

Jesus Christ by using the same words he pronounced when he instituted this sacrament.

Although priests always consecrate this sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine and the Christians in the first centuries sometimes received Communion under both species, in recent times the Church has found it proper to prescribe that only priests, carrying out the action of the sacrifice of the Mass, should receive Communion under both species. All others, whether ecclesiastics or laypeople, should receive only the species of bread. This, however, does not prevent them from receiving the blood of Jesus Christ along with his body, exactly like those who receive under both species, for each species alone contains the body and blood of Jesus Christ, just as both of them together do.

Section 3—The obligation incumbent on Christians to receive the Holy Eucharist; how often they should do so

The Church commands all the faithful to receive the Holy Eucharist—what we call "going to Communion"—at least once a year. This prescription, found in the eleventh canon of the Lateran Council, does not mean that the Church wants Christians to be satisfied with communicating so rarely, for she declares in this passage that they should receive Communion "at least once a year." In the thirteenth session of the Council of Trent, she states that her earnest desire is that Christians should have such respect for this sacred mystery that they will receive it often and that it will give them life and health of soul.

The first Christians received Communion quite often, as we learn from Saint Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, where he says, "All persevered in the doctrine of the Apostles, in the communion of the breaking of the bread, and in prayer."[6] Further on, he tells us that they did so daily: "They continued daily with one accord in the Temple, breaking bread in one house or in another."[7] They were not obliged to do this by any commandment, and if they communicated so often, it was only through piety and devotion. The custom was so universal in the Church that all the faithful communicated at every Mass they attended, which is what was prescribed in a decree attributed to Pope Saint Anacletus, mentioned in canon law: "Let all receive Communion after the Consecration, unless they want to be banished and interdicted from the Church, for the Apostles so ordained it, and it is the practice of the Roman Church." As Saint Denis relates, in those days it was the custom in the Church for the priest, after consecrating the bread and

6. Acts 2:42.
7. Acts 2:46.

wine and after taking Communion, to turn to the people and say, "Come, my brethren, to Communion."

Later on, this custom fell into such disuse that several Councils were obliged to prescribe that the faithful should receive Communion at least three times a year, at Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. Because these ordinances were no longer observed as time went on, the Lateran Council, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, limited itself to obliging the faithful under pain of mortal sin to communicate once a year during paschal time. The Council of Trent renewed and confirmed this regulation.

All the saints advise us to receive Communion often, but it is not easy to determine how often each person should do so. Saint Thomas has given us an admirable solution to this problem. He says that if we consider the reception of the Eucharist as a sacrament, it is useful to receive it daily so as to share daily in the graces it gives us. This is why Saint Ambrose, in book 4 of *The Sacraments*, says that "because as often as the blood of Jesus Christ is shed, it is shed for the remission of sins, and because we sin every day, we should receive the Holy Eucharist every day to find therein the remedy for our sins."

However, if we consider the reception of the Eucharist from the point of view of the receiver, we must say that we should approach this sacrament only with great devotion. Saint Thomas continues by saying that if we are properly disposed every day to receive the Blessed Sacrament, we do well to receive it daily. For this reason Saint Ambrose says, "Receive it daily so that it may benefit you daily," but then he adds, "Live in such a way that you may be worthy of receiving it daily." Because most people have many hindrances, both of body and of soul, that prevent them from communicating so often, we read in the book, *Ecclesiastical Teachings*, "I do not at all approve of the practice of daily Communion, nor do I disapprove of it, but I advise and exhort you to receive Communion every Sunday, provided that you have no affection for sin."

To give advice on this subject that applies to all sorts of persons, we may say that to adopt a rule concerning the more or less frequent reception of Communion, we should follow the advice of a wise confessor. In doing so, we can be sure of receiving Communion as often as the Church desires.

Section 4—The proper conditions for worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist; the effects this sacrament can produce in us

Because it would be of little use to receive the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist if we did not dispose ourselves for it as perfectly as possible, it is worthwhile to teach the faithful the conditions needed to receive Communion worthily.

Two kinds of conditions are needed to receive Communion; some are necessary, and others are required by propriety.

The necessary conditions are those we must have when receiving Communion; to receive Communion without them would be a sacrilege. There are two such conditions, namely, to be fasting and to be free from mortal sin. The latter is taught by the Apostle Paul when he says that each person should prove himself, that is, he should examine the state of his soul and never eat this bread except after careful examination. He gives this advice because, as he declares, "Whoever eats unworthily eats his condemnation, not discerning the body of the Lord."[8]

To receive Communion without being entirely free of mortal sin would be to commit a sacrilege, one of the most enormous sins of which we can be guilty. The holy Fathers compare this to the crime of Judas and of the Jews who crucified our Lord. Therefore, those who desire to receive Communion and have been guilty of some mortal sin must purify themselves of it first by going to Confession and thus regain the grace of God. As the Council of Trent says so well, if we know we have a mortal sin on our conscience, no matter what kind of contrition we may have, we must not receive Holy Communion before going to Confession.

The second necessary condition for receiving Communion is to be fasting, that is, not to have eaten or drunk anything whatever since the previous midnight.

The conditions of propriety for receiving Holy Communion are not so strictly required. We would not commit a sacrilege if we lacked them, but it is highly proper to have them to participate in this holy sacrament. Without them we cannot hope to obtain many graces from communicating.

These conditions are the following: to be free from venial sin, to have a pure intention, and to approach the holy table with great external modesty and interior faith, fear, and love of God. These latter conditions are the ones that the Church formerly expected of the faithful when she had the deacon call out immediately before Com-

8. 1 Cor. 11:27.

munion to those who were about to receive, "Draw near with faith, fear, and love."

The holiness of this sacrament and of the communicant privileged to receive it require such great purity and cleanliness of heart that Saint John Chrysostom says, "If the chalices and other sacred vessels are kept spotless, with how much greater reason must our souls be even more pure?"

Because this sacrament is a mystery of faith, say Saint Thomas, we must prepare ourselves to receive it with full faith. We must also entertain a deep sentiment of our unworthiness—considering the greatness and infinite majesty of God, whom we are about to welcome—of our nothingness, and of the sins of which we have been guilty. This reflection should produce in us sentiments of respect, fear, and self-abasement. It is also proper that we should ardently desire to unite ourselves with our Lord in this sacrament and that we should give ourselves entirely to him as he gives himself to us.

The effects and graces produced in our soul by the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist when we receive it with worthy intentions are many and very important. Because this sacrament is a remedy for us as well as food for our soul, it produces different effects depending on these different qualities that we need.

As a medicine, this sacrament heals all the infirmities of our soul. It delivers us from the devil's temptations and fortifies us so as not to yield to them. It moderates the fires of concupiscence and calms our passions while greatly diminishing our inclination to sin. It removes the deformity that sin has produced in our soul, and it appeases God's anger, aroused against us because of our sins and infidelities in his regard. It delivers us from eternal death, as our Lord promised when he said, "Whoever eats of this bread will live forever."[9]

It remits venial sins and those we may have forgotten. If we have been preserved from sinning and from falling so easily, we should, says Saint Bernard, attribute this to the virtue of this sacrament. It also fortifies us so much, says Saint Cyprian, that it makes us triumph over the world, the devil, and ourselves.

The effects that the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist produces in us, considered as nourishment for our souls, are that it restores the vigor that sin had undermined and gives us new energy to carry out our actions with grace and by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. It also makes us grow in grace by augmenting sanctifying grace in us as soon as we receive it, and it procures for us many actual graces that are given to us at appropriate times and as we need them. These help us to preserve sanctifying grace, the life of the soul.

9. John 6:51.

This sacrament greatly strengthens the powers of our soul so that we may apply ourselves with greater facility and courage to what pertains to God's service. It imparts a certain spirit of life that illuminates our understanding with new vision, as happened to the two disciples at Emmaus,[10] and it stirs up and inflames our will with new ardor to love God above all things. It becomes our Viaticum on the journey we pursue to eternity; it affords us great consolations and spiritual delights, says Saint Cyprian, and it unites us so closely with our Lord that we become one spirit with him.

This sacrament produces admirable effects in the body as well: sanctifying it through contact with the body of our Lord and consecrating the body by making it become in truth the member of Jesus Christ and a living tabernacle of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Thus, says Saint Cyril, we become "God carriers," bringing Jesus Christ with us when we receive his sacred body in ours.

Chapter 5

The Eucharist as a Sacrifice

Section 1—How the Eucharist is indeed a sacrifice

The Holy Eucharist is not only a sacrament; it is also a sacrifice, the one true sacrifice of the New Law. It is a sacrament because by means of it God gives us the body and blood of Jesus Christ to sanctify us under the sensible signs, or appearances, of bread and wine. But it is also a sacrifice because the priest during Mass offers the body and blood of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine to God the Father in memory of the Passion and death of the same Jesus Christ.

The Eucharist as a sacrifice exists only during the time that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are actually being offered to God. This offering occurs during Mass at the Consecration, when the priest pronounces the words by which the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of our Lord. This means that the Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and no longer a sacrifice from the moment of the Consecration and during the time it is reserved in church. The sacrament remains as long as the species of bread and wine subsist, that is, until they are consumed or corrupted to such an extent that they no longer have the appearance of bread and wine.

10. Luke 24:31.

The difference between the sacrament and the sacrifice is that the former was instituted to sanctify us and give us grace, and the latter is intended to honor God as our Creator, on whom all things depend. The sacrament benefits only those who receive it with the proper intentions, but the sacrifice can be of benefit to all, present or absent, the just or sinners, well disposed or not, living or dead—unless they died in the state of mortal sin. Although the sacrifice was instituted directly not to sanctify us but to honor God, it obtains the remission of sins, the spirit of penance, and many other graces for those for whom it is offered, for it honors God, appeases his anger against them, and makes intercession for them.

This sacrifice, an external and sensible offering of something agreeable to God, is presented to him alone. The offering is destroyed in his honor by a person who has the right and the responsibility of doing so to bear witness both to our dependence on God and to God's sovereign dominion over all creatures.

The way in which this offering must be destroyed in God's honor is indicated for us in the sacrifices of the Old Law. There the victim was destroyed and annihilated to the extent and in the manner that was possible. If the victim of the sacrifice was some animal, it was slain. If it was something material, such as salt, incense, bread, flour, and so on, all these things were consumed. If the offering was something liquid, it was poured on the ground. All these practices show us that the destruction carried out in the sacrifice of the Mass consists in killing or annihilating as far as possible the victim that is offered to God and dedicated to him.

The destruction that takes place in the sacrifice of the Mass consists in the changing of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This true destruction of the substance of the bread and wine is brought about by the words that Jesus Christ used and that the priest pronounces in his name at the Consecration. They produce the effect that they signify.

The victim of the sacrifice in the holy Mass is not the bread and wine but the body and blood of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. At the Consecration this victim is offered to God, dedicated and destroyed in God's honor. Because Jesus Christ died on the cross, he cannot die again, but at Mass he dies again, insofar as this is possible, in what we call a mystical manner, for his body and blood are separated in this sacrifice. In virtue of the words of the Consecration, only his body is in the host, and only his blood is in the chalice. Of course, in reality his blood is present in the host along with his body, and his body is also in the chalice along with his blood.

Section 2—Those by whom, to whom, and for whom the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, or holy Mass, is offered and why it is offered

Priests alone offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass. By virtue of the authority they have received from God and of their sacred character, they are empowered to consecrate and to offer to God this divine mystery as the vicars of Jesus Christ, the primary and sovereign priest.

Jesus Christ, in fact, is the true priest who offers the sacrifice of the holy Mass. Other priests, when celebrating this sacrifice, are merely representatives of his person, which is obvious because when they pronounce the words of the Consecration, they do not say, "This is the body of Jesus Christ," but rather, "This is my body," as though Christ himself were speaking. One consequence of this is that a Mass celebrated by an unworthy priest has the same value and efficacy as one said by a saintly priest.

Because this sacrifice was instituted solely to honor God as our Creator, we are not permitted to offer it to the saints or to any creature whatsoever, for that would be to render them the honor and homage due only to God's sovereign majesty. Hence, even when Mass is said in honor of the saints, it is offered to God alone. We pray to the saints to join us and to unite their merits to our prayers to make this sacrifice more agreeable to God through their intercession.

We offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass, says the Council of Trent, according to the Tradition of the Apostles, for the sins and other necessities not only of the faithful still living but also of those who have died in Jesus Christ and are not yet entirely purified—in a word, for all those who are in purgatory.

This sacrifice obtains different graces for the just and for sinners. For the latter, says the Council of Trent, it secures the gift of penance, which includes the grace of repenting for their sins. For the just it wins the remission of their venial sins, the punishment due to their sins, an increase of grace and virtue, and special help to do what is right.

The Church accommodates the weakness of the faithful by allowing the holy sacrifice of the Mass also to be offered to obtain temporal benefits, provided they are requested in submission to the holy will of God and that God judges them useful for his glory and for their salvation. If at times God does not grant such favors when asked, it is because those for whom the holy Mass is offered are unworthy of such blessings or because what they ask would not be good for them but dangerous for their salvation.

Section 3—The relationship between the holy sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifices of the Old Law that prefigured it

The holy sacrifice of the Mass was prefigured and represented, says the Council of Trent, by the various kinds of sacrifices in use according to both natural and written law. It contains all the benefits that were only signified by these ancient rites, which find their perfection and completion in the Mass.

There were four kinds of sacrifices in the ancient law; all are found again in the holy Mass: holocausts, eucharistic sacrifices, propitiatory sacrifices, and intercessory sacrifices.

Holocausts were instituted to render God the sovereign honor and worship we owe him because he is our Creator, the one who has given us being and all that we have; because he is our sovereign Lord and can dispose of us as he pleases without our having any right to resist; because he is our last end, to whose glory we should refer everything by letting ourselves be entirely consumed for him.

In a holocaust the victim was entirely burned, that is, nothing was set aside. This burning was to show God that because we receive everything from his hand, we want to give everything back to him and that it is as easy for him to take our life and annihilate us entirely as it is for the one offering the sacrifice to slay the victim and consume it entirely.

Eucharistic sacrifices were instituted to thank God for the good things of nature and of grace received from him in general and in particular, for what he daily gives us, and for what we expect throughout this life. These sacrifices were also called peace offerings.

Propitiatory sacrifices were instituted to obtain the pardon of sins and of the punishment due to them.

Intercessory sacrifices were instituted to obtain efficaciously the spiritual, corporal, and material benefits that people needed.

In these last three kinds of sacrifice, only part of the victim was burned; the remainder was reserved for the priests and for the persons who offered the victim.

The sacrifice of holy Mass is a holocaust because we pay God infinite honor by offering Jesus Christ. We recognize that God is the Creator, sovereign Lord, and last end of all things. We acknowledge God as Creator of all because his Son, whom we offer him, is the first of all creatures. We pay God honor as our sovereign Lord because in one instant he destroys the substances of bread and wine and replaces them with the humanity of our Lord, who appears under the accidents of the elements. Finally, we honor God at Mass as the end of all things because our Lord Jesus Christ sacrifices and consummates

himself for the glory of God along with all humanity, who are in him and with him as members with their head.

This sacrifice is also eucharistic because by the offering we make to God of his own Son, we return to him infinitely more than everything he has given to us. It is also propitiatory because it appeases God's anger aroused against us. It obtains for us the remission of our sins and the temporal punishment they have deserved because this is the same sacrifice as that of the cross, whose merits it applies to us.

Finally, it is an intercessory sacrifice because it possesses full efficacy to obtain for us all we need. This is why it is offered every day for public and private necessities, both spiritual and temporal. Jesus Christ, the victim of the sacrifice, pleads for those who offer it and those for whom it is offered. We can be sure that our prayers at Mass, united to those of our Lord and presented by him to God his Father, can neither prove disagreeable to him nor be rejected by him.

Section 4—The relationship and the difference between the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross

In addition to the ends of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, which it has in common with the sacrifices of the Old Law, it was especially instituted to remind us of the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the oblation he offered for us on the cross. He tells us this in the words "Whenever you do this, do it in remembrance of me."[11] Saint Paul adds, "For as often as you eat this bread or drink this chalice, you will proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes."[12]

Furthermore, the sacrifice of the holy Mass is the same as the one our Lord Jesus Christ underwent for us when he died on the cross: the same victim is present in both. The same Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself once on Calvary, offers himself again daily in holy Mass. The same priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, offers his sacrifice to the eternal Father in holy Mass, and this sacrifice is the same as once presented on the cross.

There is, however, one difference between the sacrifice of the Mass and that of the cross. The latter was visible and bloody, and it took place only once. On the contrary, the sacrifice that occurs on the altar is invisible because Jesus Christ offers himself there invisibly. Nor is it a bloody sacrifice; in it Jesus Christ does not shed his blood for us as he did on the cross. In addition, the Mass is offered daily because it is intended for sinners who fall into sin every day and need God's grace every day.

11. Luke 22:19.
12. 1 Cor. 11:26.

These two sacrifices also differ in that the sacrifice of the cross is the cause of justification for all, the source of the graces we receive. The same cannot be said of the Mass, which draws all its power from the death of Jesus Christ. In addition, by the sacrifice of the cross, Jesus Christ made satisfaction fully and more than sufficiently for our sins. He also merited for us all the graces that can be useful or necessary for us, whereas in the holy Mass his satisfaction and merits are applied to us.

It is true that all the sacraments were instituted to apply to us the merits of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, but there is a difference between them and the sacrifice of the Mass. The sacraments apply to us the merits of the Passion and thus justify us, whereas the Mass obtains for us the grace to apply these merits to ourselves. Therefore the sacraments are of use only to those who approach them with the proper intentions, whereas the Mass is profitable even to infidels because it obtains the grace of conversion and to impenitent sinners because it leads them to repentance and sorrow for their sins.

The holy sacrifice of the Mass also differs from the other sacraments in that it contains not only grace but also the body of Jesus Christ, which redeemed us, and it is profitable not only to the living but also to the dead who are suffering in purgatory. It diminishes their sufferings and even delivers them from purgatory, whereas the sacraments are of use only to the faithful on earth.

Even though Jesus Christ had sacrificed himself by dying on the cross, an oblation that was sufficient for our redemption, it was appropriate that he should institute the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The Council of Trent gives three reasons: 1) because Jesus Christ is the eternal priest, as Saint Paul calls him, his sacrifice should not end with his death but should continue through his ministers until the end of time; 2) because there has never been a religion without sacrifice, it is most reasonable that the Christian religion should have its own, one proportionate to its dignity and excellence; 3) this sacrifice gives us an opportunity of perpetually recalling the death Jesus Christ suffered for us on the cross, and it applies the merits of his Passion to us. For this reason, the same Council says, the sacrifice of the cross and that of the holy Mass are identical, the only difference being the manner in which they are offered.

Chapter 6

The Virtue of Penance and Its Necessity

Sin has always reigned in the world, and ever since it was introduced by the first man, as Saint Paul tells us, we have always needed to do penance to escape its toils. We have no other means of making up for sin or for reconciling ourselves with God, as he declared through his holy Prophets. This led the holy Council of Trent to affirm that to obtain grace and justice, penance has always been necessary at all times and for all who have sullied their souls by mortal sin. In support of this assertion, the Council invokes the words that Saint John the Baptist and Jesus Christ pronounced long before the institution of the sacrament of Penance, "Unless you do penance, you will all likewise perish."[13] The Council also adds that penance is necessary for those who present themselves to be washed clean by the sacrament of Baptism, and it confirms this by the words of Saint Peter in the Acts of the Apostles, "Do penance, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."[14]

Nevertheless, as the same Council affirms, Penance was not a sacrament prior to the coming of Jesus Christ, nor since that time is it a sacrament for anyone who has not received Baptism. It follows that there must be a penance, apart from the sacrament, without which no one guilty of mortal sin has ever been or can be saved. This penance is a virtue by which we conceive true sorrow for our sins, resolving not to commit them any more and to make up for them. This leads Saint Ambrose and Saint Gregory to say that penance means to weep over our past sins and to be disposed not only to commit them no more but also to make satisfaction for them.

This virtue includes three acts. The first is horror and aversion not only for our sins but also for all they may lead to and the occasion for further sinning that they give. This loathing should be much greater than what we might experience for the most abominable things in the world, for sin is the greatest of all evils. The second act of this virtue of penance is both a deep sorrow for having offended God because we love him above all things and a firm resolve not to offend him again. The third act of this virtue is zeal for God's justice, which fills us with an ardent desire to make reparation to God for our sins. This zeal obliges us to spend our entire life in deep humiliation

13. Luke 13:3.
14. Acts 2:38.

and distress because of our sins, and it keeps us away from whatever might lead us to offend God again.

The Council of Trent says that the conditions we must have to receive pardon for our sins and the grace of God through penance are faith, fear of God, confidence in his mercy, and true love of him as the source of all justice. These motives produce in us a great hatred and aversion for our sins and an effective resolve to lead a new life by observing God's commandments entirely and exactly.

We ought to make acts of penance throughout life, according to the Council of Trent, because the life of a Christian is one of continual penance. We must not, therefore, delay for a single instant in embracing penance, for God, who has promised his pardon to those who repent, has not promised us the time to do so. More than one sinner who expected to do penance when dying did not get the chance. God justly refused to give more time to such a person because in these cases the sinner sooner quits sinning through death than turns away from sin in life. The most obvious proof of this is that the majority of those who recover their health after having been at death's door usually go right back to their sinful way of life. We must, then, do penance as soon as God gives us the inspiration to do so because we are not sure that we will have the time or the grace to do it later on.

The first act of penance, which consists in conceiving horror for sin, and its last act, which calls on us to embrace difficult and laborious actions to make satisfaction to God for our sins, are as necessary for the righteous and those who have preserved their baptismal innocence as they are for sinners. This is true because the righteous must take all possible means to preserve themselves from sin. No means is more effective in achieving this than hating sin, conceiving a deep horror for it in the depths of our heart, and depriving ourselves of sensual pleasures and of whatever else provides us with personal satisfactions in this world. In short, we can avoid sin only insofar as we deprive ourselves of everything that can lead us to it.

Although penance in itself is a good thing, not all those who practice it do so rightly; deep in their hearts they do not have a sincere sorrow for their sins, with God in mind and inspired by love for him, or an ardent desire to satisfy his justice. Judas regretted his sin, yet he was damned. Even the damned feel sorrow and regret for having committed all their crimes, but they do this with rage and despair and without any love for God or confidence in his goodness. Some people feel sorry for an evil action of which they are guilty, either because it brought down on them some misfortune or unpleasant consequence or for fear that something of this sort may happen to them.

Some also do penance for their crimes, in the sense of making up for them, but only because they are forced to do so and because they do it unwillingly, like condemned criminals. Others do penance in a totally external way. They perform exterior acts of penance that are irksome and by which they could ordinarily make up for their sins, but they do so merely out of human respect and to appear truly penitent and mortified before others. Such penance is spurious. There are others who presume too much on God's mercy and put off doing penance to the end of their life. This penance is uncertain, for often enough at death we can manifest our sentiments only by signs or words that are of extremely doubtful value.

Real penance must arise from the depths of our heart. It must be there before it shows itself on the outside; otherwise, no one can be sure of its genuineness, nor should he be.

Chapter 7

The Sacrament of Penance

Section 1—Its nature, matter, form, institution, and preparation for receiving it, especially the examination of conscience

Seeing that people needed to be repentant to obtain pardon for their sins and knowing that very few of them made use of this remedy because most of them were not interiorly penetrated by a sincere regret for their sins, and also desiring to give grace in the New Law through sensible signs, Jesus Christ established the sacrament of Penance as a sovereign remedy for all sins committed after Baptism. He also willed that this sacrament should consist in certain external actions performed by both the penitent and the priest, acts that might impress people and thus encourage them to have recourse to this sacrament and then to turn aside entirely from their sins.

The word *penance* means *repentance*. This sacrament is so named because we cannot obtain the pardon of our sins by this sacrament unless we repent for them, detest them with all our heart, and, to satisfy God's justice, willingly accept the sanctions they deserve.

The holy Fathers give various other names to this sacrament, all beautiful. Saint Ambrose calls it the sacrament of those who come back to life; Saint Gregory Nazianzen, a laborious Baptism, and Saint Chrysostom, a medicine. For others, it is the sacrament of continual

reconciliation. The Council of Trent, following Saint Ambrose, styles it a second plank after shipwreck.

The sacrament of Penance is the sacrament that forgives the sins committed after Baptism. It is a sensible sign because the judgment that the priest pronounces visibly with regard to the penitent is a sensible representation of the invisible judgment by which God does or does not forgive the sinner, depending on whether the sinner has the required intentions for receiving this sacrament.

We learn from the Council of Trent that the sacrament includes three elements that the penitent must bring to it: contrition, or sorrow for sins, confessing, and satisfaction. These three elements are considered to be the matter of the sacrament, and the absolution, given by the priest in the words "I absolve you of your sins. . . ," is the form. It is not true that we receive the sacrament fully only after we have made satisfaction; actual satisfaction is not necessary to complete the sacrament. It suffices that the person who wishes to receive this sacrament be truly contrite, confess all sins, and be disposed to make satisfaction for them, which is included in the act of contrition.

There is, then, this difference between penance considered as a virtue and Penance considered as a sacrament. The former is entirely interior and consists in three acts produced within the soul, namely, horror of sin, regret for having committed sins, and the resolution to make up for them. The sacrament, on the other hand, consists in outwardly perceptible acts performed by the penitent who receives the sacrament and by the priest who administers it. The holy Council of Trent calls attention to another difference, namely, that for all those who have sullied themselves with mortal sin, the virtue of penance has always been necessary to obtain the grace to make up for it, even for those who as adults ask for Baptism, whereas the sacrament of Penance, having been instituted by Jesus Christ, is necessary only for baptized Christians.

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance, the Council affirms, particularly after his Resurrection, when he breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit; the sins will be forgiven for those whom you will forgive; they will be retained for those whom you will retain."[15] By this extraordinary act and by such clear words, says the holy Council of Trent, all the holy Fathers have unanimously and constantly understood that the power to remit or to retain sins was conferred on the Apostles and their legitimate successors to reconcile the faithful who have committed sins after Baptism.

This sacrament is so necessary that under the law of grace, we cannot obtain pardon for our sins except by means of this sacrament

15. John 20:22–23.

or at least by the desire of receiving it when we cannot presently do so. Because this sacrament is so important for salvation, to receive it properly we must bring to it several required conditions. The main one is to make our examination of conscience carefully.

This examination of conscience is a diligent and painstaking search so that we can confess all the sins we have committed. It consists in seeking out in our mind and our memory all our evil thoughts, words, and actions. This examination must always precede confessing so that we can remember the mortal sins we have committed and by this means detest all of them in particular, conceive deep sorrow for them, confess them without any omissions, and correct ourselves of them. This examination of conscience is so necessary that if we fail to confess some mortal sin because we do not sufficiently examine ourselves, we commit a sacrilege and receive neither the sacrament nor the forgiveness of any sin.

To assure complete tranquility of conscience, we must examine ourselves not only before going to Confession but also every day before going to bed. To make a good examination of conscience, we should apply ourselves to it with the same care and diligence that we would give to any matter of the highest importance, for this involves our salvation, the most crucial business we can ever have in this world.

To succeed in making a good examination of conscience in preparation for making a good Confession, we should do three things. First, we ought to isolate ourselves somewhat and ask God for the light needed to know all our sins and for the grace to experience true and deep sorrow for them. We cannot ask God for these graces too earnestly, for he alone can give them to us.

Second, we should examine our conscience attentively, going over the commandments of God and of the Church, the seven capital sins, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, the evil use we have made of our senses, and our failures in the duties of our profession. We must examine ourselves on the evil thoughts, desires, words, and actions of which we have been guilty and on the sins committed against God, our neighbor, and ourselves.

The sins we should examine ourselves on most particularly and with the greatest diligence are our habitual sins, the sins proper to our state and position, the sins of enmity, and the harm we may have done to our neighbor. These, as a rule, are the sins to which we pay the least attention. Such sins are ordinarily those toward which we have some special tendency and inclination, those for which we usually experience very little repugnance, and those we do not take much care to avoid because we do not keep away from the occasions that lead to them.

We must examine four aspects with regard to every sin we have committed: the nature of the sin, the manner in which we fell into it, the cause and the reasons for our failing, and the effects that this sin produced.

To examine the quality and nature of a sin properly, we must consider whether it was committed by thought, desire, word, action, or omission, that is, not doing something we should have done; whether our fault has caused any scandal, and whether we have taken part in another's sin.

When examining the manner in which we have fallen into sin, we must pay attention to the circumstances of the action: whether they modify its nature, augment its seriousness, or diminish it. For instance, if we say "God's head!" or "God's stomach!" when cursing, the sin is one not merely of cursing but of blasphemy. Let us say we stole something, that this took place in a church, and that it was only a penny. If the theft took place in a church, this circumstance adds to the seriousness of the sin. If we stole only a penny, this circumstance diminishes the sin. If we stole something not only in a church but also belonging to the Church, and if it was of considerable value, all these circumstances change the nature of the sin and make it a sacrilege.

To examine properly what causes us to commit sin, we must consider whether it was passion, an evil inclination, a habit we have contracted, our temperament, the time and place in which we are, or pure malice, and so on. To examine properly the effects produced by a sin, we must ask, for instance, whether it caused some harm to our neighbor or to his goods or honor, or whether it caused someone to get angry at us or to nourish hatred against us.

Third and finally, we must consider all that may have contributed to our falling into the sin, such as our inclinations and passions, the habits we have gotten into, the occasions we have had of offending God, the persons with whom we have conversed, the transactions we have concluded, the places we have frequented, and a number of other circumstances that help us to a better understanding of our sins.

When examining ourselves, we should also try to distinguish between mortal and venial sins. Mortal sins make us lose God's friendship, and because they cannot be remitted except through the sacrament of Penance, we must confess all such sins without omitting a single one, and we must conceive a much greater sorrow for them than for our venial sins.

Section 2—Contrition, the first element in the sacrament of Penance

The first and principal element required of the person who goes to Confession is contrition, which the Council of Trent defines as an interior sorrow and detestation of the sins we have committed, accompanied by a firm resolution not to sin again.

This is the most necessary part of this sacrament. We can sometimes receive this sacrament and obtain pardon for our sins when it is impossible for us to confess them or to make satisfaction for them, provided we give some external signs indicating the sorrow we feel for having offended God. Because contrition includes the resolve to confess our sins and the desire of making up for them, it suffices along with the absolution of the priest to constitute the sacrament of Penance and bestow its proper power and virtue.

We say that contrition is sorrowful because it involves repenting and regretting from the heart that we have offended God. *Contrition* is a word that means *breaking,* to show that the heart is broken, humbled, softened, and made subject to God by penance. This sorrow must be voluntary because it is intended to obtain the remission of sin, which is voluntarily committed. The Council of Trent distinguishes between two kinds of contrition: perfect, which we properly call contrition, and imperfect, which we call attrition.

Contrition is perfect, says the Council, when inspired by a sentiment of charity and love of God. Because it includes the will to receive the sacrament of Penance, it reconciles us with God even before we have received the sacrament. Attrition, according to the same Council, ordinarily arises from consideration of the shamefulness and deformity of sin or from fear of the chastisements and penalties that must follow it. We must conclude that perfect contrition is sorrow for having offended God because he is infinitely good and lovable and because we love God on account of his infinite perfections. Attrition is sorrow for having offended God that arises from the horror we have conceived for sin because of its deformity or from fear of God's judgments, his justice, and the pains and torments of hell.

The Council of Trent declares that this kind of sorrow for sin, which it calls attrition, if it is accompanied by the hope for pardon and excludes the will to sin again, is a gift of God and a movement produced by the Holy Spirit, even though God does not as yet dwell within the sinner but only moves and touches him. With its help the sinner prepares for justification. Although this attrition by itself does not purify us from sin without the sacrament of Penance or lead us to justification, it prepares us to obtain the grace of God in the sacrament.

From this teaching of the Council of Trent, we should conclude that because attrition is a proximate condition for receiving the grace of God in the sacrament of Penance, it is sufficient for obtaining pardon for our sins in this sacrament when joined to confessing our sins and the absolution of the priest.

However, this sorrow named attrition would be completely useless in the sacrament of Penance if not inspired by a motive that refers to God, for in that case it would not be produced by a movement of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if in attrition we felt sorrow for having offended God because of the shamefulness and the moral deformity of sin, this sorrow should be because sin offends and outrages God or because it is so disgraceful for a Christian, a member of Jesus Christ according to the Apostle, to abase himself by sin. If we are sorry because we fear the pains and sufferings of hell, it should be because we would be God's enemies there and victims of his justice and vengeance, because we would be deprived of the happiness that is God, or because of some other reason of this nature.

If our sorrow is inspired only by the moral turpitude of sin, by the shame we feel for having committed it, or by fear of the sufferings of hell with no reference to God, this sorrow inspired by a purely natural motive is merely natural and human. It is not, strictly speaking, hatred for sin as an offense against God but as something disgraceful in itself, as natural reason teaches us to consider it, or as the source of the punishment due to the sin. Thus, our contrition would not have God ultimately in view but only ourselves. This kind of contrition aims only at delivering us from the distress and sufferings we have deserved. According to the Council of Trent, sinners cannot be justified unless they begin to love God as the source of all justice and, as a result, reject sins by the kind of hatred and detestation that they have conceived against the sins for which they feel guilty.

The difference, therefore, between perfect contrition and imperfect contrition, or attrition, is that the former effaces sin even before we confess it, for it is an act of charity having no other motive than the pure love of God. The latter, on the other hand, motivated by the hideousness of sin, by fear, or by hope, is accompanied only by a beginning of the love of God; hence, unless it is joined to the sacrament of Penance, attrition can neither efface sin nor retrieve the grace we have lost.

The reason for this difference between contrition and attrition is found in the difference between the motives that inspire the one and the other, as explained above, and from the level of the love of God found in each case. As Saint Augustine teaches, all sorrow originates in love.

There are two kinds of love of God; one causes contrition, and the other accompanies attrition. The love of God that gives rise to contrition is the love called friendship, or benevolence. By it we love God for himself, and this love is perfect. The other is a love based on our own self-interest. By it we love God not for himself but for ourselves because we desire to possess him as our sovereign good or because we fear losing him; this love is imperfect.

Similarly, there are two kinds of sorrow for having offended God; they arise from the two types of love. With the first sorrow, we are sorry for having offended God in consideration of his goodness and perfections in themselves; this perfect sorrow we call contrition. With the second sorrow, we regret having displeased God not so much for love of him as for love of ourselves because of our fear of being deprived of the happiness that God has prepared for us or of incurring his indignation. This imperfect sorrow we call attrition.

The fear of God is found in contrition as well as in attrition, but there is this difference between the two: contrition is not motivated by fear but by pure charity and perfect love of God. This fear is a consequence of the love of God, which remains the true motive of contrition; it is a respectful fear, like that which children feel with regard to their father, and for this reason we call it filial fear. On the contrary, the fear that is the motive of attrition, being unaccompanied by any formal act of charity and love of God, is the fear of a servant for his master, and for this reason we call it servile fear. Apart from these differences, contrition and attrition are entirely similar, and all their other conditions and qualities are identical.

Section 3—The qualities of contrition, perfect or imperfect

In the sacrament of Penance, contrition and attrition must possess six qualities. Sorrow for our sins in this sacrament must be actual, interior, supernatural, sovereign, universal, and efficacious.

It must be actual because it is not enough to feel it in our heart in a more or less habitual manner; we need to make acts of contrition at the time we receive the sacrament, as the Council of Trent declares.

It must be interior, that is, it should arise from the depths of the heart. Neither tears nor other outward testimonials of sorrow are infallible manifestations of true contrition, nor are they necessary. Although we must give outward and perceptible signs of sorrow while confessing, it is not required that the sorrow we have for our sins be outwardly sensible.

Contrition must be supernatural because a merely natural action cannot sanctify our soul. It must be supernatural in its origin because

it is the Spirit of God who must produce it in us. The Council of Trent says that true contrition is a gift of God, thus instructing us that we cannot repent merely by ourselves and that all our efforts directed to this end are useless unless we are aided by the grace of God. Contrition must also be supernatural in its motive because this sorrow for our sins, being directed to God as to the author of grace, must also be inspired by a supernatural motive, a motive aimed at God either in himself or in reference to ourselves for the spiritual and eternal good of our soul.

Saul's sorrow was purely natural; he regretted his sin only because it had led to the loss of his kingdom. So also was the contrition of Antiochus, who repented of his sins only because of the great suffering he was enduring. Such is often the sorrow experienced by most Christians for their sins.

Because our sorrow is founded on love, contrition must also be sovereign. The grief we experience for our sins, which are offensive to God, should equal the love we ought to have for him. Because we are obliged to love God sovereignly and above all things, our repentance for offending him should surpass the compunction we feel for anything else capable of arousing sorrow in us. The sign we can give to show that this sorrow is sovereign is to be prepared to suffer all sorts of evil, however great they may be—even death—rather than commit a single sin.

Nonetheless, it is not necessary that this sorrow, to be truly sovereign, must be felt more keenly than what we experience over some other loss or evil that has befallen us. It suffices that in the depths of our heart we esteem God and his grace more highly than anything else in the world and that we prefer to lose everything rather than to commit a single sin.

Contrition should be universal, that is, it should extend to all the mortal sins we have committed, with no exception, and we should be determined to make reparation to God for all of them. Those who would still entertain some affection for a sin, even a single one, would not be truly contrite because they would hate their sin for some natural motive and not for being an offense against God. In the latter case, they would hate whatever displeases God and consequently all their sins, at least those that are mortal.

Sinners, moreover, cannot obtain the remission of their sins unless all their sins are pardoned at one time, for sin makes sinners enemies of God. Their sins are pardoned only so that they will no longer be enemies; otherwise, they would want at the same time to be God's enemies and to cease to be such. In other words, they would want to be God's enemies because they would love a sin that

makes them God's enemies, and yet they would like to cease being such because they would like to be freed from some of their sins. As a consequence, they would be trying to embrace two contradictory alternatives, which is impossible—they would simply be deceiving themselves.

To have universal contrition, it is not necessary to have all our particular sins actually in mind. It is sufficient that we consider them all in general and hate all of them without excepting a single one. In fact, it is often not advisable to try to remember them all in particular.

Finally, contrition should be efficacious. It would not be real if we did not form in our heart a sincere resolution not to sin again. The Council of Trent teaches this and adds that this resolution should be firm, universal, efficacious, and perpetual.

It should be firm: we must be ready to die rather than to offend God. It must be universal: we must be resolved not to commit any sin of whatever kind, no matter how much we may have been attached to it. It must be efficacious: we must be absolutely determined to carry it out in spite of all the temptations, opposition, and difficulties we may find in so doing. It must be perpetual: we must be resolved not just for a day, or even for a while, but forever.

To provide this efficacy to our contrition and to the resolution we make in the sacrament of Penance not to offend God any more, we must be ready to separate ourselves entirely from our habitual sins and from the occasions of sin, no matter what loss or deprivation this may occasion for us. If we do not have this kind of determination, we show that we still entertain some affection for sin; we are obliged to do away with such affection if we wish to dispose ourselves properly to receive pardon and absolution.

We understand occasions of sin to be whatever leads us to commit sin or whatever puts us in danger of falling into sin. Such occasions are called proximate when we are morally certain that they will lead us into mortal sin. Therefore, because we are not allowed to place ourselves in an evident danger of offending God, we cannot dispense ourselves from avoiding them.

There are two kinds of proximate occasions of mortal sin. Some occasions in and of themselves induce us to sin, such as looking at nakedness, obscene pictures, or images; reading impure books; frequent and familiar conversations between men and women, boys and girls, and so on.

Other occasions are proximate dangers for us only because of our evil intentions, weaknesses, natural inclinations, or evil habits. For example, such an occasion might be the role of judge, for a person who knows that out of fear, ignorance, or venality, he is not going to

judge justly; the role of merchant, for someone who cannot keep from being dishonest; gambling, for a person who infallibly starts cursing when losing at the gaming table, or a tavern, for someone who drinks excessively when frequenting it.

We are not fit to receive absolution unless we have turned away from our habitual sins and from whatever the kind of proximate occasions of sin. It is not enough to promise that we will avoid them. If we go to Confession without having done so in fact or are unwilling to do so without delay, the Confession is sacrilegious, the absolution, if we receive it, is unavailing, and we place ourselves in danger of damnation.

To have true contrition and a firm resolve not to offend God any more, we must often ask this of him, for it is up to God to give it to us. We must also make frequent acts of repentance and do many good works to obtain this grace. We should develop these sentiments in ourselves by recalling the great blessings God has given us and by meditating on the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, on the enormity and great number of our sins, which were the cause of his agony, and on the consideration of the horror we should feel for them. We must take all possible means to avoid our habitual sins, which are the source from which all our other sins spring. We must reflect that it is almost impossible for our Confession not to be nullified when we often fall back into the same sins. Every day we must mortify ourselves in some way, flee from bad company, especially those persons with whom we are in the habit of offending God, and cultivate the company of persons of piety.

To avoid occasions of sin and to persevere in our good resolutions, we must renew every morning the resolutions we made at our last Confession, go to Confession frequently to the same confessor, and resist temptations as soon as we find ourselves attacked.

The signs we can give to show that we are truly sorry for our sins and firmly resolved to avoid falling back into them are as follows: to keep away from whatever formerly led us into sin, to seek means that will help us from yielding to them again and to put these into practice, to make willingly the penance that the confessor gave us to do, and to impose other penances on ourselves as soon as we find we have succumbed again to temptation. Those who entertain hatred for their neighbor cannot give better proof of their repentance than by seeking to be reconciled with them; those who possess ill-gotten goods, than by restoring them to their rightful owners; those who slandered others, than by repairing their neighbor's reputation—and in all cases, by changing their ways of acting and beginning to satisfy God's justice. We should do this before going to Confession, without

waiting for the confessor to oblige us to do so, as he is strictly bound to do.

Every day we should make acts of contrition, especially as soon as we have offended God. We should do so again in the evening before going to bed, as often as possible during the day, when we are in danger of death, and when we are assailed by some violent temptation.

This is how we can make an act of contrition: "My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you because you are all good and because sin offends you. I firmly resolve with the help of your holy grace to offend you no more, to make satisfaction for my sins, and to confess them as soon as possible."

When contrition is genuine, it not only obtains pardon for our sins but also remits them and part of the temporal punishment due to them that God wills us to suffer.

Section 4—Confessing, the second element in the sacrament of Penance; the defects that can be found in it

Confessing sins has always been in use in the Church. We have a reference to this in chapter 9 of the Acts of the Apostles, where we read that a number of believers came to confess what they had done wrong.[16] The holy Fathers testify to the continual use of this practice. In his sermon about those who had fallen into idolatry or other sins after being baptized, Saint Cyprian praises the deep faith of those who with sorrow and in all simplicity confessed their sins of thought to the priest, laid bare their consciences, and unburdened their hearts, seeking a salutary remedy for even the smallest of their wounds.

In his minor *Rule*, Saint Basil says that we must necessarily reveal our sins to those who in the design of God's mysteries are appointed for this role, for we see that the ancients followed this same maxim. Saint Leo forbids people to confess publicly their hidden sins; it suffices that the priest alone, through a secret Confession, should know the maladies afflicting our conscience.

The universal Church has always recognized, as the Council of Trent says, that our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the confessing of sins and that Confession, by divine law, is necessary for all those who have fallen into sin after Baptism. This act of confessing is the second proximate condition needed to receive the sacrament of Penance; it is an essential part of the sacrament. Confession thus understood is a declaration, or accusation, of all our sins, made voluntarily and in secret to a priest approved by the bishop, so as to obtain absolution.

16. Acts 19:18; the misprint of 9 for 19 occurs in the original edition.

It is an accusation because in Confession we must not relate our sins for the sake of mere form, as though we were only recounting something that had happened. We must declare them in an accusatory manner, as though we were condemning them and hoping to take vengeance on ourselves for them. The word *confess* also reminds us that we must accuse ourselves of our sins and not seek to excuse them. We must not, like Eve, put the blame on the devil, who tempted us or, like Adam, on someone else who might have incited us to commit these faults.

Confession is a voluntary accusation, distinct from that extorted from criminals by force in the presence of their judge. It should be secret because it is ordinarily made in private. We are especially to understand by this that the priest who hears our Confession is bound to keep inviolably secret all the sins confided to him.

Confession must deal with our own sins, not those of others, which must not be mentioned in Confession. If we are obliged to refer to someone else to explain the nature of the sin we committed, it is sufficient to give this person's condition, for instance, to say that he or she is a religious, a priest, or a married person. To indicate how closely the other person is related to us, we should say, for example, "It is my brother, my sister, or my first, second, third, or fourth cousin." As a rule, we should not say more than this so as not to make the Confession a backbiting session.

Confession must include all our sins. We must accuse ourselves in Confession of at least all mortal sins; if we kept back even a single one, the Confession would be of no benefit and would be sacrilegious. Nevertheless, to fulfill this obligation, it suffices to accuse ourselves of all the sins we can remember; the Council of Trent declares that the sins a person does not remember after a serious examination are included in general in Confession. The same Council also says that to confess our sins completely, we must explain in Confession the circumstances that change the species of the sin. The reason given is that otherwise the penitent's sins are neither fully revealed nor sufficiently made known to the confessor, who as a judge must make a just evaluation of the seriousness of the crimes committed so as to impose on the penitent a suitable penance.

The same Council gives two reasons why penitents must confess all their sins, not only in general but in detail and in particular. The first reason is to enable the priests, to whom Jesus Christ has given the authority of remitting or retaining sins, to give absolution or a verdict of condemnation. It is clear that they cannot exercise this act of jurisdiction unless they know the case fully, nor can they observe equity in the imposition of sanctions on the penitent if the latter declares

his or her sins merely in general and not in particular and in a detailed manner. This argument also proves that we must not declare in Confession sins we have not committed. The second reason is that all mortal sins, even those committed by thought, make us children of wrath and enemies of God; hence, we should seek pardon of them all by a sincere Confession.

The same Council adds that those who voluntarily hold back some sin in Confession present nothing to the goodness of God that the priest can remit. From this doctrine we should conclude that none of the other sins confessed is forgiven and that the Confession itself is a serious sin and a sacrilege.

Although it is not absolutely necessary to confess venial sins, for they do not deprive us of God's grace and can be expiated by various other means, the Council of Trent, nevertheless, says that it is useful and advantageous to do so because by the sacrament of Penance, they are remitted with greater certainty and with more grace and because by confessing them, we learn to know them better and to correct ourselves more readily of them. This is also an appropriate means of avoiding a fall into mortal sin in the future, thanks to the graces we receive in the sacrament. One advantage obtained by those who are careful to purify themselves of the least sins is that it makes them more watchful against committing any more serious offenses.

We can even say that those who commit only venial sins but do not take care to confess them expose themselves to the grave danger of falling readily into mortal sins as a result of their negligence in receiving the sacrament of Penance. This sacrament is not only a highly effective remedy for remitting our past sins but also a powerful preservative to prevent us from falling into sin again.

By stating that we must confess our sins to a priest, the Council of Trent indicates that if we wish to obtain pardon, it is not enough to confess them to God in the secret of our heart. Only priests have the power to absolve us from our sins in the sacrament of Penance.

Finally, we say that to receive absolution for our sins, we must confess them. This is to indicate that we do not confess our sins simply to make them known, to find some remedy for them, or even to humble ourselves because of them, but we do so with the aim of receiving pardon for them by means of the priest's absolution.

Several serious defects can be found in Confession that ordinarily make it null and sacrilegious. It is proper to let the faithful know about these so that they can take care to avoid them. For instance, it is a serious flaw to omit in Confession sins we forgot because we did not examine ourselves or did not do so with enough care before presenting ourselves to the confessor. In that case we would make a

Confession that is null and sacrilegious. This is not true in the case of sins we do not remember at all, even after examining ourselves seriously. They are included, says the Council of Trent, in confessing our other sins. This is why we say confidently with the Prophet, "Cleanse me, O Lord, from my hidden sins."

Sometimes we meet persons so mentally deficient that they are not by themselves sufficiently enlightened to discover all their sins, or they lack memory to recall them. We should not, therefore, blame them too readily for forgetting their sins. What such persons should do is to ask the confessor to help them remember; it is his duty to question them. However, those who in going to Confession make up their mind not to give any particulars about certain sins unless questioned about them by the confessor would commit a sacrilege.

Another serious defect that can be found in Confession is to go to it not knowing what we should know and what we should have known at the time the sin was committed. This can happen when we go to Confession without having taken the trouble to learn the principal mysteries of our religion. In this case we are accepting a guilty habit of ignorance for as long a time as we are unacquainted with these matters.

It is an equally considerable defect to fail to confess a sin we have committed because we did not know that it was a sin, although we should have known. This happens fairly frequently, especially to people who are not properly instructed concerning the duties of their state and profession and about the sins they can commit in it. A lawyer, for instance, or a public prosecutor, goes to Confession and fails to mention the sins he committed in his professional occupation because he does not know what they are. The same is true for a physician who does not know what pertains to his art or the many sins he can commit in its exercise. So too for the merchant who does not know about all the wrong he is liable to be guilty of in his business, and as a result he does not confess them.

The same situation happens to those who miss Mass in their parish church, if they were able to go, and consequently, not knowing about a fast day that falls during the week, eat meat that day or do not fast. Such ignorance is inexcusable. Someone may not be sure whether a certain action is sinful; neglecting to learn the truth before doing that action, he does not confess it. Such ignorance is equally reprehensible, and as in the previous examples, the Confession is null.

The same kind of defects might make people fail to confess all their sins because they are unwilling to avow them out of shame or fear, to disguise some sin so as to make it seem less serious than it really is, to omit or diminish the number of their sins, or to keep back

the circumstances that would change their kind. It would be better for those who act thus not to go to Confession at all, for none of the sins they avow in such a Confession will be pardoned. Consequently, they will not find peace of conscience.

Those who yield to this wretched shame should reflect that they are confessing their sins to God, who knows them already; that nobody is without sin before him; that it is a great privilege to confess our sins when we want to correct ourselves of them; that we must admit them in this world or else be damned; that the confessor is bound to complete secrecy and can never speak of them unless he wishes to incur God's indignation and be condemned to eternal flames. These reflections are impressive enough to persuade a sinner not to be overcome by this false shame and not to make a bad Confession as a result of it.

Finally, our Confession would be fatally flawed if we were to confess to a priest who lacks the approbation and the jurisdiction necessary to hear Confession, if we were resolved at the time we confess our sins not to accomplish the penance the priest might impose, or if we confessed our sins without having true contrition for them and a firm resolution not to commit them again. This is shown plainly enough when we do not give up the proximate occasions of sin, when we entertain hatred for someone when making our Confession, when we have not repaired the honor of the person whom we calumniated, when we have not restored another's property that we have unjustly retained, and finally, when we fall back into our sins repeatedly after confessing them.

In all such circumstances, every Confession made thus is sacrilegious. To obtain forgiveness of our sins, we are obliged to confess again all the sins already mentioned in a Confession that is null, but this time with the proper intentions. Because often enough we cannot remember distinctly all the sins that we have mentioned in such a Confession, it is usually best and most appropriate to make a general Confession of all our life.

We would fall into the same predicament every time we deliberately fail to reveal clearly and distinctly the number of sins we have committed. For whenever we tell a sin, we must say how many times we fell into it. For instance, if we have cursed once, that is one sin; if we did so twelve times, that makes twelve sins that we must declare; otherwise, the confessor cannot make a sound and well-founded judgment. If we do not remember how many times we have committed a given sin, we should tell about how many times we sinned or about how often we did so in a day, week, or month. For instance, we can state in Confession, "I blasphemed God's holy name, as a rule,

about three or four times a day or week or month," and thus indicate, more or less, how often we have sinned. The same should be done with regard to all the other sins we have committed.

If through our sin we have caused some damage to our neighbor, we are obliged to mention this in Confession and to tell how we have done him wrong, whether in goods, in reputation, in physical well-being, or in the soul. For instance, if we have scandalized someone and the scandal given has caused that person in turn to offend God, we cannot fail to mention all such things in Confession.

The principal advantages found in a well-made Confession are that it obtains for us not only the forgiveness of all our sins but also the grace to avoid them in the future, to overcome our bad habits, and to resist the devil's temptations. It also makes the soul recover God's friendship and gives it the means to enjoy deep tranquility of conscience.

Section 5—The minister, the absolution, and the ceremonies of the sacrament of Penance

According to the Council of Trent, the power of administering the sacrament of Penance belongs only to bishops and priests. No matter what their personal spiritual state is, even if they are in mortal sin, they still possess, by the power of the Holy Spirit that they received in their ordination, the authority to remit sin in their position as ministers of Jesus Christ.

According to the same Council, just as the acts of the penitent—namely contrition, confessing, and satisfaction—are the matter of the sacrament and, being divinely instituted, are required from the penitent to insure the integrity of the sacrament of Penance and to obtain the full and perfect remission of sins, so too, says this holy Council, the form of this sacrament, in which its power and virtue mainly consist, is found in these words that the priest pronounces: "I absolve you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The same Council declares that the priest's absolution is a type of judicial act by which the priest, acting as judge, pronounces the sentence. In pronouncing it, he remits sins of whatever kind and quantity, provided that the penitent confessed them properly and was sincerely sorry for them. The reason why the Council of Trent says that absolution is a judicial act is that it is neither a simple ministry or commission to declare that sins are forgiven nor a form of prayer and supplication to God by which the priest would implore him to pardon the penitent's sins. By saying the words "I absolve you. . . ," the priest takes away and effectively remits the sins of the penitent through the

power and authority of jurisdiction that the bishop imparted to him in ordination and in fulfillment of these words of Christ, "The sins will be forgiven for those whom you will forgive; they will be retained for those whom you will retain."[17]

Although priests at their ordination receive the power to absolve from sins, the holy Council of Trent declares that no priest, not even a member of a religious order, can hear the Confession of seculars, not even of other priests, unless he has a benefice that gives him the title or the function of the care of souls or unless he has been judged capable by the bishops and has been approved by them. As the same Council says elsewhere, the reason is that absolution is null when it is given by a priest to a person over whom he has no jurisdiction, either ordinary or delegated; good order and the essence of any judgment require that no one can pronounce a sentence except on those who are subject to him.

Although the power to forgive sins is granted to priests at their ordination, they do not acquire the power of jurisdiction, that is, the power to absolve any given person, except when they are assigned to a position involving the care of souls. This gives them jurisdiction over all the faithful in a parish. They obtain a more general authority when they are approved by the bishop, who, possessing full jurisdiction over all the souls in the entire diocese, can communicate it to priests to the extent he judges fit.

Our forefathers, says the Council of Trent, have always held that it was extremely important for the proper discipline of the Christian people that certain especially atrocious and abominable crimes should not be pardoned by any priests indiscriminately, even by those who enjoy general faculties, but that they should be reserved to the bishops. For this same reason the popes, in virtue of the authority they have received over the universal Church, have reserved to their special judgment certain most heinous crimes. Nor should we doubt that all the bishops, each in his own diocese, enjoy the same prerogative. The Council adds, however, that when a person is in danger of death, no case is reserved. All priests, even those without faculties, can absolve when no other priest is available all penitents from the censures they may have incurred and from any sin whatsoever.

The pope and the bishops reserve to themselves the power of absolving penitents from certain enormous and scandalous sins so that the difficulty of obtaining pardon for them may give pause to sinners and keep them from falling into such grievous crimes.

Because the priest has the authority not only to forgive sins but also to retain them, we need to explain and make clear in what this

17. John 20:22–23.

power consists. First is the right to prescribe for sinners what they must do to repair the outrage done to God and to heal the wounds they inflict on themselves by their sins. Second is the right to refuse or delay absolution to penitents who are not yet properly disposed, depending on what is best for their salvation.

Priests must refuse or delay absolution to all those who are in a state of inexcusable ignorance of the principal mysteries of our religion, the commandments of God and of the Church, and the sacraments that they are obliged to receive. Because such persons are in the habitual and continual state of mortal sin, he cannot give them absolution until they have learned all these things.

They must also refuse or delay absolution to those who do not want to make restitution for the goods of others that they have appropriated and still hold unjustly or to repair the harm they have done to their neighbor's reputation. Nor is a confessor allowed to give absolution to those who do not want to renounce the hatred they nourish against someone or to be reconciled with their enemies, or to those who are in some habit of sin or some proximate occasion of mortal sin that they refuse to give up.

Priests must also refuse or delay absolution to the penitents who, while declaring sorrow for their sins, show by their actions that their protestations are not sincere and who by their conduct give reasonable grounds for concluding that they do not fulfill the conditions necessary to receive the sacrament of Penance fruitfully. For this would be to profane the effects of the blood of Jesus Christ, which are contained in this sacrament and ought to be dispensed by the priests, as mediators between God and humanity, with justice, prudence, and charity.

Even if a priest were to grant absolution to someone with such imperfect intentions, the absolution would be of no use, and the Confession would be null. The penitent would only leave more guilty than before, and the priest and the penitent would both commit a sacrilege, one of the most grievous of all sins.

When a priest refuses or delays absolution to someone, he should prescribe the means of avoiding sin and satisfying God's justice. Those who cannot endure to have absolution denied them for some time, which is intended to oblige them to correct their habitual sins, show by their continual relapses and disobedience to the one who holds the place of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of Penance that they go to Confession only out of custom and without true repentance for their sins or a sincere desire of returning to God, that they neither fear nor love God, and that they are putting themselves in an obvious danger of being damned.

Penitents should find it right that their confessor delays giving them absolution when they are not sufficiently well disposed to receive it, that is, when they do not fulfill the conditions that are absolutely necessary for absolution and without which they would commit a sacrilege. They should be pleased and even desire that absolution be delayed when the priest judges this more useful for them so that they may make greater effort to acquire the intentions that they are capable of and that God demands of them, to live according to the holiness of their state, and to reach the perfection to which God calls them. It is sometimes most appropriate for a priest to delay granting absolution to penitents who have committed only venial sins so that they may strive harder to correct themselves and not fall always, or nearly always, into these same sins.

Ceremonies of the sacrament of Penance

When hearing Confession, the priest should be seated because he is acting as the penitent's judge and because he pronounces either a merciful sentence by remitting sins or a judgment of justice by retaining them.

He should stretch out his hand to show us that in this sacrament God's hand reaches out to withdraw us from sin and guide us in the path of salvation. Next, he makes the sign of the cross to assure us, with Saint Paul, that it is by the cross that our soul is reconciled with God.

We are to kneel near the priest with eyes cast down. We should join our hands and assume an attitude of deep humility, like a criminal before a judge. We must also make the sign of the cross, asking God through Jesus Christ to drive out the devil, who tries as far as he can to prevent us from having all the conditions required for a good Confession. We then ask for the priest's blessing, saying, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." By this we wish to obtain from God through the ministry of the priest the grace of making a good Confession.

Immediately thereafter, we recite the prayer "I confess. . . ," in which we confess our sins to God, the Most Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints, and the entire Church. We confess them to God, recognizing that we have greatly offended God, and thus we put ourselves in the proper state to obtain from God the remission of our sins through the priest's ministry.

We confess also to the Most Blessed Virgin because we have offended her by outraging her Son, who died for us, and by renewing the wounds and the death of Christ by the crimes we have commit-

ted. We confess our sins to the saints, admitting that we have offended them by separating ourselves from Jesus Christ and by cutting ourselves off from the other members of Christ's body, principally the saints, who are united to this divine head.

We confess our sins to the entire Church to acknowledge that we have offended her by desecrating in our own persons the holiness of the Church, of which we are members, and by offending God, whose interests the Church takes so deeply to heart. Finally, we confess to the Church in the person of the priest, who is one of her ministers.

After reciting this prayer up to the words "through my fault," we then confess our sins simply, humbly, and distinctly, mentioning how many times we have committed them, with all of their circumstances. After accusing ourselves of all our sins that we can remember, we should humbly ask the confessor to question us, and we should answer these questions honestly and in a few words, without concealing any sin. We then strike our breast, following the example of the publican, and say, "through my fault," thus showing the horror and shame we feel for our sin. After this we complete the recitation of "I confess."

We should listen attentively to the advice the priest gives us and to his suggestions for avoiding sin in the future so as to dispose ourselves to put these means into practice when the occasion arises. Then we will humbly accept the penance the priest imposes on us, firmly resolving to perform it as soon as possible. When the priest is giving us absolution, we should bow our head and humble ourselves, recognizing that we are unworthy to receive it and asking God's pardon for our sins from the bottom of our heart.

After confessing our sins and receiving absolution, we should thank God for pardoning our sins. We should renew in our heart our resolution not to offend God any more, after asking him for the grace to do so. We should perform our penance as soon as possible, doing exactly what the priest ordered us to do.

Such are the actions to be done in the sacrament of Penance and the things we should pay special attention to in receiving it.

Section 6—Satisfaction, its necessity, and the different kinds of satisfaction

Satisfaction has always been the element in Penance most earnestly recommended to Christians by the holy Fathers, says the Council of Trent. The reason given is that the sacrifices imposed to make satisfaction for sin are certain to help prevent many more sins, for they act as a sort of brake on the penitents, obliging them to be more vigilant

and wary in the future. Besides, the sacrifices remedy the remains of sin in us, and by the practice of the contrary virtues, they destroy the evil habits contracted by an unregulated life.

Satisfaction has given its name to the sacrament of Penance. Satisfaction is so important that in some measure it is more necessary than confessing is. Although the relating of our sins instructs the priest about our behavior and about the kind and number of our faults so that he may know what judgment to pronounce on us as the minister of Jesus Christ, satisfaction is the act by which we satisfy God's justice for our sins so as to appease his anger.

Although it is indeed true that Jesus Christ has satisfied fully and overabundantly for our sins, in no way, according to the Council of Trent, do our deeds of satisfaction veil or diminish the power and efficacy of the satisfaction offered by Jesus Christ. On the contrary, when we suffer for our sins in performing our penance, we become more like Jesus Christ, who made satisfaction for us and from whom we draw all our capacity for doing right; in this way we gain an assurance that we will share in his glory after sharing in his sufferings. This satisfaction of ours by which we pay for our sins is not entirely ours; it is also performed and accomplished by Jesus Christ, in whom we make satisfaction and bring forth true fruits of penance. These draw all their strength and merit from him; they are offered by him to the Father, and they are accepted and received by the Father through his mediation. All this is the teaching of the Council of Trent.

We should add, further, that the merit of the satisfaction offered by Jesus Christ is applied only to those who satisfy the justice of God for their sins. This is why it is absolutely necessary for us to offer such reparation either in this world or in the next. Without this we cannot enter heaven, for the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ must be applied to us to purify our soul from all its stains contracted through sin; nothing sullied can enter heaven. Although the holy Apostles did not overlook the infinite value of the satisfaction performed by Jesus Christ, it was for this reason that Saint Peter does not hesitate to say that Jesus Christ suffered for us and has left us an example so that we might walk in his footsteps and that Saint Paul dares to say that he fills up in his body what is wanting in the Passion of Christ.

All our sins are certainly pardoned after we make a good Confession, but it is entirely false, says the Council of Trent, and contrary to the word of God to say that once God pardons our sin, all the punishment it deserved is also fully remitted, for eternal punishment is often changed into a temporal one.

The same Council gives us six reasons why God acts in this way. First, the justice of God seems to desire different ways of restoring

sinners to grace: one way for those who sinned through ignorance before their Baptism and another for those who, after having been once delivered from the slavery of sin and of the devil, have not feared to profane deliberately those hearts that are the temples of God and to sadden the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Second, the penances imposed to make up for sins keep many from sinning; they hold sinners back, as it were, and make them more cautious. Third, by making us practice the virtues contrary to the evil habits contracted by a sinful life, these penances destroy the latter. Fourth, there are no means more certain than these acts of penance for turning aside the chastisements with which God constantly threatens us. Fifth, by satisfaction of this kind, we become more like Jesus Christ, who offered satisfaction for our sins. Sixth, by the same token, we obtain a secure pledge of sharing in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ because we share in his sufferings.

Because we cannot avoid making satisfaction for our sins either in this life or in purgatory, it would no doubt show a lack of faith and of common sense to wait until purgatory to make up for our sins, for there the pains we will suffer are most bitter, last an extremely long time, and win us no merit. This satisfaction we owe God is the sinner's means of repairing through painful and humiliating deeds the offense made to God by sin.

There are two kinds of satisfactory works, interior and exterior. Interior satisfaction is the return to God by sinners when they cast aside their affection for sin. External satisfaction consists in painful and laborious works. There are two kinds of external satisfactory acts, sacramental and voluntary.

We can also say that there are two kinds of sacramental acts of satisfaction. Of the first kind are acts included in the sacrament and essential to it, for example, the first two actions of the penitent, namely, contrition and confessing. To these are joined the willingness and the decided intention to do all that the priest may enjoin. As Saint Thomas so rightly remarks, the pain that the penitent suffers in contrition and confessing is a part of the satisfaction. This same remark had been made even before Saint Thomas by an ancient author who declared that a sinner offers much satisfaction for sins by overcoming shame and by not keeping back from God's minister any of the evil committed.

The other kind of sacramental satisfaction is external to and comes after the sacrament. It is a chastisement that the penitent performs and that has been commanded by the priest in the sacrament of Penance to help compensate for the deserved temporal punishment and to repair the injury done to God and to neighbor by sinning.

Voluntary satisfaction is what we perform of our own accord or the sufferings we accept with submission from God's hand, such as illnesses, the loss of our goods, and other afflictions that befall us or come to us through the bad will of others—for example, calumnies, insults, ill-treatment, and so on. As the Council of Trent says, God's liberality and the extent of his goodwill are so great that we can satisfy him not only by the sufferings we embrace of our own volition or that are inflicted on us by the priest's sentence to punish sin in ourselves, but also by the afflictions of a temporal nature that God sends us in this world as a sign of his love, provided we endure them patiently.

There is this difference between sacramental acts of satisfaction and those we voluntarily perform, namely, that the former possess a special power and efficacy for satisfying God. A day of fasting, for instance, if prescribed by the priest in the sacrament of Penance, much more readily remits the punishment that remains due after sin than a day of fasting that we would observe on our own initiative because, says Saint Thomas, sacramental acts of satisfaction do not simply remit the punishment due to sin; because they are a part of the sacrament, they also have the power to impart the grace proper to them to those who are disposed to receive it.

Nevertheless, it is fitting for us to impose some penances on ourselves voluntarily to make satisfaction for our sins over and above those prescribed by the priest in the sacrament of Penance. However considerable these may be, they do not ordinarily suffice to do away with all the traces of sin in us, and in this life we constantly need to purify ourselves through penance. In fact, every morning we should offer to God, in a spirit of penance and reparation for our sins and in union with the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, all the sufferings that will befall us that day.

All these acts of satisfaction, whether sacramental or voluntary, procure great advantages for us. They not only remit the punishment due to our sins because we must satisfy God's justice for them after obtaining his pardon but also soothe our conscience, accustom us to suffer patiently the trials of life, increase our merit, eliminate our evil habits and inclinations to sin, and make us share the satisfactions and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we should not spend a single day of our life without performing some acts of penance.

Section 7—In what satisfaction consists; our obligation to accept and to fulfill the penance imposed in Confession

The Council of Trent says that satisfaction is made by fasting, almsgiving, prayers, and other pious exercises of the spiritual life. Fasting

means abstaining from food and includes all other corporal mortifications. Almsgiving embraces all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Prayer means both by voice and from the heart, along with raising our heart to God, offering him our actions, and assisting at church offices, catechism lessons, and sermons.

The Council of Trent requires that the acts of satisfaction imposed and the penances given should include three conditions. The priests of the Lord, it says, insofar as the Holy Spirit and their own prudence may suggest, must impose salutary satisfactory acts and appropriate penalties depending on the kind of sins confessed and on the penitent's motivation. They must also, it adds, take care that the satisfactory act they impose may serve as a punishment and chastisement for the person's past sins, a remedy for weakness, and an aid to help the penitent persevere in a new life of grace.

The good works that the priest should more especially enjoin on penitents to satisfy God's justice must strongly run counter to the sins they habitually find themselves most prone to commit. They should help to destroy their evil habits, and they can compensate, as Holy Scripture says, by the pain they inflict in proportion to the pleasure that accompanied the transgressions. The priest, for instance, should impose on a proud or ambitious person some kind of humiliation; a vindictive sinner might be told to perform acts of kindness and gentleness; gluttons should be made to fast; the impure should be given corporal penances to perform; all these penances should be proportionate to the pleasure that these persons have enjoyed when they offended God.

Just as we have used the body to serve us for satisfying our unregulated pleasures, says Saint Paul, so should we immolate the body with a similar ardor to further what concerns God's glory and our salvation. We will not do satisfactory penance if we do not perform actions contrary to our past sins. Saint John urges us to produce results worthy of penance.

The Council of Trent teaches us that the acts of satisfaction we perform for our sins in the sacrament of Penance must consist in painful and laborious works because the effect Baptism produces differs from that of Penance. In Baptism we are clothed with Jesus Christ and become an entirely new creation in him with a total remission of all our sins, whereas in the sacrament of Penance we can attain this total and entire renewal only through the deep groaning and great labor that God's justice requires of us. For this reason the holy Fathers appropriately call Penance "a painful or laborious Baptism."

We are obliged to accept with submission the penance given us by the priest. If we have some legitimate reason that prevents us from

performing it, we should let him know this. We ought to perform our penance as soon as we can, and if we forget it, we should carry it out as soon as we remember what it was. We would commit a considerable sin if we omitted to do our penance out of scorn or crass negligence. We are speaking here of a penance imposed in the sacrament. We should especially take care to be in the state of grace when performing our penance, for as the Wise Man says, "God does not look favorably on the gift offered by the wicked."[18]

If we are in mortal sin, nevertheless, we satisfy the obligation of doing the penance enjoined by the priest, but we gain no merit, any more than we would by performing any other good work in that state. We would not obtain exoneration of any of the punishment due to sin and would remain as obligated to the justice of God as we were previously, for Jesus Christ does not pour out the influence of his merits and his satisfactions on those members who are dead in sin and not united with him by charity.

It is not enough to make satisfaction to God; we must also make satisfaction to our neighbor in body, soul, honor, and goods. We are bound to repair the harm done in any of these four ways. One difference between the satisfaction we owe to God and what we owe our neighbor is that God could excuse us from what is due to him, but no one has the right to dispense us from what we owe our neighbor.

When we have done harm to our neighbor's soul by the scandal we have given, we must make up for the wrong done by putting a stop to the scandal, repairing the evil we may have caused, and giving good example to the injured party. When we have done harm to our neighbor's body, whether by wounding, striking, or killing, we must compensate insofar as we can the one we struck or wounded, or the heirs of the person we killed. In such a case we must follow the advice of a prudent and enlightened confessor.

If we have done harm to our neighbor's honor by spreading lies, we are obliged as far as possible to undeceive all those who may have believed the evil reports we spread and to assure them that everything we said about the other party was false. When we have made known some hidden sin committed by someone, we must make it a point to speak well of him when the opportunity presents itself and to call attention to the person's good qualities.

When we have harmed our neighbor's goods, we must return all we have taken, either in kind or the equivalent in monetary value, and also make restitution for all the losses and the damage we have caused; this can be done in person or through an intermediary. If we cannot make full restitution for the damage caused to our neighbor,

18. Prov. 15:8.

we should give back what we can and be firmly resolved to return the rest as soon as we are in a position to do so.

Persons who come to Confession but who are not ready to return the stolen goods of others or to repair the damage done to their neighbor cannot receive absolution as long as they persist in this state. They are exposing themselves to damnation. We are likewise obliged to pay our debts, the wages of our servants, and the salaries of workers, and to repair all the damage that the unjust refusal or delay in paying may have caused these persons to suffer. It is not enough on such occasions to promise the priest in Confession that we will repair all the harm we have done to our neighbor or to put it off and leave instructions in our will that reparation be made. Whoever would be in this condition when going to Confession would nullify it and commit a sacrilege.

After receiving the sacrament of Penance, we still cannot be fully sure of being in the state of grace. This is a secret known to God alone because we cannot be completely certain there has not been some defect in our examination, our contrition, or our confessing. We cannot be absolutely sure that we have truly turned to God with our whole heart, yet it is only to those who do so entirely that grace is given in this sacrament.

Nevertheless, we can know with some assurance whether we have recovered the grace of God and whether we possess it if we do not fall again into considerable sins, if we correct ourselves of our defects, if we watch over ourselves, and if we courageously resist temptation. If we have a deep horror for vice, an extreme affection for virtue, and an ardent love for God, we should remain in peace when we observe these external signs in our life and trust that we have indeed obtained from God the forgiveness of our sins.

Section 8—Satisfaction for sins by means of indulgences

We can also satisfy the justice of God for our sins by means of indulgences. An indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment due to our sins that the Church grants us outside of the sacrament of Penance after the sins have been forgiven in the sacrament and the eternal punishment they merited has been remitted.

Jesus Christ, says the Council of Trent, empowered the Church to grant indulgences when, after telling Saint Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven," he added, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."[19] In Saint Mark he says the same thing to all his

19. Matt. 16:19, 18:18.

Apostles, giving them by these words the power to impose penances for sins and to remit at least a part of them for reasonable motives.

It would seem that this was what Saint Paul did with regard to the incestuous Corinthian on whom he had at first imposed a penance. At the request of the Corinthians and in consideration of the sorrow that he had for his crime, Paul then granted him an indulgence in the name and person of Jesus Christ by remitting a part of the penalty he had deserved. Saint Paul seemed to fear that this sinner might be overwhelmed by an excess of sadness.[20] Saint Ambrose and Saint Cyril use this example to justify the granting of indulgences by the Church to her children. This manner of acting on the part of Saint Paul shows that the practice of granting indulgences is as old as the Church. We might even say that Jesus Christ granted a plenary indulgence to the sinful woman, to the woman taken in adultery, and to the good thief, for he pardoned their sins without requiring them to make satisfaction by penance.

From the earliest times, says the Council of Trent, the Church made use of this power given to her by God. The pope can grant indulgences for the whole Church and the bishops for their dioceses. They enjoy this prerogative in the person of Jesus Christ, whom they represent, and in their role as dispensers of the Church's treasures.

In themselves indulgences have no power to remit either mortal or venial sins; sin cannot be wiped out except by removing corruption from the heart, which indulgences cannot do. What they can do, however, for persons who have not entirely made satisfaction for their sins is to remit what is still lacking in their penitential acts, that is, the punishment that they must suffer, either in this life or in purgatory after death, to satisfy the justice of God. The pains endured in purgatory are nothing but the additional satisfaction that we have not entirely paid off in this life.

From the beginning of the Church, it was in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ that the saints begged God to show mercy to sinners and established the practice of granting indulgences, as we see in the example of the incestuous Corinthian to whom Saint Paul remitted some of the punishment due him. It is from Christ's merits that indulgences derive all their efficacy.

Indeed, by means of indulgences the Church remits only the punishment that the sins of penitents have deserved. She does so by applying to them the superabundant merits of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the saints to make up for what they lack. All these merits constitute what we call the treasury of the Church. Jesus Christ suffered far more than what the justice of God required for the sins of human-

20. 2 Cor. 2:7

ity, and the torments of the holy martyrs and many other saints surpassed by far what their own sins had deserved.

Because Jesus Christ is united with the saints in charity and all of them form one body with the faithful on earth, they can let the latter share in this superabundance of merits as needed to supplement what is lacking in the faithful's acts of penitence when these are not completely satisfactory. This is accomplished by means of indulgences.

In the early Church, the martyrs did this while still alive and enduring torments for the faith. They wrote letters to the bishops, begging them to remit part of the acts of penance imposed on those Christians who had fallen into scandalous crimes or into idolatry. They willingly sought to apply the merit of the martyrdom they were enduring for the faith, and the bishops often granted this request of these holy martyrs.

In those days, according to Saint Cyprian, only the bishops had a right to grant such indulgences in virtue of their governance and rule over the Church, which Jesus Christ made the dispenser of his own and the saints' superabundant merits and satisfactions. From that time on, only the pope and the bishops have ever used this power.

The holy Fathers have referred to indulgences as reductions, remissions, absolutions, peace, and reconciliation. The three kinds of indulgences are plenary indulgences, non-plenary indulgences, and the Jubilee indulgence. A plenary indulgence is the general remission of all the temporal punishment due to our sins. A non-plenary indulgence is the remission of part of this punishment, depending on the intention of the grantor and the motivation of the recipient. The Jubilee indulgence is an extraordinary plenary indulgence that the pope grants to all the faithful along with various other special privileges.

For many centuries, because the bishops had the right to give indulgences without distinctions or restrictions, no distinction was made between plenary indulgences and indulgences that remitted a certain number of years or days of penance. Bishops would grant the remission of everything that remained due as a penance, in effect a plenary indulgence because it was given unreservedly.

As time passed, the law fixed the number of days or years of penance that had to be imposed for each kind of sin. Around the twelfth century, a distinction was recognized between indulgences that remitted only some years or days of the prescribed penance and those that remitted all punishment. These latter were therefore called plenary indulgences. Because some bishops granted indulgences with too free a hand and with no limits, the Lateran Council, in 1215, ordered that henceforth the bishops could grant an indulgence of not more than one year on the occasion of the dedication of a church. In

all other circumstances, they could grant only forty days' indulgence and only within the limits of the diocese.

Because the pope is the head of the whole Church, he can grant indulgences to the entire Church, and because his power is unlimited, he can accord plenary or non-plenary indulgences as he judges useful for the good of the faithful.

We should not imagine, however, that indulgences are intended to discourage or excuse us from doing penance or that it is enough to have the intention of gaining them to be dispensed from the obligation of doing penance. Far from it; even if they are plenary, they always presuppose that we have done some of the penance we deserve or that we are sincerely disposed to do so if we have the time and the strength, for the Church grants indulgences only to remit what is missing in the penance we would have been obliged to do, not to exempt us from it entirely. Because God has imposed the obligation of doing penance on all those who have fallen into some mortal sins after Baptism, no one can relieve them of this obligation. As Saint Cyprian says, no one is above God.

For this reason this holy bishop declares that it would be a sin against God's law and the Gospel to grant indulgences to those who have not done any penance for a reasonable time, and he instructs martyrs who were asked for letters of indulgence to grant such only to those who had almost finished the penances incurred on account of their sins. No doubt for this same reason the Council of Trent, following the Church's ancient and approved custom, says that indulgences should be granted only with moderation and restraint and that in Jubilees the Church should oblige those who wish to gain these indulgences to perform acts of penance: prayers, alms, fasts, and so on.

It is true that the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ and of the saints, which make up the treasury from which the Church draws when she grants us indulgences, are more than sufficient to obtain pardon for the misdeeds of the greatest sinners. But for this to occur, it is necessary that these merits be applied and communicated to them, and this cannot happen except in the case of those who have disposed themselves by penance and taken part in the sufferings that Jesus Christ endured for the expiation of sins.

The Council of Trent teaches that the use of indulgences is beneficial to the Christian people because they supplement the weakness of sinners and bring the happiness of enjoying God nearer to them—no slight advantage, surely, and one that should make the faithful greatly desire to gain indulgences.

Various conditions are necessary for gaining indulgences, including the Jubilee indulgence.

1) We must have a pure intention and want to gain the indulgence, not just to find a means of avoiding penance but so that having obtained full remission of our sins, nothing may stand in the way of our rejoicing in God. This desire of enjoying God's friendship sooner is a Christian sentiment and an excellent motive for seeking through indulgences a release from the punishment due to our sins.

2) We must be in the state of grace and thus be far removed from mortal sin, having abandoned the occasions of sinning, for we cannot obtain any grace from God while we are his enemy.

3) We must be detached from all sin, for we cannot obtain the remission of the punishment due to sin as long as we entertain any affection for it.

4) Finally, we must perform what the Church prescribes, namely, go to Confession with true sorrow for our sins, receive Holy Communion, and perform certain acts of piety, almsgiving, and visits to the churches designated for this purpose. Over and above this, the Church prescribes three days of fasting to gain the Jubilee indulgence. All these acts must be accomplished within the time set by the pope in the bull of indulgence or by the bishops in their pastoral letters. Whoever would perform them at some other time would not gain this indulgence.

The conditions prescribed for gaining indulgences in the bull issued by the pope cannot be modified unless the pope or the bishops who give them permit confessors to change them for other acts of piety. This must always be specifically mentioned in the papal bulls or the episcopal letters.

Thus, to gain indulgences we must be truly repentant for all the sins we have committed. Without this condition we can never gain any indulgence, and this rule cannot be changed for any reason whatsoever. The indulgence is granted mainly on this condition because this is what reconciles us with God and restores his holy grace to us. It is so necessary that God with all his mercy could not pardon our sins unless he sees in us true repentance and genuine conversion of heart to him. True repentance is the first thing that the popes require from those to whom they grant indulgences, and they always express this in their bulls with the words *vere penitentibus*, that is, to those who truly repent. Pope Nicholas V explains this in greater detail in his bull for the Jubilee year of 1450, where he states that all those who desire to receive the grace of the Jubilee must be reconciled with God by the sorrow expressed in penance, humiliations, weeping, heartfelt contrition, and almsgiving.

All this leads us to conclude that the Church does not give indulgences to the faithful purely and simply but that she grants them only

so that the latter may seriously undertake to reform their life and show in all their conduct that they have truly been converted to God. All those who lack any of these motives will receive no indulgence from God. We should not feel assured that we have gained the Jubilee indulgence unless we afterward adopt a well-regulated life quite different than the one we followed previously.

Section 9—Satisfaction for the souls in purgatory

We can gain indulgences for the souls in purgatory in the form of suffrages, that is, the application to these souls by our intentions or by our asking God to apply to them the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ that we might have won for ourselves by gaining indulgences.

While we are in this life, we can do much to aid the souls in purgatory by relieving the torments they suffer to complete the satisfaction due to God's justice for their sins. We can do this by our prayers, alms, personal sufferings, and voluntary penances; by the holy sacrifice of the Mass, by our Communions, and by all kinds of good works performed in a spirit of satisfaction for the sins of these holy souls. We should certainly look on this act of charity as a duty because both Christian charity and, often enough, justice oblige us to do so.

What should especially persuade us to fulfill this duty is the fact that these souls are the friends of God and living members of our Lord Jesus Christ; we too are united with them and form one body and society with them; their torments are extreme and last for a long time; they cannot help themselves at all; once delivered from purgatory, they will be happy in heaven and will intercede for us with God.

It is indeed advantageous for us to pray for the souls in purgatory and to procure for them some relief, for they can help us too; they no doubt pray for us while they are still in purgatory. Although they cannot merit any more or obtain any grace for themselves, they can still secure graces for others. Their prayers can be most useful to us, and we grow in grace, virtue, and merit by the charity we show them. By delivering us from purgatory after we die or by inspiring others to obtain our deliverance, God will reward us for this good deed we have done.

The prayers that the faithful on earth offer for those who are in purgatory greatly console these holy souls and give them new hope of seeing God soon and possessing him eternally. Although they suffer willingly all the torments God uses to punish them for their sins and endure these with entire conformity to his will, they experience a vehement desire to leave that place, not so much to suffer less but to see God, whom they love as he is, and never to be separated from

him. Therefore we cannot give them any greater joy than to take interest in their deliverance through our prayers and good works. Afterward, they are bound to be most grateful to us.

Chapter 8

Extreme Unction

Section 1—The nature and effects, the matter and form, and the minister of Extreme Unction

We are subject to so many and such great trials, especially at the end of our life, that it was fitting for God to provide us with some special spiritual help to relieve us in these adversities or to enable us to endure them patiently. This is why Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of Extreme Unction, which is so useful to those who are dangerously ill.

Extreme Unction is a sacrament that Jesus Christ instituted for the sick to deliver them from the remaining residue of their sins, to fortify them against the devil's assaults and the suffering they may encounter at the moment of death, to help them die well, or to cause them to regain health if this is necessary or useful for their salvation.

The use of this sacrament, says the Council of Trent, is suggested in chapter 6 of Saint Mark[21] and is recommended to the faithful by Saint James, the Apostle and brother of our Lord: "Is anyone sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick man; the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven."[22]

This sacrament is called Extreme Unction because it is given only at the end of our life, which is why we also call it the sacrament of the dying; it is the last of all the anointings that a Christian receives during life, and it is ordinarily given only to those who have already received the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

Long ago, the practice in the Church was just the opposite, as we can see in the life of Saint Ambrose and of Saint John Chrysostom, and in that of Saint Malachy written by Saint Bernard, where we read that these saints received Extreme Unction first and then Holy Viaticum. The reason the Church changed her procedure in this matter,

21. Mark 6:5.
22. James 5:14–15.

according to Cardinal Bellarmine, is that when the administration of Extreme Unction is usually delayed as long as possible so as not to frighten the patient, the person might lose consciousness and be rendered unable to receive Holy Communion.

We should not, however, wait until the sick are in the last extremity before having them receive this sacrament It is most fitting that all should receive it, if possible, when still fully conscious so that they may unite themselves to the Church's intentions and prayers and those of the priest who administers the sacrament to them. Therefore such persons should ask for Extreme Unction and should be made to receive it as soon as the illness begins to appear dangerous.

Although it is not absolutely necessary to receive this sacrament, it is extremely useful to do so. According to the Council of Trent, we could not neglect it as being of little value without committing a serious sin and injuring the Holy Spirit. This sacrament, says the same Council, augments habitual grace, an effect it shares with the other sacraments.

It also produces two other effects in the soul, as Saint James indicates. The first is when he says, "The Lord will raise him up."[23] It fortifies and gives relief to the soul of the sick, says the Council of Trent. It arouses in them a great confidence in God's mercy, helps them to endure more readily the burdens and pains of illness, and makes them stronger and victorious against the temptations and snares that the devil lays before them in this extremity and to which they might easily succumb if they were not aided by the special grace given in this sacrament. These anxieties that torment the mind of the sick ordinarily arise from the thought of death, the remembrance of past sins, the imminence of judgment, the consideration of the pains of hell, and sometimes even from the sight of the devil.

The second effect produced in the soul by this sacrament is the remission of sins. We learn this from these words of Saint James: "If he has committed sins, they will be forgiven."[24] First, if they receive this sacrament with attrition, it remits the mortal sins that the sick are aware of having committed but are unable to confess and for which they have imperfect contrition. Under these circumstances, the sacrament makes up for the lack of Confession and perfect contrition. In such a case, this sacrament is so necessary that without receiving it, they could not be saved. Secondly, it remits any hidden mortal sins of which they are unaware. It is true that other sacraments also have this power, but this remission happens only by accident; sanctifying grace cannot exist with sin, whereas this remission is one of the proper and

23. James 5:15.
24. Ibid.

specific effects of Extreme Unction, corresponding with one of the purposes for which it was established.

The Council of Trent also calls this sacrament the consummation of Penance because it also takes away the residue of sin, delivering the soul from the apathy, sadness, torpidity, languor, and general feebleness that result from sin and that have not been entirely eliminated by Penance. It also remits all venial sins, known and unknown, and the penalties due not only for mortal sins but also for venial sins; they are either entirely wiped out or at least much diminished by this sacrament. Sometimes it even brings about the cure of the body when this is expedient for the salvation of the patient's soul.

Few Christians, however, experience this effect of the sacrament because most of them wait far too long before asking to receive it, doing so only when they have practically lost consciousness. It may also be that for the sick person, death is preferable to a longer life. But the main reasons few receive this benefit from the sacrament are the imperfect intentions they bring to it and the lack of piety with which most of them receive it.

We can receive this sacrament more than once, as often, in fact, as the person seems to be in danger of death, provided that this repeated danger results from a different illness. We can even receive it more than once in the course of the same malady if the illness lasts a long time, provided we rally and then appear to fall several distinct times in danger of death.

Only priests can administer the sacrament of Extreme Unction. They use olive oil, called the oil of the sick, that is blessed by the bishop. This anointing is the matter of the sacrament. Saint James refers to this when he says that the sick person should be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord. The oil symbolizes the strength and special vigor that the Holy Spirit gives to the sick in this sacrament. The prayer the priest uses as the form of the sacrament contains these words: "By this unction and by his pure mercy, may God forgive you all the sins that you have committed by . . ." such or such a sense, for instance, "by sight, by hearing," and so on.

To help us better understand its effects, Jesus Christ willed that oil should be used in this sacrament. Oil soothes, fortifies, and heals, and the sacrament of Extreme Unction soothes the pains caused by sickness, fortifies the soul against temptation, cleanses it of its sins, and even heals the body of its malady and infirmity if God judges this necessary or useful for the patient's salvation.

Section 2—The conditions required to receive Extreme Unction; the ceremonies connected with this sacrament

To receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction, we must be a Christian, have the use of reason, and be sick and in danger of death. Those who are healthy can do penance, whereas Extreme Unction is for those who can no longer do so. Persons who are mortally wounded and those suffering from pestilence are also capable of receiving it.

We are also advised to give it to children who are ill and in danger of death, just as though they were adults, provided that they are seven years old, for we should make sure that it is administered to all who are capable of offending God, something we can do as soon as we have the use of reason. It is also given to children because it produces in them the same effects as in adults. Such is the opinion of Saint Bonaventure and of Saint Antoninus. It can also be given to the insane, even to the raving mad, provided they did not always suffer from this condition.

Extreme Unction should be refused to excommunicates, those who never had the use of reason, those who are impenitent, those who die in an obvious state of mortal sin, those who are about to engage in a duel, and those who are to suffer the death penalty. Nor can it be given to those who expose their life on the sea or who are condemned to a life sentence in prison, unless they are sick or near death.

A necessary condition for receiving this sacrament is that the person be free from mortal sin. It is especially for this reason that the Church customarily does not administer this sacrament to the sick until they have gone to Confession and received the Holy Viaticum.

To be properly disposed to receive this sacrament, we should have the same confidence in the goodness of God as people displayed who presented themselves to our Lord to be healed of their infirmities. We must also unite our intentions and our prayers during the administration of the sacrament to those of the Church.

As a rule, when someone is receiving Extreme Unction, several long prayers are recited, something that does not take place when we are given the other sacraments. This happens because the sick have such urgent need of extraordinary help and must ask for this through the prayers of others, being incapable of doing so themselves. We can also say that the prayers recited by the sick and by those present, before the sacrament is actually administered, take the place of the conditions required in the other sacraments. Ordinarily, the penitential psalms are recited because this sacrament is intended as a supplement to Penance and because, as the Council of Trent teaches, the life of a

Christian is a perpetual penance; therefore, just as we should have lived in penance, so we should die with sentiments of penance.

The anointings are made with the holy oil in the form of a cross to show that the grace received in this sacrament flows from the merits of the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ and to make use of the cross as a weapon formidable to the devil and extremely powerful in unmasking and overcoming him.

The anointings are made on the eyes, the ears, the nose, the lips, the hands, the breast—that is, the heart—and the feet because, although some of these are sense organs of our body and others are the seat of our thoughts and affections and the tools of our actions, they are also the instruments we use for sin. Because these organs were corrupted and profaned by sin, the Church seeks to purify and sanctify them in this sacrament to make them worthy to behold Jesus Christ and to stand in his presence in heaven.

While anointing the organs of the five senses, the priest recites over each one the words that make up the form of the sacrament, and at the conclusion he mentions the sense of which this part of the body is the organ. On the eyes, he mentions sight; on the nose, smell; on the ears, hearing; on the lips, tasting and speaking; on the breast, thoughts, and on the feet, walking.

He anoints the eyes to heal the sins committed by sight, such as gazing, impure glances, forbidden reading, watching theatrical comedies, and desiring or using the goods of this world for evil purposes, which we call the concupiscence of the eyes.

Next, he anoints the ears to heal the sins the sick person committed through hearing, such as uncharitable and impure words, scandalous gossip, worldly or dangerous songs that were listened to with eagerness, and resistance offered to the Holy Spirit's inspirations.

Then he anoints the nostrils to heal the sins the ill person has committed through the sense of smell, such as by perfumes, scents, and flowers, and by scandals and bad example, for we ought to diffuse everywhere the good fragrance of a saintly life.

Next, he anoints the lips, or the mouth, to efface the sins committed by the mouth, such as gluttony, drunkenness, fastidiousness in eating and drinking, and the sins committed by the tongue, which, as Saint James says, is "a world of iniquity."[25]

Then he anoints the hands to heal the sins that the sick person has committed by the sense of touch, which is mainly located in the fingertips, to atone for thefts, fighting, murder, and all other unjust acts committed by these members as well as the omission of required actions performed by the hands.

25. James 3:6.

He anoints the breast to heal the sins committed by thought, such as sins of pride, envy, anger, hatred, unregulated affections, despising of others, hidden sins, and sins of others instigated by the sick person.

Finally, he anoints the feet to heal the sins committed by walking, such as going to dangerous or evil places, by promenades, by affections of the soul symbolized by the feet, and by all sinful attachments, whether mortal or venial, for creatures.

If it appears impossible to anoint all the sense organs, the priest can first omit the double anointings of those senses that have a double organ, such as sight, hearing, and touch; it is sufficient to anoint one eye, one ear, or one hand. He can also omit, if necessary, the anointing of the back, the breast, or the feet.

He can also anoint only once each organ of the five senses, without making the sign of the cross, and say only once the following prayer that serves as the form of the sacrament, naming all five senses: "May God through this holy unction and by his most merciful pity pardon you all the sins you have committed by sight, hearing, smell, taste, speech, and touch."

The priest then presents a crucifix to the sick person to cast out the devil, who is put to flight by the sight of the crucifix, and to help the patient make various types of acts to prepare well for death. He should urge the sick person to have great confidence in God through consideration of the merits that Jesus Christ won for us by his sufferings and death. He should encourage the patient to suffer with fortitude all the pain that it now pleases God to send—and may please him in the future—no matter how severe they may be, following the example of our Lord, who willingly suffered everything his Father deigned to send him, even death on the cross for our sins.

Afterward, when death seems to be approaching, a blessed candle is placed in the sick person's hand to repel the demons, the spirits of darkness, by virtue of the special power that the candle received when it was blessed by a priest and also to show that the patient wishes to die in the spirit of Christianity, which he received in Baptism when a candle was placed in his hand. This symbol also shows that the dying person wishes to continue even unto death, firmly attached to Jesus Christ and his doctrine, the true light, and to be a burning, shining lamp before God, one that burns itself out for his love by consecrating to God the last moments of life with wholehearted affection.

Chapter 9

Holy Orders

Section 1—The name, matter, institution, and use of the sacrament of Holy Orders; the seven orders in particular

The Church needs officers and ministers of Jesus Christ to offer to God the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, to administer the sacraments to the faithful, and to instruct them in their faith and in all their religious duties. Jesus Christ, the sovereign legislator of the law of grace and the founder and head of the Church, provided her with such ministers when he instituted the sacrament of Holy Orders. This sacrament imparts to those who receive it the power to exercise the functions and ministries of the Church along with the grace to carry them out fittingly.

The name *Holy Orders* has been given to this sacrament because it includes various degrees subordinate to one another that involve different functions and are pursued in succession from the last order to the first, which is the priesthood. All the rest refer to this as to their end. This sacrament represents for us the priesthood of Jesus Christ and his role as the Mediator between God and us.

It would seem that Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament before his Passion, when he gave his Apostles the power to consecrate his body and blood under the species of bread and wine, and also after his Resurrection, when he gave them the power to forgive sins. In the person of his holy Apostles, Jesus Christ gave the Church the authority to ordain her ministers, together with the right to pass it on. The Apostles transmitted this authority to the first bishops, and they to their successors, in uninterrupted succession. This power will remain in the Church until the end of time.

We learn the practice of ordaining the Church's ministers from both Holy Scripture and apostolic Tradition. Saint Paul refers to the ordination of priests in his Epistle to Titus, bishop of Crete: "I left you behind in Crete so that you should put things in order and appoint priests in every city."[26] He says to Timothy, "Do not lay on hands hastily on any man,"[27] and again, "I admonish you to rekindle the grace of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands."[28]

26. Titus 1:5.
27. 1 Tim. 5:22.
28. 2 Tim. 1:6.

This is why the Council of Trent says that it is clear and manifest from the testimony of Holy Scripture, from apostolic Tradition, and from the unanimous agreement of the Fathers that grace is imparted by Holy Orders, which is conferred by words and external signs. No one can doubt that Holy Orders is truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of the Church.

This sacrament contains seven degrees, which are called orders. Three are named sacred orders: the priesthood, the diaconate, and the subdiaconate. They are called sacred because those who receive them are consecrated to God in a such a special manner that they cannot return to the world and because the functions they exercise are very holy. Priests consecrate the body of Jesus Christ in holy Mass; deacons and subdeacons assist them in doing so and help in offering the sacrifice.

There are four so-called minor orders: those of porter, lector, exorcist, and acolyte. They are called minor in comparison with the sacred orders, whose functions are more exalted.

All these orders were instituted to make us appreciate the excellence of our mysteries, which require so many ministers. Some consecrate the Holy Eucharist, others distribute it, and others prepare the people to receive it.

All these various degrees of Holy Orders are sacraments because by each one we receive certain sacred powers through sensible signs and a special grace to exercise these functions properly. They do not, however, constitute seven distinct sacraments; they comprise one and the same sacrament because all of them relate to the same end.

In the Church there are three main functions: first, consecrating the body and blood of Jesus Christ; second, forgiving sins and administering the other sacraments; third, preaching the word of God. Priests, who have the power to exercise all these functions, are ordained and receive the authority to consecrate the body and blood of Jesus Christ when the bishop has them touch the chalice containing wine and the paten on which is one of the hosts to be consecrated and when he tells them at the same time, "Receive the power to offer the sacrifice to God and to celebrate Mass for both the living and the dead." They receive the faculty of forgiving and retaining sins by a second imposition of the bishop's hands and by the words he then says to them, "Whose sins you will forgive will be forgiven, and whose sins you will retain will be retained."

When deacons are ordained, they receive the commission to read the holy Gospel publicly in church, to preach the word of God, and to distribute the Holy Eucharist, which are the functions proper to their order, and to confer Baptism in church with the usual ceremo-

nies. They are ordained when the bishop imposes his hands on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit so that you may have strength to resist the devil and his temptations in the name of the Lord," and again later, when the bishop hands them the book of the Gospels, has them touch it, and says, "Receive the power to read the Gospel in the Church of God for both the living and the dead."

Subdeacons are ordained and acquire the power to assist the priest in the action of the holy sacrifice when the bishop has them touch the empty chalice, along with the paten, while saying to them, "See what a ministry is conferred on you; I therefore warn you to act in such a way that you may please God," and when he later gives them the book of the Epistles to touch, saying, "Receive the book of Epistles and the power to read them in the Church for both the living and the dead."

Acolytes are ordained and receive the power to light and to carry the candles for the sacrifice when the bishop gives them a candlestick with a candle in it and, as they touch it, says to them, "Receive this candlestick and this candle and know that you are obliged in the name of the Lord to light the lights in the church." They also receive the power to present and to prepare the water and wine for the sacrifice when the bishop has them touch two vessels, called cruets, in which the water and wine destined for the sacrifice are poured. He tells them, "Receive these cruets so as to provide the wine and the water for the Eucharist of Jesus Christ's blood in the name of the Lord."

Exorcists are ordained and receive the power to exorcise those possessed by the devil when the bishop gives them the book of exorcisms, has them touch it, and says, "Receive this book and learn it by heart. Receive the power of imposing hands on those possessed," namely, by the devil, "whether they are baptized or catechumens," that is, adults receiving instruction in preparation for Baptism.

Lectors are ordained and receive the power to read the lessons in the Divine Office, which is chanted in church, when the bishop gives them the book containing the lessons used in the Office, has them touch it, and says, "Receive this book; read to the people the word of God, and if you faithfully and usefully carry out your responsibility, you will share in the reward of those who have preached the word of God from the beginning."

Porters are ordained and receive the power of opening and shutting the doors of the church when the bishop hands them the keys of the church, saying, "Fulfill your ministry faithfully because you will have to give an account to God for the things kept under the safety of these keys."

Section 2—The minister of Holy Orders; those who can receive it and the intentions they should bring to it; the tonsure

Only a bishop can confer the sacrament of Holy Orders. We learn this from the Tradition of the Apostles and as defined by the Council of Trent.

The sacrament of Holy Orders can be given only to Christians and to men. According to Saint Paul, women can neither command nor teach in the Church although they did at one time exercise certain functions in the Church. Those called deaconesses took care of preparing and aiding other women to receive Baptism and helped them disrobe when Baptism was given by immersing a person in water. There were others also called deaconesses, and even some known as priestesses, because their husbands had been ordained deacon or priest after they had been separated by common consent or because of their age—the word *priest* means *elder*. But none of these women was ever honored with the sacrament of Holy Orders; they simply bore the name.

The sacrament of Holy Orders requires of those who receive it both interior and exterior conditions. The former include honesty, chastity, firmness in the faith, and knowledge. The exterior conditions are to have reached the age decreed by the Church, to be physically fit and without deformity, and to possess full use of the senses, especially sight and hearing. Also, the person cannot be either a slave or of illegitimate birth.

No one, says the Council of Trent, should be promoted to the order of subdeacon before he is twenty-two years old, to that of deacon until he is twenty-three, and to the priesthood until he is twenty-five, but it suffices that he has begun the year of eligibility. To receive the four minor orders, the age of reason suffices.

Laypeople should have great veneration and deep respect for priests and other members of the clergy because they are pastors of the Church, ministers of God, and dispensers of his mysteries.

Besides these orders, there is a ceremony that introduces a person into the ecclesiastical state and is performed by the bishop. This sacred rite is called the tonsure because some of the candidate's hair is cut off—formerly it was shaved off entirely—to indicate the renunciation that the one receiving the tonsure must make regarding all the vanities and superfluities of the world. The tonsure is a simple ceremony established by the Church by which a man is separated from the world and consecrated to God and to the service of his Church.

Those who have been tonsured are called clerics because they have chosen God for their lot; the word *cleric* means *portion,* or *inheritance.* They are also called ecclesiastics because they have consecrated themselves to the Church's service.

The holy Council of Trent has decreed that no one should be admitted to the tonsure without these four conditions: 1) he must have received the sacrament of Confirmation; 2) he must have been instructed in the first principles of the faith; 3) he must know how to read and write; 4) there must be a well-founded hope that he has chosen this way of life only to serve God faithfully. In addition, he must be born of a legitimate marriage and be free from all censures and irregularities.

Furthermore, it is fitting that those who present themselves to receive the tonsure should be in the grace of God, and they should show clear signs of a vocation to the ecclesiastical state. The following are some such signs. A person should not enter this state merely to live in it with ease, leisure, or some other temporal advantage—for example, to inherit a benefice from relatives or friends, or because he suffers from some bodily or mental infirmity. Rather, as the Council of Trent suggests, it should be to serve God for all his life and to make himself useful to the Church. He should have taken the advice of some pious, wise, and disinterested priest distinguished by his ecclesiastical spirit. He should show signs of piety, chastity, intelligence, and the zeal needed to serve the Church well and to perform the duties of this vocation commendably. Finally, he should enter this state only after proper preparation.

Some signs that a person is not called to the ecclesiastical state are a lack of chastity, a desire to possess some benefice, an evident lack of concern about how he should live in so holy a state, an attraction to a totally secular way of life, frequentation of worldly people, addiction to gambling, and a love for seeking his leisure.

Those who enter this state and receive the tonsure merely to be more honored or to have more income, thanks to a benefice, commit a serious sin. So do the parents who urge their children to enter the ecclesiastical state—even though they show no marks of a vocation—to relieve themselves of the financial burden of providing for them or to keep some benefice in the family. Such parents are often the cause of their children's damnation and will have to answer to God for the scandal these children may later give to the Church.

To avoid all such regrettable consequences, parents must take great care before one of their children receives the tonsure to examine whether he seems to have an aptitude for the ecclesiastical state and shows enough piety and seriousness to enter so holy a vocation.

They must also pray much and do good works to obtain from God the grace of discerning their son's calling. On this point they should consult their confessor and other pious and learned ecclesiastics. They should also make known to the boy in advance the obligations he will incur and find out whether he is prepared to fulfill them and whether he has in mind nothing but the good of the Church and the salvation of his soul. After the boy has been tonsured, they must see to it that he wears the clerical garb and the tonsure and urge him to conform his life to what the sanctity of his state requires.

Chapter 10

Matrimony

Section 1—The nature, excellence, and institution of Matrimony; God's purpose in establishing Matrimony

Having instituted a law of grace, Jesus Christ willed that everything should be permeated with grace. Hence, knowing that marriage is one of the most corrupted institutions because the majority enter it with intentions far removed from those God had when he instituted it, he resolved to require Christians to enter it only with the holiest and purest motives. He therefore raised this association and union of man and woman to the dignity of a sacrament. He did this also to give the couple the means of fulfilling the duties of their state with grace, of bearing its trials more easily, and of keeping inviolable fidelity to each other.

Matrimony is a sacrament by which a man and a woman join together to bring children into the world legitimately and to educate them in the fear of God. This is what the holy Council of Trent teaches.

Saint Paul says that this is a great sacrament in Christ and in the Church. In fact, it represents the indissoluble union between Jesus Christ and the Church and the espousal of human nature by the Incarnate Word, who effects this union only to give God his Father other children worthy of him and who live by his Spirit. Thus it is the intention of Jesus Christ and of God in instituting marriage that the husband and wife should be united by the Spirit of God with the sole view of giving new members to Jesus Christ and new children to his Church.

According to the rules laid down by the Council of Trent, a marriage cannot be contracted unless one of the parish priests of the two

parties is present, along with two more witnesses. Once thus contracted and later consummated, the marriage can never be dissolved; husband and wife can no longer be separated from one another. In other words, the husband can never marry another wife nor the wife another husband, except after the death of the other spouse.

However, if a marriage has not yet been consummated, either party can enter religious life without the consent of the other; this, however, cannot take place once the marriage has been consummated.

God is the author of marriage. He instituted it after creating the man, when he drew from his body the woman Eve and gave her to him for his wife, saying to them, "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh."[29] After quoting these words, Jesus Christ made clear that God's intention in the establishment of marriage is that this union of husband and wife should be inviolable, by adding, "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."[30] This led Saint Augustine to say that marriage is entirely divine. Even the pagans, affirms this saint, knew by the light of natural reason that there is something sacred and divine in marriage; consequently, all people condemn adultery and the other vices opposed to purity while highly valuing chastity and moderation in the pursuit of sexual pleasure.

The words in Genesis, "Man clings to his wife," show us that God did not intend merely to unite husband and wife bodily in their marriage but that he wished them to contract an intimate union of hearts, of which their physical union is merely a figure and an external sign. However, marriage without the union of bodies would not cease to be a true marriage, as it was in the case of Saint Joseph and the Most Blessed Virgin.

God's special intention in instituting marriage was that a man and a woman might find comfort in each other amid the sufferings and trials of this life. "Let us make for him," said God, "a helpmate who resembles him"[31] so that they may give children to the world and bring them up in the fear of God. We learn this from these words that God said to Adam and Eve, "Increase and multiply."[32] It was also his intention that they should find in marriage a preservative from weakness. This is what Saint Paul teaches when he says, "To avoid all impurity, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."[33] This was also the intention of Jesus Christ when he raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. He also expected that thanks

29. Gen. 2:24.
30. Matt. 19:6.
31. Gen. 2:18
32. Gen. 1:28.
33. 1 Cor. 7:2.

to the grace attached to the sacrament, husband and wife would have the means of bearing the trials found in marriage with much greater ease and would never forsake each other.

There is this difference between the marriages of infidels, Jews, and Christians. Pagans consider marriage as a simple contract by which a man and a woman come together by mutual consent to have children and raise them. Hence, for them it is a purely civil affair established to forestall disorder and confusion in society. Jews recognize a certain sacred element in marriage because God is its author and blesses it, and most especially, because it was to have contributed to the coming of the Messiah, who would deliver the human race from sin. But Christians honor marriage as a sacrament, and when they enter it, they should pay attention solely to God, who governs it, and to the grace he bestows on them through it. Hence, they should take care to marry only in view of doing the will of God, giving children to the Church, and begetting them in Jesus Christ, for marriage, instituted at the beginning of the world to populate the earth, is now established to populate heaven.

Section 2—The ends of Matrimony and the graces received in this sacrament

Three ends are natural and common to all marriages as God intended. First, marriage unites husband and wife intimately; second, it brings them together to help each other in all their needs; third, it enables them to have children legitimately.

Three other ends of marriage flow from its institution by Jesus Christ. He intended married persons to sanctify themselves in marriage and to contribute to each other's sanctification. This leads Saint Augustine to observe that in marriages between the faithful, the holiness of the sacrament is of greater worth and power than fecundity. God willed that marriage should be a sacrament so that it might be permanent, which is why he declared, "whoever leaves his wife and marries another commits adultery."[34] For this reason Saint Augustine says that in the Church we recommend not only the bond of marriage but also the sacrament, so that a husband is not permitted to give his wife to another. Jesus Christ's purpose is also that the married couple should by means of this sacrament receive special grace to love each other and to accomplish in the view of God all the duties that marriage imposes.

Bearing children is not necessary to make a true and holy marriage. Saint Augustine demonstrates this quite effectively by citing the

34. Matt. 19:9.

example of the union between Saint Joseph and the Most Blessed Virgin. He concludes that it is an authentic testimonial to conjugal love that a marriage in which continence is preserved by mutual consent can be strong and be called a true marriage—not because of the physical union of the sexes but by reason of mutual affection and the union of minds and hearts.

In marriage the couple receive an increase of sanctifying grace and a special sacramental grace. The first is an effect common to marriage and to four other sacraments. The second is unique to each sacrament in particular and consists in special actual graces given in greater abundance than usual and bestowed only in view of the sacrament that is being received. These graces are the ones needed to fulfill the obligations assumed in receiving the sacrament.

God gives the sacramental grace of Matrimony to the married partners so that they may live chastely and holy in this state, preserving a deep union with each other, courageously bearing the trials found in marriage, and fulfilling the duties it imposes. This grace refers to the three obligations incumbent on married persons, namely, to remain together always without separating, to preserve fidelity to each other, and to bring up their children in a Christian manner.

With regard to the first duty of married people, which is to stay together always without ever separating from each other, the grace of the sacrament gives them the strength to love each other as Jesus Christ loved the Church, to assist each other, to put up with each other's defects, not to grow weary of living together, and to fulfill their conjugal duty.

With regard to fidelity, the second duty of married people, the sacramental grace gives them special help to do only what is permitted in marriage, not to entertain conjugal affection for any person other than their spouse, and to resist all the occasions that can be met with in society that might lead them to fail in regard to this duty.

As for the third duty of married couples, which is to bring up their children in the fear of God, the sacramental grace of marriage helps them to procure a Christian education for their children, to give them proper example, and not to complain because they have too few or too many children, making them realize that it is God who sends them.

It is very rare for Christians to receive the full sacramental grace of Matrimony, for most of them enter this state only out of human considerations or out of avarice to consolidate their family fortunes and to enjoy more freely the pleasures of sex, thus acting with intentions contrary to those of Jesus Christ. The angel Raphael, in chapter 6 of the Book of Tobit, teaches us that the devil wields his power

over such persons. Experience shows the sad results of the marriages that people enter only to satisfy their passions or their avarice.

God give the graces special to Matrimony only to those who receive the sacrament with the proper intentions and in the state of grace. Although it is not impossible to obtain these graces later on, when through personal fault the spouses have not been given them, it is at least very difficult to do so.

Section 3—Conditions required for the sacrament of Matrimony

Most moral disorders found in married couples arise from the fact that so few get married under the conditions they should fulfill to receive the sacrament and the sacramental graces proper to it. To use Saint Paul's language, very few "marry in the Lord,"[35] that is, in view of God and in a truly Christian spirit. This is why it is so important to make known to Christians what intentions they should bring to the reception of this sacrament.

The first of these conditions is to be called by God to this state in life, for God grants the special and particular graces of this sacrament only to those who are called to the married state. But this is not sufficient; it is also necessary that the person whom we wish to espouse should be the one whom God has destined for us, for as Solomon says, "A prudent wife is from the Lord."[36]

The means we should use to find out whether we are called by God to marriage are to pray much so as to know his holy will before engaging in marriage, to consult wise, prudent, and disinterested persons, and to examine whether the person we seek to marry has been brought up in the fear of God and whether there are grounds for hoping that he or she will help us to work out our salvation and to carry out the duties that marriage imposes.

It is also necessary to consider whether we feel inclined to enter this state, to live uprightly therein, and to fulfill all the duties imposed by it. A person whose inclinations are quite contrary to all this is obviously not called to the conjugal state. We should consider whether we are capable of ruling and guiding a family in a Christian manner and of keeping those under our authority faithful to their duties. God never calls anyone to a task that the person is incapable of fulfilling. We should also consider whether we might not find it easier to work out our salvation in the state in which we presently are or even in some other one.

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35. 1 Cor. 7:39.
36. Prov. 19:14.

Another important motivation is to have great purity of intention in getting married, not doing so for the sake of mere pleasure. As Saint Augustine says, it would be an abuse of the sanctity of this sacrament if we sought to camouflage carnality under the specious cloak of marriage. The seven husbands of Sarah, as we read in chapter 6 of the Book of Tobit, were killed on the first night of their wedding simply because they had entered marriage solely for the sake of pleasure. The demons hold sway over those who marry for this reason.

Nor should we marry for mere financial considerations. Usually with those who marry with such motives, says Saint John Chrysostom, the party who brings less money becomes the slave of the one who has more. It is also fitting that those who wish to get married should as far as possible be of equal social condition and also be virtuous.

Another condition required by the Church is that those who wish to get married should be instructed about the principal mysteries of our religion and should know the *Pater Noster,* the *Ave Maria,* the Creed, the commandments of God and of the Church, the seven sacraments, especially what concerns Baptism and the words used in conferring it, the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist, and what concerns the sacrament of Matrimony and the duties it imposes.

But the most important condition we must fulfill before receiving the sacrament of Matrimony worthily is to place ourselves in the state of grace by making a good Confession and Communion some days previously. A person would commit a sacrilege when contracting marriage without being in the state of grace. We would thus put ourselves in a position where we would not receive the special sacramental graces of Matrimony, without which it is morally impossible to be saved in this state.

Finally, one condition is absolutely necessary to contract marriage, namely, to be exempt from any impediment. Some impediments make marriage null; others do not make it null but illicit; we would commit a grave sin by marrying under these circumstances.

The first impediment to marriage is error concerning who the person is, for instance, if a person married another, thinking it was someone else, as happened to Jacob when Leah was substituted for Rachel, whom he wished to marry.[37]

A second impediment is a solemn vow of chastity, which can be either that of profession in a monastery of male or female religious or the reception of the subdiaconate.

A third impediment for marriage is a blood relationship within the fourth degree of the collateral line, for example, brothers and sisters, cousins, and so on. Those who are related in the direct line, for

37. Gen. 29:23.

example, father and daughter, or grandfather and granddaughter, can never marry no matter how distant the relationship is.

Affinity is contracted by a husband with the blood relatives of his wife and by the wife with those of her husband. Thus, if one of a couple dies, the remaining spouse cannot marry a relative of the deceased up to the fourth degree inclusively. A man contracts affinity up to the second degree inclusively with the relatives of a person with whom he had an illicit relationship outside of marriage. We can also contract what is known as spiritual affinity by Baptism and Confirmation, which arises between the person who baptizes and the one baptized, the father and the mother of the latter, as well as between the godparents and the natural parents of the person who is baptized or confirmed.

The fourth impediment is impotence, which occurs when either party is incapable of consummating the marriage.

The fifth impediment is the bond of a previous marriage with a person still living; those who have once married cannot remarry while their consort is still living.

The sixth impediment is disparity of religion, for a Christian cannot marry an infidel; however, a Catholic can marry a heretic.

The seventh impediment to marriage is the crime of homicide or of adultery, when a husband, for instance, wishing to marry another woman, causes the death of his own wife, or when he commits adultery with another woman and promises to marry her after the death of his wife. He is never allowed to marry this other person. The same is true of a woman who makes use of the same means to marry another man.

The eighth impediment to marriage is force and violence, which occurs when a person consents to marriage as a result of force and constraint or under the threat of injury.

The ninth impediment to marriage is that of public propriety. which means that when a person has been engaged to or has married someone who dies before the marriage is consummated, this person cannot marry the brother or the sister of the deceased. If the death occurred after consummation, the surviving party cannot marry any relative of the deceased up to the fourth degree of kindred.

The tenth impediment to marriage is kidnapping, which exists when a man carries off a girl to marry her. No matter what sort of consent the girl may give to a marriage, she cannot validly contract marriage with that man until she has been returned safe and sound to her parents.

The eleventh and final impediment forbids marriage to be contracted except in the presence of the parish priest and two witnesses.

The most ordinary impediments that make the marriage illicit, although not invalid—and, as a result, a serious sin—are to marry during the times forbidden by the Church or to marry when a person has made a vow of chastity or of religion or is engaged to someone else. Matrimony is not allowed from the first Sunday in Advent until after the feast of the Epiphany, and from Ash Wednesday until after the octave of Easter. The Church has judged it fitting to forbid marriage in these periods because the days of Advent and Lent are destined for penance and should be spent in prayer. The faithful would easily be turned aside from both these duties by the solemnizing of marriages, for as a rule at such times people give themselves over to vain rejoicing and all sorts of excesses, especially of a gastronomical kind.

Certain Councils also forbade the solemnizing of marriages on Sunday so that Christians might not be prevented from going to their parish Mass and to the various religious offices and so that they might not profane these sacred days by conduct that is at variance with the service they should be giving God.

Section 4—Engagement and other immediate preparations and conditions for the sacrament of Matrimony

The Church has also established and prescribed another requirement preliminary to Matrimony: a ceremony called *engagement*, which consists in the solemn promise that two persons of opposite sexes make in the Church to take each other as husband and wife.

It is a sin not to fulfill this promise unless there is some valid reason that authorizes the couple to do so. It is up to the Church to rule whether such a reason exists and to dispense the engaged couple from their promise. Thus, an engagement cannot be rescinded except by the authority of the Church, which can occur when the two parties willingly give back the plighted troth that they had exchanged or when one party contracts marriage with someone else, either by word or by presence, or if one party has made a vow of chastity.

The Church does not allow engaged couples to live together in the same house. The parish priest who witnessed the engagement promises must insist on this. The Church does this to avoid the scandalous liberties that the two persons might engage in and that might give rise to very regrettable consequences. The parents of the couple should see to it that they do not have too intimate a contact with each other and do not see each other except in the presence of witnesses. The engaged couple should pay great attention to this.

It is very wise not to celebrate the engagement too long before the marriage is scheduled and advisable not to let persons who are

not in a position to marry fairly soon bind themselves by the engagement promises. Either they might not keep these promises, or the engagement might lead them to commit some very serious sins.

Engagement ceremonies should take place in the parish church, never elsewhere. The Church forbids them to occur at home because this is a sacred ceremony and a preparation for the sacrament of Matrimony. In this ceremony the priest asks the two persons who present themselves whether they have made a vow of chastity or of religion, or a promise of marital fidelity to some other party, whether they have the consent of their parents to contract the alliance they have in mind, and whether they have been constrained to do this by force, by threats, or through fear of some person's authority. Next, the priest makes them promise that they will take each other as spouse within forty days if the holy Church permits them to do so.

As a rule, the banns are published after the engagement ceremony and before the marriage; the future marriage is announced in the parish to which each party belongs. The purpose of banns is to discover any impediment that might be an obstacle to the marriage, to stimulate the interest of all the parishioners as members of a single body, and to encourage them to pray fervently that God will bless the forthcoming marriage.

To prepare for their marriage, the engaged couple should pray much and have others pray to obtain from God the graces they need to sanctify themselves in the state they wish to enter. It is most appropriate that the couple intending marriage should apply themselves assiduously to prayer on their wedding day and cultivate special sentiments of devotion to draw down on them and their future family God's temporal and eternal blessings. Above all, they should avoid vanity and superfluity in dress, being persuaded that because they have put on Christ in Baptism, they must not remove his Spirit in their marriage, in which they hope to receive a greater abundance of it.

They should proceed to the church with much piety and modesty and remain there in silence and deep recollection, pondering the sacred action they are about to perform. Once they are before the priest, they should listen to his instructions with great docility and earnestness, receive his blessing in a sentiment of humility, and exchange their consent in his presence, declaring that they take each other for husband or for wife.

Section 5—Ceremonies of Matrimony

A proper understanding and grasp of the ceremonies that accompany the administration of the sacrament significantly helps us receive the

sacrament well. With regard to Matrimony, because this comprehension of the liturgical celebration is quite important and can help the persons receive the sacrament with holy intentions, we think it useful to explain these rites to the faithful at this point, for we are persuaded that this explanation will lead them to respect the sacrament more profoundly and to regard it in a thoroughly Christian spirit.

The priest who officiates at the marriage first blesses the ring and gives it to the man to indicate to him that he must love no other woman than the one he is taking for his wife. For this reason in times past, seals were engraved with the names of the two people who were getting married.

After the man and the woman have given themselves to each other by mutual consent, the husband places the ring on his wife's finger to give her to understand that she should not love any other man but him, for the ring is the symbol of the inviolable love and fidelity that husband and wife owe each other. Only one ring is used, which symbolizes the union that should exist between the two hearts in marriage.

The custom of giving a ring to married persons as a sign of the love they should bear to one another is an ancient one. It is mentioned in the Old Testament, where we read in Genesis that Tamar asked Jacob for his ring as a pledge.[38]

The husband then presents his wife with one or several coins to show that he undertakes to provide for her and that they are entering into a community of goods. The priest blesses these coins to ask God to give his blessing to the couple's labors and to provide them with the temporal goods they need. To symbolize this, the priest says, as he gives the money to the couple, "You will live by the work of your hands; God will bless it, and you will be happy."

When the prospective husband and wife present themselves before the priest, he asks them whether they wish to take each other as husband and wife. The Church requires that they answer affirmatively by saying, "Yes," because a valid marriage must be voluntary and free of all constraint. The consent given must be so positive that there can be no doubt about its character.

The husband and wife take each other by the hand to show, as though they were swearing an oath, that they pledge union and love for each other. They do so with the right hand because all nations have always recognized two right hands joined together as the symbol of fidelity. The husband places his hand on that of his spouse to

38. Judah gives Tamar a ring, in Gen. 38:18; De La Salle seems to have in mind Rebekah's receiving a ring from Abraham's servant, who is searching for a wife for Isaac, in Gen. 24:22.

indicate that he is the head of the woman, that she should be subject to him, and that he should be the first to maintain fidelity. This ceremony is as old as the world. Holy Scripture shows that when Raguel married his young daughter to the youthful Tobias, he took his daughter's right hand and presented it to Tobias.[39] As the husband and wife join hands, they pronounce the solemn marriage promise. Each accepts the gift of the other's body in the presence of the parish priest and the witnesses.

These promises refer to the present and bind the couple to five things: to preserve fidelity to each other, to love each other mutually, to observe conjugal chastity, to bring up their children in the fear of God if it should please him to give them any, and to help one another in the trials of life. In ages past these promises were signified by a ceremony in which the husband placed his cloak over his wife, as we see described in the Book of Ruth.[40]

The final ceremony of marriage is the solemn blessing that the priest gives in the name of the Church, saying, "I join you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." This blessing is an echo of God's blessing Adam and Eve when he said, "Increase and multiply."[41] It has been in use ever since and is mentioned in the Book of Tobit, where Raguel blessed his son-in-law Tobias and his daughter Sarah when he gave her in marriage.[42]

After the celebration of the wedding, holy Mass is offered, which the couple should attend with great devotion. This has always been the custom of the Church, as Tertullian asserts and as appears from a decree attributed to Pope Saint Evaristus. According to the holy Fathers, in times past the couple received Communion at this Mass because the Holy Eucharist is the perfection and consummation of all the sacraments and graces and because the blood of Jesus Christ poured out and offered in the Mass can make the promises exchanged during the marriage rite holy and inviolable.

During this time the man and the woman hold white lighted candles in their hands to indicate their preservation of chastity since Baptism and their duty to keep themselves ready with burning lamps in their hands, as the Gospel says, to appear before Jesus Christ, the true spouse of souls.

The man and the woman come forward with the gifts at the Offertory to show that marriage is something pleasing to God and honored by the Church, who gives her peace to those who have

39. Tob. 7:12.
40. Ruth 3:9.
41. Gen. 1:28.
42. Tob. 10:11.

contracted marriage and receives the offerings they bring. The gifts also make them understand that they should offer themselves to God as holy and agreeable victims, who wish to sacrifice themselves to God during their marriage by mortifying their concupiscence and all their unregulated desires. Pope Nicholas mentions this ceremony as an ancient one practiced in the Church from time immemorial.

After the priest's Communion, a veil is placed over the couple kneeling at the foot of the altar. According to Tertullian, this ceremony signifies the woman's subjection to her husband; according to Saint Ambrose, it recalls that the most beautiful ornaments of a woman are her modesty and reserve, which ought to be inseparable from marriage. Saint Ambrose also declares that this ceremony is derived from the law of nature because it is mentioned in Genesis that Rebekah, on seeing Isaac, to whom she was betrothed, veiled her face[43] to show, as the saint says, that modesty should always come before marriage. This practice was also observed by the pagans, among whom, as Tertullian relates, women were brought veiled to their husbands.

This veil is used strictly for women, and also for virgins. It is not used for widows, for the significance of this veil no longer applies to them. However, it is sometimes also used to cover the husband to show, as Saint Isidore says, that he should deeply value the modesty of his wife, treat her body with honor and respect, as the Apostle commands, and share in the labors and trials of marriage.

While this is happening, the priest turns to the couple and asks God, as the author and sanctifier of marriage, to be pleased to give them a true and sincere affection for each other. Next, he prays in particular for the woman that the yoke she is taking on herself in marriage may be one of love and peace; that she may enter marriage with views and intentions conformable to those of Jesus Christ; that she may be as loving a spouse to her husband as Rachel was, as wise as Rebekah, and as faithful as Sarah; that she may constantly observe God's commandments; that she may be a model by her gravity and modesty and may become wise in the things of God; that she may be happy in her posterity; that she may be inviolably chaste and innocent and by these means make herself worthy of the company of the saints in heaven.

The sign of peace is then given to the couple to make them understand that they must preserve it inviolably throughout life and that unless they live together in peaceful union, marriage will be for them an unbearable burden and a beginning of hell.

The newlyweds should spend the rest of the day in great modesty, avoiding all excess in eating and drinking, all licentious dancing,

43. Gen. 24:65.

and all sorts of dissolute behavior. It is proper to celebrate in moderation but in a Christian manner, for such feasts represent the spiritual joy of those who are guests at the wedding of the Lamb. They have been customary from time immemorial. We see in the Scriptures that there was a banquet when Jacob married Rachel and when young Tobias wedded Raguel's daughter Sarah. The holy Fathers, however, have strongly criticized such feasts; not that they wished to condemn them, but because they said it is difficult to avoid the excesses that accompany them and the liberties that are taken there.

Treatise 2[1]

Prayer, the Second Means to Obtain the Grace We Need to Fulfill Our Duties to God Properly

Chapter 1

Prayer

Section 1—What prayer is

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the sacraments as the ordinary means for imparting habitual grace to us, but we still needed another means to help us preserve this grace and to obtain the necessary actual graces. Receiving the sacraments provides us with many of these graces and enables us to preserve and augment habitual grace when we possess it; nevertheless, we do not receive the sacraments every day, although we need grace constantly to help us perform our actions properly, to resist the temptations that assail us, and to keep us on the right path. Therefore it was important for God to give us a means other than the sacraments to make it possible for us to enjoy

1. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 1, part 2, treatise 2; *Œuvres Complètes,* 970–1000; Cahiers lasalliens 20, 405–494.

all the advantages that we can easily secure by means of prayer. For this purpose God established prayer as a special help, constantly at our disposal, which we can make use of at every moment to obtain from God everything needed in this world to insure our salvation and to acquire eternal life.

Prayer is the application of our mind and the elevation of our heart to God to give him due reverence and to ask for everything we need for our salvation. We say that prayer is an application of our mind because no matter what words we repeat and what gestures we perform, God does not consider them as prayers addressed to him unless we apply our mind to the subject of these prayers.

We also say that prayer is a raising of our heart to God because in prayer we lift ourselves above sensible things and are concerned only with God and with what brings us closer to God, for when we pray, we address God more with the heart than with the lips. Prayer disposes us to reach out to God, to elevate ourselves to him, and to unite ourselves intimately with him by conforming our affections with his so that we want and desire nothing but God or what refers to God.

We fulfill our duties to God when we adore him, thank him, and offer ourselves to him with all we have.

To adore God means to recognize his infinite greatness, his sovereignty over all creatures, and his independence from anyone and anything whatsoever. While considering these aspects, we humble ourselves deeply and express sentiments of profound respect regarding his divine majesty.

To thank God means to express our gratitude to him for all the natural benefits we do and can enjoy only because of him: he created us; he preserves us day by day, and he gives us all we need for our body and the preservation of our life. All these gifts are the effects of God's infinite goodness to us, and we certainly ought to show gratitude for them.

Giving thanks also means expressing to God how much we are indebted for all the graces he gives us in general, such as redeeming us, delivering us from our sins, letting us be born in a Christian and Catholic country, giving us our faith, and preserving it. We should also thank God for the special graces we have received since birth, such as the opportunity to receive the sacraments, the deliverance from a great number of temptations, the frequent gifts of inspiration to do good, and the help to put these inspirations into practice. We should also thank God for special favors, such as pardoning an enemy, overcoming a temptation to pride or impurity, and so on.

Offering ourselves and all we have to God means to present ourselves to him and to dedicate to him all our thoughts, words, actions,

and goods, whether spiritual or temporal—in a word, everything we possess in this world. We assure God that because we are wholly dependent on him, we also wish to consecrate ourselves to him and his service and to abandon ourselves entirely to what he may choose for us, not wishing to follow our own will. We beg him not to permit us to entertain a single thought, utter a single word, or accomplish the slightest action that is not in conformity with his holy will and with what he asks of us. We should also remind God of all the graces we have received from him and tell him that far from abusing any of them, we wish to act in such a way that none of them may prove useless but that all may attain their full effect. Finally, we should offer and consecrate to God in particular all the natural advantages and temporal goods we may possess, declaring that just as we have received them all from God, we wish to make use of them only for his sake.

This offering of ourselves, all we possess, and everything we have received from God forms part of our prayer of adoration in which we recognize and profess our dependence on God. For if we offer all these things to God, it is because we count on him to provide or to preserve them for us and because he has given them to us only so that we may render him honor and glory because of them.

We ask God for the things we need to achieve our salvation when we beg him both to give us the graces necessary for us to do good and avoid evil and to grant us pardon for our sins.

Asking God for the graces needed to do good means asking him to give us the opportunity and the facility to perform some good action that we find difficult, such as pardoning a person who has wronged us or who is ill-disposed to us, doing all the good we can for that person, or, more particularly, greeting that person, saluting when we meet, and speaking with much charity even if we feel great repugnance in doing this, or accomplishing some other good action that we may have an opportunity of doing either now or soon.

To ask God for the graces we need to avoid evil means praying to him to grant us all the help required to avoid committing any sin or to keep from falling into some particular fault when an occasion for doing so is present to us or could turn up in the future. It means asking God, for instance, to help us not to succumb to a temptation of pride or impurity, not to give in to anger or impatience when we feel inclined to yield to these passions, or not to swear or lie on the occasions we foresee as times when we might allow ourselves to fall into one of these defects.

Although prayer in general includes all these elements, what we specifically and properly call prayer is what we address to God to ask some grace of him; the word prayer means a request we present to

God with humility and insistence. This is the kind of prayer we will discuss in this treatise.

Section 2—The necessity of prayer

Because we are created solely for God, we undoubtedly have an obligation to pay God the homage due to him. Because we constantly need God's help, we must also frequently address him in prayer to obtain graces for ourselves and to beg the infinite bounty to grant them to us.

Because God has given us all we have, we should often do him homage for all these benefits. As God's creatures, we are also bound to pay him respect and adoration by humbling and prostrating ourselves interiorly and exteriorly before our Creator, keeping in mind our own lowliness and nothingness and the grandeur and infinite excellence of God's majesty, which shines forth in all his creatures and before which they are all less than mere atoms.

The great number of graces that we have received from God and continue to receive from him every day also obliges us to have recourse to God and to thank him for them, for ingratitude is one of the things God finds most displeasing. God wants those who serve him to recognize that all they possess comes from him, and he does not ordinarily grant them any increase of grace unless they show themselves grateful for what they have already received from him.

Our privilege of being children of God, members of Jesus Christ, and living temples of the Holy Spirit should persuade us to offer our soul to God every day so that he may fill it with the fullness of his Spirit. We should also offer our body as an object that should be entirely consecrated to him and therefore no longer be used for anything profane, much less for anything as shameful as sin. This offering is so vital for us that unless we are faithful in making it, we will not draw down God's blessings on us.

Without doubt we need light to know and to see the path that will lead us to heaven and the virtues we must practice to get there. Without such light we would grope about like blind people and would most likely lose our way. This is what Saint John Chrysostom declares will happen to us without fail if we do not apply ourselves faithfully to prayer, which he says is the light that illumines our soul like the sun enlightens our body. He goes even further, stating that it is impossible for us to live a Christian life unless we spend much time in prayer, which he asserts is the life of our soul. Whoever does not pray to God assiduously is dead, miserable, and inanimate, even as a body separated from the soul is thereby bereft of life. He proves this

by citing the example of Daniel, who preferred to die rather than omit his accustomed prayers for three days.[2] If God does not come to our help in need, the soul will prove incapable of accomplishing anything good; God will not come to our assistance and bring us relief except insofar as we love prayer.

As the same saint assures us, God made this a commandment when he enjoined on us, by the lips of Jesus Christ, to pray often. We should be more concerned about the worship of God than about our own life because, as the saint says, without prayer we cannot obtain for ourselves the benefit of living in a Christian manner, grow in piety, or fill our heart with it as with a precious treasure. Indeed, one person may have a strong attraction for purity; another may want to keep chastity easily; a third may wish to control anger and practice the virtue of meekness; a fourth would like to be free of avarice, and another may wish to live a life of piety. All of them will find all this possible by means of prayer.

It cannot happen that those who ask God for purity, justice, meekness, liberality, and the other virtues will not obtain them readily, for our Lord assures us that if we ask anything of God, he will give it to us because "the one who asks receives."[3] If even those who are wicked give good things to their children, how much more willingly will our heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him? Saint John Chrysostom makes this point and concludes by saying that it is easy to understand how impossible it is to live in the practice of virtue without having recourse to prayer.

Saint Augustine says that there are virtues we cannot obtain except by prayer: for instance, chastity, wisdom, and perseverance in good; his proof is by examples from Holy Scripture. The Wise Man tells us that we cannot be chaste unless God gives us this grace,[4] and Saint James declares that if we want wisdom, we should ask for it with faith and confidence, and God will bestow it on us.[5] Saint Augustine does not imply that we can obtain some virtues without prayer; what he means is that prayer is necessary in a special way for the above-mentioned virtues because to possess them we must more frequently and continually implore God to give them to us.

If we need prayer so urgently to do good, prayer is no less necessary to deliver us from sin. Saint John Chrysostom admirably expresses this thought by saying that no matter how many sins we may have committed, if we love prayer, we will soon be freed and entire-

2. Dan. 6:10, referring to Daniel's custom of praying three times a day.
3. Matt. 21:22.
4. Prov. 20:9.
5. James 1:5.

ly purified of them. Prayer, he claims, is a divine medicine for the soul that is sick and infected by sin, and once prayer reaches down into the inner recesses of the heart, it drives out all the malice found there and fills it with justice. Jesus Christ assures us in the holy Gospel that the demon, that is, the sin of impurity, which is the most difficult to eradicate from a person's heart once it has taken possession of it, cannot be driven out except by prayer and fasting.

From all this it is easy to conclude that just as light is necessary in this world, just as we need life in our body to preserve it, and just as a sick person needs medicine to get well, so too prayer is necessary for the soul that wishes to serve God and not allow itself to be corrupted by sin.

Section 3—The advantages of prayer

Even if prayer were not necessary for us to be saved, its utility and the advantages it offers should still induce us to apply ourselves to it. Because these advantages cannot be better expressed than in the words of Saint John Chrysostom in two works he composed to make known the excellence, necessity, and utility of prayer, we will merely summarize here what the saint says on this topic.

The first and most notable advantage to which he calls our attention is that the person who prays has the honor of conversing with God. This privilege is so stupendous, says the saint, and so far beyond what we might conceive that it makes us join the ranks of the angels, for prayer is their special occupation. Indeed, would it not seem that God has created the angels only so that they might devote themselves to prayer? Humbling themselves before God, they honor him and do him homage; they pray to him for those who are entrusted to their care, and they present our prayers to God. Thus when we pray, we are doing what the holy angels do, and although there is a great difference between angels and ourselves, prayer is something common to us both.

Saint John Chrysostom goes further by saying that prayer even lifts us far above the dignity of the angels. They appear before the infinite majesty of God to give him their due homage only with sentiments of awe mingled with fear and trembling, but when we pray, we enjoy the privilege of conversing familiarly with God. We should experience great satisfaction of mind and be joyful when we reflect on the honor that God does us, mortals as we are, by conversing with us. This honor is all the more exalted, says the saint, because by this happy communing with God, we cease to be mere mortal, perishable beings; by our perseverance in prayer, we enter life immortal.

By prayer, adds the saint, we become temples of Jesus Christ. Just as marble, gold, and precious stones are used to build and ornament the houses of kings, prayer shapes souls into temples of Jesus Christ and adorns them by giving them so much beauty and splendor that they seem to be quite transformed from what they were before. In this way Saint Paul brought Jesus Christ to dwell in the hearts of the faithful through his prayers. Prayer so changed the city of Nineveh in a short time that anyone who had known it previously and returned after the people had given up their unregulated life and embraced a life of piety would not have recognized it.

The saint further declares that prayer is for our soul what the foundation is for a house and that it establishes and fortifies piety within us. He again assures us that when a soul applies itself regularly to prayer, all the virtues enter it at the same time. Who, he asks, is more just and holy than those who have familiar dealings with God? It is hard to describe their wisdom, prudence, goodness, and sobriety —in short, all their virtues and the purity of their life. Prayer has this wonderful power of filling with justice those in whose hearts it has established its dwelling place. It cannot co-exist with any evil and easily makes pure again the soul that had withered in the toils of sin.

We have, says Saint John Chrysostom, an example of this in the Gospel story of the publican, who obtained from God the forgiveness of his sins as soon as he begged for it, and another instance in the case of the woman taken in adultery. She who had spent her life in sensuality and impurity obtained salvation and the healing of her soul as soon as she prostrated herself at Christ's feet.

Although prayer obtains considerable benefits for a soul by making it practice virtue, by driving out of the heart all the malice contained there, and by purifying it from all its sins, its beneficial action is not limited to these effects. Prayer delivers those who apply themselves to it from all kinds of spiritual and temporal perils.

As for spiritual dangers, namely, temptations, if they arise from within us and from our natural inclination to sin, prayer so strengthens the soul against all evil thoughts that it suppresses them or makes them powerless. If they come from the devil's suggestions, says Saint John Chrysostom, no sooner do these malignant spirits notice that a soul has taken refuge in prayer than they fall back. On the contrary, if they find the soul bereft of the force and stamina resulting from prayer, they tempt it to many sins and soon reduce it to a most wretched state. They so greatly fear the courage and strength drawn from prayer that they dare not approach a soul that applies itself thereto. This thought makes Saint John Chrysostom say that prayer is a formidable fortress confronting the demons.

As for temporal and passing dangers found in this world, it is enough to pray, and they will be turned away from us. Saint John Chrysostom proves this by the example of Moses and David, reminding us that the kings of earth usually put their expectation of victory in the number and skill of their warriors and in their own military prowess, but Moses and David made sure of the defeat of their enemies only through prayer, which became for them a rampart surrounding their troops. This happened when the Israelites assailed the inhabitants of the Promised Land. Moses used no arms other than prayer against their numerous enemies. From this we learn that the prayers of the just are more powerful than weapons to overcome the mightiest and bravest foes. While Moses was praying, the Israelites were victorious, whereas when he stopped praying, his men lost the advantage. Saint Peter was delivered from prison, and its gates were opened for him, thanks only to the prayers offered by the Church. Prayer often helps cure bodily illnesses, such as happened to the leper who was instantly cured as soon as he prostrated himself at Jesus' feet. This caused Saint John Chrysostom to ask that if God so promptly restored a body devoured by a dreadful malady, will he not with greater reason heal our souls infected by the illness and leprosy of sin?

Prayer also often succeeds in appeasing God's anger aroused against us, which is what happened to Moses when God was angered by the Israelites. Moses prayed to God so fervently that he obliged God, as if in spite of himself, to give up the idea of exterminating his people as he had determined to do. Holy Scripture testifies that God said to Moses, "Let me alone; do not prevent me from allowing my anger to flame up against this people."[6]

Prayer also gives us special strength to endure patiently everything that we find most difficult. Prayer made it possible for Saint Paul, after he had spent half the night in prayer, to suffer the most painful torments, such as the blows of whips on his body, as though he were a statue. Prayer also helps us to renounce the pleasures of the world, and it establishes in a soul a total disregard for the things of earth.

Such are the principal effects of prayer, as we learn from Saint John Chrysostom, which teach us clearly enough the benefits we can derive from it and how useful it is for us to apply ourselves to it.

6. Exod. 32:10.

Chapter 2

The Circumstances That Should Accompany Prayer

By the circumstances that should accompany prayer, we mean the conditions it must have to be useful to us and agreeable to God, the places and times for engaging in prayer, and the posture we should assume during prayer. All these points will be treated in the following two sections.

Section 1—The conditions required for prayer

It is not enough to pronounce words or to seem to be praying exteriorly if we wish to pray in fact and to make our prayer agreeable to God and useful for ourselves and our neighbor. Our prayer must fulfill various conditions without which it might often be displeasing to God and would be of little use, perhaps even of no use at all. The principal conditions required for prayer are purity of heart, attention, devotion, fervor, humility, resignation, confidence, and perseverance.

Purity of heart means keeping our heart entirely detached from sin, an extremely important condition for those who wish to apply themselves to prayer. God does not care about our prayers and does not answer them by his blessings if we pray to him with a heart sullied by sin. The Royal Prophet aptly expressed this when he said that the eyes of the Lord are on the just and his ears are open to their prayers, but he pays no attention to the supplications of sinners, who, being his enemies, cannot be heard by him or obtain what they ask of him.[7] Saint John Chrysostom gives us two more reasons for this. The first is that because prayer is an activity that transcends our natural powers, the Spirit of God must be present in us to enliven and guide us in our prayer, and this Holy Spirit is in us only insofar as we distance ourselves from sin and feel a true horror for it. The second reason mentioned by the saint is that the devil does all he can to prevent us from occupying our mind with holy thoughts when we are praying. Once a soul has been sanctified by the Spirit of God, the evil one finds no easy access to it, will only with difficulty disturb it during this sacred time, and can hardly put an end to or hinder the salutary effects of its prayers.

We must also be attentive in our prayer because it displeases God unless we pray with devout concentration, thinking of God or of

7. Ps. 34:15–16.

what we are asking of him. The reason is given to us in Saint Cyprian's treatise on the *Pater Noster,* where he says that it is not proper to expect God to hear us when we do not even listen to our own words in prayer. It is, he adds, criminal negligence to allow ourselves, when we are praying to God, to be overcome by profane thoughts suggesting that there are things other than God about which we could better and more advantageously occupy our mind.

To pray without attention means to allow our mind to wander and to dwell on evil or useless thoughts. We call this being distracted in prayer. When we willingly or through negligence allow our mind to dwell on such thoughts, this sin will at least cause our prayer to produce no good effect. However, when these distractions are not willed, rather than being sinful they are often a source of merit for us before God. We must not only do nothing to give rise to them but also strive to put them aside as far as we are able. For this purpose we should concern ourselves during the day only with what refers to our duties and our salvation.

True, it is difficult to keep our mind so constantly applied to prayer that it is entirely exempt from distractions. Because we are not always the master of our thoughts, we must watch closely over ourselves during our prayer so as to enter often into ourselves and not allow our mind to be filled with all sorts of thoughts and thus prevent those that sometimes enter in spite of our best efforts from leading to any evil effects.

Just as attention gives our prayer its value and merit, devotion sustains it, obtains for those who pray an abundance of graces, and explains why God readily and willingly grants what they ask of him. We pray with devotion when we experience a tender affection for God and for everything that concerns his service or can procure his glory. This affection and desire cause us to present him our respectful homage and worshipful service.

Prayer will hardly be agreeable to God unless devotion has some part in it; however, it is not necessary that this devotion be of a sensible kind or that it be perceived externally. On the contrary, it is often more useful for it to remain completely interior. Provided that our heart is fully penetrated by it, God usually is better satisfied with our prayer if we do not let our devotion show itself by signs or transports of mind or heart that might do nothing but inspire us with pride or some vain satisfaction.

Because the most precious result of our prayer is either knowledge and love of God or some grace that will help us acquire the one or the other, we should beg these two things of God with all the more fervor, for they are God's most precious gifts, the ones most beneficial

to us. God also wishes us to show a vehement desire for possessing them; the more ardent this desire becomes, the more promptly God grants what we ask of him. We see this in God's behavior with Daniel when he had the angel tell him that his prayer had been heard because he was a man of desire.

Although fervor should accompany all our prayers, we should not display an equally urgent desire of obtaining everything we ask of God. Because we can—and should—ardently desire the spiritual goods we lack and everything that has to do with the salvation of our soul, all of us are obliged to ask God fervently for a horror of sin, affection for what is right, victory over temptation, deliverance from the defects to which we are subject, acquisition of solid virtue, and perseverance in piety. We should desire all these things.

It is also important to show extra fervor in our prayer on certain special occasions, such as when we are assailed by some violent temptation that makes us fear we might fall into sin, when we find it difficult to overcome ourselves and to perform some good action, or when we must put up with something for which we feel great repugnance.

As for what concerns temporal benefits, we are not allowed to be overly eager to possess them. Because we never know whether they will be advantageous for our salvation, we cannot desire such things absolutely. Hence, if we display some fervor in asking for them, it should only be because we are paying our due homage to God and are praying to him, not showing how much we desire what we are asking of him.

Humility, no doubt, is one of the main conditions required in prayer. It is essential because it is humility that obtains from God with great readiness what we beg of him. Abraham made use of the humblest terms imaginable when he asked God not to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. "Will I dare speak to my Lord," he said, "when I am but dust and ashes?"[8] Likewise, it was humility that gave Judith confidence that she would by herself win victory over the enemy of the Jewish people, for she remembered that God had always been favorably impressed by the prayers of the humble. This is the meaning of what we read in Ecclesiasticus, "The prayer of the humble pierces the heavens."[9]

Saint John Chrysostom says the reason for this is that humility lifts our prayer to God. "God," says Saint Jerome, "is so good to the humble that because they are little and cannot raise themselves to him, he abases himself and comes down to them to hear their prayers

8. Gen. 18:27.
9. Sir. 3:18.

and answer them." We see the same thing in the case of the publican in the Gospel. Not daring to raise his eyes to heaven and standing out of humility behind the door of the Temple, he deserved to be heard on the spot because of the humility displayed in his prayer.

The humility we are obliged to manifest in our prayer should give us an entire resignation to God's will and make us desire what we ask only insofar as it will please God to grant it to us. What should especially make us take this attitude of resignation is to be convinced, as we should be, that God knows far better than we do what we need and what is good for us and that he is always prepared to give us this; consequently, God grants it to us when we pray to him. Jesus Christ displayed this attitude throughout his life, especially in his prayer in the Garden of Olives before his Passion. After imploring the eternal Father to deliver him from the bitter chalice of suffering that confronted him, he added these words: "Yet, may your will be done, Father, and not mine."[10]

The resignation to God's will that we ought to have when we pray should produce in us a kind of indifference as to whether we obtain from him what we ask for. This indifference, however, must not be indiscriminate with regard to everything we can ask of God. Because God has put us in this world only to save our soul, we are certain that God wishes to give us the means of doing so. Consequently, we must desire, seek, and ask God for them with insistence, persuaded that if we earnestly desire them and plead for them, we will not fail to be resigned and abandoned to God's will. According to Saint Paul, the will of God is to bring about our sanctification;[11] God also wants us to ask for it and for the means to contribute to it, for as a rule God does not give them except in proportion as we beg him for them.

The same rule does not hold true with regard to temporal benefits. Not being true goods, they may jeopardize as well as favor our salvation. Although it is sometimes permitted to ask God for them, we can do this only with complete indifference, persuaded that God will be good enough to grant them to us insofar as we need them for his service, which we should make our first and principal goal, as Jesus Christ tells us in the holy Gospel.

This abandonment to God's will that we should profess when we implore him should not prevent us from praying with all possible confidence, for God is more eager to grant us what we ask of him than we are to pray to him. Does he not tell us in the holy Gospel, "Ask, and you will receive; why have you not asked for anything in my

10. Matt. 26:39.

11. 1 Thess. 4:3.

name?"[12] Does he not urge us to pray without ceasing and assure us that he will grant us all that we ask?

This kind of confidence inspired the prayer of the Canaanite woman and of the centurion in the Gospel. Their trust was so great and unexpected that it elicited the admiration of Jesus Christ and was the reason why he granted their request immediately.

Our confidence in prayer cannot expect to produce such startling effects unless it is based on the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is only through him, as Saint Paul says, that we have access to the eternal Father. He made satisfaction for our sins and reconciled us with God when he made himself the victim for our sins and became sin itself, as Saint Paul again says, to destroy sin in us.

Yet, no matter how great the confidence of those who turn to God in prayer may be, it would be of little use to them if it were not backed up by perseverance. Although it is true that God does not allow those who trust in him to be frustrated in their hopes, he does not often grant what they ask for in prayer unless they continue begging it of him, and it is by perseverance in prayer that he often tests whether we truly trust him. This is why our Lord, after explaining to the Apostles how to pray, taught them by two parables that if they persevered in prayer, even though God would not grant their prayers just because they were his friends united to him by grace, their importunity would, so to speak, enable them to obtain everything they needed.

Let us not, therefore, be surprised if God does not grant us right away what we ask him, for when God delays to hear us, says Saint Augustine, it is not because he means to refuse our request; by so acting, he only wants to teach us to esteem more highly what he gives us. Furthermore, we experience greater satisfaction in obtaining at last the favors we have so long desired. "Do not give up praying," says Saint Ephrem, "even though God delays granting your request. Do not grow discouraged because of that; remember the Canaanite woman, and imitate her perseverance. If Jesus Christ deferred for a time giving her what she begged for so insistently, he did not let her go away without hearing her prayer. This was to teach us by her example to persevere in prayer, even when we do not at once receive the graces we need."

Section 2—The place, time, and posture for praying

There is no place where we cannot pray. Saint Ambrose proves this by the words of our Lord, "When you wish to pray, go into your

12. Matt. 7:7.

room."[13] Saint Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, prescribes that we should worship God everywhere. We also have the example of the saints, who offered prayers everywhere because in all places we can honor God, who is present everywhere. There is no place where we should not recognize him as God and offer him our respect.

But the place where we should pray to God that is preferable to all others is the church, for of all places it is the one most especially consecrated to the worship of God. This is why Jesus Christ calls it the house of God and a house of prayer. We also have reason to believe that our prayers, when offered in church, will be more quickly and readily heard than if we prayed anywhere else. For if God promised Solomon that he would listen to the supplications of those who invoked him in the Temple of Jerusalem, which was only a figure of our churches, with how much more reason will our petitions be heard in our churches, where Jesus Christ resides constantly in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar and where we thus possess in him the fullness of the divinity.

There is no inappropriate time for praying. We can offer prayers at any hour of the day or night. Although David was a king busy with the concerns of his kingdom, he says that he rose at midnight to prostrate himself before God and that by remembering his sins every night when he had retired, he felt so contrite and humble and wept so abundantly that he bedewed his couch, so to speak, with his tears, so deeply sorry did he feel for having offended God so gravely.

Jesus Christ has given us the example of praying during the night; the Gospel relates that he often spent the night in prayer. This is a very appropriate and proper time to pay homage to God because then we are not so easily interrupted or distracted. Because the devil tempts people more ordinarily and more powerfully during the hours of darkness, we also need more grace then; hence, we are more strictly obliged to pray. No doubt for these reasons Saint John Chrysostom says that because the nights are much longer in winter, it is proper for us to spend a greater part of them in prayer, happy to be able to give more time to the worship of God. If few people do this, we at least cannot dispense ourselves from having frequent recourse to God during the day. This saint declares that in this matter we should begin before sunrise, for, says this Father, how could we dare to look at this splendid orb if we had not previously adored the one who gives us its light to enjoy? He adds that we are no less obliged to pray in the evening before going to bed, for we would easily give impure spirits an opportunity to tempt us during the night if we went to sleep without having forearmed ourselves against their assaults.

13. Matt. 6:6.

The same Father also urges us never to omit invoking God before we sit down at table. He implies that it would show extreme ingratitude to take the liberty of eating what is set before us without having previously paid homage to God, who does us so much good and from whom we receive our food.

This saint requires much more than this from all Christians. He orders them not to let a single hour of the day go by without offering God some prayer so that the flow of our acts of piety, as he says, may parallel the passing hours of the day. This is how ordinary Christians can put into practice what our Lord recommended to us in the holy Gospel, namely, to pray without ceasing, and what Saint Paul enjoined on the early Christians in several passages of his Epistles, where he tells them that the will of God is that they should invoke God not only with affection but also with assiduity. Saint Augustine, exhorting his people to pray without ceasing, says that although it is true that we cannot be on our knees, prostrate in prayer, or with our hands lifted in supplication all the time, we can pray unceasingly without much effort. To do so, it is sufficient for us not to spend a single day without praying at set times.

Praying without ceasing, according to the same Father, means having in all our actions a lasting hunger and a constant desire of enjoying God's company. He says further that we can succeed in this by practicing what was common among the hermits of Egypt, who often uttered short but fervent prayers that for this reason are called ejaculations. These helped to bring their attention back to God, for prayer, as he says, is continual when this attention to God remains in all its fervor.

Finally, this saint claims that nothing can prevent those who work with their hands from meditating continually on the law of the Lord and from singing incessantly the praises of God. It is also very useful and appropriate to pray when there is no special action we need to perform. A life thus entirely spent either in good works or in the exercise of prayer should be considered as a continual prayer.

Although we can pray in any bodily position, when we address God in private, Christian piety and the respect owed to God require us to kneel on both knees, without leaning on anything or sitting on our heels, and to show ourselves very recollected and modest. According to Tertullian, it is highly irreverent to God's majesty to pray to him while sitting, unless we are working or doing some obligatory action and wish to occupy our minds with holy thoughts. This is something that Saint Augustine highly recommends, provided that at some other time we fulfill the duty we have as a Christian of praying to God daily on our knees for a certain length of time.

This is how the holy Apostles prayed and how Saint Paul tells us that he also did, imitating the example of Jesus Christ, who knelt and prostrated himself on the ground in the Garden of Olives, wishing to appear before his Father in the name of all as a criminal. The Church has always observed this custom on penitential days, as Saint Ambrose testifies.

It has also been the practice of the Church during the paschal season and on all the Sundays of the year, as we learn from Tertullian, Saint Ambrose, and Saint Augustine, to pray while standing to symbolize the joy that Christians feel over the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which took place on a Sunday.

Saint Paul desires that men should worship uncovered and that women should do so with their head veiled, which is what all Christians usually do when they pray.

It is also a rather common practice to pray with our hands joined. According to Tertullian, the practice of lifting our hands to heaven also goes back a long time in the Church. This is what David says he did when praying. Some people hold their arms out in the form of a cross, after the example of Moses when the Israelites were warring with the Amalekites. This illustrates the advantage and the facility that all Christians enjoy of being able to overcome all the demons through prayer in virtue of the merits that Jesus Christ won for them through his Passion. According to Saint Ambrose and Tertullian, this was done in the early Church by all the faithful on Good Friday.

As for the eyes, some keep them lifted to heaven to show that they are addressing their prayers to God, who resides especially in heaven. Our Lord did this on some occasions when he asked certain graces from his Father. Others keep their eyes cast down like the publican out of humility and to give proof of the contrition they feel over their sins and out of respect for God.

An ancient and very common practice in the Church was to face east when praying, especially in the public assemblies of the faithful. This is why churches are ordinarily built oriented toward the east. Saint Basil affirms that this was done because the earthly paradise lay toward the east and because the Church wishes Christians to show by doing this the desire they feel to return to their true country from which they have been driven, that is, to their state of primitive innocence. Saint Augustine claims that this is done because those who pray should turn to God, who is symbolized by the east. Saint John Damascene concludes that it is because Jesus Christ was crucified facing the west and because the Church wants us to have him always in view as our Mediator when we pray. He says that it is for this purpose that in churches a crucifix is placed facing west and that having Jesus

Christ always facing us when we enter, we may consider him as our model and Redeemer.

Chapter 3

For What and for Whom We Can and Should Pray to God

Our prayers would be of little use unless we applied ourselves to asking God for what pleases him and to praying to God for all those for whom he wants us to pray. We will explain this in the following two sections.

Section 1—What we should ask of God in prayer

We are not allowed to ask God for everything that comes into our head; it would be most inappropriate to follow our own way of thinking in our prayers. Saint Paul says that we do not know what we should ask of God; the Holy Spirit must pray in us and inspire us to ask God only for what can further his glory and our salvation or that of our neighbor.

Tertullian teaches that Jesus Christ came into this world to renew all things and to transform what is earthly into what is spiritual. Hence, he wished to teach his disciples not to ask any longer for the goods of this world but only for the things that can lead them to heaven. For this reason in the formula he taught us called the Lord's Prayer, he illustrated a new manner of praying that is so excellent that Tertullian does not hesitate to say that it sums up the whole Gospel.

The Church has always held this prayer in great veneration. The Fathers of the first centuries were in the habit of often explaining it to the faithful, especially to the catechumens and the newly baptized. From the beginning of the Church, it was also customary to recite it thrice daily. No doubt for this reason Saint Augustine says that fathers and mothers should teach it to their children and all Christians should know it by heart. The Church saw fit to prescribe this in the seventh canon of the Sixth General Council. It would be sinful to remain ignorant of this prayer out of negligence.

Saint Augustine tells us that Jesus Christ gave us this prayer only to teach us what we should and what we can piously and usefully ask of God, which is admirably expressed in the formula purposely left us by Jesus Christ as the model of all the other prayers that we may for-

mulate for ourselves. He also adds that nothing will be found in other prayers that is not implied in this one and that although we are free to make use of other words when addressing God, we are not at liberty to ask God for things other than those contained in this prayer.

In fact, according to the same Father, in the Lord's Prayer we ask for all the temporal and spiritual needs of our present life and for our eternal life, as well as the grace to be delivered from all evils—past, present, and future. Therefore, if we wish to make known to the faithful everything they ought to and can ask of God, we need merely to explain to them, as Tertullian and Saint Augustine did, what is contained in the seven petitions of the *Pater Noster*.

The first thing our Lord has us ask for in this prayer he left us is that God's name be hallowed. As Tertullian remarks, not that God's name is not holy and sanctified in itself—for it sanctifies all else—but that what we ask for in this prayer, says Saint Augustine, is that God's name be so perfectly hallowed and so fully recognized as holy that we may be convinced that nothing can be holier and that this conviction may make us fear to offend him and bring us to aim at nothing but the glory of God in everything we do.

The second thing we ask for in this prayer is that the kingdom of God may come. Saint Augustine declares that by these words we stir up in ourselves the desire for the kingdom of God and eternal life. While on earth, he says, all our wishes should tend to this. According to this same Father, we can also understand by these words the reign of God over the just through his holy grace. As our Lord declared in the Gospel, "The kingdom of God is within you."[14] We ask God that he never cease reigning in these souls and that he sanctify them more and more to make them worthy of possessing his heavenly kingdom.

Tertullian asserts that by the third petition we ask God to give us in this world the means of saving ourselves, for this is the accomplishment and the end of God's will for us. Thus we beseech God to help us obey his commandments with as much fidelity and exactness as shown by the angels in executing his orders or as we will accomplish his will in heaven when we are fortunate enough to get there. As Saint Augustine affirms, we are sure of doing God's will when we observe his commandments. We also ask God, this saint tells us, to enable us to subject our flesh to the spirit because what is most capable of causing chagrin to a soul that seeks God is to see how the flesh continually wars against the spirit as long as we remain in this world.

Saint Augustine argues that the fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," means that we can pray for our bodily as well as our spiritual nourishment. If we are asking for bodily food, says the saint,

14. Luke 17:21.

this request does not reach very far; nevertheless, it is in conformity with what Saint Paul advises when he writes that we should be content as long as we have what we need to live and to be clothed.

Jesus Christ includes all the needs of the body under the word *bread,* for the Scriptures often sum up all our necessities in this word. We are also to understand that we are not allowed, as Saint Augustine warns, to desire and demand temporal blessings except those that are truly necessary.

Both rich and poor people are obliged to ask God for their daily bread, for although they might not lack what is necessary, they need to acknowledge that God is the one who has given them their temporal wealth and who can take it away whenever he pleases. Those who work with their hands to earn the necessities of life must also address this prayer to God, who satisfies their needs by blessing their work. If he did not do so, their labor would remain quite useless.

If by these words we ask God for food for the soul, we mean, asserts Saint Augustine, either the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, which is called our daily bread because we can receive it every day, or God's grace, which we need not only every day but at every moment, or again the gift of meditating on the law and the word of God. We need all these things constantly to restore the vigor of our soul and to lead us to sovereign blessedness.

By the fifth petition, "forgive us our trespasses," it is clear, says Saint Augustine, that we ask God to pardon the sins we have committed. This we implore of God alone because only he can forgive them. We must realize that to make this prayer effective and to obtain this grace from God, all of us are obliged to pardon from the heart the faults committed against us and the insults we might have endured. Those who are not so disposed when reciting this prayer bring down on themselves their own condemnation and the malediction of God. The just need to say this prayer as much as sinners because all of us stand in need of God's mercy, for no one on earth is exempt from slight faults that can readily be pardoned by the efficacy of this prayer.

Saint Augustine explains that by the sixth petition, "lead us not into temptation," we ask God not to allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear and not to abandon us to temptation to such an extent that we might be led astray and succumb. Rather, we beg him to give us the grace to resist temptation and to draw benefit from it. We should often repeat this prayer because during this life we are always liable to be tempted, and on many occasions we can scarcely avoid it.

By the last petition, "deliver us from evil," we ask God to spare us all the punishment due to us because of our sins, the evils of the next life in hell and purgatory, and those of this present life. In addi-

tion, we beg God to help us endure our sufferings patiently and to deliver us from all those corporal and spiritual afflictions that might hinder us from saving our soul.

It is especially with regard to the tribulation and suffering of this life, observes Saint Augustine, that we do not know what we should ask of God, for these trials may be most useful as well as harmful to us. Because they are in themselves painful, irksome, and contrary to nature, we are inclined to beg God with all our will to take them away from us, but we should not believe that God has forsaken us if he does not at once deliver us from these trials. On the contrary, we should thank God for them, convinced that it is much better that his will be done than ours and that the patience we show in supporting them will obtain great benefits for us. For this reason we are not allowed to ask God to deliver us from our temporal afflictions except insofar as this may be expedient for our soul because they might also lead us to fall into sin. We are, however, obliged to beseech God simply and absolutely to save us from eternal death because this is the one evil that we must at all costs avoid.

Saint Augustine also remarks that when we ask God for temporal blessings, we should do so only with restraint and with the fear of displeasing him and only on condition that God gives us the things he judges will be to our advantage. On the contrary, if God knows that they will harm us, we should hope that he will refuse our prayer, for it is only with a kind of tolerance and condescension for our weakness that God suffers us to ask for such things. This is why, declares this saint, we should never request anything specific with regard to temporal matters but beg God to give us what he knows will be best for us, for we ourselves do not know this.

We must not, continues the saint, yearn for riches, for many have been lost through possessing wealth. Nor should we long to enjoy the pleasures and goods of this earth, for we would slight God by seeking our own satisfaction in such things. Nor should we procure or ask God to give us high and honorable positions because of the pomp and display that accompany them and the vainglory that inspires them. The saint concedes that such petitions are tolerable if we pray for them to do good to those over whom we will be placed, not because of the honors and other rewards in themselves. The safest course, says the saint, is never to pray for any temporal benefits at all.

Section 2—Those for whom we can and should pray

The first obligation God has imposed on us is to labor for our own salvation; prayer is one of the principal means we can use to obtain

this favor for ourselves. Hence, when we devote ourselves to this sacred exercise, it should be for our own sake, first of all, to obtain from God all we need to enjoy the grace and love of God in this world and to secure eternal life.

However, God also requires all of us to contribute to the welfare of our neighbor, and Christian charity, the most beautiful ornament of our religion, obliges us not to think only of ourselves but to help others, insofar as we are able, to save themselves. Furthermore, because there is no one for whom this obligation is not binding, it is our duty to pray for everyone. This is what Saint Paul tells us and what he recommends to Timothy as the first thing to which we should apply ourselves in our assemblies. This is also what Saint Augustine exhorts us to do, saying that if we pray only for ourselves, we will enjoy only the efficacy of our own prayers, but if we have enough charity to pray for everyone, all of them will pray for us in return. The saint goes even further and declares that if God in his goodness and according to his accustomed mercy grants what we ask him for others, we will be doubly rewarded in heaven.

Those for whom we are especially bound to pray are all Christians, our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, as we learn from Saint James, who orders all the faithful to pray for one another to be saved. As Saint Jerome assures us, whoever saves a sinner, that is, another Christian, will be helped in turn by this person's prayer.

Saint Augustine does not wish us to be content with praying for those who belong to the Church; he advises us to offer frequent and fervent prayers for those who are separated from her, such as schismatics, who refuse to recognize the Church's head, and heretics, who contest her teachings. We should weep over them, says this Father, because they are our brothers and sisters even though they do not wish to be such any more, and we should pray to God for them so that they may come to know and love him and that there may henceforth be one flock and one shepherd. We should also pray for the Jews, he continues, even though they incurred God's curse, and for pagans, who believe neither in God nor in Jesus Christ, so that they may come to know the one true God, the Lord of the universe.

Those who are exceedingly weak in virtue and those who are enmeshed by the world and live according to its maxims are the ones who need the most help. Hence, they are likewise the ones among Christians, as Saint Augustine again teaches, for whom charity urges us to pray to God most earnestly and ardently, especially if we have taken part in their disorderly and licentious life. He tells us that we should ask God that they may become our companions in a life of piety as we were once theirs in sin.

Although the just are in the state of grace and friendship with God, they are not certain of remaining such; therefore, we are not allowed to forget them in our prayers. Saint John Chrysostom teaches us this by the example of the first Christians, who did not hesitate to pray for Saint Peter and Saint Paul even though these Apostles were at the time the very pillars of the Church.

We should also, Saint Jerome declares, pray constantly for God to uphold and extend the Church. The persons in the Church for whom we should ordinarily offer our prayers are those who govern and exercise authority over her, whether spiritual, such as the pope, bishops, and pastors, or temporal, such as kings, princes of the earth, and magistrates. This practice, Tertullian states, has been observed in the Church from the beginning. It is what Saint Paul recommends Timothy to have his faithful do.

Saint Paul also wishes prayers to be offered for the preachers of the Gospel so that God may give them the light they need to announce the mysteries of Jesus Christ and to preach the word of God effectively.

Our obligations to our parents should lead us to pray for them, asking for whatever may be advantageous to them. The Church also wishes us to pray for our friends and benefactors, for she has instituted special prayers for their intentions.

It would be of little merit to pray for our friends unless we also pray for our enemies. Jesus Christ ordered us to do this and presented himself as an example in the Gospel to induce us to do so. He asks us what reward we can expect if we show affection only to those who love us, for then we are doing nothing more than pagans do. Realizing that this practice is something we would find difficult, he willed to give us an example in this regard by praying publicly for those who were crucifying him. If we think we cannot rise to the level of imitating our Lord Jesus Christ, remarks Saint Augustine, at least we can imitate his saints, who were his servants just as we are. Such were Saint Stephen, one of the first deacons, and Saint James the Apostle, surnamed the Just, who prayed to God on their knees for their persecutors.

Nor does it suffice, warns Saint Augustine, for us to pray to God for the living; we must also offer God our supplications for the dead, as Holy Scripture exhorts us. Such entreaties are very useful to those who have not entirely made satisfaction for their sins in this life. Saint Augustine assures us that he frequently prayed thus for his mother, and he adds that the Church has always practiced this custom. She makes a general commemoration of all, without naming anyone in particular, to show that she does not forget in her intercession the

dead who have no relatives or friends on earth to pray for them. As he observes, if we did not pray for the dead, it would be of little use to bury them in consecrated ground.

We are not allowed to pray for the devils or for the damned so that they may by God's mercy be delivered from the torments they deserved in all justice. Saint Augustine teaches that these persons cannot do penance to provoke the mercy of God; consequently, the Church's prayers for them cannot be heard.

Nor are we permitted to pray for the saints, for they already possess sovereign beatitude, which they cannot hope or desire to increase. It would also be offensive to God were we to pray for them. All we can do for the blessed is to thank God for the graces he bestowed on them and for the glory they enjoy in heaven.

Chapter 4

To Whom We Can and Should Address Our Prayers

We need to know not only what we can request in our prayers but also whom we should address for the favors we need, which is what we will discuss in the next three sections.

Section 1—We should address our prayers to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ

Because God is the author of all good and because all the benefits we enjoy come from him, as Saint James the Apostle informs us, we cannot address our pleas to anyone other than to him, not only for the temporal goods we need but also for the eternal benefits we must have and the graces necessary to secure the latter. Therefore, when the Church incites us to beg for God's graces, she often has us pray to God as to the one from whom all blessings flow.

God's fatherhood, which he often insists on in Holy Scripture, and the fact that no one else can really be called our father, should convince us all the more to turn to God, especially to ask him for what he alone can grant us. It was no doubt for this reason that in the prayer he taught us, our Lord gave God no other name than that of Father to encourage us to lay our needs before him.

God's Spirit, says Saint Paul the Apostle, should enliven and vivify all our actions, and because only God can make us share in this

Spirit, we should implore him alone for help so that as the Prophet says, he may pour out his Spirit abundantly on us.

However great or trifling the sins that we have committed may appear, only God has the right to pardon us for them. The Church teaches this doctrine when she has us say that forgiving sins is God's special prerogative. Just as it is from God alone that we can hope for the grace to avoid sin in the future, it is only from God that we must beg for his grace and pardon of our offenses.

We are no less obliged to have recourse to God to ask him to preserve the life of soul and body. The Church in her prayers has us ask this of him. Because God is the source of life for both soul and body, he is the only one who can give us their continuation. Because God is our sole recompense and because by his kindness alone we are able to enjoy him as our sovereign good, it would be useless on our part to have recourse to anyone else but God to procure this highest good. Therefore, no matter what benefits we long for on earth, what grace we desire to obtain, and what happiness we hope for in heaven, only God can give these to us, and we can ask them of him and of him alone.

We ought also to offer our prayers to our Lord Jesus Christ because he is both God and man. Being our Mediator and intercessor before God, only he, as Saint Paul says, can give us access to the eternal Father. Only through him can we hope that our prayers will achieve their effect and be answered. For this reason the Church ordinarily terminates the Collect at Mass by the words "*Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum*"—that is, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." This wording does not imply that he needs to obtain or procure for us some new grace, but because he suffered and died to merit for us all the graces we need to be saved, he constantly offers his sufferings and his satisfactions to the Father, imploring him to apply to us the effects of his own Passion. Because he is God as well as man, he can grant us whatever we ask of him in prayer, provided it pleases him to do so.

Section 2—We can also pray to the saints

Although we are obliged to address our prayers to God and to have recourse to him alone in our needs, for he alone can give us what we require, nevertheless, we can pray to the angels and the saints. This practice that has always been in use in the Church is very helpful and cannot but procure great blessings for us.

It is true that no matter what power the angels and the saints, who dwell closest to God, possess, they cannot of themselves give us

what is necessary to assure our salvation or what can help us in this life. But they can often obtain these favors for us, which is why we do not ask for blessings from them in the same way we ask for blessings from God.

Thus, when we have recourse to the angels and the saints and pray to them, it is not to persuade them to grant us some favor or to deliver us from the evil and suffering that afflict us in this life. It is only, says Saint John Chrysostom, so that they may deign to become our intercessors before God—because they are his friends—and obtain from his goodness what we need.

The difference in the end and in the intention we have when we pray to God and pray to the saints is made sufficiently clear by the different manner in which we address our prayers to them. When we pray to God, we ask him to have pity on us, but we merely ask the saints to pray for us, showing that although we expect to obtain from God alone the graces we request, the saints can help us by their prayers to obtain these favors, not indeed by the merits they have earned but by the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which they share by being his members.

It is true that in our prayers we may sometimes ask the saints to have pity on us, but we would be speaking inaccurately in using these words. We should understand that we are asking the saints to be so touched by our misfortune and the sorry state to which we are reduced that they feel moved to help us by their prayers.

Sometimes we can even pray to the saints quite effectively, asking them to have compassion on us. As Saint Bernard concludes, if they showed such sympathy for sinners and prayed to God for them while they were still living, how much more readily will they now display the depths of their pity for us. Their charity to us, far from being lessened, must instead be powerfully increased because they always behold the one who is the source of mercy, and they now understand the depths of our misery so much better than they did in this life.

Nor should we imagine that the prayers we address to the saints are tantamount to slighting God or depriving him in any way of the honor due to him. Theodoret says that those who pray to the saints do not consider them as minor gods but have recourse to them as to wholly divine people in the hope that the saints may be their advocates before God. Our prayers to the saints, like those offered by the saints to God on our behalf, do not in any way prevent Jesus Christ from being the sole Mediator between God and us. Jesus Christ gives power and efficacy to the prayers of the saints, and it is in the name of Jesus Christ that the saints ask God for the graces we need. If they are our mediators and intercessors, it is only in Jesus Christ and by

Jesus Christ, who, according to Saint Paul, constantly intercedes for us before his Father. The saints cannot move God to do good for us except through a consideration of the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, his Son.

Although it is not indispensably necessary to pray to the saints, it is certainly highly useful, so much so that those who fail to do so are neglecting their own salvation and will find great difficulty in securing it. As the Second Council of Nicaea taught, the prayers we address to the saints and the honor we offer them are means enabling us to share in their sanctity and to become perfect in all kinds of good works.

This holy Council, while explaining for us the order we should adhere to in our prayers with regard to the saints, teaches us that we should address ourselves, first of all, to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, then to the holy angels, and then to the other saints.

Section 3—The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the one of all the saints to whom we should especially and frequently pray; the principal prayer the Church recites in her honor

If it is useful and appropriate for us to pray to all the saints, it is much more beneficial for us to address our prayers to the Most Blessed Virgin; being the most perfect and most exalted in glory of all creatures, she enjoys great power with God. Through her intercession she can help us considerably to attain salvation and to secure what we need, for she never refuses it to those who ask her for it with sincere piety and a heart entirely disengaged from affection for sin.

Because she is the Mother of God, it is an ancient practice in the Church to pray to the Most Blessed Virgin in preference to all the other saints. For this reason the Church has judged it proper to draw up many prayers in her honor, prayers used everywhere and recited daily throughout the Church, both in public and in private.

The principal prayer directed to the Most Blessed Virgin, the most excellent of all after the *Pater Noster,* is the one we call the Angelical Salutation, because the archangel Gabriel is its original author. This prayer is so outstanding because it is composed, first, of the words that the angel said to the Most Blessed Virgin when announcing the mystery of the Incarnation and, second, of the admirable words addressed by Saint Elizabeth to our Lady when she had the happiness of welcoming her into home: “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.” The Church has fashioned this prayer from the words of the holy archangel and those of this saintly

woman filled by the Spirit of God. Because these words simply express a greeting, the Church, eager for the faithful to implore some grace through the daily intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin, has added the conclusion, "Holy Mary. . . ," to give the entire set of words the form of a prayer.

This invocation contains three ways in which we can honor the Most Blessed Virgin when we address her. First, we greet her; then we praise her; then we beseech her. By the first words of the archangel Gabriel, we salute the Most Blessed Virgin as full of grace and filled with every kind of virtue to show the respect we feel for her as the Mother of God. By the last words of the archangel, "The Lord is with thee," we praise her, recognizing the joy she experiences from always possessing God within her and being filled with his Holy Spirit. By the words of Saint Elizabeth, we wish her all kinds of benedictions, recognizing the special rank she holds among creatures and her excellence that far surpasses theirs because she is filled with all the graces and blessings of heaven. Because she is the Mother of God, we bless and adore Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, thanking him for the honor he gave to the Most Blessed Virgin when he chose her among all women to be his mother.

By the words the Church has added to these salutations, praises, and blessings, we beseech the Most Blessed Virgin because she has all power as the Mother of God to obtain for us every good thing and because she has at heart the salvation of all of us so much that she is always ready to lend us her assistance. We especially recommend the salvation of our soul to the Most Blessed Virgin. We beg her to plead our cause before God and to obtain for us through her most holy intercession God's grace in this life and glory in the next.

So highly does the Church esteem and venerate this prayer that in the Divine Office she nearly always joins it to the *Pater Noster*. She desires that the faithful should, as a rule, not separate the one from the other, so that after having asked God for the graces they need, they may pray to the Most Blessed Virgin to obtain these graces for them through her powerful protection and her intercession before God, and so that during the entire Office she may join herself to them and present their prayers to God.

It is, then, highly useful to recite the *Ave Maria* often, provided we do so with piety and fervor. This prayer reminds us of the mystery of the Incarnation, helps us to make ourselves more like the Most Blessed Virgin in her virtues, and more than all other prayers inclines her to take an interest in our salvation.

Chapter 5

The Different Ways of Praying

Because Christians should often apply themselves to prayer, it is important for them to know the different ways of praying and the occasions when they can and should pray, which we will explain in the following five sections.

Section 1—Different kinds of prayer

Because we have both a soul and a body, it is only right that both should pay homage to God and render him their due worship. No doubt this is why the Church was not satisfied with prescribing that Christians should perform interior acts of religion but also prescribed inclination, prostration, genuflection, joining our hands, extending our arms, striking our breast, and so on, either to honor God in an external way or to show God sensible signs of the sorrow we feel for our sins.

For the same reason God has willed that we should be able to pray in two different ways: in our heart or with words. Prayer that springs from the heart is ordinarily called interior prayer,[15] that is, prayer of the mind, for the body takes no part in it. By this kind of prayer, we fulfill our duties to God and ask him for what we need, speaking from the heart only. Prayer expressed in words is called vocal prayer because it utilizes our voice, and by this means we honor God and represent to him what is necessary or useful for our salvation.

David, who has admirably taught us about the different kinds of prayer, tells us in the Psalms that he often had recourse to the one and to the other. Sometimes, he says, God's praises were always in his mouth; his lips rejoiced when he was praising God; his tongue was busy all day long paying honor to God's justice. He also says that he cried out to the Lord with a loud voice and that he begged God to let his ear be attentive to the sound of his prayers.

But when he speaks of the prayers that he formed in the depths of his heart without expressing them externally, he says that he sought always to apply his mind to the presence of God, that the law of God was the subject of his meditation, that he arose in the middle of the night to think of God's judgments, that he seriously reviewed his past

15. The French term is *oraison mentale*. The preferred English translation of *oraison* is *interior prayer*.

years and often kept eternity in mind, and that he meditated on this during the night in the depths of his heart. Sometimes he informs us about the effects of his fervent meditations that often caused him to lament, watering his bed with his tears night after night.

However, this manner of praying from the heart was not much used in Old Testament times. We see this in the surprise felt by the High Priest Eli when he saw Hannah, the mother of Samuel, praying in the Temple with her lips scarcely moving. He took the occasion to insult her as if she were full of wine and ordered her to leave the Temple until she had sobered up.[16] The reason for this reaction is that the Jews were a materialistic people who made all their religion consist in external practices.

Jesus Christ came to this earth to establish a New Law based mainly on interior worship. He taught us by his example and words how to pray to God more frequently and more often from the heart than from the lips, for it is said of him that he often spent the night in prayer. To encourage us to adopt this practice of addressing ourselves to God from the heart alone, he told us that because God is a spirit, we should adore him in spirit when we wish to fulfill our duties to him and that the hour had come when the true worshipers would adore the Father in spirit and truth.[17]

Not that our Lord condemns vocal prayer, for he taught one to his disciples that they should say when praying to the Father. But he wished to make us understand that the best way of praying is to appeal to God from the heart, for as Saint Cyprian says, it is not the mouth but the heart that speaks to God. God also complained through one of the Prophets that too often people honor him with their lips while their heart is far from him.[18]

Prayer from the heart, or interior prayer, enjoys the advantage over vocal prayer of being good and useful in itself. No doubt this is why our Lord says that adoring God in spirit is adoring him in truth, whereas vocal prayer is of worth only when it is joined to interior prayer that springs from a heart that loves him; it draws all its power and efficacy from this source. For this reason David tells God that his tongue will meditate on God's justice[19] because the prayer that issues from the mouth is of no value whatever if the mind is not meditating while the tongue speaks and prays.

We also enjoy the advantage of praying to God in our heart at all times and occasions. It can happen, says Saint John Chrysostom, that

16. 1 Sam. 1:13–14.
17. John 4:23.
18. Isa. 29:13.
19. Ps. 35:28.

we may pray with deep attention while walking through the city; while with our friends, we may keep our mind fixed on God; while doing something else, we may invoke God interiorly with great fervor and devotion. A pious and ancient author reports that this is what the anchorites of old did: they never ceased praying to God in the depths of the heart.

We can pray to God interiorly in different ways but especially in these five. We may simply keep ourselves silently in the presence of God with sentiments of respect and adoration and without expressing any thoughts or asking anything of God. Cassian appears to speak of this manner of praying in his Ninth Conference, where he says that sometimes in prayer the mind is hidden from itself in deepest silence. We can also pray by thinking without uttering a single word. Saint John Chrysostom has this kind of prayer in mind when he states that it is made perfect through the fervor of our spirit. We can also pray to God through our affections when we ask something of him by the sole movement of the heart. According to Saint Cyprian, it was thus that Hannah, the mother of Samuel, was praying. We can pray by actions when we perform good ones with a view of rendering our duties to God or of obtaining some favor from him. But one of the best ways of praying to God in our heart is to pray by means of our sufferings, which we do when we endure patiently the afflictions that God sends us and with the intention of doing him honor or of procuring some spiritual or temporal benefit.

Vocal prayers can be made in public or in private. Public prayers are those said by Christians in common when assembled in church. Private prayers are those said by each of the faithful in private. Public prayers have the advantage over private prayers because they are ordained by the Holy Spirit, who leads the Church; because by them we can obtain more easily what we ask of God on account of their number and the union of heart by those praying together; because each individual has a share in the merits of all the others who pray alongside. The most typical public prayers are the religious exercises that Christians perform in common when assembled on Sundays and feasts, such as at the parish Mass and the Divine Office. The prayers Christians say most commonly in private are those in the morning and evening, at holy Mass, and at different occasions during the day.

Section 2—Principal public prayers: the parish Mass and the Divine Office

The parish Mass is the principal religious exercise of the faithful in public assembly. The churches in which Christians gather are called

parishes and are as old an institution as the Church. Even at the time of the Apostles, all the assemblies formed by the first Christians to celebrate the sacred mysteries were, in the proper sense, parish assemblies.

At these assemblies in the first centuries of the Church, the faithful would have the Scriptures read and explained to them. The Apostles, and later the bishops and the priests, would consecrate the body and blood of Jesus Christ, nourish themselves with it, and then share it with the faithful who were present. Then in one voice they would all sing the praises of God and ask him, for one another and the whole Church and in a spirit of union with Christ and with simplicity of heart, to grant all their spiritual and temporal needs.

In the same spirit as the first Christians assisted at their assemblies, all Christians should attend their parish Mass to join with their parish priest to beg God to give us all the graces and assistance he can provide that are necessary for us to spend the week in a Christian manner. This is why the Church wills that the parish priests should say this Mass exclusively for the intentions of the parishioners. She likewise obliges them to explain the Gospel of the day, immediately after it is chanted, to instruct the parishioners in the truths and maxims of religion, and to teach them how to live as true Christians.

Although the parish Mass is no different in itself and in what it contains from ordinary low Masses, with the exception of a few ceremonies, there is one variation that concerns the faithful who are present. In ordinary low Masses, they participate only in virtue of their intention and of the attention they bring to it, whereas in solemn parish Masses, they also have a share in the intention of the celebrant, who offers it expressly for them. They also share in the instruction, in several ceremonies, and in all that is sung, for the Church believes that they should join with the clergy in forming a single chorus with them, blending the voices of all those present into one voice that rises up to heaven to bring down the grace and the mercy of God on the whole assembly of the faithful.

The ceremonies in which the faithful take part during a parish Mass are the Offertory, the blessing of the bread, and the kiss of peace, which we sufficiently explain in the book containing the instructions for holy Mass.[20]

The Divine Office, another form of public prayer, is the second most important religious exercise that Christians ought to attend in

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20. *Instructions et Prières pour la Sainte Messe, la Confession et la Communion*. Rouen: Machuel, 1734 (Cahiers lasalliens 17, Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, 1963). *Religious Instructions and Exercises of Piety for the Christian Schools* (Landover, MD: Lasallian Publications, 2002).

their parishes on Sundays and feasts. The Church, having obliged the faithful to sanctify Sundays and feasts, has given them a means of spending a great part of these sacred days in exercises of piety. For this purpose she has chosen and assigned prayers to be sung publicly in church at different hours of the day. These prayers, taken together, form what is called the Divine Office, that is, a duty owed to God, for it contains all that a Christian is obliged to render to God: adoration and praise, instruction from his word, and supplication addressed to him.

In effect the Church has arranged the various hours of the Office in such a manner as to give those who sing the Office an opportunity of accomplishing these three duties. For this reason she includes in each hour of the Office psalms, hymns, and canticles that enable us to praise God. There are also lessons drawn from Holy Scripture and from the writings of the holy Fathers to instruct the faithful by means of the word of God. Finally, we find Collects, prayers that conclude each hour of the Office, in which we beg God for the grace of fulfilling his holy law and his divine word. It is true that the psalms are often filled with instructions from God and with fervent prayers, but because the Church has especially included them in view of praising God, they should be considered in the Office only as prayers of praise.

The Office is divided into various parts that we call the hours of the Office, in reference to the different hours of the day at which in times past they were chanted in church. The first hour, called Matins, used to be sung during the night. The second, called Lauds, was sung at daybreak. The third, known as Prime, was chanted at the first hour of the day, that is, about 6 a.m. The fourth is Tierce, at the third hour, namely, 9 a.m. The fifth is called Sext, which was sung around noon. The sixth is called None, chanted about 3 p.m. The seventh is Vespers, sung about 6 p.m. Compline, which occurs before retiring, was added to the Office to serve as night prayer.

Of all these hours of the Office, the Church has maintained in most parishes only Vespers and Compline, which are sung only on the eve and the day of Sundays and feasts. However, the entire Office is chanted in most churches on the most solemn feasts.

It is entirely right for the faithful to attend the Divine Office regularly when it is sung in their parish, for these ceremonies have been established so that they may take part in them. and the Church has to a great extent relaxed her demands on the faithful, accommodating their weakness and their meager piety to give them a better chance to participate in them.

Section 3—Another principal public prayer: the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin

One of the most important prayers established by the Church is the Office she has drawn up in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin. We also ought to look on it as one of the principal public prayers chanted in the name of all the faithful.

It is an ancient practice in the Church to recite this holy Office, which was introduced and used in all the particular churches where the Divine Office was sung. Thus, in all these places it has for centuries been chanted after the Divine Office.

Because in many places this custom had fallen little by little into disuse, Pope Pius V declared in the bull he issued for the reform of the Divine Office that individuals who in the future no longer recited the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin would not be guilty of any sin. But he added that he desired that this pious practice should be maintained in the churches where this custom still existed. This practice has since then been maintained in many individual churches, especially in cathedrals and in most of those belonging to religious orders, where the custom is to sing the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin after the main Office, except on days when a solemn feast is celebrated.

This prayer, so universally practiced and so warmly authorized by the Church, should frequently be recited by the faithful, and she desires them to do so. To encourage them to do so, Pius V, in the bull concerning the Divine Office, granted to those who recite the Little Office of the Most Blessed Virgin an indulgence of one hundred days every day they remained faithful to this practice. For this same reason, in the books printed for laypeople that contain numerous prayers for recitation when they go to church, they always find the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin to remind them that the Church desires them to say it privately when they have time. In doing so, they ought to unite their intentions to those of the priests so that when these ministers of the Church spend part of the day in prayer and in the recitation of the Office to draw down on the whole Church the graces and blessings of God, they too, by reciting this Little Office, can procure for the entire Church the constant protection of the Most Blessed Virgin.

Although this Office is called the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin, not all the prayers of which it is composed are addressed to our Lady, for the psalms we recite in it are the same ones that often appear in the Divine Office. But we call it thus because in all the Collects that close each part of the Office and in various other minor parts, we implore the intercession of our Lady. The Church, however, has chosen the psalms for this Office because in their entirety or in

parts of them the words can be understood as suitable and attributed to the Most Blessed Virgin. Thus, those who recite this Office can honor her in God just as they honor God in her, for all the offices of the Church are directly addressed to God as their end.

This Office, like all others, includes three principal acts: 1) we make ourselves aware of God's presence; 2) we praise him; 3) we petition him. We find these same elements in each of the hours of this Office. We are instructed about the majesty of God and the grandeur of the Most Blessed Virgin by means of the lessons and chapters drawn from Holy Scripture. We praise God in the Most Blessed Virgin and her in God through the psalms, hymns, antiphons, and responses. In the Collects that close each hour of the Office, we ask God to give us and the Church, under the protection and intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin, the graces that we all need.

Those who recite the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin ought to perform this exercise with special piety and devotion. To draw from it the benefits that the Church hopes for, they must consider 1) the excellence and dignity of our Lady, in whose honor they are reciting it, 2) her charity to those who place themselves under her protection, and 3) the great need we have of her intercession before God.

Section 4—Prayers we should recite daily, especially in the morning and in the evening

Because Christians need the grace of God every day and at every moment, all should, as we mentioned previously, pray to God not only every day but all the time. However, because most people must provide for the needs of their families and busy themselves about temporal concerns, the holy Fathers agree in suggesting that they pray each morning as soon as they rise and in the evening before retiring. Prayer at these two moments especially seems to them necessary and obligatory because we have no other means for obtaining the graces we need to serve God properly. It would also show culpable unconcern for our salvation and great disdain for the majesty of God if we did not adore him as soon as morning breaks, before performing any other action, if we did not thank him in the evening before retiring for the graces given us during the day, or if we did not ask his pardon for the faults we may have committed.

What should, therefore, induce us to pray to God unfailingly every day, morning and evening, is the obligation incumbent on us not to spend a single day without adoring God, recognizing our constant need of his graces during the day and our inescapable duty of offering him all our actions and referring them to him.

Because it is also a duty for us to thank God every evening for all the graces he gave us during the day, to ask pardon for all the sins we committed during the course of the day, and to request the graces we need to spend the night worthily without falling into any sin, we cannot dispense ourselves from praying to God in the evening before taking our rest. We might even say that it would be living like a pagan, who does not know God, to fail to satisfy these two obligations.

Because in general we should not have anything more pressing to do than to pray to God, it would not be wise and would also show a lack of the respect we owe God to leave our room without having performed this characteristically Christian action. It is extremely important to draw down on ourselves God's graces and special help to perform well all the actions of our day.

Nor is it permitted to excuse ourselves from night prayer on the pretext that we are drowsy, our mind is fatigued, and our body exhausted. At such times we must exert ourselves for the love of God because it is entirely just and reasonable that at the close of day we ought to do something for our soul to procure for it the eternal blessings we aspire to, for we have been busy all day performing exhausting tasks for the needs of our body or to acquire some temporal advantages. We should not convince ourselves that to satisfy the duty of reciting our morning or evening prayers, it is enough to do so while still lying in bed, dressing or undressing, or doing something else, for this would not be to give God the due respect we owe him.

It would be most appropriate for the heads of families to gather together their children and servants every day to pray with them, morning and evening. They would thus give excellent example in this pious action and facilitate for them the accomplishment of this duty. They would also secure for all concerned the advantage of deserving the blessings of God by this means. This custom would easily enable them to fulfill their obligation to make sure that their children and dependents say their night prayer with a true spirit of religion.

To pray to God properly in the morning, we ought to adore him, thank him for the graces he gave us during the night, and ask his pardon if we have offended him. Next, we ought to foresee and think about the actions to be done during the day, and after offering them to God, ask him for the grace to perform them for his holy love. It would be most appropriate to foresee at this time the occasions when we might offend God during the day and to take the means, with the grace of God, not to succumb to them. Every morning it would also be most useful to select some defect to be overcome, especially one to which we are most inclined, and to adopt the most appropriate means to avoid falling into it.

To say night prayer well, we should think of the graces received from God during the day and thank him for them. Next, we ought to examine our conscience to recognize the sins we committed, the time we spent idly, and the actions we failed to perform for the love of God. After calling to mind all these faults, we ought to ask God's pardon for them and take a strong, generous resolution to avoid them the next day and for the rest of our life. We should not finish our night prayer without asking God for the grace to spend the night well and especially not to consent to any sin, not even an evil thought.

Section 5—Various appropriate occasions to pray to God in a particular manner during the day; how to do so

Although the Church does not require Christians to pray constantly, she would like to see that no action of theirs is performed without some prayer, for there is no activity in which we do not need the grace of God if we hope to perform it well.

To conform ourselves with this intention of the Church and of Jesus Christ in each of our actions, we ought to pray to God in three ways: 1) offer the action to God, 2) implore his help, and 3) perform it while keeping God in mind. Furthermore, we ought to unite ourselves with the intentions and characteristics that our Lord Jesus Christ had in performing similar actions. We ought to take care to do them for the love of God so that there may not be, in fact or even in appearance, anything in our actions that goes against or even seems to go against his intentions and attitudes. This is how we should act when we begin anything, whatever it may be, without differentiating among our actions.

Although all our deeds should be dedicated to God, we ought to consecrate certain ones in a special manner; therefore, they should be prepared for or accompanied by some prayer. We ought to do this as soon as we awake, when we take holy water, when we enter a room or leave it, when we go to work, when we leave the house, before and after meals, before going to bed, and while we await sleep.

As soon as we wake up, we ought to think of God because he thinks of us unceasingly. We ought to offer ourselves to him and consecrate every hour and every action of our day to him.

When we take holy water—something we ought to do often, especially on rising and on retiring—we ought to ask God to purify our soul of all sin by the power of this sacramental.

On entering a room, we ought to adore God, who is fully present in it, and ask him to give us his holy blessing and the grace not to offend him while we remain there. Before leaving a room, we

ought to ask God for the grace never to part from him by sin and never to be deprived of his holy presence.

When leaving for work, we ought to recall that it was sin that put us under the obligation of laboring for our daily sustenance. We ought to ask God for the grace to approach our labor in the spirit of penance and to beg him not to allow us to fall into any sin during the entire time we are working. When we are ready to leave the house, we ought to ask God for the grace to walk constantly with him, paying attention to his holy presence, and not to let either our mind or our senses dwell on anything that can lead us to sin.

Before meals we should ask God to pour out his blessings on the food and on those who will partake of it and to give them the grace not to offend him in any way but rather to serve him with more fervor, courage, and faithfulness. After meals we ought to thank God for what we have just eaten and ask him to pardon the faults we may have committed in doing so.

Before going to bed, we should offer our sleep to God and ask him for his holy grace and his protection during the night. Once in bed, we ought to beg God for the grace of spending the night in his holy love without offending him, and then we should go to sleep while occupying our mind with some good thoughts.

There are various other occasions that do not happen every day when we have a special obligation to pray because we need grace more urgently than usual. Examples are when we undertake some new project or begin a journey; when we go to call on someone or return from doing so; when we suffer some wrong, trouble, or injustice; when we are ill or upset; when we are tempted or find ourselves in danger of offending God, or when we have fallen into sin.

When we wish to undertake a project, we ought to pray God to guide it according to his holy will and not permit us to fail in whatever we are doing, a result that would not be agreeable to him. When setting out on a journey, we should ask God for three things: 1) to lead us where we are going and to bring us back again, 2) to give us one of his angels to be our guide, and 3) to preserve us from sin.

When going to visit someone, we ought to pay attention to three things: 1) to go with the same attitude, intention, and readiness that the Most Blessed Virgin had when she went to visit Saint Elizabeth, 2) to beg God that the conversations we will engage in may increase his holy love in our heart, and 3) to ask God for the grace not to offend him in any way during this time and especially to help us avoid sins against charity. On returning from a visit, we must ask God's pardon for the faults we may have committed during the visit and for the time we may have wasted.

When a person causes us some pain, wrong, or injustice, we ought to do three things: 1) adore the justice of God that is acting on us, 2) adore the patience of Jesus Christ and beg him to share it with us, and 3) ask God for the grace to look on this wrong as an advantage for us and as something useful for our salvation.

When we are ill or not feeling well, we ought to recognize that the illness comes from God, offer it to him, thank him for it, and ask for the grace to endure it patiently and make good use of it. If we happen to be assailed by temptation or find ourselves in some occasion of offending God, we ought to plead that he keep it far from us or give us the grace not to yield to it. When we have fallen into some sin, we ought at once to ask God's pardon for offending him. We ought to impose some penance on ourselves that may help us to make up for the fault and preserve us from repeating it in the future.

From time to time and on various occasions, it is also good to perform acts of Christian virtue, such as an act of faith when we are tempted against faith, an act of love for God when we see him offended, an act of veneration for God and praise of his holy Name when we hear blasphemy or swearing in our presence, an act of hope and trust in God when we find ourselves abandoned by our best friends or by everyone, an act of humility when someone affronts us, an act of resignation to God's will when something unfortunate happens to us, or some other act that can bring us closer to God.

The main effect these prayers ought to produce in us is to make us practice the maxims of the holy Gospel, which is also the greatest advantage we can derive from our knowledge of the Church's mysteries and of her doctrine.

End of volume 1, part 2

The Duties of a Christian to God

The Duties of a Christian to God

Volume 2

Part 1

The Two Duties of a Christian to God, Namely, to Know God and to Love God

Preliminary Lessons[1]

Lesson 1—The Christian religion and true Christians

Q. To what religion do you belong?
A. I belong to the Christian religion.
Q. What is the Christian religion?
A. It is a society comprising many people from different countries who are striving to give honor to God as Jesus Christ has taught them to do.
Q. What do we call those who belong to the Christian religion?
A. We call them Christians.
Q. What does the name *Christian* mean?
A. It means *follower of Jesus Christ*.
Q. How does a person become a Christian?
A. A person becomes a Christian through Baptism.
Q. Is Baptism sufficient for becoming a Christian?
A. Yes, Baptism is enough.
Q. Is Baptism sufficient for being a true disciple of Jesus Christ?
A. No, it is not enough.
Q. What else must Christians do to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ?
A. They must be Catholic and practice what Jesus Christ taught his disciples.
Q. Who is a Catholic?
A. Catholics are baptized persons who accept everything the Church commands them to believe and are entirely submissive to her.
Q. Are Catholics the only people who believe everything the Church commands them to believe?
A. Yes, only Catholics do this.
Q. Are there any Christians who do not believe everything the Church commands them to believe?
A. Yes, there are many such Christians.
Q. What do we call Christians who do not believe everything the Church commands them to believe?
A. We call them heretics.
Q. Are heretics also Christians?
A. Yes, because they are baptized.
Q. Are heretics also Catholics?
A. No, they are not; they do not accept everything the Church commands them to believe, and they do not submit to her.

1. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 2, preliminary lessons, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1003–06; Cahiers lasalliens 21, 1–9.

Q. Are heretics true disciples of Jesus Christ?
A. No, they are not.
Q. Besides heretics, are there other Christians who are not submissive to the Church?
A. Yes, there are such Christians.
Q. What do we call those Christians who do not submit to the Church but are not heretics?
A. We call them schismatics.
Q. Are schismatics true disciples of Jesus Christ if they do not submit to the Church?
A. No, and they are not Catholics.
Q. Why are schismatics not Catholics?
A. Catholics must submit entirely to the Church.

Lesson 2—The signs of being a Christian

Q. Are there signs to indicate that people are Catholic and to distinguish them from those who are not?
A. Yes, there are several such signs.
Q. By what signs can we recognize a Catholic Christian?
A. The main signs are the exterior practices of religion observed by Christians.
Q. What are the principal exterior practices of the Christian religion?
A. The five practices are 1) attending holy Mass and divine services, 2) receiving the sacraments of the Church, 3) hearing the word of God preached in Catholic churches, 4) reciting the profession of faith of the Catholic Church, and 5) making the sign of the cross.
Q. By which of these five practices do we most readily recognize a Christian?
A. There are two: making a public profession of faith in all the articles of the Creed and making the sign of the cross.
Q. What is the sign of the cross?
A. It is a gesture made by tracing a cross with the right hand on ourselves or on something else.
Q. How do we make the sign of the cross?
A. With the right hand, we touch the forehead, then the breast, then the left shoulder, and then the right shoulder.
Q. What do we usually say when we make the sign of the cross?
A. We usually say, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
Q. What do we call the sign of the cross?
A. We call it the sign of the Christian.

Q. Why do we call it the sign of the cross and the sign of the Christian?
A. We call it this because those who make it are recognized as Catholic Christians.
Q. Why do we make the sign of the cross?
A. It is to ask for God's blessing and help in the name of the Most Holy Trinity through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. When should we make the sign of the cross?
A. We should make it especially on four occasions: 1) at the beginning of our prayers, 2) at the start of our principal actions, 3) when we are assailed by temptation, and 4) when we are exposed to some danger.
Q. Should we highly esteem the sign of the cross?
A. Yes, because it represents the sacred mysteries for us.
Q. What mysteries does the sign of the cross represent?
A. It represents and reminds us of the principal mysteries of our religion, in particular, the Holy Trinity and the Redemption.
Q. How does the sign of the cross represent the mystery of the Holy Trinity?
A. It is by having us pronounce the words "In the name of the Father . . . " and so on.
Q. How does the sign of the cross traced on ourselves represent the mystery of the Redemption?
A. It is by our tracing on ourselves the cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us.
Q. Why was the sign of the cross instituted?
A. It was instituted to make us remember that we have been saved and that we can attain happiness only through the cross.

Lesson 3—The duties and obligations of a Christian

Q. Are all who exhibit the external marks of a Catholic Christian true followers of Jesus Christ?
A. No, not all of them are.
Q. Are not all Catholics true disciples of Jesus Christ?
A. No, because some do not practice what Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to do.
Q. What did Jesus Christ command his disciples to do?
A. He commanded them to carry out faithfully their duties to God.
Q. How many duties do Christians have to God?
A. There are two duties.
Q. What are the two duties Christians owe to God?
A. They must know God and love God.

Q. Can Christians ever exempt themselves from these two duties?
A. They must never do so if they wish to live as true Christians agreeable to God.
Q. Do Christians have duties and obligations to God other than to know him and to love him?
A. Yes, they do have other duties, but all are related to knowing and loving God.
Q. Are Christians bound to adore and love God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to avoid sin, and to observe the commandments of God and the Church?
A. Yes, but all these duties are summed up in that of loving God.
Q. How is the Christian's obligation to adore God included in the duty of loving God?
A. Those who love God know that they must attentively revere and respect him.
Q. How does the Christian's obligation of knowing, loving, and adoring our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, depend on the duties to know and to love God?
A. As our Lord instructed us in the holy Gospel, we cannot truly know, love, and adore God without also knowing, loving, and adoring his Son, Jesus Christ, whom God sent to us. Furthermore, our Lord Jesus Christ is God as well as human, and he cannot be known, loved, and adored as a human unless we consider his humanity as united to his divinity.
Q. How does the duty of avoiding sin depend on loving God?
A. We cannot avoid sin, which is an injury to God, unless we love God; we cannot love God without avoiding sin, which makes us his enemy.
Q. How does the Christian's obligation of observing God's commandments depend on the duty of loving God?
A. If we love God, we must keep his commandments.
Q. How is the obligation of keeping the commandments of the Church implied in the Christian's duty of loving God?
A. If we love God, we will do whatever he requires of us in his own name or through anyone else.
Q. What then do a Christian's duties to God come down to?
A. They come down to these two principal duties of knowing and loving God and taking the means necessary to fulfill these obligations properly.

Treatise 1[2]

The First Duty of a Christian, Which Is to Know God

Lesson 1—Faith, by which we know God in this world

Q. What is the Christian's first duty to God?
A. It is to know God.
Q. How do we know God in this world?
A. We know God through faith.
Q. What is faith?
A. Faith is a virtue that makes us believe what we are told.
Q. How many kinds of faith are there?
A. The two kinds of faith are divine faith and human faith.
Q. What is divine faith?
A. By divine faith God enlightens our mind so that we can firmly believe everything the Church teaches and commands us to believe because God has revealed it to her.
Q. How does divine faith enlighten our mind?
A. It does so by making known what we previously did not know.
Q. What does it mean to believe something?
A. Believing means accepting something as true and assenting to it solely on the word of another who has told it to us.
Q. Why should we firmly believe everything the Church teaches and commands us to believe?
A. We do so because God has revealed these truths to her.
Q. Why must we firmly believe everything God has revealed to his Church?
A. It is because God can neither be deceived nor wish to deceive us.
Q. Should we be as certain of the truths we know through faith as we are of the things we see with our own eyes?
A. We should be even more certain of them because our eyes, our senses, and our mind can deceive us, whereas God can neither deceive anyone nor be deceived.
Q. When did we receive faith?

2. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 2, part 1, treatise 1, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1006–29; Cahiers lasalliens 21, 10–72.

A. We received faith when we were baptized.
Q. Does mortal sin make us lose faith?
A. No, but it renders it useless for salvation if we are God's enemy.
Q. What does human faith mean?
A. Human faith is a quality, and sometimes a virtue, that leads us to accept what people tell us.
Q. Do heretics possess faith?
A. They do not possess divine faith, only human faith.
Q. Do heretics believe some of the mysteries of our holy religion?
A. Yes, but they do not accept all of them.
Q. Because they believe in some of the mysteries of our holy religion, why is the faith of heretics not truly divine faith?
A. Heretics believe the mysteries of our holy religion but not because God revealed them.
Q. Why is the heretics' faith in the mysteries of our holy religion not based on the revelation of God?
A. It is because if they do not believe God on one point, they cannot believe him on another.
Q. Why is the faith of heretics merely a human faith?
A. Heretics only believe certain mysteries of our religion because they have been taught to do so by others.
Q. Can we be deceived into believing truths just because others have told us to do so?
A. Yes, even good, learned, and enlightened people can be deceived and can deceive others sometimes.

Lesson 2—The truths of faith that we must believe

Q. How many truths does the Church teach and command us to believe?
A. There are two kinds of such truths: speculative and practical.
Q. What are the speculative truths that the Church teaches and commands us to believe?
A. They are truths that we must simply believe, such as that there is only one God.
Q. What do we mean by the practical truths that the Church commands us to believe?
A. They are truths that we must both believe and practice, such as forgiving our enemies and doing good to them.
Q. What practical truths does the Church command us to believe?
A. They are the truths that our Lord Jesus Christ taught in the holy Gospel and all those set forth in Holy Scripture.

Q. Must we believe all the practical and speculative truths that the Church teaches and commands us to believe?
A. Yes, we must believe them all.
Q. Is it sufficient to believe in general all that the Church teaches and commands us to believe?
A. No, this is not sufficient; there are several mysteries that we are obliged to believe and know in particular.
Q. What particular mysteries must we believe and know?
A. They are the ones contained in the Apostles' Creed.
Q. What particular truths must we believe and know to be saved?
A. These truths are 1) there is only one God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; 2) the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, became human and died on the cross to ransom us from sin and to deliver us from the pains of hell; 3) the good, namely, those who died in the state of grace, will be rewarded and will go to heaven, where they will see God for eternity, and the wicked, namely, those who died in the state of mortal sin, will be punished and will go to hell, where they will never see God and will burn for eternity.
Q. Would it be a sin not to believe these truths?
A. Yes, and we can neither please God nor enjoy one day of happiness in heaven if we do not believe these particular truths.

Lesson 3—The means of preserving and increasing our faith and our obligation to make acts of faith

Q. What must we do to preserve and increase our faith?
A. We must do three things: 1) ask God often for this grace, 2) make frequent acts of faith, and 3) often perform actions that the practical truths of faith teach us.
Q. When should we especially ask God to preserve and to augment our faith?
A. We ought to do so when we are tempted against faith.
Q. When must we make acts of faith?
A. There are four occasions in particular: 1) when we begin to have the use of reason, 2) when we are tempted against faith, 3) when we receive a sacrament, and 4) when we are about to die.
Q. Would we sin by not making acts of faith?
A. Yes, we would sin if we did not make any acts of faith on the principal mysteries of our holy religion.
Q. In how many ways can we make acts of faith?
A. We can do so in two ways, in general and in particular.
Q. How can we make a general act of faith?

A. We can do so in this way: My God, I firmly believe everything the Church teaches and commands us to believe because you have revealed it to her.
Q. How can we make a particular act of faith in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity?
A. We can do so in this way: My God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because you have revealed this to your Church.
Q. Is it sufficient to make acts of faith only on the speculative truths that faith teaches us?
A. No, we must also make acts of faith on the practical truths, that is, those we must practice.
Q. How can we make an act of faith on a practical truth?
A. We can do so in this way: My God, I firmly believe that we must pardon our enemies and do good to them and that if we fail to do this, we cannot be saved, for Jesus Christ taught this in the holy Gospel.
Q. How can we act according to a practical truth that faith teaches us?
A. We can perform good deeds because faith teaches us to do so. For example, when we pardon our enemies and do good to them, we act according to a practical truth of faith. Another example would be to discipline ourselves so as not to fall into sin, for faith teaches us that we must master ourselves if we wish to enter heaven.

Lesson 4—The principal truths of faith in the Apostles' Creed

Q. Where can we find the truths of faith we must know and believe?
A. They are contained in the Apostles' Creed.[3]
Q. What does the word *Symbole* mean?
A. It means *sign,* or *summary.*
Q. What is the Apostles' Creed?
A. It is a summary of the principal mysteries of our faith.
Q. Why is it called the Apostles' Creed?
A. It is because the Apostles composed it before going out to preach throughout the world and because it contains in abridged fashion the main points of the teaching the Apostles left us.
Q. Why was the Apostles' Creed drawn up?
A. Its purpose is that the Church can profess a single belief throughout the world.
Q. Why is the Apostles' Creed given the name *Symbole*?

3. *Symbole des apôtres* in French, referring to the Apostles' Creed.

A. It is both a sign by which Christians can be recognized and a summary of what they should believe.
Q. Must we know the Apostles' Creed by heart?
A. Yes, we should know it well or at least know the meaning of its mysteries and truths.
Q. Are we obliged to recite the Apostles' Creed?
A. Yes, because the Church commands us to do so.
Q. When must we recite the Apostles' Creed?
A. We ought to recite it every day, morning and evening, and when we are tempted against faith.
Q. Why does the Church want us to recite the Apostles' Creed so frequently?
A. By reciting it frequently, we renew our profession of faith often.
Q. Recite the Apostles' Creed in Latin.
A. This is the Apostles' Creed in Latin: *Credo in Deum*. . . .
Q. Now recite the Apostles Creed in French [English].[4]
A. I believe in God the Father almighty. . . .
Q. How many articles are in the Apostles' Creed?
A. The Apostles' Creed has twelve articles.
Q. Recite each of the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed.
A. 1) I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, 2) and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, 3) who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, 4) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; 5) he descended into hell, rose from the dead on the third day, 6) ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; 7) he will come again to judge the living and the dead; 8) I believe in the Holy Spirit, 9) the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, 10) the forgiveness of sins, 11) the resurrection of the body, and 12) life everlasting. Amen.
Q. How many parts does the Apostles' Creed have?
A. The Apostles' Creed has three parts.
Q. What is the subject of the first part of the Apostles' Creed?
A. The first part is about God, the person of the Father, and the creation of the world.
Q. What is the subject of the second part of the Apostles' Creed?
A. The second part concerns the Son of God, his Incarnation, his other mysteries, and our redemption.
Q. What is the subject of the third part of the Apostles' Creed?
A. The third part concerns the Holy Spirit, God's gifts to the living who belong to the Church, and the glory promised after death.

4. *Français* in the original; *English* is inserted here because the ensuing questions refer to the articles of the Apostles' Creed in the vernacular.

Lesson 5—The first article of the Apostles' Creed: God and the creation of the world

Q. What is the first topic of the Apostles' Creed?
A. The first topic is God and the creation of the world.
Q. What is the first article of the Apostles' Creed?
A. The first article is "I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth."
Q. What does the word *believe* mean?
A. To believe means to hold something as certain and sure.
Q. How many ways are there to believe in God?
A. There are three ways.
Q. What are the three ways to believe in God?
A. The three ways are to believe that God exists, to believe what God says, and to believe in God.
Q. What does believing that God exists mean?
A. To believe that God exists means to believe that there is a God, and only one.
Q. What does believing what God says mean?
A. It is to believe everything God has said and revealed because he is truth itself.
Q. What does believing in God mean?
A. Believing in God means believing that God is good and our last end and placing all our trust in him.
Q. Can sinners truly say that they believe in God?
A. No, they cannot truthfully say this; they merely believe that God exists and what God has said.
Q. Why do sinners not believe in God?
A. It is because they do not place all their trust in God.
Q. Who is God?
A. God is the pure and infinitely perfect spirit who created heaven and earth and is the sovereign Lord of all things.
Q. What does it mean to say that God is a pure spirit?
A. It means that God has no body.
Q. If God has no body, why do we speak as though God has a mouth, eyes, ears, hands, and feet?
A. This helps us understand that God speaks to us as though he had a mouth, sees us as though he had eyes, hears us as though he had ears, and punishes or rewards us as though he had hands.
Q. What do we mean when we say in the first article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in God the Father"?
A. We mean that there are three persons in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that the first person of the Holy

Trinity is called the Father because he has a Son, who is God just as he is.

Q. Are the Son and the Holy Spirit as all powerful as God the Father?

A. Yes, they are as powerful as the Father.

Q. Why do we call the Father "almighty" but not the Son or the Holy Spirit?

A. We attribute almighty power to the Father because he is the first person of the Holy Trinity.

Q. What does it mean to say that God is almighty?

A. To be almighty means that nothing is difficult or impossible.

Q. Can God do whatever he wishes?

A. Yes, God can do whatever he wishes except commit sin.

Q. Why cannot God commit sin?

A. It is because God cannot hate himself.

Q. Why do we call God the Creator of heaven and earth?

A. It is because God made out of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures.

Q. What is meant by heaven and earth?

A. By heaven we mean heaven and the angels who dwell there; by earth we mean all humanity and all other things found on earth.

Q. What does it mean to be a creator or to create?

A. A creator makes something out of nothing.

Q. Is it possible to create and to make something out of nothing?

A. Yes, God can do so because he is all powerful.

Q. How did God create and make all things out of nothing?

A. God did this by a mere word.

Q. How do we usually refer to everything that God created?

A. We call it the world.

Q. Why do we say that the Father created the world?

A. It is because the Father is the principle of the other two persons and created the world through the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Q. Has the world existed from all eternity?

A. No, God created it at the beginning of time.

Q. When did God create time?

A. God created time when he began to create the world.

Q. Why did God create the world?

A. It was to make known his almighty power and his goodness to all creatures and thus to be glorified.

Q. How long did it take God to create the world?

A. God created the world in six days.

Q. Could not God have created the world in an instant?

A. Yes, God could easily have done so.

Q. Why did God take six days to create the world if he could have done it instantly?
A. It is because it pleased God to take this time to fashion all creatures with order and wisdom.
Q. Does God sustain all the creatures he made?
A. Yes, God sustains them all; they cannot subsist for a single instant without him and his help.
Q. Does God govern all creatures?
A. Yes, God governs them all and disposes of them as he pleases.

Lesson 6—The angels

Q. What creatures are the most perfect?
A. They are the angels.
Q. What are angels?
A. Angels are spirits, without a body, that God created to give him honor and to help us achieve our salvation.
Q. Are there many angels?
A. Yes, there are great numbers of angels.
Q. Are there different kinds of angels?
A. Yes, angels are divided into various groups called hierarchies.
Q. How many groups or hierarchies of angels are there?
A. There are three hierarchies.
Q. In each hierarchy, how many kinds, or choirs, of angels are there?
A. Each hierarchy has three kinds of angels, making nine choirs of angels in all.
Q. What are the nine choirs of angels?
A. In the first hierarchy are Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; in the second hierarchy are Virtues, Dominations, and Powers, and in the third hierarchy are Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.
Q. When did God create the angels?
A. Saint Augustine says that it was on the first day.
Q. Where did God create the angels?
A. God created them in heaven.
Q. In what state were the angels created?
A. They were created in the state of grace.
Q. Did all the angels remain faithful to God and preserve the gift of grace?
A. No, some persevered in grace; others lost it through pride.
Q. What happened to the angels who lost the grace of God?
A. They were driven from heaven and cast into hell to burn forever.
Q. Did God give the angels who lost grace time to do penance?
A. No, God condemned them as soon as they sinned.

Q. What do we call these angels who lost the grace of God?
A. We call them devils, demons, fallen angels, or wicked spirits.
Q. What happened to the angels who persevered in grace?
A. They remained in heaven, where they enjoy eternal happiness.
Q. What does the word *angel* mean?
A. The word angel means *messenger*.
Q. Why are angels called messengers?
A. They are called messengers because God sends them to care for humans and to help them achieve salvation.
Q. What do we call the angels who are sent to care for humans and to help them achieve salvation?
A. We call them guardian angels.
Q. Does every human have a guardian angel?
A. Yes, every person has a guardian angel.
Q. How do our guardian angels care for us?
A. They care for us in four principal ways: 1) they give us good inspirations; 2) they protect us from many occasions of sin; 3) they offer our prayers to God; 4) they pray to God for us.
Q. Can we pray to the angels?
A. Yes, we can pray to them to ask God for the graces we need.

Lesson 7—The creation of humans; the first sin

Q. What is the most perfect creature on earth?
A. The human being is the most perfect of all creatures on earth.
Q. What is a human being?
A. A human being is a rational creature made in the image of God and composed of body and soul.
Q. Why do we say that human beings are rational?
A. They are rational creatures because when they do something, they know what they do and why.
Q. How are humans made in the image of God?
A. Their soul, not their body, is made in the image of God.
Q. How is our soul made in the image of God?
A. Just as God is an invisible and immortal spirit who knows and loves himself, our soul is spiritual, invisible, immortal, and capable of knowing and loving God.
Q. From what did God form the body of the first human being?
A. God made it from the dust of the earth.
Q. From what did God make the soul of the first human being?
A. God made it out of nothing because he created it.
Q. Was that the only soul God created?
A. No, God also created the souls of all other human beings.

Q. Why did God create the soul of the first human and of all humans?
A. God created souls so that we might learn to know and love God in this life and thereby enjoy eternal happiness in heaven.
Q. What is the name of the first man?
A. His name is Adam.
Q. What is the name of the first woman?
A. Her name is Eve.
Q. In what state did God create Adam?
A. When God created Adam, he gave him many different gifts for body and soul.
Q. What gifts did God give Adam's soul when he created him?
A. Adam's soul was made spiritual and immortal, filled with many graces, and made capable of exercising mastery over all visible creatures.
Q. What gifts did God give to Adam's body?
A. Adam was exempt from all infirmities, sufferings, and death as long as he never sinned.
Q. Did Adam remain the master of all visible creatures?
A. No, this lasted only as long as he was entirely submissive to God.
Q. Where did God place Adam after creating him?
A. God placed Adam in a garden called the earthly paradise.
Q. Why was it called the earthly paradise?
A. It was because it was a blissful place to live.
Q. What commands did God give Adam when he placed him in the earthly paradise?
A. God commanded Adam to love and serve him and to cultivate the garden.
Q. What did God forbid Adam to do when he placed him in the earthly paradise?
A. God forbade him to eat the fruit of a tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
Q. What punishment did God say would befall Adam if he ate the fruit of this tree?
A. God forbade him to eat it under pain of both temporal and eternal death.
Q. Why did God forbid Adam to eat the fruit of this tree?
A. God wanted to test his submission and obedience.
Q. Did Adam obey God?
A. No, he ate the fruit God had forbidden him to eat.
Q. Who encouraged Adam to eat the forbidden fruit?
A. It was Eve.
Q. Who tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit?

A. The devil, in the form of a serpent, tempted her.
Q. What misery and weakness do all suffer because of Adam's sin?
A. There are five particular sufferings: 1) ignorance, 2) the struggle to do good, 3) the tendency to do wrong, 4) physical sufferings and death, and 5) hell and eternal damnation.
Q. Why are all humans punished because of Adam's sin?
A. It is because all humanity has sinned in him and with him.
Q. How have all humans sinned in Adam and incurred his guilt?
A. God had ordained that if Adam sinned, all humanity would sin in and with him and would share his guilt.

Lesson 8—The Incarnation of the Son of God

Q. Did God abandon the human race in this state of sin?
A. No, God resolved to deliver humans from it.
Q. What did God do to save humans from the state of sin?
A. God sent his Son into the world for this purpose.
Q. When the Son of God came into the world, what did he do to free humans from the state of sin?
A. He became a human being.
Q. What does it mean that he became a human?
A. It means that he assumed a body and a soul like ours.
Q. Did the Father and the Holy Spirit also become human?
A. No, only the Son did.
Q. What do we call the incarnate Son of God?
A. We call him our Lord Jesus Christ, or the Incarnate Word.
Q. Is Jesus Christ both God and human at the same time?
A. Yes, he is God because of his divine nature and human because he also has a human nature.
Q. Because Jesus Christ is God and human, does he have two persons as well as two natures?
A. No, in Jesus Christ there is only one person, the Son, who is the second person of the Most Holy Trinity.
Q. When Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, was on earth, was he like other men?
A. Yes, he was entirely like them in body and in soul.
Q. Was Jesus Christ different in any way than other humans?
A. He differed only in being sinless, having no inclination to sin, and suffering no form of ignorance.
Q. What do we mean by saying in the Creed that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Blessed Virgin Mary?
A. The body of Jesus Christ was formed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin from her most pure blood and therein united to his soul.

Q. How could the mother of Jesus Christ, a virgin, conceive?
A. Conception took place by a miracle through the action of the Holy Spirit.
Q. How was Jesus Christ conceived by the action of the Holy Spirit?
A. This mystery was accomplished when the Holy Spirit formed the body of Jesus Christ in the womb of the Most Blessed Virgin, created his soul, and at the same time united the body to the soul.
Q. Did the three persons of the Holy Trinity form the body of Jesus Christ and create his soul?
A. Yes, the three divine persons did this together.
Q. Then why do we say that the Holy Spirit formed the body of Jesus Christ and created his soul, instead of saying that this was done by the other two persons as well?
A. We say this because God gave his Son out of love, and what God does out of love is attributed to the Holy Spirit.
Q. What do we mean by saying that the Son of God is incarnate?
A. We mean that the Son of God became human, uniting his person substantially to the body and the soul that he took in the womb of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. What do the words *Incarnation of Jesus Christ* mean?
A. These words designate the union of the body and the soul of Jesus Christ with the person of the Son of God.
Q. How did the Son of God become man? How was the Incarnation, that is, the union of the body and soul of Jesus Christ with the person of the Son, brought about?
A. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ took place as follows, and this is how he became man. As soon as the Holy Spirit formed the body and created the soul of Jesus Christ in the womb of the Most Blessed Virgin, the Son of God united them to his divine Person.
Q. When do we celebrate the feast of the Incarnation and the conception of Jesus Christ?
A. We celebrate this feast, called the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin, on 25 March.
Q. Why is this feast of the conception of Jesus Christ called the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. It is because on this day the angel Gabriel announced to the Most Blessed Virgin that she will conceive a child who will be the Son of God.

Lesson 9—Our Lord Jesus Christ's parents, birth, and life

Q. When the Son of God became human, did he have a father and a mother like other people?

A. As God he has a Father, but as a human he has a mother, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, but no father.
Q. Who is the father of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. It is God the Father, the first person of the Most Holy Trinity.
Q. Why is God the Father the true father of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. It is because from all eternity the Father begot the person of the Son of God, who is also the person of Jesus Christ.
Q. Is Jesus Christ the only Son of God?
A. He is the only Son of God by nature because the Father from all eternity begot him alone. In begetting him, God the Father communicated the divine nature to him alone.
Q. Because Jesus Christ is the only Son of God by nature, why do we say that good Christians are children of God?
A. Good Christians are not children of God by nature but by adoption because God chose and adopted them as his children when he gave them grace.
Q. Is the Holy Spirit the father of our Lord Jesus Christ as man?
A. No, because the Holy Spirit did not beget Christ.
Q. Because Jesus Christ as man has no human father, why is he called the son of David?
A. It is because he is the son of the Most Blessed Virgin, who descended from David.
Q. Is Saint Joseph the human father of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. No, Saint Joseph is not his true father.
Q. Why does the Gospel call Saint Joseph the father of Jesus Christ if he is, in effect, not his father?
A. It is because Jesus Christ as a child lived with Saint Joseph and because everyone thought Saint Joseph was his father.
Q. Why did people believe that Saint Joseph was Jesus' father?
A. It is because Saint Joseph was entrusted with the guidance of Jesus Christ and because he was the husband of the Most Blessed Virgin, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. Was the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ a virgin when she conceived him?
A. Yes, and she remained a virgin afterward.
Q. Can we call the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God?
A. Yes, we can and we ought to call her the Mother of God, not because she engendered the divinity, but because she gave birth to the body of Jesus Christ, who is God.
Q. As a man, was Jesus Christ the only son of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. Yes, because the Most Blessed Virgin never had any other children besides our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. If the Most Blessed Virgin never had any other children besides our Lord Jesus Christ, why does the Gospel speak of the brothers of Jesus Christ?
A. What the Gospel refers to as Jesus' brothers are his cousins, not his brothers, a term often used in Holy Scripture for close relatives.
Q. On what day and at what hour was Jesus Christ born?
A. He was born on Christmas day, 25 December, during the night.
Q. Where was Jesus Christ born?
A. He was born in a stable near the town of Bethlehem.
Q. On what day was Jesus Christ circumcised and given the name Jesus?
A. It was eight days after his birth, on New Year's day.
Q. Who gave the name Jesus to the incarnate Son of God?
A. Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin gave him this name, following God's instructions received through an angel.
Q. What does the name *Jesus* mean?
A. It means *Savior.*
Q. Why is the incarnate Son of God called the Savior?
A. He came into this world to save all humans.
Q. From what did the Son of God come to save all humans?
A. It is from sin, death, hell, and all the evils of soul and body.
Q. What led the Son of God to become our Savior?
A. His goodness alone led him to do this.
Q. Why is the name *Christ,* which means *anointed,* or *sacred,* added to the name Jesus?
A. It is to show us that Jesus Christ was sanctified and filled with grace by the union of his divine nature and his human nature.
Q. Why is Jesus Christ called our Lord?
A. It is because he has a special authority over Christians, whom he redeemed by his blood.
Q. When did the kings adore Jesus Christ?
A. It was on 6 January, thirteen days after his birth.
Q. When did the Most Blessed Virgin present Jesus Christ in the Temple?
A. It was on the fortieth day after his birth.
Q. What do we call the feast of the Presentation of our Savior in the Temple?
A. It is the feast of the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. Why do we call the feast of our Lord's Presentation in the Temple the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. On that day the Most Blessed Virgin went to the Temple not only to present our Lord but also to purify herself.

Q. What happened to Jesus Christ after he was presented in the Temple?
A. Saint Joseph and the Most Blessed Virgin had to take Jesus and flee into Egypt.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ have to flee into Egypt?
A. Herod began a persecution to find Jesus so that he could put him to death.
Q. How long did Jesus Christ remain in Egypt?
A. He remained there until Herod's death.
Q. What happened to Jesus Christ after Herod died?
A. The Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph brought our Lord Jesus Christ out of Egypt and back to Judea.
Q. Where did Jesus Christ live after returning from Egypt?
A. He lived in Nazareth under the guidance of the Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, for which reason he was called a Nazarene.
Q. Where, by whom, and at what age was Jesus Christ baptized?
A. When Jesus Christ was about thirty years old, Saint John the Baptist baptized him in the Jordan River.
Q. What did Jesus Christ do after he was baptized?
A. He went into the desert, where he fasted for forty days and nights; he neither ate nor drank and was tempted three times by the devil.
Q. What did Jesus Christ do when he returned from the desert?
A. He spent three years preaching the Gospel, from the time of his baptism until that of his death.

Lesson 10—The sufferings and death of Jesus

Q. What happened to Jesus Christ after he preached the Gospel for three years?
A. Judas, one of his disciples, betrayed him into the hands of the Jews.
Q. What did the Jews do with Jesus Christ after Judas betrayed him?
A. After causing him much suffering, they put him to death.
Q. Why do we say in the Creed that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate?
A. This shows that his sufferings and death are verifiable.
Q. Who is Pontius Pilate?
A. He was the governor of Judea, appointed by the Romans.
Q. Did Jesus Christ suffer both in body and in soul?
A. Yes, he suffered mortal sadness in his soul and various torments in his body.
Q. How did Jesus Christ die?

A. He died by being nailed to a cross.
Q. Who was nailed to a cross with Jesus Christ?
A. He was crucified between two thieves, one on his right and the other on his left.
Q. Did Jesus Christ die as God or as a man?
A. He died as a man, not as God.
Q. Can we say that when Jesus Christ died, God died?
A. Yes, we can truly say this because Jesus Christ is God.
Q. Why can we say that when Jesus Christ died, God died, if Jesus Christ did not die as God?
A. It is because we attribute to the person of Jesus Christ what is proper to his human nature, for example, suffering and dying.
Q. Where did Jesus Christ die?
A. He was crucified and died on a cross on Mount Calvary, near Jerusalem.
Q. When did Jesus Christ die?
A. He died at three o'clock in the afternoon.
Q. What do we call the day when we commemorate the death of Jesus Christ?
A. We call it Good Friday.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ suffer so much and die on a cross?
A. Jesus suffered and died to satisfy the justice of God, his Father, for our sins.
Q. Did Jesus Christ have to suffer and die for us?
A. No, he did not have to do this; he could have abandoned us in our sins and allowed us to be damned.
Q. Could anyone else, a man or an angel for instance, have satisfied the justice of God for our sins?
A. No, neither a man nor an angel could have done this.
Q. Why could no one but Jesus Christ satisfy God's justice for sins?
A. The Savior had to be both God and human to do this.
Q. Why did the one who would make satisfaction for ours sins have to be God?
A. The offense made to God by our sins was something infinite; hence, infinite reparation had to be made to God, which no creature could do.
Q. Why did the one who would make satisfaction for our sins have to be human?
A. It is because he had to suffer and to die.
Q. Was it necessary for Jesus Christ to suffer as much as he did and to die on a cross to make satisfaction for our sins?
A. No, this was not necessary; he could have done it by one drop of his blood or by a single action.

Q. Why did Jesus Christ suffer so much and die on a cross if this was not necessary to satisfy God's justice for our sins?
A. It was to prove the great love he has for us and to fill us with a greater dread of sin.

Lesson 11—Jesus' burial, Resurrection, and Ascension

Q. What was done with Jesus Christ's body after his death?
A. Jesus Christ's body was wrapped in white winding cloths and placed in a tomb.
Q. How long did Jesus Christ's body remain in the tomb?
A. It remained for three days, from the evening of Good Friday until the morning of Easter.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ's body remain in the tomb for three days?
A. It remained there to give clear proof that he truly died and rose from the dead.
Q. Why do we say in the Creed that Jesus Christ descended into hell?
A. We say this because he descended beneath the earth to a place called limbo.
Q. What is limbo?
A. Limbo is the place where all the saints who had died before Jesus Christ were gathered to await his death and his coming, so as to ascend to heaven with him.
Q. Did Christ's soul or body descend into limbo?
A. His soul descended into limbo while his body remained in the tomb until his Resurrection.
Q. What happened to Jesus Christ's body after being in the tomb for three days?
A. His body was once again united to his soul and thus recovered life anew.
Q. How did Jesus Christ rise?
A. He rose by his own divine power, which is equal to that of the Father and the Holy Spirit.
Q. When Jesus Christ rose, did he still have the marks of his wounds on his body?
A. Yes, this was to prove that he had the same body that had suffered.
Q. When did Jesus Christ rise?
A. He rose on the third day after his death.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ rise so soon after his death?
A. He did so to show his disciples that he was alive with a new life and to give them the hope of rising like him.

Q. Why do we call the day on which we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ *Easter*, or the *Pasch?*
A. We call it Easter, or the Pasch, because on this day the Jews were celebrating the feast that they called the Pasch, or *Passover,* in memory of their ancestors' flight from Egypt and their crossing of the Red Sea.
Q. How long did Jesus Christ remain on earth after his Resurrection?
A. He remained on earth for forty days.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ remain on earth for forty days after his Resurrection?
A. He remained on earth to strengthen his disciples' faith in his Resurrection and to instruct them in his divine mysteries.
Q. What happened to Jesus Christ on the fortieth day after his Resurrection?
A. He ascended to heaven.
Q. What is meant by heaven, to which Jesus Christ ascended?
A. This is the place above the visible heavens where those who have served God in this world will dwell and be rewarded eternally.
Q. How did Jesus Christ ascend to heaven?
A. He ascended body and soul by his own power, in full sight of his disciples, until finally he disappeared in a cloud.
Q. Why do we say that Jesus Christ is seated in heaven at his Father's right hand?
A. This means that Jesus Christ is equal to his Father, not that God has a right or a left hand.
Q. What do we call the solemn celebration of the day when Jesus ascended to heaven?
A. We call it the feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson 12—The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Q. What happened ten days after our Lord ascended to heaven?
A. The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles.
Q. Why did the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to the Apostles?
A. The purpose was to fill them with the Holy Spirit and grace and to establish the Church.
Q. In what form did the Holy Spirit descend on the Apostles?
A. The Holy Spirit descended in the form of tongues of fire.
Q. Why did the Holy Spirit descend on the Apostles in this form?
A. The main purpose was to give the Apostles the gift of tongues and to prepare them to preach the Gospel.

Q. Were these tongues of fire the Holy Spirit?
A. No, they only indicated the presence and the effects that the Holy Spirit was going to produce in the Apostles.
Q. What benefits did the Holy Spirit confer on the Apostles when he descended upon them?
A. He taught them what truths to preach, enabled them to speak in various languages, gave them the power of performing miracles, and strengthened them in the faith and grace of Jesus Christ.
Q. Did the Holy Spirit have to bestow all these gifts on the Apostles and disciples of our Lord?
A. Yes, this was necessary for preparing them to preach the Gospel.
Q. Why do we call the day the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles *Pentecost?*
A. We call it Pentecost because on this same day the Jews celebrated a feast, called Pentecost, in memory of the fact that God had given them the law of Moses on Mount Sinai fifty days after the Israelites had left Egypt.
Q. Is the Holy Spirit everywhere?
A. Yes, the Holy Spirit is everywhere because he is God.
Q. How could the Holy Spirit descend on the Apostles on Pentecost if he is everywhere?
A. Although the Holy Spirit is everywhere, he visibly descended on the Apostles on Pentecost and performed marvelous effects he had not previously done.
Q. Does the Holy Spirit still show himself visibly as he did to the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday?
A. No, but he communicates himself invisibly to just souls, that is, to those who are in the state of grace.
Q. What does the Holy Spirit do for a soul in the state of grace?
A. He purifies it of all sins, gives or increases grace within it, inspires it with the thought of doing good, makes it love what is good and gives it the strength to accomplish it, enables it to overcome temptation, and consoles it in its trials.
Q. What are the signs that the Holy Spirit dwells in a soul?
A. The signs are that the soul takes pleasure in hearing about God, has a true horror of sin, and willingly and patiently suffers for the love of God.
Q. What do we need to do to draw down the Holy Spirit upon ourselves?
A. We must prepare ourselves to receive the sacrament of Confirmation worthily if we have not yet received it. We must also go to Confession often and avoid sin more than death itself, especially the sin of impurity.

Q. What must we do to keep the Holy Spirit with us?
A. We must avoid the occasions of sin, flee bad company, and pray to God fervently and frequently.

Lesson 13—The Church

Q. How did the Holy Spirit establish the Church when he descended on the Apostles?
A. He established the Church by inspiring some three thousand persons, whom Saint Peter soon after converted, to join together in one belief and by forming them into a society called the Church.
Q. Has this Church, established by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles, continued without interruption?
A. Yes, it has never ceased to be.
Q. Do all people belong to the Church?
A. No, only Catholic Christians do.
Q. Do deceased Catholic Christians belong to the Church just as the living do?
A. All Catholic Christians who have died in the state of grace belong to the Church, but those who have died in mortal sin are damned.
Q. Why do Catholic Christians who died in the state of grace belong to the Church?
A. They belong because they are united with Jesus Christ and the living by faith and charity.
Q. Why do those who died in mortal sin and are damned not belong to the Church?
A. Because they are no longer capable of loving or possessing God, they do not belong to the Church.
Q. What is the Church, which includes all Catholics, living and dead?
A. It is the society of all the faithful, living and dead, who are united among themselves and to Jesus Christ, who is their head.
Q. How do we distinguish the different parts of the Church?
A. We distinguish the Church triumphant, the Church suffering, and the Church militant.
Q. What is the Church triumphant?
A. The Church triumphant is all the saints and blessed in heaven.
Q. What is the Church suffering?
A. The Church suffering is the souls of those who died in the state of grace but who suffer in purgatory to finish making satisfaction for their sins because they did not entirely do so in this life.
Q. What is the Church militant?
A. The Church militant is the gathering in one single body, or society, of all Catholic Christians who are on this earth and who must

still win their salvation by combating the world, the flesh, and the devil. They are united among themselves and with Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, and they recognize the authority of our Holy Father the Pope, the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth.

Lesson 14—The head of the Church

Q. Is there a head of the Church on earth?
A. Yes, the Church has both an invisible and a visible head.
Q. Who is the invisible head of the Church?
A. He is our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. Why is Jesus Christ the invisible head of the Church?
A. Jesus Christ has given her his laws and guides her invisibly by the Holy Spirit and his grace.
Q. Who is the visible head of the Church?
A. Our Holy Father the Pope governs the Church visibly.
Q. Who is our Holy Father the Pope?
A. He is the bishop of Rome, the successor of Saint Peter, and the one Jesus Christ established as his vicar on earth to govern the Church.
Q. How do Catholic Christians constitute a society and a single body on earth?
A. They do so by their union among themselves and with Jesus Christ and by their dependence on our Holy Father the Pope, just as the subjects of a state constitute a society and a unified body because of their union among themselves and with their prince and because of their dependence on him.
Q. What kind of union do Catholic Christians have with Jesus Christ?
A. Jesus Christ and Catholic Christians are joined by two kinds of union: a spiritual, interior one and a visible, exterior one.
Q. Are all Catholic Christians spiritually and interiorly united with Jesus Christ?
A. No, many are only visibly and exteriorly united with Jesus Christ.
Q. Are all Catholic Christians visibly and exteriorly united with Jesus Christ?
A. Yes, they are all united with him in this way.
Q. Who are spiritually and interiorly united with Jesus Christ?
A. They are the Catholic Christians who, animated by the Holy Spirit, are in the state of grace.
Q. Who are visibly and exteriorly united with Jesus Christ?
A. They are all Catholic Christians who possess faith, even those who have committed mortal sin and thereby lack grace and are God's hated enemies.

Q. Why are all Catholic Christians, even those in mortal sin, visibly and exteriorly united with Jesus Christ?
A. They at least exteriorly profess the doctrine Jesus Christ taught, take part in the sacraments he instituted, share in the prayers and merits of the saints in heaven and of all Christians on earth, and are subject to our Holy Father the Pope and to other pastors of the Church.
Q. What kind of union with Jesus Christ must all Catholic Christians have to belong to the Church?
A. They all must be at least exteriorly united with him.
Q. What kind of union with Jesus Christ must all Catholic Christians have to please God?
A. They all must be at least interiorly united with Jesus Christ.
Q. Are all those who are exteriorly united with Jesus Christ joined to him as members to their head?
A. Yes, they are united with him in this way.
Q. Therefore, are all those exteriorly united with Jesus Christ members of the Church?
A. Yes, they are members of the Church.

Lesson 15—The members of the Church

Q. How do we become members of the Church?
A. We become members by receiving the sacrament of Baptism.
Q. How many kinds of members are there in the Church?
A. The two kinds of members are the living and the dead.
Q. Who are the living members of the Church?
A. They are Catholic Christians in the state of grace, either having preserved their baptismal grace or having recovered it through Penance.
Q. Who are the dead members of the Church?
A. They are those in mortal sin and without the grace of God.
Q. Why are Catholics lacking God's grace considered dead members of the Church?
A. They are dead members because God's grace gives life to the soul.
Q. Are there any who were once members of the Church but are not now?
A. Yes, some are in this situation.
Q. Who were once members of the Church and are now separated from her?
A. These include heretics, schismatics, and the excommunicated.
Q. Who are heretics?

A. Heretics are those who, although baptized, do not believe all the articles of faith that the Church obliges us to believe.
Q. Who are schismatics?
A. Schismatics are those who have been baptized but are not subject to the pope and to the other pastors of the Church.
Q. Who are the excommunicated?
A. The excommunicated are those who have been cut off from the visible communion of the Church, having committed great sins and having refused to submit to the Church.
Q. Can we associate with an excommunicated person?
A. No, this is not permitted.
Q. Are there persons who have never been members of the Church?
A. Yes, there are many.
Q. Who are those who have never been members of the Church?
A. They include pagans, idolaters, and infidels.
Q. Who are pagans?
A. Pagans live without practicing any religion.
Q. Who are idolaters?
A. Idolaters adore false gods and give homage to creatures instead of to God alone.
Q. Who are infidels?
A. Infidels do not recognize Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer; for example, the Jews are infidels.
Q. Why are pagans, idolaters, and infidels not members of the Church?
A. They are not baptized (and thus are not exteriorly united to Jesus Christ), and they do not profess faith in his teaching.

Lesson 16—The power of the true Church and the marks by which it can be recognized

Q. What power and authority does the Church possess?
A. She possesses the same power as Jesus Christ.
Q. Who gave the Church the same power and authority as Jesus Christ?
A. Jesus Christ gave it to her.
Q. How do we know that Jesus Christ gave his power and authority to the Church?
A. Jesus told us when he said, "If anyone refuses to hear the Church, let him be to you as the pagans or the publicans."[5]
Q. What are the most ordinary marks, or signs, by which we can recognize the true Church?

5. Matt. 18:17.

A. The four signs are that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.
Q. How is the Church one?
A. This means that the Church is the one true Church. All Catholics who belong to it profess the same faith, participate in the same sacraments, and obey the same pastors, especially the pope, her visible head, and Jesus Christ, her invisible head.
Q. Why is the Church holy?
A. The Church is holy because Jesus Christ, her founder and head, is holiness itself; her maxims, commandments, and sacraments are holy, and the living members of the Church are holy.
Q. Why is the Church called catholic, that is, universal?
A. The Church is catholic because it is spread throughout the world and will last until the end of time.
Q. Why is the Church called apostolic?
A. The Church is apostolic because the Apostles established it and taught the doctrine she has always preserved.
Q. Why is the Church also called Roman?
A. The Church is called Roman because the pope, the bishop of Rome, is the visible head of the Church and to distinguish her from heretical and schismatic sects, who claim the title of church.

Lesson 17—The Church's treasure: the communion of saints and the forgiveness of sins

Q. What benefits do the members of the Church enjoy in this life?
A. There are four principal benefits: 1) they become members of the communion of saints and share in the prayers and merits of the saints and of all Christians; 2) they can obtain the forgiveness and pardon of their sins; 3) they can receive the graces of Jesus Christ; 4) they can receive the sacraments of the Church.
Q. What benefits are promised to members of the Church in the next world?
A. There are three benefits: 1) the body will rise at the end of the world; 2) they will enjoy life everlasting; 3) they will be eternally happy in heaven.
Q. What is the communion of saints?
A. The communion of saints is the union existing among Christians (who are called saints among themselves), the saints in purgatory, and the saints in heaven. They share in the prayers, merits, satisfactions, and good works of the saints in heaven and of the Christians still on earth.
Q. Who receives the benefit of sharing the Church's spiritual goods?

A. All those in the state of grace share this benefit.
Q. Who participates in the sharing of spiritual goods?
A. The saints in heaven, the suffering souls in purgatory, and Christians in the state of grace share their spiritual goods.
Q. Why do these three groups share their spiritual goods?
A. They are all members of the body of the Church.
Q. Why are all Christians, even those still in this life, called saints?
A. By belonging to a religion that is holy, they are obliged to be saints.
Q. Does the Church have the power to forgive sins?
A. Yes, she has.
Q. Who gave the Church the power to forgive sins?
A. Our Lord gave it to her when he said to his Apostles, "If you forgive sins, they will be forgiven."[6]
Q. Through whom does the Church forgive sins?
A. She forgives sins through the ministry of her priests.
Q. How do members of the Church obtain pardon for their sins?
A. They do so by receiving the sacrament of Penance.
Q. Do all members of the Church obtain pardon for their sins?
A. Although all members can, not all do.
Q. Why do some members of the Church fail to obtain pardon for their sins?
A. Some members continue to sin and do not repent for the sins they have committed.
Q. How do members of the Church receive the grace of Jesus Christ?
A. They receive the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. How are the merits of Jesus Christ given to the members of the Church?
A. They are given through the holy sacrifice of the Mass and through the sacraments.
Q. Do all Church members have a right to receive the sacraments?
A. Yes, they all have this right, provided they have properly prepared themselves.
Q. Can the members of the Church receive all the sacraments?
A. Yes, except for Holy Orders and Matrimony; a Catholic cannot be ordained and married at the same time. Moreover, women are not able to receive Holy Orders.

6. John 20:23.

Lesson 18—The particular and the general judgment

Q. How long will the Church militant last?
A. It will last until the end of the world.
Q. Will the world last forever?
A. No, some day the world will end and be consumed by fire.
Q. Will anything remain after the world is consumed by fire?
A. No, nothing will remain except the earth and the heavens, which will have been purified by fire.
Q. What will happen to the people on earth when the world is consumed by fire?
A. They will all die and then return to life to appear at the last judgment.
Q. What is meant by saying that everyone will rise?
A. They will return to life; the body and the soul will be reunited.
Q. Will the soul also return to life?
A. No, it cannot, for the soul is already immortal.
Q. How will everyone return to life?
A. They will be raised to life by the almighty power of God, who will bring the body out of the grave.
Q. When will everyone rise?
A. They will rise at the end of the world.
Q. Why will everyone rise?
A. They will rise to be rewarded for the good or punished for the evil they did during life.
Q. Will the good and the wicked rise in the same way?
A. No, the just will arise with a glorified body; the wicked, with a frightful and miserable body.
Q. What will happen after everyone has risen?
A. Everyone will be brought to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where the last judgment will take place before our Lord.
Q. Will they undergo more than one judgment?
A. Yes, there will be two judgments: the particular and the general.
Q. What is the particular judgment?
A. This is the judgment God passes on each individual at the moment of death.
Q. What happens to the soul after the particular judgment?
A. If the soul is in the state of grace and has made complete satisfaction for its sins, it will go to heaven.
Q. If sins have not been entirely expiated at the moment of death, where will the soul go?
A. The soul will go to purgatory to finish satisfying God's justice.
Q. If someone dies in the state of mortal sin, where will the soul go?

A. It will go to hell to burn eternally.
Q. What is the general judgment?
A. The general judgment will happen at the end of the world in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where everyone will be judged.
Q. On what will people be judged in both the particular and the general judgment?
A. They will be judged on their thoughts, words, actions, and what they failed to do.

Lesson 19—The eternal life of the blessed and the eternal death of the wicked

Q. What will happen after the general judgment?
A. The just will go to heaven, where they will enjoy eternal life, and the wicked will be cast into hell, where they will burn eternally with the demons.
Q. Will everyone go to heaven after the general judgment?
A. No, only those who died in the grace of God will go to heaven.
Q. Who will go to hell?
A. The wicked who died in the state of mortal sin will go to hell.
Q. What is the eternal life that the just will enjoy in heaven?
A. It is a never-ending life of happiness.
Q. Of what will the happiness of eternal life consist?
A. Eternal life will consist in seeing God as he is, in loving him, and in possessing him forever.
Q. What will the blessed do in heaven?
A. They will adore and love God for all eternity.
Q. What blessings do the saints eternally possess in heaven?
A. They enjoy all sorts of blessings without any evil or suffering.
Q. Will only the soul enjoy the happiness of heaven?
A. No, after the general judgment, the body will also share in eternal happiness.
Q. Of what will the bodily happiness and glory of the blessed consist?
A. It will consist of four things: 1) they will never suffer any more; 2) they will be extremely beautiful and shine with splendor; 3) they will be able to move from place to place instantly; 4) they will be able to pass through other bodies, no matter how solid, without meeting any resistance.
Q. What punishments will those who go to hell suffer throughout all eternity?
A. They will endure four kinds of suffering: 1) they will never see God; 2) the body and soul will burn forever; 3) they will endure

all sorts of punishments without any consolation; 4) they will have no company except the demons and the other damned persons.

Q. What will the damned do in hell?
A. They will constantly blaspheme the name of God and curse themselves for having lost heaven through their own fault.
Q. Who runs a great risk of being damned?
A. Those who rarely go to Confession, who remain in mortal sin for a long time, who hate their neighbor, who retain another's goods, who do not correct themselves of their evil habits, who do not avoid occasions of sin, who pray little, who neglect their exercises of piety, and who put off their conversion until the hour of their death.

Treatise 2[7]

The Second Duty of a Christian, Which Is to Love God

Lesson 1—Charity, by which we love God and our neighbor for the love of God

Q. What is a Christian's second duty?
A. It is to love God.
Q. What does it mean to love God?
A. It means to attach our heart to God and to cultivate affection for him.
Q. By what virtue do we love God?
A. The virtue is called charity.
Q. What is charity?
A. Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.
Q. How should we love God?
A. We should love God with all our mind, all our heart, and all our strength—in other words, above all things.

7. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 2, part 1, treatise 2, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1029–53; Cahiers lasalliens 21, 73–138.

Q. What does it mean to love God above all things?
A. It means to love God more than anything and everything else we love in the world.
Q. Can we be saved without loving God above all things?
A. No, we cannot.
Q. Is it enough to say, "My God, I love you with all my heart"?
A. No, this is not enough.
Q. Are there any signs that show we love God?
A. Yes, we can mention several: 1) when we think often of God and willingly speak to him, 2) when we faithfully accomplish what we think God asks of us, 3) when we do good to all people, even those who hate us and do us harm, and 4) when we often make acts of love to God.
Q. How do we make an act of love to God?
A. We can make an act of love to God by saying, "My God, I love you more than all things and more than myself; I would prefer to die rather than offend you."
Q. How often should we make acts of love to God?
A. We should make them 1) in the morning on rising and in the evening when retiring, 2) in all our prayers, 3) at the beginning of all our actions, 4) when we are tempted to offend God, and 5) when we are about to receive a sacrament.
Q. Is it sufficient to love only God if we are to practice charity and be saved?
A. No, for this we must love not only God but also our neighbor.
Q. Why does charity require that we love our neighbor as well as God?
A. We cannot love God if we do not love our neighbor.
Q. How do we know that we cannot love God if we do not love our neighbor?
A. Saint John assures us that anyone who claims to love God but does not love his neighbor is a liar.[8]
Q. Does the same obligation bind a Christian to love both God and neighbor?
A. Yes, the same virtue and purpose lead us to love both God and neighbor.
Q. How should we love our neighbor?
A. We should love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.
Q. What does it mean to love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God?
A. It means to do for our neighbor out of love for God all the good that God wants us to desire and seek for ourselves.

8. 1 John 4:20.

Q. Who is our neighbor?
A. Our neighbor is every person in the world, even our greatest enemy.
Q. What do we owe our enemies?
A. We must pardon them for the wrongs they have inflicted on us, love them truly, pray to God for them, and help them in their spiritual and temporal necessities.
Q. Must we love everyone with an equal love?
A. No, we are not bound to love all equally.
Q. Whom should we love more?
A. We should have more love for 1) good Christians, who are our brothers and sisters in God and in Jesus Christ, and 2) our parents and those among our relatives to whom we are most closely bound.
Q. Who should we help more than others?
A. We should especially help those who need our spiritual aid more than our material assistance.

Lesson 2—The commandments of God in general

Q. How do we show our love of God and love of neighbor?
A. We show our love by doing the good God commands us to do and by avoiding the evil that God forbids, namely, sin.
Q. How do we know what doing good is?
A. The commandments of God and of the Church instruct us.
Q. How many commandments of God are there?
A. There are ten commandments.
Q. Recite the ten commandments in the words God gave them to us.
A. They are as follows: 1) I am the Lord your God, whom you should adore and love with all your heart; you shall not have strange gods before me. 2) You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain (that is, you must not swear). 3) Remember to keep holy the day of rest (that is, Sunday). 4) Honor your father and mother that you may have a long life on earth. 5) You shall not kill. 6) You shall not commit adultery. 7) You shall not steal. 8) You shall not lie or bear false witness against your neighbor. 9) You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. 10) You shall not covet your neighbor's house, servant, maidservant, ox, ass, or any other possession.
Q. How can we summarize the ten commandments of God?
A. We can summarize them in two main precepts. The first is to love God with all our heart and above all things; the second is to love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Q. Which commandments have to do with the love of God?
A. They are the first three.
Q. Which commandments have to do with the love of our neighbor?
A. They are the last seven.
Q. Is it necessary to keep all God's commandments to be saved?
A. Yes, this is necessary.
Q. How many commandments would we need to break in order to be damned?
A. If we break even one of them once, we could be damned.
Q. Who are obliged to keep God's commandments?
A. All those who have the use of reason are required to do so.
Q. Can we keep all the commandments without God's help?
A. No, we are not able to do this without the grace of God.
Q. What reward has God promised us if we keep the commandments?
A. God has promised us temporal blessings in this world and eternal life in the next.
Q. How will we be punished if we fail to keep the commandments?
A. We will suffer all sorts of temporal trials in this world, and we will never see God and will burn eternally in unquenchable fire in the next.

Lesson 3—The first commandment of God "I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods except me. You shall not make yourself carved images or any likenesses of anything to adore them or serve them."

Q. What does the first commandment require?
A. We are to adore God alone.
Q. What does it mean to adore God?
A. To adore God, who is our Creator and the one on whom we entirely depend, we must offer him the greatest reverence possible through our worship.
Q. In how many ways can we adore God?
A. We can adore God interiorly and exteriorly.
Q. What does it mean to adore God interiorly?
A. It means adoring God in spirit by recognizing and honoring him in the depths of our soul as our first principle and our last end.
Q. What does it mean to adore God exteriorly?
A. It means showing by exterior acts of humility and submission and with our body the esteem and respect we profess for God's majesty.

Q. Are we obliged to adore God both interiorly and exteriorly?
A. Yes, because both our body and our soul belong entirely to God, we must adore him with both.
Q. Is it enough to adore God exteriorly?
A. No, this is not enough; exterior adoration not accompanied by interior worship would be meaningless.
Q. When should a Christian adore God most of all?
A. This should be done particularly on six occasions: 1) every morning and evening on our knees, 2) from time to time during the day, 3) when entering a church, 4) when assisting at holy Mass, 5) when receiving the Blessed Sacrament, and 6) when hearing someone blaspheme God's holy name.
Q. How do we make an act of adoration?
A. We make an act of adoration as follows: "My God, I adore you as my Creator and sovereign Lord on whom I depend for all things; as such, I wish to give you all the honor due to you."
Q. Should we adore our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. Yes, we should adore him because he is God.
Q. Should we adore the humanity of Jesus Christ?
A. Yes, his humanity is united to his divinity.
Q. May we adore the clothes, the nails, the cross, and the images of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. Yes, we may adore them if we use them only as a means of adoring the person of Jesus Christ.
Q. Are we permitted to adore the Most Blessed Virgin, the angels, or the saints?
A. No, we can only honor them, for God alone is to be adored.
Q. Why are we allowed to honor the Most Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints?
A. We can honor them because of their great holiness, the glory they enjoy in heaven, and the power God has given them.
Q. Does the honor we offer to the Most Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints transgress the first commandment of God?
A. No, this honor is far less than the adoration we offer God.
Q. Are we permitted to honor the relics of the saints, that is, the remains of their body, bones, and possessions?
A. Yes, their body contributed much to their sanctification, and their belongings served as instruments for their perfection. The relics also remind us of the saints and help us to honor them.
Q. May we also honor images of our Lord and the saints?
A. Yes, this has always been the practice of the Church.
Q. Is honoring images contrary to the first commandment God gave Moses: "You shall not make any graven image"?

A. No, we do not adore these images as though they were gods, which is the only thing the first commandment forbids.
Q. In honoring images of our Lord or of the saints, are we honoring the wood, stone, metal, paint, and so on?
A. No, when we honor their images, we honor only our Lord or the saints they represent.
Q. When we kneel before an image, are we praying to it?
A. The image simply helps us to remember the saint to whom we are praying.
Q. Are images useful?
A. Yes, they remind us of the saints, help us remember their virtuous actions, and encourage us to imitate them.
Q. May we also honor the cross?
A. Yes, when we honor the cross, we honor Jesus Christ, who was crucified on it.
Q. We sometimes use the words "adoring the cross" when we venerate it; does this make us idolaters?
A. No, we are not adoring the wood of the cross but our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified on it.

Lesson 4—The second commandment of God "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; that is, you shall not swear by the name of the Lord your God."

Q. What does the second commandment forbid us to do?
A. It forbids us to swear by and to take God's holy name in vain.
Q. What is swearing by God's name?
A. It means claiming God as a witness that what we say is true.
Q. What is swearing in vain?
A. It means swearing for idle and useless things.
Q. What do we mean by God's name?
A. We mean any name signifying God, Jesus Christ, the saints, and holy things.
Q. Are we ever allowed to swear?
A. Yes, we can swear when what we say is true, just, and necessary.
Q. In how many ways can we sin against the second commandment?
A. We can do so in three ways: 1) by swearing or making oaths, 2) by blasphemy, and 3) by a vow wrongly made or not observed.
Q. What do we mean by swearing or making oaths?
A. We mean claiming God as a witness that what we say is true.
Q. In how many ways can we offend God by swearing and by oaths?

A. We can do so in three ways: 1) when we swear contrary to the truth or when uncertain about the truth, which is called perjury, 2) when we swear to do something wrong, or something good with no intention of doing it, and 3) when we swear without respect, discretion, or necessity—for example, when we swear terrible oaths or for no reason other than a bad habit.

Q. When is there a good reason for swearing?

A. It is when we are required to do so by a judge or by a superior in an important matter.

Q. If we swear to do something wrong, are we bound to carry it out?

A. No, if we were to do so, it would be a very serious sin.

Q. Who uses the name of God disrespectfully?

A. They do so who often have the name of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Most Blessed Virgin, or of the saints on their lips without reflecting about it.

Q. How might we correct ourselves of the habit of swearing?

A. We can do three things: 1) be reluctant to swear at all, 2) ask those who hear us swear to bring it to our attention, and 3) impose some penance every time we catch ourselves swearing.

Q. What is blasphemy?

A. Blasphemy is any irreverent expression addressed to God or the saints.

Q. In how many ways can we offend God by blasphemy?

A. We can do so in four ways: 1) by attributing to God what is not proper to him, saying, for instance, "By God's head" or "By God's belly," 2) by denying God's existence or taking away from him what is truly his, for example, saying that he is unjust for making us suffer so much, 3) by attributing to a creature what belongs to God, for instance, saying that a prince is as powerful as God, and 4) by cursing or speaking scornfully of God or the saints.

Q. How can we describe those who mock sacred things, jest about devotion, or complain about God when they suffer misfortune?

A. Such people are irreligious and impious.

Q. What is a vow?

A. A vow is a promise made to God to do some good thing that does not preclude our doing a better thing.

Q. Can we make vows to the Most Blessed Virgin or the saints?

A. No, vows can be made only to God.

Q. Why must vows be made only to God?

A. A vow is a religious act that we can only make to God by which we consecrate to his service and worship whatever we promise by the vow.

Q. Can we make a vow in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin or of the saints?
A. Yes, in this case the vow is made to God and not to the saints.
Q. In how many ways can we sin against a vow?
A. We can do so in three ways: 1) by not making it properly, 2) by not keeping it entirely or in part, and 3) by not fulfilling it, unless there is a legitimate reason.

Lesson 5—The third commandment of God "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath," which is Sunday.

Q. What does the third commandment require us to do?
A. We are to sanctify the holy day called Sunday.
Q. Has Sunday always been the special day to be sanctified?
A. No, the Jews observed Saturday, which they called *Sabbath*, namely, the "day of rest."
Q. Why did the Jews do this?
A. They wanted to recall the rest that God took on the seventh day after creating the world.
Q. How long have we been observing Sunday rather than Saturday?
A. The Apostles judged it proper to prescribe this to distinguish us from the Jews.
Q. Why did the Apostles choose to sanctify Sunday rather than Saturday?
A. They consecrated Sunday to God because several of the mysteries of our religion, especially the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, took place on Sunday.
Q. How must we sanctify Sundays and feast days?
A. We must refrain from servile work on those days and spend them in the service of God.
Q. What do we mean by servile work?
A. Servile work is the type of labor ordinarily performed by servants, hired hands, and manual workers to earn a living.
Q. May we ever work on Sundays and feast days?
A. We may do so with the permission of the pastor of the parish when some serious necessity requires it.
Q. What sort of necessity would justify our working after obtaining the permission of the pastor of the parish?
A. An example would be work that cannot be delayed or omitted without notable inconvenience for ourselves or for others.
Q. Is there always a need to work on Sundays and feast days during the grain harvest or the grape-picking time?
A. No, the need is only when crops would be lost if not harvested.

Q. Why are we forbidden to work on Sundays and feast days?
A. It is so that we can spend these days exclusively in serving God properly and thinking about our salvation.
Q. May we spend Sundays and feast days in dancing, traveling, and other amusements?
A. No, it would be a profanation of these holy days if we spent them entirely in such diversions.
Q. May we look for or organize work or travel to or from villages on Sundays and feasts for the sake of our business interests?
A. No, these days are set apart to focus us on our salvation, not on secular affairs.
Q. What is our principal obligation on Sundays and feast days?
A. It is to attend holy Mass.
Q. Is hearing a low Mass enough to sanctify Sundays and feast days properly?
A. No, we should also attend the parish Mass, the sermon, the catechism lesson, the parish Vespers, and all the public prayers.
Q. How should we spend the remaining time after attending church on Sundays and feasts?
A. We should spend it teaching children, if we have any, discussing the sermon or the catechism lesson, reading good books, visiting poor and afflicted people, and comforting those who are ill.
Q. What are the principal ways we can sanctify Sundays and feast days?
A. Two principal ways are 1) to purify our conscience by going to Confession and Communion frequently and 2) to spend these holy days without committing any sin.

Lesson 6—The fourth commandment of God "Honor your father and mother so that you may have a long life in the land the Lord your God has given you."

Q. What does the fourth commandment require us to do?
A. We are to honor our father and mother and all those who have authority over us.
Q. What does the fourth commandment require children to do?
A. They are required to do four things: 1) love their parents, 2) respect them, 3) obey them, and 4) help them.
Q. What do we mean by loving our parents?
A. It means desiring and doing for them all the good in our power.
Q. Who do not properly love their parents?
A. They are those who refuse to see them or who long for their death so as to be rid of them and inherit their property.

Q. What do we mean by respecting our parents?
A. This means showing consideration for them, speaking respectfully to them, never publicizing their defects, and never doing anything immodest or indecent in their presence.
Q. Who lack respect for their parents?
A. They are those who despise them, use injurious language with them, harshly reproach them, treat them as inferior, do not greet them, refuse to speak to them, or fail to visit them.
Q. What does obeying our parents mean?
A. This means willingly and promptly doing what they command us to do.
Q. Is it enough to obey our parents only when we are children?
A. No, we should obey them always, even after their death.
Q. How can we still obey our parents after they die?
A. We do so by fulfilling what they prescribed in their will or what they requested before dying.
Q. Must we obey our parents when they command something against God's law or our conscience?
A. No, we are even obliged to disobey them in such circumstances.
Q. What does helping our parents mean?
A. This means helping them financially when they are poor, consoling them in their suffering, caring for them when they are ill, making sure they receive the last sacraments when they are dying, and praying for them after they die.
Q. What are the duties of servants with regard to their masters?
A. They should obey them, faithfully serve them, and not waste their goods.

Lesson 7—The fifth commandment of God "You shall not kill."

Q. What does the fifth commandment forbid us to do?
A. We are forbidden to harm our neighbor in body or soul.
Q. How can we harm the body of our neighbor?
A. We do so by striking, wounding, or killing.
Q. Are we ever allowed to cause the death of another person?
A. Only public authorities, by a judge's order, can inflict death.
Q. Are we ever allowed to kill ourselves?
A. No, if we were to kill ourselves for any reason whatsoever, we would commit a very serious sin and lose our salvation.
Q. Do we commit a serious sin if we counsel someone to strike or to kill another, aid in doing so, or give advice about how to do it, especially when we could have prevented the action?

A. Yes, the sin would be as grave as though we had done the wrong ourselves.
Q. How can we harm the soul of our neighbor?
A. We can do so by giving scandal or by inciting someone to offend God.
Q. What do we mean by giving scandal to our neighbor?
A. This means committing some wicked act in our neighbor's presence that gives incentive to offend God.
Q. By this commandment are we only forbidden to wound, kill, or do some harmful action to the body or soul of our neighbor?
A. No, we are also forbidden even to think about acting in this way, to harbor hatred, or to nurture anger toward our neighbor.
Q. How do we know that the fifth commandment forbids us even to think about wounding, killing, or harming our neighbor in body or soul?
A. Sin does not consist merely in the evil action but in our perverse will. Willing to do something evil is as wrong as actually doing it, except that our neighbor is not harmed when we only wish to do evil.
Q. How do we know that the fifth commandment forbids us to hate our neighbor?
A. Saint John says, "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer."[9]
Q. Why does hating others make us a murderer?
A. It is because whoever truly hates another would like to see that person dead.
Q. Does the fifth commandment also forbid wishing ourselves or others to be sick or to die?
A. Yes, it does if we desire this with an evil intention.
Q. May we desire death for ourselves or for someone else, as long as it is without evil intent?
A. Yes, we may desire this to enjoy God in heaven or to be delivered from sin, which is how Saint Paul desired it for himself.[10]
Q. What must we do when we have harmed someone in body or soul?
A. We must make compensation to the person or to the family for bodily harm, and if we have harmed someone's soul, we must make amends as much as possible.
Q. If we give scandal to our neighbor, what should we do to repair the injury?
A. We must immediately dissuade him from doing wrong, encourage him to do right, and beg pardon for the scandal given.

9. 1 John 3:15.
10. Rom. 7:14.

Q. When we have given evil counsel, what should we do to repair the harm done?
A. We must tell the person not to follow our advice and repair any harm already done by his following our bad counsel.
Q. If others have done us harm, what should we do?
A. We must offer them pardon and do for them all the good we can.
Q. Is it enough simply to wish no evil to those who have harmed us?
A. No, we must wish and do for them all the good we can.

Lesson 8—The sixth and ninth commandments of God

6) "You shall not commit adultery."
9) "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife."

Q. What do the sixth and ninth commandments forbid us to do?
A. We are forbidden all kinds of impure acts, words, looks, desires, and thoughts.
Q. In what ways can we sin against the sixth and ninth commandments?
A. We can sin by our bodily senses against the sixth commandment and by the faculties of our soul against the ninth.
Q. How do we sin against the sixth commandment by the sense of touch?
A. We do so by touching ourselves or another person improperly for pleasure or by allowing another to touch us improperly.
Q. How do we sin against the sixth commandment by the sense of sight?
A. We do so by looking at another with impure pleasure, even if we do not intend to do anything wrong, by looking voluntarily at improper things with pleasure, by reading bad books, or by keeping them to read later.
Q. How do we sin against the sixth commandment by the sense of hearing?
A. We do so by listening with pleasure to improper words and songs.
Q. How do we sin against the sixth commandment with our mouth?
A. We do so by giving sensual kisses or by saying words or singing songs that are indecent.
Q. How do we sin against the sixth commandment with our whole body?
A. We do so by dressing immodestly or by adopting postures or making gestures that are indecent.

Q. How do we sin against the ninth commandment with the use of our memory?
A. We do so when we take pleasure recalling something immodest.
Q. How do we sin against the ninth commandment with our will?
A. We do so by desiring or willing to do or to see something impure, whether or not we carry out this intention.
Q. How do we sin against the ninth commandment in thought?
A. We do so by dwelling on indecent thoughts and taking pleasure in them, even without performing them.
Q. What should we do when impure thoughts suggest themselves to us?
A. We must reject them without delay.
Q. Should we greatly fear these impure and indecent sins?
A. Yes, because they displease God very much, because we are always in danger of consenting to them, and because they are the most common reason for the damnation of Christians.
Q. Should we feel horror for the sin of impurity?
A. Yes, because this sin defiles the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit and a member of Jesus Christ; consequently, it should be pure like the soul.
Q. What should we do to avoid the sin of impurity?
A. We must do five things in particular: 1) pray much, 2) mortify ourselves, 3) go to Confession to the same confessor frequently, 4) nurture a tender devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, and 5) avoid occasions leading to this sin.
Q. Which occasions most often lead to this sin?
A. There are eight occasions as follows: 1) bad company, 2) impure talk, 3) bad books, 4) suggestive pictures, 5) indecent songs, 6) dancing, 7) idleness, and 8) gluttony.
Q. Is it sufficient to promise our confessor that we will avoid occasions of impurity?
A. No, we must avoid them in fact.
Q. What happens if after committing a sin of impurity, we fail to confess it out of shame or malice?
A. We will be eternally damned unless we repent and confess these sins with all the others that we have not mentioned in our bad Confessions.

Lesson 9—The seventh and tenth commandments of God

7) "You shall not steal."

10) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house, servants, ox, ass, or any other possession."

Q. What does the seventh commandment forbid us to do?
A. We are forbidden to take another's property and keep it unjustly.
Q. What does God forbid us to do by his tenth commandment?
A. We are forbidden to wish to take another's property and keep it unjustly.
Q. What kind of person takes another's goods unjustly?
A. There are mainly eight kinds: 1) thieves, 2) those who sell at inflated prices or buy at cut prices, 3) those who buy goods while knowing or suspecting they were stolen, 4) those who lose or waste things belonging to another, such as those who let grain spoil, 5) those who cheat at cards or other games, 6) those who force debtors to pay more than is owed, 7) those who receive alms but are not poor, and 8) those who profit from loans lent at usurious rates.
Q. What kind of person retains the goods of another unjustly?
A. The three kinds of people are 1) those who do not pay their debts, servants' wages, or employees' salaries, or keep back some of what is owed, 2) those who do not return what they have found or appropriated, and 3) those who do not repair the damage caused another, even though they did not profit from it.
Q. In how many ways can we cause damage to our neighbor without profit to ourselves?
A. There are five ways: 1) doing the harm ourselves, 2) commanding another to do so, 3) advising someone to do so, 4) not preventing it when possible, and 5) not revealing who did so when we know the culprit.
Q. Are children allowed to take money or other valuables from their parents, or are servants allowed to do so from their masters?
A. No, whoever does this offends God.
Q. Are we obliged to return what we have stolen?
A. Yes, we must do so.
Q. When we have stolen something, is it enough to confess this, receive absolution, and be pardoned?
A. No, restitution must be made.
Q. To whom should we return what we have stolen or found?
A. What has been taken or found must be returned to its owner, if known.

Q. If we do not know whom we have robbed, what should we do?
A. We should use the money as alms for poor people or to have prayers said for the owner.
Q. If the person we stole from is dead, to whom must restitution be made?
A. We must make restitution to the heirs.
Q. When we cannot return what we have taken, what must we do?
A. We must at least have a sincere will to make restitution when it becomes possible to do so.
Q. When should we return what we have stolen?
A. We should do so as soon as possible.
Q. Is it sinful not to return what we have stolen?
A. Yes, we commit a new sin every time we think of making restitution, have the power to do it, and fail to do so.
Q. Who are bound to make restitution?
A. All those who have committed, contributed to, or taken part in the theft are bound to make restitution.
Q. Are we allowed to keep things we have found?
A. No, the object must be returned, and we must do all we can to find out who the owner is.

Lesson 10—The eighth commandment of God "You shall not lie; you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

Q. What does God forbid us to do by his eighth commandment?
A. We are forbidden to harm our neighbor by our words.
Q. In how many ways can we cause harm to our neighbor by words?
A. There are three ways: 1) false testimony against our neighbor, 2) lies that cause harm, and 3) slander.
Q. What does testifying falsely against someone mean?
A. It means lying when we are under oath in court.
Q. Are we always obliged to answer and to do so truthfully when a judge interrogates us on some particular fact while carrying out his duties?
A. Yes, we are obliged to answer because a judge has a right to question us, and we must also tell the truth. If we do not do so, we always commit two, or perhaps three, sins as follows: 1) we would be failing to submit in a serious matter to a superior having God's authority; 2) we would commit perjury by violating our oath to tell the truth; 3) we would commit an injustice if a third party's interest were involved. In this case we must make restitution for any damages incurred because we lied.

Q. Are we obliged to reveal whatever we know when the Church publishes an admonition to discover the truth about some secret matter?
A. Yes, the Church has the right to find out the truth and can require us to reveal what we know of the matter, under pain of excommunication.
Q. What must we do if we tell a lie about someone?
A. We must acknowledge our lie and repair the harm we have done as much as possible.
Q. What does lying, or telling lies, mean?
A. It means speaking contrary to what we think is true.
Q. Is it a lie if we say something false but believe it to be true?
A. No, in this case we are not speaking contrary to what we think is true.
Q. How many kinds of lies are there?
A. There are three kinds of lies: 1) jocose lies, which are uttered in jest and do no harm to anyone, 2) officious lies, which are told to please someone, and 3) malicious lies, which harm others.
Q. Which of these three kinds of lies are sinful?
A. All three kinds are sinful.
Q. Are we allowed to tell lies to amuse others or to save our life or our goods?
A. No, this is never allowed; lying is a sin regardless of the good that might result from it.
Q. What is slander?
A. Slander is speaking evil of a person.
Q. In how many ways can we slander our neighbor?
A. We can do so in five ways: 1) by calumny, which is accusing someone of a wrong that was not committed, 2) by exaggerating the evil someone has done, 3) by revealing someone's hidden misdeeds, 4) by putting an evil interpretation on a good act someone has done, and 5) by insulting or reproaching someone for a crime.
Q. Are we ever allowed to speak of another's hidden misdeeds?
A. No, we are never allowed to speak this way except to those who can remedy or prevent the evil or to the person who is being harmed.
Q. Is it a serious sin to slander our neighbor?
A. Yes, because we thereby rob him of his reputation, which is a much greater wrong than robbing him of his goods.
Q. Is it also sinful to listen willingly to slander?
A. Yes, this sin is as serious as uttering the slander ourselves.
Q. Is it sinful to believe slanderers?

A. Yes, it is without a doubt a serious sin.
Q. Are we allowed to repeat to others the slanders we may have heard about someone?
A. No, we are never allowed to do so.
Q. When we have slandered someone, what must we do?
A. We must take back all we said that is not true.
Q. If what we said is true, what must we do?
A. We should say that we were wrong to speak ill of the person and did so in anger or out of revenge, and then we should say everything good we know about the person.
Q. What should we do when we hear someone being slandered?
A. If we have any authority, we ought to make the slanderer stop; if we have none, we should change the subject and show how distasteful the topic is to us.
Q. What should we do if we are the victims of calumny?
A. We must pardon the calumniator and endure the slander with patience.
Q. Does the eighth commandment also forbid false and rash judgments about our neighbor?
A. Yes, because they are a sort of false testimony against our neighbor, although it is given to ourselves and not to others.
Q. Why are we inclined to judge our neighbor wrongly or rashly?
A. It is because of the envy or hatred we foster against our neighbor.
Q. What should we do to avoid false or rash judgments about our neighbor?
A. We should think more of our own shortcomings.

Lesson 11—The commandments of the Church in general; the first and second commandments in particular

Q. Are we required to obey only God's commandments?
A. No, we are also required to obey all the commandments of the Church.
Q. Are all Christians required to obey the Church's commandments?
A. Yes, they are unless they are legitimately dispensed from doing so.
Q. Why are all Christians required to obey the Church's commandments?
A. It is because our Lord said that *whoever does not obey the Church should be regarded as a pagan and a publican.*[11]
Q. Does the Church have the power to make commandments?
A. Yes, she does have this power.

11. Matt. 18:17; the quotation is in italics in the French edition.

Q. Who gave the Church the power to make commandments?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave her this authority.
Q. How many commandments of the Church are there?
A. There are six main ones.
Q. Recite the six main commandments of the Church.
A. They are as follows: 1) keep holy the feast days prescribed by the Church and do not work on those days, 2) attend Mass on Sundays and feasts, 3) go to Confession at least once a year, 4) receive Holy Communion annually, at least during the Easter season, and always in the state of grace, 5) fast during Lent, on Ember Days, and on the eve of prescribed feasts, and 6) abstain from meat on Fridays and Saturdays.
Q. What does the Church require us to do by her first commandment?
A. She requires us to attend Mass on Sundays and feasts.
Q. What must we do to hear Mass properly and to observe the first commandment of the Church?
A. We must hear Mass entirely, attentively, and devoutly.
Q. Who are those who fail to hear Mass entirely?
A. They are those who arrive after it has begun or leave before it is finished.
Q. Who are those who do not attend Mass attentively?
A. They are those who sleep, converse, or are voluntarily inattentive during Mass.
Q. What must we do to hear Mass devoutly?
A. We must remain kneeling with head uncovered, face the altar without looking about or turning our head, and pray all during holy Mass.
Q. To fulfill the first commandment of the Church, is it enough to be bodily present at Mass without praying to God?
A. No, the Church requires us to attend Mass so that we can pray to God during this time and offer him our worship.
Q. Do people offend God if they attend Mass on ordinary days without praying to him?
A. Yes, they offend and dishonor God.
Q. Is it enough to attend a low Mass on Sundays and feasts?
A. No, the Church wants us to attend the parish Mass on Sundays and feasts.
Q. Are fathers and mothers required to see that their children attend Mass on Sundays and feasts, and are masters and mistresses required to do the same for their domestic servants?
A. Yes, they are required to do so and will answer to God if they fail in this duty.

Q. What does the Church require by her second commandment?
A. She requires us to observe holy days of obligation just as we do Sundays.
Q. Is it as serious a sin to work on feast days as on Sundays?
A. Yes, it is because we should observe these feasts just as we do Sundays.
Q. Why has the Church instituted the feasts of saints?
A. It is to thank God for the graces given them, to honor them, and to ask for their help.

Lesson 12—The other commandments of the Church

Q. What does the Church require us to do by her third commandment?
A. She requires us to confess our sins at least once a year.
Q. When does the Church want us to confess our sins?
A. It is at Easter time.
Q. To whom does the Church require us to confess our sins?
A. It is to our parish pastor or, with his consent, to another priest approved by the bishop.
Q. At what age should children begin to confess their sins?
A. At the latest, it is when they are capable of offending God and have the use of reason, usually at the age of seven or eight.
Q. What does the Church require us to do by her fourth commandment?
A. She requires us to receive Communion at least yearly during Easter time.
Q. At what age should children begin to receive Communion?
A. It is when they are capable of discernment and have been properly instructed in the mysteries of our holy religion, which is usually at the age of twelve.
Q. What penalty does the Church impose on those who fail to make their Easter Communion?
A. She excommunicates them.
Q. When we make a bad Confession or a bad Communion, do we fulfill the third and fourth commandments of the Church?
A. We certainly do not.
Q. Should Christians be satisfied with confessing their sins and receiving Communion only during Easter time?
A. No, if they wish to continue in the state of grace, they must confess and receive Communion more often.
Q. What does the Church require us to do by her fifth commandment?

A. She requires us to fast during the forty days of Lent, on Ember Days, and on the eve of certain feasts.
Q. What does fasting mean?
A. It means to refrain from eating proscribed foods and to be satisfied with one meal a day, taken around noon, and a light collation in the evening.
Q. Who are required to fast?
A. All those over twenty-one years of age are required to fast unless they have a legitimate reason for not fasting.
Q. Who may legitimately be dispensed from fasting?
A. Sick and elderly people, pregnant women, nursing mothers, workers engaged in heavy labor, and poor people who lack sufficient food can be dispensed from fasting.
Q. Should children wait until they are twenty-one to fast during Lent?
A. No, before they reach this age, it would be appropriate for them to fast one, two, or three days a week to prepare them when old enough to follow the full fast during Lent.
Q. What does the Church's sixth commandment forbid us to do?
A. It forbids us to eat meat on Fridays and Saturdays.
Q. Why does she forbid the eating of meat on Fridays?
A. It is to honor the Passion and death of our Lord, which took place on that day.
Q. Why does she forbid eating meat on Saturdays?
A. It is to honor the burial of our Lord, who remained in the tomb on Saturday, to show our devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, and to prepare us to observe Sunday.

Lesson 13—Sin in general

Q. What do we call the evil that God forbids us to do?
A. We call it sin.
Q. What is sin?
A. Sin is disobeying God; sin is a thought, word, act, or omission contrary to a commandment of God or of the Church.
Q. How do we sin in thought?
A. We sin in thought when we think of doing something wrong and consent to it, whether or not we do it.
Q. In how many ways can we offend God in thought?
A. There are three ways.
Q. What is the first way of offending God in thought?
A. The first way, by a simple thought, is when we think of something evil, consent to it, and take pleasure in it—for instance,

when an indecent image comes to mind and we take pleasure in it or when the idea of stealing occurs to us and we consent to it.

Q. What is the second way of offending God in thought?

A. The second way, by entertaining evil desires, is when we want something that God forbids—for instance, when we unjustly covet another's goods or desire to commit an act of impurity.

Q. What is the third way of offending God in thought?

A. The third way, by a determination of our will, is when we intend to do something forbidden by God, whether or not we actually do it.

Q. Can we be damned for a single evil thought?

A. Yes, if we voluntarily dwell on it.

Q. How do we sin by words?

A. We sin by words when we utter bad words—for instance, when we say something indecent or speak ill of another.

Q. How do we sin by action?

A. We sin by action when we perform an evil act forbidden by a commandment of God or of the Church.

Q. How do we sin by omission?

A. We sin by omission when we do not perform a good act that God commands—for instance, when we fail to adore God, honor our parents, or attend Mass on a Sunday or a holy day.

Q. Is sin a great evil?

A. Yes, sin is the greatest of all evils in this world.

Q. Why is sin the greatest of all evils in this world?

A. It is the greatest evil for three reasons: 1) it offends God and causes us to lose God's grace—only sin can cause so great a loss; 2) it deprives us of the greatest of all goods, the love of God and God himself; 3) it is the source of all the evils we suffer in this life and the next.

Q. Is sin a greater evil than sickness or poverty?

A. Yes, it is a much greater evil because illness and poverty do not prevent us from being saved and going to heaven, but the slightest sin prevents us from being saved and going to heaven.

Lesson 14—The different kinds of sin

Q. How many kinds of sin are there?

A. The two kinds of sin are original sin and actual sin.

Q. What is original sin?

A. It is the sin we are born with and bear the guilt of because of Adam's disobedience.

Q. Why is this sin called original?

A. It is original because we are born with this sin, having inherited it from Adam as from our origin.
Q. What is actual sin?
A. It is the sin we commit of our own free will after reaching the use of reason.
Q. Why is this sin called actual?
A. It is because we are the ones who actually commit it.
Q. How many kinds of actual sin are there?
A. The two kinds of actual sin are mortal sin and venial sin.
Q. What is mortal sin?
A. It is a sin that causes us to lose God's grace.
Q. Why is this called mortal sin?
A. It is because it causes the death of our soul.
Q. How can mortal sin cause the death of our soul when the soul is immortal?
A. It causes the death of our soul by depriving it of God's grace, which is the soul's supernatural life, and thus makes it subject to eternal death.
Q. Does the punishment of mortal sin require more suffering than our Lord Jesus Christ and all the saints suffered in this world?
A. Yes, the punishment of mortal sin requires incomparably more suffering with greater intensity.
Q. What kind of punishment does mortal sin deserve?
A. It deserves infinite and eternal punishment.
Q. What punishment is inflicted on those who commit a mortal sin?
A. If they die in this state, they are damned; that is, they will never see God and will burn eternally in hell.
Q. How many mortal sins must we commit to deserve hell and damnation?
A. It is enough to die in this state having committed a single mortal sin.
Q. What is venial sin?
A. It is a sin that diminishes God's love for us but does not deprive us of his grace.
Q. What does the word *venial* mean?
A. It means *pardonable*.
Q. Why is this sin called venial?
A. It is because God readily forgives it in this life and always pardons those who die in the state of grace.
Q. Must we carefully avoid venial sin?
A. Yes, we should avoid it with extreme care.
Q. Can we be damned for a venial sin?
A. No, we can only be damned for a mortal sin.

Q. Then why should we avoid venial sin so carefully if we cannot be damned for committing one?
A. It offends God, and it would be preferable that the whole world perish than for one of us to commit a single venial sin.

Lesson 15—The inequality of different sins

Q. Are all sins equally bad?
A. No, they are not.
Q. Why are all sins not equal in their malice?
A. It is because people commit them with more or less freedom and attention.
Q. What do we call sins committed with less freedom and attention?
A. They are sins of ignorance or weakness.
Q. What is a sin of ignorance?
A. It is a sin that we unwillingly commit or one we commit without taking the responsibility for finding out whether it is wrong.
Q. What is a sin of weakness?
A. It is a sin we commit through fragility, incited by some passion.
Q. Is a habitual sin usually a sin of weakness?
A. It is not a sin of weakness if we make no effort to overcome the bad habit.
Q. What do we call sins committed freely and with full attention?
A. They are sins of malice.
Q. What is a sin of malice?
A. It is a sin we commit with full willingness, with complete knowledge and freedom, and without being incited by any passion.
Q. What sins are the most serious: sins of ignorance, weakness, or malice?
A. Sins of malice are the most serious.
Q. Are some sins of malice more serious than others?
A. Yes, some we say cry to heaven for vengeance, and others we call irremissible because they are unpardonable, which shows that both these types of sins are more serious than other more commonly committed sins.
Q. How many sins are there that cry to heaven for vengeance?
A. There are four: voluntary murder; oppression of poor people, widows, and orphans; unjustly holding back laborers' wages, and sodomy.
Q. Why do we say that these crimes cry to heaven for vengeance?
A. Being opposed to reason and nature, they are so dreadful in God's sight that nothing can excuse them.
Q. Which sins are irremissible?

A. They are the sins that are against the Holy Spirit.
Q. What does it mean to sin against the Holy Spirit?
A. It means to despise and reject a good thought that is meant to prevent us from offending God.
Q. How many sins are there against the Holy Spirit?
A. There are six: 1) despairing of salvation, 2) presuming on God's mercy, 3) hardening ourselves in sin, 4) envying graces God has given another, 5) despising the truth, and 6) being impenitent to the end.
Q. Why are these sins against the Holy Spirit?
A. It is because we cannot commit such sins without despising how the Holy Spirit touches our hearts, converts us, and saves us.
Q. Can irremissible sins ever be forgiven?
A. Yes, God is prepared to pardon our sins, however enormous, provided we are truly sorry for committing them and are sincerely disposed not to commit them again.
Q. Then why do we call these sins irremissible?
A. Because of their extreme malice, God rarely and with difficulty pardons them.
Q. What must we do to avoid sin?
A. We must do five things in particular: 1) frequently confess our sins to the same confessor, 2) avoid the occasions of sin, especially bad company, 3) make a daily examination of conscience, 4) make frequent acts of contrition, and 5) ask God often for a hatred of sin and the grace to avoid it.
Q. What must we do when we commit a sin?
A. To receive pardon and absolution, we must make an act of contrition immediately and go to Confession to a priest approved by the bishop.

Lesson 16—The capital sins

Q. Which sins should we most carefully avoid?
A. They are those we call capital sins.
Q. How many capital sins are there?
A. There are seven: pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth.
Q. Why should we especially avoid these capital sins, and why do we call them capital?
A. It is because they are the source of other sins, and for this reason they are called capital.
Q. How, for example, are pride and covetousness a source of other sins?

A. It is because we cannot be proud or avaricious without committing many other sins.
Q. What is pride?
A. Pride is an exaggerated esteem of ourselves and an inordinate desire to exalt ourselves.
Q. Is pride a great sin?
A. Yes, it is the beginning and source of all sin.[12]
Q. Why is pride a great sin?
A. There are three reasons: 1) we attribute to ourselves what is not ours, for of ourselves we have nothing; 2) we rob God of the honor and glory belonging to him; 3) we act unjustly when we exalt ourselves above others, for all people are equal and have nothing, either by nature or by grace, that is not of God.
Q. In how many ways can we sin through pride?
A. There are four particular ways: 1) when we attribute to ourselves what can only come to us from God, 2) when we think we have deserved the graces and benefits God gave us, 3) when we esteem ourselves more than we should, and 4) when we prefer ourselves to others.
Q. How can we avoid sinning by pride and correct ourselves of this vice?
A. There are five particular ways: 1) by reflecting that of ourselves we are nothing and have more than once deserved hell or by considering the deep humility of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Most Blessed Virgin, or some other saint, 2) by avoiding people who like to show off and attract attention, 3) by never doing or saying anything only to be praised by others, 4) by willingly doing lowly and humble actions in front of others, and 5) by patiently suffering the injuries, outrages, and scorn we receive from others.
Q. What is covetousness?
A. Covetousness is an unregulated desire for wealth and riches.
Q. How can we avoid or overcome covetousness?
A. There are three ways: 1) by thinking, as the Gospel says, that should we die tonight, all that we have desired or accumulated of worldly goods will only cause us greater torments in hell, 2) by giving as much as we can in alms, and 3) by not taking to heart the financial reverses we may experience.
Q. What is lust?
A. Lust is an unregulated desire for carnal pleasure.

This was considered under the sixth and ninth commandments.

Q. What is envy?

12. Sir. 10:13.

A. Envy is the unregulated sorrow we feel over another's good fortune or the satisfaction we experience over another's ill fortune.
Q. How can we avoid sinning by envy?
A. There are two ways: 1) by considering that this sin brings us nothing but pain and no advantage whatsoever, and 2) by reflecting on our obligation to love our neighbor as ourselves and to perform acts of this virtue frequently.
Q. What is gluttony?
A. Gluttony is an unregulated desire for eating and drinking.
Q. In how many ways can we sin by gluttony?
A. There are five ways: 1) by eating or drinking when we have no need or by doing so excessively, 2) by eating food the Church forbids us to eat on certain days, 3) by breaking the fast prescribed by the Church, 4) by seeking exotic or exquisitely prepared fancy foods out of mere sensuality, and 5) by eating merely for pleasure.
Q. Is getting drunk a serious sin?
A. Yes, it is because by doing so we lose the use of reason.
Q. How can we avoid or overcome gluttony?
A. There are three ways: 1) by considering that gluttons ruin their body as well as their soul, usually fall into poverty, and die miserable deaths, 2) by not frequenting places where this kind of excess occurs—cabarets, for example—and 3) by developing habits of moderate eating and drinking and occasionally practicing mortification in eating and drinking.
Q. What is anger?
A. Anger is an unregulated desire for revenge and a reaction of the soul that makes us irritable and upset when something unpleasant happens.
Q. How can we avoid yielding to anger?
A. There are three ways in particular: 1) by calling to mind frequently how our Lord Jesus Christ showed great gentleness on so many occasions, especially when he prayed to his Father for his enemies while on the cross, 2) by suppressing our reactions of anger by refraining from speech and action until our anger has subsided, and 3) by enduring patiently the defects of our neighbor, who is certainly obliged to endure ours.
Q. What is sloth?
A. Sloth is revulsion for exercises of piety and reluctance to carry out our duties.
Q. How can we avoid getting accustomed to a life of sloth?
A. There are three ways: 1) by reflecting on how God has given us our lifetime only for saving our soul and on how we will have to

give a strict account to him for our use of it, 2) by avoiding the company of idle people, and 3) by regulating the daily use of our time: planning every morning what we expect to do during the day and keeping ourselves always usefully occupied.

Lesson 17—Virtue

Q. What is the opposite of vice and sin?
A. Virtue is the opposite of vice and sin.
Q. What is a virtue?
A. A virtue is an inclination to and a facility for doing good.
Q. How many kinds of virtue are there?
A. There are two kinds: theological virtues and moral virtues.
Q. What are theological virtues?
A. Theological virtues directly refer to God as their object.
Q. What are moral virtues?
A. Moral virtues help us do what is good and avoid sin; that is, they regulate morals.
Q. How many theological virtues are there?
A. There are three: faith, hope, and charity.
Q. What is faith?
A. Faith is the virtue of believing firmly whatever God has said and revealed through the Church.
Q. What is hope?
A. Hope is the virtue of confidently looking forward to and expecting the blessings God promised us, namely, grace in this world and glory in the next.
Q. What is charity?
A. Charity is the virtue of loving God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.
Q. What are the principal moral virtues?
A. They are the cardinal virtues and the virtues opposed to the seven capital sins, or vices.
Q. How many cardinal virtues are there?
A. There are four: prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance.
Q. What is prudence?
A. Prudence is the virtue of taking appropriate means to an end; for instance, if we wished to be saved, we would be prudent if we used the means that lead to salvation.
Q. What is fortitude?
A. Fortitude gives us courage amid the dangers and obstacles we encounter and leads us to undertake and endure difficult and painful things for God's love.

Q. What is justice?
A. Justice enables us to give our neighbor his due.
Q. What is temperance?
A. Temperance is using our senses with moderation and without seeking pleasure.
Q. Why are these four virtues called cardinal virtues?
A. It is because they are the first and principal moral virtues on which all the rest depend.
Q. What moral virtues are opposed to the seven capital vices?
A. They are humility, charity and zeal for our neighbor's good, generosity, chastity, sobriety, gentleness, and devotion and diligence.
Q. Must we practice these virtues?
A. Yes, we must because the only way to avoid the seven capital sins is to practice the virtues opposed to them.
Q. What moral virtue is opposed to pride?
A. It is the virtue of humility.
Q. What is humility?
A. Humility is the virtue of knowing and despising ourselves.
Q. What virtues are opposed to envy?
A. They are the virtues of charity and zeal for the welfare of our neighbor.
Q. What does charity for our neighbor mean?
A. Charity is the virtue of loving our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.
Q. What is zeal for our neighbor's good?
A. Zeal is the virtue of desiring for our neighbor every possible good or some particular benefit.
Q. What virtue is opposed to covetousness?
A. It is the virtue of generosity.
Q. What is generosity?
A. Generosity is the virtue of sharing our resources to fulfill our own needs and those of our neighbor.
Q. What virtue is opposed to lust?
A. It is the virtue of chastity.
Q. What is chastity?
A. Chastity is the virtue of renouncing the pleasures of the flesh and not satisfying its desires.
Q. What virtue is opposed to gluttony?
A. It is the virtue of sobriety.
Q. What is sobriety?
A. Sobriety is the virtue of controlling and moderating ourselves in eating and drinking.
Q. What virtue is opposed to anger?

A. It is the virtue of gentleness.
Q. What is gentleness?
A. Gentleness is the virtue of bearing with equanimity of mind the defects of our neighbor and the evils that may befall us.
Q. What virtues are opposed to sloth, or laziness?
A. They are the virtues of devotion and diligence.
Q. What is devotion?
A. Devotion is the virtue of serving God and fulfilling the duties of religion promptly and with affection.
Q. What is diligence?
A. Diligence is the virtue of accomplishing affectionately and promptly everything that our duty requires of us.

End of volume 2, part 1

The Duties of a Christian to God

The Duties of a Christian to God

Volume 2

Part 2

The Means to Fulfill Our Duties to God Properly

Preliminary Lesson—Grace, which is necessary for us to fulfill our duties to God properly[1]

Q. Can Christians fulfill the two duties to God, namely, knowing him and loving him, by their own strength?
A. No, we cannot do this.
Q. What do we as Christians need to fulfill these two duties properly?
A. To fulfill these duties, we need special help from God.
Q. What do we call this special help needed to fulfill these two duties to God?
A. We call this help God's grace.
Q. Why is this help called God's grace?
A. God gives this help gratuitously.
Q. What does giving grace gratuitously mean?
A. It means that God gives it to us without our having deserved it.
Q. Can we obtain or deserve God's grace by our own efforts?
A. We can neither acquire it by our own efforts nor deserve it by performing any good deed.
Q. Does God, then, give grace to Christians without their having merited it?
A. Thanks to the merits of Jesus Christ, God gives us grace.
Q. How did Jesus Christ merit God's grace for us?
A. He merited it for us by his suffering and death.
Q. What is grace?
A. Grace is a supernatural quality that God infuses into our soul and bestows on us gratuitously to help us attain our salvation.
Q. What must we especially believe about God's grace?
A. We must especially believe three things: 1) we are not entitled to it; 2) we cannot do any good whatever without it; 3) we will not be denied if we ask God for it.
Q. How many kinds of grace are there?
A. The two kinds of grace are habitual and actual.
Q. What is habitual grace?
A. Habitual grace is a supernatural quality that God communicates to our soul that purifies it of sin and makes it agreeable to him.
Q. What does the word *habitual* mean?
A. It means that grace *dwells,* or *abides,* in us.
Q. Why do we call this grace habitual?
A. Once this grace is in a soul, it remains forever unless the soul commits a mortal sin.

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1. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 2, part 2, preliminary lesson, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1053–54; Cahiers lasalliens 21, 139–42.

Q. What are the benefits of habitual grace?
A. The benefits are that we become friends and children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, and heirs to eternal glory.
Q. Does habitual grace have any other name?
A. Yes, we also call it justifying grace because when entering the soul, it drives out all sin and makes those receiving it holy and just.
Q. How do we obtain habitual grace?
A. We obtain it through the sacraments.
Q. Can we lose habitual grace?
A. Yes, we can lose it.
Q. How can we lose habitual grace?
A. We can lose it by committing a mortal sin.
Q. What is actual grace?
A. Actual grace is a temporary assistance that God gives for doing some good or avoiding some evil, that is, for preventing us from falling into sin.
Q. Do we need actual grace?
A. Yes, without it we are not able to have even a good thought or accomplish a good action.

Treatise 1[2]

The Sacraments, the First Means to Obtain the Grace We Need to Fulfill Our Duties to God Properly

Lesson 1—The sacraments in general

Q. What means has God given us to obtain, increase, and preserve habitual grace in ourselves?
A. He has given us the Church's sacraments.
Q. How many sacraments are there?

2. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 2, part 2, treatise 1, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1054–90; Cahiers lasalliens 21, 143–242.

A. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.
Q. Who instituted these seven sacraments?
A. Jesus Christ instituted them.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ institute these sacraments?
A. It was to give us by their means the various graces we need.
Q. What are sacraments?
A. Sacraments are sensible signs of grace instituted by Jesus Christ to sanctify us.
Q. What is a sign?
A. A sign is an indicator that makes something else known; for example, smoke is a sign because it indicates the presence of fire.
Q. What is a sensible sign?
A. It is a sign that we perceive and know through our senses; for example, the water in Baptism can be seen and felt.
Q. How are the sacraments signs of grace?
A. They are signs of grace because the matter of each sacrament indicates and signifies the grace the sacrament produces. For example, the water poured on the head of the person being baptized shows that just as water washes the body clean, so the grace of Baptism, signified by the water, cleanses the soul of the baptized person from the stain of sin.
Q. How is Baptism, for example, a sensible sign?
A. The water of Baptism, which we can see, signifies the grace of this sacrament, which we cannot see.
Q. Do the sacraments only signify grace?
A. No, they also produce or increase grace in us.
Q. What grace do the sacraments give or increase?
A. They give or increase sanctifying, or habitual, grace.
Q. What is sanctifying grace?
A. Sanctifying grace is what makes us holy and agreeable to God.
Q. Do the sacraments give grace or increase it in all those who receive them?
A. No, this result does not always happen.
Q. Who receive this gift or increase of grace through the sacraments?
A. Those who fulfill all the required conditions receive it.
Q. Do all the sacraments give sanctifying grace to those who lack it?
A. No, only some sacraments do this.
Q. Are there any sacraments that do not give sanctifying grace and must be received when we are in the state of grace?
A. Yes, there are several of them.
Q. How do those who already have sanctifying grace benefit from the sacraments?

A. The sacraments increase the grace they already have.
Q. How many sacraments give sanctifying grace to those who lack it?
A. There are only two: Baptism and Penance.
Q. How many sacraments must be received in the state of grace and thus only increase the grace already present?
A. There are five: Confirmation, Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.
Q. To whom does Baptism give grace?
A. Baptism gives grace to those who have not yet received it.
Q. Can we lose the grace received in Baptism?
A. Yes, we can.
Q. How do we lose this grace?
A. We lose it by committing a mortal sin.
Q. Can we recover habitual grace once we have lost it?
A. Yes, we can.
Q. How do we recover grace after losing it?
A. We recover it through the sacrament of Penance.
Q. How do Baptism and Penance give us sanctifying grace?
A. They do so by removing mortal sin.
Q. What is the common name for the two sacraments that give grace to those without it and take away mortal sin?
A. These two sacraments are called sacraments of the dead.
Q. Why are these two sacraments called sacraments of the dead?
A. They confer the life of grace on those who are dead through sin.
Q. In whom do the other five sacraments increase grace?
A. The other sacraments increase grace in those who already possess it, that is, those not in the state of mortal sin.
Q. What is the common name for the five sacraments that only increase grace in us but do not remove mortal sin?
A. These five sacraments are called sacraments of the living.
Q. Why are these sacraments called sacraments of the living?
A. Only those who are free from mortal sin and live the life of grace should receive them and can derive any benefit from them.
Q. What should be done if a person has committed a mortal sin but wishes to receive one of the sacraments that only increases grace?
A. That person must go to Confession before receiving the sacrament.
Q. Does each of the seven sacraments confer its own special grace?
A. Yes, each sacrament confers a special grace: sacramental grace.
Q. What do we mean by sacramental grace?
A. Sacramental grace is special to a particular sacrament and cannot be conferred by another; for example, only Confirmation gives

the grace of fortitude to profess the Catholic faith publicly, even at the risk of our life.

Q. Is the special sacramental grace conferred if we receive a sacrament of the living while in the state of mortal sin?

A. No, we would receive neither this grace nor any other.

Q. When we fail to receive sacramental grace, can we obtain it later?

A. Yes, we can, but only with great difficulty.

Lesson 2—The matter, form, character, and ceremonies proper to the sacraments

Q. What is required for a sacrament to exist?

A. Three things are required: the matter, the form, and the intention of the one who administers it.

Q. What are the essential elements of a sacrament?

A. They are the matter and the form unique to each sacrament.

Q. What do we mean by the matter of a sacrament?

A. The matter is the sensible element used in conferring the sacrament; for example, water is the matter of Baptism; balsam, of Confirmation; bread and wine, of the Eucharist; holy oil, of Extreme Unction, and so on.

Q. What do we mean by the form of a sacrament?

A. The form consists of the words used by the minister of the sacrament that effectively cause the sacrament to come into being; for example, the form of the sacrament of Baptism is "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"; the form of the Eucharist is "This is my body; this is my blood"; the form of Penance is "I absolve you from your sins."

Q. How do the matter and the form constitute each sacrament?

A. When the minister of the sacrament applies the material element, which is the matter, and at the same time pronounces the words, which are the form of the sacrament, the sacrament is brought into being and conferred. For example, Baptism takes place when the minister pours the water on the candidate's head and at the same time says, "I baptize you. . . ."

Q. When a sacrament is being administered, why must the words be pronounced at the same time the matter is being applied?

A. These simultaneous actions emphasize more distinctly the effect and the grace produced by the sacrament. For example, the water in Baptism has the power to refresh as well as to wash and purify; therefore, it could be the sign of either of these effects. However, when the minister pronounces the words of the form while pouring the water, we understand its power to purify and

that it is used to signify the interior cleansing of the soul and not refreshment.

Q. Do the sacraments of Penance, Holy Orders, and Matrimony have matter, for no sensible element is applied to those who receive them?

A. Yes, each of these sacraments has matter.

Q. What is the matter of the sacrament of Penance?

A. The matter consists of the acts of the one who is receiving the sacrament: 1) giving testimony of sorrow for sin and 2) confessing the sins. These two acts, joined to the words of absolution, constitute the sacrament of Penance.

Q. What is the matter of the sacrament of Holy Orders?

A. The matter consists of the bishop's handing over some object to the one being ordained that indicates the power received through this order. For example, the matter of ordination to the priesthood consists of the bishop's handing to the ordained the chalice that contains the wine, covered by the paten that holds an unconsecrated host, and his laying hands on the candidate while saying to him, "Receive the Holy Spirit . . . ," which gives him the power to forgive and absolve sins. The matter of the diaconate is the bishop's handing over the book of Gospels to the candidate. The matter of the subdiaconate is the bishop's handing over the chalice and the book of the Epistles, and so on.

Q. What is the form of the sacrament of Holy Orders?

A. The form consists of the words pronounced by the bishop as he hands over the matter to the candidate.

Q. What are the matter and form of the sacrament of Matrimony?

A. The matter consists of the signs of mutual consent given to each other by the bride and groom when they take each other as husband and wife—for example, placing one hand in the other's hand or some other sign that marks their consent. The form of the sacrament consists of the words they say to each other, namely, "I take you for my wife," by the groom, and "I take you for my husband," by the bride.

Q. What intention should the minister of the sacraments have?

A. The intention is the firm commitment to follow the practice of the Church and to do what our Lord intended by each sacrament.

Q. How is the intention of the minister shown?

A. It is shown in two ways: 1) when the minister prepares the matter, that is, the sensible sign that is used in conferring the sacrament, and 2) when he applies the matter and pronounces the form of the sacrament. In other words, the minister truly intends to administer the sacrament when he is determined to follow and

actually follows the practice of the Church and does what our Lord intended by each sacrament.

Q. Can we receive the sacraments more than once?

A. There are four sacraments that we can receive more than once, and three that we can receive only once.

Q. Which four sacraments can be received more than once?

A. They are Penance, Eucharist, Extreme Unction, and Matrimony.

Q. Which three sacraments can be received only once?

A. They are Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

Q. Why can we receive Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders only once?

A. They imprint on the soul a certain type of spiritual mark called a character.

Q. What is this character that a sacrament imprints?

A. This character is an indelible spiritual mark imprinted on the soul of those who receive certain sacraments, which shows that they have been especially consecrated to God's service.

Q. Do these three sacraments have one and the same character?

A. No, they differ according to the purpose of each.

Q. Why do we call this character a spiritual mark?

A. It is imprinted on the soul and not on the body.

Q. Why do we say the character is indelible?

A. Neither sin nor death can remove it, and even the damned will keep this character eternally in hell.

Q. If we are in the state of mortal sin when we receive a sacrament that imprints a character, do we still receive the character?

A. Yes, the sacraments always imprint a character on the soul, and nothing can prevent this.

Q. Are there different ceremonies connected with administering the sacraments?

A. Yes, there are several beautiful ceremonies for these occasions.

Q. Who established the ceremonies for administering the sacraments?

A. The Church has prescribed these ceremonies.

Q. Why did the Church establish these ceremonies for administering the sacraments?

A. The Church did so for three reasons: 1) to help us have more respect for the sacraments, 2) to inspire and increase the devotion of the priests administering them, the faithful receiving them, and those witnessing them, and 3) to assist us in better understanding why the sacraments are given and what effects they produce. For example, when those being baptized are exorcised, just as those who are possessed by the devil are, we realize much better that

a consequence of original sin is a kind of possession by Satan, who thus needs to be driven out.

Lesson 3—The sacrament of Baptism

Q. Which is the first and most necessary of the Church's sacraments?
A. It is the sacrament of Baptism.
Q. Why is Baptism the first of the Church's sacraments?
A. We cannot receive any other sacrament without first being baptized.
Q. Why is Baptism the most necessary sacrament?
A. We cannot be saved without having been baptized.
Q. What is Baptism?
A. Baptism is the sacrament that removes original sin and any other sin we may have committed before receiving Baptism and that makes us Christians, children of God and the Church, members of Jesus Christ, and living temples of the Holy Spirit.
Q. How do we become children of God through Baptism?
A. Through Baptism we share in the divine nature.
Q. Why do we share in the divine nature when we receive Baptism?
A. There are two reasons: 1) by the grace of Baptism, we acquire the holiness natural to God; 2) we become God's heirs, thus having a right to God's own glory that the saints possess in heaven.
Q. Why do we become children of the Church through Baptism?
A. There are three reasons: 1) through Baptism we place ourselves under the guidance and authority of the Church; 2) we are fed and spiritually brought up by others who have been baptized; 3) we have a right to share all the Church's spiritual riches.
Q. Does becoming children of God and of the Church mean that we are reborn and become children again?
A. We are reborn spiritually because the gift of sanctifying grace we receive for the first time in Baptism is the spiritual life of the soul.
Q. Why do we say we become members of Jesus Christ through Baptism?
A. Jesus Christ becomes the head of all who are baptized.
Q. Why do we say Jesus Christ becomes the head of those receiving Baptism?
A. He unites us to him, gives us life, and governs us just as the head governs the other parts of the body.
Q. Why do we say we become temples of the Holy Spirit through Baptism?
A. The Holy Spirit dwells in the baptized person as in his temple, where he is to be praised and adored.

Lesson 4—The matter and form of the sacrament of Baptism

Q. What do the words *Baptism* and *baptize* mean?
A. They mean *washing* and *to wash,* for Baptism was instituted to cleanse and purify us from our sins.
Q. What is the matter of Baptism?
A. The matter of Baptism is ordinary water kept in the baptismal font of the church.
Q. What kind of water is kept in the baptismal font?
A. It is natural water that the bishop or the parish pastor solemnly blesses on the eve of Easter and of Pentecost.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ want water to be used in Baptism?
A. It was to teach us that as water washes and cleanses our body of grime, baptismal grace washes and purifies our soul of sin.
Q. Can we use any kind of water for Baptism other than what is in the baptismal font?
A. It would be a sin to use any other kind of water except in a case of necessity, for example, if a child might die before it could be taken to the church. In that case the child can be baptized at home with any kind of natural water.
Q. If ordinary water were used to baptize a person who was not in danger of death, would that person be truly baptized?
A. Yes, that person would be truly baptized.
Q. What do we mean by natural water?
A. It is ordinary water from a well, a stream, a fountain, or from rain, and which is not mixed with any other liquid.
Q. What are the words used to administer Baptism?
A. The following words are used: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."
Q. How is Baptism administered?
A. It is administered by pouring water in such a way that it touches the skin of the person being baptized, while at the same time saying, "I baptize you. . . ."
Q. Who must pronounce the words of the form?
A. The same person who pours the water.
Q. If someone other than the one pouring the water said the words, would the child be baptized?
A. No, the Baptism would not be valid.
Q. When baptizing, is it enough to say, "In the name of the Father. . . ," without saying, "I baptize you," or to say, "I baptize you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"?
A. No, it is necessary to say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Q. Must water be poured on the person receiving Baptism?
A. Yes, it would not be enough, for example, to moisten a finger in water and then to touch the person being baptized.
Q. Where should the water be poured?
A. The water must be poured on some important part of the body, for example, the head, the shoulders, the breast, and so on, but usually it is poured on the head.
Q. If a baby is born alive after being baptized on some less significant part of the body, for example, a hand, what should be done?
A. The child should be baptized again conditionally with the words "If you are not baptized, I baptize you. . . ."
Q. Why should we re-baptize conditionally a child who has been baptized on a less important part of the body?
A. It is because this Baptism may not have been valid.
Q. If the water has not touched any part of the child's body, would the Baptism be valid?
A. No, the Baptism would not be valid.
Q. What intention should we have when baptizing someone?
A. We should have the intention of following the practice of the Church and of doing what Jesus Christ wished to be done in the sacrament of Baptism.

Lesson 5—The exterior details concerning Baptism

Q. Who can administer Baptism?
A. In case of extreme necessity, anyone can baptize; outside such cases, only the pastor or vicar of the parish where we live.
Q. If someone other than the pastor or his vicar administered Baptism without necessity, would the person be truly baptized?
A. Yes, the Baptism would be valid.
Q. Can we baptize, that is, pour the water, without performing the ordinary ceremonies of Baptism?
A. This would be sinful except in cases of obvious danger of death or unless the bishop permitted it.
Q. Can we baptize a child without the ceremonies and wait until the godparents arrive to perform them?
A. No, this is not allowed.
Q. Can we delay Baptism several days to wait for the arrival of the godparents?
A. No, this is not allowed.
Q. Where should Baptism take place?
A. It must be in the parish church where the family lives, unless there is obvious danger of death or the bishop has given permission.

Q. Can children be baptized at home?
A. They cannot unless a child is in danger of death.
Q. What did we promise God when we were baptized?
A. We promised three things: 1) to believe in God and in Jesus Christ, 2) to observe God's commandments, and 3) to renounce Satan, his works, and his pomp.
Q. What do we mean by renouncing Satan, his works, and his pomp?
A. Renouncing Satan means rejecting all his temptations; renouncing his works means rejecting the pleasures of the flesh and senses, and renouncing his pomp means rejecting the maxims and vanities of the world.
Q. Can we receive Baptism more than once?
A. No, we can receive it only once.
Q. Why can we receive Baptism only once?
A. Baptism imprints on the soul a certain spiritual mark, called a character.
Q. What is this character given us at Baptism?
A. It is a mark showing that we are God's children.
Q. How does this baptismal character indicate that we are God's children?
A. It shows that we have been adopted as God's children.
Q. Who dishonor their baptismal character?
A. They are those who live according to the world and do not imitate Jesus Christ, for they do not live like true children of God.
Q. Will the damned who have been baptized preserve this character in their soul?
A. Yes, they will.
Q. Why is this so?
A. It is so that they can be recognized as rebellious children of God, who have become the offspring of the devil by their sins.
Q. Is it possible to be saved without having been baptized?
A. No, for all who do not have the use of reason, it is impossible.
Q. Can those who have reached the use of reason be saved without having been baptized?
A. Yes, they can in three circumstances: 1) when they have true contrition for their sins, but it is impossible for them to receive it, 2) when they desire Baptism but die without it through lack of proper instruction, and 3) when they suffer martyrdom for their faith in Jesus Christ.
Q. Does this mean that Baptism is not absolutely necessary to be saved?
A. No, to those who have the use of reason, Baptism can be given by the will to receive it and by martyrdom, which is why there

are three kinds of Baptism: Baptism of water, Baptism of desire, and Baptism of blood. Baptism of water is the sacrament we have been discussing; Baptism of desire is a firm desire and a will to be baptized; Baptism of blood is martyrdom suffered because of faith in Jesus Christ.

Lesson 6—Confirmation

Q. What is the second sacrament of the Church?
A. It is the sacrament of Confirmation.
Q. Why is Confirmation the second sacrament of the Church?
A. It should be the next one given after Baptism.
Q. Why is this so?
A. Confirmation simply increases the grace received in Baptism.
Q. What is Confirmation?
A. Confirmation is the sacrament that makes us perfect Christians and gives us the strength and courage to profess our faith and the maxims of Jesus Christ before the entire world.
Q. Why is this sacrament called Confirmation?
A. It gives us the strength to confess our faith in Jesus Christ and to make public profession of it by performing Christian actions publicly and practicing our religion openly.
Q. How does the sacrament of Confirmation make us perfect Christians?
A. We receive the Holy Spirit, who gives us the courage to practice virtue and to act as true Christians without fear or concern for the judgment of others.
Q. Do we receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation?
A. Yes, we do.
Q. Do we receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation in the same way as the Apostles did on Pentecost?
A. No, we do not receive him in precisely the same way.
Q. What is the difference between the way we receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation and the way the Apostles received him on Pentecost?
A. The difference is that the Apostles received the Holy Spirit visibly in the external form of tongues of fire; we receive him invisibly.
Q. How do we receive the Holy Spirit invisibly in Confirmation?
A. The Holy Spirit descends invisibly into our soul and fills it with grace.
Q. Must we receive Confirmation to be saved?
A. Yes, provided that we can easily do so; neglecting to receive it when we are able to would be a mortal sin.

Q. Why would we sin, even mortally, if we neglected to receive this sacrament?
A. We are bound to use the means that Jesus Christ left us to preserve our faith and the grace received in Baptism.
Q. When can we receive Confirmation?
A. We can receive it as soon as we have been baptized.
Q. Why, then, do children usually have to wait until they have the use of reason before they are confirmed?
A. It is so that they can prepare more fully for its reception and thus receive more grace.
Q. Can all children who have the use of reason be confirmed?
A. Yes, provided they are sufficiently instructed, truly desire to become perfect Christians, and possess sufficient discernment to do what is needed for this.
Q. Can we receive Confirmation more than once?
A. No, we can receive it only once.
Q. Why can we receive Confirmation only once?
A. Confirmation imprints on the soul a certain indelible spiritual mark, called a character.
Q. What is the character of Confirmation?
A. It is a sign that we are soldiers of Jesus Christ.
Q. How does the character of Confirmation indicate that we are soldiers of Jesus Christ?
A. It shows that we have volunteered as soldiers of Jesus Christ and have sworn to uphold and defend his maxims and the doctrine of the Church.
Q. Who dishonor the character of their Confirmation?
A. They are those who are ashamed to do what is right and who fail to act when God is being offended in their presence.
Q. Will the damned who have been confirmed preserve this character in their soul?
A. Yes, they will.
Q. Why is this true?
A. It is so that they can be recognized as deserters who have abandoned Jesus Christ's army and have taken up service with the devil.

Lesson 7—The matter, form, minister, and ceremonies of Confirmation

Q. Who confers the sacrament of Confirmation?
A. The bishop alone can confirm.
Q. Why is the bishop the only one who can confirm?

A. Bishops, who are the leading officers in the Church, have the right to give the soldiers of Jesus Christ the arms needed to overcome the enemies of their salvation.
Q. What does the bishop do when confirming?
A. He lays his hands upon those he confirms, and he anoints them with holy chrism.
Q. What is holy chrism?
A. Holy chrism is a liquid composed of olive oil and balsam that the bishop blesses during the sacred ceremonies on Holy Thursday.
Q. Why is the holy chrism blessed with such solemnity?
A. It is so that we can understand the deep respect we should have for Confirmation and the special intentions we need for receiving it.
Q. Why is holy chrism used in Confirmation?
A. It is so that we can understand that we have been consecrated to Jesus Christ in a special manner.
Q. How does olive oil help us understand the grace given in Confirmation?
A. It shows us that the Holy Spirit penetrates and impregnates our soul and fills and fortifies it against its enemies, just as the oil spreads through things, penetrates them, and fortifies the weakened body.
Q. How does balsam indicate the grace given in Confirmation?
A. It does so in two ways: 1) it helps us understand that the Holy Spirit preserves our soul from the corruption of sin, just as balsam preserves the body from decay; 2) it shows us that we should give good example to our neighbor through the fragrance of our virtues, just as balsam's aroma attracts those near it.
Q. How does the bishop apply holy chrism in Confirmation?
A. He makes the sign of the cross with it on the forehead.
Q. Why does the bishop put holy chrism on our forehead?
A. He does this to show that the confirmed Christian should not be ashamed of or afraid to confess faith in Jesus Christ and to profess openly the maxims of the Gospel, for we ordinarily display shame and fear on the forehead.
Q. Why does the bishop anoint our forehead with chrism in the form of a cross?
A. It is to teach us that we should glory only in the cross, bearing it on our forehead just as rulers wear their crown.
Q. What words does the bishop use when applying the holy chrism?
A. He says, "I sign you with the sign of the cross, and I confirm you with the chrism of salvation in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Q. Why does the bishop give us a slight blow on the cheek after applying holy chrism?
A. This is to teach the newly confirmed Christian three things: 1) to be ready to endure injuries and affronts for the sake of Jesus Christ, 2) to suffer all pain with patience and courage and for the love God, and 3) to understand that the afflictions of this life come to us from God, whom the bishop represents.
Q. Why does the bishop say, "Peace be with you," when giving us this slight blow on the cheek?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to help us understand that when we receive the grace of Confirmation, we are also receiving the gift of unutterable peace, and 2) to show that patient suffering is the best means for preserving peace in this world with our neighbor.
Q. Because Confirmation gives peace, does this mean that the newly confirmed Christian has no more enemies to combat?
A. No, we still have several to contend with because this life is a constant warfare.
Q. Why is a piece of cloth laid upon our forehead?
A. This helps us understand that we should take great care to preserve the grace we have received in Confirmation.

Lesson 8—The conditions required to receive Confirmation

Q. What conditions are required to receive Confirmation worthily?
A. There are three main ones: 1) to be well instructed in the principal mysteries of our religion, 2) to be in the state of grace, with no mortal sin on our conscience, and 3) to receive Communion if we are able to do so.
Q. How can we be sure that we are in the state of grace and without any mortal sin on our conscience before receiving the sacrament of Confirmation?
A. We should go to Confession with true sorrow for our sins.
Q. When we are before the bishop, ready to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, what must we do to receive it properly?
A. When presenting ourselves to the bishop to be confirmed, we should 1) dress appropriately, 2) kneel with great recollection, 3) keep our head raised and our hands joined, and 4) have on our left arm a piece of cloth and in our right hand a ticket from the parish priest attesting that we are sufficiently instructed and have gone to Confession.
Q. What should we reflect on while waiting to be confirmed and while receiving the sacrament?

A. To dispose ourselves profitably, we should do three things: 1) think of what happened on Pentecost Sunday when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles, 2) urgently beseech God to give us the Holy Spirit, and 3) resolve to live henceforth as a perfect Christian and to observe faithfully the maxims of the holy Gospel, especially those most difficult to practice; we should even bind ourselves to do this by some act.

Q. What should we do after receiving Confirmation?

A. We should do six things: 1) remain kneeling in prayer until the bishop gives his blessing, 2) receive the bishop's blessing with faith, respect, and devotion, 3) ask God for the grace never to lose the Holy Spirit by any mortal sin, 4) make a profession of faith by reciting the Creed piously and attentively, 5) spend the rest of the day in exercises of piety, and 6) keep the cloth bound to our forehead until one of the parish priests removes it.

Q. What are our obligations as confirmed Christians?

A. As confirmed Christians, we are bound: 1) to allow ourselves to be guided in our actions by the Spirit of God, whom we have received, esteeming what God values and scorning what God accounts of little worth, 2) to perform acts of piety often and with no embarrassment, need for human approval, or concern over the mockery these may provoke, 3) to suffer willingly afflictions, affronts, and injuries and to pardon them for the love of God, and 4) to keep away from companions who might lead us to lose the grace of God and to associate only with well-behaved and morally good persons.

Q. What should those do who have not received the grace of Confirmation because they were not properly disposed?

A. They should do three things: 1) humble themselves before God, 2) go to Confession as soon as possible, and 3) do penance and whatever the confessor orders them to do so that they can receive the grace of this sacrament.

Lesson 9—The sacrament of Penance

Q. What is the third sacrament of the Church?

A. It is the sacrament of Penance.

Q. What is Penance?

A. Penance is the sacrament that remits all sins committed since receiving Baptism.

Q. Why is this sacrament called Penance?

A. It is because we cannot receive pardon for our sins unless we do penance for them.

Q. What does doing penance for our sins mean?
A. It means to be truly sorry for them and to accept punishment for them to satisfy God's justice.
Q. Why is this sacrament also called Confession?
A. To receive it, we must confess our sins.
Q. When did Jesus Christ institute the sacrament of Penance?
A. He did this when he said to his Apostles, "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."
Q. On what day did Jesus Christ institute the sacrament of Penance?
A. It was on the day of his Resurrection.
Q. Can the sacrament of Penance remit all kinds of sins?
A. Yes, it can do so, however great or numerous they may be.
Q. How does the sacrament of Penance, or Confession, remit sin?
A. It remits sin by the absolution the priest gives to those who receive it.
Q. What must we do to receive the forgiveness of our sins in the sacrament of Penance?
A. We must do four things: 1) examine our conscience, 2) show contrition for our sins, detest them, and firmly resolve not to sin again, 3) confess all our sins to a priest approved by the bishop, and 4) make satisfaction to God and to neighbor for all the sins we have committed.
Q. How many parts does the sacrament of Penance have?
A. There are three parts: contrition, confessing, and absolution.
Q. Why are these three parts considered essential?
A. We would not receive the sacrament of Penance if any of these elements was lacking.
Q. Is satisfaction also a part of the sacrament of Penance?
A. Yes, but it is only an integral, not an essential, element of Penance.
Q. Why is satisfaction not an essential part of Penance?
A. If we fail to make satisfaction, we still receive this sacrament, provided that we confessed all our sins and were truly sorry for them.
Q. Why is satisfaction called an integral part of Penance?
A. There are three reasons: 1) we have to satisfy entirely the justice of God for our sins before Penance is complete; 2) we must compensate for our sins either in this world or in the next; 3) we are remiss if we do not perform the penance imposed by the priest.

Lesson 10—The examination of conscience

Q. What is the first thing we must do to receive pardon for our sins in the sacrament of Penance?
A. We must carefully examine our conscience.
Q. What does examining our conscience mean?
A. It means conscientiously questioning ourselves to discover all our sins since our last Confession.
Q. Why do we need to examine our conscience before going to Confession?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to recall to mind all the sins we have committed so as not to forget any in our Confession, 2) to conceive true sorrow for each and every sin we may have committed, and 3) to find ways for correcting ourselves.
Q. Must we always examine our conscience before going to Confession?
A. Yes, we would make a sacrilegious Confession if we omitted some sin in Confession because we failed to examine ourselves diligently.
Q. Is it sufficient to examine ourselves while we are confessing our sins?
A. No, when we begin our Confession, we must think only about confessing our sins properly.
Q. How careful and meticulous must we be in examining ourselves before Confession?
A. We must be as diligent, careful, and meticulous as we would be in matters involving our property or even our life.
Q. How must we prepare ourselves to examine our conscience well before Confession?
A. We must do three things: 1) withdraw to some quiet place in the church, 2) kneel down, and 3) ask God to enlighten us to know all our sins.
Q. On what topics should we examine our conscience before confessing our sins?
A. We should examine ourselves on 1) the commandments of God and the Church, 2) the seven capital sins, and 3) the sins most commonly committed in our vocation, profession, or employment.
Q. To examine our conscience well, is it enough to make a general examination, for example, whether we have sworn, stolen, disobeyed, and so on?
A. No, we must examine ourselves on the number and the special circumstances of each sin.

Q. What should students reflect on to examine themselves properly?
A. They should look for the sins they may have committed in church, in school, at home, in bed, and in other places where they have been. They should also consider the company they have kept.
Q. What are the most common sins students can commit in church or related to church?
A. The most common are 1) failing to attend Mass or coming late on Sundays and feasts, 2) failing to pray to God when there, 3) running about or being guilty of some other type of immodest conduct, 4) looking around, 5) talking or playing, 6) hitting others, and 7) stealing.
Q. What are the most ordinary sins students can commit in school?
A. The most common are 1) coming late through their own fault, 2) wasting time or not using it to study, 3) preventing others from studying, 4) failing to pay attention to the catechism lesson or not trying to remember it, 5) not showing piety during prayers, and 6) failing to obey and respect the teacher.
Q. What are the most common sins children can commit at home?
A. The most common are 1) failing to recite morning and evening prayers, 2) disobeying those in authority and lacking respect for them, 3) quarreling and fighting, 4) stealing, and 5) using improper language.
Q. What are the most common sins children can commit in bed?
A. The most common are 1) being lazy in getting up, 2) going to bed without praying to God, 3) taking pleasure in indecent thoughts, and 4) touching themselves or doing other things contrary to purity.
Q. What are the most common sins that students can commit in the company of their associates?
A. The most common are 1) indulging in impure words, looks, and touching, 2) cursing, 3) lying, 4) backbiting, 5) using insulting language, 6) fighting, 7) stealing, and 8) causing scandal and bad example.

Lesson 11—Contrition

Q. What is the second thing we must do to receive pardon for our sins in the sacrament of Penance?
A. We must have great contrition and grief for our sins.
Q. What is contrition?
A. Contrition is heartfelt sorrow for all the sins we have committed, joined to a firm resolution never to commit them again.

Q. What qualities of contrition are needed for a good and sufficient sacrament of Penance?

A. Contrition must have six qualities: 1) supernatural, that is, coming from God, 2) interior, that is, arising from the depths of our heart, 3) sovereign, that is, showing more contrition for having offended God than for anything else that might cause us grief, 4) universal, that is, extending to all our sins, or at least all our mortal sins, 5) efficacious, that is, accompanied by a firm resolution not to sin again, and 6) inspired by the love of God and joined to a great confidence in his goodness and in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. If we felt sorry for our sins only because we feared losing our honor, wealth, or some other temporal advantage, would we have true contrition, and would we make a good Confession?

A. No, for this fear is entirely from our human nature and does not come from God or exclude all affection for sin.

Q. If we felt sorry for all our sins except one, would we have true contrition and would we make a good Confession?

A. No, receiving absolution in this state would be a sacrilege, especially if it was a mortal sin we did not regret or if we had some serious doubt about it.

Q. How can we make an act of contrition?

A. We can make an act of contrition as follows: "O my God, I humbly beg your pardon for all the sins I have committed in my whole life and especially since my last Confession. Because you are infinitely good, I deeply regret having committed them. I detest them out of love for you, for they displease you, and I am resolved with the help of your grace never to fall into them again."

Q. To make an act of contrition with genuine sorrow for our sins, is it enough merely to say, "My God, I am very sorry for having offended you because you are infinitely good"?

A. No, we must also have genuine feelings of sorrow in our heart.

Q. Must we repent and feel deep sorrow in our heart for all our sins before we go to Confession?

A. Yes, we must have sufficient sorrow for all our sins, at least before we receive absolution; otherwise, we would run the risk of making a sacrilegious Confession.

Q. When making an act of contrition in Confession, must we also have a firm resolution never to fall into these sins again?

A. Yes, for if we fail to do so, we would commit a mortal sin and make a sacrilegious Confession.

Q. Why do we commit a mortal sin and a sacrilege if we confess without a firm resolution never to sin again?

A. This is because a firm purpose of amendment is an element of contrition, an essential part of the sacrament of Penance.
Q. What is this firm purpose of amendment or this strong resolution not to offend God again?
A. It consists of a resolute and determined will to suffer any torments, even death, rather than commit a single sin.
Q. How can we make an act of firm purpose never to offend God again?
A. We can do so as follows: "My God, I am resolved with the help of your holy grace to die rather than offend you again."
Q. If we constantly fall into the same sins, can we be said to have genuine contrition for our sins?
A. No, this shows that we lack a firm purpose of amendment and a strong resolution never to sin again.
Q. If we do not wish to give up a proximate occasion of sin, do we have a firm resolve not to offend God again?
A. No, our resolution is not steadfast.
Q. What do we mean by proximate occasions of sin?
A. Proximate occasions of sin are all things that ordinarily cause us to sin, for example, people and places that usually lead us to offend God.
Q. How many kinds of proximate occasions of sin are there?
A. There are two kinds: 1) those that of themselves lead to sin, such as reading impure books or associating frequently and familiarly with someone of the opposite sex, and 2) those that cause a person to fall into sin, not so much of themselves but because of the person's poor motivation due to weakness, natural inclination, or bad habits.
Q. Must we give up the second kind of occasion of sin as well as the first?
A. Yes, if we generally offend God in these occasions and would continue to do so.
Q. What benefit do we receive if we have true sorrow and perfect contrition for our sins?
A. We receive the grace of God and the remission of our sins, even before confessing them, provided we intend to do so.
Q. How many kinds of contrition are there?
A. The two kinds of contrition are perfect contrition and imperfect contrition, also called attrition.
Q. What is perfect contrition?
A. Perfect contrition is sorrow for having offended God because he is infinitely good and detests sin.
Q. Does perfect contrition always remit sin, even without Confession?

A. Yes, it does, provided that we intend to confess our sins.
Q. Must we go to Confession if our sins have been forgiven by perfect contrition?
A. Yes, for our sins were pardoned through perfect contrition only because we had the firm intention of confessing them.
Q. What is imperfect contrition?
A. Imperfect contrition is sorrow for having offended God only because of the enormity of our sins, fear of the pains of hell, or fear of losing the reward of heaven that God has promised to those who die in the state of grace.
Q. Can we obtain the remission of our sins by imperfect contrition alone?
A. No, it must be accompanied by the other elements of the sacrament of Penance.
Q. Can we make a true act of contrition or experience genuine sorrow for our sins through our own efforts?
A. No, only God's grace makes this possible.
Q. Can we arouse in ourselves true contrition and sorrow for our sins?
A. Yes, we can do this with the grace of God.
Q. What must we do to arouse in ourselves true contrition and sorrow for our sins and a firm resolve never to sin again?
A. We must do five things: 1) ask God for this grace, 2) think of God's goodness and the blessings we have received, 3) recall the enormity and great number of our sins, 4) consider that sin makes us lose God's grace, deprives us of a right to heaven, and merits hell, and 5) make acts of true contrition often.

Lesson 12—Confessing

Q. What is the third thing we must do to make a good Confession?
A. We must confess our sins to a priest approved by the bishop.
Q. What do we mean by confessing?
A. Confessing is the secret self-accusation of all our sins made to a priest to obtain absolution.
Q. Why do we say that confessing is an accusation?
A. We must relate our sins in Confession in the form of an accusation, that is, by admitting that we did wrong.
Q. Do we have to accuse ourselves of all our sins in Confession?
A. Yes, we must accuse ourselves of all the sins we have committed, at least the mortal sins, to obtain absolution.
Q. If we voluntarily omitted a mortal sin in Confession, would we receive absolution for the ones that we did confess?

A. No, if we did so, we would commit a sacrilege.
Q. Would we make a good Confession if after seriously examining our conscience, we forget to mention some sin?
A. Yes, that sin would be pardoned as well as the others we did confess.
Q. What should we do if we have forgotten a sin in Confession and remember this later in another Confession?
A. We must mention the forgotten sin in the new Confession.
Q. What must we do to state our sins properly in Confession?
A. We must state the kind and number of our sins and the circumstances affecting each sin we have committed.
Q. What do we mean by stating the kind of sin we have committed?
A. It means to say specifically what sin we committed. For example, when we sin by swearing, we must mention what curse was uttered; if we insulted somebody, what insult was said, and so on.
Q. What do we mean by declaring the number of sins we have committed?
A. It means saying how many times we committed each sin we confess.
Q. Is it enough to say that we committed a certain sin several times, for example, that we cursed several times?
A. No, if we sinned twice, we sinned several times, and if we sinned ten, twenty, thirty, a hundred, or a thousand times, that could still be "several" times.
Q. What do we mean by the circumstances affecting each sin we have committed?
A. It means telling how, why, with whom, where, and so on the sin was committed, when these details are necessary to clarify what sort of sin we committed.
Q. How should we accuse ourselves of a sin when we are not sure that we committed it?
A. We should say, "Father, I doubt, or I fear, that I consented to an impure thought, or to a thought of pride," and so on.
Q. How should we accuse ourselves if when committing a sin, we urged another person to sin likewise?
A. We should tell the confessor what happened and how many persons we encouraged to sin by our bad example.
Q. What should we do when we have omitted confessing a sin or have made a bad Confession for whatever reason?
A. We must confess again as soon as possible all the sins we named in the bad Confession and subsequent Confessions, along with the sin we omitted and the number of bad Confessions and Communions we have made since then.

Q. What should we do if we are guilty of making a bad Confession and cannot remember all the sins we confessed and those we have committed in the interval, or the number of bad Confessions and Communions we have made?
A. It would be best to make a general Confession covering our entire life.
Q. Who must make a general Confession of their whole life, or at least of the time since their first invalid Confession?
A. Seven groups of persons must do this: 1) those who routinely went to Confession without sufficient sorrow for their sins, 2) those who voluntarily omitted some sin in Confession, either because they had not examined themselves properly or for any other reason, 3) those who went to Confession without knowing the principal mysteries of our holy religion, 4) those who did not avoid the proximate occasions of sin, 5) those who refused to be reconciled with their enemies or did not repair the harm done to the honor or property of another, 6) those who after their Confession have not changed their way of living and continually commit the same sins, and 7) those who doubt whether they have made an invalid Confession.
Q. When is a Confession invalid?
A. It is invalid on four particular occasions: 1) when we have forgotten to mention some sin in Confession because we did not make a serious examination of conscience, 2) when we failed to mention some sin through shame or malice, 3) when we lacked the courage to state our sins just as they were but tried to make them appear less serious, and 4) when we had insufficient sorrow or lacked a firm resolve not to sin again, or our willingness to do penance and to make satisfaction for our sins was defective.

Lesson 13—Absolution by the priest

Q. To whom must we confess our sins?
A. We must confess to a priest approved by the bishop.
Q. Can we only confess our sins to a priest?
A. Yes, only priests can give us absolution for our sins.
Q. Why should we confess our sins?
A. We should confess our sins to have them pardoned through the priest's absolution.
Q. Must the confessor give absolution to all who confess their sins to him?
A. No, he should give it only to those properly disposed who have true contrition and a firm determination not to sin again.

Q. Would we be pardoned of our sins if the confessor gave us absolution when we were unworthy of receiving it?
A. No, in such a case both the confessor and the penitent would commit a sacrilege.
Q. Should we fear dying in mortal sin and being damned if the confessor refuses us absolution?
A. Yes, we should fear this, but the same is to be feared if the confessor were to give us absolution, for it would be invalid.
Q. What should we do to secure the possibility of being saved when we have been refused absolution for not being properly disposed?
A. We should immediately make an act of contrition and do our best to acquire the intentions we lacked.
Q. To whom must a confessor refuse absolution?
A. Absolution is to be refused to eight kinds of people: 1) those who are ignorant of what a Christian must know, until such time as they are properly instructed, 2) those who sin habitually, until such time as they correct themselves, 3) those who refuse to give up the proximate occasions that lead them to sin, 4) those who cherish hatred or animosity and refuse to be reconciled, 5) those who possess or damage their neighbor's goods or harm his reputation and refuse to make restitution or to repair the wrong they have done, 6) those who refuse to make reparation for having given scandal, 7) those who go to Confession without being properly disposed, without having examined their conscience, feeling any sorrow for offending God, or having any firm purpose of not sinning again, and 8) those who do not accuse themselves of all their sins, do not want to make satisfaction for them, or refuse to do the penance assigned to them.
Q. What should the confessor do with persons having such intentions?
A. He should defer absolution until they have become better disposed or refuse it if they do not want to change their conduct.

Lesson 14—Satisfaction

Q. What is the fourth thing we must do to receive pardon for our sins in the sacrament of Penance?
A. We must offer satisfaction to God for our sins.
Q. Is it enough to receive absolution to obtain pardon for our sins?
A. No, we must still make satisfaction.
Q. What does it mean to make satisfaction for our sins?
A. It means to repair the injury done to God by our sins.

Q. Why must we make satisfaction to God for our sins, for Jesus Christ has already made satisfaction for them by his death on the cross?
A. We must avail ourselves of the merits our Lord obtained for us by his death.
Q. To whom do we owe satisfaction?
A. We owe satisfaction to God and to our neighbor.
Q. In how many ways can we offer satisfaction to God?
A. We can do this in seven ways: 1) by the penance the confessor imposes on us, 2) by penances we voluntarily inflict on ourselves, 3) by the tribulations God may send us, for example, illnesses, and so on, 4) by the trials inseparable from our state in life, 5) by the sufferings we receive from our neighbor, for example, calumnies, lawsuits, lack of consideration, and so on, 6) by the sufferings endured in purgatory, and 7) by indulgences.
Q. Must we do the penance given us by our confessor?
A. Yes, if we fail to do so, we commit a new sin. Also, if we were already resolved not to do it when going to Confession, we would not receive pardon for our sins.
Q. What should we do if we forget our penance entirely or in part?
A. We must do it as soon as possible after we remember it.
Q. Would we make a good Confession if we were willing to do penance only in purgatory?
A. Not at all, for this would show that we have neither true repentance for our sins nor the desire to make satisfaction for them.
Q. Do we make full satisfaction for our sins if we complete the penance imposed by our confessor?
A. Ordinarily, it is often necessary and always very useful to perform other penances as well, for these penances are often not sufficient if we have offended God a great deal.
Q. What kinds of good works can we do to satisfy God for our sins in this life?
A. We can pray, fast, suffer, and give alms to help our neighbor.
Q. Is it enough to make satisfaction to God to have our sins forgiven?
A. No, we must also make satisfaction to our neighbor when we have wronged him.
Q. In how many ways can we wrong our neighbor?
A. We can wrong our neighbor in four ways: 1) we can harm the soul through scandal; 2) we can harm the body by wounding or killing; 3) we can harm honor by insults or evil speech; 4) we can harm property by theft.
Q. How can we make satisfaction to our neighbor when we have harmed the soul by giving scandal?

A. We must repair the harm done and give good example instead.
Q. How can we make satisfaction to our neighbor when we have done bodily harm by striking, wounding, or killing?
A. We must make just compensation to the person or the heirs according to the best of our ability.
Q. How can we repair the harm done to our neighbor by evil speech, whether or not what we said was true?
A. If what we said was false, we must tell the truth, if possible, to those who believed our evil speech. If what we said was true but not public, we must admit that we were wrong to say what we did and that what we said should not be believed, and we should also praise the good qualities of this person.
Q. When we have harmed our neighbor's goods, what must we do to repair the damage done?
A. We must make restitution for everything we took, in kind or in its equivalent value, and repair the damage we caused or made another person do.
Q. Can we make a good Confession if we are unwilling to repair the harm we did to our neighbor and refuse to restore what we took when we are able to do so?
A. No, the Confession would be worthless.
Q. Is it enough to promise the confessor that we will give back what we took or leave instructions in our will that this should be done?
A. No, we must actually make restitution when we have the means of doing so.

Lesson 15—Indulgences and purgatory

Q. Is there any other way besides penances to satisfy God's justice for our sins?
A. Yes, we may also use indulgences.
Q. What is an indulgence?
A. An indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sins already pardoned that the Church grants us apart from the sacrament of Penance.
Q. Does the Church have the power to grant indulgences?
A. Yes, this is an article of faith we must believe.
Q. Who gives the Church the power to grant indulgences?
A. Jesus Christ gives her this power.
Q. Does the Church use indulgences to remit the punishments merited by our already pardoned sins?
A. Yes, she applies to us the superabundant satisfactions of Jesus Christ and the saints.

Q. Who has the power to grant indulgences?
A. Our Holy Father the Pope can grant them throughout the Church, and the bishop can grant them in his diocese.
Q. To whom does the Church grant indulgences?
A. It is only to those in the state of grace who have through the sacrament of Penance obtained the remission of the guilt of sin and the eternal punishment due to it.
Q. How many kinds of indulgences are there?
A. The three kinds are plenary indulgences, partial indulgences, and the Jubilee indulgence.
Q. What is a plenary indulgence?
A. A plenary indulgence is the general remission of all temporal punishment due to sin.
Q. What is a partial indulgence?
A. A partial indulgence is the remission of part of the punishment due to sin.
Q. What is the Jubilee indulgence?
A. The Jubilee indulgence is a plenary and extraordinary indulgence granted to all the faithful.
Q. What is the difference between the Jubilee indulgence and the ordinary plenary indulgence?
A. The Jubilee indulgence affords us various advantages that other indulgences do not provide.
Q. Why does the Church grant indulgences?
A. The Church grants indulgences to supplement the insufficient penance done by those who have not entirely made satisfaction for their sins.
Q. Do we fulfill the proper conditions for gaining an indulgence if we do not want to make satisfaction to God for our sins in this life?
A. No, the Church cannot dispense us from at least wanting to do so, for God has obliged us to do penance,.
Q. What is the last way to offer God satisfaction for our sins?
A. The last way is to suffer for them in purgatory.
Q. Who must offer satisfaction to God in purgatory for their sins?
A. It is those who died in the state of grace but had not entirely satisfied God's justice for the punishment due their sins.
Q. Can we avoid satisfying the justice of God in purgatory if we have not done so entirely in this life?
A. No, we cannot.
Q. Why must we complete in purgatory the satisfaction we owe God?
A. To enter heaven, we must be free of all stain contracted through sin.

Q. Must we believe in the existence of purgatory?
A. Yes, this belief is an article of faith.
Q. What is purgatory?
A. Purgatory is a place in the earth where the souls of the just who are in the state of grace when they die complete the satisfaction owed God for their sins through the sufferings they endure there.
Q. What sufferings do the souls in purgatory endure?
A. They endure three kinds of sufferings: 1) they are deprived temporarily of the vision of God; 2) they burn constantly in a fire believed to be as penetrating and painful as that of hell; 3) they endure other penalties we do not know about and cannot understand.
Q. Do the souls in purgatory endure more suffering there than they would have had in this life?
A. Yes, they suffer even more than all the martyrs together suffered on earth.
Q. Do these souls remain in purgatory for a long time?
A. The length of time they remain there depends on the satisfaction they owe God's justice for their sins. Some will suffer in purgatory until the end of the world.
Q. Why does God cause the souls in purgatory to suffer so much?
A. He does this for two reasons: 1) to help us understand the rigor of his justice in the next world, and 2) to inspire us with horror for even the slightest faults.
Q. Are even the slightest of sins, such as a lie told in jest, a useless word, or a distracted look in church, going to be punished in purgatory?
A. Yes, they are, unless we do penance for them in this world.
Q. Do souls who die in mortal sin go to purgatory?
A. No, they go to hell to burn for all eternity.
Q. What must we do to avoid going to purgatory?
A. We must do three things: 1) be deeply sorry for having offended God, 2) do strict penance for the sins we have committed, and 3) carefully avoid in the future even the slightest sin.
Q. Can we, while on earth, help the souls in purgatory suffer less than they would otherwise have to do to satisfy God's justice?
A. Yes, we can do this.
Q. In how many ways can we help the souls in purgatory?
A. We can do so in six ways: 1) going to Mass or having a Mass said for them, 2) receiving Communion for them, 3) suffering or doing penances for them, 4) praying for them, 5) giving alms for their intention, and 6) gaining indulgences for them.
Q. Must we help the souls suffering in purgatory?

A. This is not an absolute obligation, but Christian charity urges us to do so.
Q. What benefits do we receive by helping the souls suffering in purgatory?
A. We receive two kinds of benefits: 1) many graces in this life, and 2) the hope that God will deliver us promptly from our own purgatory.

Lesson 16—The Holy Eucharist

Q. What is the fourth sacrament of the Church?
A. It is the Holy Eucharist, the greatest and most excellent of all the sacraments.
Q. Why is Holy Eucharist the greatest and most excellent of all sacraments?
A. It contains Jesus Christ, the author of grace and all the sacraments.
Q. What are the principle names given to the sacrament of Holy Eucharist?
A. It is called the Eucharist, the Most Holy Sacrament, and the sacrament of the altar.
Q. What does the word *eucharist* mean?
A. Eucharist means *thanksgiving*.
Q. Why do we call the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ the Eucharist, or thanksgiving?
A. We do this for two reasons: 1) Jesus Christ instituted it while giving thanks to God his Father, and 2) we also give thanks to God when we receive this sacrament and offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass.
Q. Why do we call the sacrament of the body of Jesus Christ the sacrament of the altar?
A. This sacrament is brought into being and offered to God on the altar.
Q. Why do we call the sacrament of the body of Christ the Most Holy Sacrament?
A. There are two reasons: 1) it contains our Lord Jesus Christ, who is holiness itself, and 2) it imparts holiness to those who receive it worthily.
Q. When did Jesus Christ institute the Eucharist?
A. He instituted it on the eve of his Passion.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ institute the Eucharist?
A. He did so for three reasons: 1) to show us love, 2) to remind us of his death, and 3) to provide us with spiritual nourishment and to increase grace in us.

Q. What is Holy Eucharist?
A. Holy Eucharist is the sacrament containing the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.
Q. Is the body of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist the same body conceived in the womb of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and nailed to the cross?
A. Yes, it is the same body.
Q. Is the blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist under the appearance of wine the same blood shed for us on the cross?
A. Yes, it is the same blood.
Q. Is the living Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist?
A. Yes, the living Jesus Christ is there.
Q. Does our Lord Jesus Christ suffer in body and soul in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist?
A. No, he cannot suffer, for he is in his glorious and immortal state.
Q. What is the matter of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist?
A. The matter is the bread and wine that the priest consecrates.
Q. What is the form of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist?
A. The form consists of the words the priest uses to consecrate the bread and wine when he says, "This is my body; this is my blood."
Q. Because the matter of this sacrament consists of bread and wine, is what the priest offers on the altar really bread and wine?
A. What the priest offers on the altar is bread and wine until he pronounces the words of the Consecration; then it is no longer bread and wine.
Q. Why is what the priest offers on the altar no longer bread and wine after he pronounces the words of the Consecration?
A. The words of the Consecration change the bread into the body and the wine into the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. What do we call this change of the bread into the body and of the wine into the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. We call it *transubstantiation*, which means *the changing of one substance into another.*
Q. Do the bread and wine still remain in the Eucharist along with the body and blood of Christ?
A. No, in the sacrament of Holy Eucharist, nothing remains but the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.
Q. What do we mean by the appearances of bread and wine?
A. We mean what our senses perceive as bread and wine, including the accidents accompanying them: color, taste, shape, and so on.

Lesson 17—The two species of bread and wine

Q. Is there anything else in the Holy Eucharist under the species or appearance of bread besides the body of Jesus Christ?
A. Yes, his blood, soul, and divinity are also present along with his body.
Q. Is there anything else under the species, or appearance, of wine besides the blood of Jesus Christ?
A. Yes, his body, soul, and divinity are also present along with his blood.
Q. Is Jesus Christ, therefore, entirely present under the species of both bread and wine?
A. Yes, Jesus Christ is wholly and entirely present under each of the two species.
Q. How can Jesus Christ, with his whole body, be contained in a tiny host and his blood and all his body be present under the species of wine?
A. God by his almighty power can do whatever and as he pleases.
Q. Does the priest, who receives both the bread and the wine, receive more than the people, who receive only the bread?
A. No, we receive Jesus Christ whole and entire under either species as if we received him under both.
Q. When the priest breaks the host, does he also break the body of Jesus Christ?
A. No, he merely breaks the appearance of the bread.
Q. When the priest divides the host into several pieces, is the body of Jesus Christ wholly and entirely present in each morsel of this broken host?
A. Yes, he is wholly and entirely present in the smallest particle, just as he is in the largest, and he is not more present in the biggest host than in the smallest or in the whole quantity of hosts than in a single one.
Q. Is the same body of Jesus Christ present in all consecrated hosts?
A. Yes, it is the same.
Q. Can the same body of our Lord be in different places and in a great number of different hosts at the same time?
A. Yes, this is possible because our Lord is all powerful.
Q. Does our Lord remain in our stomach for a long time after we receive him in Holy Communion?
A. He remains there as long as the appearances of bread and wine are not digested.
Q. When the appearances are digested, what happens to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was in our stomach?

A. When this happens, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ wholly and entirely ceases to be present within us, but he does not cease to be present in our soul by his grace, as long as we do not commit a mortal sin.
Q. What honor should we render to our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist?
A. We should adore him in the Holy Eucharist because he is the same Jesus Christ who is adored by the angels and the saints in heaven.

Lesson 18—The conditions needed to receive the Holy Eucharist and our obligation to receive it

Q. Do all those receiving the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist share in all the graces God wishes to impart through this sacrament?
A. No, only those receiving the Holy Eucharist worthily and in the state of grace share in these graces.
Q. What conditions must we fulfill to receive Communion worthily?
A. There are two kinds of conditions, those relating to the soul and those relating to the body.
Q. What two conditions of soul must we have to receive Communion worthily?
A. First, we must be in the state of grace and free from all mortal sin; second, we must perform this action with great devotion.
Q. What should we do before Communion to be in the state of grace and free from mortal sin?
A. We must go to Confession before going to Communion.
Q. What sin would we commit if we went to Communion in the state of mortal sin?
A. We would commit a horrible sacrilege.
Q. Were we to receive Communion unworthily and in the state of mortal sin, would we still receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. Yes, but it would be for our condemnation.
Q. Is it also a sacrilege to receive Communion in the state of venial sin?
A. No, but we would be deprived of the many graces we might have received through this sacrament.
Q. How should we prepare ourselves to receive Holy Communion with devotion?
A. We should do so, first, by making acts of faith, adoration, love, humility, and ardent desire to be united to our Lord; second, by expressing to him after Communion our gratitude for such a great

favor, by offering ourselves to him, and by asking for all the graces we need.

Q. What conditions of body must we have to receive Communion properly?

A. There are two: to be modestly dressed and to be fasting by not eating or drinking anything after midnight.

Q. Are we sometimes permitted to receive Communion when we are not fasting?

A. Yes, we are allowed to do so if we are dangerously ill and receive Holy Communion as Viaticum.

Q. What do we mean by the word *Viaticum?*

A. Viaticum means *sustenance for a journey.*

Q. Why do we call the Holy Eucharist Viaticum?

A. Viaticum sustains us when we are at life's extremity, helping us to die well and reach heaven.

Q. When and how often must we receive the Holy Eucharist?

A. We must do so at least once a year in our parish during the two weeks of Easter and when we are in danger of death.

Q. Should we not receive Communion more than once a year if we wish to live as good Christians?

A. Yes, this would be most appropriate.

Q. How often should we receive Holy Communion if we wish to live as good Christians?

A. We should generally receive it at least once a month, even more often if possible, but we should follow the advice of our confessor.

Q. What should we do if we do not receive Holy Communion sacramentally?

A. We should make a spiritual communion.

Q. What is a spiritual communion?

A. A spiritual communion means that we have an ardent desire in our heart for uniting ourselves to Jesus Christ, his sentiments, and his maxims and intentions—as much as we can and with all our heart.

Q. What benefits do we receive from a spiritual communion?

A. We receive at least some of the graces of sacramental Communion.

Lesson 19—The holy sacrifice of the Mass

Q. Is the Holy Eucharist a sacrifice as well as a sacrament?

A. Yes, the Holy Eucharist is the most excellent sacrifice that ever existed or can exist.

Q. What do we mean by the word *sacrifice?*

A. A sacrifice is an offering to God of some creature, which is then immolated and destroyed in God's honor.
Q. What do we mean by immolating something in God's honor?
A. Immolation means destroying, changing, or modifying something in some way to honor the power that God has to destroy, change, or alter any creature when and as he pleases.
Q. What do we call the creature immolated, destroyed, and offered to God in a sacrifice?
A. We call it the victim of the sacrifice.
Q. Can anyone offer sacrifices to God?
A. No, only those whom God has chosen and consecrated for this role can offer sacrifices.
Q. Why do we destroy a creature in the sacrifice to offer it to God in his honor?
A. We do this to recognize and publicly show that God, the sovereign master of all things, has the right and absolute power to destroy his creatures.
Q. May we offer sacrifices to anyone but God?
A. No, only God, our sovereign Lord, has absolute power over life and death.
Q. When is the Holy Eucharist a sacrifice where Jesus Christ is offered to God?
A. This happens at holy Mass.
Q. What is holy Mass?
A. Holy Mass is a sacrifice in which Jesus Christ offers himself to God his Father under the species, or appearances, of bread and wine through the hands of the priest and in memory of the death he suffered on the cross for our sins.
Q. How is holy Mass a true sacrifice?
A. The body and blood of Jesus Christ are offered to God and immolated in his honor.
Q. Because Jesus Christ can no longer die, how can we say that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are immolated and destroyed during the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. We can say this only in a certain way.
Q. In what way are the body and blood of Jesus Christ immolated in the sacrifice of the Mass?
A. The body and blood of Jesus Christ, which were actually separated when he died on the cross, are only represented to us as such by the separate Consecration of the bread and the wine. After Communion, when consumed, they cease to exist under the sacramental species.
Q. How do we offer Jesus Christ in the holy sacrifice of the Mass?

A. We offer him under the appearances of bread and wine.
Q. Is the sacrifice of the Mass different than that of the cross?
A. Although this sacrifice is the same as that of the cross, it does differ from it in certain aspects.
Q. How is the holy sacrifice of the Mass the same as that of the cross?
A. In the Mass Jesus Christ offers himself to his Father, just as he did on the cross.
Q. How is the holy sacrifice of the Mass different than that of the cross?
A. It is different in that on the cross Jesus Christ actually shed his blood to make satisfaction for our sins, whereas in holy Mass Jesus Christ does not shed his blood but offers himself to his eternal Father, and by virtue of this sacrifice, he applies to us the graces he merited for us by his sufferings and death.

Lesson 20—The institution, minister, end, and fruits of the sacrifice of the Mass

Q. Who instituted the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. Jesus Christ instituted it.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ institute the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. He did it so that we might remember the sacrifice of the cross and apply its merits to ourselves.
Q. Who offers the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. Jesus Christ himself offers it invisibly, and the priest, as the minister of Jesus Christ and of the Church, offers it visibly.
Q. Do priests alone have the power to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. Yes, only priests have this power.
Q. To whom do we offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. We offer it to God alone.
Q. When we say that a Mass is offered in honor of a saint, do we mean that the Mass is offered to that saint?
A. No, we are simply praying to the saint to join with the priest and with the faithful in honoring God and our Lord Jesus Christ in this sacrifice and to offer it along with us.
Q. Do we offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass with the priest?
A. Yes, we do so when we attend Mass with good and holy intentions and unite in affection and intention with the priest.
Q. Why do we offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. We offer it to adore God, to thank God for his benefits, to ask his pardon for our sins, and to beg for the grace we need to be saved.

Q. For whom do we offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. We offer it for the living, especially for those who are present, and for the dead.
Q. What benefits and advantages does the holy sacrifice of the Mass obtain for the living?
A. It secures spiritual and temporal blessings for them.
Q. What benefits does the holy sacrifice of the Mass obtain for the deceased?
A. It alleviates the sufferings of those in purgatory.
Q. Can the holy sacrifice of the Mass obtain pardon for our sins?
A. Yes, it can do this.
Q. Because we can obtain pardon for our sins at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, is it enough to go to Mass without going to Confession?
A. No, we must also confess our sins and receive absolution for them.
Q. Because we still have to confess our sins even though we attend the holy sacrifice of the Mass, what do we mean by saying that we obtain pardon for our sins at Mass?
A. When we say that we obtain pardon for our sins at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, we do not mean that it remits sins as effectively as the sacrament of Penance does, but rather that it appeases God's anger against us and obtains the graces of true conversion and of making a good Confession.

Lesson 21—The sacrament of Extreme Unction

Q. What is the fifth sacrament of the Church?
A. It is the sacrament of Extreme Unction.
Q. What is the sacrament of Extreme Unction?
A. Extreme Unction is the sacrament instituted for the solace of the sick by preparing them to die well when they are in danger of death.
Q. How does the sacrament of Extreme Unction give solace to the sick?
A. It does this in four ways: 1) it remits venial sins and even mortal sins if the sick person has any and cannot confess them; 2) it delivers the soul from the languor and feebleness for doing good that remains in the soul after sin; 3) it strengthens the soul to bear patiently the sufferings of illness and to resist the devil's temptations; 4) it restores health to the body if this is necessary or useful for the salvation of the soul.
Q. When does the sacrament of Extreme Unction remit mortal sins?

A. It does so when we have a mortal sin on our conscience that we do not remember or know about, as long as we are truly repentant.
Q. What are the remains of sin from which the sacrament of Extreme Unction delivers us?
A. They are the evil effects produced in the soul by sin, such as a certain languor and feebleness for doing good, which lead to a guilty conscience, lack of confidence in God's mercy, and fear of dying.
Q. How does the sacrament of Extreme Unction deliver us from these remains of sin?
A. It does so in three ways: 1) by allaying the guilty conscience usually afflicting those who are deathly ill, 2) by inspiring them with deep trust in God's goodness, and 3) by encouraging the dying to see death as the end of sufferings and the beginning of true happiness.
Q. Why do we call this sacrament Extreme Unction?
A. We do so for two reasons: 1) it is the last of all the anointings that a Christian receives in this life, and 2) only those who are ill and near death receive this sacrament.
Q. Should we wait until a patient is at the last extremity before administering Extreme Unction?
A. No, it is enough to be in clear danger of death.
Q. Is it wrong to wait until we are at the last extremity before asking to receive Extreme Unction?
A. Yes, it is wrong for three particular reasons: 1) it shows that we are not very eager to receive it; 2) we risk dying without having received it; 3) it means putting ourselves in a state where we cannot benefit from it should we finally receive it.
Q. Is it absolutely necessary to receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction?
A. No, but we would be in serious danger of losing our soul should we fail to receive it through our own fault.
Q. Why would we be in serious danger of damnation if we failed through our own fault to receive this sacrament?
A. We would be in danger for two reasons: 1) we would show contempt for this sacrament, and 2) we would through our own fault be putting ourselves in danger of yielding to the devil's temptations, which are very violent at the hour of death.
Q. Can we receive the sacrament of Extreme Unction more than once?
A. Yes, but not in the same illness.
Q. What is the matter of the sacrament of Extreme Unction?
A. The matter is the oil of the sick, which is blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday.

Q. What is the form of the sacrament of Extreme Unction?
A. The form consists of the words the priest pronounces when applying the blessed oil to the sick person.
Q. Does the oil used in the sacrament of Extreme Unction signify all the types of relief that the sick person may receive by virtue of this sacrament?
A. Yes, it signifies them all.
Q. How does the oil signify all these types of relief that Extreme Unction can provide to the sick person?
A. It is a property of oil to soften, strengthen, and heal, and the special grace of Extreme Unction is to strengthen us against temptations, deliver us from both sin and the remains of sin, soothe our sufferings as a patient, and even cure us of our illness if this is good and advantageous for us.
Q. Why did the Church prescribe that the bishop blesses the oil applied to the sick in the sacrament of Extreme Unction?
A. The Church did this to show that the oil of this sacrament can produce these great effects in the soul only through the power God gave it.
Q. What places on the body do we anoint with the blessed oil in this sacrament?
A. We ordinarily anoint the body in seven places: on the eyes, the ears, the nose, the lips, the breast, the hands, and the feet.
Q. Why do we anoint these places on the body in the sacrament of Extreme Unction?
A. We do so for two reasons: 1) to ask God's pardon for our having used these parts of our body to offend him, and 2) because the devil can still make use of them at the moment of death to tempt us and cause us to be lost.
Q. How do we make use of all these parts of our body to offend God?
A. We use our eyes to offend God by evil looks; our ears, by listening to slander or improper language; our lips and tongue, by gluttony, sensuality, and evil speech; our breast, that is, the heart, by dwelling on evil thoughts; our hands, by striking others or by improper touches; our feet, by walking where we should not go.
Q. What conditions ought we to fulfill when receiving the sacrament of Extreme Unction?
A. We ought to fulfill four conditions to receive it properly: 1) a clear conscience free of mortal sin, 2) deep trust in God's mercy and resignation to his holy will, 3) ardent desire and great longing to receive it, and 4) acts of contrition for the sins we have committed with the parts of the body being anointed with holy oil.

Q. What must we do after receiving the sacrament of Extreme Unction?
A. We must no longer think of the things of this world but only of God and our soul's salvation, thus preparing ourselves to die worthily.

Lesson 22—The sacrament of Holy Orders

Q. What is the sixth sacrament of the Church?
A. It is the sacrament of Holy Orders.
Q. What is the sacrament of Holy Orders?
A. Holy Orders is the sacrament that bestows the power to administer the sacraments or to assist those who do.
Q. Can all who receive the sacrament of Holy Orders perform the same functions in the Church?
A. No, they can perform only those functions corresponding to the orders they have received.
Q. Are there various orders in the Church?
A. Yes, there are seven: four minor orders and three major, or sacred, orders.
Q. Does this mean that there are seven sacraments of orders?
A. No, all seven orders together make up only one sacrament.
Q. What are the four minor orders?
A. They are the orders of acolytes, exorcists, lectors, and porters.
Q. What are the duties of those in minor orders?
A. Acolytes serve holy Mass by lighting and carrying the candles; exorcists cast out demons from possessed people; lectors read Holy Scripture in church, and porters open and shut the doors of the church and ring the bells.
Q. What are the three major, or sacred, orders?
A. They are the orders of subdeacons, deacons, and priests.
Q. What are the duties of those in major orders?
A. The subdeacon serves the deacon and sings the Epistle; the deacon serves the priest, sings the Gospel at High Mass, and preaches to the faithful; the priest consecrates the body and blood of our Lord and absolves sins.
Q. What is the matter of the sacrament of Holy Orders and of each order in particular?
A. The matter is something sensible indicating the power given in each order. For example, the matter of the order of priesthood is the bishop's handing to the ordained a chalice filled with wine and covered by a paten holding a host for the Consecration, plus the imposition of his hands on the candidate to indicate the power he bestows to forgive sins.

Q. What is the form of the sacrament of Holy Orders?
A. The form consists of the words the bishop pronounces while he exteriorly and sensibly hands over the signs of the power received in the sacrament. For example, the form of the order of the priesthood consists of two actions: 1) the bishop, while handing over the chalice to the candidate, pronounces the words that indicate the power the candidate receives to consecrate the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and 2) the bishop, while imposing his hands on the candidate, speaks the words that indicate the power conferred on the candidate to forgive sins. These words are "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you forgive shall be forgiven; whose sins you retain shall be retained." Similarly, the bishop, while conferring the other orders, hands over the matter that symbolizes the power received and at the same time pronounces the form that specifies the power he gives.
Q. Would a person receive the sacrament of Holy Orders each time for each of the seven different orders?
A. A candidate receiving all seven orders would receive the sacrament only once, for all the orders are only different degrees of the same sacrament.
Q. Can the sacrament of Holy Orders, for example, the priesthood, be received several times?
A. No, the sacrament can be received only once.
Q. Why can the sacrament of Holy Orders be received only once?
A. It imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, called a character.
Q. What is the character of Holy Orders?
A. This character is a mark showing that the ordained is a minister of Jesus Christ, the dispenser of his mysteries, and an officer in his Church.
Q. How does the character of Holy Orders show that the ordained is the minister of Jesus Christ and the dispenser of his mysteries?
A. It does do by showing that whoever has received the sacrament of Holy Orders exercises the functions of Jesus Christ on earth and procures his grace for the faithful by administering the sacraments.
Q. How does the character of Holy Orders show that the ordained is an officer in the Church?
A. It does so by showing that whoever has received the sacrament of Holy Orders is set apart to labor for the good of the Church and the sanctification of souls.
Q. Who abuse the character of Holy Orders?
A. Ecclesiastics who care nothing about sanctifying others by word and example in the exercise of their ministry abuse this character.

Q. Will ecclesiastics who are damned preserve the character of Holy Orders?
A. They will, indeed, for all eternity.
Q. Why will ecclesiastics who are damned preserve the character of Holy Orders?
A. It is so that they can be recognized as traitors and unworthy ministers of Jesus Christ who cravenly abandoned God's interests and neglected the care of his Church and the salvation of the children entrusted to them.
Q. Which of the orders is the holiest and most excellent?
A. It is the order of the priesthood.
Q. Why is priesthood the holiest and most excellent of all orders?
A. It gives the ordained the power to consecrate the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and to forgive sins.
Q. Who gives priests the power to consecrate the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and to forgive sins?
A. The bishop who ordains them gives this power.
Q. Who gave bishops and priests the power to consecrate the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and to forgive sins?
A. Jesus Christ gave them these powers when he conferred them on his Apostles, from whom the bishops have received this authority.
Q. When did our Lord Jesus Christ give his Apostles the power to consecrate his body and blood?
A. Jesus Christ gave them this power on Holy Thursday when he instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.
Q. When did our Lord Jesus Christ give the power of absolving sins to his Apostles?
A. Jesus Christ gave them this power when he first appeared to them after his Resurrection.
Q. Must we give more honor and respect to priests than to others?
A. Yes, they represent our Lord Jesus Christ on earth.
Q. Should we also respect ecclesiastics who are not priests?
A. Yes, we should because of the holiness of their state.
Q. Must we respect priests who lead an evil life?
A. Yes, we must show them respect because of the authority they have received from God.
Q. Is tonsure one of the orders?
A. No, tonsure confers no function in the Church; it only authorizes attendance at the Divine Office in a surplice and the wearing of ecclesiastical garb.
Q. What is tonsure?
A. Tonsure is a ceremony of the Church in which a Christian is consecrated to serve God in the clerical state.

Q. What is the proper intention for receiving the tonsure?
A. The Christian should sincerely intend to become a cleric and to live uprightly in that state.
Q. What are the proper conditions for receiving the tonsure?
A. The proper conditions are 1) to be able at least to read and to write, 2) to be confirmed, and 3) to be called by God to the clerical state.
Q. What must be done after receiving the tonsure?
A. There are three special obligations: 1) keeping the hair cut short and wearing clerical garb, 2) assisting at the Divine Office in the parish on Sundays and feasts, wearing the surplice, and 3) giving good example by frequenting the sacraments.
Q. May parents require or even urge their children to receive the tonsure merely in the hope of obtaining an ecclesiastical benefice?
A. No, they have no right to do this.
Q. What is wrong with parents' requiring or urging their children to receive the tonsure in the hope of obtaining an ecclesiastical benefice?
A. There are three serious wrongs: 1) they offend God; 2) they incur guilt for their children's damnation and the scandal they will give to the Church; 3) they damn themselves.
Q. What should parents do when they wish to have their children tonsured?
A. They should do six things: 1) examine whether the child has any aptitude for and seems called by God to the ecclesiastical state, 2) ask God earnestly to let them know his holy will, 3) consult their confessor or some other learned and pious cleric on this matter, 4) never press the child to embrace the clerical state because of or in the hope of obtaining some benefice, 5) help the child understand what the obligations of ecclesiastics are, and 6) find out beforehand whether the child is resolved to live as a true cleric and fulfill the obligations of this state.
Q. Do parents have any special obligations to their children who have been tonsured?
A. They have two: 1) to make them wear clerical garb, and 2) to make them live according to the holiness of their state.

Lesson 23—The sacrament of Matrimony

Q. What is the seventh sacrament of the Church?
A. It is the sacrament of Matrimony.
Q. What is Matrimony?

A. Matrimony is the sacrament that gives married persons the grace they need to love each other in a Christian manner and to raise their children in the fear and love of God.
Q. What are the matter and the form that constitute the sacrament of Matrimony?
A. They are the mutual consent of the two parties getting married.
Q. Must Matrimony take place in the presence of others?
A. Yes, Matrimony must take place in the presence of the parish pastor and two other witnesses; otherwise, it would be null.
Q. Is it better never to marry?
A. Yes, provided God calls us to remain single.
Q. Can parents force their children to marry?
A. No, they commit a very serious sin if they do so.
Q. Should children ask their parents' consent when they wish to marry?
A. Yes, they would commit a sin if they failed to do this.
Q. Are we allowed to get married outside of our parish?
A. No, we are not, unless the pastor of the parish gives permission.
Q. Why are so few marriages blessed by God?
A. Most people get married in the state of mortal sin and often with an evil intention.
Q. What sin do we commit if we get married in the state of mortal sin?
A. We commit a sacrilege, which often draws down God's curse on us and our children.
Q. What must we do to receive the sacrament of Matrimony worthily?
A. We must 1) ask God whether we are called to this state, 2) go to Confession and Communion in our parish a few days prior to the wedding so as to be in the state of grace, 3) be instructed in the mysteries of our holy religion, 4) enter marriage with a proper intention and renounce all the evil intentions we might have, 5) have the banns of marriage published in the parish, 6) prepare ourselves for marriage by prayer, 7) be free from all impediments to marriage, and 8) receive the sacrament with devotion, modesty, and decency.
Q. What must we do to discover any impediments to the proposed marriage?
A. We should consult our parish pastor or a prudent confessor well in advance of the wedding.
Q. What would be wrong with getting married despite some impediment?
A. We would offend God by this, and in many cases the marriage would be null.

Q. What evil might result if the marriage were null?
A. The two partners would be living in a continual state of mortal sin.
Q. Why must we consult the pastor or a prudent confessor to discover any impediments to the proposed marriage?
A. It is so that we can obtain the proper dispensation according to the advice of the pastor or confessor.
Q. Why must we try to discover any impediments to the marriage before the ceremony takes place?
A. An impediment must be remedied before a wedding so that the marriage will not be null.
Q. What graces does God bestow on those who marry with the requisite intentions?
A. God gives us the grace 1) to live together in peace and union, 2) to bring up our children in the fear of God, and 3) to support patiently the sufferings found in this state.
Q. What obligations do married people have?
A. There are four obligations in particular: 1) to use their marriage rights in a holy manner, 2) to maintain conjugal fidelity to each other, 3) to bear each other's faults patiently, and 4) to bring up their children in a Christian manner.
Q. What must parents do to bring up their children in the fear and love of God?
A. They must do three things: 1) instruct them, 2) correct them, and 3) make them live like good Christians.
Q. What must parents teach or have taught to their children?
A. There are four things especially: 1) the principal mysteries of our holy religion, 2) the commandments of God and of the Church, 3) the prayers they should say, and 4) the proper way to pray.
Q. Must parents correct their children?
A. Yes, many parents will be damned for not doing so.
Q. What must parents do to make their children live as good Christians?
A. They ought to do four particular things: 1) have them go to church and pray on Sundays and feasts, 2) prevent them from associating with bad companions, 3) see that they go to Confession often and to the same good confessor, and 4) give them good example.

Treatise 2[3]

Prayer, the Second Means to Obtain the Grace We Need to Fulfill Our Duties to God Properly

Lesson 1—Prayer in itself

Q. What is the second means of receiving God's grace?
A. It is prayer.
Q. What particular grace do we receive through prayer?
A. We receive actual grace through prayer.
Q. How do we receive actual grace through prayer?
A. Ordinarily, when we pray, God gives us all the help necessary or useful to do good and avoid evil, that is, sin.
Q. What is prayer?
A. Prayer is raising our soul to God to render him homage and to ask him for what we need.
Q. Why do we say that prayer is raising our soul to God?
A. In prayer we lift our soul above material things to concentrate only on God and what leads us to God.
Q. Who are required to pray?
A. Everyone is required to pray because we all must render God due homage and ask him for what we need.
Q. Are we required to ask God for what we need, for he knows our needs even before we ask him?
A. Yes, we are truly required to do this.
Q. Because God knows our needs even before we ask him, why does God want us to ask for what we need?
A. It is to make us recognize that all we have and can have comes only from God.
Q. How do we know that we must pray to God and ask him for what we need?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ told us in the holy Gospel that God would not grant us what we need unless we asked him for it, and he

3. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 2, part 2, treatise 2, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1090–1113; Cahiers lasalliens 21, 243–304.

also assured us that we would receive whatever we asked for if we had faith.

Q. For whom should we pray?

A. We should pray not only for ourselves but also for everyone: for the just and sinners, for heretics and pagans, also for infidels, for our friends and our enemies, for our parents especially, for our superiors, and for those who have done good to us. In other words, we should pray for all the living and also for the dead suffering in purgatory.

Q. What homage should we render God in our prayers?

A. We should adore and thank God and offer God all that we have received from him.

Q. How do we adore God in prayer?

A. We adore God by remaining before him in an attitude of deepest respect and by recognizing his greatness, our nothingness, and our dependence on him as our Creator and sovereign Lord.

Q. What do we need to thank God for in prayer?

A. We should thank God for all the graces and benefits we have received or for some particular benefit or grace, for example, overcoming a temptation to impurity or pardoning an enemy we were reluctant to meet.

Q. Must we thank God for the graces we receive from him?

A. Yes, we must do so, for God finds ingratitude highly displeasing.

Q. What are the advantages of thanking God for the grace he gives us?

A. God then readily grants other graces in greater number.

Q. When must we adore and thank God?

A. We must adore God daily because we depend on God every day to sustain our life and to provide us with all things.

Q. When must we thank God?

A. We must thank God daily because every day we receive many graces from him.

Q. What must we offer God?

A. We must offer God what is ours and what depends on us, such as our thoughts, actions, labors, and so on.

Q. Why must we offer God what is ours and what depends on us?

A. It is to acknowledge to God that we have received everything from him, that we are indebted to him for these benefits, that he is free to take them from us whenever he pleases, and that we must refer all things to him.

Q. To what sort of prayer does this kind of offering belong?

A. This offering is a type of prayer of adoration, which declares and recognizes how dependent we are on God.

Q. When must we offer God all that we have and all that depends on us?
A. We must do so daily because every day God gives us all things, sustains them, or helps us bring them about.
Q. What needs should we lay before God in prayer?
A. We should ask for God's grace for whatever may be useful or necessary for our own and our neighbor's salvation and for the pardon of our sins.
Q. May we ask God for temporal necessities and for all that helps maintain our health and life?
A. Yes, we may, provided we ask with the right intention and with resignation to whatever God wills.
Q. May we ask God for riches, honors, and pleasures?
A. No, we may not, for such things are not true goods and often imperil our salvation.
Q. In what type of prayer do we ask God for some favor?
A. All prayer, in the proper sense of the word, means asking for some favor because the word *prayer* means a request made with humility and insistence. It is with this sense of prayer that we will be concerned in this treatise.

Lesson 2—The necessity of prayer and the advantages it gains for us

Q. Must we all ask God for his grace?
A. Yes, we all must do this because we all need grace and cannot be saved without it.
Q. Must we ask God to give us a special grace when we need it?
A. Yes, we must do this.
Q. What type of prayer asks God to pardon our sins?
A. This prayer is properly called an act of contrition.
Q. Must we ask God to pardon our sins?
A. Yes, God will not pardon them unless we ask him to do so.
Q. Must everyone ask God's pardon for sins?
A. Yes, we have all offended God.
Q. When must we ask God for his graces and pardon for our sins?
A. We must do this daily because every day we fall into some sin and need God's grace.
Q. What advantages do we gain from prayer?
A. There are seven in particular: 1) it draws down God's graces and blessings on those for whom we pray; 2) it gains us the pardon of our sins; 3) it increases grace in us; 4) it helps us overcome temptations; 5) it delivers us from many dangers to body and soul; 6) it

detaches us from the world and unites us to God; 7) it gains us the gift to persevere in God's grace and in doing good.

Q. Why do so few receive the advantages of prayer and obtain what they ask of God?

A. There are three reasons: 1) many ask God for things not in accord with his will and prejudicial to their salvation; 2) most of them pray while in the state of mortal sin; 3) most of them do not pray with the conditions that should accompany prayer.

Q. Why is it that even the just do not always obtain what they ask of God?

A. There are three reasons: 1) God wishes to test their faith and patience; 2) he wishes to make them more humble and more resigned to his holy will; 3) he wishes to make them persevere in prayer.

Lesson 3—The eight conditions required for prayer

Q. How many conditions should accompany our prayer for it to be good and agreeable to God and useful to our neighbor and ourselves?

A. It should possess eight qualities, or conditions.

Q. What are the eight conditions our prayers should fulfill to be good and agreeable to God and useful to our neighbor and ourselves?

A. Those who pray should do so 1) in the state of grace or at least with contrition for their sins, 2) with attention, 3) with devotion, 4) with fervor, 5) with humility, 6) with confidence, 7) with resignation, and 8) with perseverance.

Q. What is the first condition our prayers must have to be good and agreeable to God?

A. We must pray in the state of grace or at least have sincere contrition for our sins.

Q. To pray properly, why must we be in the state of grace or at least sincerely sorry for our sins?

A. Sinners who still cherish an affection for their sins are God's enemies; consequently, God neither hears their prayers nor finds them agreeable.

Q. What is the second condition our prayers must have to be good and agreeable to God?

A. We must pray with attention.

Q. What do we mean by praying with attention?

A. It means applying our mind to God while praying.

Q. Why must we be attentive during prayer?

A. We can only pray to God if we think of him and of what we are asking him.
Q. Whose prayer lacks attention?
A. Those who are distracted when they pray lack attention.
Q. What do we mean by distractions in prayer?
A. We are distracted when our mind wanders and is occupied with evil or useless thoughts.
Q. How many kinds of distractions are there?
A. There are two: voluntary and involuntary.
Q. What are voluntary distractions?
A. We are voluntarily distracted when we purposely dwell on evil or useless thoughts.
Q. What are involuntary distractions?
A. We are involuntarily distracted when we unintentionally dwell on evil or useless thoughts.
Q. Are distractions sinful?
A. Voluntary distractions are sinful, but involuntary ones are not.
Q. Must we try to free our mind of all kinds and occasions of distractions?
A. Yes, we must do this.
Q. Would it be sinful not to drive away all distractions?
A. Yes, it would be sinful not to try to eliminate them as well as we can.
Q. What should we do to drive away distractions?
A. We should concern ourselves with worldly matters only insofar as they relate to our state in life.
Q. What is the third condition our prayers must have to be good and agreeable to God?
A. We must pray with devotion.
Q. What do we mean by praying with devotion?
A. It means praying with great respect and a tender interior affection for God and all that concerns him.
Q. Why must we pray with devotion?
A. The devotion we show in our prayer draws down God's grace and goodness and inclines him to grant willingly what we ask of him.
Q. What is the fourth condition our prayers should have to be good and agreeable to God?
A. We must pray with fervor.
Q. What do we mean by praying with fervor?
A. It means praying with an ardent desire of receiving what we ask for in prayer.
Q. Must we have an ardent desire of receiving what we ask for when we pray?

A. Yes, God desires this, and the more ardent our desire is, the more willingly and promptly he answers our prayers.
Q. Can we fervently ask God for benefits that pertain to this life?
A. Yes, we can, provided we ask with resignation to God's holy will and ardently desire to fulfill his will more than to receive the temporal benefits we are seeking.
Q. Must we fervently desire and seek spiritual favors from God?
A. Indeed, we should do so.
Q. Why are we allowed to ask ardently for and desire spiritual benefits but are not allowed to do so for temporal goods?
A. We are allowed to ask for spiritual benefits because they are truly good, and we are sure that God wishes to grant them to us, but we are not allowed to desire and request temporal goods in absolute terms because these are not true goods in themselves, and we have no assurance that God wants to give them to us.
Q. What spiritual benefits should we ask God for most fervently?
A. We should ask for good thoughts, an affection for what is right, a horror for sin, and the graces we need for all these things.
Q. What is the fifth condition our prayers must have to be good and agreeable to God?
A. We must pray with humility.
Q. What must we do to pray with humility?
A. We must be convinced that we do not deserve to be heard and that we receive what we ask for only out of God's goodness.
Q. How can we demonstrate our humility when we pray?
A. We can do so by always praying in a modest and humble posture.
Q. What modest and humble posture is the most appropriate for praying?
A. The most appropriate posture for prayer is kneeling.
Q. Must we kneel when praying?
A. Yes, we must kneel, at least during morning and evening prayers and in church.
Q. What is the sixth condition our prayer must have to be good and agreeable to God?
A. We must pray with confidence in God and in his goodness.
Q. What do we mean by praying to God with confidence?
A. It means hoping that God will grant what we ask of him, provided this promotes his glory and our good.
Q. On what do we base our confidence in God when we pray?
A. We should base our confidence on God's goodness and the merits of Jesus Christ.
Q. How can we show in our prayer that we place all our confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ?

A. We can show this by offering our prayers to God in the name of Jesus Christ.
Q. Who taught us to pray in the name of Jesus?
A. Our Lord did, and the Church's constant practice has ordinarily been to end prayer with the words "through our Lord Jesus Christ."
Q. Why should we pray through our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. We have access to God only through Jesus Christ.
Q. What is the seventh condition our prayers must have to be good and agreeable to God?
A. We must pray with total resignation to God's will.
Q. What do we mean by praying with total resignation to God's holy will?
A. It means to desire or want what we ask of God only insofar as it is in accordance with his will.
Q. On what do we base our resignation to God's will?
A. We base it on our knowledge that God is our Father, who watches over us and knows better than we do what we need for our salvation.
Q. Concerning what especially should we show this deep resignation to God's will when we pray?
A. We should show it especially concerning temporal benefits and what happens to us in this life.
Q. Should we also have great resignation to God's will concerning spiritual goods?
A. Yes, but we must also believe that God wills to grant these insofar as they may be necessary for our salvation, and for this reason we must desire and ask for them with persistence.
Q. What justifies our resignation to God's will when praying for temporal benefits?
A. The Gospel teaches us to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and it assures us that all else will be given to us as well.
Q. Can we have the same indifference to our salvation and to all that contributes to it as we have for the temporal benefits of this life?
A. No, this indifference is not allowed.
Q. Why are we not allowed to have the same indifference to our salvation and to all that contributes to it as we have for the temporal benefits of this life?
A. God has created us to be saved, and we should believe that he wills to save us and will give us whatever we need for this purpose.
Q. What is the eighth condition our prayers must have to be good and agreeable to God?

A. We must pray with perseverance.
Q. What do we mean by praying with perseverance?
A. It means not letting ourselves grow weary of praying even when God delays in granting what we ask of him.
Q. Why should we pray with perseverance?
A. God does not always give us immediately what we ask for in our prayers, and he wishes us to pray frequently and at length.
Q. Why does God sometimes defer granting what we ask of him?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to make us realize more keenly how wretched and helpless we are, 2) to make us appreciate his goodness all the more, and 3) to bind us more strongly to him.
Q. How long does God delay granting what we ask of him?
A. God delays answering us for as long as he likes, sometimes until the end of our life.
Q. Does God always hear our prayers?
A. Yes, God does hear us when we pray in the state of grace and with all the conditions that should accompany our prayers, provided we ask for what is needed for our salvation.
Q. Who promised us that if we pray with these eight conditions, God will answer us?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ promised this in the Gospel.

Lesson 4—The different kinds of prayer

Q. Where should we pray?
A. We should pray to God everywhere but especially in churches, which are designed and built for this sacred exercise.
Q. On what days and at what times must we pray to God?
A. We must pray to God every day but especially and at greater length on Sundays and feasts.
Q. In how many ways can we pray?
A. We can pray in two ways: with our heart and with our mouth.
Q. What do we call prayer that occurs only in our mind and heart?
A. We call this interior prayer.
Q. What do we call prayer that makes use of our lips and tongue?
A. We call this vocal prayer.
Q. What is interior prayer, or prayer of the heart?
A. Interior prayer is when we give God our due respect and ask for his benefits by speaking only from the heart.
Q. What is vocal prayer, or prayer of the mouth?
A. Vocal prayer is when we render God our homage, lay our needs before him, and ask him to grant them by speaking from both heart and mouth.

Q. In how many ways can we pray to God by speaking only from the heart?
A. We can do this in five ways: 1) by silence, 2) by thinking, 3) by affections, 4) by actions, and 5) by suffering.
Q. What do we mean by silent prayer?
A. It means keeping ourselves simply in God's presence with feelings of respect and adoration, laying before God our wretchedness without even asking to be delivered from it. This is what beggars often do: they limit themselves to uncovering their sores and their poverty to the eyes of passersby without asking for anything, trusting simply that others will be moved to compassion by what they see.
Q. What do we mean by praying through our thoughts?
A. It means rendering God our homage and laying before him our wants through the thoughts of our mind but without using words.
Q. What do we mean by praying through our affections?
A. It means showing God the love we feel or the desire we have to receive some requested grace more by the movements of our heart than by the reflections of our mind.
Q. What do we mean by praying to God through action?
A. It means rendering God our homage or requesting some grace by doing good actions for the love of God.
Q. What do we mean by praying to God through our sufferings?
A. It means rendering God our homage or requesting some grace by enduring with Christian patience all the pains and afflictions God may be pleased to send us in this life.
Q. How many kinds of vocal prayers are there?
A. The two kinds are public prayers and private prayers.
Q. What are public prayers?
A. Public prayers are those all Christians recite together in churches, for example, holy Mass, the Divine Office, hymns of praise and thanksgiving, and so on.
Q. What are private prayers?
A. Private prayers are those the faithful individually offer in private.
Q. Must we attend public prayers?
A. Yes, as members of a body, the Church, we must participate in everything that concerns her and join with the other members in asking God for our common needs.
Q. Is public or private prayer more agreeable to God?
A. Ordinarily, common, or public, prayer pleases God more.
Q. What advantages do public prayers have over private prayers?
A. There are four main advantages: 1) they are prescribed by the Holy Spirit, who governs the Church; 2) they are occasions when

Jesus Christ is often, even usually, with us because he promised to be in the midst of those who gather in his name; 3) they are the prayers by which we more easily receive what we ask for; 4) they enable us to share in the merits of all the others who pray with us.

Q. How many kinds of public prayers are there?
A. The three kinds are 1) ordinary public prayers, 2) less ordinary public prayers, and 3) extraordinary public prayers.
Q. What are the ordinary public prayers?
A. The ordinary public prayers are the religious practices Christians observe together on Sundays and feasts, such as the parish Mass and the Divine Office.
Q. Where should we offer public prayers?
A. Normally we offer them in churches.
Q. What are churches?
A. They are buildings consecrated to God where Christians gather to fulfill the religious duties proper to their Christian faith.

Lesson 5—The prayers that should be offered in private every day, especially morning prayers, night prayers, and prayers said at holy Mass

Q. When must we pray privately to God?
A. We must do so as often as possible.
Q. Why must we pray privately as often as possible?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to pray always.
Q. Is it possible to pray all the time?
A. We can do so in two ways: 1) by raising our heart to God as often as possible, and 2) by performing all our actions for his love and glory in a spirit of prayer.
Q. Are there times when we must especially pray privately?
A. Yes, there are several such occasions.
Q. When must we especially pray privately?
A. We must do so on the following occasions: 1) every morning upon arising, every evening before retiring, and during Mass, 2) from time to time during the day, 3) on various occasions that may not occur daily, and 4) during all our actions, which ought to be done in a spirit of prayer.
Q. Must we pray every morning and evening?
A. Yes we must.
Q. Would we commit a sin by not praying every morning and evening?

A. Yes, we would show grievous neglect of our salvation and great indifference for God's majesty.
Q. Why must we pray each morning?
A. We must do so for two reasons: 1) to ask God for the graces needed at every hour and moment of the day, and 2) to offer him all our actions.
Q. Why must we pray to God each evening before retiring?
A. We must do so for three reasons: 1) to thank God for all the graces we have received, 2) to ask pardon for all the faults committed during the day, and 3) to ask for the graces we need to spend the night without committing any sins.
Q. How must we pray to God in the morning?
A. We must do three things: 1) withdraw to some suitable spot, 2) kneel before an image of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Most Blessed Virgin, or some saint, and 3) maintain a modest posture without leaning on anything or sitting back on our heels.
Q. Why should we kneel while praying, both morning and night?
A. It is to show our respect for the majesty of God.
Q. Who gave us the example of kneeling in prayer?
A. Jesus Christ gave us this example when he prayed to his Father while prostrate in the Garden of Olives.
Q. Is it not enough to pray when we are in bed or while we are dressing or working?
A. No, this would not render proper homage or show due respect to God.
Q. Is it wrong to pray when in bed or while dressing or working?
A. No, on the contrary, it is also good to pray when in bed or while dressing or working, but this is not enough; we still need to pray modestly on our knees once we have gotten up and are dressed.
Q. How are we harmed if we fail to pray while kneeling in the morning and evening, out of either shame or negligence?
A. We are deprived of many graces and run the risk of not being saved.
Q. What should we do in our morning prayers?
A. We should do five things: 1) adore God, 2) thank God for having spent the night safely, 3) ask God for pardon if we have offended him during this time, 4) look ahead to what we need to do during the day and anticipate the occasions when we may offend God, and 5) ask God for the grace to perform all our actions for his love and to resist any temptations we may meet with during the day.
Q. If we have some pressing duties to perform or if we get up late, may we omit our morning prayers?

A. No, we should not omit them for any reason whatsoever.
Q. Are parents, masters, and mistresses required not only to pray themselves but also to see to it that their children and servants pray every day on their knees?
A. Yes, they are required to do this, and God will punish them if they fail to do so.
Q. Is it permissible for us to go to bed without saying our evening prayers if we are drowsy, tired, or worn out from work?
A. No, for such reasons as these, we should not fail to say our prayers before going to bed.
Q. What should we do in our evening prayers?
A. We should do five things: 1) adore God, 2) thank God for the graces received from him during the day, 3) examine our conscience for sins we have committed, time we have wasted, and actions we have failed to do for the love of God, 4) ask God's pardon for the faults we have committed and firmly resolve to avoid them the next day, and 5) ask God for the grace to spend the night without falling into any sin or even consenting to any evil thoughts.
Q. Must we pray during Mass?
A. Yes, if we fail to do so, we have not attended Mass properly.

Lesson 6—The various occasions for praying during the day

Q. When should we pray during the day?
A. There are mainly eight occasions: 1) as soon as we awaken, 2) when entering or leaving a room, 3) when beginning each of our actions, 4) when going to work, 5) before leaving the house, 6) before and after meals, 7) before going to bed, and 8) when we are in bed.
Q. What prayer should we say on awakening?
A. We must think of God and offer our day, consecrating it to him.
Q. What prayer should we say on entering a room?
A. We must adore God, whose presence fills the room, and we should ask for his holy blessing and the grace not to offend him during the entire time we remain there.
Q. What prayer should we say on leaving a room?
A. We must ask God for the grace not to separate ourselves from him by sin and never to be deprived of his presence.
Q. What prayer should we say on going to work?
A. We must ask God for the grace to take up our labor in a spirit of penance and to keep us from sin during the time we are working.

Q. How should we pray at the beginning of each of our actions?
A. We should pray in five ways: 1) offer them to God, 2) ask for help to perform them correctly, 3) do them while paying attention to God, 4) unite ourselves to the intentions and attitudes Jesus Christ had when performing actions similar to what we are doing, and 5) do them for the love of God.
Q. What prayer should we say when leaving the house?
A. We must ask God for the grace always to walk in his presence and never to allow anything to occupy our mind or our senses that might lead us to sin.
Q. What prayer should we say before meals?
A. We must ask God to bless the food and ourselves and ask his help not to offend him as we eat but to serve him better.
Q. What prayer should we say after meals?
A. We should thank God for the food we have eaten and ask pardon for the faults we may have committed while eating.
Q. What prayer should we say before going to bed?
A. We should offer our sleep to God and ask for grace and protection during the night.
Q. What prayers should we say once we are in bed?
A. We should ask God for the grace to spend the night in his love without offending him and to sleep with our mind occupied with good thoughts.
Q. What are the various occasions when we should pray to God that do not occur every day?
A. We should pray to God in all circumstances of life, but we must especially do so on six occasions: 1) when conducting some business or when leaving on a trip, 2) when going to visit someone or returning from doing so, 3) when enduring some wrong, pain, or injustice, 4) when suffering illness or feeling poorly, 5) when being tempted or in danger of offending God, and 6) when falling into some sin.
Q. What prayers should we say on conducting some business?
A. We should ask God to direct it according to his will and not to allow us to do anything disagreeable to him.
Q. What prayer should we say when leaving on a trip?
A. We should ask God for three things: 1) to guide us on our way and to bring us back safely, 2) to give us the company of one of his angels to lead us, and 3) to preserve us from falling into sin.
Q. What prayer should we say when going to visit someone?
A. We should pay attention to three things: 1) to make this visit with the same spirit, intentions, and motivation that the Most Blessed Virgin had when she visited Saint Elizabeth, 2) to ask God that

our conversations may increase his love in us, and 3) to ask God that we not offend him in any way, especially against charity, during the visit.

Q. How should we pray on returning from a visit?

A. We should ask God's pardon for the faults we may have committed in conversation and for the time we may have wasted.

Q. What prayer should we say when we endure some suffering?

A. We should offer this suffering to God and ask that it may serve as penance for our sins.

Q. What prayer should we say when someone hurts, injures, or mistreats us unjustly?

A. When this happens, we should do three things: 1) adore God's justice in our regard, 2) adore the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ with the Jews and ask for a share in it, and 3) ask God for the grace to consider this wrong as beneficial for us and something conducive to our salvation.

Q. How should we pray when suffering illness or feeling poorly?

A. We must do four things: 1) acknowledge that this illness or indisposition comes to us from God, 2) offer it to him, 3) thank him for it, and 4) ask him for his love and the grace to bear it patiently and make good use of it.

Q. What prayer should we say when being tempted or in danger of offending God?

A. We must ask God to remove this temptation or to give us the grace not to yield to it.

Q. What prayer should we say when we have fallen into some sin?

A. We must at once ask God's pardon for it and impose some penance on ourselves that may help make satisfaction for it and keep us from committing it again.

Lesson 7—The Lord's Prayer

Q. To whom should we address our prayers?

A. We should address them to God because he alone can grant us all we ask of him.

Q. What is the most excellent prayer we can address to God?

A. It is the Lord's Prayer, which begins with the words *Pater Noster.*

Q. What do we mean by the expression *Sunday Prayer?*

A. It means the Lord's Prayer.

Q. Why do we call it the Sunday Prayer, or the Lord's Prayer?

A. It is because our Lord Jesus Christ prayed it and taught it to his Apostles.

Q. When did Jesus Christ compose the Lord's Prayer?

A. He composed it when his Apostles asked him to teach them how to pray.
Q. Why is the Lord's Prayer the most excellent prayer we can offer to God?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ is its author, and it includes a summary of all we should ask of God.
Q. Are we required to know the Lord's Prayer?
A. Yes, we would sin if we did not know it through our own fault.
Q. Must we recite the Lord's Prayer often?
A. Yes, we indeed must do so.
Q. Say the Lord's Prayer in Latin.
A. *"Pater Noster, qui es in coelis. . . ."*
Q. Now say it in French.
A. "Nôtre Père. . . . [Our Father, who art in heaven. . . .]"
Q. How many petitions does the Lord's Prayer have?
A. It has seven petitions.
Q. Do the words "Our Father, who art in heaven" contain a petition?
A. No, they are like a preamble that helps us raise our heart to God.
Q. Who is it whom we call "Our Father" at the beginning of the Lord's Prayer?
A. It is God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Q. Why do we call God Our Father at the start of the Lord's Prayer?
A. We do so for three reasons: 1) God created us in his image and likeness; 2) he sustains us and grants all our needs; 3) he makes us his children by giving us his grace.
Q. Why do we call God *Our Father* in the Lord's Prayer rather than use some other name, for example, *Master* or *Lord?*
A. When we pray, God wants us to address him with the same confidence that children have when speaking to their father.
Q. Why do we say *Our* Father and not *My* Father?
A. This is to teach us to pray not only for ourselves but also for all others, especially Christians, and to pray in union with them because we should consider them our brothers and sisters.
Q. Why do we invoke God as "who art in heaven" if God is everywhere?
A. We do so for three reasons: 1) to remind us that heaven is the place where God most especially manifests his glory, 2) to teach us that we should raise up our heart and our mind to heaven, and 3) to show us we should ask God more for the goods of heaven than for those of earth.

Lesson 8—The first four petitions of the Lord's Prayer

Q. What do we ask of God by the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer?
A. By the first petition, we ask that God be honored and glorified. By the next three, we ask for the following blessings: those of heaven, those of the soul—namely, the virtues and faithfulness to the commandments of God and the Church—and those needed for bodily life. By the last three, we ask for deliverance from three sorts of evils: the worst ones, which are sins, the less serious ones, which are temptations, and the least dangerous ones, which are the pains and afflictions of mind and body that fall to us in this life.
Q. What is the first petition of the Lord's Prayer?
A. In the first petition we say, "Hallowed be thy name."
Q. What do we mean by God's name?
A. We mean God himself.
Q. What does it mean to hallow God's name?
A. It means to have a deep respect for God's holiness and a great dread of offending him.
Q. Who are they who hallow God's name?
A. Those who obey him hallow his name.
Q. Who dishonors God's name?
A. It is those who offend him by committing any sin, but especially those guilty of swearing and blasphemy.
Q. What do we especially ask of God by the words "Hallowed be thy name"?
A. We ask that God may be known, loved, served, blessed, honored, and adored by all creatures in time and in eternity.
Q. What is the second petition of the Lord's Prayer?
A. The second petition is "Thy kingdom come!"
Q. What do we ask of God by the words "Thy kingdom come"?
A. We ask two things: 1) that God may increasingly reign in this world through his holy grace, and 2) that he may hasten the day when he will reign over all people, the saints and the damned.
Q. When will God reign over all people?
A. This will happen after the general judgment at the end of the world.
Q. How will God reign over all the saints?
A. He will reign by having them enjoy eternal glory.
Q. How will God reign over the damned?
A. He will do so by enforcing a most rigorous justice in hell for all eternity.

Q. What is the third petition of the Lord's Prayer?
A. The third petition is "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
Q. What do we ask of God by the words "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"?
A. We ask God that everyone in this world, even all creatures, may do his holy will as the angels and saints do it in heaven.
Q. What do we mean by doing the will of God?
A. We mean doing two things: 1) keeping the holy commandments of God and of the Church, and 2) submitting to all the trials he may send us.
Q. Why do we ask God that his holy will be done?
A. We ask this because we need his grace to fulfill his will.
Q. Why do we ask God that his will be done on earth as in heaven?
A. We ask this because we want everyone to do God's holy will with submission, affection, and love for him, just as the blessed do in heaven.
Q. What is the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer?
A. The fourth petition is "Give us this day our daily bread."
Q. What is this daily bread we ask of God in the Lord's Prayer?
A. It is the bread we need for our soul and our body.
Q. What bread for our soul do we ask of God in the Lord's Prayer?
A. It is the grace of God, his sacred word, the Holy Eucharist, and whatever else we need for the salvation of our soul.
Q. What is the bread for our body we ask of God in the Lord's Prayer?
A. It is whatever we need for the life and conservation of our body.
Q. Why do we ask for what we need for our body under the name of bread?
A. We should be satisfied with bread if God does not give us anything else, and we should not desire any superfluous things.
Q. Why do we ask God to give us today, or each day, our daily bread?
A. We need every day and every hour what is required for the salvation of our soul and the preservation of our body.
Q. Why do we ask God for bread only for a day?
A. We must trust in God's providence for tomorrow, which we may never see.
Q. Should rich people ask God for their daily bread just as poor people do?
A. Yes, they should, for two reasons: 1) they need the grace of God, and 2) they need to remember that God gives them the riches they possess and can deprive them whenever he pleases.
Q. What should we do when God refuses to give us the temporal goods we ask of him?

A. We should adore his divine providence and believe that he refuses us these things out of his goodness.

Lesson 9—The last three petitions of the Lord's Prayer

Q. What is the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer?
A. The fifth petition is "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."
Q. What do we ask of God with these words of the Lord's Prayer?
A. We ask God to forgive our sins as we forgive our enemies and to treat us as we treat those who have caused us suffering.
Q. Why do we ask God to forgive our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us?
A. There are two reasons: 1) we can hope that God will show us mercy if we show it to others, and 2) we can hope that this will strengthen our confidence because God has promised to treat us as we have treated those who have offended us.
Q. What do we mean by forgiving those who have offended us?
A. It means not desiring revenge and being willing to return good for evil.
Q. Have we forgiven those who have offended us if we refuse to see or to have anything to do with them, merely saying that we wish them no evil?
A. No, Jesus Christ says that we must love them and desire to do them good if we have forgiven them.
Q. What must we do to show we love those who have offended us and desire good for them?
A. We must do six things: 1) forgive them sincerely for the love of God, 2) speak no ill of them, 3) reconcile with them, 4) associate willingly with them, 5) greet them, and 6) pray for them.
Q. If we do not want to forgive those who have offended us and refuse to see them or greet them, what are we doing when we recite the Lord's Prayer and ask God to forgive our sins?
A. We are condemning ourselves by asking God to withdraw his graces from us and not to see us, help us, or forgive our sins until we forgive those who have offended us.
Q. What is the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer?
A. The sixth petition is "Lead us not into temptation."
Q. What do we ask of God with these words of the Lord's Prayer?
A. We ask God for the grace of deliverance from temptations or of resistance to them when they occur.
Q. What is a temptation?
A. A temptation is a test for our benefit or an enticement to do evil.

Q. When is a temptation a test for our benefit?
A. It is a test when it puts our virtue on trial.
Q. What is a temptation to do evil?
A. It is a thought or an inclination that leads or urges us to do evil.
Q. Is a temptation to do something evil a sin?
A. No, it is not a sin, provided we did not initiate it or consent to it but resisted it by being virtuous.
Q. Is God sometimes the author of temptations?
A. No, God is never the author of temptations to evil, although he often permits them, but he is sometimes the author of temptations that test our virtue.
Q. How does God put our virtue to the test?
A. God sends us pains and afflictions to strengthen our patience.
Q. Why does God permit us to be tempted to do evil?
A. It is so that we may have opportunities to merit more grace by resisting the temptation.
Q. Why does God allow us to give in to temptation?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to make us keep closer watch over ourselves, 2) to provide us with opportunities for humbling ourselves and renewing our fervor in God's service, and 3) to make us more compassionate regarding the sins of others.
Q. What causes temptations to evil?
A. The world, the devil, and the flesh cause temptations to evil.
Q. What should we do to be rarely tempted?
A. We must do three things: 1) avoid idleness, 2) mistrust ourselves, and 3) inform our confessor when we feel tempted to do evil and then follow his advice.
Q. Can we resist temptations on our own?
A. No, we can only do so with the help of God's grace, and we must ask for his help every day, especially when we are undergoing temptations.
Q. What must we do to avoid giving in to temptations?
A. As soon as we realize we are being tempted, we must do five things: 1) recognize that we cannot resist temptation without God's grace, 2) ask most earnestly for this grace, 3) ask for help from the Most Blessed Virgin, our guardian angel, and the saints to whom we are devoted, 4) make the sign of the cross, and 5) distance ourselves from the occasions of sin.
Q. What temptations should we especially watch out for?
A. They are the temptations against faith and chastity.
Q. What should we do to overcome temptations against faith?
A. We must promptly make acts of faith on the truth that we are tempted to disbelieve.

Q. What should we do to overcome temptations against chastity?
A. We must do three things: 1) keep ourselves constantly busy, 2) avoid opportunities and people inclined to impurity and also members of the opposite sex, and 3) take flight when we find ourselves in occasions of this sin.
Q. What should we do when we have yielded to temptation?
A. We must do five things: 1) immediately acknowledge our weakness and inability to do what is right, 2) ask God to pardon our sin, weep bitterly over it, and do penance for it, 3) go to Confession as soon as possible, 4) heal any scandal we may have caused others, and 5) stay away from the occasions and companions that made us fall into sin.
Q. What is the final petition of the Lord's Prayer?
A. The final petition is "Deliver us from evil."
Q. What do we ask of God in this final petition?
A. We ask God for the grace to be freed from the pains of the next life, that is, purgatory and hell, and from those of this present life, that is, afflictions and sufferings, and to bear with patience all the pain God might give us in this world.
Q. Why did our Lord will that we always say "we" rather than "I" when praying all the petitions of this prayer he gave us?
A. It was to help us understand that he wants us to pray not only for ourselves but also for all Christians, who should share in our prayers because we are united with them.
Q. What is the meaning of the word *Amen* that closes the Lord's Prayer?
A. It means *may it be so,* or in other words, "Grant us, if you please, O my God, all that we have just asked you in this prayer."
Q. Why do we conclude the Lord's Prayer with "Amen"?
A. We do so to indicate the confidence we should have at the end of our prayer of receiving from God what we have asked of him.

Lesson 10—Prayers addressed to the saints, especially to the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. Can we offer our prayers only to God?
A. No, we can pray to the angels and the saints as well as to God.
Q. When we pray to the angels and saints, are we not giving them the honor due to God alone?
A. No, we do not pray to them in the same way as we pray to God.
Q. Can we offer our prayers to the saints in the same way as we do to God?
A. No, we are not allowed to do this.

Q. Why are we not allowed to pray to the angels and the saints in the same way as we pray to God?
A. There are two reasons: 1) we are not permitted to adore the angels and the saints, and 2) we cannot ask the angels and the saints for grace in the same way that we ask God, for they cannot of themselves grant us any grace.
Q. How do we offer our prayers to God?
A. We offer our prayers to God in the knowledge that he can grant us all we ask.
Q. How do we address our prayers to the saints and the angels?
A. We do so knowing that they can intercede for us before God and can obtain from God many graces for us through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. Why can the saints obtain so many graces for us from God?
A. They enjoy God's favor for being his friends and beloved servants.
Q. Must we pray to the saints?
A. Although we can pray to them and find it a very useful practice, we are not required to do so.
Q. When the saints want to gain some grace for us, do they have to pray to God?
A. Yes, this is absolutely necessary.
Q. Who among all the saints should we pray to most especially and most often?
A. We should pray most especially to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

Lesson 11—General explanation of the *Ave Maria*

Q. What is the principal prayer we should address to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. It is the Angelical Salutation, which begins with the words *"Ave, Maria."*
Q. Why do we call the *Ave Maria* the Angelical Salutation?
A. It begins with the words the angel spoke to the Most Blessed Virgin when he greeted her and announced the mystery of the Incarnation, which was to take place in her womb.
Q. Why is the Angelical Salutation the principal and most excellent prayer we can offer to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. There are two reasons: 1) the dignity of those who composed it, and 2) the excellence of its contents.
Q. Who composed the Angelical Salutation?
A. Saint Gabriel the archangel, Saint Elizabeth, and the Church composed it.
Q. What words of Saint Gabriel form part of the Angelical Salutation?

A. "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you."
Q. What words of Saint Elizabeth form part of the Angelical Salutation?
A. "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."
Q. When did Saint Elizabeth say these words to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. She said them when Mary came to visit her.
Q. What words did the Church add to those of the angel Gabriel and Saint Elizabeth to complete the Angelical Salutation?
A. The Church added the following: 1) the word "Mary" after "Hail," and 2) "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."
Q. What excellent and important features are contained in the Angelical Salutation?
A. There are three features: 1) we greet the Most Blessed Virgin; 2) we praise her; 3) we pray to her.
Q. Why do we greet the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to manifest the respect we feel for the Most Blessed Virgin as the Mother of God, and 2) to show confidence in her as our mother and advocate before God.
Q. Why do we praise the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation?
A. There are two reasons: 1) she is the Mother of God, and 2) she is filled with every kind of grace.
Q. Why do we pray to the Most Blessed Virgin when reciting the Angelical Salutation?
A. She greatly desires the salvation of all humanity, and being all powerful with God, she is always ready to help us.
Q. What words do we say to greet the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation?
A. We say, "Hail, Mary!"
Q. What words do we say to praise the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation?
A. We say, "Mary, full of grace, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus," and "Holy Mary, Mother of God."
Q. What words do we say to pray to the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation?
A. We say, "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, Amen."

Lesson 12—Explanation of the *Ave Maria*

Q. Why did the Church add the name of Mary to the words of the angel in the Angelical Salutation?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to remind us that we are addressing the Most Blessed Virgin in this prayer, 2) to help us understand the excellence of this name, and 3) to persuade the Most Blessed Virgin to listen more favorably to our prayers.
Q. What does the name *Mary* mean?
A. It means *Lady* and also *Star*.
Q. Why do we call Mary the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. There are two reasons: 1) the Most Blessed Virgin is the queen and mistress of all creation, especially of all Christians, and 2) she is the star who will guide us to God.
Q. Why do we say in the Angelical Salutation that the Most Blessed Virgin is full of grace?
A. There are two reasons: 1) she has indeed received more graces and glory than all the angels and saints, and 2) she received and used well all the graces God had destined for her.
Q. What principal graces did God give to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. There are ten: 1) the Church piously believes that she was free from original sin, all actual sin, and any inclination to sin; 2) she was the Mother of God while remaining a virgin; 3) she was full of the eminent graces God gave her as the mother of his Son; 4) she was deserving of great merit for all her actions; 5) she died in the state of perfect love of God; 6) she was raised up in glory after her death; 7) she was taken up to heaven, body and soul, and set above all the saints; 8) she is more honored by the Church than any other saint; 9) she contributed to the salvation of all humanity by giving birth to her Son, Jesus Christ; 10) she is the distributor of all the graces God wills her to give to us.
Q. Why do we say to the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation, "The Lord is with thee"?
A. There are four particular reasons: 1) she always belonged to God and was present to him in a special manner; 2) she always possessed the grace of God; 3) she was always free from sin; 4) she carried Jesus Christ in her womb for nine months.
Q. Why do we say to the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation, "Blessed art thou among women"?
A. God bestowed on her three graces that were not granted to any other woman.
Q. What three graces did the Most Blessed Virgin receive from God that were not given to any other women?

A. The three graces are: 1) she was both a mother and a virgin; 2) she brought forth her Son without pain; 3) the Son she bore is God.
Q. Why do we say to the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation, "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb"?
A. She is the holiest and most perfect of all creatures.
Q. Why do we call Mary "Mother of God" in the Angelical Salutation?
A. There are two reasons: 1) we acknowledge her as the mother of Jesus Christ, who is God and human, and 2) we seek to win her over so that she may more readily grant what we ask her because she is the mother of him who can do all things.
Q. What do we ask of the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation when we say, "Pray for us"?
A. We ask her for whatever can contribute to our salvation.
Q. For whom do we pray when we ask the Most Blessed Virgin in the angelic salutation to pray for us?
A. We pray for all people, but especially for Christians.
Q. When we pray to the Most Blessed Virgin, why do we call ourselves sinners?
A. It is to persuade her to pray to God for us with all the more zeal and affection because of her horror of sin.
Q. What do we ask of the Most Blessed Virgin in the Angelical Salutation when we say, "Pray for us now"?
A. We ask the Most Blessed Virgin to pray for us at every moment of our life.
Q. Why do we ask the Most Blessed Virgin to pray for us "at the hour of our death"?
A. It is because the moment when we most need the help of the Most Blessed Virgin is when we are at the point of death.

Lesson 13—The rosary and the *Angelus*

Q. Why does the Church desire us to recite the Angelical Salutation often?
A. There are four reasons: 1) to remind us of the mystery of the Incarnation, 2) to help us imitate the virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin, 3) to have her more insistently pray to God for us, and 4) to show that this prayer is most agreeable to God and to the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. Is it useful to say and often repeat the same prayer, especially the Angelical Salutation?
A. Yes, it is most useful, provided we always do so with affection and devotion.

Q. What prayers frequently repeat the Angelical Salutation?
A. They are the rosary and the prayer called *Angelus*.
Q. What is the rosary?
A. The rosary is a prayer addressed to the Most Blessed Virgin and composed of the *Credo*, the *Pater Noster* and the *Gloria Patri*, seven times each, and the *Ave Maria,* sixty-three times.
Q. Is the rosary a prayer that is very agreeable to God and to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. Yes, this prayer is most agreeable to them.
Q. Why do we say sixty-three *Ave Maria*'s when reciting the rosary?
A. It is to honor the sixty-three years that the Most Blessed Virgin is believed to have lived.
Q. When reciting the rosary, why do we say the *Pater Noster* before each decade of the *Ave Maria?*
A. It is to show God that we recognize him as the first principle and author of all the graces received by the Most Blessed Virgin and all those we hope to receive through her intercession.
Q. When reciting the rosary, why do we say the *Gloria Patri* at the end of each decade of the *Ave Maria?*
A. By doing so, we give glory to God and thank God for all the graces he grants us by the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin, whose help we have asked for in this prayer.
Q. May we believe that there is such special virtue in the number of the *Pater Noster, Ave Maria,* and *Gloria Patri* prayers that make up the rosary that we should never say either more or less to receive what we ask for in this prayer?
A. It would be superstitious to believe such a thing, but by saying this number of prayers, we perform an act of religion in glorifying God and honoring the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. Who should frequently recite the rosary?
A. It is those in particular who do not know how to read or how to pray to God very well on their own.
Q. What should we do before beginning the rosary?
A. We should do four things: 1) make acts of humility and contrition for our sins, 2) determine some intention for which we will pray, 3) unite our prayers to those of the whole Church, and 4) intend to glorify God and honor the Most Blessed Virgin by this prayer.
Q. How should we say the rosary?
A. To recite the rosary well, we should adopt the following seven practices: 1) place ourselves in the holy presence of God, 2) make the sign of the cross, 3) kiss the crucifix on our rosary beads, 4) say the prayer *Veni Sancte Spiritus* to ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to say this prayer with all possible attention and

devotion, 5) profess our faith by reciting *Credo in Deum,* in Latin or in French, so as to share in the faith of the Most Blessed Virgin, 6) say the *Pater Noster* on the large beads and the *Ave Maria* on the small ones, in Latin or in French, and 7) say the *Gloria Patri* at the end of each decade of the *Ave Maria*.

Q. What should we do when we begin the rosary and recite *Pater Noster* on the first large bead?

A. We should do three things: 1) adore God, 2) ask him to be pleased with this prayer we are going to offer him, and 3) ask for the grace to pray it well.

Q. What can we think about while reciting the rosary?

A. We can think about some mystery in the life of our Lord or of the Most Blessed Virgin, or we can ask God for the grace never to offend him or for some other special grace through the merits of our Lord and the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin.

Q. How should we conclude the rosary?

A. We should say the prayer *Sub Tuum* [We fly to thy patronage] or *O Domina mea* [O Holy Queen] to place ourselves under the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin.

Q. What should we do after finishing the rosary?

A. We should make an act of contrition for the faults committed while saying it and then thank God for the graces we have received by reciting this prayer.

Q. What is the prayer called the *Angelus?*

A. The *Angelus* is a form of prayer the Church has used for a long time; it consists of the *Ave Maria* three times, plus three verses from the holy Gospel and the Collect *Gratiam tuam* [Pour forth, we beseech you].

Q. When should we say the prayed called the *Angelus?*

A. We should do so daily in the morning, at noon, and in the evening; to remind Christians to do so, the bell is rung daily at these three times in almost all churches.

Q. Why should we say the *Angelus* every day in the morning, at noon, and in the evening?

A. There are two reasons: 1) to remind us of the birth, death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and 2) to honor the Most Blessed Virgin as his divine mother and the mother of all Christians.

Q. How should we recite the prayer called the *Angelus?*

A. We should recite the *Angelus* with our head uncovered and with much devotion, uniting our intentions with those of the Church.

Q. To help ourselves say the *Angelus* properly, what should we do before reciting it?

A. We should do three things: 1) make the sign of the cross, 2) place ourselves in God's holy presence by lifting up our mind and our heart to him, and 3) offer God our heart.

Q. What should we do after saying the *Angelus?*

A. We should ask God's pardon for our sins, particularly those we committed that day, or during the previous night if the prayer is said in the morning, and we should also renew the offering we made to God of all our actions.

Q. What does the *Angelus* contain?

A. It contains the following:

V. *Angelus Domini nuntiavit Maria* [The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary].

R. *Et concepit de Spiritu Sancto* [And she conceived of the Holy Spirit].

Ave Maria.

V. *Ecce ancilla Domini* [Behold the handmaid of the Lord].

R. *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* [Be it done unto me according to your word].

Ave Maria.

V. *Et Verbum caro factum est* [And the Word was made flesh].

R. *Et habitavit in nobis* [And dwelt among us].

Ave Maria.

Oremus [Let us pray]

Gratiam tuam quaesumus Domine mentibus nostris infunde, ut, qui angelo nuntiante Christi Filii tui incarnationem cognovimus, per passionem ejus et crucem, ad resurrectionis gloriam perducamur. Per eumdem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

[Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, so that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel may by his Passion and cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.]

End of volume 2, part 2

The Duties of a Christian to God

The Duties of a Christian to God

Volume 3

The Exterior and Public Worship That Christians Are Obliged to Offer to God and the Means of Doing So

Preliminary Lesson[1]

Q. Are we as Christians required to worship God exteriorly?
A. Yes, we must do so because we must adore God exteriorly as well as interiorly.
Q. Must this exterior worship that we owe God also be public?
A. Yes, it must be public because as Christians we are a society, and we must gather together 1) to have a chance to live and act as a society, 2) to show that we belong to it, and 3) to render God our collective homage.
Q. Where do we assemble to offer God our exterior and public worship?
A. We do so in churches, which are places consecrated to God for this purpose.
Q. How do we offer God exterior and public worship in churches?
A. We do so by attending the religious exercises carried out there for us and in our name.
Q. How does the Church encourage us to offer God exterior and public worship?
A. The Church does so in four principal ways: 1) by establishing public rites of religion, 2) by adding to these rites many very beautiful ceremonies to encourage us to be diligent in attending them and eager to offer God a more solemn worship, 3) by consecrating to God in a special manner certain periods of the year to honor certain mysteries or prepare for their celebration so that during these sacred times we may come to church more frequently and offer God with greater diligence and fervor the exterior worship due to him, and 4) by instituting various kinds of feast days that we should spend entirely in honoring God and offering him an exterior worship in union with Jesus Christ and the saints who are honored on these days.

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1. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 3, *The Exterior and Public Worship That Christians Are Obliged to Offer to God and the Means of Doing So,* preliminary lesson, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1117; Cahiers lasalliens 22, 3–4.

Treatise 1[2]

The Public Rites of the Christian Religion

Lesson 1—The public rites of the Christian religion in general

Q. What is the first means the Church uses to encourage Christians to offer God exterior and public worship?
A. The first means consists of the public rites of religion observed in churches.
Q. What kinds of ordinary public religious rites are held in churches?
A. There are three kinds: ordinary ones, less ordinary ones, and extraordinary ones.
Q. What are the most ordinary rites of religion that take place in churches?
A. The most ordinary rites are the parish Mass and the Divine Office.
Q. What are the less ordinary public rites of religion that take place in churches?
A. The less ordinary public rites are processions, confraternities, and pilgrimages.
Q. What are the extraordinary public rites of religion that take place in churches?
A. The extraordinary public rites are the public prayers offered by the clergy and the faithful on certain special occasions or in times of urgent and extraordinary spiritual or temporal needs affecting both the Church and the faithful.
Q. On what occasions does the Church prescribe the recitation of extraordinary prayers?
A. There are mainly four such occasions: 1) when some heresy, schism, or other disturbance arises in the Church, 2) when the weather is unfavorable for the growth and maturation of the crops, 3) when war rages and peace is sought from God, and 4) when some contagious or public malady strikes and God's deliverance is sought.

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2. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 3, *The Exterior and Public Worship That Christians Are Obliged to Offer to God and the Means of Doing So,* treatise 1, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1117–24; Cahiers lasalliens 22, 5–22.

Q. In which churches should Christians gather to observe the public rites of religion in common?
A. This should be done in churches, which we call parishes.
Q. What are parishes?
A. Parishes are the churches that Christians living in a given area or a certain zone belong to and gather in to observe the rites of the Christian religion as a community.
Q. On which days should we gather in our parish churches to observe publicly and communally the rites of the Christian religion?
A. We should do so on Sundays and feasts.
Q. Why should we gather in our parish churches on Sundays and feast days to observe the rites of the Christian religion?
A. There are two reasons: 1) these sacred days are especially designated to be used in the service of God and for these rites; 2) the Church requires Christians to meet together in their parishes on Sundays and feast days.

Lesson 2—The parish Mass

Q. What is the first and principal religious rite that Christians observe together in the parishes on Sundays and feast days?
A. It is to hear holy Mass, which we call the parish Mass.
Q. Are Christians obliged to attend the parish Mass?
A. Yes, they are obliged.
Q. Would it be a sin not to attend the parish Mass?
A. Yes, it would be a sin to miss it through negligence or not to hold it in high esteem.
Q. Why must we attend the parish Mass on Sundays and feast days?
A. There are two reasons: 1) the Church commands it; 2) we offer prayers more pleasing to God at this Mass than at another one.
Q. Why are the prayers offered at the parish Mass more pleasing than at another Mass?
A. There are three reasons: 1) the parish Mass is said especially for the parishioners; 2) this Mass unites the faithful with one another and with the priest in presenting and offering to the eternal Father the divine and most excellent sacrifice of Jesus Christ, his Son, thereby drawing down many graces on the whole parish; 3) the parish Mass with its accompanying ceremonies leads us to God more effectively and obtains many graces for us.
Q. What ceremonies accompany the parish Mass?
A. There are seven ceremonies: 1) the blessing of holy water, 2) the procession, 3) the sermon, 4) the Offertory, 5) the blessing of bread, 6) the kiss of peace, and 7) the incensing.

Lesson 3—The Divine Office

Q. What is the second public religious rite that Christians observe in the parishes on Sundays and feasts?
A. It is the Divine Office.
Q. What is the Divine Office?
A. It is a public prayer instituted by the Church that is divided and assigned to various hours of the day to praise God, learn from his word, and lay our needs before him.
Q. How do we praise God in the Divine Office?
A. We praise God by the psalms, hymns, and canticles recited in it.
Q. How do we learn from the word of God in the Divine Office?
A. We do so by reciting the lessons chosen from Holy Scripture or from the saintly Fathers.
Q. How do we lay our needs before God in the Divine Office?
A. We place our needs before God in the antiphons and Collects.
Q. How is the Divine Office divided?
A. It is divided into seven hours of the day, corresponding to the times when the Church formerly recited these prayers. The first part is Matins, said during the night. The second part is Lauds, said at daybreak before sunrise. The third part is Prime, said at the first hour of the day, that is, at 6 o'clock. The fourth part is Tierce, said at the third hour of the day, that is, at 9 o'clock. The fifth part is Sext, said at the sixth hour of the day, that is, at noon. The sixth part is None, said at the ninth hour of the day, that is, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The seventh part is Vespers, said at about 6 o'clock in the evening. The eighth part, which the Church later added to the seven others, is Compline, said in the evening before bedtime as night prayer.
Q. What part of the Divine Office should Christians especially attend on Sundays and feast days?
A. It is Vespers.
Q. Why should Christians especially attend Vespers on Sundays and feasts?
A. There are two reasons: 1) Vespers is publicly recited or chanted in all the parishes only so that the faithful can participate; 2) they should sanctify the afternoon with Vespers just as they sanctify the morning with the parish Mass.

Lesson 4—Less ordinary public rites; first, processions

Q. What are the less ordinary public rites of religion?
A. They include processions, confraternities, and pilgrimages.

Q. What is a procession?
A. It is a form of public prayer that the clergy and people participate in while solemnly walking.
Q. How many kinds of processions are there?
A. There are three kinds: 1) processions with prayers to ask God for a favor or special help in some pressing need, 2) thanksgiving processions to express gratitude to God for some favor received, and 3) penitential processions to make amends for some crime or to humble ourselves because of our sins.
Q. Who instituted processions?
A. The Church instituted processions.
Q. Has the Church had processions for a long time?
A. Yes, processions are a very ancient custom and have been solemnly practiced from the earliest centuries of the Church.
Q. Why did the Church institute processions?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to honor the travels of Jesus on earth for our salvation, 2) to remind us of our duty to follow Jesus and walk in his footsteps, like sheep following their shepherd, and 3) to show that clerics should follow Jesus Christ closely, lead the faithful in the path of virtue, go before them, and be their models.
Q. Why do clerics walk two by two in processions?
A. They do so to imitate the disciples Jesus Christ sent out, two by two, to preach his Gospel.
Q. Why do we carry the cross at the head of processions?
A. It is to show us that Jesus Christ crucified is our leader and that we must follow Jesus Christ and imitate his virtues if we wish to arrive safely at our heavenly home.
Q. How should Christians participate in processions?
A. It is by praying with great modesty and devotion and by occupying the mind with holy thoughts.
Q. What defects should Christians avoid during processions?
A. They should especially avoid four defects: 1) taking part in them out of mere habit or curiosity, 2) talking to one another, 3) not praying to God or doing so in a distracted manner by looking about irreverently or thinking about other things, and 4) leaving the procession before it is finished.
Q. What should we do when the procession returns to the church?
A. We should do two things: 1) ask God's pardon for the faults we may have committed during the procession, and 2) thank God for the graces received.
Q. What are the Church's main processions?
A. There are eight: 1) the procession before the parish High Mass every Sunday, 2) the procession on the feast of the Epiphany, the

Adoration of the Magi, 3) the procession on the feast of the Purification, 4) the procession on Palm Sunday, 5) processions to the baptismal fonts during the octave of Easter, 6) processions occurring after Easter, 7) processions on Saint Mark's feast and on Rogation Days, and 8) the procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

Q. Why did the Church institute the procession before the parish High Mass every Sunday?

A. There are two reasons: 1) to ask God to banish Satan from the church and to sanctify it before the holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered there, and 2) to recall the pilgrimages and visits the early Christians made to the tombs of the first martyrs to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. Why did the Church institute the procession on the feast of the Magi?

A. It is to honor the journey the three kings made from their own country to Bethlehem when they came to adore Jesus Christ as a newborn child.

Q. Why does the procession on the feast of the Magi follow an itinerary entirely different than the one used on other occasions?

A. It is to show that the three Magi went home by a very different route than the one they had taken to come to adore Jesus Christ in the crib and that we too should follow a totally different path in life from the one we had pursued before knowing God.

Q. Why did the Church institute the procession on the feast of the Purification?

A. It is to honor the Most Blessed Virgin's journey to the Temple to be purified there and to present our Lord.

Q. Why do we carry candles in the procession on the feast of the Purification?

A. It is to honor Jesus Christ, who offered himself to his Father to be our light and guide on our journey to heaven.

Q. Why did the Church institute the procession on the sixth Sunday of Lent, known as Palm Sunday?

A. It is to honor our Lord's entry into Jerusalem six days before his death.

Q. Why do we carry branches in the procession on Palm Sunday?

A. There are two reasons: 1) to remind us of what the people of Jerusalem who came in throngs to meet our Lord did on that day and to imitate their fervor, and 2) to show that we should be victorious with our Lord over the enemies of our salvation.

Q. What did the people do when they met Jesus Christ on this day?

A. Some cut branches from the palm trees and carried them in his honor; others strewed them before him while singing his praises.

Q. Why does the Church bless the palm branches we ought to carry in this procession?
A. It is to encourage us to carry them with pious, religious feelings.
Q. Why did the Church institute processions to the baptismal fonts throughout the Easter octave?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to honor these holy fonts, which are the source of sanctification for Christians, 2) to thank God for the grace of Baptism, which we received at the font, and 3) to ask God to renew this grace in all the baptized.
Q. Why did the Church institute processions during the Easter octave and during paschal time?
A. It is to honor our Lord's apparitions to the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles after his Resurrection.

Further explanation about the processions of Saint Mark and Rogation Days is in treatise 3, liturgical seasons. Instructions on the procession in honor of the Most Blessed Sacrament are in treatise 4, where more is said about the feast celebrating this great mystery.

Lesson 5—Confraternities

Q. What is a confraternity?
A. A confraternity is a special society of a number of Christians who assemble to do good works and other religious practices.
Q. Who instituted confraternities?
A. The Church instituted them.
Q. Why did the Church institute confraternities?
A. It is to encourage Christians to adopt various pious practices that they might not otherwise do.
Q. Is it useful and appropriate to join a confraternity?
A. Yes, it is very useful and appropriate, provided we do so with pure intentions and to serve God better.
Q. May we join a confraternity in which there is nothing to do?
A. No, confraternities are instituted only for the purpose of doing pious exercises and good works.
Q. What are the main obligations of confraternity members?
A. They are 1) to confess and receive Communion, the main purpose of the confraternities, 2) to say special prayers, 3) to attend certain offices or other exercises of piety held in a given church, and 4) to observe extra fasts and days of abstinence.
Q. Are the prayers and pious practices we perform out of obligation to a confraternity more agreeable to God than those we might do out of devotion and in private?

A. Yes, as a rule they are more agreeable to God for three reasons: 1) we accept an obligation in joining a confraternity to attach ourselves more closely to God and to his service; 2) we participate in prayers and exercises of piety in union with the other confraternity members and thus gain many more graces; 3) we share individually in the prayers and pious practices of all the other members; thus, our prayers are more likely to be heard by God.
Q. Is it wrong to join a confraternity and then fail to meet our obligations?
A. Yes, to do so would mock God and the saints in whose honor the confraternity was established.

Lesson 6—Pilgrimages

Q. What are pilgrimages?
A. They are visits to certain churches or sacred places that we make to honor God or the saints in whose honor these sites are consecrated and dedicated to God.
Q. Who instituted pilgrimages?
A. The Church instituted them.
Q. Have pilgrimages been customary in the Church for a long time?
A. Yes, the Church has always had pilgrimages.
Q. How did going on pilgrimages begin?
A. It began when the first Christians visited with great devotion the sacred places where our Lord accomplished the mysteries of our redemption and where the holy martyrs suffered death.
Q. Why did the Church institute and support pilgrimages?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to encourage the devotion of the faithful, 2) to give them an opportunity to honor the saints whose churches they visit, along with their images and relics, and 3) to give them a chance to do penance for their sins.
Q. How has the Church understood pilgrimages?
A. Pilgrimages have always been understood as penitential practices.
Q. What motives should we have when we go on a pilgrimage?
A. We should have three main ones: 1) a very pure intention, 2) feelings of piety, and 3) a true spirit of penance.
Q. What intentions should we have when we go on a pilgrimage?
A. Above all, we should have the three following: 1) to go on them only with pure devotion, 2) to honor especially the saints whose churches or relics we visits, and 3) to convert ourselves entirely to God and to do penance for our sins.
Q. What should we do to show that we have feelings of piety during our pilgrimage?

A. We should do six things: 1) we should be occupied only with exercises of piety, prayer, and good works during the journey; 2) we should attend holy Mass every day unless it is absolutely impossible; 3) we should adore the Most Blessed Sacrament in the places we pass through; 4) we should go to Confession and Communion frequently if the journey is long; 5) we should speak only of God and what can lead us to God during this time; 6) we should avoid all company, especially members of the opposite sex, that might divert us or lead us to offend God.

Q. What should we do to show that we have a true spirit of penance during our pilgrimage?

A. We should do six things: 1) go to Confession and Communion before leaving, 2) strive to avoid all sin during the journey, 3) go occasionally on foot, if not always, 4) live in a frugal manner, 5) recite some prayers now and again to maintain a spirit of penance and devotion, and 6) do exterior acts of penance on occasion.

Q. What defects should we avoid on pilgrimages?

A. We should especially avoid these five: 1) to go on a pilgrimage out of pure curiosity or mere fantasy, 2) to eat too much, 3) to speak of improper or frivolous things or uncharitably to our neighbor, 4) to talk too much or about useless and idle topics while saying little or nothing that can lead other people to God, and 5) to pray very little or not at all.

Treatise 2[3]

Ceremonies Performed During the Public Rites of the Christian Religion

Q. What is the second means the Church uses to encourage Christians to offer God exterior and public worship?

A. The second means is the ceremonies that accompany the public religious rites in the churches.

Q. What main ceremonies has the Church instituted to accompany the public rites of the Christian religion?

A. They are 1) those that accompany the administration of the sacraments, 2) those required during the holy sacrifice of the Mass, 3) those that are part of the celebration of the Divine Office and other services, and 4) those comprising the blessings given in the Church.

Q. What principal ceremonies take place before and during the parish Mass?

A. There are seven: 1) the blessing of the water, 2) the procession, 3) the sermon, 4) the Offertory, 5) the blessed bread, 6) the kiss of peace, and 7) the incensing.

Q. What important ceremonies take place on the first day of Lent and during Holy Week?

A. There are seven [eight]: 1) placing the blessed ashes on the foreheads of the faithful on the first day of Lent, 2) blessing the palms distributed on Palm Sunday, 3) giving general absolution on Holy Thursday, 4) adoring the cross on Good Friday, 5) blessing the new fire on Holy Saturday, 6) lighting the three-branched candle afterward, 7) blessing the paschal candle on Holy Saturday, and 8) blessing the water in the baptismal font on Holy Saturday and also on the eve of Pentecost.

Q. Why did the Church institute the ceremonies that take place during the sacraments and the holy sacrifice of the Mass?

A. It is to increase the veneration of the faithful for the sacraments and to inspire them with deep respect for the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

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3. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 3, *The Exterior and Public Worship That Christians Are Obliged to Offer to God and the Means of Doing So,* treatise 2, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1124–38; Cahiers lasalliens 22, 23–64.

Q. Why did the Church establish ceremonies for the celebration of the Divine Office and other services?
A. It is to make the faithful more willing to attend these rites and participate in them with greater devotion.

We will not speak here of the ceremonies that take place during the administration of the sacraments; volume 2, which dealt with the sacraments, already covered them. We will also not discuss the ceremonies of the Mass, which are explained in the book on instructions and prayers for holy Mass. Because most of the ceremonies that take place in church are blessings or are accompanied by blessings, we will here discuss blessings and later speak of particular ceremonies.

Lesson 1—The blessings of the Church

Q. What are the blessings of the Church?
A. They are blessings that priests and prelates give in their role as public ministers of the Church.
Q. How many kinds of blessings does the Church have?
A. There are two kinds: 1) those that simply ask God to come upon the persons or things being blessed, such as the blessings given every day at holy Mass or those said over the fruits of the earth in processions, and 2) those said over various kinds of things to remove them from profane use and dedicate them for sacred use pertaining to God and his service, and to beg God for many graces for the persons who will use these objects or those for whom they will be used.
Q. Does God give graces through the use of blessed objects?
A. Yes, if we use them with faith and follow the Church's intentions.
Q. Why do priests always make the sign of the cross over the objects they bless?
A. God only gives blessings through the merits of Jesus Christ crucified.
Q. Why is holy water sprinkled over the objects being blessed?
A. Holy water signifies the Holy Spirit, whom God bestows on the objects being blessed, to remind us that the Holy Spirit blesses and sets them apart to be used only in the service of God.
Q. Why does blessing a profane object set it aside for sacred use?
A. Before being blessed, these objects can be used for anything we wish, but after they are blessed, we can and we ought only use them in the service of God.
Q. Would it be wrong to use blessed objects for anything other than the service of God?

A. Yes, it would be a great evil because it would mean that we did not respect the blessing the Church has given these objects and the sacred purposes for which they are intended.

Lesson 2—Blessed candles

Q. What do the blessed candles in church signify?
A. They signify Jesus Christ, the true light of all Christians, who, says Saint John, enlightens everyone who comes into this world. They also signify the faith, joy, and devotion that good Catholics have in the Lord's presence during the celebration of his feasts and those of the saints.
Q. Why do we light candles and lamps in the churches?
A. It is to honor God through Jesus Christ his Son and the saints, whose honor and glory depend entirely on Jesus Christ.
Q. Why do we light candles during the holy sacrifice of the Mass?
A. It is to show the faith and respect that the Church has for this most holy and august sacrifice.
Q. Why do we bring out lighted candles during solemn Masses when the Gospel is about to be chanted?
A. It is to show that the Gospel is the true light that has given the knowledge of the true God.
Q. Why do we keep a lamp constantly burning before the Most Blessed Sacrament?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to signify that Jesus Christ, who is hidden in the host, is our eternal light, 2) to testify that we believe in this mystery through the enlightenment of faith, and 3) to express our desire to burn with the fire of love of God in the presence of and for Jesus Christ in this sacred mystery.
Q. Why do we light many candles for the exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to manifest the deep faith the entire Church has for this great mystery, 2) to show the love good Christians have for Jesus Christ, sacrificed and exposed for their love, and 3) to exemplify the great joy that fills their hearts at the privilege of possessing so great a treasure.
Q. Why do we light candles before images and relics of the saints?
A. It is to show that the saints enlightened the world by their teaching and good example and now enjoy the light of glory forever.
Q. Why do we carry two lighted candles alongside the cross during processions?
A. It is to signify that we do not walk in darkness when we follow Jesus and his cross.

Q. Why do we place a lighted candle in the hands of a person who is near death?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to help him make amends to God for all the sins committed in this world, 2) to show that he awaits the true light that is the happiness of the saints, and 3) to remind him that if the light of his good deeds enlightens others, he will go before Jesus Christ and enter heaven with him, like the wise virgins.
Q. Why do we carry candles and torches during funeral processions?
A. It is to show that the deceased lived and died in the faith of the Church and that we wish them the perfect light of eternal glory.

Lesson 3—Holy water

Q. What kind of water is solemnly blessed every Sunday before the parish Mass?
A. It is plain water, mingled with a little salt, that the Church consecrates to holy use by prayers and the sign of the cross.
Q. How long has the Church used holy water?
A. Holy water has been used since the time of the Apostles.
Q. How is holy water used?
A. We use it to purify and drive away whatever evil may be in the things we sprinkle with it.
Q. How does sprinkling holy water purify things?
A. It does so 1) by the power and efficacy of the blessing, and 2) by the power of the Holy Spirit, the purifier and sanctifier of all things, who imparted divine power and virtue to water at the creation.
Q. Why do we mingle a little salt with the water when blessing it?
A. It is to follow the example of the Prophet Elisha, for salt is designed to purify.
Q. Why do we exorcise the water and the salt before blessing them?
A. It is to ask God to drive out the devil, who has mastery over them through sin.
Q. Why do we bless the salt before we bless the water?
A. Just as we use the water to purify the things sprinkled with it, we must also purify the salt with the Church's blessing and prayer so that it can purify the water.
Q. Why do we bless holy water every Sunday before High Mass?
A. It is so that the priest can have holy water to bless the altar and the congregation.
Q. Why do we bless the altar with holy water every Sunday before High Mass?

A. It is to purify it and drive away the demons, who might interfere with the effects of the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. Why is the entire congregation blessed with holy water on Sundays before High Mass?

A. There are two reasons: 1) it purifies and reminds them of the purity of conscience they should have when attending Mass and offering their prayers; 2) it shows them that they should be filled with the Spirit of God if they wish to participate worthily in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. What else does the sprinkling of holy water over the congregation signify?

A. It symbolizes the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, of which this water is the symbol and which washes us and purifies us of our sins.

Q. What benefits does holy water confer on us when we use it with faith and devotion?

A. It has many benefits for both soul and body.

Q. How does holy water benefit the soul when we use it with faith and devotion?

A. There are three main benefits: 1) it cleanses the soul of venial sins; 2) it drives away evil thoughts and temptations; 3) it disposes us to pray and to perform good deeds.

Q. How does holy water benefit our body when we use it with faith and devotion?

A. It has four main benefits: 1) it protects against charms and spells; 2) it purifies the air; 3) it averts lightning and calms tempests; 4) it heals or soothes our sickness.

Q. Why do we place holy water at the door of churches?

A. There are three reasons: 1) to help purify the faithful and dispose them for prayer, 2) to remind them that they should come to church only to worship God and to draw down the Holy Spirit, and 3) to show them that to be able to pray to God properly, to sanctify and make their prayers agreeable to God, and to have the proper motives so that God will hear their prayers, they must be purified of their sins and turn away from all the devil's temptations.

Q. Why do the faithful keep holy water in their houses and rooms?

A. There are three reasons: 1) as an act of religion, 2) to drive away evil spirits, and 3) to draw down God's blessings on them, their family, and their home.

Q. Why do we sprinkle holy water on the dying in their last agony?

A. It is to drive away the devils surrounding them and gain many graces for them.

Q. Why do we bless the bodies of the deceased or their tombs with holy water?
A. When we do this with piety, it has three important effects: 1) it helps relieve the sufferings of the souls in purgatory; 2) it drives away the demons who sometimes remain in tombs; 3) it reminds us of the resurrection of the dead, which will take place at the end of the world.
Q. When should Christians use holy water?
A. It is especially on five occasions: 1) when they get up and when they go to bed, 2) when they enter or leave their home or church, 3) when they are tempted, 4) before they begin their prayers, and 5) when they see lightning or hear thunder.
Q. How should we use holy water?
A. To use holy water properly and piously, we must do three things: 1) remove our gloves before taking it, 2) take the holy water with the middle finger of the right hand, and 3) touch it to our forehead in the form of a cross.
Q. What should we ask God when we use holy water?
A. We should ask God to purify our heart by this water that symbolizes his holy grace, just as he purified us in Baptism.

The procession that takes place every Sunday is covered in treatise 1, lesson 3.

Lesson 4—The sermon

Q. What is the sermon?
A. The sermon is an instruction on various necessary or pertinent topics that the priest gives to the congregation every Sunday at the parish Mass.
Q. When during the parish Mass does the priest deliver the sermon?
A. He usually delivers it immediately after the Creed, before what is called the Mass of the Faithful, that is, before the Offertory.
Q. Why does the priest deliver the sermon before the Mass of the Faithful?
A. He follows the Tradition of the early Church of allowing catechumens and penitents to hear the Gospel explained in the sermon but not allowing them to remain in the church once the Mass of the Faithful had begun, that is, when the Offertory began.
Q. What topics does the priest usually explain to the faithful during the sermon?
A. In the sermon the priest provides instruction on six topics: 1) the Creed and the commandments of God and of the Church, 2) their

duty to pray for all the needs of the Church and its principal members, as well as how to do this, 3) the feasts and fasts of the week, 4) the marriages or ordinations that are to take place, including the names of the brides, grooms, and ordinands, 5) any excommunications that have been incurred, and 6) the holy Gospel that has just been proclaimed by the deacon.

Q. Why does the priest begin with instruction on the Creed and the commandments of God and of the Church?

A. There are two reasons: 1) they must know these things above all others if they wish to be saved; 2) they must publicly profess the Creed and the commandments to be recognized as members of the faithful and worthy to participate in the sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. Why during the sermon does the priest instruct the faithful on their duty to pray for themselves, the needs of the Church, and its principal members?

A. It is to persuade the faithful to keep a close union among themselves and to contribute to it through prayer as much as possible so that the number of the faithful will increase and Catholics will persevere in faith and piety.

Q. Why during the sermon does the priest advise the faithful about the feasts and fast days of the coming week?

A. It is so that they can observe them exactly and not neglect them through ignorance.

Q. Why during the sermon does the priest announce to the faithful the banns of marriage and the future ordination of those aspiring to the ecclesiastical state?

A. It is so that if someone knows of an impediment to the marriage or to the ordination of an ecclesiastic, he can make it known before either ceremony takes place.

Q. Why during the sermon does the priest announce the names of excommunicated persons?

A. There are three reasons: 1) to let the faithful know that they should not associate with these people, 2) to encourage the congregation to denounce any excommunicated person who might be present as not being fit to attend the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and 3) to oblige those who might be present to leave before the Mass of the Faithful begins.

Q. Why during the sermon does the priest explain the Gospel that has just been chanted in the church?

A. One of the principal duties of pastors is to proclaim and explain the Gospel to the faithful under their care, and one of the primary duties of the faithful is to know the rules and maxims of the Gospel so that they can practice them.

Q. Why is the Gospel explanation placed before the Mass of the Faithful, that is, before the Offertory?
A. There are two reasons: 1) in the early Church the catechumens and the penitents could hear the explanation of the holy Gospel before they had to leave the church prior to the Mass of the Faithful; 2) it is even more necessary for the faithful to be instructed in the truths of religion and the maxims of the holy Gospel than to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Lesson 5—The Offertory

Q. What is the Offertory?
A. The Offertory is the ceremony during the holy sacrifice of the Mass where those assisting offer to God, in the person of the priest, various things that are either used in the sacrifice or needed for the livelihood of the priest who offers it.
Q. What things offered at Mass are used in the holy sacrifice itself?
A. They are bread, wine, and sometimes candles.
Q. What kinds of things offered during holy Mass are needed for the livelihood of the priest who is the minister of the sacrifice?
A. Money or such things as food or clothing are offered to the priest.
Q. Is this custom of offering things during holy Mass very ancient?
A. Yes, it is believed to be as old as apostolic times, for both Tertullian, who lived in the second century, and Saint Cyprian, who lived in the third century, mention it as something in use in their time.
Q. In the early Church, what did Christians think about this practice?
A. They considered it to be obligatory.
Q. In the early Church, what was the main reason for the Offertory?
A. It allowed each of the faithful at Mass who intended to receive Holy Communion to offer the priest the bread that would be given back at Holy Communion.
Q. Did the Church establish the Offertory only to provide the bread that would serve for the Communion of the priest and the faithful at Mass?
A. No, it was also established for four other reasons: 1) to emphasize God's sovereign dominion over all creation and to honor God by showing that all we have comes from his pure bounty, 2) to show that we have more confidence in God's providence than in our own abilities by asking him to bestow his blessings on the faithful and their goods, 3) to provide for the livelihood of the priest saying Mass and the other ministers of the Church dedicat-

ed to the worship of God and the salvation of souls, and 4) to contribute to the needs of the Church and of poor people.

Q. Do we still present at the Offertory the bread for the Communion of the faithful?

A. No, we no longer do this because not all the faithful receive Communion at every Mass they attend, as they did in the early Church.

Q. What do we usually present at the Offertory in place of the bread and wine that the faithful formerly offered for the holy sacrifice of the Mass?

A. Ordinarily, we offer bread that the priest blesses, breaks, and distributes to all present.

Q. What do we note about the Offertory of the early Church?

A. We observe four particular facts: 1) the men went up first, followed by the women; 2) they processed with great respect and devotion; 3) as they presented their gifts, they gave the priest their name and the name of the deceased for whom they also made some offering so that he might commemorate them in the sacrifice; 4) they placed any leftover gifts near the altar, where they received a special blessing.

Q. In the early Church, was everyone allowed to offer a gift?

A. No, the Church never allowed offerings to be received from infidels, catechumens, public penitents, excommunicated persons, or the publicly infamous, such as persons guilty of sacrilege, thieves, usurers, those living with concubines, women of loose morals, and so on.

Q. What does the ceremony of the Offertory mean today?

A. We should understand it in two ways: 1) as a means of participating in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and 2) as the sign of union among the faithful and with the priest who celebrates the holy sacrifice.

Q. What motives should we have when we make our offering?

A. We should have the following three motives: 1) a purely religious motive with feelings of true Christian devotion, 2) the intention of uniting ourselves with the priest and with the other faithful in offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and 3) a desire to recognize God as our sovereign Lord by giving to God a share of all our goods.

Lesson 6—The blessed bread

Q. What is the blessed bread that we offer every Sunday at the parish Mass?

A. It is the bread the priest blesses and distributes to those present, who then consume it with piety and respect.
Q. Does the blessed bread contain the body of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. No, the bread simply signifies the body of Jesus Christ.
Q. Why is bread blessed and distributed to the faithful every Sunday in church?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to signify the early Christians' communion with each other and their reception of the Holy Eucharist at every Mass they attended, 2) to signify the festive meal the early Christians held after Mass, and 3) to signify the union the faithful have with one another as they share in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.
Q. When did the early Christians eat their festive meal together?
A. They ordinarily did this on Sunday.
Q. What did the early Christian call this festive meal together?
A. They called it an *agape,* which means *feast of love.*
Q. Why were these festive meals of the early Christians called feasts of charity?
A. They were held to nurture charity among the participants.
Q. In whose memory did the early Christians share these feasts?
A. The feasts commemorated the Last Supper Jesus Christ shared with his Apostles when he instituted the Holy Eucharist.
Q. When did the Church begin the custom of distributing the blessed bread?
A. It began when the faithful stopped observing the ancient custom of receiving Communion at every Mass after the priest did.
Q. What does the Church ask of God in the prayers during the blessing of the bread?
A. She asks God to make us healthy in soul and body.
Q. How can this blessed bread make us healthy in soul and body?
A. When we receive it with faith, devotion, and respect, it can 1) obtain remission of our venial sins, and 2) drive away evil and cure various illnesses.
Q. In what ways can we use this blessed bread disrespectfully?
A. We can do so in five ways: 1) combine it or eat it with ordinary food, 2) eat it without respect, 3) give larger pieces to some and smaller pieces to others, 4) allow children to disrespect it or give it to animals, and 5) push our way up front to be the first one served.

Lesson 7—The kiss of peace

Q. Why is an object called "the peace" given to all in the congregation during the parish High Mass so that we can kiss it?
A. It is to show that the faithful should be perfectly charitable with one other and that those who have ceased to do so should be reconciled with one another and restore their union.
Q. What is the origin of the ceremony of kissing the object called "the peace" during all the parish High Masses?
A. In the early Church, the faithful exchanged kisses before Communion to show their union and willingness to be reconciled if they had a quarrel with anyone.
Q. Why did the Church have this custom of exchanging kisses among the faithful before Communion?
A. This was so we could do what our Lord commanded in the Gospel: "When you present your gift at the altar, if you know that your brother or sister has something against you, go first to be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift."[4]
Q. What is the significance for us of kissing the instrument of peace?
A. It signifies that the faithful are not worthy to be present and participate in the holy sacrifice of the Mass unless they are sincerely in union with one another; if they have difficulty with someone or know that someone is angry with them, they should reconcile beforehand with those who are angry.
Q. What motives should those assisting at Mass have when they kiss the instrument of peace?
A. In union with the intentions of the Church, they should have these three motives: 1) to seek peace and union with the faithful, 2) to desire profoundly to be reconciled with those with whom they have differences, and 3) if they have not already done so, to commit themselves to be reconciled with these persons as soon as they leave the church.

Lesson 8—The blessing of incense and the incensing

Q. Why do we bless incense in church?
A. It is to use this incense when rendering the honor due to God, the saints, and the faithful.
Q. How is incense blessed?
A. We say a prayer in which the Church asks God to bless it.
Q. What does the blessed incense signify?

4. Matt. 5:23–24.

A. The incense signifies prayer and an edifying life.
Q. How does incense signify prayer?
A. It is by the smoke rising to heaven, which is why David asked God that his prayer might mount to heaven like the smoke of incense rising in the air.
Q. How does incense signify an edifying life?
A. Just as, according to Saint Paul, a Christian should be the good fragrance of Jesus Christ, incense signifies an edifying life by the sweet perfume it diffuses.
Q. Why do we incense churches?
A. It is to remind us they are sacred places where God resides in a special way.
Q. Why are various objects incensed when they are blessed?
A. It is to show us that we should use blessed objects to raise our thoughts to God.
Q. To whom do we offer the incense we burn on the altar?
A. We offer it to God, whom the altar symbolizes.
Q. Why do we offer incense to God?
A. It is to offer the sovereign God the worship due to him alone.
Q. To whom do we offer the incense we burn before a crucifix?
A. We offer it to Jesus Christ because he is God.
Q. Why do we burn incense at Mass over the bread and wine being prepared for the sacrifice?
A. It is to show our respect for this bread and wine set aside for God and destined to become the body and blood of Jesus Christ.
Q. Why do we burn incense before the cross in processions?
A. It is to honor the crucified Jesus Christ, under whose standard the clergy and the Christian people are about to process.
Q. To whom do we offer the incense we burn before the images of saints?
A. We offer it to the saints portrayed in the images.
Q. Why do we offer incense to the saints?
A. It is to honor them as God's friends.
Q. Why do we incense the body of a saint?
A. It is to honor the body, which has contributed to the holiness of the soul.
Q. Why do we incense the bodies of the deceased?
A. It is to show our desire that they may rise body and soul to heaven and enjoy the glory destined for them.
Q. Why do we incense the priests?
A. It is to honor them as ministers of God and dispensers of his mysteries.
Q. Why do we incense laypeople in church?

A. It is to show that just as the sweet fragrance of incense is agreeable, they should be agreeable to God by leading a holy life.

Lesson 9—The blessing of ashes

Q. Why did the Church institute the ceremony of placing ashes on the head of the faithful on the first day of Lent?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to remind us that we are only dust and will return to dust, and 2) to encourage us to do penance during Lent as a preparation both for celebrating Easter properly and for our death.
Q. Why do we bless the ashes that are placed on the head of the faithful on the first day of Lent?
A. It is so that the prayers the Church offers during the blessing may obtain from God a spirit of penance for the faithful.
Q. What does the Church ask of God when blessing these ashes?
A. She asks God to give the grace of penance to those who will receive the ashes with proper motives.
Q. Why are ashes placed on our head on the first day of Lent?
A. It is to signify that the holy season of Lent was instituted as a time of penance and is therefore a most appropriate time to think of death.
Q. Who places the blessed ashes on our head?
A. The priest does this.
Q. What does the priest say when placing the ashes on our head?
A. He says, "Remember, man, that you are dust, and into dust you shall return."
Q. Where do these words come from?
A. They are taken from Holy Scripture, where God pronounces a curse on Adam after his sin.
Q. When placing the ashes on our head, why does the priest say over us the curse pronounced by God against Adam after his sin?
A. It is to motivate us to do penance after hearing these words of the curse, just as Adam did after hearing God pronounce these words.
Q. For how long did Adam do penance?
A. He did so all his life, about nine hundred and thirty years.
Q. How long should our penance last?
A. It should last as long as we live.
Q. Why does the priest apply the blessed ashes on us in the form of a cross?
A. It is to show us that we should do penance for the love of Jesus Christ, who willingly suffered death on the cross for us.

Q. Why does the priest place the ashes on the forehead?
A. It is to show us that we should not be ashamed to do penance.
Q. What attitudes should we have when receiving blessed ashes?
A. We should have three kinds of characteristics: 1) humility, pondering how our body will soon be reduced to dust, 2) profound sorrow for the sins for which we must do penance, and 3) devotion, asking God for the grace to do penance properly when we fast on each day of Lent.
Q. In what posture should we receive the blessed ashes?
A. We should be kneeling with eyes cast down and hands joined, saying, "My God, give me the grace to live and die in penance."

The ceremony of blessing the palms will be covered in the lesson for Palm Sunday.

Lesson 10—The general absolution during paschal time

Q. What is the general absolution the Church offers on Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday?
A. This general absolution is not a sacramental one but a simple ceremony to remind us of the solemn reconciliation of penitents in the early Church.
Q. What was this solemn reconciliation of penitents?
A. It was an act of reconciliation before the Easter Communion in which the Church publicly absolved penitents who had incurred excommunication and were doing penance for some very serious sin they had committed.
Q. What was the nature of this excommunication that was absolved for public penitents prior to the Easter Communion?
A. The penitents were not allowed to attend Mass or to receive the sacraments during this time.
Q. What was the effect of general absolution on public penitents?
A. It gave them back the right to attend Mass and to receive the sacraments.
Q. Why did the Church absolve public penitents from excommunication and reconcile them on these special days?
A. It was so that they could join with other Christians in celebrating the mystery of the Resurrection and be worthy to receive Easter Communion.
Q. What must all Christians do during the two weeks of Easter?
A. By making a good Confession, they must receive our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar with a pure heart free from all sin.

Lesson 11—The adoration of the cross

Q. What is a crucifix, which we venerate on Good Friday?
A. It is a cross bearing the image of a man nailed to it.
Q. Why has the Church especially selected Good Friday as the day to hold the ceremony of the adoration of the cross?
A. The Church solemnly commemorates the death of Jesus Christ on that day.
Q. What is signified by this image of a man attached to the cross and adored by us on Good Friday?
A. It signifies the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was nailed to the cross.
Q. May we adore a crucifix, that is, the representation of the body of a crucified man?
A. Yes, not only may we but we must adore it because it is a symbol of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, attached to the cross.
Q. Do we adore the gold, silver, stone, or wood when we bow before a crucifix?
A. No, that would be idolatry; rather, we adore the crucified Jesus Christ, whom the crucifix signifies for us.
Q. Why do we in the Church adore the body of Jesus Christ attached to the cross?
A. It is to give due honor to Jesus, dead on the cross.
Q. What honor must we give Jesus, crucified and dead on the cross?
A. We must adore him because he is God.
Q. How do we adore Jesus Christ crucified and dead on the cross?
A. We prostrate ourselves before a crucifix.
Q. Why do we call the prostration made before a crucifix adoration, but the prostration made before the image of a saint is not?
A. When we prostrate ourselves before a crucifix, we adore Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and is God, but when we prostrate ourselves before the image of a saint, we only honor the saint as being a friend of God.
Q. What attitudes should we have when adoring the cross on Good Friday and at all other times?
A. We should have the following four motives: 1) profound respect, recognizing that Jesus Christ is our God and our Lord, 2) immense gratitude, thanking Jesus Christ for suffering such a disgraceful and humiliating death for our sins, 3) profound humility and concern, remembering that our sins caused the death of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Sovereign, and 4) sorrow, realizing that by offending God each day, we crucify him anew by our sins.

Lesson 12—The blessing of the fire

Q. What happens in church on Holy Saturday?
A. We bless the paschal candle and the baptismal font.
Q. What is the blessing of the baptismal font?
A. The blessing of the baptismal font is the solemn rite on the vigil of Easter and of Pentecost in which we bless the water to be used for Baptism and then reserve it in the baptismal font.
Q. How is the paschal candle blessed?
A. We bless it as follows: 1) we light a new fire and then bless it; 2) we light a three-branched candle with this blessed fire; 3) we bless the paschal candle and then light it with fire taken from the three-branched candle.
Q. What does the new fire blessed on Holy Saturday signify?
A. It signifies God's love.
Q. How do we make the new fire on Holy Saturday?
A. We make it by striking a piece of steel on flint.
Q. What does the flint used to make the new fire in church on Holy Saturday signify?
A. It signifies Jesus Christ, who is the cornerstone rejected by the world, as he foretold, and who rose to enkindle a new fire of divine love in all hearts.
Q. What does the steel used to strike the flint and produce the new fire on Holy Saturday signify?
A. It signifies the great suffering that our Lord Jesus Christ endured in his Passion to save us from sin and open our heart to his divine love.
Q. Why is the new fire blessed on Holy Saturday?
A. It is both to remind us that our hearts must be filled with the fire of God's love if we wish to celebrate joyfully the solemn feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and to enable us to be renewed spiritually during these holy days.

Lesson 13—The three-branched candle

Q. How do we use the new fire on Holy Saturday?
A. We use it to light a candle with three branches.
Q. Who lights this candle?
A. The deacon lights it with great ceremony.
Q. What else does the deacon do when lighting this candle?
A. He kneels and sings the *Lumen Christi,* which means *light of Christ.*
Q. Does the deacon kneel and adore the three-branched candle?

A. No, that would be idolatry; rather, he kneels to adore Jesus Christ, whom the candle signifies.
Q. What do we do with the three-branched candle once it is lighted?
A. We use it to light the lamps and the other candles in the church.
Q. Why do we make a new fire and a new light in the church on Holy Saturday?
A. It is to show us that Jesus Christ, the light of the Church, disappeared from sight when he died on Good Friday and that this light was rekindled and began to shine again when he rose from the dead.
Q. Why do we light the lamps and candles with the flame of the three-branched candle that signifies the light of Jesus Christ?
A. It is to show 1) that Jesus Christ is the unique source of all light that enlightens everyone who comes into this world, and 2) that we should not use any light other than that of Jesus Christ as our guide on the path to heaven.
Q. Why is it a three-branched candle, and what do the three branches signify?
A. The candle with three branches signifies God in three persons, from whom Jesus Christ draws the light he communicates to everyone coming into this world.
Q. What should the faithful do during the services of Holy Saturday when the three-branched candle is lighted and the paschal candle is blessed?
A. They should do three things: 1) recognize that Jesus Christ is their true light, 2) adore him as such, and 3) prepare themselves to receive his light and to follow it in all they do.

Lesson 14—The paschal candle

Q. Why do we bless and light the paschal candle on Holy Saturday?
A. It is to signify that the risen Jesus Christ is the light of the world and that he rose from the dead to enlighten his disciples and the entire Church.
Q. Why do we mark the paschal candle with five grains of incense in the form of a cross?
A. It is to remind us that Jesus kept his five wounds after his Resurrection.
Q. Why do we use five grains of incense in the paschal candle to signify the five wounds of our Lord?
A. It is because the incense, as a symbol of prayer, represents Jesus Christ interceding unceasingly in heaven for us through the merits of his five wounds.

Q. For how long do we use the paschal candle in church?
A. We light and use it from Easter until the Ascension of our Lord.
Q. Why do we light the paschal candle from Easter until the Ascension of our Lord?
A. It signifies the risen Christ, who appeared many times to his Apostles after his Resurrection until he ascended into heaven.
Q. When do we light the paschal candle?
A. We light it on four different occasions: 1) during the interval between the Gospel and the Communion at High Mass, 2) during the singing of the *Benedictus* at Matins, 3) during the chanting of the *Magnificat* at Vespers, and 4) during the singing of the *Nunc Dimittis* at Compline.
Q. Why do we light the paschal candle at High Mass during the interval between the Gospel and the Communion?
A. It is to show us that the body of Jesus Christ is truly on the altar, that he preached and announced his Gospel for everyone, and that he invites everyone to benefit from the sacrifice of the cross by offering him in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.
Q. Why do we light the paschal candle during the singing of the *Benedictus?*
A. It is to show that during this time the Church joins with Saint Zechariah in asking God to grant the light of Jesus Christ to those who are in the darkness of ignorance.
Q. Why do we light the paschal candle during the singing of the *Magnificat?*
A. It is to show that Jesus Christ took flesh in the womb of the Most Blessed Virgin and came into this world to enlighten it with his divine light and holy grace and that the Church, with the Most Blessed Virgin, offers thanksgiving to God for this by singing her canticle.
Q. Why do we light the paschal candle during the singing of the *Nunc Dimittis?*
A. It is to show that with Saint Simeon the Church recognizes Jesus Christ as the light that came into this world to enlighten the Gentiles and restore the luster and true glory of the Jewish people.
Q. Should the faithful give any special honor to the paschal candle?
A. Yes, they should see it as the symbolic reminder of their duty to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and the example of his holy life.

Treatise 3[5]

The Times the Church Especially Consecrates to God to Honor Certain Mysteries or to Prepare Herself for Their Celebration

Q. What is the third means the Church uses to encourage Christians to offer God exterior and public worship?
A. The third means is to have them observe certain times of the year that the Church has consecrated to God and designed to honor some mystery or to prepare them for it.
Q. What does the Church want Christians to do in particular to offer God exterior and public worship during these holy times consecrated to God?
A. The Church wants Christians to worship God more solemnly and continually by going to church more often during these holy times and remaining there longer.
Q. What sacred times has the Church set aside to honor certain mysteries or to prepare herself for celebrating them?
A. There are ten seasons: 1) Advent, 2) Christmas to the Purification, 3) Septuagesima Sunday until Lent, 4) Lent, 5) Passion Sunday and Holy Week to Easter, 6) Easter, 7) Ascension of our Lord to Pentecost, 8) the feast of Saint Mark and Rogation Days, 9) Ember Days, and 10) the vigil, or eve, of certain feasts during the year.

Lesson 1—Advent

Q. What do we call the period preceding Christmas, or the solemnity of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. We call this season Advent.
Q. What is Advent?
A. Advent is a period the Church has especially consecrated to God to help us worthily celebrate the feast of Christmas.

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5. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 3, *The Exterior and Public Worship That Christians Are Obliged to Offer to God and the Means of Doing So,* treatise 3, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1139–60; Cahiers lasalliens 22, 65–124.

Q. Why did the Church institute the season of Advent?
A. There are three main reasons: 1) to renew the fervor of Christians, 2) to prepare them to celebrate the feast of Christmas with greater devotion, and 3) to dispose them to receive Jesus Christ into their soul.
Q. How did they observe the season of Advent in the early Church?
A. They observed Advent by fasting and reciting special prayers.
Q. How should we consider the season of Advent?
A. We should think of it as a time of prayer and penance.
Q. What is the focus of most of the services of the Church during Advent?
A. They focus on awakening in us a desire for the coming of Jesus Christ into our heart or on preparing us for the last coming of our Lord on judgment day.
Q. What are the "O Antiphons" that we so solemnly chant in church during the days preceding Christmas?
A. They are exclamations the Church uses to express longing for her Liberator and Redeemer, who is our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. Why does the Church long so for the coming of our Lord when he has already come?
A. The Church does not long for a new coming of Jesus Christ into this world but for the coming of our Lord into our heart to deliver us and entirely free us from our sins.
Q. What must we do to observe the holy season of Advent with the spirit and mind of the Church?
A. We must do four main things: 1) attend church more frequently and pray to God more than at other times, 2) thank our Lord every day for becoming human out of love for us, 3) avoid offending God, who sent his Son to deliver us from sin, and 4) ask our Lord to come and dwell in our soul.

Lesson 2—The time from Christmas to the Purification

Q. What is special in the Church during the time from the birth of our Lord to the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. The Church sets aside this time to honor the holy childhood of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. How does the Church honor the holy childhood of our Lord during the time from Christmas until the Purification?
A. She does four things: 1) she celebrates during this time the mysteries that took place during the infancy of our Lord Jesus Christ; 2) she schedules the reading of all the Gospel passages on the infancy of our Lord Jesus Christ; 3) she wishes the faithful to be

joyful during this time; 4) she celebrates the liturgy at the end of the season with as much joy as she did on the birth of our Lord at the beginning of the season.

Q. What mysteries of the infancy of Jesus Christ does the Church celebrate between Christmas and the Purification?

A. They are the following ten mysteries: 1) the birth of Jesus Christ, 2) his circumcision, 3) his adoration by the three Magi, 4) his Presentation in the Temple and the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin, his mother, 5) his flight into Egypt, 6) Herod's search for the infant Jesus to put him to death, 7) the massacre of the Holy Innocents, 8) the return from Egypt of Saint Joseph and the Most Blessed Virgin with the infant Jesus, 9) the settling of the Holy Family in Nazareth and the submission of the child Jesus to his parents, and 10) the loss of Jesus in Jerusalem and his discovery in the midst of the doctors. It is also during these celebrations of the mysteries that we read in church the relevant Gospel passages instructing us about everything that took place during the holy childhood of our Lord

Q. How do we know that the Church wants the faithful to spend the time from Christmas to the Purification in great joy?

A. The Church refrains from fasting during this season, even on the vigil of the feast of the Epiphany, and lifts the obligation of abstinence on Saturdays.

Q. Why do we refrain from fasting and observing the Saturday abstinence during this time?

A. It is to show our joy that the Most Blessed Virgin has brought our Lord Jesus Christ into the world.

Q. How does the Church show joy over the birth of our Lord at both the beginning and the end of this holy season?

A. It is in the antiphons at Matins and especially at Lauds on Christmas day and in the antiphons at Vespers on the eve of the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin.

Q. What should we do to celebrate properly the season between Christmas and the Purification and to be one with the spirit and mind of the Church?

A. We should do four things in particular: 1) adore our Lord Jesus Christ as a child every day and often during the day, 2) thank God for having sent his Son into this world and for letting him become a child so that we could not help but love him, 3) ask the child Jesus to give us the spirit and simplicity of childhood and a fear of all lying and deviousness, and 4) devote ourselves during this time to meditating on the holy mysteries of the childhood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson 3—The time from Septuagesima Sunday until Lent

Q. What is the time from Septuagesima Sunday until the beginning of Lent?
A. It is a time the Church consecrates chiefly to prayer and penance.
Q. What did the early Christians do in the time from Septuagesima until the beginning of Lent?
A. They did two things: 1) they began the Lenten fast at Septuagesima; 2) they started the public instruction of the catechumens in preparation for their Baptism on the vigil of Easter.
Q. How does the Church encourage the faithful to do penance during this holy time?
A. She does four things in particular: 1) she uses the color violet; 2) she omits the Alleluia and the canticles of joy and happiness during services; 3) she offers us in the services some of the most impressive truths of religion: the creation of the world, the first sin, humanity's condemnation to death and loss of the earthly paradise, Adam's penance, the corruption of humanity, the flood, the saving of Noah in the ark, and the captivity of God's people in Egypt with their deliverance by Moses as a prefiguring of Jesus Christ; 4) at Mass she selects passages from the Epistles and the Gospels that strongly urge us to do penance.
Q. Why does the Church stress penance during this time between Septuagesima and Lent?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to prepare Christians for the holy season of Lent, and 2) to turn them aside from the spirit and practices of worldly people, who indulge in debauchery and riotous pleasures during this holy season more than at any other time.
Q. Why does the Church use violet vestments and omit the singing of the Alleluia and other joyful chants during the time between Septuagesima and Easter?
A. It is to encourage Christians to share in her spirit and to abstain during this time not only from indecent and forbidden recreations but also from those that might be appropriate at other times.
Q. Why are the Church's prayers longer during the time between Septuagesima and Lent?
A. It is to remind us that sin is such a great evil that we need to apply ourselves earnestly to prayer if we wish to receive pardon for those we have committed.
Q. Why do we call the three Sundays in this season Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima?
A. We call the first Sunday Septuagesima because there are seventy days from this Sunday until the Sunday after Easter, not counting

Easter itself; the second Sunday is called Sexagesima because there are sixty days from this Sunday until the Wednesday of Easter week; the third Sunday is called Quinquagesima because there are fifty days from this Sunday until Easter.

Q. What should we do to spend this period from Septuagesima to the start of Lent in a Christian manner and according to the spirit of the Church?

A. We should do five things: 1) avoid during this time all gatherings only intended for pleasure, 2) look with revulsion on illicit gatherings, such as balls, dances, shows, and the vain and foolish diversions that occupy the worldly during this holy time, such as masquerades, and so on, 3) remain in deeper seclusion than at other times and never look with curiosity or pleasure at the carousing that takes place during this period, 4) offer up some acts of penance both to mitigate, insofar as we can, the insults many Christians offer to God and to Jesus Christ during this holy time and to prepare ourselves for Lent, and 5) go to church more often to visit the Most Blessed Sacrament, to offer reparation to Jesus Christ for the sins committed during this time, and to ask God to pardon all our past sins committed during this holy time.

Lesson 4—Carnival time

Q. What is Carnival time?

A. Carnival time is when worldly and lax Christians engage in various kinds of disorderly conduct, such as parties, balls, dances, masquerades, games of chance, and feasting, while good Christians spend it in silence and seclusion.

Q. How long does the Carnival season last?

A. It lasts from a month to six weeks up to the beginning of Lent.

Q. Who started the observance of Carnival?

A. Worldly and lax Christians started it, acting under the urging and inspiration of the devil.

Q. Why did these worldly and lax Christians begin observing Carnival time?

A. It was for two reasons: 1) to spend as much time in disorderly behavior and licentious living as good Christians spend in fasting during Lent, and 2) to prepare themselves by riotous living to spend Lent in licentiousness, just as good Christians prepare themselves by seclusion and prayer to spend Lent in a holy manner according to the spirit of the Church.

Q. Why did the devil inspire worldly and lax Christians to institute Carnival?

A. It was to give them as much time to honor and serve him as good Christians spend in honoring God during Lent.
Q. How do these worldly and lax Christians spend their time during this period?
A. They spend this time in debauchery, feasting, gambling, dancing, and masquerading.
Q. Whom do these people, who give themselves over to such excesses during Carnival time as nighttime reveling, masquerading, gambling, and gluttony, resemble?
A. They resemble the Jews who contributed to the death of our Lord.
Q. Whom do the night revelers resemble?
A. They resemble Judas and those who came with him at night to apprehend Jesus.
Q. Whom do the gamblers resemble?
A. They resemble the soldiers who shot dice for our Lord's robe as he hung dying on the cross.
Q. Whom do the masqueraders resemble?
A. They resemble those who scourged and disfigured our Lord, for they disfigure their faces and even their souls, which are made in God's image.
Q. Whom do the dancers resemble?
A. They resemble those who mocked our crucified Lord, wagging their head at him.
Q. Whom do the debauched and gluttonous resemble?
A. They resemble those who executed our Lord because, according to Saint Paul,[6] they crucify him anew by their sins and cause him to suffer death all over again insofar as they can.
Q. What will be the consequences for those who behave like this during Carnival time?
A. They will have an unhappy life and an evil death followed by eternal damnation.
Q. Why will those who spend the Carnival time in disorderly behavior suffer such unhappiness?
A. It is only right they should spend eternity in the company of the devil and share in his woe because they served him so faithfully in this world.
Q. What must those do who wish to spend Carnival time properly?
A. They must do five things in particular: 1) examine how they spent this dangerous time in the past, 2) ask God's pardon for the faults committed in the past during this season and make a firm resolution to spend it in the future as the Church desires good

6. Heb. 6:6.

Christians to do, 3) thank God for giving them the grace to avoid all worldly dissipation during this time, 4) pray to God for their relatives and friends who might be tempted to indulge in excesses and disorderly conduct at this time, and 5) ask God for the grace to do penance during Lent for their past failures and for those their fellow Christians may commit during this time.

Q. How do good Christians spend their time during Carnival?

A. They adopt the following six practices: 1) to live more soberly than at other times, 2) to live in greater seclusion, 3) to avoid entirely the people who live worldly lives, 4) to refrain from attending banquets, 5) to avoid with great fear not only participating in parties, balls, dances, and masquerades but even watching them or talking about them, and 6) to spend more time in prayer, go to church more frequently, remain there longer, and often visit the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Q. Why do good Christians spend Carnival time in retreat and in prayer?

A. There are two reasons: 1) to weep and lament before God over the disorders in the world during this time, and 2) to try to make reparation for them as much as possible.

Q. How might we describe Carnival time?

A. We might call it the devil's Lent because lax Christians spend the same amount of time in disorderly living and debauchery to honor the devil, who is the god of the worldly, as good Christians spend during Lent in fasting, penance, and works of piety to honor God and his Son Jesus Christ.

Lesson 5—The last three days of Carnival

Q. Which are the most important days of Carnival?

A. They are the last three days before Lent, which the devil has especially claimed as his own and the worldly call Fat Sunday, Fat Monday, and Fat Tuesday [Mardi Gras].

Q. Why did the devil claim these three days, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday before Lent, as his own special days?

A. It was mainly for two reasons: 1) so that he might have his own selected days just as God and Jesus Christ especially selected as their own the last three days of Lent: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, and 2) so that worldly and lax Christians might spend the last three days before Lent wholly occupied with continuous partying, balls, dances, and masquerades, accompanied by all sorts of debauched, dissolute, and improper conduct, just as good Christians spend the last three days of Lent in even

greater seclusion, more austere penance, and almost constant prayer.

Q. Why are the last three days before Lent called Fat Sunday, Fat Monday, and Fat Tuesday [Mardi Gras]?

A. The devil inspired worldly and lax Christians to give them these names for two reasons: 1) to mirror the last three days of Lent: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, and 2) to show that the world dedicates the last three days before Lent to the devil and his service just as the Church consecrates the last three days of Lent entirely to God.

Q. What solemn rite takes place in many churches during the last three days of Carnival?

A. It is the Forty Hours devotion of the Most Blessed Sacrament, that is, public exposition for three consecutive days, from six in the morning until seven at night.

Q. Who introduced in the Church the rite of Forty Hours devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament on the last three days of Carnival?

A. Saint Charles Borromeo introduced this rite.

Q. Why does the Forty Hours devotion take place in many churches during the last three days of Carnival?

A. It is to keep Christians from balls, dances, masquerades, gambling and the other excessive and disorderly conduct so common during these three days.

Q. Why do we read on Quinquagesima Sunday the Gospel passage in which Jesus predicts his Passion?

A. There are four reasons: 1) to encourage Christians to have a spirit of penance for their sins, which caused the death of our Lord, 2) to inspire them with an aversion for the usual behavior of worldly people, 3) to persuade them to make reparation for the disorderly conduct so rampant during these days, and 4) to prepare them to spend the holy season of Lent properly and unite themselves with our Lord as he does penance for their sins.

Q. How should a good Christian, especially a Christian child, properly spend the last three days of Carnival?

A. He should adopt the following six practices: 1) he should not go out into the streets to watch the masqueraders; 2) he should never spend this time gambling, dancing, or overeating; 3) he should keep himself in seclusion from companions more than any other time; 4) he should be abstemious, eat a light supper, go to bed early, and get up early; 5) he should visit with our Lord in church, ask his pardon, and offer him reparation for all the sins being committed in the world during this time; 6) he should receive Communion on these three days, at least on Sunday.

Q. What else should Christian students do during these three days?
A. To avoid occasions of offending God and to learn how to serve our Lord better, especially during these days, they should faithfully attend school without missing a day, including Tuesday, when their parents urge them to stay home.
Q. What reward can they expect if they spend these three days of Carnival by faithfully attending church and school to avoid bad company and occasions of sin?
A. Their reward will be the same one that was given to the Most Blessed Virgin, Saint John, and the holy women who stayed at the foot of Jesus' cross, lamenting his Passion and sufferings while the Jews were killing him and while everyone else committed outrages and blasphemies.

Lesson 6—The holy season of Lent

Q. What is Lent?
A. Lent is a period of about six weeks when the Church requires Christians to observe the fast of forty days that was instituted by the holy Apostles.
Q. Why was this holy season of Lent instituted?
A. There are four reasons: 1) to honor our Lord's retreat and fast of forty days in the desert, 2) to urge us to do penance for our sins through fasting and other mortifications, 3) to prepare us through fasting and penance for the feast of Easter, and 4) to give God a tithe, that is, a tenth of the year, in fasting.
Q. Why do we cover the images in church during Lent?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to help us reflect on how sin separates us from God and the communion of saints, and 2) to realize that the only thing for our meditation and concern during this season is the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is why in former times Christians were not allowed to celebrate any saint's feast during Lent, a restriction now observed only during Holy Week.
Q. What should Christians do to observe the holy season of Lent properly?
A. They should do six things in particular: 1) fast daily, except on Sundays, when abstinence alone is observed, 2) pray frequently, 3) give alms abundantly to receive pardon for their sins, 4) avoid socializing, especially with bad company, so as to avoid falling into sin, 5) humble themselves and ask God's pardon for their sins, which caused the death of the Son of God, and 6) prepare the soul by a good Confession to free them from all mortal sin before Lent begins.

Q. Why should we free our conscience of all mortal sin before the beginning of Lent?

A. There are three reasons: 1) the fasting and other good works we can do during Lent will be useless for salvation if we are in the state of mortal sin, an enemy of God, and deprived of God's grace; 2) to rid ourselves of sin is the most important penance we can do; 3) to have a true spirit of penance, we must renounce all our sins with heartfelt and true affection.

Q. How did Christians observe Lent in the early Church?

A. They usually observed these five practices: 1) they abstained not only from meat and eggs but also from milk, butter, cheese, and fish, eating only vegetables and fruit; 2) they only had one meal a day, in the evening; 3) they all fasted, even the children; 4) they all went to church every day, attending both holy Mass and the Divine Office, and they prayed for a long time, both day and night; 5) they gave alms generously to poor people during this time with money that in other instances they would have spent on various objects.

Q. At what age must we start fasting?

A. We must start fasting when we reach the age of twenty-one unless we have a legitimate dispensation from the Church.

Q. Who are legitimately dispensed from fasting?

A. Sick and elderly people, workers doing heavy labor, poor people who usually do not have enough food, and women who are pregnant or breast-feeding infants are dispensed from fasting.

Q. May we dispense ourselves from fasting and from abstaining from eggs and meat during Lent?

A. No, but if we think we are not able to fast, we must ask for a dispensation from the pastor of our parish and never fail to do so, no matter the reason.

Q. Must we wait until we are twenty-one to begin fasting during Lent?

A. No, we may start fasting before reaching this age so as to be more accustomed to the practice when we are required to do so.

Q. What should children and those with legitimate dispensations do during Lent in place of fasting to make reparation for their sins?

A. They should do four things: 1) pray to God more often and longer than they usually do, 2) think often of their sins and prepare themselves to make a good Confession, 3) sacrifice something at meals and give alms to poor people, and 4) be modest in church, work assiduously at school, and avoid playing and amusing themselves as they do at other times.

Lesson 7—Passiontide and Holy Week

Q. What is Passiontide?
A. Passiontide is a season consecrated by the Church to honor the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. How long does Passiontide last?
A. It comprises the last two weeks of Lent.
Q. During these last two weeks of Lent, how does the Church honor the Passion, that is, the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. She does so in two ways: 1) by the antiphons and the responses of the Divine Office, and 2) by the Gospel passages read during this time at Mass, which tell of the insults and torments the Jews inflicted on our Lord.
Q. Why does the Church honor the Passion of our Lord during the last two weeks of Lent?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to teach Christians that they receive the benefit of our Lord's merits when they do penance and fast during Lent, and 2) to remind them that during these two weeks they should make every effort to apply his merits to themselves.
Q. What should we do during Passiontide to enter into the Church's spirit?
A. We should do four things: 1) live a more secluded life and pray more fervently, 2) meditate continually on the Passion and the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, 3) increase our penitential practices and strive especially to mortify ourselves, and 4) prepare ourselves to make a good Confession and Communion by examining our conscience.
Q. What do we call the last week of Lent?
A. We call it Holy Week, Painful Week, or Great Week.
Q. Why do we call this last week of Lent Holy Week?
A. There are four reasons: 1) the sacred mysteries that took place and that the Church honors and celebrates during this week, 2) the mystery of our Lord's Passion and death, which the Church honors and celebrates during these holy days as the means for our salvation, 3) the graces we receive from God more abundantly during this week than at any other time for preparing ourselves through Lenten penance to celebrate worthily the sacred mysteries to be commemorated and to make a good Confession and Communion, and 4) the Church's intention that we devote ourselves entirely to the service of God and to the exercises of piety so that we may sanctify the week by our holy actions and the sacred rites we attend.

Q. Why is the last week of Lent called Painful Week?
A. There are two reasons: 1) the pain and suffering that Jesus endured during this week, and 2) the Church's intention that Christians increase the austerity of their penances during this week.
Q. Why is the last week of Lent called Great Week?
A. There are two reasons: 1) the great mysteries that took place during this week, and 2) the lengthy prayers and offices that take place in church during this week.
Q. How did Christians in the early centuries observe Holy Week?
A. They ate only bread and water during this week, and many of them spent two, three, or four days—or even the entire week—without eating anything until Easter.
Q. What should we do to observe Holy Week properly?
A. We should do nine things: 1) fast even more strictly than we have been during Lent, 2) participate in all the Church's offices and services with great piety and devotion, 3) deprive ourselves of all recreation, diversions, and pleasures, 4) live in mourning, sadness, and tears because of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5) out of sorrow for the death of our Lord, refrain from speaking uselessly, joking, or laughing, 6) remain in deep recollection and keep strict vigilance over all our thoughts, words, and actions so as not to do the least thing disagreeable to God, 7) reflect throughout this week on the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8) refrain from anything that might distract us from these reflections, and 9) for this purpose avoid as much as possible any sort of social gathering and conversation with others.

Lesson 8—The paschal season

Q. What is the paschal season?
A. The paschal season is the time between Easter Sunday and the Ascension, when the Church honors the mystery of our Lord's Resurrection and his appearances.
Q. How many times did our Lord appear between his Resurrection and his Ascension?
A. He appeared ten times: 1) to Saint Mary Magdalene, 2) to the holy women who ministered to him during his earthly life, 3) to Saint Peter, 4) to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, 5) to the Apostles gathered in a large room, 6) to Saint James, 7) to all the Apostles in particular, 8) once to five hundred disciples at the same time, 9) to the Apostles while they were fishing, and 10) to a great number of Apostles and disciples on the day of his Ascension.

Q. What did our Lord Jesus Christ do on earth during the forty days between his Resurrection and his Ascension, especially when he appeared to his holy Apostles and disciples?

A. He did six things: 1) he proved to the Apostles the reality of his Resurrection; 2) he established his Church by appointing the Apostles as its pastors and ministers; 3) he commissioned them to establish the Church through the preaching of the Gospel; 4) he imparted to them his authority, power, and Spirit to instruct, baptize, and forgive sins; 5) he ordered them to teach the people his holy commandments and his will; 6) he revealed to them the happiness of heaven and the means of attaining it.

Q. How long does the paschal season last?

A. It lasts for fifty days from Easter to Pentecost.

Q. What does the paschal season signify?

A. It signifies and prefigures an eternal life free from suffering and sin, just as Lent signifies the present life, which is full of temptations, sorrows, and afflictions.

Q. What particular observances does the Church maintain during paschal time?

A. The Church observes three special practices during this time: 1) she prohibits fasting during this holy time, a universal custom that has always been observed in the Church; 2) she offers public prayers in a standing position; 3) we frequently sing *Alleluia,* the song of joy that means *praise God,* in the offices and at the end of the responses, antiphons, and versicles.

Q. Why is there no fasting in the Church during paschal time?

A. There are two reasons: 1) to rejoice in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and 2) to show that all the suffering and affliction of this present life will be banished in the eternal life.

Q. Why do we pray standing rather than kneeling in the Church during paschal time?

A. There are three reasons: 1) to show that Christians should have entirely given up sin and strive during this time only for the glorious resurrection that awaits them, 2) to direct all their thoughts and intentions only to heaven, in union with our Lord Jesus Christ, and 3) to show that we will no longer need to lament over our sins in eternal life, which is prefigured by paschal time, for we will never again commit any.

Q. Why do we frequently and in some places almost always repeat the chant "Alleluia" during paschal time?

A. There are three reasons: 1) to note that the Church wants the faithful to devote themselves during this time only to praising God and Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, 2) to have us understand

that in heaven all we will do is bless God and sing and proclaim his praise, and 3) to remind us often during this time of the unspeakable joy and eternal happiness we will have in heaven.

Q. What should we do to observe paschal time in the spirit of the Church?

A. We should do five things: 1) reflect often on the mystery of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2) thank our Lord for revealing the reality of his Resurrection to his Apostles and convincing them of it, 3) think often of eternal life, 4) long for the sovereign bliss to be enjoyed in heaven, and 5) suffer the pains, crosses, afflictions, humiliations, and other evils of this life in expectation of the eternal happiness that God reserves in the other life as consolation for all the passing ills and sufferings of this one.

Lesson 9—The time from the Ascension until Pentecost

Q. What did the holy Apostles do from our Lord's Ascension until Pentecost?

A. They prepared themselves to receive the Holy Spirit by retreating from the world and continuously praying for ten days.

Q. What should we do during these ten days from the Ascension until Pentecost?

A. We should prepare ourselves as the holy Apostles did to receive the Holy Spirit.

Q. What should we do during these ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost to prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit?

A. We should do seven things: 1) withdraw more than ever from socializing, 2) especially avoid associating with worldly and free-thinking people, 3) turn away from the pleasures of the world, 4) commit no voluntary sin during this sacred time, 5) attach ourselves only to God and what belongs to his holy love, 6) pray often, at length, and with great fervor, and 7) long for the coming of the Holy Spirit into our heart.

Lesson 10—The solemn celebration of Saint Mark's feast and Rogation Days

Q. What do we call the solemn observance of Saint Mark's feast?

A. We call it the Great Litanies.

Q. What does the word *litanies* mean?

A. It means *prayers,* and the Great Litanies refer to the great, or lengthy, prayers.

Q. What type of prayer in the Church is a litany?

A. A litany is a prayer the Church uses to invoke the saints by naming them one after another, asking them to help her and to intercede with God for the special favors she is requesting.
Q. Why do we call the solemn observance on Saint Mark's feast the Great Litanies?
A. On this day the Church holds a long procession during which we customarily recite the very lengthy Litany of the Saints.
Q. Who instituted the procession in church on Saint Mark's feast?
A. It is thought that Pope Saint Gregory the Great instituted it and also required that we abstain from meat and recite extra prayers on this day.
Q. Why did Pope Saint Gregory institute a procession and special prayers on Saint Mark's feast?
A. In Rome during his pontificate, many people died from a pestilence caused by serpents.
Q. Why did the Church continue the practice of special prayers on Saint Mark's feast?
A. It is to ask God to bless the earth's harvests, especially through the intercession of this great saint, and to show the trust we have always had in his merits in the Church.
Q. Why do we abstain on Saint Mark's feast?
A. It is to join mortification to prayer.
Q. Why is fasting not required on Saint Mark's feast?
A. This feast always occurs during the paschal season, when the Church prohibits fasting.
Q. What should we do to celebrate Saint Mark's feast in the spirit of the Church's solemn festivities?
A. We should do three things: 1) make sure that we are in the state of grace before joining the procession, 2) participate in the procession and the public prayers in church in a spirit of penance and with a contrite heart, and 3) spend the day in seclusion, prayer, and penance.
Q. What do we call the solemn observances of the three days preceding the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. We call these days Rogation Days, or the Small Litanies.
Q. What does the word *rogation* mean?
A. Rogation means *prayer*.
Q. Why do we give the name Rogation to the three days preceding the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. These are days of special and solemn prayers in the Church.
Q. Why do we call the Rogation Days litanies?
A. On these three days, we hold processions in churches during which we chant the Litany of the Saints to ask the saints for their

intercession with God for the special favors that the Church requests on these holy days.

Q. Why do we call the Rogation Days the Small, or Minor, Litanies?

A. We call them the Minor Litanies because they are similar to the procession and litanies held on Saint Mark's feast, except that they are shorter.

Q. Who instituted the processions and other observances of the Rogation Days in the Church?

A. Saint Mamertus, bishop of Vienne, instituted them.

Q. Why did Saint Mamertus institute the solemn processions of Rogation Days?

A. For a whole year during his episcopacy, the city of Vienne suffered earthquakes and dreadful incursions of wild beasts, which were heard howling during the night.

Q. Why did the Church prescribe the continuation of these special prayers and processions on the three Rogation Days?

A. There are three reasons: 1) to appease God's anger against us because of our sins, 2) to implore God's help for the needs of the Church, and 3) to ask God to preserve the fruits of the earth that are vulnerable to damage from bad weather at this season.

Q. How do these processions help appease God's anger?

A. In the prayers she recites and chants, the Church tries above all to encourage Christians to ask God's pardon for their sins, to turn away from them, and to do penance for them, hoping that these repeated public petitions will draw down God's mercy on his Church, especially on sinners.

Q. Why does the Church especially urge the faithful in the Rogation processions to ask God's pardon for their sins, to turn away from them, and to do penance for them?

A. Because sin is the cause of every evil suffered in this life, renouncing sin is the principal means of deliverance by God from woes, calamities, and public misfortunes and of drawing down God's blessings on the faithful and on the fruits of the earth.

Q. Why do we go from church to church in Rogation processions?

A. We do so to find more intercessors with God wherever we can.

Q. Why do we observe abstinence on these three days?

A. We do so to join mortification with prayer.

Q. Why do we refrain from fasting on Rogation Days?

A. The Church prohibits fasting during the paschal season, the time when these days always occur.

Q. Should we attend the prayers and processions on Rogation Days?

A. Yes, we should, and in the past the faithful took time off from work to participate in these rites.

Q. Why do so few persons take part in Rogation Day processions nowadays?
A. There are two reasons: 1) few Christians are truly pious and religious; 2) most people care very little about turning to God in their needs.
Q. What motives should we have for participating in the processions on Saint Mark's feast and the Rogation Days?
A. We should have two motives in particular: 1) deep feelings of repentance and regret for our sins, and 2) fervent prayers to God for all the needs of the Church.
Q. What should we do to observe the three Rogation Days in the spirit of the Church?
A. We should have the following three objectives: 1) remain in seclusion and prayer, 2) do only what leads us to God, and 3) work in a spirit of penance for our sins and with the intention of drawing down God's mercy on his Church.

Lesson 11—Ember Days

Q. What are Ember Days?
A. Ember Days are the days the Church dedicates to prayer and fasting for public necessities in each of the four seasons of the year.
Q. Which days does the Church dedicate to prayer and fasting for public necessities in each of the four seasons of the year?
A. They are Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday in the first week of Lent, in the octave of Pentecost, in the week following the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and in the third week of Advent.
Q. Did the Church institute the Ember Days a long time ago?
A. Yes, the custom is a very ancient one believed to date from the time of the Apostles.
Q. What led the Apostles to establish the fasts and prayers of the Ember Days?
A. They were following the practice under the Old Law of fasting at four different seasons of the year.
Q. Why did the Church prescribe fasting on the annual Ember Days?
A. There are eight reasons: 1) to sanctify the four seasons of the year by religious rites and penance, 2) to draw down God's mercy on the faithful throughout the year, 3) to remind them of their duty to do penance at all times, 4) to renew their spirit of piety and pursuit of virtue, 5) to protect them from the negligence that easily occurs in serving God, 6) to receive God's help in their struggle against demons, 7) to provide them with an occasion to think of the happiness and bliss of heaven, and 8) to ask God for

good priests and clerics to govern the Church and to draw down the strength and power of the Holy Spirit on those who will be ordained on each Ember Saturday.

Q. How does the Church draw down God's mercy on the faithful through fasting on Ember Days?

A. Through fasting we more easily receive full remission of our sins, especially when the whole Church participates in praying for this.

Q. Why should we join prayer to fasting on Ember Days?

A. Prayer by someone fasting is agreeable to God and terrible to the demon.

Q. Why were Ember Days chosen for fasting and praying for the entire Church rather than other days?

A. There are two reasons: 1) to consecrate each season and portion of the year to God, and 2) to invite all the faithful to pray and fast for the priests and other ministers of the Church who are ordained on Ember Saturday.

Q. How are all the seasons of the year consecrated to God by the Ember Days?

A. The Ember Days come at the end of each season: the Ember Days of Pentecost are at the end of spring; those of September, at the end of summer; those of December, at the end of autumn, and those of Lent, at the end of winter.

Q. For what special reason did the Church institute the Pentecost Ember Days?

A. It is to make amends for the faults we may have committed by not fasting during Easter time and to ask God to preserve in us the graces received at Pentecost.

Q. For what special reason did the Church institute the September Ember Days?

A. There are five reasons: 1) to remind the faithful that God gives the fruits of the earth and distributes them as and to whom he wishes, 2) to prevent the faithful from fixing their joy and security on such goods, 3) to make them remember the fragility and nothingness of temporal goods, 4) to urge them to use these goods with reserve and moderation, and 5) to ask God for the graces they need to make proper use of them.

Q. For what special reason did the Church institute the December Ember Days?

A. It is to thank God for the harvest of all the fruits of the earth.

Q. Why does the Church ordain priests and other ministers of the Church on Ember Saturday?

A. It is to follow the example of the holy Apostles, who ordained Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas at a time of fasting and prayer.

Q. Why do we fast and pray for the whole Church when ordinations take place?
A. The greatest need of the Church is to have good clerics who can govern the Church capably and inspire her by their virtues.
Q. Why is the good selection of priests and other ministers of the Church her greatest need?
A. The salvation or the damnation of the people depends on the good or the evil conduct of the priests who guide them.
Q. How did the early Church observe the three Ember Days?
A. The early Church observed the following three practices: 1) all the faithful took time off from their ordinary occupations to attend church; 2) they spent nearly all day in church grieving for their sins, asking for God's mercy, presenting him with the various needs of the Church, and listening to instructions; 3) they kept vigil on Ember Saturday and spent nearly the entire night in prayer.
Q. What should we do to sanctify the Ember Day fast and make it agreeable to God?
A. We should do four things: 1) fast with a lively faith and true devotion, 2) chasten our mind and body by sincere and continual sorrow for our sins, 3) fast in mind as well as in body by mortifying our passions, and 4) deprive ourselves of sensual pleasures by preferring the delights of heaven to those of earth.
Q. What must we do to observe Ember Days in the Church's spirit?
A. We need to do five things: 1) cleanse our conscience by the previous Sunday, or at the latest, the previous Tuesday, so that we can receive along with the whole Church what we ask of God during this sacred time, 2) abstain from eating meat and fast on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday if we are twenty-one years old, 3) pray in church at great length on these days, 4) beg God's pardon for the sins we have committed during the previous three months, and 5) spend these holy days in prayer and good works, asking God especially for good priests and clerics.

Lesson 12—Vigils

Q. What are the eves, or vigils, of feast days?
A. They are the days the Church consecrates to prayer, fasting, and penance to prepare Christians for her principal and most solemn feasts.
Q. Why do we call the eve of a feast a *vigil?*
A. In the early Church, the night preceding these holy days was spent in part or entirely in prayer in the churches.

Q. On which eves did Christians spend part of or the whole night in church praying to God?
A. The eve of the most solemn feasts, such as Easter, Pentecost, Christmas, and the Epiphany, was spent in this way.
Q. Which of these vigils was the most famous and longest one?
A. It was the vigil of Easter, which lasted until daybreak.
Q. What rites did the Church celebrate during the Easter vigil?
A. After gathering in church on Holy Saturday evening, the faithful began by reading the Law and the Prophets and singing psalms. Next, they blessed the Easter candle and the water used for Baptism and then baptized the catechumens. Then they read and explained the Gospel, celebrated Mass, and received Communion.
Q. Do we still observe the vigils of feasts at night in church?
A. No, the only vigil we still observe is Christmas Eve, for Christ was born at midnight.
Q. Why did the Church establish the solemn observance of vigils and require that we fast on these days?
A. There were six reasons: 1) to encourage Christians to purify themselves of sin and sinful tendencies through fasting and doing penance before the celebration of these feasts, 2) to make them more likely, having been purified, to receive God's abundant graces on the principal feasts, 3) to make them worthy to share in the spiritual joy that God gives to his servants on these solemn feasts, 4) to prepare them to celebrate worthily these holy days and great feasts, 5) to dispose the faithful to be renewed in piety and fervor on these important feast days, and 6) to prevent the faithful from falling into tepidity and negligence.
Q. How many different kinds of vigils are there?
A. There are two kinds; on some vigils we fast, and on others we do not.
Q. On which vigils, or eves, of feasts do we fast?
A. They are the following eleven vigils: 1) Easter, 2) Pentecost, 3) Christmas, 4) the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin, 5) All Saints, 6) Saint John the Baptist, 7) the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 8) Saint Andrew, 9) Saint Matthew, 10) Saints Simon and Jude, and 11) Saint Lawrence.
Q. Why do we fast on the eve of Saint Lawrence's feast?
A. There are three reasons: 1) the Church has always had great veneration and devotion for this great saint; 2) the faithful can prepare themselves by penance to celebrate the feast of a saint who suffered so much and with such great joy; 3) through his intercession they can place themselves in a state to gain control over their passions and to love suffering.

Q. On which vigils of feasts in the Church do we not fast?
A. They are the following seven vigils: 1) the Adoration of the Kings, 2) the Ascension of our Lord, and 3) the other Apostles, that is, the feasts of Saints Philip and James, 4) Saint James the Greater, 5) Saint Bartholomew, 6) Saint Thomas, and 7) Saint Matthias.
Q. Why do we not fast on the eve of the Adoration of the Kings and of the Ascension?
A. The first occurs between Christmas and the Purification, and the second, during the Easter season; these are times when we do not fast in the Church.
Q. Why do we not fast on the eve of the feasts of Saints Philip and James, Saint James the Greater, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Thomas, and Saint Matthias?
A. The Church is content with fasting on the eve of the feasts of six Apostles.

Lesson 13—Jubilees

Q. What is a Jubilee?
A. A Jubilee is a time especially consecrated to God when we pray, fast, and give alms to gain the indulgences the pope grants to all the faithful during this period.
Q. What indulgence does the pope grant to all the faithful during the Jubilee?
A. It is an extraordinary indulgence that remits the temporal punishment due for their sins.
Q. What is the difference between a plenary indulgence and a Jubilee indulgence?
A. A Jubilee indulgence is accompanied by a number of advantages not granted by a plenary indulgence.
Q. What privileges or advantages does the pope grant in proclaiming the Jubilee?
A. There are four main privileges: 1) the faithful can choose any confessor during the Jubilee, provided he is approved by the bishop; 2) all approved confessors during this time can grant absolution from crimes normally reserved to the pope, including those mentioned in the bull *In Coena Domini;* 3) they can also lift censures from their penitents, provided these persons have not been denounced or censured by a judge; 4) except during the Holy Year Jubilee, they can convert vows, except for the vows of religion and of chastity, into other good works of like value and usefulness, but they cannot grant dispensations from vows.

Q. What do we mean by the word *Jubilee?*
A. We mean remission, full rest, and superabundant joy.
Q. What else do we call the Jubilee year?
A. We also call it a Holy Year, a year of grace, of mercy, of peace, of remission, of reconciliation, of indulgences, of general pardon, of salvation, and a year of the Lord.
Q. Why do we call the Jubilee year a Holy Year?
A. During the holy time of Jubilee, we can be entirely freed not only of the guilt of our sins but also of the punishment due for them and therefore be sanctified by a bounteous application of the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ and the saints, which we call the Church's treasury.
Q. Why do we call this year a year of grace and mercy?
A. During this time God bestows his graces abundantly and shows mercy to all who fulfill the Jubilee.
Q. Why do we call this year a year of peace, remission, and reconciliation?
A. There are three reasons: 1) God remits for sinners the punishment due to their sins; 2) they resume being at peace with God; 3) they are entirely reconciled with God through the power of the Jubilee.
Q. Why do we say it is a year of indulgences and general pardon?
A. God pardons all sins and the punishment due for them to everyone who fulfills the Jubilee.
Q. Why do we say that it is a year of the Lord and also a year of salvation?
A. Just as every Sunday is called the Lord's day because it is consecrated to the worship of God, so too is the Jubilee year called a year of the Lord, and because God offers us in this year extraordinary means of being saved, it is called a year of salvation.
Q. Is the Jubilee an ancient practice of the Church?
A. Yes, our Lord Jesus Christ gave Saint Peter and his successors the power to proclaim it.
Q. How did our Lord give Saint Peter and his successors the power to proclaim the Jubilee?
A. It was when he told Saint Peter that he was giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven and that whatever sins he remitted on earth would be remitted in heaven.
Q. Who proclaimed the first Jubilee to the world?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ did, according to the bull of Clement VIII.
Q. How many kinds of Jubilee are there?
A. There are three kinds: 1) the Holy Year Jubilee, granted by the pope every twenty-five years, 2) the special Jubilee, granted im-

mediately after the election of each pope, and 3) Jubilees occasionally granted by the pope for urgent needs of the Church.

Q. For what purpose was the Holy Year Jubilee instituted?

A. It was to stir up the piety of the faithful and to urge them to go to Rome to visit the churches of Saints Peter and Paul.

Q. Which pope instituted the universal Jubilee of the Holy Year?

A. Pope Boniface VIII decreed the first Holy Year Jubilee in 1300 and directed that it should be granted every one hundred years.

Q. Since the first Holy Year Jubilee was granted, has one occurred only every one hundred years?

A. Not once was there one hundred years before granting it; for some time the interval was every fifty years; presently the interval is every twenty-five years, as has been the case since 1450.

Q. Which pope decreed that the Holy Year Jubilee should be granted every fifty years?

A. Clement VI decreed this when he proclaimed the Jubilee in 1350.

Q. For how long was the Jubilee granted every fifty years?

A. It was granted at this interval for 150 years, from 1300 until 1450.

Q. Which pope decreed that the Holy Year Jubilee should be granted every twenty-five years?

A. Pope Paul II decreed this in 1470 because the life expectancy after childhood for most people was so short that few could gain the Jubilee if it occurred only every fifty years.

Q. Why do popes customarily grant special Jubilees that do not coincide with the Holy Years?

A. There are four particular reasons: 1) to ask God on the occasion of the pope's election for the grace needed to govern the Church wisely, 2) to ask God for the grace to resist the enemies of the Church, 3) to ask God for peace among Christian rulers, and 4) for other public needs such as famine, pestilence, or epidemics.

Q. How long does a Holy Year Jubilee last in Rome?

A. It lasts a full year.

Q. Why does the Holy Year Jubilee last a whole year in Rome?

A. It is so that people from all nations can easily take the time to visit Rome during this year.

Q. What must we do in Rome to fulfill the Holy Year Jubilee?

A. We must visit the churches of Rome, particularly those of Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint John Lateran, and Saint Mary Major, during an interval of fifteen days.

Q. Are some people dispensed from going to Rome during the Holy Year to receive the Jubilee indulgence?

A. Yes, kings, princes, hermits, cloistered nuns, those desiring to go to Rome but hindered from doing so by illness or other obstacle,

the aged, the sick, and prisoners are dispensed from the requirement of going to Rome, but they can still receive the Holy Year Jubilee indulgence, according to the bull of Pope Alexander VI.

Q. Does anyone else fulfill the Holy Year Jubilee besides those who visit Rome and those the bull dispenses from going there?

A. Through his kindness and as a special favor, the pope usually grants an extension of the Jubilee in the following year for all the kingdoms and countries in Christendom.

Q. How long is the extended Jubilee that allows the people of Christian countries to fulfill the Holy Year Jubilee?

A. It usually lasts for two months.

Q. What must we in Christian kingdoms and countries do to fulfill the Holy Year Jubilee when the pope grants it in the year after the Holy Year?

A. The pope requires the faithful to visit the churches designated in the bull or in the bishop's pastoral letter, to do so as often as the pope or the bishop mandates, to pray to God for the needs of the Church, and to receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist, but they are not required to fast or to give alms.

Q. May we visit the churches, pray there, and do whatever is prescribed for fulfilling the Jubilee on any of the days during the two-month extension of the Holy Year?

A. Yes, we can do this.

Q. How long do the Jubilees last, whether at Rome or elsewhere, that are not connected with a Holy Year?

A. They last for two weeks.

Q. What does the pope ask Christians, whether in Rome or elsewhere, to do to fulfill a Jubilee not connected with a Holy Year?

A. The papal bull ordinarily requires them to do five things, all within the same week: 1) fast for three days, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 2) give alms, 3) visit churches, 4) pray to God in each church they visit for the needs of the Church and the intentions of the Holy Father, whether or not they are expressly mentioned in the bull, and 5) go to Confession and receive Communion.

Q. Would we fulfill the Jubilee if we failed to do all the exercises and practices of piety within a given week?

A. No, we would not.

Q. To fulfill the Jubilee, is it absolutely necessary to fast and to visit the designated churches?

A. No, confessors can dispense anyone they judge unable to fulfill either requirement.

Q. Is it absolutely necessary to pray, to go to Confession, and to receive Communion to receive the indulgence?

A. Yes, these three requirements are absolutely necessary.
Q. What prayers must we recite to fulfill the Jubilee?
A. We must recite the prayers prescribed in the bull, usually the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria* five times in each church we visit.
Q. Is it absolutely necessary to give alms to fulfill the Jubilee?
A. Yes, poor people are also obliged to do so, although even the smallest coin would be enough.
Q. Can confessors extend the time of the Jubilee for their penitents?
A. Yes, they can extend it 1) for those in their judgment who are not well disposed to receive absolution, and 2) for the sick, prisoners, travelers, and those whom they judge to be legitimately hindered from fulfilling the requirements.
Q. What spiritual benefits do the faithful receive from the Jubilee?
A. They receive three kinds: 1) the faithful are delivered from slavery to the devil and to sin; 2) the temporal punishment due for their sins is remitted; 3) they recover God's grace and all the merits they had previously acquired.
Q. What should motivate us to desire to fulfill the Jubilee?
A. There are six principal motives: 1) God's great goodness that offers us an easy means of satisfying his justice, 2) the remission we obtain in the Jubilee of the severe penalties due for our sins that we cannot escape either in this world or in the next, 3) the ease during this time of applying to ourselves the infinite merits of our Lord and the superabundant sufferings of the saints, 4) our obligation to pray with all the faithful for all the needs of the Church, 5) the uncertainty of ever again being able to fulfill the Jubilee if we miss this occasion, and 6) the help we receive from all the prayers and good works during this time, which can significantly aid our conversion more than at any other time.
Q. What intentions should those have who wish to fulfill the Jubilee?
A. They should especially have four: 1) to be entirely converted to God, 2) to make a sincere commitment to satisfy God for their sins, 3) to be in the state of grace, hence free from all mortal sins and firmly determined not to commit any in the future, and 4) to do whatever is prescribed by the bull.
Q. Do those who do all that the bull prescribes fulfill the Jubilee?
A. No, all do not turn to God sincerely and renounce their sins entirely, without which they cannot fulfill the Jubilee.
Q. What signs show that we have fulfilled the Jubilee?
A. There are five signs as follows: 1) when we have no desire to sin anymore, 2) when we keep away from all occasions of sin, 3) when we have corrected our evil habits, 4) when we firmly and resolutely determine to improve our life and actually do so by

changing our conduct, and 5) when we are ready to do penance for our sins.

Q. Are those who fulfill the Jubilee freed from doing penance for their sins?

A. No, to fulfill the Jubilee we must perform some of the penance due for our sins and be sincerely willing to do more if we have the time and the strength.

Treatise 4[7]

The Different Kinds of Feasts Instituted by the Church to Honor God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Saints

Q. What is the fourth means the Church uses to encourage Christians to offer God exterior and public worship?

A. It consists of observing a large number of feasts that the Church has instituted.

Q. What are the feasts that the Church has instituted?

A. They are days entirely consecrated to God and in honor of the saints on which Christians offer exterior, public, and solemn worship to God in union with Jesus Christ, their head, and the saints whose feast they celebrate.

Q. How do the feasts instituted by the Church help us offer God exterior, public, and solemn worship?

A. It is by the solemn celebration of the divine services in churches on these holy days by the assembled faithful gathered to praise God and honor the saint whose feast is celebrated.

Q. How many kinds of feasts has the Church instituted?

A. There are four kinds: 1) feasts solely intended to honor God, 2) feasts of our Lord, 3) feasts of the Most Blessed Virgin, and 4) feasts of saints.

Q. Does the Church celebrate all these feasts with the same degree of solemnity?

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7. *The Duties of a Christian to God,* volume 3, treatise 4, *Œuvres Complètes,* 1160–1222; Cahiers lasalliens 22, 125–301.

A. Although we are equally required to celebrate all these feasts, some, such as those instituted solely to honor God or our Lord Jesus Christ, are the most solemnly celebrated because of their importance, and the feasts instituted to honor the Most Blessed Virgin are more solemnly celebrated than those of other saints.

Section 1. Feasts Instituted Solely to Honor God

Q. Which feasts are instituted solely to honor God?
A. They are the feast of the Most Holy Trinity and all Sundays.

Lesson 1—Sunday

Q. What is Sunday?
A. Sunday is the first day of the week and is especially consecrated to God.
Q. What does the word *Dimanche [Sunday]* mean?
A. It means *Lord's day*.
Q. Why is Sunday called the Lord's day?
A. It is entirely devoted to the service of God.
Q. Who instituted Sunday as a holy day?
A. The Apostles decided to replace the Jewish Sabbath with Sunday.
Q. What is the Jewish Sabbath?
A. It is the seventh day of the week, which God ordered the Jews to consecrate entirely to him and to refrain from doing any servile work.
Q. Why did the Apostles substitute Sunday for the Jewish Sabbath?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to honor our Lord Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead on that day, and 2) to consecrate a holy day to God other than the Jewish Sabbath.
Q. Should Christians have great respect for Sunday?
A. Yes, God set it apart for himself and commanded us to consecrate it entirely to him.
Q. How did the first Christians spend this holy day?
A. They gathered in a designated place where they spent almost the entire day in the following ways: 1) praying to God for the various needs of the Church, 2) reading from the Old and the New Testament of the Bible, 3) listening to instructions from their pastors, 4) singing psalms and sacred canticles, and 5) attending holy Mass and receiving Communion.
Q. Did the first Christians consider themselves obligated to spend Sunday as they did?

A. Yes, they considered themselves so firmly committed to doing so that they judged as enemies of God those who did not come to the public assemblies of the faithful or who behaved negligently while there.
Q. What must we do to sanctify Sunday properly?
A. We must do two things: 1) avoid manual labor, and 2) use this day to engage in doing holy actions intended only to honor God and sanctify our soul.
Q. What types of work must we give up to sanctify Sunday?
A. We must give up all types of work ordinarily performed by artisans and hired hands, but more especially gambling, dancing, plays, and above all, sin.
Q. Why should artisans and hired hands not work on Sunday?
A. By not working they can more easily concentrate on what concerns the worship of God and their own salvation.
Q. Why must we avoid gambling, dancing, plays, and especially sin if we wish to sanctify Sunday?
A. Such activities profane Sunday instead of sanctifying it.
Q. What should we do on Sunday to honor God alone and to sanctify our soul?
A. We should engage in exercises of piety, works of charity, and other good deeds.

Lesson 2—Feast of the Most Holy Trinity

Q. What is the feast of the Most Holy Trinity?
A. It is the day instituted by the Church to honor God and the three divine persons of the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Q. Why did the Church institute the feast of the Most Holy Trinity?
A. It is to honor this sacred mystery with a special devotion.
Q. Why is the feast of the Most Holy Trinity celebrated above all other mysteries?
A. All the other mysteries and feasts refer to this great mystery, which is the culmination of all the Church's worship.
Q. Why did the Church choose this particular Sunday to celebrate the feast of the Most Holy Trinity?
A. There are two reasons: 1) this is the first of all Sundays, which are consecrated to God and to honor the Most Holy Trinity; 2) the first Sunday after Pentecost was also the first one the early Christians celebrated in honor of God and the Most Holy Trinity, after receiving the faith and being baptized by the Apostles on Pentecost or shortly thereafter.

Q. Why does the feast of the Most Holy Trinity not have an octave?
A. Every Sunday of the year is dedicated to the honor of God and the three persons of the Most Holy Trinity.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the Most Holy Trinity and to honor this mystery properly?
A. We must do five things: 1) make frequent acts of faith this day on the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, 2) offer acts of adoration for this great mystery from time to time, 3) repeat often the sign of the cross and *Gloria Patri* to mitigate as far as we can the insults to this holy mystery caused by the sins and blasphemies of the wicked, 4) thank God more than on other Sundays for his benefits, and 5) ask God's pardon for failing to sanctify Sundays properly and make reparation for these sins as much as we are able.
Q. How can we make reparation on the feast of the Most Holy Trinity for failing to sanctify Sunday properly?
A. We should do five things to make reparation: 1) attend the entire Divine Office in our parish with great piety, 2) go to Confession and Communion, 3) avoid socializing on this day, 4) spend time in our house of God and on activities that lead to God and honor the three divine persons, and 5) sing hymns in honor of the Most Holy Trinity.

Section 2. Feasts Instituted to Honor the Mysteries of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Q. What means has the Church chosen for offering exterior and public worship to our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. The Church has instituted feasts in honor of his holy mysteries to encourage Christians to have great devotion to him.
Q. How many feasts has the Church instituted to honor the sacred mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. The Church instituted twelve feasts to honor these mysteries: 1) the Incarnation, also called the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin, which honors our Lord's conception, 2) the Nativity of our Lord, also known as Christmas, 3) the Circumcision, 4) the Epiphany, also called the Adoration of the Kings, 5) the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple, also called the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin, 6) the Transfiguration of our Lord on Mount Tabor, 7) the entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, also called Palm Sunday, 8) the solemnity of the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, 9) the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, also called Easter, 10) the Ascension of our Lord to heaven, 11) the

Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, also called Pentecost, and 12) the feast of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

Lesson 1—Feast of the Incarnation of the Son of God

Q. What is the feast of the Incarnation, or the conception, of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. It is a feast the Church instituted to honor the day the Son of God, the second person of the Most Holy Trinity, became incarnate, that is, was conceived and became human by taking a body and a soul in the womb of his mother, the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. What do we usually call this feast of the Incarnation, that is, the conception, of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. We call it the feast of the Annunciation.
Q. Why do we call the feast of the Incarnation, or the conception, of our Lord Jesus Christ the Annunciation?
A. The archangel Gabriel came from God to announce the mystery of the Incarnation to the Most Blessed Virgin, assuring her that God had chosen her to be the mother of his Son, Jesus Christ, truly God and human.
Q. Is this feast of the Incarnation of our Lord and the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin a great one?
A. Yes, it is one of the greatest feasts in the Church because in becoming the Mother of God on this day, the Most Blessed Virgin received the greatest honor and grace of her life.
Q. Why do we honor the beginning of human redemption on the day of the Incarnation?
A. On this day the Son of God came into this world to save humanity and to deliver it from sin and the pains of hell.
Q. What happened in the mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. The archangel Saint Gabriel was sent by God to announce to the Most Blessed Virgin in Nazareth that she would conceive and give birth to a son who would be the Son of God and that she would name him Jesus.
Q. What was the Most Blessed Virgin doing when the archangel Saint Gabriel appeared to her?
A. The pious belief is that she was alone in her house at prayer.
Q. What happened to the Most Blessed Virgin when the archangel Saint Gabriel appeared to her?
A. Troubled, she considered herself unworthy of so great an honor.
Q. What virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin were evident in the Incarnation of the Son of God?

A. Three virtues are evident in this holy mystery: 1) great purity in not wishing to consent to become the Mother of God at the price of sacrificing her purity, 2) profound humility when she said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord," after being chosen the Mother of God, and 3) great faith and complete obedience when she told the angel, "Let it be done to me according to your word."
Q. What should we do to celebrate properly the feast of the Incarnation of the Son of God, or the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. We should do five things: 1) adore often on this holy day the Son of God becoming incarnate in the womb of the Most Blessed Virgin, 2) give the Most Blessed Virgin due honor because she received the status of Mother of God on this holy day, 3) thank God for the grace and love he showed to all humanity in sending his own Son to deliver them from sin and the pains of hell, 4) ask the Holy Spirit for a share in the graces he gave Jesus Christ at the moment of his conception to impart to all people, and 5) ask Jesus Christ, through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin, for interior and exterior purity and deep humility to prepare ourselves to receive him worthily in Holy Communion.
Q. What should we do to honor the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God and the maternity of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. We should do two things: 1) make frequent acts of faith in this sacred mystery, and 2) adore Jesus Christ and honor the Most Blessed Virgin in this mystery by reciting three times a day the prayer that begins with the word *Angelus.*

Lesson 2—Christmas

Q. What is the feast of Christmas?
A. Christmas is the feast of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and the solemnity of the day when the Most Blessed Virgin bore him into the world.
Q. What is the origin of the word *Noel?*
A. The word comes from *Emmanuel,* meaning *God with us,* for on this day God came as a child to live among us.
Q. Where was our Lord Jesus Christ born?
A. He was born in a poor stable in the city of Bethlehem.
Q. At what hour, day, and season was Jesus Christ born?
A. He was born at midnight on 25 December, during the winter.
Q. What were the circumstances of Jesus' birth?
A. He was born in the direst poverty and suffering.
Q. Who gave birth to Jesus?

A. He was born of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.
Q. Where did the Most Blessed Virgin lay the holy child Jesus after his birth?
A. She laid him in a manger.
Q. Did the Most Blessed Virgin lose her virginity in bringing Jesus Christ into the world?
A. No, she was a virgin before, during, and after giving birth.
Q. Was the Most Blessed Virgin living in Bethlehem, the place where she gave birth to our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. No, she was not living there, but she had journeyed there with Saint Joseph to be enrolled in the census mandated by Caesar Augustus.
Q. What was the Emperor's order?
A. He ordered all the people to go to their birthplace to be enrolled.
Q. Why did the Most Blessed Virgin bring forth her Son in a stable?
A. She was so poor that no one would provide her with lodging in Bethlehem.
Q. Why was our Lord willing to be born in such need and to such a poverty-stricken mother?
A. It was to teach us to be happy if we are poor and to love people who are poor.
Q. Why was our Lord Jesus Christ willing to suffer so many hardships at his birth?
A. It was to teach us that he came into the world only to suffer and that we should also be willing to suffer, following his example.
Q. Did anyone visit the infant Jesus after his birth?
A. Yes, the shepherds who kept watch over the sheep in the neighborhood of the stable came to adore the holy infant as soon as he was born.
Q. Who told the shepherds about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. An angel sent by God told them.
Q. Why are three Masses celebrated on Christmas: one at midnight, one at dawn, and one at the usual hour?
A. These Masses honor the triple birth of the Son of God: his eternal birth from his Father, his temporal birth to his mother in this world, and his spiritual birth in the souls of the righteous.
Q. What should we avoid doing if we wish to celebrate the feast of Christmas properly?
A. We should avoid imitating worldly people, who think only of preparing and eating a large meal right after midnight Mass.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of Christmas properly?
A. We should particularly do eight things: 1) prepare ourselves to make a good Communion by spending Christmas Eve in prayer,

2) at midnight Mass honor Jesus Christ born in a stable and laid in a manger, 3) at the second Mass adore Jesus Christ with the shepherds, 4) worship the infant as the Son of God begotten from all eternity and born in time of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, 5) have a tender devotion to the holy infant Jesus, 6) attend all the church services during the night and day with great piety, 7) occupy ourselves during all the divine services and the rest of the day with thanking God for giving us his own Son to save and deliver us from sin and the pains of hell and to teach us the way to heaven, and 8) ask God for the grace to cherish suffering and to endure cold and poverty willingly for love of him.

Lesson 3—The Circumcision of our Lord

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the Circumcision of our Lord.
Q. Why do we call this feast the Circumcision of our Lord?
A. On this feast we honor the day our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised and given the name Jesus.
Q. What does the word *circumcise* mean?
A. To circumcise means *to cut,* or *to cut off.*
Q. What is circumcision?
A. It is a sacrament of the Old Law that distinguished the Jews from other people and that some thought removed original sin.
Q. Why was this sacrament called circumcision?
A. This sacrament required cutting off a small piece of the flesh of little boys on the eighth day after their birth.
Q. Were all Jewish males required to be circumcised?
A. Yes, all of them were.
Q. Was Jesus Christ required to observe the law of circumcision?
A. No, this sacrament was intended only for sinners, and he never committed or incurred the least sin.
Q. Why was our Lord Jesus Christ willing to be circumcised even if the law did not apply to him?
A. There are four reasons: 1) to establish his identity as a Jew and a child of Abraham, 2) to show that he had come to bear the punishment due for our sins and to make reparation for them, 3) to shame those not wanting to suffer anything or do penance for their sins, and 4) to teach us by his example that we should observe the commandments of God in all things.
Q. Was a name given to the infant on the day of his circumcision?
A. Yes, he was named on this day.
Q. What name was given to our Lord when he was circumcised?

A. He was named Jesus.
Q. What does the name *Jesus* mean that was given to Our Lord on this day?
A. The name means *Savior,* or *Redeemer.*
Q. Who gave our Lord the name Jesus?
A. The Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph named him.
Q. Why did the Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph name the Son of God made man Jesus, or Savior?
A. There are two reasons: 1) the eternal Father through the archangel Saint Gabriel told the Most Blessed Virgin to do so; 2) our Lord came to save and redeem all humans from sin.
Q. Should we have great respect for and highly honor the name of Jesus?
A. Yes, for in this name, that is, in honor of this holy name, every knee must bend in heaven, on earth, and in hell.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast and honor the mystery of the Circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ properly?
A. We must circumcise our heart, that is, cut away all evil desires and unregulated affections from it, especially the attachment we naturally feel for sensual pleasures.
Q. What should we do to sanctify and consecrate this first day of the year and all the rest of the year to God?
A. We should do three things: 1) ask God's pardon for the sins committed during the previous year, 2) offer and consecrate the new year to him, and 3) ask for the grace to live this new year in his love and service.

Lesson 4—The Epiphany

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Epiphany and of the Adoration of the Kings.
Q. What does the word *Epiphany* mean?
A. It means *manifestation,* and on the day the kings adored Jesus Christ, he manifested himself to them and showed his glory in the three great mysteries that the Church celebrates and commemorates on this holy day.
Q. What three great mysteries does the Church commemorate on the day of the Adoration of the Kings?
A. They are 1) the adoration of the newborn infant Jesus Christ by the three Magi kings, 2) the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Jordan River by Saint John the Baptist, and 3) the first miracle of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he changed water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee.

Q. Which of the three feasts celebrated by the Church this day is the most important?
A. It is the Adoration of the Three Magi Kings.
Q. Why does the Church make the day of the Adoration of the Kings such a great feast?
A. This was the day when Gentiles and idolaters were first called to believe in Jesus Christ.
Q. How were Gentiles and idolaters called to faith in Jesus Christ on the day of the Adoration of the Kings?
A. When they adored our Lord as an infant, the three kings became the first among the Gentiles to receive the faith.
Q. Who were these holy kings who came to adore our Lord?
A. They were princes who were called Magi, that is, Wise Men.
Q. Where did these three kings come from when they traveled to adore Jesus?
A. They came from the East.
Q. Why did these three kings who adored our Lord Jesus Christ come to Judea?
A. They came solely to adore the King of Kings, who had just been born.
Q. How did the three Magi learn that Jesus Christ had been born and that he was the King of the Jews?
A. God made this known to them by a star that appeared to them and led them to the stable in Bethlehem.
Q. What did the Magi kings do when they arrived in Bethlehem?
A. When the star stood still above the stable where our Lord was lying, they went in and adored him.
Q. How did the Magi kings honor our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. They prostrated themselves before him and offered him gifts of the most precious things they had.
Q. What gifts did the Magi kings offer to our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. They offered him gold, myrrh, and incense.
Q. What did the gifts that the Magi kings offered to our Lord Jesus Christ signify?
A. The gold that the Magi kings presented to our Lord signifies that he is a king; the incense, that he is God, and the myrrh, that he is human.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the Adoration of the Kings properly?
A. We should do five things: 1) avoid the excesses and scandalous conduct the worldly indulge in on this day, which dishonors and ridicules God, 2) thank God for giving us the faith and making us Christians on this day, 3) ask God for the grace to preserve our

faith and to be guided only by its light, 4) spend the greater part of this holy day in church assisting at the divine services and receiving the sacraments, and 5) offer to our Lord on this day the gold of charity, the myrrh of suffering, and the incense of sincere and pure adoration.

Lesson 5—The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple and the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. She celebrates two great feasts and mysteries: 1) the Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple, and 2) the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. Why does the Church celebrate on the same day the feast of the Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple and the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. On this day the Most Blessed Virgin went to the Temple in Jerusalem to present Jesus Christ, her son, and to be purified.
Q. Why did the Most Blessed Virgin present Jesus Christ, her son, in the Temple?
A. It was to comply with the Jewish Law, which said that 1) every firstborn son must be presented in the Temple and consecrated to the service of God, and 2) this son would be dispensed from service in the Temple when the parents gave the priests five shekels, that is, about twenty *sols.*
Q. Why did the Most Blessed Virgin go to the Temple to be purified?
A. The Jewish Law prescribed that 1) a woman who gave birth to a son should stay in her home for forty days, or sixty days in the case of a daughter, and 2) after forty days she should go to the Temple and offer a sacrifice of a lamb and a pigeon, or if she is poor, two turtledoves.
Q. What did the Most Blessed Virgin offer for this sacrifice?
A. She claimed the privilege accorded to poor people and offered a sacrifice of two turtledoves.
Q. Why did the Jewish Law require parents to present their firstborn son in the Temple and consecrate him to the service of God?
A. It was to recall that God spared the firstborn of the Israelites when he delivered them from captivity in Egypt but slew the firstborn of the Egyptians.
Q. Why did the Jewish Law require that women be purified in the Temple after giving birth?
A. It was to emphasize that the birth of every human being is impure and accursed because of Adam's sin.

Q. Did the Most Blessed Virgin have to comply with the law of purification?
A. No, she was not obliged, for the birth of Jesus Christ was pure, and she remained a virgin.
Q. Did Jesus Christ have to comply with the law requiring that firstborn sons be presented to God in the Temple?
A. No, but he was willing to be presented there because he came into the world to offer himself to God for the sins of all humans.
Q. What unusual event took place in this mystery of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple and the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. When the Most Blessed Virgin was in the Temple, a holy old man named Simeon, to whom God had revealed that before dying he would see our Lord, came to her, took the infant in his arms, and recognizing him as God, uttered loud praise and blessings over him. A holy Prophetess named Anna, who was filled with the Holy Spirit, was also in the Temple and spoke of the divine infant to all who awaited the redemption of Israel.
Q. What did Simeon do while holding Jesus Christ in his arms?
A. He did two things: 1) he said that he no longer worried about dying after seeing the one who was the light of the world; 2) he foretold the contradictions that Jesus Christ would suffer and the sorrow they would cause the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. Why do we also call this feast Candlemas Day?
A. On this day the Church has created a solemn procession in which we carry blessed and lighted candles.
Q. Why do we carry lighted candles in procession on the feast of the Presentation of our Lord?
A. It is to honor Saint Simeon's words while he held our Lord in his arms that Jesus Christ is the light that has come into the world to enlighten the Gentiles.
Q. Why did the Church institute the ceremony of blessing candles and carrying them lighted in procession?
A. It was to show us that our Lord is the true light of the soul and that we should carry him in our heart as Simeon carried him in his arms.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin properly?
A. We should to do seven things: 1) prepare ourselves for it in advance by purifying our heart through Confession, 2) thank the eternal Father, as Saint Simeon did, for revealing his Son to us on this day, 3) thank our Lord for having offered himself for us to his

Father on this day, 4) periodically make acts of faith in this mystery, 5) offer at Mass our body and soul and all the thoughts, words, and actions of our life to our eternal Father in union with our Lord, asking for the grace to live in a Christian manner through the merits of his Son, 6) obey God's law and the maxims of the holy Gospel with total exactness, just as the Most Blessed Virgin did, and 7) following Saint Simeon's example, offer our life to God as a sacrifice and show him that all we desire is to possess Jesus Christ.

Q. Why does the feast of the Purification of our Lady have no octave?
A. It is to teach us that we should purify ourselves all through our life, not just for a certain number of days.

Lesson 6—The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. What is the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. It is a mystery in which Jesus Christ was transfigured in front of three of his Apostles.
Q. What does it mean to say that Jesus Christ was transfigured?
A. It means that his body was changed then.
Q. How did Jesus' body change when he was transfigured?
A. For a short time, his body appeared with the characteristics of a glorified body.
Q. Was this change in the appearance of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ at his Transfiguration a miraculous one?
A. The change was not a miracle; what was miraculous was that the brightness and other qualities of a glorified body did not constantly appear in his body.
Q. What took place in this mystery of the Transfiguration?
A. One day, Jesus Christ took three of his Apostles, Peter, James and John, ascended a high mountain, and while he was praying, he was transfigured in front of them.
Q. On what mountain did the Transfiguration of our Lord occur?
A. It is commonly believed that this happened on Mount Tabor.
Q. How was Jesus Christ transfigured?
A. Divine light streamed from him; his face became as brilliant as the sun, and his garments were as white as snow; it was thus he was transfigured.
Q. What happened while Jesus Christ was transfigured?
A. Moses and Elijah appeared with him in glory during this time, and while they talked with him about what was going to happen

in Jerusalem during his Passion and the exceeding love that he would show there, a luminous cloud surrounded them, and a voice came from it saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

Q. What did the three Apostles do during the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. As soon as they heard the voice, the three Apostles fell prostrate on the ground, terrified, and our Lord approached them, touched them, and told them to rise, but they saw no one but Jesus.

Q. What did Jesus Christ do after he had been transfigured?

A. He came down from the mountain with his three Apostles and told them not to speak of this vision until he had risen from the dead.

Q. Whose voice did they hear while our Lord was transfigured?

A. It was the voice of the eternal Father.

Q. Why did Jesus Christ will to be transfigured before his Passion?

A. There are two reasons: 1) to make the Apostles believe he was truly God, and 2) to show that all who follow him in his sufferings will share his glory in heaven.

Q. Why was Jesus Christ transfigured while praying?

A. It was to show us that when we pray, we become completely different than what we were.

Q. Why did Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus Christ during his Transfiguration?

A. It was to show that the just who lived before the coming of the Son of God and the saints who have lived since have received grace and salvation from him.

Q. What should we do to celebrate this feast and honor the mystery of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ properly?

A. We should do four things: 1) adore the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, manifested on this day through his glorious body, 2) thank God for revealing to us in this mystery how splendid the glorified body will be after the last judgment, 3) ask God to change our heart and give us a love of solitude and prayer, and 4) ask God to enlighten us with the light of his grace and give us the glory of the saints in the next life.

Lesson 7—Palm Sunday and the entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem

Q. What solemnity does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?

A. She celebrates the solemnity of the entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, otherwise called Palm Sunday.

Q. Why do we call this feast Palm Sunday?
A. The children and the adults who accompanied Jesus Christ on his entry scattered palms and other branches on the road so as to honor our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. Why is this feast also called "Easter in bloom"?[8]
A. It is the first day on which we can fulfill the Church's Easter Communion obligation.
Q. What happened when our Lord Jesus Christ made his entry into Jerusalem?
A. This is what happened: six days before his Passion, Jesus sent for an ass and her colt, neither of which had yet been ridden, and he then solemnly entered the city of Jerusalem, riding on the ass and later on the colt.
Q. Was Jesus Christ well received when he entered Jerusalem?
A. Yes, he was received with applause and loud cries of joy.
Q. Who welcomed Jesus Christ when he entered Jerusalem?
A. The common people and children marched before him and welcomed him.
Q. What signs of respect did the people who marched before Jesus give him during his entry into Jerusalem?
A. They carried palm and olive branches and covered the roadway with greenery, while others honored him by laying down their garments before him.
Q. Why did Jesus choose to ride an ass and her colt when he triumphantly entered Jerusalem?
A. There are two reasons: 1) they serve as mounts for princes; 2) Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies that had predicted this.
Q. Why did Jesus have the ass and the colt brought to him without asking who owned them or getting permission to use them?
A. It was to show by his commands that he is the sovereign Lord of all things.
Q. Why did the disciples of Jesus Christ cover the ass and her colt with their garments?
A. It was to show that they recognized him as their King and the Lord of the universe.
Q. Why was Jesus willing to be honored by the children and the common people?
A. They were like him in their simplicity and humility.
Q. Why did only the common people of Jerusalem and not the important ones come out to honor Jesus when he entered the city?
A. The important people never recognized Jesus Christ, and they considered honoring him beneath their dignity.

8. *Pâques fleuries.*

Q. What did Jesus do when he approached Jerusalem?
A. He wept with compassion over the city and lamented its coming destruction.
Q. Why did Jesus weep over the city of Jerusalem when he approached it?
A. It was because of the sins committed in this city and the death he would suffer there in five more days.
Q. What should we do to honor and celebrate properly this mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem?
A. We should do four things: 1) adore the humility of our Lord Jesus Christ, who entered Jerusalem in triumph, mounted on an ass, 2) purify our heart in preparation for carrying the blessed palms in procession, 3) thank our Lord for giving us this example of despising the world's vanities and glory when he entered Jerusalem on an ass, accompanied by his disciples, who were poor fishermen, and receiving honor only from common people and children, and 4) ask for God's grace to overcome our evil inclinations.
Q. What should we do with the blessed palms after High Mass?
A. We should each bring a blessed palm home, keep it with respect, and use it only to sprinkle holy water; the one from the previous year should be brought back to the church.

Lesson 8—The solemnity of the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ

Q. What mystery does the Church commemorate on these holy days?
A. It is the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. What happened during the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. This is what happened: the Apostle Judas betrayed Jesus to the leaders of the Jews, who sent soldiers to arrest him. After the arrest, the soldiers brought him to Annas, then to Caiaphas, the High Priest, and later to Pilate at the Praetorium, who had him cruelly scourged, condemned him to die at the insistence of the leaders of the Jews, and handed him over to them to be crucified.
Q. On what day did Judas betray Jesus and deliver him into the hands of the Jews?
A. He did this on Holy Wednesday.
Q. How much was Judas paid for betraying Jesus?
A. He was paid thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave.
Q. What did Jesus Christ do after Judas betrayed him to the Jews?
A. On Thursday he shared Passover and the meal of the paschal lamb with his disciples.

Q. What is this ceremony of the paschal lamb?
A. It is a Jewish ceremony, according to God's instructions, that is observed each year on the evening of preparation for Passover, when each family eats a roasted lamb.
Q. What did Jesus do on Holy Thursday after eating the paschal lamb?
A. He sat at table and instituted the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine.
Q. What did our Lord Jesus Christ do on Holy Thursday after instituting the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist?
A. He went with his disciples outside the walls of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives.
Q. What did Jesus do when he arrived at the Mount of Olives?
A. He took Peter, James, and John and led them into a garden to pray to God.
Q. What happened to Jesus Christ while he was praying to God in the Garden of Olives?
A. Overcome with a deep agony and profound sadness, he fell face down on the ground and began to sweat drops of blood so abundantly that they trickled down to the earth.
Q. Why did Jesus Christ experience this overwhelming sadness in the Garden of Olives?
A. The cause was the sins of humanity for which he was about to suffer.
Q. Did Jesus Christ experience any kind of comfort during his spiritual ordeal and bodily sweating of blood?
A. Yes, an angel came to strengthen him at this time.
Q. What happened to Jesus after his profound agony in the Garden of Olives was over?
A. Judas immediately arrived with a group of men armed with swords and clubs to arrest Jesus.
Q. What sign did Judas tell the Jews he would use to identify Jesus, whom they did not know?
A. He said he would kiss him, which he did.
Q. What did the Apostles do when they saw this party of armed men coming to seize Jesus?
A. They all fled, except Saint Peter, who stayed with Jesus Christ.
Q. What did these armed men do once Judas had identified Jesus?
A. They seized him, bound him, and led him back to the city of Jerusalem, abusing and tormenting him on the way.
Q. Where did these armed men bring Jesus?
A. They brought him first to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, and then to Caiaphas, the High Priest, where he spent the rest of the night.

Q. On leaving the house of Caiaphas, where did these armed men who had seized Jesus take him?
A. They left Caiaphas' house early on Friday morning and brought him to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.
Q. What did Pilate do when the Jews brought Jesus before him as a criminal?
A. He did all he could to free him because he could not discover any crime that Jesus had committed, and then he sent him to Herod, king of Galilee.
Q. What did Herod do after Pilate sent Jesus Christ to him?
A. He had him robed in a white robe to mock him and then sent him back to Pilate.
Q. What did Pilate do after Herod sent Jesus back to him?
A. He again tried his best to set him free.
Q. Did Pilate free Jesus?
A. No, the Jews forced him to condemn Jesus to be scourged.
Q. How did the Jews force Pilate to scourge and then crucify Jesus?
A. They told him that he would be considered an enemy of Caesar if he freed Jesus, who had said that he is the King of the Jews.
Q. What other torments did the soldiers inflict on Jesus after scourging him?
A. They abused him in four ways: 1) they threw an old scarlet mantle on his shoulders and placed a crown of thorns on his head; 2) they thrust a thorny branch into his hands that tore them; 3) they then insulted him, saying, "Hail! King of the Jews!" 4) they slapped him and beat the crown of thorns into his head.
Q. What did Pilate do when he saw Jesus covered in his own blood and with a crown of thorns on his head and a reed in his hand?
A. In an attempt to move the crowd to compassion and persuade them to free Jesus, Pilate presented him to the Jews in this state and said to them, "Behold the man!"
Q. What did the Jews do when Pilate presented Jesus to them, saying, "Behold the man!"?
A. They cried out that he should crucify Jesus and that if he did not do so, they would denounce him to Caesar.
Q. What did Pilate do when the Jews threatened to denounce him to Caesar unless he condemned Jesus Christ to death?
A. Out of fear of being denounced, Pilate condemned Jesus to be crucified.
Q. What did the Jews do after Pilate condemned Jesus to be crucified?
A. They gave Jesus a very heavy cross and made him carry it to Mount Calvary.

Q. What did the Jews do once Jesus Christ reached Mount Calvary?
A. They stripped him and nailed him to the cross between two thieves.
Q. How long was Jesus Christ on the cross?
A. He was on it for three hours before he died.
Q. At what time did Jesus die?
A. He died at three o'clock in the afternoon.
Q. What did they do to Jesus Christ after he died?
A. One of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance, causing blood and water to flow out.
Q. What happened to Jesus Christ's body after his death on the cross?
A. Immediately after he died, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, both men of distinction who were secret disciples of Jesus Christ, asked Pilate for his body, and he gave it to them.
Q. What did Joseph and Nicodemus do with the body of Jesus Christ?
A. They took it down from the cross, wrapped it in a winding sheet with perfumes, and placed it in a new tomb hewn out of a rock.
Q. How long was the body of Jesus Christ in the tomb?
A. It remained there from Friday evening until about five o'clock the next Sunday morning, when our Lord rose from the dead and left the tomb.
Q. What happened to the soul of Jesus Christ while his body was in the tomb?
A. His soul descended to the subterranean region called limbo to free all who had died in the grace of God from the beginning of the world until the death of Jesus Christ.
Q. Was Jesus Christ's divinity separated from his body and soul after he died?
A. No, his divinity always remained united to both, as it had been since the moment of his conception.
Q. What should we do to observe these holy days properly and to honor the mystery of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. We should do six things: 1) devoutly attend *Tenebrae* and all the other services in our parish, 2) give our full attention to all the beautiful ceremonies taking place on these holy days, 3) venerate the cross with deep feelings of humility and compassion, reflecting on the sorrows and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, 4) make frequent acts of compassion, gratitude, trust, and love to our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered for our sins, 5) feel remorse for causing the death of our Lord Jesus Christ by our sins and for making the fruits of his Passion useless by abusing his grace, and 6) imitate the humility, obedience, patience, charity, and gentleness that our Lord Jesus Christ showed in his Passion.

Q. What will be the reward for those who devoutly attend the services held in their parish during these holy days?
A. They will share in the fruits of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, as did Saint John and the holy women who accompanied Jesus Christ in his sufferings.
Q. What will be the punishment for those making noise in church during *Tenebrae*, showing no piety in their participation, or playing in the streets during the sacred ceremonies of these days?
A. They will be punished like Judas, Caiaphas, Herod, and all the other Jews who caused Jesus Christ to suffer in his Passion and then crucified him.

Lesson 9—Easter

Q. What feast do we celebrate in the Church [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. We celebrate Easter, the greatest feast of the whole year.
Q. What feast do we celebrate on the two days following Easter?
A. These days are the continuation of Easter, which shows how important and excellent this feast is.
Q. What is the feast of Easter?
A. Easter commemorates the day Jesus Christ rose from the dead.
Q. What do we mean when we say "rise from the dead"?
A. We mean that a person comes back to life after dying.
Q. Who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead by his own power.
Q. How did Jesus Christ do this?
A. Because he is both God and human, his divinity reunited his body with his soul.
Q. How did the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ happen?
A. It happened this way: his body lay entombed since Friday evening; early Sunday morning, the soul of Jesus Christ returned from limbo and reunited itself with his body in the tomb; he then immediately came to life and emerged from the still-sealed tomb.
Q. Who made known the Resurrection of Jesus Christ?
A. An angel with a countenance as bright as lightning came and sat above the tomb and told Saint Mary Magdalene and the other holy women who had come to the tomb very early that morning that Jesus had risen from the dead and that they should go and bring this news to the Apostles.
Q. When Saint Mary Magdalene told the Apostles that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, what did they do?
A. Saint Peter and Saint John immediately ran to the tomb but found nothing there except the burial cloths.

Q. What does the word *Pasch* mean?
A. Pasch means *passage*.
Q. Why is the feast of Easter called the Pasch?
A. On this day the Israelites departed from the land of Egypt, where they were suffering greatly, to pass through the desert and enter the land God had promised them.
Q. Did the Jews celebrate this feast?
A. Yes, they celebrated it every year to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt, and each family was obliged on this feast to eat a roasted lamb with unleavened bread .
Q. Why do we still call this feast Passover although we no longer observe the Old Law?
A. It is to teach us three things: 1) that Jesus Christ passed from death to life on this day and can no longer die, 2) that we should also pass from sin to grace and never offend God again, and 3) that Christians are obliged each year to receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of unleavened bread, just as the Jews were obliged each year to eat a lamb with unleavened bread in memory of their departure from Egypt.
Q. Why does the Church celebrate the feast of Easter with so much solemnity?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to honor the mystery of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and 2) to oblige Christians to rise spiritually.
Q. What do we mean by saying "rise spiritually"?
A. We mean turning away from sin and coming back to the grace of God.
Q. How can we rise spiritually?
A. It is by frequently saying an act of contrition, going to Confession, and worthily receiving Communion.
Q. What signs show that we have risen spiritually?
A. The following six signs show this: 1) when we have a strong aversion to sin and avoid the occasions that lead to it, 2) when we shun worldly people and willingly associate with devout ones, 3) when we discuss God's word as Jesus Christ did with his disciples after his Resurrection, 4) when we scorn the world's vanities and pleasures and, according to Saint Paul, seek the things that are from above, 5) when we have a love for prayer and spiritual devotions, and 6) when we earnestly strive to practice virtue.

Lesson 10—The Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. What do we mean by the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. The Ascension commemorates the day when our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven.
Q. When did our Lord Jesus Christ ascend to heaven?
A. He ascended forty days after his Resurrection.
Q. Who was present when Jesus Christ ascended to heaven?
A. The Most Blessed Virgin, the holy Apostles, and all the other disciples were present when Jesus ascended.
Q. How did our Lord Jesus Christ ascend to heaven?
A. This is how it happened: he appeared to his Apostles and a large number of his disciples, ate with them, and then went with them to Bethany, where the Most Blessed Virgin, Saint Mary Magdalene, and the rest of the faithful had already gone. He then led them to the summit of the Mount of Olives, and after giving them his last instructions and blessing, he rose up to heaven while those present watched attentively and were awestruck by what they saw.
Q. Did our Lord Jesus Christ enter heaven alone?
A. No, he brought with him the souls of the saints who had died before him and gave them a share of the glory of paradise.
Q. Did our Lord Jesus Christ go up to heaven as God?
A. No, as a human, Jesus Christ, body and soul, rose up to heaven; as God he is everywhere.
Q. Why did our Lord Jesus Christ go up to heaven?
A. There are four reasons: 1) to enjoy the glory merited by his humanity after so much suffering, 2) to open heaven for us and to give us the hope of entering if we follow him, 3) to be our advocate, Mediator, and intercessor there with his Father, and 4) to send his Holy Spirit to his Apostles and the whole Church.
Q. Why do we say that our Lord is seated at the right hand of his Father in heaven?
A. We mean that Jesus Christ is equal in power and glory to his Father, not that his Father has a right or a left hand.
Q. Why do we have a solemn procession on the day of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. It reminds us that today our Lord Jesus Christ led his holy Mother, the holy Apostles, and the disciples to the Mount of Olives.
Q. How should we prepare ourselves for the feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. There are two ways: 1) by spending the three Rogation Days in prayer and penance, and 2) by receiving the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast and honor the mystery of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ properly?
A. We should do four things: 1) make frequent acts of faith in this sacred mystery, 2) rejoice with Jesus Christ and the entire Church over his Ascension to heaven, 3) detach ourselves from earthly things and desire and reflect only on heavenly things, and 4) imitate the crucified life of our Lord Jesus Christ so our body and soul may enjoy the glory prepared for them in heaven.

Lesson 11—Pentecost

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Pentecost.
Q. What feast does the Church celebrate on the two following days?
A. It is a continuation of the same feast.
Q. What does the word *Pentecost* mean?
A. This word means *the fiftieth day,* for we celebrate this feast fifty days after Easter, that is, after the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. What is the feast of Pentecost?
A. Pentecost solemnly commemorates the day when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles.
Q. Did the Jews also observe Pentecost under the Old Law?
A. Yes, they celebrated this feast in memory of Moses' giving the Law to the Israelites on Mount Sinai in the desert, fifty days after their deliverance from slavery in Egypt.
Q. How did the Holy Spirit descend on the Apostles?
A. It happened as follows: ten days after our Lord ascended to heaven, the Apostles and disciples were gathered in a large room in Jerusalem; suddenly, the Holy Spirit appeared and came down visibly on each one of them as tongues of fire.
Q. Was there any indication of the coming of the Holy Spirit before the tongues of fire appeared?
A. Yes, the Apostles heard a noise like a mighty wind that filled the entire building where they were.
Q. What were the holy Apostles doing where they had assembled?
A. They were in retreat and prayer, awaiting the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. On what day and at what hour did the Holy Spirit descend on the Apostles?

A. It was at nine o'clock on a Sunday morning.
Q. Who is the Holy Spirit, who came down on the Apostles?
A. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Most Holy Trinity, and because he is God, just like the Father and the Son, he is a pure spirit.
Q. How did the Holy Spirit appear visibly on earth on Pentecost day if he is God and a pure spirit?
A. He did not appear visibly on this day in his own nature, but he showed himself in a visible way, that is, as tongues of fire.
Q. Did the Holy Spirit ever appear visibly on earth before Pentecost?
A. He had also appeared visibly at the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the form of a dove and again at his Transfiguration in the form of a cloud.
Q. Why did the Holy Spirit appear visibly on Pentecost in the form of tongues of fire?
A. He came to prepare the Apostles to teach throughout the world by instructing them to preach the holy Gospel in every language.
Q. How is it that the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles if as God he is everywhere?
A. He did not actually descend on the Apostles but gave himself to them through the tongues of fire that appeared over them.
Q. What do we mean when we say the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles on Pentecost day?
A. We mean that the Holy Spirit gave the Apostles extraordinary graces on this day.
Q. Did the Father and the Son also come down on the Apostles on Pentecost day with the Holy Spirit?
A. Yes, the three Persons, being one God, share in whatever any one of them does.
Q. Then why do we say that the Holy Spirit, and not the Father and the Son, came down on the Apostles?
A. On that day the Apostles were filled with the grace and love of God, gifts commonly believed to be imparted by the Holy Spirit.
Q. What is the difference between the descent of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?
A. The Son of God descended to become human, whereas the Holy Spirit descended to pour out his grace on the Apostles and the whole Church but not to become human.
Q. Who sent the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles?
A. The Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, sent the Holy Spirit, as Jesus had promised.
Q. Is the Holy Spirit in any way subordinate to the Father and the Son because they sent him?

A. No, but we say that he was sent by the Father and the Son because he proceeds from them both.
Q. What effects did the Holy Spirit have on the Apostles?
A. There are three effects: 1) he enabled them to speak in all kinds of languages; 2) he helped them understand Holy Scripture; 3) he confirmed them in habitual grace and in the grace of their apostolic vocation.
Q. Why did our Lord Jesus Christ send his Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the Church?
A. It was to govern the Church so it might remain forever steadfast in his doctrine and the truths of the faith.
Q. Can the Holy Spirit come upon us as he came upon the Apostles?
A. Yes, he can, although he does so invisibly when he comes into our soul through the graces he gives us.
Q. What does the Holy Spirit do when he abides in a soul?
A. He gives it grace in four different ways: 1) he sanctifies it by habitual grace; 2) he guides it in its activity; 3) he strengthens it in its temptations; 4) he consoles it in its afflictions and sufferings.
Q. What should we do to prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit?
A. We should do two things: 1) keep our conscience pure and free of all sin by making a good Confession, and 2) pray more frequently than usual.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of Pentecost properly?
A. We should do six things: 1) attend the entire office chanted in the Church this day, 2) thank our Lord Jesus Christ for sending us his Holy Spirit, 3) try to renew within ourselves the grace of our Confirmation, 4) pray frequently to the Holy Spirit to fill us with his graces, 5) be attentive to and follow the holy inspirations he imparts to us, and 6) take care to keep the Holy Spirit in our heart by not committing any sin.

Lesson 12—The Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar.
Q. Why does the Church so solemnly celebrate this feast of the Most Blessed Sacrament?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to commemorate the day, the eve of his Passion, when our Lord Jesus Christ instituted this holy sacrament, and 2) to make amends for all the times heretics and unfaithful Christians offend and insult Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Q. What is the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar?
A. It is the Eucharist: the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ truly present under the appearances of bread and wine.
Q. Is the Most Blessed Sacrament simply blessed or sacred bread or a mere figure and resemblance of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. No, it is his true body, blood, soul, and divinity.
Q. Why do we say that our Lord Jesus Christ's soul and blood are present with his body in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar?
A. A body without a soul and blood is not a living body.
Q. What do we mean when we say that the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ is also present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar?
A. We mean that his divinity can never be separated from his body and his soul.
Q. Because our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Most Blessed Sacrament on the eve of the Passion, why does the Church wait until this day to celebrate this feast?
A. There are two reasons: 1) on the eve of the Passion, Holy Thursday, the Church is preoccupied with the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; 2) the early Christians began receiving the Holy Eucharist at this time, after receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
Q. Why is the Most Blessed Sacrament publicly shown on this feast day and all during the octave?
A. There are four principal reasons: 1) to arouse the devotion of the faithful and encourage them to come and adore Jesus Christ present on the altar, 2) to remind them to thank Jesus Christ for so great a benefit, 3) to urge them to offer reparation for all the offenses Jesus Christ receives in this sacrament, and 4) to encourage them to show the respect they owe him in this sacrament, especially during this holy time.
Q. Why is the procession held on the feast day of the Most Blessed Sacrament so solemn?
A. There are three particular reasons: 1) to give public witness to the faith we all profess in the reality of the body of Jesus Christ present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, 2) to offer reparation for the offenses and insults committed daily against this adorable and great sacrament, and 3) to display it triumphantly after the condemnation of heretics and irreligious people, who have denied this holy sacrament.
Q. What should we do to celebrate this feast and honor our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament properly on the day of the feast and all during the octave?
A. We should do six things: 1) thank God for the graces he bestows on us by giving us our Lord Jesus Christ in this sacrament,

2) make reparation through frequent visits and special devotion for any time we may have failed to show reverence to the Most Blessed Sacrament and for any improper Communions we may have made during the year, 3) attend the offices of the Church, High Mass, the sermon, the adoration, and benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 4) participate in the procession, 5) receive Communion with great piety, and 6) make frequent acts of faith in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

Q. What evil is done by those who do not honor the Most Blessed Sacrament during this octave?

A. 1) They show that they do not believe in this sacrament or that they despise it; 2) they also manifest a lack of piety and religious spirit.

Lesson 13—The devotion we should have to our Lord Jesus Christ

Q. What should be our first and principal devotion?

A. It should be to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Why should our principal devotion be to our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. He is God and human, and he has redeemed us by his humanity.

Q. What devotion should we have to our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. We should have an affection and an inclination to honor him, show him our respect, and offer our homage to him joyfully and spontaneously.

Q. Should we have a greater devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ than to the saints?

A. Yes, we should have greater devotion for two reasons: 1) being God as well as human, he can use his powers to help us, something no saint can do; 2) as human, he is the leader, model, and Mediator of all Christians.

Q. How is Jesus Christ the leader of all Christians?

A. He communicates the life of grace to them through the merits of his Passion and death.

Q. How is Jesus Christ the model of all Christians?

A. They must imitate him in the virtues he practiced.

Q. How is Jesus Christ our Mediator?

A. According to Saint Paul, there are two reasons: 1) he redeemed us by his death; 2) he constantly intercedes for us with his Father in heaven.

Q. What kind of devotion should we have for our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. It consists mainly of five aspects: 1) honoring and adoring him in all the manifestations of his mortal and immortal life, 2) worship-

ing him frequently in his various manifestations and principal actions, 3) asking him for particular graces when we meditate on him in each of his different manifestations, 4) imitating his virtues, and 5) celebrating worthily the feasts the Church has instituted to honor his holy mysteries.

Q. In what different manifestations can we think about our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. They are the following four: 1) in his earthly life, 2) on the cross, 3) in heaven, and 4) in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Q. How should we honor and adore our Lord Jesus Christ in his mortal life?

A. We should honor him as a leader and a legislator who taught us his doctrine and his holy law by word and example.

Q. How should we honor and adore our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross?

A. We should honor and adore him as the Mediator between God and humanity and as the Redeemer of the world.

Q. How should we honor and adore our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven?

A. We should honor and adore him there as the sovereign High Priest of the true Holy of Holies, who constantly prays for us to his Father.

Q. How should we honor and adore our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar?

A. We should honor and adore him there as a victim who offers himself continuously to the eternal Father for the salvation of all humanity.

Q. What outward signs of respect should we show Jesus Christ when thinking about him as leader and lawgiver during his mortal life?

A. We should frequently listen, read, and practice his teachings and his holy law.

Q. What outward signs of respect should we show Jesus Christ when thinking about him as dying or dead on the cross?

A. They are the following two practices: 1) frequently adoring a crucifix by prostrating ourselves before it and kissing it, and 2) humbly looking at it with great gratitude for his dying for our sins.

Q. What outward sign of respect should we show Jesus Christ when thinking about him as being in heaven?

A. We should thank him for the great goodness he shows by continually praying to his Father for us.

Q. What outward signs of respect should we show our Lord Jesus Christ when thinking about him in the Most Blessed Sacrament?

A. They are mainly the following four practices: 1) kneeling down to adore him, 2) keeping great reserve and deep silence in his

presence, 3) participating in the processions organized in his honor, and 4) accompanying him when he is brought to the sick.

Q. What grace should we ask of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray to him as our leader and lawgiver?

A. It is the grace to follow his teachings, preserve and observe his holy law, and practice the maxims of his holy Gospel.

Q. What graces should we ask of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray to him as dying or dead on the cross for our sins?

A. They are mainly these two: 1) to deliver us from temptation, and 2) to release us from the burden of our sins by applying the merits of his Passion.

Q. What graces should we ask of Jesus Christ when we pray to him as reigning in heaven?

A. They are these two: 1) to die in his holy love, and 2) to go from this life straight to heaven.

Q. What grace should we ask of Jesus Christ when we pray to him as present in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar?

A. It is the grace to sacrifice ourselves entirely for him: our life, senses, mind, will, and so on.

Q. What virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ should we imitate when thinking about him as our leader and legislator?

A. We should strive to conform our life to his and to what he taught us in his holy Gospel.

Q. What virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ should we imitate when thinking about him dead on the cross for our sins?

A. We should especially imitate these four virtues: 1) his humility, 2) his gentleness, 3) his silent acceptance of suffering, and 4) his patience and love for suffering.

Q. What virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ should we imitate when thinking about him as interceding for us with his Father in heaven?

A. We should strive to imitate two virtues of our Lord considered in this state: 1) his affection for prayer, and 2) his constant zeal for the salvation of souls.

Q. What virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ should we imitate when thinking about him in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar?

A. To imitate him in this state, we should follow these two practices: 1) develop a love like his for self-denial and the hidden life, and 2) enter into the spirit of sacrifice he always had in his life and death and that he will have until the end of time.

Q. What mysteries of Jesus Christ should we most often and most particularly honor?

A. They are those of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

A. Why should we honor the mysteries of our Lord on the cross and in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar more often than his other mysteries?
A. There are two reasons: 1) Jesus saved us and freed us from sin and hell by his death on the cross; 2) he gives us himself and many graces in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar.
Q. How can we show that we particularly honor our Lord Jesus Christ for dying on the cross for our sins?
A. We can do so in the following three ways: 1) kneeling frequently before an image of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified and meditating on the mysteries of his suffering and death, 2) often holding a crucifix in our hands, and 3) adoring the cross by kissing it and asking his pardon for our sins, which caused his death.
Q. How can we show that we particularly honor our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar?
A. There are four ways: 1) attending Mass daily, 2) receiving Communion often, 3) frequently visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, and 4) accompanying him when he is brought to the sick.
Q. Should we adore Jesus Christ frequently in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar?
A. Yes, we should adore him there often, especially on the following three occasions: 1) on entering the church, 2) at the elevation of the host and the chalice, and 3) during benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.
Q. When should we visit the Most Blessed Sacrament?
A. We should try to visit every day, especially during exposition or when we are suffering, but if we cannot, we should at least adore him and visit him in spirit.
Q. Why should we visit the Most Blessed Sacrament when we are suffering?
A. The reason is to lay the suffering before him and to ask for the grace to bear it for his holy love.

Section 3. The Feasts and the Mysteries of the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. How many feasts and mysteries does the Church celebrate in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. The Church celebrates seven feasts and seven mysteries in her honor: 1) her Immaculate Conception, 2) her Nativity, 3) her Presentation in the Temple, 4) her Visitation, 5) her Annunciation, 6) her Purification, and 7) her Assumption.

Lesson 1—The Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. What feast do we celebrate [today, *or*, on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. Who is the Most Blessed Virgin Mary?
A. She is the mother of the Son of God made man, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. Why do we call the conception of the Most Blessed Virgin *immaculate?*
A. It is because the Most Blessed Virgin was conceived without original sin.
Q. What is original sin?
A. It is the sin we humans are all born with that we bear because of Adam's disobedience.
Q. How was the Most Blessed Virgin exempt from original sin and conceived without sin?
A. God granted her this special privilege because he had destined her to be the mother of his Son.
Q. Does the Church honor and celebrate the conception of any saint other than the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. No, of all the saints, only the Most Blessed Virgin was exempt from original sin.
Q. Why did God exempt the Most Blessed Virgin from original sin?
A. It was appropriate that the mother of his Son should be as pure in soul as in body and should never bear or commit any sin.
Q. Was the Most Blessed Virgin also free of all actual sin?
A. Yes, she never committed any sin.
Q. How many saints were exempt from original sin?
A. Only our Lord Jesus Christ and the Most Blessed Virgin were conceived without original sin.
Q. Why does the Church celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin so solemnly?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to thank God for giving us on this day the Most Blessed Virgin to be the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2) to honor this day as the beginning and the primary source of human redemption, and 3) to encourage us to place ourselves this day under the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin properly?
A. We should do four things: 1) give the Most Blessed Virgin all the honor due to her in this holy mystery, 2) thank God for giving us this day the Most Blessed Virgin to be a part of the salvation of

all humans by bringing our Lord into the world, 3) ask God for the grace to live and act no longer according to our natural inclinations, and 4) begin living solely for God in imitation of what the Most Blessed Virgin began this day and continued throughout her entire life.

Lesson 2—The Nativity of the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Nativity of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. What is the Nativity of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. It is the day on which the Most Blessed Virgin was born.
Q. Who are the parents of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. They are Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, who had her miraculously from God when they were advanced in years.
Q. Why did God choose Saint Joachim and Saint Anne to be the parents of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. It was because of their great virtue and prayerfulness.
Q. What name did Saint Joachim and Saint Anne give to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. They named her *Mary,* which means *Lady,* or *Mistress.*
Q. Why was the Most Blessed Virgin given a name that means Lady, or Mistress?
A. It was to show us that she was to be the queen of angels and saints and recognized as both our mother and the mother of Jesus Christ.
Q. Did the Most Blessed Virgin have any brothers or sisters?
A. No, she was an only child.
Q. What was special about the birth of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. There were three special circumstances: 1) her birth was humble and drew no particular attention; 2) it was miraculous because Saint Anne was barren and far advanced in age; 3) the Most Blessed Virgin was born to be the mother of the Incarnate Word and to participate with God in human salvation more than anyone else did.
Q. Why did God want the Most Blessed Virgin's birth to be miraculous?
A. It was to show that it was more God's work than human work.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the Nativity of the Most Blessed Virgin properly?
A. We should do five things: 1) honor the Most Blessed Virgin's coming into this world to be the mother of the Redeemer and Savior and the treasurer of God's graces, 2) thank God for giving

the world the Most Blessed Virgin to bring about our salvation, 3) renew our baptismal promises, 4) ask God for a special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, and 5) ask God for humility and simplicity through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin.

Lesson 3—The Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. What is the feast of the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. It commemorates the day when the Most Blessed Virgin was presented in the Temple.
Q. How old was the Most Blessed Virgin when she was presented in the Temple?
A. It is believed that she was three years old.
Q. Who presented the Most Blessed Virgin in the Temple?
A. It was by her parents, Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, her mother and father, and by herself.
Q. Why was the Most Blessed Virgin presented in the Temple?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to consecrate her there to God, 2) to have her live there in solitude and prayer, and 3) to dedicate her to service in the Temple.
Q. What did the Most Blessed Virgin do when she presented herself in the Temple?
A. She consecrated herself to God and made a vow of chastity.
Q. How long did the Most Blessed Virgin remain in the Temple?
A. It is believed that she lived there from the age of three to the age of fifteen.
Q. What did the Most Blessed Virgin do in the Temple?
A. She devoted her time to the service of God by praying, making vestments for the priests and ornaments for the Temple, and doing only tasks related to God's service.
Q. What did the Most Blessed Virgin think about during the time she remained in the Temple?
A. She thought mostly about three things: 1) the happiness of being consecrated to God, 2) the graces she could receive in this holy place, and 3) the dedication of her every action for God's love and glory.
Q. Is the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin an ancient feast in the Church?
A. Yes, it is very ancient.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin properly?

A. We should do six things: 1) honor the Most Blessed Virgin for consecrating herself entirely to God on this day, 2) thank God for inspiring the Most Blessed Virgin to make a vow of virginity, 3) thank God for making the Most Blessed Virgin on this day the mother and patroness of virgins, 4) detach ourselves for the love of God from those most dear to us, 5) offer and consecrate ourselves entirely to God on this holy day, and 6) attend only to what concerns the service of God and our salvation and ask God through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin for the grace of being faithful in this endeavor.

The Annunciation and the Maternity of the Most Blessed Virgin were covered along with the feast of the Incarnation of the Son of God because these two feasts are celebrated on the same day.

Lesson 4—The Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. What is the feast of the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. It is a feast that the Church instituted in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin's visit, as soon as she had conceived our Lord Jesus Christ, to Saint Elizabeth, who was pregnant with Saint John the Baptist.
Q. Why did the Church institute the feast of the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. There are three special reasons: 1) to honor Jesus Christ for the miracles he performed during the Most Blessed Virgin's visit to Saint Elizabeth, 2) to honor the Most Blessed Virgin for her virtue on this occasion, and 3) to honor the graces that Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist, still in his mother's womb, received.
Q. What miracles did Jesus Christ perform during the visit of the Most Blessed Virgin to Saint Elizabeth?
A. He bestowed many extraordinary graces on Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist.
Q. What virtues were evident in the Most Blessed Virgin's visit to Saint Elizabeth?
A. She made evident three particular virtues: 1) her humility, for although she was the mother of God, she took the initiative to visit someone far beneath her in dignity, 2) promptness in setting out as soon as she knew it was God's will and understood his purposes in sending her, even though it was a difficult journey through mountainous country, and 3) her modesty and propriety

during this visit, for according to Holy Scripture, when she entered Zechariah's house, she greeted no one but Saint Elizabeth.

Q. Why did the Most Blessed Virgin visit Saint Elizabeth?

A. She did so by divine inspiration and for three reasons: 1) to sanctify Saint John the Baptist and to fill the house of Saint Zechariah and Saint Elizabeth with blessings, 2) to congratulate Saint Elizabeth on her happiness at having miraculously conceived a son in her old age, and 3) to share with Saint Elizabeth her own joy of bearing in her womb the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

Q. What favors and graces did Saint Elizabeth receive during the visit of the Most Blessed Virgin?

A. She received six in particular: 1) she was filled with the Holy Spirit; 2) she learned of the mystery of the Incarnation and the divine maternity of the Most Blessed Virgin; 3) she was the first person to honor these two great mysteries; 4) she received extraordinary interior graces; 5) she received the gift of prophecy and learned of the mystery of the Incarnation, which was still unknown on earth; 6) she was the first to declare and make known the glory of the Most Blessed Virgin when she told her, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Q. What favors and graces did Saint John the Baptist receive during the Most Blessed Virgin's visit to Saint Elizabeth?

A. He received four special graces: 1) he was purified of original sin; 2) he was sanctified by an abundant outpouring of grace; 3) he received the use of reason; 4) he leaped in his mother's womb out of respect for the presence of Jesus Christ and out of joy over the Incarnation of the Son of God.

Q. How long did the Most Blessed Virgin stay with Saint Zechariah and Saint Elizabeth?

A. She stayed with them for three months.

Q. How did the Most Blessed Virgin's visit to Saint Elizabeth occur?

A. Saint Luke in his Gospel, describing the visit of the Most Blessed Virgin to Saint Elizabeth, says that at that time (that is, after the angel had told the Most Blessed Virgin that she would become the mother of Jesus Christ), the Most Blessed Virgin rose and went with haste over the mountains to a town in Judah*, and so on, Luke, chap. 2. v. 16.*

Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin properly?

A. We should do five things: 1) adore Jesus Christ living and present in the Most Blessed Virgin and sanctifying Saint John the Baptist and Saint Elizabeth, 2) thank God for revealing to us the mysteries that took place during this visit of the Most Blessed Virgin,

3) ask through the intercession of Mary for a share in the graces Jesus gave to Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist, 4) recite frequently and meditate devoutly on the *Magnificat,* the sacred canticle that the Most Blessed Virgin recited during this visit and that reveals to us her holy motives, and 5) imitate the Most Blessed Virgin's virtues shown during this visit.

The Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin was covered along with the feast of the Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple because these two feasts are celebrated on the same day.

Lesson 5—The Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the holy death and the glorious Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. What is the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. It is the raising of the Blessed Virgin, body and soul, to heaven.
Q. Was the Most Blessed Virgin buried in a tomb after she died?
A. Yes, her body was placed in a tomb but remained there only a short time, for she returned to life and was then brought to heaven, body and soul.
Q. Why does the Church so solemnly celebrate the feast of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. It is because of the holy death, the glorious resurrection, and the triumphant Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. Why was the death of the Most Blessed Virgin so holy?
A. She died in the holiest state of grace possible.
Q. With what holy motives did the Most Blessed Virgin die?
A. Her motives were that she died with 1) a great love for God, 2) perfect detachment from all things, and 3) an ardent desire to unite herself with God.
Q. Did the Most Blessed Virgin die in pain from some natural illness?
A. No, it is believed that she died without pain and illness, solely from the love of God in her.
Q. Why was the Most Blessed Virgin not spared death if she was free of sin?
A. All humans must die; even our Lord Jesus Christ died.
Q. What favors and advantages did the Most Blessed Virgin receive at her death?
A. She received these three: 1) she died without pain; 2) her body remained incorrupt after her death; 3) God raised her to life and gave her incomparable glory.

Q. Did the Most Blessed Virgin remain on earth when she died?
A. No, the angels brought her to heaven right away, body and soul.
Q. Did the Most Blessed Virgin rise to heaven by her own power and virtue?
A. No, the angels brought her there, and she was enthroned above all the angels and saints, where she was welcomed and glorified by her Son Jesus Christ.
Q. Why did the Most Blessed Virgin receive such honor and glory in heaven after her death?
A. She is the Mother of God and the most perfect of all creatures.
Q. Did the Blessed Virgin merit all the benefits she received after her death?
A. Yes, she merited them through three qualities she possessed: 1) she deserved a holy death for living a holy life; 2) she deserved incorruptibility and the resurrection of her body for her very great purity; 3) she deserved to be enthroned above all the angels and saints for her profound humility.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin properly?
A. We should do five things: 1) honor the Most Blessed Virgin with the whole Church for being enthroned above all the choirs of angels and receiving from God on this day of her Assumption such great favors and privileges, 2) thank God for so highly exalting the Most Blessed Virgin because of her humility and establishing her as Queen of angels and of humanity and as our first Mediatrix in heaven, after Jesus Christ, 3) ask God through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin for all the graces we will ever need, especially for detachment from the things of this world and a death somewhat like hers, 4) seek to imitate the humility of the Most Blessed Virgin and her great love for purity, and 5) go to Confession and Communion with worthy intentions to make ourselves able to live as good Christians and merit a holy death.

Lesson 6—Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. Should we have a special devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. Yes, we should for three reasons: 1) she is the Mother of God and the Queen of angels and of humanity; 2) she is the holiest of all creatures; 3) she is the most powerful with God among all the saints and very much desires to do good for us.
Q. How should we show our devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. There are four ways: 1) esteem her, 2) respect her, 3) pray to her, and 4) imitate her.

Q. How do we show the esteem we should have for the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. We show our esteem by believing her to be the Mother of God and recognizing her eminent virtues and qualities and her great glory.
Q. How do we show the exterior respect we should have for the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. There are four ways: 1) by speaking of her with reverence and never allowing anyone to speak ill of her, 2) by greeting her when her holy name is spoken, 3) by honoring her images, and 4) by celebrating all her feasts devoutly.
Q. When should we pray to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. We should do so at all times and let no day pass without addressing to her some special prayers, above all when we face some suffering or temptation, particularly when our chastity is endangered and when we are at the hour of our death.
Q. What are the principal virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin that we should imitate?
A. They are humility, gentleness of spirit, obedience, and chastity.
Q. What reward will be given to those who have a true devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. They will be filled with grace and benefit from the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin during this life and at the hour of death.
Q. What misfortune will befall those who are not devoted to the Most Blessed Virgin?
A. They will find it very difficult to be saved.

Section 4. Feasts Instituted to Honor the Saints

Q. What main feasts has the Church instituted to honor the saints?
A. They are the following: 1) the feast of All Saints, which is followed by the Commemoration of the Dead, 2) the feast of Saint Michael, 3) the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, 4) the feast of Saint John the Baptist, 5) the feasts of the holy Apostles and Evangelists, 6) the feast of Saint Joseph, 7) the feast of Saint Stephen, 8) the feast of Saint Lawrence, 9) the feast of Saint Martin, 10) the feast of Saint Nicholas, and 11) the feast of holy patrons, whether of the diocese or of the parish church, to which the Church adds the feast of the dedication of churches, which is celebrated with great solemnity.

Lesson 1—All Saints

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of All Saints.
Q. Why does the Church solemnly commemorate the feast of all the saints on a single day?
A. There are four reasons:[9] 1) she cannot celebrate an individual feast for every saint, 2) to teach us that she honors all the saints and that we should also honor and pray to all of them, 3) to encourage us more to practice virtue by proposing so many saintly examples at one time, 4) to enable us to receive an increase of grace thanks to the many intercessors who join in praying for our salvation when we honor and invoke them, and 9) [5] to celebrate symbolically the eternal festival that God holds in heaven with all his saints.
Q. Why should we honor all the saints?
A. There are four reasons: 1) God made them saints; 2) God made them blessed; 3) we honor God in his saints; 4) being God's friends, they can obtain from God the grace we need for salvation.
Q. While we are in this world, what should we do in particular to honor the saints and increase their joy?
A. We should do penance for our sins, lamenting those we have committed and resolving not to sin again.
Q. Why do the saints rejoice so much when we do penance?
A. There are three reasons: 1) God rejoices over this; 2) our penance honors God and exalts his mercy; 3) the saints are keenly interested in everything that concerns our salvation.
Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of All Saints and to honor the saints properly on this day?
A. We should do four things: 1) adore God, who is the fullness of joy for all the saints, and honor him in his saints, 2) ponder the exalted happiness of the saints, 3) pray fervently to obtain the grace necessary for salvation, especially a disdain for worldly things and a strong desire to possess eternal life, and 4) imitate their principal virtues, especially their love for prayer and their renunciation of sensual pleasures.

The topic of the eternal life of the blessed is included in the explanation of article 12 of the Apostles' Creed in part 1, treatise 1, lesson 19 of The Duties of a Christian To God.

9. The "four reasons" and the number "9" are as in the French text.

Lesson 2—The Commemoration of the Dead

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Commemoration of the Dead.
Q. Why is this day called the Commemoration of the Dead?
A. The Church uses this day to pray for souls suffering in purgatory.
Q. Why did the Church designate a special day to pray to God for all the souls in purgatory?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to relieve the suffering of all, especially the many for whom no one prays, and 2) to join together all Christians to pray for their relief.
Q. Which souls suffer in purgatory?
A. They are the souls of the faithful who died in God's grace without making full satisfaction in this world to God's justice for their sins; therefore, they must complete their penance in purgatory.
Q. Is there a purgatory?
A. Yes, it is an article of faith that we must believe.
Q. What is purgatory?
A. Purgatory is a place on earth where the souls of those who die in the state of grace without having made full satisfaction to God for their sins complete their penance through suffering.
Q. What suffering do these souls endure in purgatory?
A. The souls detained there endure two kinds of sufferings: 1) a fire that is believed to be as fierce and terrible as that of hell, and 2) the inability to see God as long as they remain there.
Q. Are the souls in purgatory destined for heaven?
A. Yes, God judged them immediately after their death and sent to purgatory only those who must finish making satisfaction for their sins before going to heaven.
Q. Are we required to pray for the souls in purgatory?
A. Yes, charity requires us to do so for three reasons: 1) they are God's friends; 2) they are united to us by grace; 3) they are not able to pray to God for themselves.
Q. Are we required to pray equally for all the souls in purgatory?
A. No, we must pray for some more than for others.
Q. Which souls in purgatory must we especially pray for?
A. We must especially pray for four types of souls: 1) the souls of our parents, friends, and benefactors, 2) the souls of those we caused to be there, 3) the souls of those for whom few or no prayers are offered, and 4) the souls who are suffering the most.
Q. Can we suffer for the souls in purgatory?
A. Yes, we can, and the suffering we endure for them is beneficial to them.

Q. How does our suffering benefit the souls in purgatory?
A. Because of it, God frees these souls sooner from their pain or lessens it.
Q. Does the Church use black vestments and mournful songs in the Masses and the Office of the Dead to lament the death of those whose souls are in purgatory?
A. No, the Church does not lament the death of those in purgatory but rather deplores their sins, which caused their death and the pains they are enduring there.
Q. Why do we carry burning lanterns and light many candles when we bury the dead and sing the Divine Office for them?
A. It is to show our hope that some day they will rise and be eternally happy in heaven.
Q. Should there be any joy in the funeral services and the Office of the Dead?
A. Yes, there should be, for we hope and anticipate that the body will rise again and the soul will find happiness in heaven.

Lesson 3—Saint Michael

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Michael the Archangel.
Q. Why did the Church establish the feast of Saint Michael?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to honor this great saint as the leader of all the angels, 2) to implore his protection for the entire Church, and 3) to ask him to defend all Christians against demons and heretics, their declared foes.
Q. What does the name *Michael* mean?
A. Michael means *one who is like God.*
Q. Why is this angel named Michael?
A. While fighting against Lucifer and the rebel angels, who wanted to be like God, he attacked them with the cry, "Who is like God?"
Q. Should we highly honor Saint Michael?
A. Yes, for four reasons: 1) he is the most important angel in heaven; 2) he was the first to have adored God; 3) he showed great zeal for God's honor and glory by resisting Lucifer and his adherents the moment they rose up against God; 4) he has the special task of receiving the soul when it leaves the body and of presenting it to God for judgment.
Q. What should we do to celebrate this feast and to honor Saint Michael properly?
A. We should do four things: 1) hold him in special esteem because he was the first creature privileged to attach himself to God and

to recognize and adore Jesus Christ, 2) have great confidence in his help, 3) ask him to intercede with God for zeal for God's honor and glory and for courage in resisting the devil, and 4) imitate his humility, which led to his victory over the demons.

Lesson 4—The Holy Guardian Angels

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels.
Q. What does the word *angel* mean?
A. Angel means *messenger.*
Q. Who are the guardian angels?
A. They are the angels God sends to earth to help humans achieve their salvation.
Q. Does every human being have a guardian angel?
A. Yes, even heretics, pagans, and infidels have a guardian angel.
Q. Who gave every human being a guardian angel?
A. God gave everyone a guardian angel at the moment of birth.
Q. Why does God give every human being a guardian angel?
A. The purpose is to help all humans save themselves.
Q. How do guardian angels help people save themselves?
A. There are four ways: 1) they inspire them to do good deeds by suggesting good thoughts; 2) they help them avoid sin when liable to fall into it; 3) they offer their prayers to God for them; 4) they defend them against all the devil's attacks and temptations.
Q. Should we be especially devoted to our holy guardian angel?
A. Yes, our angel helps us daily and cares about our salvation.
Q. How should we show proper devotion to our holy guardian angel?
A. There are five ways: 1) we should have a deep respect for him and never do anything that might displease him, for he is always at our side; 2) we should thank him often for the graces he obtains for us; 3) we should pray confidently to him daily; 4) we should follow the inspirations he gives us; 5) we should imitate his virtues, especially his purity and swift, exact obedience.

Lesson 5—Saint John the Baptist

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint John the Baptist.
Q. Why does the Church so solemnly celebrate the feast of the birth of Saint John the Baptist and not the birth of the other saints?
A. There are four reasons: 1) the birth of Saint John the Baptist was announced by an angel, just as our Lord's was; 2) Saint John the

Baptist was born without sin, unlike the other saints; 3) Saint John the Baptist is the greatest of all the saints and the Prophets, as our Lord declared in the holy Gospel; 4) Saint John was the precursor of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Has the Church always solemnly celebrated the feast of Saint John the Baptist's birth?

A. Yes, in earlier times she even celebrated three Masses on the feast of the birth of Saint John the Baptist, just as she did for the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Has the Church always professed great respect for Saint John?

A. Yes, she has always considered him to be the greatest of all the saints after the Most Blessed Virgin.

Q. What does the name *John* mean?

A. It means *grace of God*.

Q. Who gave this name to Saint John?

A. An angel gave it to him.

Q. Why was Saint John given this name?

A. He was the first saint under the law of grace.

Q. What is the meaning of the expression "precursor of Jesus Christ" given to Saint John?

A. It signifies the one who arrived before Jesus Christ to announce his coming.

Q. Why was Saint John named the precursor of Jesus Christ?

A. He prepared the people to receive him, and he showed him to the people, saying, "Behold him who takes away the sins of the world."

Q. What was special about the birth of Saint John the Baptist?

A. There are two particular aspects in the birth of this saint: 1) he was born in the state of grace because he was sanctified by Jesus Christ in Saint Elizabeth's womb when the Blessed Virgin came to visit her; 2) his father, Saint Zechariah, who had lost the power of speech, recovered it to proclaim the child's blessedness in the canticle *Benedictus*.

Q. Why was Saint John the Baptist considered so important?

A. He was important for nine reasons: 1) he was foretold by the Prophets, who called him the "angel of the Lord"; 2) he was given his name by the archangel Gabriel when Gabriel spoke to his father, Zechariah, just as our Lord was given his name when the same archangel spoke to the Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph; 3) he was miraculously conceived by two elderly and sterile parents; 4) he was sanctified in his mother's womb; 5) he received from God the early use of reason; 6) he was born in the state of grace; 7) he was sent by God to be the precursor of his

Son on earth and to announce his coming there; 8) he was chosen by God to baptize our Lord Jesus Christ; 9) he led a most exemplary life.

Q. How did the archangel Gabriel announce the birth of Saint John the Baptist to his father, Zechariah?

A. This is what happened according to the Gospel: the angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah, who on seeing him was troubled and seized with fear, but the angel told him, "Do not fear, Zechariah, because. . . ."[10]

Q. What is so remarkable about the way Saint John the Baptist lived?

A. He lived more like an angel than like a human being, for as a child he went to live in the desert, wearing only a camel's hair garment and living on wild honey and grasshoppers or, as our Lord sometimes did, not eating at all.

Q. After leaving the desert, what did Saint John the Baptist do?

A. He spent his time preaching and baptizing many people, including our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Did Saint John baptize only our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. No, he not only baptized our Lord Jesus Christ; he also baptized a great many Jews.

Q. Was the baptism of Saint John the Baptist the same as that of our Lord?

A. No, it was not the same.

Q. What was the purpose of the baptism of Saint John the Baptist?

A. It led people to repentance and prepared them to welcome the Messiah, whom Saint John had come to proclaim.

Q. Why was our Lord Jesus Christ willing to receive the baptism by Saint John, which was meant only to lead people to repentance?

A. He did this to appear as a sinner no different than the Jews.

Q. Why did Saint John the Baptist at first refuse to baptize Jesus Christ?

A. He refused out of humility and respect for our Lord, whom he knew to be the Son of God.

Q. How did Saint John the Baptist die, and what brought about his death?

A. King Herod had him beheaded because Saint John often reproved him for living with his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, in an incestuous and adulterous relationship.

Q. Why do Christians in some parishes light a bonfire on the eve or on the feast of the birth of Saint John the Baptist?

A. This custom expresses the joy the Church feels over the birth of this saint.

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10. Luke 1:13.

Q. Are we allowed on the eve of this feast to dance around the bonfire, enjoy a feast, throw onto the fire the first herbs gathered before noon or before the fast, keep coals and brands from the fire as if they had some power, or follow other similar customs?
A. No, such activities are not permitted, for they are superstitions unworthy of a Christian.
Q. How should we behave around the bonfire lighted on the eve of the feast of the birth of Saint John the Baptist?
A. We should behave modestly and piously during the bonfire.
Q. How should we celebrate the feast of the birth of John the Baptist properly?
A. We should do three things: 1) join the Church in honoring this saint who, according to the Son of God, was one of the holiest men who ever lived, the first saint of the law of grace, and the precursor of Jesus Christ, 2) thank God for sending this saint on earth to bring it a spirit of penance and a zeal for converting sinners, and 3) imitate the virtues of this saint, especially his constant mortification of the body, his love for purity, and his deep humility.

Lesson 6—The Holy Apostles

Q. Who are the holy Apostles?
A. Jesus Christ chose the Apostles as his closest disciples and called them to accompany him during his mortal life, to bear witness to his holy life, wise conduct, teachings, and miracles, and to preach his Gospel throughout the world after his death.
Q. How many Apostles are there?
A. There are twelve: Saint Peter, his brother Saint Andrew, Saint James and his brother Saint John, Saint Philip, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Matthew, Saint Thomas, Saint James, son of Alpheus, Saint Simon, called the Zealot, Saint Jude, brother of Saint James the Less, and Saint Matthias, who was chosen by the Apostles to take the place of Judas Iscariot, who hanged himself in despair after betraying our Lord.
Q. Is Saint Paul also one of the Apostles?
A. He is ranked among the holy Apostles, but he is not one of the twelve originally chosen by our Lord.
Q. Why is Saint Paul called an Apostle if he is not one of the Twelve?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ chose him and told him and the other Apostles that he was sending him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.
Q. Before ascending to heaven, what did our Lord commission the holy Apostles to do?

A. He commissioned them to be the first pastors and to establish, guide, and govern the Church.
Q. How did Jesus Christ prepare his holy Apostles to establish and govern the Church?
A. He taught them his doctrine so that they could teach all nations.
Q. After the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, how did the holy Apostles establish the Church?
A. They preached the Gospel, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.
Q. What did the holy Apostles do to preach the Gospel to the Jews?
A. They stayed in Jerusalem and also preached throughout Judea.
Q. What else did the holy Apostles do while they were in Jerusalem and Judea?
A. They preached the Gospel to the Jews and took steps to establish and govern the Church.
Q. What did the holy Apostles do to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles?
A. The Apostles decided which place and country each would go to preach the Gospel, and then they dispersed all over the world.
Q. How did the holy Apostles learn all the truths they taught?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught them these truths and also instructed them through the Holy Spirit, who descended upon them on Pentecost.
Q. How did the holy Apostles confirm the truth of the Gospel they preached and taught?
A. They confirmed it by working many miracles.
Q. How did the Apostles establish and govern the Church while in Jerusalem and Judea?
A. They did two things especially: 1) they composed a Creed, that is, a summary of the principal articles of faith; 2) they gathered frequently to make many decisions concerning the doctrine and the discipline of the Church.
Q. What main decisions concerning doctrine and discipline did the Apostles make while they were in Jerusalem?
A. They include the following: 1) Gentiles would be admitted to the faith; 2) they would not be required to observe the traditions of the Jews.

Lesson 7—The Holy Evangelists

Q. Who are the holy Evangelists?
A. They are the people who recounted the life and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Q. How many Evangelists are there?
A. There are four: Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John; they are named Evangelists because they each wrote a book called the Gospel.
Q. What does the word *Gospel* mean?
A. It means *good news.*
Q. Why is the holy Gospel called good news?
A. It is the good news that Jesus Christ came on earth to announce.
Q. Who is the first Evangelist?
A. The first Evangelist is the Apostle Saint Matthew.
Q. Where did Saint Matthew write his Gospel?
A. He wrote it in Judea.
Q. When did Saint Matthew write his Gospel?
A. He wrote it soon after the death of our Lord Jesus Christ and before the Apostles separated to preach throughout the world.
Q. Who is the second Evangelist?
A. The second Evangelist is Saint Mark, a disciple of Saint Peter.
Q. Where did Saint Mark write his Gospel?
A. He wrote it while he was in Rome with Saint Peter, about ten years after the death of Jesus Christ.
Q. Who is the third Evangelist?
A. The third Evangelist is Saint Luke, a disciple and companion of Saint Paul on his journeys.
Q. When did Saint Luke write his Gospel?
A. He wrote it about twenty-three years after the death of Jesus Christ.
Q. What especially characterizes Saint Luke's Gospel?
A. He wrote about the mysteries of Jesus Christ's infancy, which the other Evangelists omitted.
Q. Did Saint Luke write any other work besides his Gospel?
A. Yes, he also wrote a book, The Acts of the Apostles, an account of the most noteworthy things the Apostles did after the death of our Lord, including the history of Saint Paul's activity.
Q. Who is the fourth Evangelist?
A. The fourth Evangelist is Saint John the Apostle, the beloved disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, who rested his head on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper.
Q. What is noteworthy about Saint John the Evangelist?
A. There are two things in particular: 1) he remained celibate; 2) he is an Apostle, an Evangelist, and a Prophet.
Q. What especially characterizes the Gospel of Saint John?
A. He begins his Gospel with the eternal generation of the Son of God in the bosom of his Father.

Q. When did Saint John write his Gospel?
A. He wrote it sixty-five years after the death of Jesus Christ, when certain heretics were denying the divinity of our Lord.
Q. Why is Saint John a Prophet?
A. When he wrote the Apocalypse while on the island of Patmos, he prophesied major events that would happen to the Church.

Lesson 8—Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles.
Q. Why does the Church celebrate the feast of Saint Peter and of Saint Paul on the same day?
A. There are four principal reasons: 1) they were both Apostles, Peter to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles; 2) they were martyred on the same day and in the same city; 3) their relics repose in the same church and in the same tomb; 4) because they both enlightened the entire Church, the Church never separates them in her prayers.

Saint Peter

Q. Who was Saint Peter?
A. Saint Peter was a Jew from Bethsaida, a fisherman by profession, and a disciple and Apostle of Jesus Christ.
Q. How did Jesus Christ call Saint Peter to be his Apostle?
A. Jesus saw him fishing one day, got into his boat, and began to preach to the crowd that lined the shore. He then told Peter to cast his nets into the sea; when he did, he caught a large number of fish. Jesus then told him that henceforth he would be catching men; at these words Peter left his boat, his nets, and all his possessions to follow Jesus Christ.
Q. What special graces did Jesus Christ give Saint Peter?
A. He gave him four: 1) he revealed that he is the Son of God; 2) Saint Peter was the first to recognize him as such; 3) he was the first to preach the Gospel to the Jews, on Pentecost day; 4) he was the first to preach to the Gentiles, in the person of the centurion Cornelius.
Q. Did Jesus Christ treat Saint Peter differently than he did the other Apostles?
A. Yes, he showed Peter special affection.
Q. How did our Lord Jesus Christ show special affection for Saint Peter?

A. He did so in the following eight ways: 1) Jesus Christ deigned to enter Peter's humble abode, where he cured his mother-in-law and took a meal with him and the other Apostles; 2) he chose Saint Peter to witness the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, the chief of the synagogue, his Transfiguration, and his agony in the Garden of Olives; 3) Jesus Christ looked at Saint Peter in the Praetorium to touch his heart after his denial on the eve of the Passion; 4) after his Resurrection, Jesus Christ appointed Saint Peter head of the Church; 5) Jesus Christ disclosed to Saint Peter that he had prayed for him especially so that he might never waver in his faith; 6) Jesus Christ told Saint Peter in particular that whatever he would bind on earth would be bound in heaven and that whatever he would loose on earth would be loosed in heaven; 7) Jesus Christ paid the tribute to Caesar not only for himself but also for Saint Peter, something he did not do for the other Apostles; 8) on the day of his Resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to Saint Peter in particular.

Q. What were Saint Peter's significant accomplishments as leader of the Apostles and head of the Church after the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ?

A. He did six significant things: 1) in the assembly of the Apostles, he decided how to elect Saint Matthias, and he was the first to speak when the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem to decide whether they should require the Gentiles to observe the Jewish Law; 2) he was the first to preach the Gospel to the Jews, on Pentecost, and to the Gentiles, when he visited Cornelius; 3) he converted eight thousand people through his sermons on Pentecost and for several days later; 4) he performed so many miracles that the mere shadow of his body cured the sick; 5) he established his see first at Antioch, where he worked for seven years, and then at Rome, where he lived until his death; 6) he sent many bishops to preach throughout the world.

Q. What was Saint Peter's reward for preaching the Gospel in the places to which he traveled?

A. He was often insulted, imprisoned, and scourged, both in Jerusalem and in Rome, where he was crucified.

Q. Did Saint Peter write anything?

A. Yes, he wrote two Epistles, one to the Jews dispersed in Greece and another to all the faithful.

Q. How did Saint Peter die?

A. This is how it happened: Emperor Nero, the first persecutor of the Christians, imprisoned him and then had him scourged and crucified. Out of respect for our Lord, Saint Peter asked to be cru-

cified head downward, considering himself unworthy to die in the same position as Jesus Christ.

Q. What honor did Saint Peter receive after his death?

A. His body was buried in Rome, where a splendid basilica was built over his tomb, and the faithful of all nations on earth have always come to visit it with deep veneration, even during the most violent persecutions.

Saint Paul

Q. Who was Saint Paul?

A. He was a Hebrew of the tribe of Benjamin but also a Roman citizen because he was born in Tarsus of Cilicia. He was educated in Jerusalem by Gamaliel, a doctor of the Mosaic Law, and became a very zealous observer of the law and a professed Pharisee.

Q. How did Saint Paul show his zeal for the Jewish Law?

A. He showed his zeal in the following five ways: 1) at the martyrdom of Saint Stephen, he kept watch over the cloaks of those who stoned him; 2) he persecuted the Church cruelly until God converted him; 3) according to Holy Scripture, he breathed murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord; 4) he entered houses and dragged men and women off to prison; 5) he even went one day to get authorization from the chief priests to bring to Jerusalem in chains any Christians he would find in the synagogues of Damascus.

Q. How did God convert Saint Paul and make him a disciple of Jesus Christ?

A. This is how it happened: as Paul was approaching the city of Damascus, a light suddenly shone from heaven around him, *and so on in Acts*.[11]

Q. Who baptized Saint Paul?

A. A disciple of Jesus Christ named Ananias, who was living in Damascus, baptized Saint Paul.

Q. What led Ananias to baptize Saint Paul?

A. God told Ananias to seek out Saul of Tarsus because he had chosen him to bring his name before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel and would show him how much he would have to suffer for his name.

Q. What did Saint Paul do after his conversion?

A. He did the following five things: 1) he withdrew into Arabia; 2) then he returned to Damascus; 3) after three years, he went to Jerusalem to visit the Apostles and confer with them while staying

11. Acts 9:1–24.

with Saint Peter for two weeks; 4) he preached the Gospel to the Jews, reducing them to silence, and converted the Proconsul Sergius Paulus, from whom it is believed he took his name; 5) he traveled over most of the known world, converting people to believe in Jesus Christ.

Q. Did Saint Paul suffer much to promote faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Yes, he suffered many exterior and interior trials.

Q. What exterior trials did Saint Paul suffer to promote faith in Jesus Christ?

A. He was persecuted many times and, as he says, endured prison, chains, hunger, thirst, whipping, beating, stoning, betrayal, slander, treatment as a thief; he bore all with unbelievable patience.

Q. What interior trials did Saint Paul have to undergo?

A. He suffered violent temptations, especially against purity.

Q. Why is Saint Paul in particular called an Apostle?

A. There are three reasons: 1) he suffered more than the other Apostles; 2) he wrote more than the others; 3) he dedicated himself entirely to the conversion of the Gentiles.

Q. What special graces did Saint Paul receive?

A. There are two in particular: 1) he was taken up in rapture to the third heaven; 2) he saw and learned mysteries there that mortals are not permitted to know on earth.

Q. Who brought about the death of Saint Paul?

A. The Jews did.

Q. How did the Jews bring about the death of Saint Paul?

A. This is how it happened: Saint Paul was in Jerusalem, arguing that the Gentiles should not be required to follow the Law of Moses, when certain Jews from Asia, who were also in Jerusalem and knew of the converts he had made in Asia among the Gentiles, saw him go to the Temple to purify himself. They started a riot among the people; seizing him, they cried out, "People of Israel, help! Here is the man who. . . ." *See the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 21, verse 27, and following, up to the final chapter.*

Q. How did Saint Paul die?

A. This is how he died: in the ninth year of Nero's reign, he was beheaded on the same day Saint Peter was crucified, both by imperial order. He was buried on the Ostian Way, where a splendid basilica was erected that Christians still visit, just as they visit Saint Peter's basilica.

Q. What miracle happened when Saint Paul died?

A. Milk instead of blood flowed out when he was beheaded.

Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul properly and to honor these two saints?

A. We should do six things: 1) esteem and respect them as two princes of the Church who prepared and gave us the faith, 2) thank God for giving us faith through them, for Saint Peter sent bishops and preachers to France, and Saint Paul also passed through and left behind some disciples, 3) beseech God to preserve our faith through the intercession of these two saints, 4) ask these two saints to defend the Church always against schisms and heresies, to entreat God for the conversion of heretics, and to obtain from God good bishops, priests, and teachers who will keep us faithful to the doctrine these saints taught us at the cost of their life, 5) imitate their faith, courage, and zeal in defending the cause of Jesus Christ and of the Christian religion, and 6) visit the churches dedicated to them.

Lesson 9—Saint Andrew

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Andrew, Apostle.
Q. Who was Saint Andrew?
A. He was one of the twelve Apostles, the brother of Saint Peter, a Jew, and a fisherman by profession from Bethsaida in Galilee.
Q. How did Saint Andrew become an Apostle of Jesus Christ?
A. This is how it happened: he was a disciple of Saint John the Baptist before encountering our Lord and the first of the Twelve to know him. When Saint John the Baptist pointed out Jesus Christ to him, he followed him at once, and he also brought along his brother, Saint Peter, and left everything to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.
Q. Did Saint Andrew do anything noteworthy while he was a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. He brought to Jesus Christ some Gentiles who wanted to see him on the day he entered Jerusalem; thus he can be considered as the first Apostle to the Gentiles.
Q. Where did Saint Andrew preach the Gospel?
A. He preached the Gospel to a great many barbarian nations that he converted to the faith.
Q. How did Saint Andrew die?
A. He had the honor of dying on a cross like his master, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. How long was Saint Andrew on the cross?
A. He remained on it for two whole days, a notable example of long-suffering.
Q. What did Saint Andrew do while hanging on the cross?

A. He did three remarkable things: 1) he pardoned those who were crucifying him; 2) he prevented the people from attacking the judge who condemned him to death; 3) he refused to come down from the cross.
Q. What special grace did Saint Andrew receive?
A. His great love for the cross caused him to cry out, "O blessed cross!" when he saw it being prepared for him.
Q. What should we do to honor Saint Andrew and to celebrate his feast properly?
A. We should do five things: 1) honor this saint as the first disciple of Jesus Christ, 2) thank God for calling him first to the faith and for bestowing on him such a great share in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, especially his love for suffering, 3) ask God through the intercession of Saint Andrew for great respect for the holy sacrifice of the Mass, which this saint celebrated daily, 4) implore this saint to obtain for us a lively faith and an ardent desire for suffering, and 5) imitate his virtues, especially his great courage.

Lesson 9b—Saint James the Greater, Apostle

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint James the Greater, Apostle.
Q. Why is this saint called the Greater?
A. He was the first of two Apostles named James called to serve.
Q. Who was Saint James the Greater?
A. Saint James, the brother of Saint John, was a Hebrew by birth, the son of Zebedee and Mary Salome, a fisherman by profession, and one of the twelve Apostles.
Q. What special graces did our Lord give to Saint James the Greater?
A. There are two: 1) he witnessed three principal actions of our Lord: the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, chief of the synagogue, the Transfiguration of our Lord, and his agony in the Garden of Olives; 2) when our Lord promised him and the Apostle Saint John that they would drink of his chalice, they replied, "We can."
Q. Where did Saint James preach the Gospel?
A. He preached the Gospel in Judea, and an ancient tradition holds that he also preached it in Spain.
Q. How did Saint James the Greater die?
A. Herod Agrippa, the king of the Jews, wishing to placate the Jews, had him arrested, scourged, and beheaded.
Q. How did Saint James bear the torments he suffered?
A. He endured them with great patience.

Q. When did Saint James the Greater die?
A. He was beheaded during paschal time and was the first Apostle to shed his blood for the faith.
Q. Does the Church show great honor to Saint James the Greater?
A. Yes, she bestows special honor by the frequent pilgrimages made to venerate his tomb in Galicia, where his body was brought after his death, and the popes have encouraged these pilgrimages by granting extraordinary indulgences and privileges.
Q. What should we do to honor Saint James the Greater and to celebrate his feast properly?
A. We should do five things: 1) respect him as one of the closest and most beloved Apostles of Jesus Christ, 2) thank God for the tender love he gave him for Jesus Christ, 3) ask God through his intercession for submission to divine providence, for it is said that this saint converted few souls to God, 4) accept suffering and be willing to drink from Jesus Christ's chalice as Saint James did, and 5) imitate his virtues, especially his affection for Jesus Christ.

Lesson 10—Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist.
Q. Who was Saint John the Apostle?
A. Saint John, the brother of Saint James the Greater, was a Jew by birth, the son of Zebedee and Mary Salome, a fisherman by profession, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, one of the four Evangelists, and also a Prophet.
Q. When and how did Jesus Christ call Saint John to be an Apostle?
A. It was on the same day, soon after he called Saint Peter and Saint Andrew, while Saint John was mending nets with his brother Saint James and their father Zebedee; the two brothers immediately abandoned everything to follow Jesus Christ.
Q. What was noteworthy about Saint John?
A. He was a Prophet and the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ, as he tells us in his Gospel, and he remained celibate.
Q. Did Saint John write anything?
A. Yes, he wrote a Gospel, three Epistles, and a book of prophecies.
Q. What especially characterizes the Gospel he wrote?
A. Three special features are: 1) he begins with the eternal generation of the Son of God in the bosom of his Father; 2) he records Jesus Christ's inspiring discourse to his Apostles after the Last Supper; 3) he tells us that Jesus Christ, when he was on the cross, entrusted the Most Blessed Virgin to him as his mother.

Q. Why is Saint John a Prophet?
A. He wrote the Apocalypse, which has as many prophecies as it has words.
Q. By what signs do we know that Jesus Christ made Saint John his beloved disciple?
A. There are three principal marks: 1) he had him witness the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, chief of the synagogue, the Transfiguration, and his agony in the Garden of Olives; 2) he gave Saint John the privilege of resting his head on his sacred breast at the Last Supper; 3) he entrusted his most holy mother to him as his mother when he was dying on the cross.
Q. How did Saint John show his special love for Jesus Christ?
A. He showed this especially on two occasions: 1) he did not abandon Jesus Christ, whom he followed to Calvary and stayed with until he died; 2) he ran to the sepulchre as soon as he learned of the Resurrection of Jesus from Saint Mary Magdalene.
Q. Was Saint John closer to Jesus Christ than the other Apostles were?
A. Yes, this was shown on two particular occasions: 1) when Jesus Christ predicted to his Apostles the ruin of Jerusalem and the Temple, it was Saint John who asked him to explain how this would come about; 2) when Jesus Christ at the Last Supper did not name the one who would betray him, it was Saint John who, at a sign from Saint Peter, who dared not speak, asked our Lord who it was, and Jesus told him.
Q. Where did Saint John preach the Gospel?
A. He preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and the other Apostles, and later in Asia.
Q. What did Saint John suffer because he preached the Gospel?
A. He suffered much, especially on the following three occasions: 1) along with Saint Peter, who had cured the lame man at the Temple gate, he was arrested and imprisoned, from where he boldly proclaimed the Resurrection of Jesus Christ before the chief priests; 2), when he was in Rome, he was seized by order of the Emperor Domitian, put in prison, scourged, and plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil from which he emerged stronger and healthier than ever; 3) he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse, which prophesies the most important things that will happen to the Church until the end of the world.
Q. What did Saint John command his disciples to do?
A. He told them repeatedly to love one another.
Q. Why did Saint John so often tell his disciples to love one another?

A. He said that if we keep this commandment faithfully, as our Lord wants us to do, we will fulfill all others, for this commandment includes them.

Q. What should we do to honor Saint John and to celebrate his feast properly?

A. We should do five things: 1) respect and esteem him as someone filled with special light and grace and as the adopted son of the Most Blessed Virgin, 2) thank God and our Lord Jesus Christ for revealing to him so many mysteries and for giving him the Most Blessed Virgin as his mother, the dearest pledge of his affection, 3) implore God through the intercession of Saint John to give us a share of the tender love he had for Jesus and for Mary, 4) ask Saint John to entreat God to give us a great love for purity, and 5) imitate his virtues, especially his simplicity and his love for solitude and prayer.

Lesson 11—Saint Thomas

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?

A. It is the feast of Saint Thomas, Apostle.

Q. What were Saint Thomas' special virtues?

A. There are three in particular: 1) his affection for Jesus Christ, 2) his faith after his unbelief, and 3) his zeal for announcing Jesus Christ and preaching his Gospel.

Q. What is an example of Saint Thomas' affection for Jesus Christ?

A. When Jesus Christ wished to go to Judea, where they were seeking to put him to death, Thomas said to the other Apostles, "Let us go and die with Jesus."

Q. What is a particular example of Saint Thomas' faith?

A. He did not at first want to believe that our Lord was risen, even though the other Apostles affirmed it, but he only believed it eight days later when Jesus appeared to them all, and then he recognized him as his Lord and adored him as his God.

Q. What is an example of Saint Thomas' zeal for announcing Jesus Christ?

A. He preached the Gospel in many different nations and in far distant lands.

Q. What should we do to honor Saint Thomas and to celebrate his feast properly?

A. We should do five things: 1) repeat frequently and with deep faith the words of this Apostle, "My Lord, and my God!" 2) thank God and our Lord Jesus Christ for opening the eyes of this holy Apostle when he was unbelieving, 3) thank God for teaching us

through the words he addressed to Saint Thomas how happy we are that we do not see, yet we believe, 4) ask God through the intercession of this saint to increase our faith, and 5) implore God through the merits of this saint for the conversion of infidels, especially Indians.[12]

Lesson 12—Saints James and Philip, Apostles

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saints James and Philip, Apostles.

Saint James

Q. Who was Saint James the Less?
A. Saint James the Less was a Hebrew of the tribe of Judah and a close relative of Jesus Christ; thus he was sometimes called his brother.
Q. Why is Saint James called "the Less"?
A. Of the two Apostles named James, he was the last to be called to the apostolate.
Q. Where did Saint James preach the holy Gospel?
A. It was in Jerusalem, where he was bishop.
Q. What are Saint James' most evident virtues?
A. There are two in particular: 1) his diligence in prayer, and 2) his austerity of life and mortification of the body.
Q. How did Saint James the Less show his diligence in prayer?
A. He was so faithful to prayer that calluses like the hoof of a camel developed on his knees.
Q. How did Saint James the Less show his austerity of life and mortification of the body?
A. He abstained from meat and wine all through his life.
Q. Was Saint James the Less held in high esteem?
A. Yes, people felt special admiration for him.
Q. How did people show their admiration for Saint James?
A. There are seven principal ways: 1) he was called "the just one" *par excellence;* 2) he was considered a model of penance, innocence, and holiness; 3) after our Lord's Ascension, the other Apostles chose him to be the first bishop of Jerusalem; 4) he was the first one Saint Peter informed that he had been freed from prison by an angel; 5) he was considered by Saint Paul as one of the pillars of the Church; 6) the Jews esteemed him so highly,

12. This might be a reference to the activity of French missionaries of the time in North America.

Tradition says, that they gave him the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies; 7) the Jews considered the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple to be an effect of and punishment for his condemnation and death.

Q. How did Saint James the Less die?

A. This is how Saint James the Less died: when he was bishop of Jerusalem, the Jews cast him from the height of the Temple, stoned him, and beat him with clubs because they hated the Christian religion he preached.

Saint Philip

Q. Who was Saint Philip?

A. Saint Philip was a Jew by birth, a native of Bethsaida of Galilee, and the fifth Apostle our Lord Jesus Christ called to follow him.

Q. Where did Saint Philip preach the Gospel?

A. He preached to the Scythians and converted to the faith the inhabitants of various other lands.

Q. What were Saint Philip's special virtues?

A. There were three especially: 1) confidence in God, 2) respectful submission to our Lord, and 3) detachment from his relatives.

Q. When in particular did Saint Philip show his confidence in God?

A. When our Lord asked him where bread might be bought to feed the five thousand men who had followed him, Saint Philip first replied that two hundred denarii would not be enough to provide a morsel for each one, but then he did not worry about what our Lord would do to provide.

Q. When in particular did Saint Philip show his respectful submission to our Lord?

A. When our Lord said, "Philip, he who sees me sees the Father also," Saint Philip said nothing more, respectfully submitting to what our Lord had said.

Q. When in particular did Saint Philip show both his respectful submission to our Lord and his detachment from his relatives?

A. It is commonly believed that it was Philip who asked our Lord for permission to go home to bury his father, and when our Lord answered him, "Let the dead bury the dead," he accepted what Jesus said.

Q. Did Jesus Christ show special regard for Saint Philip?

A. He showed special regard for Saint Philip for having asked him, just before the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, where they could get enough bread for so vast a crowd.

Q. Did it appear that Saint Philip had ready access to our Lord?

A. Yes, when our Lord made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, some Gentiles asked Saint Philip to introduce them to Jesus, which showed that he was known for his closeness to our Lord.
Q. How did Saint Philip die?
A. He died in the following manner: while preaching the Gospel, Saint Philip was arrested and thrown into prison, where he was brutally scourged, crucified, and finally stoned to death.
Q. What should we do to honor these two Apostles, Saints James the Less and Philip, and to celebrate their feast properly?
A. We should do four things: 1) show great respect to Saint James for his eminent holiness and to Saint Philip for the ready access he had to our Lord and the esteem our Lord had for him, 2) thank God for giving the Church Saint James as a model of penance, innocence, and holiness and for giving us Saint Philip as an example of detachment from relatives, 3) ask God through the intercession of Saint James for a love of prayer and mortification and through the intercession of Saint Philip for great confidence in God in the midst our needs, and 4) imitate their virtues, especially Saint James' love for prayer and penance and Saint Philip's detachment.

Lesson 13—Saint Bartholomew

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the Apostle Saint Bartholomew.
Q. Who was Saint Bartholomew?
A. Saint Bartholomew was a Jew, or Hebrew, by birth and an Apostle of Jesus Christ; he left everything to follow him.
Q. Where did Saint Bartholomew preach the Gospel?
A. Saint Bartholomew preached in vast and distant lands, especially in India, where he introduced the Gospel of Saint Matthew by using it in his preaching.
Q. What were Saint Bartholomew's special virtues?
A. There are two in particular: 1) his temperance, which he successfully taught to people whom Saint John Chrysostom describes as rough and wild, and 2) his extraordinary forbearance during his martyrdom.
Q. How did Saint Bartholomew die?
A. This is how he died: after the king of India's conversion, the king's brother, still a pagan, arrested him at the instigation of the pagan priests and had him flayed alive and then beheaded.
Q. What should we do to honor Saint Bartholomew and to celebrate his feast properly?

A. We should do four things: 1) follow this saint's example by showing great respect for the Gospel, 2) thank God for giving this saint the grace of bringing the light of faith to extremely hostile nations, 3) ask God through the intercession of this saint for a love of temperance, and 4) imitate his virtues, especially his forbearance during an extremely cruel martyrdom.

Lesson 14—Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist.
Q. Who was Saint Matthew?
A. Saint Matthew was a publican, that is, a tax collector.
Q. How did Saint Matthew become an Apostle?
A. This is what happened: one day, when passing by Saint Matthew's tax collector's booth, Jesus invited him to follow him, and immediately Saint Matthew left his place and followed Jesus. Later, Saint Matthew gave a great banquet, at which several other publicans were present, to honor Jesus Christ and his Apostles; when the Pharisees heard about it, they criticized Jesus Christ and his disciples for eating with publicans and sinners.
Q. Where did Saint Matthew preach the Gospel?
A. It was in Ethiopia, where he converted the king and his kingdom and raised the king's daughter from the dead.
Q. What were Saint Matthew's particular accomplishments?
A. He wrote the first of the four Gospels, and he is believed to be the one who began the custom of consecrating virgins and giving them a veil on that occasion.
Q. What were Saint Matthew's special virtues?
A. He had two in particular: 1) humility, which caused him to name himself in his Gospel as Matthew, the sinner or the publican, the name by which he was most commonly known, whereas the other Evangelists respectfully called him Levi, and 2) a great love for abstinence, for he ate no meat but lived on vegetables and grain.
Q. What especially characterizes the Gospel of Saint Matthew?
A. There are three main features: 1) he wrote it in Hebrew; 2) he is the only Evangelist who begins by giving us the genealogy of Jesus Christ and his ancestors; 3) he is the only one who includes in his account of the birth of Jesus Christ the adoration by the Magi, the flight of Saint Joseph with the Most Blessed Virgin and the infant Jesus to Egypt and their return to Nazareth, and the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus Christ laid down the principal maxims of the Christian life.

Q. How did Saint Matthew die?
A. It is believed that while celebrating the divine mysteries, he was massacred at the altar by the successor of the king of Ethiopia, whom he had converted. The successor, who had wanted to marry the king's daughter Iphigenia, did this out of hatred for Saint Matthew, who had inspired her to make a vow of virginity.
Q. What should we do to honor Saint Matthew and to celebrate his feast properly?
A. We should do five things: 1) read his Gospel frequently, especially the Sermon on the Mount, which contains the principal maxims of the Christian life, and at the same time make acts of faith in the main truths contained in it, 2) thank God for giving us this saint as an example of how to renounce all things and be indifferent to human admiration, 3) trust in the mercy of God, who made an Apostle and a great saint out of a sinner, 4) ask God through his intercession for the gift of chastity, and 5) imitate his virtues, especially his abstinence, his tremendous courage, and his detachment from all riches and worldly goods.

Lesson 15—Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles.
Q. Who were Saints Simon and Jude?
A. Saint Simon was from Cana in Galilee; Saint Jude, also called Thaddeus, was a Hebrew of the tribe of Judah, the brother of Saint James the Less, and a close relative of Jesus Christ.
Q. Where did Saints Simon and Jude preach the Gospel?
A. It was in Egypt, Africa, Mesopotamia, and Persia, where they converted an immense number of people.
Q. Why do we celebrate the feast of these two saints on the same day?
A. They preached the Gospel together.
Q. What did Saint Jude do that was noteworthy?
A. He wrote an Epistle against the heretics of his day.
Q. How did Saints Simon and Jude die?
A. They were martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ; Saint Simon was sawn in two, and Saint Jude was cut to pieces.
Q. What should we do to honor Saints Simon and Jude and to celebrate their feast properly?
A. We should do four things: 1) fast on the eve of their feast, as the Church prescribes, 2) thank God for giving these saints such zeal for the establishment of the Church, 3) ask God through their in-

tercession for enduring unity with our neighbor, and 4) imitate their virtues, especially their simplicity and their love for truth.

Lesson 16—Saint Matthias, Apostle

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle.
Q. Who was Saint Matthias?
A. Saint Matthias was a Jew by birth and one of Jesus' disciples before our Lord's death.
Q. How did Saint Matthias become an Apostle if he was only a disciple when our Lord died?
A. The Apostles chose him, after our Lord's Ascension, to replace Judas, who had hanged himself in despair after betraying our Lord.
Q. Who was Judas, whose place Saint Matthias took?
A. He was the one of the twelve Apostles chosen by Jesus Christ who later betrayed him into the hands of the Jews.
Q. Where did Saint Matthias preach the Gospel?
A. Saint Matthias preached first in Judea and then in Ethiopia.
Q. How long did Saint Matthias preach the Gospel?
A. He preached for thirty-three years.
Q. How did Saint Matthias die?
A. He was martyred by being stoned, crucified, and then beheaded.
Q. What should we do to honor Saint Matthias and to celebrate his feast properly?
A. We should do four things: 1) consult God in all things, 2) thank God for choosing Saint Matthias as an Apostle solely for his virtues, 3) ask God through the intercession of Saint Matthias to act always by grace and never out of human considerations, and 4) imitate his virtues, especially his distrust of his body, which he is reported to have said must be treated like an enemy and never allowed any pleasure.

Lesson 17—Saint Barnabas, Apostle

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Barnabas, Apostle.
Q. What does the name *Barnabas* mean?
A. Barnabas means *child of consolation.*
Q. Who gave this name to Saint Barnabas?
A. The Apostles gave him this name because of the joy experienced by all the faithful over the conversion and the vocation of this saint, who greatly edified the entire Church.

Q. What was Saint Barnabas called before he was given this name?
A. His name was Joseph.
Q. Who was Saint Barnabas?
A. Saint Barnabas was a Hebrew by nationality, of the tribe of Levi, who came from a wealthy family that scrupulously observed the Law of Moses, and although he was not one of the Twelve, he was considered to be an Apostle.
Q. Was Saint Barnabas an Apostle of Jesus Christ?
A. Saint Barnabas was given this title even though he was not one of the original Twelve.
Q. Why was Saint Barnabas given this title if he was not one of the Twelve?
A. He was chosen, with Saint Paul, by the Holy Spirit to do apostolic work, and he helped the Apostles considerably in founding the Church.
Q. What special work did Saint Barnabas do?
A. He worked particularly at converting the Jews and then the Gentiles, and he performed important tasks and distributed alms for the Apostles.
Q. Where did Saint Barnabas begin to preach the Gospel?
A. He was the first who went to preach in Antioch.
Q. Did Saint Barnabas convert many people?
A. Yes, in a short time he converted so many people in Antioch that these believers in Jesus Christ began to form a kind of body and were called Christians.
Q. What did Saint Barnabas do after preaching in Antioch?
A. After Saint Paul had been converted, Saint Barnabas presented him to the Apostles and was then chosen by the Holy Spirit to be Saint Paul's companion in preaching the Gospel.
Q. What were Saint Barnabas' special virtues?
A. They are mainly these three: 1) detachment from worldly possessions, 2) intense religious zeal, and 3) remarkable piety.
Q. How did Saint Barnabas show his detachment from worldly possessions?
A. He showed his detachment by selling his considerable property and giving the proceeds to the Apostles to be distributed to poor people.
Q. How did Saint Barnabas show his religious zeal?
A. When the Apostles were assembled in Jerusalem, it was said of him that he would sacrifice himself for Jesus Christ; furthermore, he was the one who asked the Apostles to examine the issue of Gentile converts and argued that they should not be required to keep the Mosaic Law.

Q. How did Saint Barnabas show his remarkable piety?
A. He had a reputation for being a man full of kindness and filled with faith and the Holy Spirit.
Q. How did Saint Barnabas die?
A. After suffering cruel persecution, he was stoned to death by the Jews.
Q. What happened when the tomb of Saint Barnabas was opened?
A. The Gospel of Saint Matthew, copied by Saint Barnabas' own hand, was found lying on his breast.
Q. What should we do to honor Saint Barnabas and to celebrate his feast properly?
A. We should do four things: 1) honor him for his indifference to riches, 2) thank God for converting him to the faith, designating him as one of the pillars of the Church, appointing him to help found the Church, and making his preaching and missions so successful, 3) ask God through his intercession for a fervent spirit and respect for the holy Gospel, and 4) imitate his virtues.

Lesson 18—Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Most Blessed Virgin

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. Who was Saint Joseph?
A. Saint Joseph belonged to the tribe of Judah and the royal family of David; he was the foster father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the husband of the Most Blessed Virgin.
Q. How did Saint Joseph live?
A. He lived as a poor man working with his hands as a carpenter.
Q. Was Saint Joseph well known in the world?
A. No, because no one had any special esteem or consideration for him, knowing him merely as a poor carpenter.
Q. Why was Saint Joseph totally unknown in the world?
A. He led a hidden life and visited no one.
Q. Why did Saint Joseph lead a hidden life unknown to all?
A. There were five reasons: 1) to submit to God, who wished to keep the mystery of the Incarnation hidden until our Lord began preaching, 2) to respect our Lord, finding no better company on earth than his, 3) to accommodate the Most Blessed Virgin, who loved seclusion and silence, 4) to apply himself entirely and interiorly to the contemplation of the sacred mysteries that took place in our Lord, and 5) to benefit more fully from the graces the eternal Father gave him through Jesus Christ, his Son.
Q. How did our Lord Jesus Christ relate to Saint Joseph?

A. He considered Joseph as his father and obeyed him in all things.
Q. What did our Lord Jesus Christ do in the house of Saint Joseph?
A. He worked with him and carried out the small tasks he gave him to do.
Q. How did the Most Blessed Virgin relate to Saint Joseph?
A. She submitted to her husband's will as a good wife does, working silently at all her tasks for the welfare of the family.
Q. How virtuous was Saint Joseph?
A. He was virtuous to an eminent degree, which is why the Gospel says of him, in a word, that he was a just man.
Q. What were Saint Joseph's special virtues?
A. There are five in particular: 1) chastity, which it is believed he kept by vow, 2) faith, accepting without question what the angel told him when revealing the mystery of the Incarnation, 3) exact obedience, leaving at night for Egypt as soon as he had received the warning from an angel, 4) humility, being content in his work and poverty even though he belonged to the family of King David, and 5) love of solitude and silence, living without fame and preferring not to speak with anyone.
Q. What benefits and special privileges did Saint Joseph have?
A. There are seven in particular: 1) he learned through revelation about the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, of human redemption, and of the Most Blessed Virgin's holiness; 2) he named the infant Jesus; 3) he received through an angel the eternal Father's warning that enlightened him and told him to take the infant Jesus to Egypt and bring him back; 4) he had the happiness of having the Most Blessed Virgin as his wife and of protecting her purity; 5) he lived together with Jesus and the Most Blessed Virgin; 6) he was obeyed and esteemed by the child Jesus and the Most Blessed Virgin; 7) he had a most happy death in the arms of Jesus and Mary.
Q. What trials did Saint Joseph have to endure during his life?
A. They are mainly five: 1) realizing that the Most Blessed Virgin was pregnant, 2) Herod's plotting to kill the child Jesus, 3) weariness on the flight into Egypt and on the return home, 4) poverty, especially in Egypt, where he knew no one, and 5) the loss of Jesus when the child was twelve years old and remained behind in the Temple in Jerusalem talking to the teachers, causing Saint Joseph and the Most Blessed Virgin to seek him for three days.
Q. What great consolations did Saint Joseph experience in his life?
A. He especially experienced these six: 1) knowing the mystery of the Incarnation and the exalted state of the Most Blessed Virgin, 2) seeing, adoring, loving, and holding in his arms the child Jesus,

3) seeing the shepherds and the kings worship the divine child, 4) hearing what Saint Simeon and the Prophetess Anna said of Jesus on the day of the Most Blessed Virgin's Purification, 5) finding Jesus in the Temple after he had been lost, and 6) receiving the obedience of Jesus and the Most Blessed Virgin.

Q. When did Saint Joseph die?

A. It is believed that he died shortly before Jesus Christ went to preach the holy Gospel.

Q. What should we do to honor Saint Joseph and to celebrate his feast properly?

A. We should especially do the following seven things: 1) honor him as the foster father of Jesus Christ, the faithful spouse of the Most Blessed Virgin, and one of the greatest saints, 2) thank God for giving this saint so many graces and for choosing him to be the foster father of his Son and the spouse of the Most Blessed Virgin, 3) spend his feast day entirely in acts of piety, 4) have great confidence in Saint Joseph's intercession because he is very powerful with God, 5) pray to him often with special devotion, 6) never fail to pray to him every day, and 7) imitate his virtues.

Q. What virtues of Saint Joseph should we try to imitate?

A. We should imitate his purity, his prompt obedience, and his humble, poor, hidden, and hardworking life.

Q. How can we describe Saint Joseph's purity?

A. His purity was so great that it equaled the Most Blessed Virgin's and made him deserving of being her husband.

Q. How can we describe Saint Joseph's obedience?

A. His obedience was so prompt and exact that he departed at the very moment he received the order from an angel to go to Egypt, even though it was night.

Q. How can we describe Saint Joseph's humility?

A. He was so humble that he was not known or considered important by anyone, even though he was a descendent of King David.

Q. How poor was Saint Joseph?

A. He was so poor that no one wanted to give him lodging when he arrived in Bethlehem, which is why he had to take refuge in a stable.

Q. How hardworking was Saint Joseph?

A. He worked constantly as a carpenter to support his family.

Lesson 19—Saint Stephen, the first martyr

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?

A. It is the feast of Saint Stephen, the first martyr.

Q. Who was Saint Stephen?
A. He was among the initial faithful selected by the Apostles to be one of the seven deacons they consecrated.
Q. What special privileges did Saint Stephen receive from God?
A. Holy Scripture mentions four principal advantages: 1) he was filled with faith, grace, and courage; 2) he was filled with the Holy Spirit and possessed deep wisdom; 3) he preached so effectively that he silenced the most obstinate Jews; 4) he performed miracles and astounding works to confirm the truth of the Gospel.
Q. What were Saint Stephen's special virtues?
A. There were three in particular: 1) great courage in preaching and proclaiming Jesus Christ crucified, with no fear of the insults or hatred of the Jews or even of death itself, 2) zeal in making Jesus Christ known, and 3) love and forgiveness for his enemies, for he prayed for them before dying, just as Jesus Christ had done, and he did not regard as sinful the death the Jews inflicted on him.
Q. How did Saint Stephen die?
A. He was martyred by the Jews, who stoned him as a blasphemer for preaching Jesus Christ to them and out of hatred for his reproaching them with their crimes and hardness of heart.
Q. What should we do to honor Saint Stephen and to celebrate his feast properly?
A. We should do four things: 1) honor him for the presence of the Spirit of God in him and as the first martyr and model for others, 2) thank God for filling him with his Holy Spirit and giving him such zeal and courage, 3) ask God through the intercession of this saint not to look upon anyone as our enemy and to pardon all those who may have done us harm, and 4) imitate his virtues.

Lesson 20—Saint Lawrence, martyr

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Lawrence.
Q. Who was Saint Lawrence?
A. He was born in Spain and became the first deacon of the Church of Rome at the time of Pope Sixtus I.
Q. What were Saint Lawrence's duties?
A. Saint Lawrence distributed alms to poor people and did so with great zeal and attentiveness.
Q. What was Saint Lawrence's most noteworthy virtue?
A. He felt such a great desire for martyrdom that when he saw Pope Saint Sixtus led away to execution, he complained that the pope

was abandoning him and should take him along so that he could suffer and die with him for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Q. How did Saint Lawrence persuade Pope Saint Sixtus to take him along to be executed?

A. He argued that it was not reasonable for the pope to go to his death without a deacon, for during his life a deacon had always accompanied him, and that nothing prevented his dying with this holy pope, for he had already distributed the alms entrusted to him.

Q. What did Saint Sixtus answer when Saint Lawrence asked to follow him to suffer martyrdom with him?

A. Saint Sixtus told Saint Lawrence to take comfort because in three days he would follow him and endure more cruel torments, for he, Sixtus, being old and feeble, would have an easy death.

Q. How did Saint Lawrence die?

A. A judge, thinking that Saint Lawrence had control over great wealth, had him arrested to get this money for himself.

Q. What did Saint Lawrence say to the judge when asked to hand over the treasure of the Church?

A. He told him to wait three days, and he would hand the treasure over to him.

Q. What did Saint Lawrence do when the three days had passed after which he had promised to show the Church's treasure to the judge?

A. He brought a great many poor people before the judge, saying that they were the most precious treasure of the Church.

Q. What did the judge do to Saint Lawrence after he said this?

A. The judge had him tortured cruelly.

Q. What torture did Saint Lawrence suffer?

A. He suffered a great number of torments: his flesh was torn to shreds; he was scourged and racked; his body was scraped with iron combs, and he suffered other atrocities all night long.

Q. What did Saint Lawrence say to this tyrant while being tortured?

A. He told him that he would never serve anyone but God and that these tortures did not intimidate him.

Q. How did Saint Lawrence finally die?

A. This is how Saint Lawrence died: after undergoing many tortures, he was placed on a gridiron and roasted over a slow fire.

Q. What did Saint Lawrence say to his executioner while lying on the gridiron?

A. After one side of his body was roasted, he said, "Turn me over; when I am fully roasted, you can eat my flesh to satisfy yourself."

Q. What did Saint Lawrence say to God while lying on the gridiron?

A. He said, "Lord, when I was threatened with fire, I confessed you as my Lord and my God; now, roasted as I am, I give praise to you," after which his soul took flight to heaven.
Q. What should we do to honor Saint Lawrence and to celebrate his feast properly?
A. We should do five things: 1) honor this saint as one of the greatest martyrs and miracles in the Church, 2) thank God for giving this saint such zeal for suffering for him and such courage in his tortures, 3) ask God through the intercession of Saint Lawrence for love for poor people and grace to bear suffering gladly for him, 4) imitate the virtues of this saint, especially esteem for poor people, generosity in his sufferings, and joy in his torments, and 5) fast on the eve of his feast.

Lesson 21—Saint Martin, Archbishop of Tours

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Martin, Archbishop of Tours.
Q. What did Saint Martin do in his youth that was so remarkable?
A. He did three things: 1) when he was ten, he enrolled among the catechumens; 2) when he was fifteen, he enlisted in the army of the Emperor Constantius; 3) when he was eighteen, he gave half his cloak to a beggar who had asked him for alms, and shortly afterward he was baptized.
Q. Did Saint Martin's gift of half his cloak to the beggar please our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. Yes, and to show Saint Martin how pleased he was, our Lord appeared to him wrapped in this half cloak, saying, "Although still a catechumen, Martin clothed me in this cloak."
Q. What did Saint Martin do when he was older?
A. He did six noteworthy things when he was older: 1) he converted his mother, his relatives, and various other idolaters, although not his father; 2) he built a monastery in the city of Milan, but the Arian bishop drove him away; 3) from there he went to live with a priest for two years on a deserted island; 4) he built a monastery near Poitiers; 5) he lived such a holy life in this monastery that he raised two dead people to life; 6) finally, he was consecrated archbishop of Tours, even though he resisted.
Q. How did Saint Martin conduct himself as an archbishop?
A. He behaved in these three ways: 1) he lived as austerely as in the monastery; 2) he was an example and a model to bishops in the governance of his diocese; 3) he performed many miracles.
Q. What kinds of miracles did Saint Martin perform?

A. He performed three kinds of miracles: 1) he miraculously destroyed idols; 2) he raised the dead to life; 3) he healed all kinds of maladies, even by contact with his clothing or his letters.

Q. What were Saint Martin's special virtues?

A. They were the following five in particular: 1) diligence in prayer, 2) respect for God's presence in churches, for he never sat down in church, believing that he should tremble in the presence of his Judge, 3) love for being poor, 4) love for corporal penance, which he practiced extensively until his death, and 5) great patience when slandered and insulted, especially by his archdeacon, Saint Brice.

Q. What graces and special favors did God give to Saint Martin?

A. There are principally four: 1) he possessed total control over the demons; 2) he was honored by the presence of God, of angels, and of saints; 3) not only animals but also the most powerful people on earth, including emperors, submitted to him; 4) people sometimes saw a globe of fire appear above his head when he celebrated holy Mass.

Q. Was Saint Martin highly esteemed during his life?

A. Yes, and this was especially shown in three ways: 1) the usurper Emperor Maximus showed him respect, listened to his advice, and invited him to his table; 2) this Emperor allowed Saint Martin to seat a priest who accompanied him in a higher place at table than the Emperor; 3) the Empress served him at table.

Q. How did Saint Martin die?

A. The death of Saint Martin was accompanied by the following six circumstances: 1) he died worn out by labor and penance, 2) wearing a hair shirt, 3) lying on the ground, 4) covered with ashes, 5) with eyes raised to heaven, and 6) angels brought his soul to heaven.

Q. Why is the feast of Saint Martin the occasion of so much disorderly conduct?

A. At first, this feast was celebrated with great solemnity because of the special devotion people felt for him, but poor people later began to abuse the feast.

Q. What should we do to honor Saint Martin and to celebrate his feast properly?

A. We should do eight things: 1) honor Saint Martin as one of the greatest and holiest bishops the Church has ever known, 2) thank God for the outstanding example this saint gave to the entire Church, 3) ask God through his intercession for a love of prayer and penance, 4) imitate the virtues of this saint, especially his respect for God, his constancy in prayer, and his poor and austere

life, 5) attend all the church services, 6) be horrified by the profanation that many make of this feast, 7) avoid all company that might lead to excess, and 8) live soberly to imitate in some way the austere and penitential life of Saint Martin.

Lesson 22—Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of Saint Nicholas, bishop of Myra and patron of schoolchildren.
Q. Why is Saint Nicholas the patron of schoolchildren?
A. He led a very holy life in his youth.
Q. What were Saint Nicholas' principal virtues in his young life?
A. He had three in particular: 1) abstinence, 2) detachment from riches, and 3) diligence in prayer.
Q. How did Saint Nicholas' love for abstinence appear in his youth?
A. It is said that he fasted twice a week, on Wednesday and on Friday, and that even when he was nursing at the breast, he refused on these two days, except for one feeding in the evening.
Q. What is an example of Saint Nicholas' detachment from worldly wealth in his youth?
A. When his parents died, he gave away all his inheritance to poor people.
Q. What is an example of Saint Nicholas' diligence in prayer in his youth?
A. He often went to church to pray to God.
Q. What were Saint Nicholas' special virtues in his later years?
A. There were three in particular: 1) a great love for purity, 2) a tender devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ, and 3) a particular affection for prayer.
Q. What is an example of Saint Nicholas's love for purity?
A. Three times he went secretly by night to throw a bag of money into the window of a house to provide a dowry for three young women who were in danger of losing their purity.
Q. What is an example of Saint Nicholas' tender devotion for our Lord Jesus Christ?
A. He traveled to the Holy Land to visit the holy places and honor the holy mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Q. What are examples of Saint Nicholas' particular affection for prayer in his later years?
A. There are two occasions in particular: 1) he predicted a violent storm when he boarded a vessel on his way to the Holy Land, and when it came, he calmed it by his prayers; 2) he was chosen

bishop of Myra by divine intervention because of his affection for prayer.

Q. How was Saint Nicholas chosen bishop of Myra?

A. God had made it known that the first man to enter the church and whose name was Nicholas should be selected as bishop.

Q. What were Saint Nicholas' special virtues while he was bishop?

A. There were eight in particular: 1) great purity, which he always preserved, 2) wisdom in his actions and words, 3) application and diligence in prayer, often praying to God all night long, 4) austerity of life, for he slept little, fasted often, was totally sober, and lived quite frugally, 5) great charity for his neighbor, 6) generous liberality to poor people, usually including hospitality, 7) gentleness in reproving others, and 8) firmness in correcting evil.

Q. What are examples of Saint Nicholas' charity for his neighbor?

A. There are two in particular: 1) he helped widows and orphans with money, advice, and charitable acts; 2) he offered refuge to oppressed people.

Q. When did Saint Nicholas offer refuge to the oppressed?

A. On one occasion when he was far away, he rescued three tribunes who had been condemned by Emperor Constantine because of false accusations and had implored his help.

Q. How did Saint Nicholas rescue these three tribunes who had appealed to him?

A. He went to the Emperor and threatened him with dire consequences unless he released them promptly.

Q. What did Saint Nicholas do for the welfare of the Church?

A. He attended the Council of Nicaea, where 318 bishops condemned the Arian heresy.

Q. What sufferings did Saint Nicholas have to endure?

A. When he preached the Christian faith at Myra, contrary to the edict of Diocletian and of Maximian, the imperial archers arrested him and took him far away, where he was imprisoned until the accession of Constantine.

Q. How did Saint Nicholas die?

A. Three particular things happened at the death of Saint Nicholas: 1) he raised his eyes to heaven; 2) he saw angels coming to meet him; 3) he said this prayer of David: "My God, I commend my soul into your hands."

Q. What should schoolchildren do to honor Saint Nicholas and to celebrate his feast properly?

A. They should do four things: 1) honor this saint as their model, 2) thank God for raising up such a great saint in the Church, for converting so many souls through him, and for giving him to all

students as their patron, 3) ask God through his intercession for the graces of rejection of the goods of this world, love of fasting and penance, aversion to impurity and what leads to it, and special love for prayer, and 4) imitate his virtues.

Lesson 23—Our holy patron

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. We celebrate the feast of Saint _____, our holy patron.
Q. Should we nurture a special devotion to our holy patron?
A. Yes, the Church gives us a patron to intercede with God for us in a more particular way than other saints do.
Q. Why does the Church give us patron saints?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to place us under their protection, and 2) to encourage us to imitate their virtues.
Q. What does the word *patron* mean?
A. Patron means *model, guide, advocate,* or *protector.*
Q. How are our patron saints models?
A. We should regulate our actions according to their holy life.
Q. How are our patron saints guides?
A. Their holy life shows us the path we must follow to reach heaven.
Q. How are our patron saints advocates?
A. In heaven they pray to God for us to procure our eternal life.
Q. How are our patron saints protectors?
A. They defend us against the enemies of our salvation.
Q. Which saints are considered patrons?
A. There are three types of patron saints: 1) those who first preached the Gospel in the place or the province where we live, 2) those to whom our parish church or the church near where we live is dedicated and consecrated to God, and 3) the saint whose name we received at Baptism or Confirmation.
Q. Should we have a special devotion to our patron saints?
A. Yes, they take great interest in whatever concerns our salvation.
Q. What particular devotion should we have to our patron saints?
A. There are five aspects: 1) venerating their holiness, 2) asking their help in all our needs and praying especially to them every day, 3) imitating their virtues and choosing one of these virtues to imitate each day, each week, or each month, 4) celebrating their feasts by going to Confession and Communion and attending the Divine Office, and 5) abstaining from banquets, games, dances, and other disorderly conduct on their feast days and from all the other excesses that are only too common on these sacred days.

Lesson 24—The dedication of a church

Q. What feast does the Church celebrate [today, *or,* on . . .]?
A. It is the feast of the dedication of. . . .
Q. What is the feast of dedication?
A. It is the solemn celebration of the day when a church was consecrated to God in honor of a saint.
Q. Why do you say that a church is consecrated to God in honor of a saint?
A. A church is given the name of a saint who is then honored as the patron of that church.
Q. What do you mean when you say that a church is consecrated to God?
A. Dedication ceremonies sanctify the building from being profane to being used solely for sacred purposes and God's service.
Q. How are churches dedicated to the service of God?
A. Nothing ought to be done in churches that does not serve God.
Q. What constitutes the service of God carried out in churches?
A. There are four principal kinds of services: 1) preaching the word of God, 2) singing his praises, 3) administering the sacraments, and 4) celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass.
Q. Why do we consecrate churches with so much solemnity and such elaborate ceremonies?
A. There are two reasons: 1) to inspire respect for these sacred precincts, and 2) to recall that churches built with stones are a symbol of the true Church, that is, the society of the faithful and the saints.
Q. How are churches symbols of the true Church?
A. The Church, that is, the society of the faithful and the saints, is the Temple where God dwells, and this Temple is constituted by the faithful, who are living stones.
Q. What does Holy Scripture call a church?
A. It is called the house of God or the house of prayer.
Q. Why do we call a church the house of God?
A. There are three reasons: 1) God is more present in a church than in any other place so as to bestow his graces there; 2) Jesus Christ is present there in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar; 3) the holy angels are present to protect it, as are the saints whose relics are kept there.
Q. Why do we call a church a house of prayer?
A. There are two reasons: 1) its purpose is for us to pray and adore God there; 2) we should go there only to pray and to fulfill our duties to God.

Q. Why is the memorial of the dedication and the consecration of churches celebrated every year?
A. There are three reasons: 1) to renew in the heart of the faithful the veneration they should feel for these sacred precincts and for the mysteries celebrated there every day, 2) to make acts of devotion and piety in reparation for the sins of irreverence and negligence committed during the year, and 3) to remember the blessed day on which the churches were dedicated and consecrated to God.
Q. On what day are Christians dedicated and consecrated to God?
A. They are dedicated and consecrated to God and made living temples of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit on the day of their Baptism.
Q. What is the best way for us to honor a church?
A. The best way is never to enter a church with any mortal sin on our soul, except to make a good Confession.
Q. Why is it that the best way we can honor a church is not to enter it in the state of mortal sin?
A. There are three reasons: 1) we would affront God if we entered his house while at enmity with him because of mortal sin; 2) we go to church only to honor God in the presence of our Lord, but we cannot honor God if we are his mortal enemies; 3) we go to church for our spiritual and temporal needs, but according to Holy Scripture, God does not hear sinners, especially those who are obstinate in their sins, for their prayers are repugnant to God.
Q. Is it enough to be free from mortal sin to honor God properly in church?
A. No, we also need to be free from venial sin and to renounce all affection for sin, whether venial or mortal.
Q. Why must we renounce all affection for venial and mortal sin to honor God properly in church?
A. Even venial sins defile the soul, and it is a gross incivility to appear before God morally defiled without cleansing ourselves beforehand.
Q. What should we do before entering the church to rid ourselves of all sin and affection for sin?
A. We should do three things: 1) examine our conscience, 2) make an act of contrition while signing ourselves with holy water, and 3) go to Confession as soon as possible if we are guilty of mortal sin.
Q. How should we show exterior respect in church?
A. We should show it in three ways: 1) by dressing modestly when we go to church, 2) by entering church in a recollected manner

without looking about, and 3) by kneeling down and adoring God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. What should we do to celebrate the feast of the dedication of a church properly?

A. We should do four things: 1) assist at all the divine services with profound piety, 2) thank God for establishing these sacred places as images of heaven where we can adore him, 3) ask God's pardon for our irreverence and lack of devotion in church, and 4) resolve with the grace of God never to enter church without feelings of religious fervor and never to commit any sin there in the future.

End of volume 3

The Duties of a Christian to God

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