



June 1. 2007

Volume VII

“For My Name’s Sake”

“If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love what is its own. But because you are not of the world, and because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you... If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also; if they have kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My Name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me... Yes, the hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think he is offering worship to God. And these things they do because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have spoken to you, that when the time for them has come, you may remember that I told you.” (John 15:18-19; 17:2-4).

One of the most convincing signs that free will—the free will of God, men, the devils—is the basic significant factor in the course of human history, is to be seen in the fact that the world has not accepted Jesus Christ and His Kingdom without opposition, without violence. Since God is all powerful, it is easy to imagine that He might, if He had so willed, have compelled all men to accept Him and to accept membership in His Kingdom. Whether or not this is really possible, the fact is that He has not done so. By a sovereign decision of His own free will, God has chosen to respect the free will of men and of demonic spirits, who have rejected Him and who hate men. When God became man as Jesus of Nazareth, He subjected Himself to the free wills of men and devils. He did not overwhelm the devils with His Almighty power and prevent them completely from interfering in the affairs of men. Nor did He subjugate the free wills of men and compel them by force to enter His Kingdom. Instead, He allowed the devils to influence men as they would, and to men He appealed only with the weapons of truth, divine signs, and His grace. He left it to the free wills of men to make the choice between sin and redemption, between hating Him and loving Him, between working with



“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before you”

(taken from “For My Name’s Sake”)

Him, and working against Him. His Kingdom on earth, so He said, the continuation of Himself in human history, would be in the same position as He Himself had been. In it, as in Himself, men could find redemption. But they would be free to enter it, to leave it, or to reject it; to work with it for the redemption of the world, or to work against it to their own condemnation. And thus, through the ignorance, the weakness and the malice of men and devils, the Kingdom would, like Jesus Christ Himself, be hated and persecuted.

The Church of Christ, the Kingdom of God on earth, has been hated and persecuted, since its inception. In its infancy, it was persecuted by the Jews. The Sanhedrin arrested the Apostles, had them beaten and cast into prison for preaching the message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead. In the year 42 A.D., Herod Agrippa instituted a systematic persecution of the Christians in his land. St. James the Greater perished during this persecution and the other Apostles left Jerusalem.

As the Christian Church grew through the Roman Empire, it became the subject to persecution by the government, both imperial and local. The first known persecution of the Christians by the imperial government took place during the reign of Nero. Nero had ordered the burning of part of the city of Rome. To divert the anger of the populace from himself, he blamed the atrocity on the Christians. In the year 64 A.D., there was a mass execution of Christians, some of them, who, were covered with pitch and burned like torches in the gardens on the Vatican Hill. In the year 67 A.D., St. Peter was crucified, head downwards, on Vatican Hill; and St. Paul was beheaded.

Whether or not Nero passed a law against the profession and practice of Christianity is still a matter of dispute among historians. Tertullian (160-230), who became a Christian in 197 A.D., says that Nero had done so. Later historians think that Christians may have been punished under already existing laws, which prohibited the practice of any religion, other than the worship of the roman gods.

At any rate, persecution of Christians broke out again during the reign of Domitian (81-96). Flavius Clemens, a relative of Domitian, and his wife and niece, suffered during this persecution. Flavius was put to death, and his wife and niece were banished.

At the beginning of the third century, during the reign of Trajan, there was evidence that Christians were persecuted simply because they belonged to the Catholic Church. Pliny the Younger, had been sent by the emperor to administer the providence of Bithynia. There he found that so many of the people had become Christians that a large number of the old pagan temples were no longer functioning. The farmers and merchants, who had previously provided animals, birds, and wine for the pagan sacrifices, were angry at the loss of their business. They complained about it to Pliny. Christians were denounced. Pliny was not quite sure what to do

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about the situation. Writing to the emperor Trajan for advice, he said: “I do not know what means and limits are to be observed in examining or punishing them...This is the way I have dealt with those who have been denounced to me as Christians: I asked them if they were Christians. If they admitted that they were, I asked them again a second and a third time, threatening them with capital punishment. If they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For I felt certain that whatever it was that they professed, their contumacy and inflexible obstinacy, demanded punishment.”

Trajan, in his reply, set down some norms for handling the situation. The authorities were not to institute a search for Christians on their own initiative. But if anyone was denounced to the magistrates as a Christian, and he admitted it, he was to be punished, “but with restriction: If anyone says that he is not a Christian, and shall actively prove it by adoring the gods, he shall be pardoned as being repentant, even though he may have been suspect in the past.”

This letter of Trajan makes it clear that Christians were persecuted for no other reason than that they were members of the Catholic Church and, as such, refused to adore the gods of the state. It is also clear that a Christian might escape punishment simply by performing a ritual act of adoration to the pagan gods of Rome. The simplicity with which Christians might escape punishment makes it all the more remarkable that many remained faithful to their belief in Jesus and refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods. The fact that the magistrates must punish Christians when they are denounced meant, too, that Christians were at the mercy of the whims or the hate of their non-Catholic neighbors.

That the people were generally opposed to the Christians is shown by the fact that during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (117-138), a governor in Asia asked the emperor how he should deal with anti-Christian riots. Hadrian and Antonius Pius (138-161), forbade mob action against Christians but reaffirmed the position of Trajan. Marcus Aurelius(161-180), moved by popular outcry that Christians were responsible for the calamities which afflicted his reign, persecuted Christians more actively and rewarded those who denounced them to the authorities.

In the year 202A.D., the Emperor Septimus Severus forbade anyone to become a Christian. Maximin the Thracian (235-238), published a general edict for the whole empire aimed against the leaders of the Christian people. His persecution was of short duration, but it established the dangerous precedent of general edicts against Christians.

The precedent was taken up vigorously by the Emperor Decius. Decius, in an attempt to reinvigorate within the empire the old Roman ideals and virtues, decided to strengthen the hold of the old Roman gods on the people. Christianity therefore had to be destroyed. By imperial edict

“Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have Mercy on us”



it was decreed that on a certain day throughout the empire those suspected of being unwilling to worship the old gods, were to appear before the magistrates and show their loyalty by sacrificing to the gods. Certificates would be issued to all those who showed themselves to be good pagans. For those who refused, the ultimate penalty was death.

The simultaneous carrying out of this edict throughout the empire took the Christians by surprise. Many of them fell victim to panic and performed the pagan ritual act prescribed and were given certificates which saved them from imprisonment and death. But many, even in these trying circumstances, remained faithful to Jesus and refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods. Some of these, such as Pope Fabian and Bishop Alexander of Jerusalem, were executed. Other less important figures were thrown into prison and tortured in the attempt to make them give up their membership in the Church of Christ.

Under the Emperor Valerian, another general persecution was undertaken by the imperial government. In 257 it was decreed that all bishops and priests of the Church were summoned and made to sacrifice to the pagan gods. The faithful were not to take part in any of the liturgical functions and reunions of the Church. The priests who refused were to be exiled. Cemeteries belonging to Christians and other places of worship were seized by the state. In 258 Valerian decreed that priests who refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods were to be executed. Members of the aristocracy who refused to sacrifice to renounce their membership to the Church of Christ were to be exiled, and their estates confiscated. When Valerian was taken prisoner by the Persians, the persecutions died down.

It was renewed during the reign of Diocletian in the year 303A.D. Urged on by Galerius, whom he had associated with himself in the government of the empire, Diocletian took measures to stamp out the Christian religion. In his first edict dated February 4, 303, Diocletian ordered that Christians were not allowed to assemble for worship; Christian Churches were to be closed; and the sacred writings of the Church were to be destroyed. Nobles who refused to renounce the Christian faith were to lose their rank, free men who refused were to be enslaved, and slaves were to remain forever slaves. A little later Diocletian decreed that those who refused to give up their profession of Christianity were to be put to death. This was the most severe of all the persecutions of the Church. Christians were arrested wholesale throughout the empire and submitted to the most horrible tortures in the attempt to destroy the Church forever.

In the Eastern empire, the persecutions lasted until 311A.D. In the Western empire it ceased when Constantine the Great became emperor in 306A.D. In 313, the edict of Milan made Christianity one of the

*“Jesus
Meek
and
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recognized religions of the empire, and the persecutions of the Church within the empire ceased.

We have no certain knowledge of the exact number of Christians who were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, deprived of rank or property, or executed during these persecutions. It is quite evident, that the number of Christians afflicted during these troubled times of the third and fourth centuries far exceeded the number of those who suffered during the first and second centuries. In the persecutions under Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian, many thousands suffered. What is more important than the number of those who actually suffered for their faith is the fact that all during the first three centuries of the Church's existence, the members of the Kingdom of God on earth had to live constantly in fear of having to suffer for their adherence to Jesus Christ. As Jesus had to suffer for them, so they had to be ready to suffer for Him.

Though the Church gained the right to peaceful existence within the empire by the edict of Milan, this did not mean that the world, which hated Christ, ceased to hate His Church. In fact, the Church has encountered this hatred in every age.

During the Roman persecutions, many Christians had fled from the empire to Persia. There, because the hostility of the earthly governments and the Church of God had been so strained, so severely strained as to prevent the Church from acting freely in its mission to save mankind. Thus, in the fourth century, some of the emperors favored the arian heresy against the true faith. In the eighth century, the emperors sought to promote iconoclasm. From the middle ages down to recent times, many Christian rulers attempted to gain control of the Church by claiming for themselves the right to nominate bishops in the Church. Pope Gregory VII; Pope Innocent III; and Boniface VIII had to struggle to prevent the sovereigns of Europe from seizing control of the Church. The energy by the Papacy in repulsing these attempts led to opposition to the Papacy. This, in part, accounts for the eagerness with which the Germanic princes of northern Europe gave up their allegiance to the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. By joining the Protestant revolt they were enabled to gain control of religion in their own territories. Opposition to the Papacy also accounts, in part, for the rise of Gallicanism in France and Josephism in Austria and the Netherlands.

Opposition to the Church has been found also in the world of thought and intellect. In the time of Imperial Rome, the pagan philosopher Celsus wrote against the Church. In modern times, the philosophers of subjectivism, idealism, positivism, materialism, and their intellectual children, the socialists and communists, have attacked the Church. By denying the existence of God, or the spirituality and immortality of the human soul, they have attempted to destroy those

*“Sweet
Heart of
My Jesus,
grant that
I may
ever love
Thee
more and
more”*



*“Heart
of
Jesus, I
put my
trust in
Thee”*

fundamental beliefs of mankind, which provide a rational basis for religion.

It should be mentioned also that the Kingdom of God in its growing life in the world, has experienced a constant succession of growing pains in the form of heresies, deviations from the true content of the divine revelation which Jesus gave to mankind. From the beginning until now the minds of some men, confronted with the profound mysteries which God has revealed, have gone astray. Refusing to listen to the voice of God’s appointed heralds, the Apostles and their successors (the Popes and Bishops of the Church), they have invented doctrines of their own and presented them to the world as God’s message to men.

In this world, then, the Kingdom of God is as Jesus had said it would be, a Kingdom persecuted by men, its members hailed before kings and princes and put to death for their faith in Christ, sometimes even put to death in His Holy Name.

(Taken from *The Whole Story* By Martin J. Healy S.T.D.; published by *The Confraternity of the Precious Blood, Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur* given March 12, 1959).



*Sermon by Fr. Martin Stepanich O.F.M.; Prayer, Part VII;
“And Lead Us Not Into Temptation”*

Near the end of the Our Father, we pray: “And lead us not into temptation.”

When we say these words, we are really pleading with God to protect us and strengthen us in the time of temptation, when we are in the occasion of sin. We have every reason to fear temptation and the only sensible thing to do is to turn to God for help.

The idea is not that we ask God to remove from us every possibility of sinning, because that would mean taking us out of this world. We always live in the possibility of sin, even if it be only sins of thought or desire. We always have our free will. We always have our pride and our passions. We are ever in a place of trial here on earth and it is God’s will that we be thoroughly tried and testes—in fact, tested “like gold in the furnace,” as it is written in the Book of Wisdom (3:6). It is only through trial and temptation that our true worth becomes known and we prove whether or not we are worthy of a heavenly reward.

What we do say when we say Lead us not into temptation, is that God might protect us from succumbing to temptation. In fact, in some languages the wording of that part of the Our Father is; “And do not let us succumb to temptation.”

We ask, furthermore, that God may not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. God does, of course, want to test our strength, and at times



very severely, too, through trial and temptation, besides wanting us to keep on acquiring more and more merits for Heaven.

But, as St. Paul wrote to the ancient Corinthians: “God is faithful, and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength, but with temptation will also give you a way out, that you may be able to bear it!” (I Cor. 10:13).

So if we actually succumb to temptation, it can never be God’s fault. It can only be our fault. It shows that we didn’t really mean it, when we said: “lead us not into temptation”. There could have been carelessness on our part, or lack of vigilance or of self-denial, overconfidence (as in St. Peter’s case), or indifference or a who-cares attitude, or just plain perverseness and maliciousness, and so on.

If God sees that we insist on having our own way in time of temptation, He simply lets us go and suffer the consequences, because that is what we really asked for. He sees that we are not trying hard enough to avoid sin or the near occasion of sin, He lets us learn the hard way, so that in the future, we might be more careful, more vigilant.

If it can be said that God allows us to be tried and tested through temptation, that can never mean that He tempts us so as to try to make us commit sin. It would be blasphemous to accuse God of anything like that. The devil, who is called the Tempter, is the one who tempts us with the idea of getting us to commit sin, and so do many of our fellow humans, so do our passions, as St. James the Apostle emphasizes.

Of God, St. James wrote in His Epistle: “Let no man say, when he is tempted, that he is tempted by God; for God is no tempter to evil, and He Himself tempts no one. But everyone is tempted by being drawn away and enticed by his own passions.” (James 1:13-14).

In view of all the sobering facts of this life, my friends, you know how vigilant we must be. We have the everlasting admonition of the Man of Sorrows in the Garden of Gethsemani: “Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation.” (Mark 14:38). You know how we must always exercise self-control, as well as self-denial. You know how humble we must keep ourselves before God, for, as St. James writes: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (4:6).

And you know, too, that though we greatly fear our own weakness, still we have every reason to have the greatest confidence in God. As God said to St. Paul, who was undergoing a severe temptation: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” (II Cor. 12:9).

(Given in Chicago, Ill. On February 23, 1964).

“God is faithful, and will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength”

(taken from Fr .Martin’s Sermon)



“Catechism on Sin”

“Sin is with us; if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves; it means that truth does not dwell in us.” (I John 1:8).

These words of St. John serve to introduce the subject of sin, now a fact of universal experience. The catechism teaches that sin is an offense against God, by any thought, word, deed, or omission against the law of God. When a man violates the law of his country, he is a criminal in the sight of that law and usually, he is punished.

Sin is a crime, not against the law of any land, but against the law of God; hence, the sinner is a criminal in the sight of God, his Maker, his Infinite Good and Loving Father, his Judge.

Sometimes sinners try to justify themselves by explaining that in doing wrong they “did not go against their conscience.” But it is the duty of everyone to make sure that his conscience is reliable and in conformity with the true law of God. A watch is no use to anyone unless it is regulated according to the true time; a conscience is like a watch, it must be regulated according to the true norm of morality, the law of God. It is the interior judgment we make as to the rightness or wrongness of our actions, and such judgment can only be reliable in so far as it does not contradict the only real norm of right and wrong. People sometimes warp their consciences, or stretch them. In fact, they are rather like sweet Molly Malone who followed her barrow whenever she pushed it around the streets of Dublin’s fair city—except that instead of a barrow, they have what they like to call conscience, which they push wherever they want it to go. Conscience is only right when its verdict is in harmony with the Ten Commandments of God; the Six Commandments of the Church; and the demands of Christian Virtue. These we shall learn in due course in order to educate our conscience.

“Sin is with us; if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves; it means that truth does not dwell in us”

(I John 1:8)

“Sins in Scripture”

Sin is disastrous for soul and body. “He that soweth iniquity shall reap evils, and with the rod of his anger he shall be consumed,” (Prov. 22:8) “Do no evils, and no evils shall lay hold on thee; depart from the unjust, and evils shall depart from thee. My son, sow not evils in the furrows of injustice, and thou shalt not reap them sevenfold.”(Eccu. 7:1-3).

Sin deprives of merit our words and undertakings. “If the just man turns himself away from his justice, all his justices which he hath done, shall not be remembered.” (Ez. 18:24). Sin brings with it both temporal and eternal punishments. “Transgressors...shall be set on fire and burnt to nothing.” (2Kings 23:6-7). “But not the cowards, nor those who refuse belief, nor those whose lives are abominable; not the murderers, the fornicators, the



sorcerers, the idolators, not those who are false in any of their dealings. Their lot awaits them in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and it is the second death.” (Apoc. 21:8).

“Go far from Me, you that are accursed, into that eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25:41).

Sin causes blindness and ignorance in the understanding. “They shall walk like blind men because they have sinned against the Lord.” (So.1:17). “Their own malice blinded them.” (Wisdom 2:21). Sin turns away the will from the Supreme Good and hardens it in evil. “My people heard not My voice and Israel hearkened not to Me. So I let them go according to the desires of their heart; they shall walk in their own inventions.” (Ps. 80:12-13)

Sin begets fear and perplexity. “Whereas wickedness is fearful, it beareth witness to its condemnation: for a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things.” (Wisdom 17:10).

Sin brings with it shame and shamelessness. “And what harvest were you then reaping from acts which now make you blush? Their reward is death.”(Rom. 6:21). “The wicked man imprudently hardens his face.” (Prov. 21:29).

Sadness and despair are the end of sin. “Into how much tribulation am I come, and into what floods of sorrow wherein now I am. I that was pleasant and beloved in my power! But now I remember the evils that I have done.” (I Mach. 6:11-12).

Sin robs the body and soul of strength. “There is no health in my flesh because of Thy wrath; there is no peace for my bones because of my sins.” (Ps. 37:4).

Sin shortens life and hastens death. “Be not over-much wicked; and be not foolish, lest thou die before thy time. “ (Ecce. 7:18).

Sin destroys reputation, honor, and fame. “ The memory of the just is with praises, and the name of the wicked shall rot.” (Prov. 10:7). “Who shall honor him that dishonors his own soul?” (Ecce. 10:32).

Sin ruins prosperity. “Justice exalts a nation; but sin makes a nation miserable.”(Prov. 14:34). “Woe to them, for they have departed from Me; they shall be wasted because they have transgressed against Me.” (Os. 7:13).

Sin makes a man hated by God. “ To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.” (Wisdom 14:9). “The Lord Thy God hateth all injustice.” (Deut. 25:16).

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*(taken from
Catechism
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“The Horror of Sin”

How terrible sin is, can be judged from the following
a). Mortal sin is a supreme contempt of the infinite majesty of God. The creature despises the laws the Creator has made for him and laughs Him to scorn. The grievous sinner would kill God if he could; for God and sin cannot exist close together. Those who live in grave sin act as if God did not exist; Infinite Love, Power, Goodness, Wisdom, and Mercy could be



dead as far as the grave sinner is concerned. He is not interested. Yet God has already shown how He hates sin by subjecting all the children of Adam to the evils of life and to death, by permitting the deluge, by destroying Sodom and Gomorrhah, by slaying 23,000 Israelites, (Exodus 32:28), and by suffering so much Himself.

b). It was sin, which caused the sufferings of Christ—the Agony, the Scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, the Crucifixion. Sinners crucify Him again, mocking Him and His Love. Mortal sin is the deepest, blackest ingratitude to the loving Heart of Jesus Christ.

c). Mortal sin deforms the souls of men, destroying all the spiritual beauty that is in them. It makes the soul bankrupt by robbing it of all past merit; it paralyzes the soul, because it is unable to merit grace in the state of mortal sin. In fact, it kills the soul by taking away from it all supernatural or spiritual life. A man in grievous sin ceases to be the temple of the Holy Trinity, a sharer in the Divine Nature, and a spiritual brother of Christ. If a man has committed mortal sin, his body is but a coffin for a dead soul, and if he dies unrepentant, he will be condemned to the living death of hell for all eternity. In a word, mortal sin is the greatest of all evils.

When St. Louis of France was a boy, his mother, Blanche of Castile, once said: “You are as dear to me as any son could be to any mother, yet I would rather see you lying dead at my feet than that you should ever commit a mortal sin.” Later in life, the king himself remarked on one occasion to a friend who said he would prefer to commit a serious sin if by it he could avoid leprosy: “ You are wrong. Nothing is more to be dreaded than to displease God.”

When Leonardo DaVinci was painting his famous picture of the Last Supper, he took as his model for Our Lord a young choir-boy of the Milan Cathedral—Pietro Bandinelli. Years later, DaVinci was looking for a model for the face of Judas. In the streets of Rome he came across a man whose hardened eyes and vice-lined countenance struck him as being ideal for his purpose. On being asked to sit in the studio, the new model said: “ Of course, you have already painted me once before—I am Pietro Bandinelli.” Whether the story be true or not, it certainly brings out the fact that whereas the state of grace makes one like to Christ, the state of mortal sin makes him like to Judas.

“The Divisions of Sin”

Sin may be original or actual; and actual sin may be mortal or venial. Original Sin: This is the sinful condition in which men are born and which we inherit from our first parents, Adam and Eve. When Adam fell, by deliberately sinning against God, he plunged the whole human race into a state of guilt. In fact, he was the human race; his was not only a personal sin, but a racial, family sin. The effects of the sin of Adam for his

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(taken from Catechism on Sin)



descendants were as follows: a). In the soul—loss of divine grace, deprivation of heaven, ignorance of the intellect, weakness and malice of the will, concupiscence in the heart; b). In body—loss of extraordinary natural gifts; work, sickness, death, corruption; c). On earth—unfruitful soil which must be tilled; animals ferocious and beyond control...

The sin committed by Adam was the sin of disobedience when he ate the forbidden fruit. His story can be read in the book of Genesis. The Church has declared that Catholics may not call into doubt the literal meaning of the book of Genesis with regard to “the original happiness of our first parents, the command given by God to test their obedience, their disobedience of this command at the instigation of the devil, and the loss of their primitive state of innocence.”

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans clearly teaches the doctrine of original sin, (cf. 5:12-21). “Well then, one man commits a fault, and it brings condemnation upon all; one man amends, and it brings to all justification, that is, life. A multitude will become acceptable to God through one man’s obedience, just as a multitude through one man’s disobedience, becomes guilty.”

Mortal comes from the Latin word *mors*, which means death. It is so called because it kills the soul by depriving it of sanctifying grace or supernatural life. As the soul is the life of the body, and without the soul, a body is dead in the sight of men, so grace is the life of the soul, and without grace, the soul is dead in the sight of God.

For a sin to be mortal the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- a). Grave Matter. In itself: murder, a large theft, real impurity.
In the purpose of the law: Holy Communion after breaking one’s fast.
In circumstances: a small theft from a poor man.
- b). Knowledge and advertence: but willful ignorance will not excuse from the gravity of the sin.
- c). full consent to the act, or to the occasion of it.

If one of the above conditions is absent, or if the act be done under compulsion or great fear, what would otherwise be a mortal sin may become only a venial sin at most.

Venial sin is an offense which does not kill the soul, yet displeases God and often leads to mortal sin. Examples: sins of infirmity, surprise, impetuosity, indeliberation or habit, in a small matter. “We are betrayed, all of us, into many faults.” (James 3:2).

Instead of killing the soul, venial sin, as it were, bruises it. It displeases the infinitely holy God, dims the souls beauty, diminishes fervor, weakens faith and hatred for sin, checks the reception of grace and deserves temporal punishment here and hereafter.

No number of venial sins, as such, ever constitute a mortal sin, but as wounds in the body, if unheeded, may lead to sickness and death, so frequent venial sin gradually leads to mortal sin. The greatest things usually

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take their rise from small beginnings—the river from the spring, the tree from the small seed, the conflagration from a spark, death from a germ.

Hence, venial sin is not something to be taken lightly. After mortal sin, it is the greatest evil before God, and we may not commit it, for any good or gain whatsoever, not even to convert the world.

We must try to obtain a true estimate of sin. We can do this by meditating seriously and frequently on the consequence of sin—of the sin of Lucifer, of the sin of Adam—on the passion and death of Christ and on the fact of the eternal punishment, which awaits those who die in mortal sin.

The time of instruction is a time of preparation for the reception of great graces. It should therefore be a period of repentance and contrition for past sins, mortal and venial. The absence of penance is an obstacle to the reception of grace. Therefore, the habit should be formed of reciting daily an act of contrition, such as the following:

“Oh My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, because Thou art all good. And I firmly resolve, by the help of Thy grace, not to offend Thee again. Amen.”

(Taken from *This is the Faith* by Francis J. Ripley; published by *Catechetical Guild Educational Society*, St. Paul, Minn., *Nihil Obstat & Imprimatur* given January 25, 1951).

“Heart
of Jesus,
make me
love Thee
and make
Thee
loved”

The Following of Christ; Book 3, Ch. 15.

*“How we are to be disposed, and what we are to say,
when we desire anything.”*

My son, say this on every occasion: if it be pleasing to You, so let it be. Lord, if it be to Your honor, let this be done in Your Name, Lord, if You see that this is expedient, and approve it as profitable for me, then grant that I may use it to Your honor. But if You know that it will be hurtful to me, and not profitable for the salvation of my soul, take away from me such a desire. For not every desire is from the Holy Ghost, though to man it seem right and good. It is difficult to judge truly whether it be a good or evil spirit that impels you to desire this or that, or whether, you are not moved to it, by your own spirit. Many in the end have been deceived, who at first seemed to be led by a good spirit.

Whatsoever, therefore, occurs to your mind as worthy to be desired, it must always with the fear of God and humility of heart that you desire and ask for it. And above all you ought, with self-resignation, commit all to Me, and say: Lord, You know what is best; let this or that be done as You will. Give what You will, and as much as You will, and what time You will. Do with me as You know, and as best pleases You, and is most for Your honor. Put me where You will, and do with me in all things according to Your will.



I am in Your hand; turn me this way or that way as You choose. Lo, I am Your servant, ready for all things; for I do not desire to live for myself, but for You; Oh, that I could do so in a worthy and perfect manner!

“A Prayer for fulfilling the will of God”

Grant me Thy grace, most merciful Jesus, that it may be with me, and labor with me, and continue with me unto the end. Grant me always to will and desire that which is most acceptable to Thee, and which pleases Thee best. Let Thy will be mine, and let me always will or not will the same with Thee; and let me not be able to will or not will otherwise than as Thou wilt or not wilt.

Grant that I may die to all things that are in the world, and for Thy sake love to be despised, and to be unknown in the world. Grant unto me, above all things to be desired, that I may rest in Thee, and that my heart may be at peace in Thee. Thou art the true peace of the heart; Thou art its only rest; out of Thee all things are hard and restless. In this peace, in the self-same, that is, in Thee, the one sovereign eternal Good, I will sleep and take my rest. Amen.

*“Heart
of Jesus,
burning
with love
for us,
set our
hearts
on
fire with
love of
Thee”*

Practical Reflections

As it is God Who will all that happens to us, and wills it for our good, for our salvation, so we ought in all things to resign ourselves to His Holy appointments—that is, we should, first, will only what God wills, and when He wills it; secondly, we should never separate our will from His by any voluntary transgression, and never say or do anything contrary to it; thirdly, we should never knowingly sin, or resist God in what He requires from us.

A firm and constant resolution to do, to renounce, and to suffer whatever He at present requires, or may in the future demand of our fidelity, is all that is necessary to make us victims of His love and good pleasure, and to commence here upon earth what we hope to continue in heaven. Wherefore, let us often pray that the will of God may be accomplished in us in time, as it will be in eternity.

Prayer

O My God, Whose holy will is the rule and principle of all good, mayst Thou be the soul of all my actions, and the object of all the motions of my heart. Grant that in my whole conduct, and in all trials, I may seek only to do and to suffer whatever Thou willest, because it is Thy will and as Thou pleasest; that I may renounce my own will in everything; that I may make



Thee the sole master and proprietor of my heart, that in all things it may be submissive to Thy will, and never depart from it. Amen.

The Explanation of Our Mission and of Our Logo.

Since this is the first year of the “Mystical Rose”, it would seem only prudent that we explain why we call our newsletter, “Mystical Rose”, and why we have designed this Logo at the top of the first page.

The title, “Mystical Rose”, is taken from the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Logo of the crown of thorns, with the roses attached, symbolizes Our Lady’s suffering during Our Lord’s Passion and Death. It also symbolizes Her suffering for us, her spiritual children. The seven roses affixed to the crown of thorns represents the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady.

We dedicate this work to Our Blessed Mother and we ask Her to help and guide us, so that we may be able to serve God’s people by printing material that will be spiritually edifying; bringing those who read it to a better knowledge of their faith; a better understanding of what God requires of them in order to achieve salvation; and a more sincere desire to serve the Living God to the best of their ability.

Information about Catholicism is so very necessary in order to live a good life. The world in which we live today is in dire need of that information, in order to save mankind from its own self-imposed ignorance. We hope, by the grace of God, that our newsletter will help to inform.

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