

MAY 30, 1908

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS. THE OFFERING OF AN INNOCENT HEART AND ITS RESULT.

Jessie had not been very recollected during the first weeks of preparations for First Communion, and Sister Margaret had once gone so far as to say that perhaps she would better wait another year. This had the effect of making the child more thoughtful, although by nature she was very lively, and not much given to piety. Sister Margaret, seeing this, had kept her after the others, in order to encourage her good disposition by pious conversation and stories of the saints. Jessie fully appreciated all that was being done in her behalf and surprised her teacher by numerous questions and thoughtful remarks, which gave her a better insight into the character of the child than all the previous years of acquaintance and guidance had accomplished.

One day she said to her, "Jessie, my child, what is your favorite devotion?" The child smiled shyly as she answered, "I like to pray to the souls in purgatory."

"To them or for them?" "To them," said Jessie. "Of course I always pray for them—I think 'Out of the Depths' is the loveliest prayer. But when I want anything very badly I just say, 'Please get me so and so, dear holy souls,' and they nearly always do."

Sister Margaret smiled. "Now I never thought you were such a pious little thing," she said. "Indeed I fancied—"

"Oh, but I am not pious at all," interrupted Jessie, hurriedly. "If I had been, you would not have had almost to put me away from my first Communion. But I do love the holy souls, and Sister"—she hesitated, blushed and again smiled in her peculiar shy little way.

"Do not be timid about saying any of your thoughts to old Sister Margaret," said the gentle religious, observing her confusion.

"I was only going to say, Sister," she continued, "that I wondered if it would be nice to offer up my first Communion for the release of a suffering soul?"

"Nice?" echoed the Sister. "Nothing could be more lovely. Is there some relative, perhaps, or whom you should wish to make the offering?"

"No, Sister. Papa and mamma are always praying and having Masses said for the grandpapa and grandmamma who are dead. And I don't know of any other friends."

"Well, then, what would be your wish?"

"I thought it might be a good thing to offer it for some neglected soul."

"Indeed it would," said Sister Margaret, much edified.

"Then I will do that," said Jessie, simply, and the matter was spoken of no more.

On the morning of first Communion day the children marched in procession from the convent to the church, with that look upon their young faces which no human being ever wears except on that memorable occasion. Jessie and her companion were the last to run the gauntlet of admiring criticism from the crowds that lined the sidewalks and surged up to the steps. A lady richly attired was passing in a carriage, driven by a liveried coachman. The horses began to kick, and Jessie swerved aside with her companion, for the first time raising her eyes, which had been bent upon the ground. They met those of a lady, large, dark and sorrowful, with a haughty expression that repelled the child even in that brief moment. But something in that innocent gaze caught the attention of the occupant of the carriage. She hesitated, leaned forward, and ordering her coachman to stop, alighted from her vehicle and slowly entered the church into which the carriage had already disappeared. Once inside she edged her way forward, and soon found herself in the pew just behind Jessie, who was seated in the last row of first Communicants.

The Mass proceeded, and the lady sat during the greater part of it, half kneeling at the elevation. Her face was pale and outwardly calm, but the occasional twitching of her lips betrayed the existence of strong hidden emotion. After a few words from the officiating priest before the Communion, the children advanced to the rail. As Jessie once more read to the rail, her young face radiant and glorified by the sublime act she had just performed, the lady bent forward in a vain effort to catch her eye. But the child had no thought for anything but the holy tenderness that filled her soul—knew only that she had received her Lord within her heart, in which He was still reposing. Dropping her head in an ecstasy of prayer and thanksgiving, the lady also knelt, tears falling from her eyes. After a time she touched Jessie on the shoulder. The child turned around.

"My child," said the lady. "Will you pray for me?"

"Yes, ma'am, I will," replied the little girl.

"And for a soul in purgatory who is very dear to me?"

The child again answered in the affirmative, and returned to her devotions. Early that afternoon Sister Margaret came to the priest's parlor to confer with him about something relative to the Confirmation of the children, which was to take place at 4 o'clock. He was talking to a lady, to whom he extended himself while he left the room to fetch what Sister Margaret wanted. As the Sister stood looking into the yard where the children were already assembled, the lady came forward and addressed her:

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It was only after she had returned to the pew from the Communion table that I felt a flood of shame and repentance sweeping through my soul. I wanted her dear prayer for myself and I am for whom I had wept and mourned through all these years, but whom I had left to suffer in the fires of purgatory.

"For I firmly believe that his was the soul whom God had chosen her to deliver, or at least assist by her pure, sweet offering. It is more than a coincidence, it is a special Providence, a miracle. I needed one to bring me back to the fold, and I found it."

"Yesterday I was tempted to despair; I felt that I could never face my God, never meet my poor husband whose last prayer I had permitted to go unheeded. But last night I went to Confession, and to day I begin to experience what it is to be a Catholic, even though a most unworthy penitent."

Society was aghast when the rich and fashionable Mrs. Malot returned to the Catholic Church, of which she took pains to inform her friends she had once been a member. Sister wondered at the affection she ever afterward showed towards her, and why she seemed so pleased to meet her on the way to and from Mass, their roads lying in the same direction. But she did not know the secret of it; wiser heads than hers believing it better not to endanger the simplicity of her pure young heart, by telling her how it seemed that her beautiful offering had been pleasing to God and accepted by Him.

Nor does she know it yet, though one of the holiest and happiest among the Helpers of the Holy Souls.—The Indian Advocate.

THOUGHTS ON OUR LADY. Sacred Heart Review. Suso, the great monk and mystic, one of the simplest and best men that ever lived, has a touching custom. Whenever he encountered a woman, were she the poorest and oldest, he stepped respectfully aside, though his bare feet must tread among thorns or in the gutter. "I do that," he said, "to render homage to our holy Lady, the Virgin Mary."—Charles Wagner.

O Mary, full of grace and crowned with stars. To follow in thy track. Thy prayers, dear Mother, I bespeak. If thou wilt plead for this, I cannot miss. To find, some day, the home I seek.

The true temple of Jesus is the Incarnate divine Essence dwells in its fullness. A creature, however, had its signal grace to lend to it her help; it is Mary the Immaculate, the Virgin, the invisible creature of God. She is the reserved, the untouched quarry from which is taken the most pure marble with which this temple is constructed. She is the loving Mother who gave to God that flesh in which He made His abode among us.

No human words can rightly pen what Mary is to the believer's soul. She exercises in the Church and in the individual, the real powers and offices of the tenderness of mothers. The thought of her kindles love for Jesus; it aids in keeping the heart clean, the intellect holy, the judgment clear. We know that the effect of living in daily intercourse with the wise and good should be to make one increase in wisdom and goodliness. What, then, must result from living in thought with Mary, who lived, and lives now, the nearest to Jesus, the source of all good, and Who is Himself the All-wise? Then, has He not promised everything to the prayer of faith? But whose prayers will be more full of faith, and gain more graces than hers? In one word, that we may know what Mary is in the Church and if we would grow in love of her, let us live with her with whom Jesus lived at Nazareth, and she will lead us ever closer unto Him.—Sacred Heart Review.

Hear, O Mater Salvatrix! Hear our hymns to thee. Spread thy glories, plumes a'er us—Spread rays of love before us. From eternity! —ANNA H. DORSEY.

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OUR RELIGION.

At the conclusion of the Credo, the priest recites the offertory. Formerly this was an antiphon sung by the choir while the faithful made their offerings of bread and wine for the Mass. It must not, therefore, be understood as the great oblation of the body and blood of our Lord. For such it is not. Next the priest removes the veil from the chalice and spreads the corporal on the altar.

On the patena lies the host, which is later changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord. Taking the patena, containing the host, in his hands with uplifted eyes he offers it for himself, for those assembled and for all the faithful, both living and dead. Passing to the Epistle side of the altar with the chalice he then pours into it the wine and a few drops of water. This signifies the union of the faithful with our Lord. Returning to the centre of the altar he offers the chalice for the whole world.

The priest then passes again to the Epistle side of the altar and washes his fingers, first that they may be clean and secondly to indicate the holiness with which the holy mystery should be approached. Returning to the middle of the altar he prays the Blessed Trinity to receive the sacrifice offered for its glory. Then follows the secret, so called because not said aloud. In it the priest asks God's blessing on the offerings of the people as well as the people themselves. This closes the third part of the Mass.

Following the secret comes the Preface, which as the word indicates, is an introduction to the prayer called the Canon. The word itself means rule. As applied to the Mass it is made up of the unchangeable prayers prescribed by the Church for the offering of the sacrifice. These prayers are of a three-fold character. The first shows the purpose of the sacrifice, that is, the glory of God and the welfare of the Church; the second enumerates those who are the particular beneficiaries of the Mass, and the third reminds us that we are in communion with the saints in heaven.

Before the consecration the priest extends his hands over the chalice and asks that the bread and wine be changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord. Then comes a repetition of the last Eucharistic words of consecration. After the elevation the priest offers our Lord to God his Father in commemoration of His passion, resurrection and ascension. Following this is the prayer for the dead said for the souls in Purgatory. This concludes the fourth part of the Mass.—Church Progress.

OUR LADY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

On Trinity Sunday our thoughts go up to earth to that glorious heaven where the Trine God reigns supreme. Of that kingdom all Catholics believe that Mary is the queen. There is nothing strange in this. With the psalmist we cry: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a sceptre of uprightness. . . . The queen stood on the right hand, in gold, clothing." We who love our mothers, and know that Jesus loved His Mother, easily believe that she who was nearest Him at the Crrib and by the Cross is nearest now to His heavenly throne; and that He who bade us honor our parents on earth, will wish us to honor His Mother. There is an indulgenced prayer in the Raccolta, which well expresses Catholic sentiment in this regard. It is as follows:

"O Queen Jesus, I beseech Thee, by the love which Thou hast for Thy Mother, grant that I also may truly love her, just as Thou lovest her, and desirest to see her loved."

Surely we do not think that when we reach heaven, as we trust in God's great mercy that we shall, we are going to be entirely ignorant of the blessed beings whom we shall find there. Oh no! Not only shall we know our dear ones whom we loved on earth, but we shall know our guardian angel, and thank him for his care of us; we shall know our patron saints and those other saints with whom here we have formed special friendships. And if this is so, what joy it will be to greet our Blessed Mother, our Lord's dear Mother, the Queen of Heaven: to look into those "heavenly eyes" that first saw Jesus; and to hear the voice that first spoke to Him tell us about Him Whom she loved best, and Who loves her best, and for Whose sake she tenderly loves each one of us. How often we are made to realize the fact that non-Catholics do not understand what is meant by that article of the Creed, "I believe in the Communion of Saints!" A recent writer has gone so far, in his utter misconception of the truth, as to say that Catholics join Mary to the Most Holy Trinity in such a manner as to make a

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quaternary," and that we even place her higher than God! No one ranks a queen as higher than a king when saying that she is his queen. No Catholic places Mary higher than God. She is what she called herself, "His handmaid; she is His creature, the work of His will; but she is also His Mother, the Queen of the Most Holy Trinity, the Queen of Heaven, where He reigns supreme eternally, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore. —Sacred Heart Review.

Three Good Resolutions. There are three things about which one should make good resolutions rather than about any others, says a Paulist Father. First, the practice of prayer; second, going to confession and Communion; third, avoiding the occasions of sin. The first two fill our souls with God's grace and the third keeps us out of danger. Put all your good resolutions into company with prayer, and monthly or at least quarterly, Communion, and you will have no great difficulty in pulling through. From month to month is not so long a time to keep, straight and a good confession and a worthy Communion is God's best help. Morning and night prayers are a mark of predestination to eternal life; keep away from bad company and dangerous places, and avoiding bad reading and all other dangerous occasions, has very much to do with an innocent life and a happy death.

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