

trees with leaves and blossoms and fills the woods with melody and joyfulness. The sinner is the prodigal son that leaves his father's house, goes into a distant country, spends his fortune in riotous living and is reduced to beggary and starvation. The repentant sinner is the Prodigal returning home to his father's house to make his confession; he is tattered, torn, foot-sore, penniless and hungry, having lost his fortune and his honour, and forfeited all rights to his father's love and to a place in the home of his childhood and innocence. Jesus in the sacrament of Penance is the father of the Prodigal who forgives and forgets the unhappy past, embraces his guilty but repentant child with the kiss of peace, clothes him with the best garments in His ample wardrobe, (charity), puts on his finger the ring of his recovered sonship, and of his restored rights in his father's house and prepares for him the rich banquet of his love, even that bread that came down from heaven and giveth life to the world. Penance then is a mighty agent in that order of renovation and restoration established on earth by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It disarms the Cherubim that with flaming sword beckoned us away from Paradise and gives us the right to return to it and eat of the tree of life.

Mortal sin incurs the debt of guilt and the penalty of eternal loss. This debt the sinner cannot pay of himself nor can he by his unaided efforts escape the dread penalty attached to it. Were he to die in that state the debt due by him to the infinite justice of God would stand recorded against him forever, and the doors of the eternal prison would ever remain closed against him. The Precious Blood applied through the sacrament of Penance pays the debt and remits the penalty; it wipes out the handwriting of death that stood against the sinner and purchases him with a great price. A person who for some capital crime has been condemned to death or to imprisonment for life, with what transports of joy does he receive the glad tidings that his sentence is cancelled and that he is soon to be restored to liberty; with what feel-