

the violent and brutal measures that, in certain countries, are executed against the Catholic Church will not soon, by a logical fatality, be directed against all the doctrines and beliefs which displease the sovereign people. God alone knows whether this future is near. However that may be, in all times, even in those that seem to us most peaceable, Christian faith carries with it the idea of sacrifice. It frequently causes in the family life the separations here foretold by Jesus Christ; it alienates from us hearts whose affections were necessary; it creates about us a formidable isolation; it excites against us a serious opposition of raillery and of a subtle and malicious hostility, more formidable, perhaps, than open persecution. No one knows all the moral sufferings, all the divisions, of which it is the cause. Every day witnesses the realization of the austere word of Christ: "I come not to bring peace, but the sword." Ah! the opposition, the derision of strangers, which it endured. But to alienate the hearts of those upon whom one depended, to meet from them defiance and indifference, to feel one's self misunderstood by them, to see one's heart's best intentions perverted, what grief and what temptation! Indeed it is to our brethren who are called upon to suffer such cruel trials, that the grand promises of our text are addressed. For every one of their sufferings God has provided a compensation. From this time forth they will find more than they have lost. There are other ties than those of flesh and blood; there are other affections than those of which nature is the source. The Church is a family also, the only one upon which death has no hold. "The Father, from whom all the family in heaven and earth are named" (Eph. iii: 15), according to the admirable expression of St. Paul, is the living hearth of souls, the only one whose fires have never been extinguished. In Him we know ourselves, we find ourselves again, we love ourselves, we possess ourselves for eternity. By Him we partake of the communion of saints in the past, the

present, and the future; we enter upon that vast current of faith, of prayers, of ardent sympathy, which circulates from soul to soul, growing in force and sweetness. And is not this a magnificent recompense for all your earthly separations, the anticipated possession of that love which is already, as one has said, heaven upon earth before being heaven in the heavens?

Have you noticed the vast place which the Gospel accords to joy? Have you observed how many times this word and this idea are repeated? In the very first sayings of Jesus this word finds a place upon His lips; it is found in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. Everywhere the apostles repeat it, and the record of their acts is all radiant with it. And this infinite joy, which came to enlighten and invigorate the world, as the warm light and air of a spiritual spring, to what is it always closely allied? To sacrifice—that is to say, to that which the world calls grief. Behold here the reason why the Church sings when she can no longer speak; and never has she sung so well as in the days of the most atrocious persecutions. She has sung in the amphitheatre of the Coliseum; she has sung in the catacombs; she has sung upon the scaffold. Listen to the poor harmony of our old psalms, not laboriously repeated, as in our days, by a few picked voices in sad and drawling tunes—more in keeping with a funeral service than with the triumphant cheerfulness of Christian worship; listen to them in the prisons and in the galleys, and in the recesses of Cevennes, where the voice of an heroic people was heard, mingled with the roaring of torrents and the sighing of mountain winds. It was joy which quivered in those unaffected and strong verses. And what occurred there has been repeated wherever souls have been found worthy to suffer for Jesus Christ.

Where are there, outside of ourselves, outside of God's family, outside of God, similar joys, so firm, so powerful—above all, so victorious? Our adorable Savior has said: "Do men gather grapes