

3rd. In commencing our prayers we should bless ourselves, as the church invariably does. The sign of the cross made devoutly, fixes the attention, and being reminded by it, that it is to the most Holy Trinity we are going to speak, we resolve not to indulge voluntary distractions, and disavow them by anticipation. Having performed this angelical duty well, we rise up from it, arming ourselves once more with the blessed sign as its most becoming termination.

4th. Before our chief actions we should make the sign of a cross, as being a means of sanctifying them. Thus sitting down to sew, or knit, or spin, or read, or write, going out or coming in from business or recreation, undertaking a journey by land or a voyage by sea, the husbandman on tacking his plough, the mechanic on taking up his tools, the merchant on entering his counting-house, the mistress of a family in applying to her household affairs, the child sitting down to its studies, the servant in taking up the mop or the broom, all would do well to make the sign of the cross. What blessings would this salutary prelude draw upon their respective labors! surely they would not dare to sin during their progress. This most christian custom has produced most salutary effects. A lunner who had contracted it, was once engaged to paint an indecent picture.—He had made the bargain, perhaps a too advantageous one to be refused; but sitting down, and before taking up his pencil, making, through habit, the sign of the cross, he reflected a moment; he at once felt the contrast, he saw that by the unworthy labor he was about to begin, he should make void for himself and for many the blood by which they had been redeemed on the holy road. He stopped short, and would not proceed leaving the prepared tablet without a single stroke of the pencil.

5. Before and after meals we should sign ourselves with the cross. Jesus Christ, our dearest Lord, has set us the example of prayer and benediction before repasts. 'Raising his eyes to heaven, he blessed the loaves and the fishes, and 'after the supper, a hymn being said, they went out to Mount Olivet.'—Bless yourselves then before meals, thus you will attract upon your repast the divine benediction, the hand of God making it nutritious and removing from it all that could render it hurtful. Thus St. Benedict escaped being poisoned, for making the sign of the cross upon the cup containing his beverage and into which poison had been infused by some wicked enemies, the base burst, and the holy man escaped death. By the same means we might escape far worse poison, that of gluttony, intemperance, sensuality. Hard indeed should it be for us to indulge in excess, or too great nicety having before our eyes him, who for our sakes was drenched with 'vinegar and gall' upon the cross. We need not say much, it being easy to see the reasonableness and propriety of signing ourselves after meals with the cross. Since it is God who gives us every thing we receive, we should thank Him for every thing. Some there are, who by neglect in this point, degrade themselves below the brute species—for even tigers love those who feed them, and what can be compared to the sense which the faithful dog evinces for such kindness—and these are for the most part among the better classes, whose tables are covered with luxuries; but how unworthy, how degrading in any class professing Christianity. St Paul says, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever else we do, to do all in the name of the Lord, (I Cor. x. 31) We shall comply with this injunction by making, before and after meals the sign of the cross. Though the dear poor and the lower

class be the chief object of our labors, still we are determined, as far as we can, to labor for, all, being in a more widely extensive sense than the apostle ' debtors to all'. Hence we would, here remonstrate with those who dining with Protestants, feel ashamed to bless, to make upon themselves the sign of the cross. Some shabby Catholics, we regret to say, have under such circumstances, shrunk from the holy practice; but others, and among them; the greatest man of his age, one who knows how to combine the most devoted love of his country and attention to public affairs with the most practical Catholicity, far from acting so unchristianly, openly blesses himself on sitting to table, and in the edification of his sectarian fellow guests, on more than one occasion.

6th. In temporal dangers we ought also to form upon ourselves the great sign of Christianity. This valley of tears is filled with them; a thousand accidents every day threaten us; our conservation is a continued miracle of divine Providence.—When then the elements are in commotion, when the winds bellow, or the lightnings flash, when threatened by bodily peril by land or sea, recur to the all-saving Cross, and the faith and confidence thus exercised, will have the same result as the invocation of the apostles, when tossed upon the stormy billows, they exclaimed, 'Lord save us, we perish,' (Matt. viii. 25.) But remember, that to be efficacious on such occasions, the blessings yourselves should be accompanied with filial fear, and sincere sorrow for your sins, which are very often the cause of these frightful convulsions of nature. And when the danger is past, be careful to execute the good resolutions which it inspired unlike those mariners who affrighted by the tempest, promise to become very saints, but who, with the returning calm resume their licentiousness and blasphemies.

7th. In sine, in temptations make the sign of the cross. Temptation is after all the greatest peril, and as far exceeds temporal dangers as the soul excels the body. But the cross dissipates it as with a strong armour, a coat of mail, an impenetrable shield; for by it we become invincible. If then a wicked thought, an evil desire, rise up in your soul, if moved to pride, anger, impatience, or otherwise solicited to sin, instantly make the sign of the cross. If you cannot do it openly, make it secretly on your heart, with an internal renunciation of the foul suggestion, and you will assuredly be victorious. Here we would remind you that you should not expose yourself rashly to temptation, such temerity is not entitled to victory. If this even on one occasion happen, still, as we have said, form the sign of the cross, disavow the temptation, and with sincere regret for having caused it, promise never more to be guilty of the like presumption.

Practical conclusion from the foregoing subject.

1. Look upon your name of Christian as your most honourable title, like the great St. Louis.
2. Never omit nor blush at making the sign of the cross on occasions required by religion.
3. Make it with respect and devotion at all times, and regret having so often formed it with irreverence and inattention.

DIALOGUE.

MEAT ON FRIDAY.

SCENE—A Farm house—Mr. Fink and Mrs. Fink, and Master Fink at breakfast—Mr. Fink smacks his lips, wipes them with his handkerchief, looks blandly at Mrs. Fink, smiles, then speaks:

Mr. F.—My dear, I have made an excellent breakfast.—(Gently presses his hands upon his stomach.)—That beef-steak was delicious—done just right.

Mrs. F.—You know I thought it, Mr. Fink, and I cooked it too.

Master F.—And I pounded it, I did. I got it all so sweet!

Mrs. F.—(Looking sour.) Hold your tongue you little head.