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VALENTINE TO A LITTLE GIRL.

Little maiden dost thou pine
For a faithful Valentine?
Art thou scanning timidly
Every face that meets thine eye?
Art thou fancying there may be
Fairer face than thou dost see?
Little maiden, scholar mine,
Wouldst thou have a Valentine?

Go and ask, my little child,
Ask the Mother Undeified:
Ask for she will draw thee near,
And will whisper in thine ear:
"Valentine the name is good,
For it comes of lineage high,
And a famous family;
And it tells of gentle blood,
Noble blood,—and nobler still,
For its owner freely pour'd
Every drop there was to spill
In the quarrel of his Lord.
Valentine! I know the name,
Many martyrs bear the same;
And they stand in glittering ring,
Round their Warrior God and King,
—Who before and for them bled,
—With their robes of ruby red,
And their swords of cherub flame."

Yest there is a plenty there,
Knights without reproach or fear,—
Such St. Denys, such St. George,
Martin, Maurice, Theodore,
And a hundred thousand more;
Guerdon gained and warfare o'er,
By that sea without a surge
And beneath the eternal sky,
And the beauteous sun,
In Jerusalem above,
Valentine is every one;
Choose from out that company
Whom to serve whom to love.
—Cardinal Newman.

CATHOLIC GENUFLECTION.

Why Catholics Bend The Knee Upon Entering the Church.

"And all the kindred of the Gentiles shall adore His sight."—Ps., xxi., 27, 28.

We Catholics bend the knee, upon entering our Church, to adore, as it were, upon the very threshold of His Church, the God we believe to dwell therein. It is an outward manifestation of our faith in the Divine presence. It is the Catholic's salute to his God. When we meet a friend upon the street we salute with a bow. This is the salute of a creature to his fellow-creature; but in meeting our God in Church we Catholics adore on bended knee. This is the salute of a creature to his Creator—of a Christian—and a Catholic to his God. Surely if we do right to bow thus to creatures, we do no wrong to bend to God! Are we to do more for the creature than for the Creator, or less for God than for man? O, surely not! We observe certain remarks of respect in entering the house of men, such as taking off our hats, for instance, through politeness. How much more so, then, in entering that Greater House—the House of God—ought we to show even greater signs of respect, and even of devotion? and this we Catholics do by bending low the knee to adore and worship God the moment we enter the portals of His Holy Church, thereby to remind us that we are no longer in the house of man, but in the house of God. O, how becoming to enter thus God's Holy Church. It tells us immediately where we are, in the presence of our God, while in genuflecting often it reminds us continually where we are—in the House of God! How truly, then, in the language of holy writ, the Catholic genuflection says:—

"Indeed, the Lord is in this place; this is no other but the House of God and the gate of Heaven. Genesis xxviii., 16, 17. How becoming, after all, is the Catholic genuflection, and how natural for hearts filled with reverence and love for God to adore on bended knee the moment they enter the Holy Church wherein he dwells. How beautiful, too, the faith that teaches us thus to bow down at the entry of God's Church to show how, first, as is most fit, we offer God ourselves before we offer Him our wants! O, how this humble and devout posture exerts its influence immediately over our souls, shows the reality of our faith, and adds devotion to our worship! and how truly grand, indeed, it is to see that living, acting faith which makes the soul and body thus agree, that both may worship God! In entering other Churches, we enter them as we do the houses of the earth, and are, therefore reminded of them; but in entering the Holy Catholic Church, we immediately bend our knee to God, and thus we are reminded that we are entering not, indeed, a house of earth—a human habitation—but the House of God. Moreover, what is the Church? Is it not the place wherein we worship God? Certainly. When better, then, could we begin our worship than at the very entry of that divine abode? or how better could we show that worship than, as

we Catholics do, by adoring on bended knee, and at the threshold of His Church, the God we believe to dwell therein? Such, then, is the Catholic genuflection—that beautiful reflection from the body as from a mirror of the soul's great love for God, for thus we know the soul has seen her Lord, and so invites the body to adore. O how grand, then, must be the faith that teaches the Christian and the Catholic to enter thus God's Holy Church, and as he enters, so also must he leave that divine abode by adoring on bended knee, that God may bless him ere he goes! Sweet, indeed, and beautiful it is, to see the Catholic salute and bid farewell to God; but sweeter still and far more beautiful, to see the God-like faith that prompts such acts of worship and of love. Beautiful, indeed, such acts, but far more so the glorious Catholic faith that gives them birth!

SUCH GENUFLECTIONS NOT IDOLATRY.

We will now see that such genuflections are not acts of idolatry. Many, indeed, do really imagine that not merely these, but in fact all the genuflections we Catholics make in Church, or elsewhere, are idolatrous rather than Christian acts. In this, however, they err, owing, no doubt, to an ignorance of Catholic teaching regarding these genuflections, which, briefly expressed, is this:—"That we Catholics never genuflect, or bend the knee, to adore, or worship except to God, and God alone; and whenever else we bend or bow it is not to adore or worship, but simply out of honor, reverence, and respect." How simple! Where indeed, is the idolatry, or even the bowing, here? Idolaters in worshipping, bow down to false Gods. Catholics, however, in genuflecting, bow only to the true God, and it is never idolatry to bow or bend in worship to our God. Idolaters, again, kneel to visible Gods made often with their own hands. Catholics, on the contrary in their genuflections, kneel only to the invisible God, not made by mortal hands. Instead, therefore of the Catholic worship being idolatry; it is faith; and instead of the Catholic genuflection being an idolatrous act, it is rather a beautiful and devout act of Christian faith, that certainly cannot but be pleasing in the sight of God, for

SUCH GENUFLECTIONS ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRIPTURE.

Thus in Ps., xxi., 27, 28, we read that: "All the kindred of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight." And O how truly is this seen and realized in the Catholic genuflection, where the kindred of the Gentiles, the children of the Catholic Church, adore on bended knee the moment they are in God's sight within His Holy Church! Again in Philippians, Chap. II., 10, we read that: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bend." Hence, if even at the name of Jesus we are told to bend the knee, how much greater reason have we to bend it in His very presence as in His Holy Church, for if this veneration be due even to the name, how shall we refuse it to Himself—the Mighty One of Heaven? St. John in a vision he had of Heaven, tells us that he saw four and twenty elders bow down before the throne of the Most High God. Apoc., iv., 10, and in that other fainter vision of Heaven, seen within the Catholic Church to-day, how beautiful to behold Catholics bowing down like them before that self-same God enthroned within their Church, thus reflecting here a similarity of faith, bringing down, as it were, to earth the Heaven of the saved, and making of our Church a nearer Heaven still! Beautiful genuflection! how near in These earth seems to be to Heaven after all, for in the vision of a saint, earth, through St. John, looks up to Heaven; and sees in other saints the genuflection of the Catholic faith, while Heaven, through her saints, looks back to earth and sees in us the Catholic genuflection, Heaven-born within our Holy Church! O how near earth draws to Heaven in the worship of the Catholic Church, and in the Catholic genuflection how the Church prepares her children for the kingdom of her Lord! Moreover, read holy scripture carefully and mark well how, when our Saviour lived on earth, men were wont to enter or leave His presence. Not unfrequently they saluted Him or bade Him fare-

well, just as we Catholics do within our Church to-day, by adoring on bended knee, as in the Catholic genuflection. Look, for instance, at the Eastern Magi and the lowly Shepherds! See how, falling down, they adored. St. Matth., chap. ii., 7, when entering the presence of the Christ Child of Bethlehem! Again, later on, when the Christ Child become the God Man. Mark how the Ruler, in approaching Him, came up and adored Him; first, before He began his prayer, St. Matth., ix., 18, just as Catholics in their Churches do to-day; and again, note how the leper of the Gospel, in saluting our Blessed Lord, fell on his face before His feet, St. Luke xvii., 16; and finally in Pilate's Hall, see how, bowing their knees, they adored Him, St. Matth., xv., 19. Thus scripture is replete with instances showing how it was customary in Christ's own time first to adore on bended knee upon entering the Divine presence, as Catholics in their genuflections and in their Churches do to-day; and as in entering, so also in leaving the presence of God, they adored frequently like us on lowly knee. Thus Simon Peter, when taking leave of Christ, fell down at Jesus' knees, St. Luke, v., 8, just as Catholics in their farewell genuflections still take leave of Him to-day within God's Holy Church. O how natural! How beautiful, then, to note the Catholic genuflections, originating with our dear religion in the days of Christ, and to see to-day only a continuance of that ancient custom prevalent when our Saviour walked with men. How striking, too, the evidence it furnishes that Christ was once really here on earth, visibly teaching in our midst, and that He is here still, just as really, though invisibly, in His silent, ever-abiding presence in our Holy Church!

In Hebrews we read of Christ: "Let the Angels of God adore Him."—Heb. chap. i., 6. Far greater need, then, have we to adore Him, the creatures only of God. Hence, with reason, we genuflect before Him in His Holy Church. Finally, look at the first, the only Catholic Church ever on earth—the little stable Church of Bethlehem! There, seen through the mirror of scripture, is the Christ Child Jesus; Mary, also, His ever virgin mother; His foster father, Joseph; the manger altar, whereon is Christ, the sanctuary lamp, the Heaven-lit star. Yes all are here; just as they are within that self-same Catholic Church to-day. There to, are the worshippers, the Eastern Magi, coming from afar, and nearer the adoring Shepherds. Soon they will be within that humble House of God. Watch, well, then, those royal adorers, those pious souls and note how they enter that lowly Bethlehem Church. The stars stop. They enter and behold. Heathens only as they are, as soon as they catch sight of Jesus, falling down they adore on bended knee their newborn Saviour King. St. Matth., ii., 7, thus showing how first they offer Christ themselves, as is most fit, before they offer Him their gifts. Beautiful scene. So faithfully mirrored in the Catholic genuflection of to-day. Shall we then be Christians, and refuse, in entering that self-same Catholic Church grown larger to bend like them the knee to God who dwells therein? Is the Christ within the Catholic Church of Bethlehem other than the Christ within the Catholic Church to-day. Or has the Christ of Bethlehem changed, that we should not adore on lowly knee within His presence still. When heathens even did so much for God, are we Christians only to do less? O, surely not! Hence it is that we Catholics, ever mindful of the real, though invisible, presence of our Lord within our Church, always genuflect or bend the knee immediately when entering that Holy House, wherein faith teaches us God dwells. Star-guided to their God and to His Stable Church, the wise men, Heaven-taught, entered on adoring knee, because the Star of Faith shone brightly in their hearts' and so within our hearts and in our church the Star of Catholic Faith still shines, and shining, guides us to God's larger Bethlehem Home to-day, His Holy Church, and when it stops, glows before the mystic manger of the Tabernacle wherein He dwells. The faith of Bethlehem teaches us to bend and adore for we know that God is really there.

O how the Catholic genuflection, begun and born in Bethlehem, still lives and has its being within the Catholic Church to-day! Surely the Catholic Church of now is but the mirror of the Bethlehem Church of old, for the faith that taught the knee to bend to God within a stable Church teaches Catholics still to bend before their God within that same though larger, Catholic Church to-day. Like Moses on Sinai's Mount, petitioning the Almighty to let him see His glory from without the cloud, and who, when God did so, and the glory of the Lord passed before him quickly, was unable to look upon it, but, making haste to bow, exod. xxxiv., 8, So we Catholics, entering the Sinai of Our Holy Church, and seeing the glory of God passing therein, like another Moses, unable to look upon it reverently, making haste bow down prostrate to the earth adoring in the Catholic genuflection, and as we bend our knee thus low to earth, our heads our hearts. Our souls bow, too, in unison with our bodies in silent adoration of the invisible God whose glory is before us. O, beautiful genuflection. Beauty-union when soul and body thus agree, and both may worship God! and beautiful, too—beautiful, beyond expression—that glorious Catholic faith which teaches severent and repentant hearts to bend their bodies low, and thus accord in the worship of the soul! This, indeed is faith; not that idle, empty faith devoid of works that shortly dies. St. James ii., but the busy acting Catholic faith that surely lives. Thus does Holy Scripture speak in favor of the Catholic genuflection. Let us now see how

THE CATHOLIC GENUFLECTION ACCORDS WITH REASON.

What is this genuflection after all? Simply bending low the knee to adore and worship God. Is there anything wrong or unreasonable in this? If so what is it? Or when did it ever become unreasonable or wrong to genuflect or bend the knee to God anywhere, and last of all in Church. Nay, on the contrary, would it not rather be unreasonable, believing as we Catholics do, that the Church is the home of God's real though invisible presence. were we not to bend our knee to God, in entering His Holy house. Suppose my dear non-Catholic friends, you who object to Catholic genuflections, suppose I say, that yourselves were really to see God visibly before you upon entering your own Church, would you not immediately bend low the adoring knee? O surely you would; hence, of you and of such faith, Christ could say; "Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed" and adored, St. John xx., 29. How much better however to hear from Christ those other words that Catholics in their faith, and in their genuflections, bending to their God they cannot see, deserve; "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed," and adored, St. John, xx., 19. Such indeed dear friends, is Catholic faith, and such a faith it is the Catholic genuflection shows. O be candid then, my dear dissenting friends, and admit that the Catholic's genuflection to his God is after all a grand and glorious act of Christian faith. Think you, God will be displeased because his children bend before Him thus within His blessed presence? O surely not. If persons could but realize fully that the Church is what they claim they believe it is, and we Catholics know it is, the House and Home of God on earth, they certainly would not wonder at or blame the faith that teaches us to genuflect in entering that Divine abode. Remember once that the Church really is and Christian Faith will instinctively teach us how to enter it, for when the heart is truly humble the body soon will bend, and the soul when once in presence of her God delays not long to urge the body to adore. Moreover when Christ lived on earth, we have already seen that it was customary upon approaching Him to bend low the knee and adore, and not what He lives invisibly in our Holy Church, may not Catholics still approach Him in the self-same way, and thus preserve those pious customs of our early Christian Faith? surely they may, for as it was but right

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