

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Keep them, I pray Thee dearest Lord, Keep them, for they are Thine— Thy priests whose lives burn out before Thy Consecrated Shrine.

Keep them, Thou knowest, dearest Lord— The World—the fresh are strong And Satan spreads a thousand snares To lead them into wrong

Keep them, for they are in the world Though from the world apart, When earthly pleasures tempt, allure, Shelter them in Thy heart.

Keep them and comfort them in hours Of loneliness and pain When all their life of sacrifice For souls seems but in vain.

Keep them, and O remember, Lord, They have no one but Thee; Yet they have only human hearts, With human frailty.

Keep them as spotless as the Host— That daily they careen— Their every thought and word and deed, Deign, dearest Lord, to bless.

LITTLE KINDNESSES Very small kindnesses help so much that it is a thousand pities that more of them are not shown in all of our lives.

A USEFUL PERSON The cheerful man is pre-eminently a useful man. The cheerful man does not cramp his mind and take half-views of men and things.

He who has formed a habit of looking at the bright, happy side of things has a great advantage over the chronic dyspeptic, who sees no good in anything.

TO-day Keep in mind how Cervantes, the author of Don Quixote, sums up the folly of procrastination: "By the street of By and By one arrives at the house of never."

THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION On this day centuries ago St. Luke tells us in his Gospel, "The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary; and the angel being come in, said unto her: "Hail, full of grace the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women."

THE USUAL QUIET OF ORIENTAL SPRING hupg over the little village of Nazareth. An angel left the Court of Heaven bearing a message from the Most High God. Straightway

he flew to the humble home of Joseph, the carpenter, for it was to his spouse the word of God was sent.

It is probable Mary was in prayer. With frightened eyes and beating heart she gazed at the radiant vision. Her humility made it hard for her to believe. Only when the angel greeted her with the assurance that God was pleased with her was she able to grasp the significance of the wonderful visit.

The feasts of Mary are milestones in the life of the Church. The Church of God loves to honor the Mother of God. It is not a mere sentiment, for our love and confidence in Mary is built on our love and confidence in Mary's Son.

In her name and beneath her protecting love orders and congregations of religious men and women have been founded. The Cistercians wear their white habit in honor of her as Patroness and Queen; the Servites, children of her Dolors, whose order she herself founded; the Dominicans, "Brothers of Mary," whom she shelters under her mantle, who are the custodians of her rose garden; Mariists, Sisters of Marie Reparatrix, who herself desired their institution as so many Marias of the Tabernacle; Franciscans, whom she keeps sheltered in her maternal heart.

Mary is the model of saint and sinner, of scholar and laborer, of prince and peasant, of the innocent child and the world-weary man, of the consecrated nun and the "joyful mother of children."

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS BUT GOD IS SWEET My mother told me so, When I knelt at her feet Long—so long—ago— She clasped my hands in hers.

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creatures He had chosen Mary, innocent, pure, and humble, to be the Mother of Him Who was to overcome the world. This is the significance of the Annunciation.

When we turn to the scriptural accounts of the fall of man and his redemption, we observe how intimately a woman is bound up with these events. The first Eve listening to the Angel of Deceit by disobedience prepared the way for the fall of man. It was therefore fitting that the second Eve giving heed to the Angel of Truth should by obedience prepare the way for the Redemption.

Mary by her Ave of submission reversed the revolt of her mother Eva. As one of the Church's beautiful hymns declares, "Sumens illud Ave Gabriels ore, mutans Eve nomen," or as Father Southwell's translation puts it:

"Spell Eva back, and Ave shall you find; The first began, the last reversed our harms An Angel's witching words did Eva bind, An Angel's Ave disenchant the charms. Death first by Woman's weakness entered in, In Woman's virtue Life doth now begin."

The writings of the Fathers contain many lovely hymns and sermons on this contrast between the first and the second Eve. Cardinal Newman tells us that "the contrast between Mary and Eve had passed almost into a proverb at the time when St. Jerome wrote, 'Death by Eve's life by Mary.'"

In the writings of St. Ephrem the Syrian, whom the late Pope Benedict XV. last year proclaimed with solemn ceremony a Doctor of the Universal Church, there is this passage: "Instead of the Serpent arose Gabriel, and instead of Eve, Mary the Virgin. Eve became a debtor to God, she it was who gave ear to the Serpent's counsel. A child of one day, she despised the commandment, and therefore through a young Maiden salvation was sent to the world. Gabriel by his words undid the speech that the execrable wanderer had held with the virgin Eve. Eve had written the debt in her hand writing and the Virgin paid the debt. The daughter full of grace stood up in battle for her mother. Eve had fallen, Mary raised her up, and to the exiles was given hope of their reconciliation and return to Eden."

On the first Annunciation Day the Angelic Salutation was first heard upon earth. Today is the birthday of the Hail Mary. When we think of Our Mother's ineffable joys on this glorious festival, and the graces that came to us as a result of her acquiescence to the Divine Command, we see more clearly the reason of her unique prerogatives, her transcendent honors, and her power in supplication.

"Remember, Son, said St. Bonaventure, "that Mary invariably answers you with a favor when you greet her with a 'Hail Mary.'" That prayer which Heaven began on the first Annunciation Day, and which the Church has happily completed, will bring strength and consolation to all sinners, in all moments of the constant battle of life, and more especially at the hour of death.—The Pilot.

IS THIS YOUR EXCUSE We must admit at once that very many Catholics have not the time to go to Holy Communion more frequently. They live too far from church or their duties hinder them. There are countless others, however, for whom "no time" is a very lame excuse. They could find time, as others do, were they to try. For it is a fact that most of those who receive frequently actually "make time."

Again, think for a moment of what people will do when in poor health. If they are at all anxious to recover, and they usually are, they will do exactly what their doctors tell them. Let us suppose that a walk before breakfast and a drink from a certain spring is prescribed. Let us further suppose that this prescription has been endorsed by several physicians consulted on the question. Few, if any, would neglect this simple remedy.

Now, the times are such that our spiritual life is menaced daily. And a great Pontiff, speaking for the Heavenly Physician, has told the modern Catholic world that frequent Communion—a walk to church before breakfast and a partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ—is necessary for a healthy Christian life. Every priest will vouch for the wisdom of this prescription of Pope Pius X.; and, therefore, Catholics should take it to heart and act upon it, as they would upon the advice of a physician concerning their physical well-being. Time would be no obstacle in this latter case, so it should not be a hindrance in the former, the more important after all.

In a word, frequent Communion is not the inconvenient practice many people imagine it to be. And time can be found for it in more lives than are at present strengthened by its graces. What sacrifice it entails is well repaid by actual help along the road to heaven, and by the fact that Christ has said: "He who eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day."—Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

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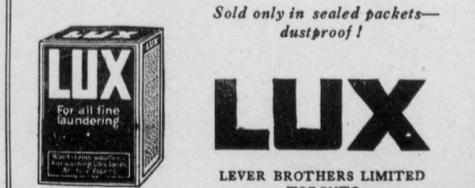
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