

body also, renounce or diminish some habitual enjoyment for the next forty days in the spirit of penance and self-chastisement for sin. Such voluntary mortifications during Lent are very pleasing to our dear Lord Jesus Christ, and are always fruitful of grace to those who practice them. Indeed they oftentimes obtain for habitual sinners the special strength from heaven to overcome a vice that has taken root in the heart or is gradually acquiring a despotism over the will. Oh! how numerous are the modern forms of self-gratification! Some of them are innocent in themselves; others more or less dangerous; and all of them are capable of being advantageously diminished or discarded, especially during Lent, if only the spirit of penance makes itself the ruling principle of the soul. Let each one resolve to sanctify the Lent and compensate for the relaxation of the law of fast and abstinence by renouncing one or other of those unnecessary, perhaps dangerous, enjoyments to which he has habituated himself. It will be accepted by Jesus Christ as an act of homage to Him in the desert, a voluntary penance and an atonement for past sin, and it will, moreover, strengthen his soul for the day of temptation.

The Church also expects her faithful children to abstain during this penitential season from all public games and theatrical entertainments and banquetings and balls and dances and such-like festive amusements. These are directly and manifestly repugnant to the spirit of the Lent, which is Penance and self-denial and humiliation of ourselves before God in atonement for our offences against His Sovereign Majesty. What can unbelievers think of us and our religion, when they see Catholic young men and young women rushing to the Church to receive the blessed ashes in token of their dedication to the forty days' discipline of compunction and self-chastisement in company with their suffering Saviour, and next day rushing to the theatre or the ball-room, to indulge in frivolity and laughter and silly, if not sinful, exhibitions of vanity, too frequently offensive to modesty and always dissipating to the religious spirit! We most earnestly exhort all Catholic parents to be firm and unrelenting in