

for her children and a desire for the salvation of all. The true religion is one of mortification and privation, because it is a continual exercise of virtue and virtue is acquired at the cost of pain and sacrifice. Nothing grand or noble was ever gained without a struggle.

Whose example is given us to follow ? That of Our Lord Jesus Christ who came on earth as the great Expiator of our crimes. As our model we find Him first in suffering, laboring, fasting and humbling Himself till He closes His life by the death of the cross.

All of us who are guilty—and who is innocent ? must imitate our Redeemer in His life of atonement. We, in our turn, must be expiators, must bewail our sins and pray for pardon. To assist us in doing this, Holy Church now proclaims the return of the solemn fast.

Our own transgressions are not the only ones we should endeavor to repair. The sins of others—those perhaps of our own families or friends—make penance a pressing duty for us. The frightful spread of impiety and irreligion, the general reign of vice and the depravity of our times call for reparation, if the world is not to be allowed to sink under the load of its iniquity.

We do not sufficiently estimate the all powerful effect of prayer and penance. What multitudes of sinners have been withdrawn from the ways of perdition and sent to heaven almost in spite of themselves, by the prayers and fasts of catholics during Lent ! Crime demands vengeance, but heartfelt contrition and repentance propitiate God's justice. Witness the Ninivites whose tears and prayers disarmed God's anger and obtained their pardon.

Far from finding the observance of the Lenten regulations difficult and painful, thousands of fervent christians are zealous in conforming with the penitential precepts and add their own works of supererogation. The knowledge that they are obeying God whose eyes are fixed on them, and that they are effacing their sins, make fasting and abstinence a pleasing duty. These christians manifest a sincere love of God, since love is proved by suffering. Let us, then, unite our fast to that of Our divine Saviour, and enter joyfully on the career of penance.