

THE MONTH OF MARY.

Cultus of the Saints is Not Idolatry. Detroit Witness.

The Rev. E. J. Gleeson, S. J., is giving three lectures this month and the first was delivered last Sunday evening, under the title of "Mary, Our Spiritual Mother."

"When Our Lord," said the reverend Father, "was hanging upon the cross and looking down beheld His mother and the disciple whom He loved, He commended the one to the care of the other; and St. John, understanding His words, during the twenty years of Mary's life, took care of her temporal welfare, and she directed him and the other apostles, as children bequeathed to her protection. St. John was the representative of all the faithful, and through him Jesus Christ no less given to us our spiritual Mother."

"The special regard paid to the Blessed Virgin Mary is not only distinctive of Catholics, but is a chief object of attack on the ground that it is superstitious and idolatrous and that in paying to a creature the honor due to God alone, dishonor is paid to the merits of Christ, and another mediator than Jesus Christ is substituted."

"Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is a special application of 'Saint Worship.' Anyone who finds a difficulty in honoring the saints, could not be classed a citizen but an alien in the house of God. The Catholic Church names many a saint whom it calls upon all to honor; and th' honor is the practice of the doctrine named in the Creed as the 'Communion of Saints.'"

"When Our Lord taught on earth, He did not hand His doctrine down to individuals, but to a society which He founded—the Church—consisting of the Apostles and the faithful. Now, a society implies union; and using the same means to compass the same end. A society of men must have external, representative signs by which they are known. So in the Church, there is the same government, the same head, the same doctrine, law and sacraments; but being a spiritual body, there is an internal union also, the bond of charity by which we are united to our Lord and to one another. This is the foundation of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints."

"The Church is broad, and includes the patriarchs of the Old Law, from Noah and Moses down to Jesus Christ, and more, all the faithful on earth, the Church militant, and those who, working out their eternal reward in Purgatory, are the Church suffering and those in Heaven, the Church triumphant. All these are united to Christ and to one another in perfect charity, and herein is seen the Communion of Saints. Individual prayers or praises are feeble, single efforts against the enemy of souls seem weak, but united what power they have! How often have graces never prayed for been obtained? Whence come they? Not from individual merit. Think of the sacrifices made, the prayers said, the sighs and tears for the sinner by mother and sister only, and see the value of the prayers offered in God's Church."

"Saint Worship" is an application of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. And two points are to be noticed: first, we honor the Saints as God's friends; and, secondly, we ask them and they grant their intercession to obtain from God graces which are necessary to us. "Does the honor which we pay to the Saints detract from the honor due to God? In asking their intercession are we doing anything derogatory to Christ's intercession as our Mediator? Our enemies say 'Yes.' Your words, your actions, prove it." But wait; if we are accused of honoring Saints, we are guilty of the charge; but if the honor paid to them is the honor due to God alone, then the charge is false. Words are conventional and change their meaning, sometimes even to the very opposite. Our opponents must prove our intention. What kind of honor do we mean? The word is common in ordinary life. How can they prove their accusation that our intention is idolatrous? Not from our preaching; not from our books of theology, not from the Catechism placed in our children's hands. The Church rejects such teachings, and the accusation is false.

"But, they say, 'you make fine distinctions.' Honor is relative in proportion to the worth of the recipient, in civil, social or commercial, and so in religious affairs. Honor to God consists in the acknowledgment of One Supreme Being, possessing perfection in Himself, Lord and Master of all. In the Saints we recognize good qualities, examples of virtues, derived all from God, secondary in their nature; and in honoring the Saints, honor is reflected on God Himself. Therefore we are not guilty of any breach of the First Commandment or of superstition in giving this honor to Saints."

"But, they further urge, 'in asking the intercession of the Saints, we wrong Our Lord who is the only Mediator. There is a distinction. In Christ, the Son of God, His infinite merits can alone atone. Every grace comes through those merits. When we ask the Saints for their intercession, we acknowledge that their virtues are derived from the virtues of Christ and are secondary to them. Nothing is independent of Christ, but through the union of the Saints with Him. Is this derogatory or rather does it not enhance Christ's honor?"

"The Sacred Scriptures justify the practice, as in the cases of Abraham, Lot, Joshua, and others. Were they idolaters? Again Angels have interceded as in the cases of Tobias and of St. Peter and Judas Maccabaeus caused sacrifices and prayers to be offered for the departed, showing approval of paying honor to and asking intercession of members of the Church not militant."

History substantiates the claim, and it is consistent with reason to honor conspicuous individuals. Why not then honor God's Saints? To obtain a favor from a person in office, we ask his friend; why not then intercede by God's friends? This is the most natural doctrine in the world. Our prayers, individually may be unavailing but united with those of the Saints they can take heaven by violence. God is honored in all His creatures; why should He not be honored in the virtues of His Saints and of His Angels?"

"If such, then, be the doctrine of the Church, there is a special application to the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose dignity soars above all the merits and virtues of the Saints; who is the chosen daughter of God the Father, the Mother of God the Son, and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost; who reigns Queen of Angels and men; in merit such that an Archangel from heaven saluted her 'Full of Grace,' whose power, even her own Divine Son did not resist at the Marriage feast at Cana."

"Man is not a machine, but body and soul; and the whole man acts, and an ennobling sentiment enlists his whole being in God's service. Woman in ages past been considered inferior. The Church has held up Mary as an example, the highest and noblest of creatures; and through her woman has been recognized as sister of the Queen of Heaven, and to dishonor her is to dishonor the Mother of God, while to preserve her dignity she must strive to imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary."

"We must, then, look up to Mary as Our Spiritual Mother, because as Eve lost to us our Spiritual life, so Mary gave us her Divine Son and brought back our spiritual life to us; and also because her Divine Son, while hanging on the Cross bequeathed her to us as a Mother, whose virtues we should, above all, this month endeavor to imitate."

"The title announced for next Sunday is 'They shall call His name Emmanuel.'"

HOW TO BE HAPPY.

[From the French of Louis Veuillot, for the Chicago "Catholic Home," F. B. H.] To the Countess De Montsaunin: Paris, 26th June, 1859.

Madame:—For the present I must give up the holiday trip to Bornay. We are but three just now to work at the newspaper, and my absence would make the burden too heavy for the others. Besides, the position of affairs is such that I must necessarily lend a hand. I am also bound down to the work of correcting the final proofs of the *Melanges*. Any delay would throw the printers out of work. I must make an end of this heavy task once and for all. It will tie me down to Paris for the whole of July, and I see another task of equal importance looming up for the month of August. After sighing for the sun all winter, I have to spend the whole summer under its scorching glare. I must await the autumn, and then the rains will keep me a prisoner until winter locks the door for good. It is always the same story, monotonous and unchanging. The result is that life affords me always but one and the same joy and that is the joy that is outside of life. That is what Charles will find. The poor child is simple enough to expect happiness in this world: happy he is, but without knowing it; which is precisely the same as if he were not happy at all. We are not happy in this world. We have been or we should have been, relatively happy, if a simple glance at a perishable happiness, ever past and ever vain, made us put aside with scorn all fruitless care for present happiness and happiness to come—I refer of course to perishable happiness. To serve God is true happiness,—to day, yesterday and forever; but a man must know it and he must begin as soon as he knows it. Many know never it—many who know it never begin; many who begin do not continue,—or continue so badly or so feebly, that their search for true happiness becomes an addition to the sense of weariness and aversion which accompanies false happiness, that is to say, true misery. Ah, great God, but for thy pity, but for thy help, what should we do? But amidst all this, life passes away, and at length we find ourselves somehow pretty well prepared to leave it.

A good subject of meditation, if we were wise, would be to consider by how many little and great obstacles, and little and great lights, God has taken the trouble to restrain our rebel wills and mad search for happiness outside of Him. Let us rejoice for everything that is a restraint and a burden to us; this is our provision for a life that will never end, on this we shall live forever.

Adieu, dear Madam. Have courage and confidence. We shall have joy and peace in heaven, and we shall get it cheaply too, in spite of all, because God is the good God. We love God because He is good, we do not despair, because He is good.

Your devoted servant and friend, Louis Veuillot.

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RECITING PRAYERS AND PRAYING.

Almost every page of the Gospel bears testimony to the necessity of prayer in the Christian life. From the words of St. Paul, "Pray without ceasing," it would seem that prayer should be not only the daily food of our interior life, but the continual respiration of our souls. In fact, among all the duties that are rigorously imposed on us as Christians, there is not one more frequently insisted upon than this; not one that our Blessed Lord has more solidly established by His precepts or more highly consecrated by His example.

Yet, despite all this evidence as to the importance—nay, the absolute necessity of praying, this sacred duty, like many others incumbent upon the professed followers of Christ, is very often most unworthily accomplished, and sometimes, alas! altogether neglected. Of the folly and recklessness of those who, plunged into deplorable indifference as to their spiritual interests, pray not at all, nothing need here be said.

Others there are, however, who have actually ceased to pray without possibly being themselves aware of the fact; and to these it may be well to point out the distinction between reciting prayers and praying. While it is true that they have preserved the habit of pronouncing certain formulas—the "Our Father," the "Apostles' Creed," the "Confiteor," the several acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition; while such recitation, too, is assuredly commendable and, in no means to be discontinued—it is quite possible, on the other hand, that the formulas are said as a mere memory-lesson; that the words are not informed or vivified by the attention of the mind or the emotions of the heart; that such persons, in a word, pronounce prayers rather than pray.

True prayer is "an elevation of the soul"—"the raising up of the mind and heart to God, to adore Him, to make known to Him our wants, to beg His grace and blessing, to return Him thanks for His benefits." "An elevation of the soul to God." In real prayer we become in truth separated from the world in which we live, to fix ourselves upon our Heavenly Father. For the time being we forget our labors, our occupation, and all the sensible objects by which we are surrounded. We extricate our minds from the hurly-burly of worldly affairs and material interests, that we may "enter into ourselves," may commune with God, may occupy ourselves with Him and with our eternal interests.

As so many spiritual writers have said, prayer is a golden chain joining earth to heaven and heaven to earth. It is another Jacob's ladder, upon which we ascend to God and He comes down to us. In its highest expression, it is a delicious intercourse, a heart-to-heart conversation, with the King of Heaven, with our Creator, our Father, our Redeemer.

Now, do we so comport ourselves while proffering our daily petitions to the Almighty that our exercise really merits the name of praying? Do we habitually endeavor to give to our orisons the attention which the majesty of Him whom we address certainly calls for—such attention at least as puts entirely away all wilful distractions? Do we begin by placing ourselves in the presence of God, by silently considering for a moment the attitude congruous to the suitor who is receiving the favor of an audience with the omnipotent Ruler of the universe? Are we faithful to follow the counsel of Ecclesiasticus: "Before prayer, prepare thy soul; and be not as a man that tempteth God?" These are important questions.

Do we endeavor to realize that we are addressing a Father who is far closer to us than if He were visibly sitting before us, His hand upon our drooping heads? Do we plead to Him with the humility and the confidence of wayward children seeking the forgiveness of loving parents? Do we interlardedly renounce sin and all attachment to sin while speaking to Him who abominates it as the evil of evils? Or do we throw ourselves carelessly upon our knees, rapidly run through a series of petitions with less attention to their import than a school-boy gives to the parrot-like repetition of a lesson learned by rote; and rise with the relief consequent upon the performance of an irksome duty? If so, we have, technically it may be said our prayers; but we assuredly have not prayed. Nay, our performance has been a distinct slight to the majesty of God rather than a tribute of homage and devotion.

By all means let us preserve the habit of reciting our daily prayers, no matter how low we sink in the mire of tepidity or of sin; but let us also be careful to do something more than simply cry: "Lord, Lord!" Let our prayers come not from the lips merely, but from the heart; for as faith without works is dead, so words without intent are sterile.—Ave Maria.

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POPE LEO AND DON BOSCO.

First Meeting Between the Present Pontiff and the Great Salesian.

Don Bosco himself has furnished us with an anecdote relating to his first meeting with the present Pope when yet a Cardinal. The incident—which we transcribe as we find it in a little work published on the election of Cardinal Pecci to the throne of Peter—took place in those anxious days when the Church was weeping over the fresh grave of Pius IX.

A priest—thus Don Bosco hides his personality in the pamphlet alluded to—having urgent need of an audience with the Cardinal Secretary of State, was passing through the silent corridors of the Vatican (then steeped in the deepest mourning), when, on a landing of the stairs, his guide exclaimed: "This is the most eminent Camerlengo, Cardinal Pecci."

The priest's eyes were lifted to the noble countenance of the Porporato, and advancing with filial affection, "Your Eminence," he said, "will permit me to kiss your hand."

"And who are you that present yourself with such assuring freedom?" "I am a poor priest, who now kiss your Eminence hand, hopefully praying that after a few days I shall be permitted to kiss your foot."

"Beware of what you are about; I forbid you praying for such a thing." "You cannot prohibit my praying to God that His will be done."

"If you pray for the intention you have expressed, I shall inflict on you the ecclesiastical censure."

"Your Eminence has not the authority of inflicting censures yet. When you will have it, I shall not fail to respect your authority."

"But who is it, may I ask, who addresses me with such assurance?" "I am Don Bosco."—The name does not appear in the publication aforementioned.

"For charity's sake," the Cardinal rejoined, "keep your lips sealed on this subject. We must think of working now and not of jesting."

Before Don Bosco's audience was terminated his heart was overflowing with filial affection for the future Pontiff, and this affection, coupled with the most profound veneration, often afterwards drew him to Rome to see the Pope, hear the Pope and place himself entirely in the hands of the Pope.—Salesian Bulletin.

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A Physical Wreck

since 1894, and had also been a constant smoker for 35 years. My wife purchased the first bottle of Hood's Sarsaparilla and I commenced to take it more to please her than anything else. One bottle after another was taken with increasing benefit. The effect was of a strengthening nature, toning up my whole system. After I had been taking the medicine a short time, I laid away my pipe and have not had any desire for the use of tobacco since. Hood's Sarsaparilla has thoroughly purified my blood and driven all poison out of my system. It has also done me

A Power of Good

physically, and I feel like a new and free man. Previously, I had tried a good many different times to stop smoking, and to regain my health, but I was unable to accomplish the former, so that my attempt for the latter was each time a failure. I am pleased to recommend Hood's Sarsaparilla as a blood purifier." J. R. McFADDEN, Ex-Commander Ness Post, No. 81, G. A. R., Dept. of Kansas, Brownsville, Wash.

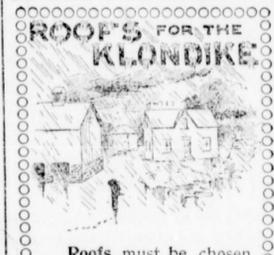
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