

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

The last day of fasting were more stringent in days gone by, because life then was not as strenuous as it is today, and because the faithful were more inclined toward such practices. Today these laws bind as ordered by the bishop of the diocese, and the obligations upon the laity are less severe and less serious. No one should presume to dispense himself from these laws. There are reasons why some should be dispensed, but they must apply to their pastors or confessors for this dispensation. And he who really can not fast should feel that he is not doing it for the right reason, but from him doing it for the wrong reason. Make up for it in some other way.

After the sacraments there is scarcely any help that enables man to do God's will more willingly and more generously, and to abstain more joyfully from things forbidden. Fasting is the best. There is a wisdom far above that of the angels and of the Church. Having before his eyes the example of Christ, the apostles, and the saints, the Church, with a complete knowledge of the needs and of the welfare of man's soul, imposes upon us the obligation of fasting. True it is that the severe fasts of the apostles, trials, and even war, are part of our lot in this vale of tears, yet these are not voluntary offerings to God. We can gain merit by resigning ourselves willingly to them, but ordinarily we would not suffer under them we could avoid it. And that is why few have the strength under their weight! Although the voluntary offerings of the soul, heart, and body bring greater

Among Catholics—for it is to Catholics that the present Intention is addressed—lukewarmness, prayerlessness, and laxity of life are no longer states of life unheard of or abhorred. Nowadays, multitudes of our own people are drifting with the tide. Worldliness and irreligion have crept into their homes, and where the simple life was once the rule, it is now the exception. In how many Catholic homes today

Secondly, a religious atmosphere should surround Catholic homes; piety and prayerfulness should find

Peace is always possible on earth. The angels promised it that Holy Night when Christ was born. But it was promised only to men, as to nations, of good will; and good will, if it means anything, means the desire of men and nations to conform to the eternal decrees of God.—Cardinal O'Connell.

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