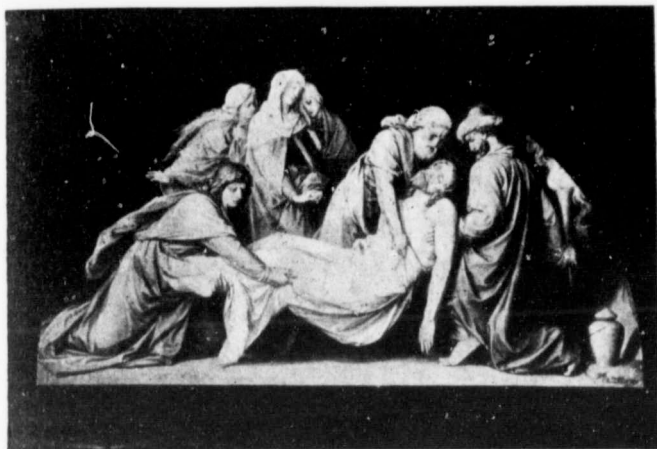


Three Men at a Table



The Last Gifts of Jesus.

THE world shines bright for inexperienced eyes,
 And death seems distant to the gay and strong,
 And in the youthful heart proud fancies throng,
 And only present good can nature prize.
 How, then, shall youth o'er these low vapors rise
 And climb the upward path, so steep and long?
 And how, amid earth's sights and sounds of wrong,
 Walk with pure heart and face raised to the skies?
 By gazing on the infinitely Good,
 Whose love must quell or hallow ev'ry other —
 By living in the shadow of the Rood,
 For He that hangs there is our Elder Brother,
 Who dying gave to us Himself as Food,
 And His own Mother as our nursing Mother.

—FATHER M. RUSSELL.



Particular Practice for the Month of April.

Meditation on the Agony in the Garden.



THE Tabernacle is a second Gethsemani. Here, the prayer of Jesus is incessant and bears upon its features the prayer in the garden. It is a prayer of intercession, of propitiation and of reparation to God the Father for the numberless sins which men commit, sins which daily wound the Sacred Heart of Jesus and inflict upon the patient Victim a sorrow which is the continuation of the sadness of that woful night in Gethsemani.

As our Blessed Lord prayed then for the world, which He had come to save, with an ardour and intensity which caused a sweat of blood to burst from His sacred veins, so now does He pray for each one of the children whom His death has redeemed. Let us think of this wonderful Divine prayer, going up to Almighty God day and night, continually, year after year, century after century, from every chapel throughout the universe in which the

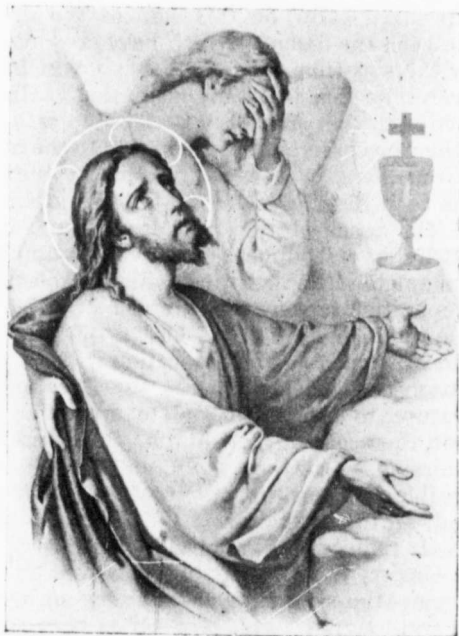
Blessed Sacrament abides, and from every consecrated Host which each ciborium contains ! There is not a human need which Jesus does not set before His Heavenly Father, not a temptation for which He does not win us grace and strength, not a sorrow, not a trial, for which He does not intercede, nor yet one prayer of our own to which He does not add the priceless merit of His own supplications.

We shall never know on this side of the grave how many have been the dangers which have been averted nor how many the sins from the commission of which we have been delivered by this incessant mediation. How often may it have been that Almighty God, Who is a God of Justice, when incensed against the world to the uttermost—against ourselves in particular—and on the verge of striking us with His anger, has let fall His uplifted arm before the eloquence of the Pleader in the Tabernacle before that living embodiment of patience, humility, charity and complete self-abnegation, which the Sacred Host offers in reparation for our wickedness !

It is true that there are grand Orders—whole families of men and of women—whose vocation it is to pray, to place themselves as shields between the Creator and His erring creature, to expiate sin and to draw down God's graces upon the needs of the Church. Beautiful however as is the mission which these holy souls fulfil, it would not be possible for their prayers to attain all the miseries of mankind, all the necessities of the Church militant and suffering. It requires the infinitude of need, and therefore Jesus Christ, Whose Heart reponds to every human cry and sympathises with every human sorrow, trial, aspiration and longing, offers Himself as perpetual channel of intercession between heaven and earth, as, in fine, our all-powerful Advocate, Whose Voice ascending continually from the Tabernacle is the key of heaven itself, *Lingua Christi, clavis cæli*.

Another characteristic of the prayer of Jesus in the Sacred Species is that of adoration—the continuation of that incessant adoration of His Heavenly Father, in which He spent the whole of His earthly life. At Bethlehem, in the twofold solitude of the cave and of the dumbness of infancy to which Jesus had condemned Him-

self, His one occupation was prayer,—not supplication for the sins of mankind only, but pure worship of God Almighty. At Nazareth, we know that besides the frequent acts of devotion in which He joined with His mother and foster-father, the Boy was wont to betake Himself to the seclusion of the vineyards on the hill-sides, in order to pray. In the temple we behold Him worshipping at



“THY WILL BE DONE.”

His mother's side. At the outset of His public ministry, He retired into the desert for forty days' uninterrupted prayer. During the course of His apostolic journeys, His nights were spent in prayer,—prayer which culminated in the Agony of the Garden at Gethsemani, to be perpetuated and renewed as long as the world shall last, in the tabernacles of our churches.

Surely the lesson which this unceasing adoration teaches us is the manifest duty incumbent on us to adore God our father, and to add our feeble mite of worship to the worship of the Sacred Host. In our prayers we ask readily for the graces and blessings of which we stand in want ; we pray very fervently whenever we are in trouble ; we make acts of contrition which are more or less genuine ; we go so far as to thank our Blessed Lord for benefits received (the warmth of our thanks nevertheless being in very unequal proportion to the eagerness with which our requests are made), but how many of us give a thought to the duty of *adoration* ? Our hearts are, as a rule, so engrossed with our own interests, that the interests of God escape our memory altogether, our prayers reflecting directly or indirectly upon ourselves alone.

Let us then henceforth take an example from the Blessed Sacrament, and when we pray beseech Jesus to give us a clearer insight into His wishes, in order that our prayers may be more in accordance with His, that they may embrace a wider sphere and that so our hearts and minds may become enlarged until we habitually place His interests before our own. If we do this, we need have no fear that Jesus will permit us to suffer for our generosity. Let us endeavour to love and worship Him for that which He *is*, as well as for that which He *gives*, seeking how, in our poor way, we may co-operate with His perpetual prayer in the Tabernacle by interceding in union with Him for the souls of men, for the souls of those dear to us, and for the souls of those who have no one to pray for them, whose lives are spent in forgetfulness of God, surrounded by temptations to evil and unblessed by any holy influence around them. The amount of help and strength we may thus bring to many a forlorn, struggling soul, whose heart is not yet utterly perverse, is incalculable, and from the very fact of our being personally unacquainted with such souls, our prayers are perhaps the more valuable inasmuch as they are untainted with the insidious self-complacency which is so apt to accompany the gratification of watching the effects of our good works.

Sweet Lord, give, we pray Thee, of Thy plenty to the poverty of our prayers. Open our understanding that we may discern the marvels of Thy love, and learn to adore Thee in spirit and in truth.

—ABEL RAM.



Lifted up.

☉ *Sun, thou crowning glory of the ever changing
 skies.
 May we with thee on waves of light, in spirit freely
 rise,
 Into the blue empyrean, this rolling earth above,
 Around, beneath, the ocean deep, unfathomed of His
 love,
 Where sands of gold-dust, starry hosts, are gathered
 in His hand—
 Rich treasures of omnipotence to brighten sea and land ;
 To picture forth in symbol true, the hidden ways of God
 The sickle of the Reaper, and the Cross, His blossoming
 rod.*

*From starry heights may we obtain, a wider range of
 view,
 And contemplate in His great light, earth-life and
 purpose true,
 All things are working but for Him, whether they will
 or no,—
 From east to west, from north to south, doth but one
 Spirit blow,
 The bee that gathers honey from the lily's dewy cup,
 Prepares the pliant wax in burning taper lifted up.
 The sun-waves faithful workers in the leaf and in the
 flower,
 Return to light the altar, and show forth His hidden
 power.*



*"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things to Me,"
Spake Jesus, who did die for all, upon Mount Calvary,
O risen Sun of God, upon our altars come to reign,
The hearts of men in Spirit and Truth, draw unto
Thee again*

*And Easter Lily blossom, in the soul, above the sod,
To yield at last the honey of thy purity to God,
Let adoration gather, all life's virtue's into one,
Love of the Eucharistic Lord, Christ, our celestial Sun.*

*God of all nature, and all worlds, let burn alone for
Thee,*

*The light of love's aspiring flame, in ardent charity,
That wheresoe'er life's taper spends itself, an altar
rise,*

*To Thine Eternal glory in the "daily sacrifice."
Then lifted up shall nature be, once more to rightful
place,*

*In the divine humanity, the channel of Thy grace,
And tear of true repentance freshen, moisten as the
dew,*

The tender blade, humility, the bloom of hope renew.

*Let all things rise with Thee, O Christ, to love's per-
fected life;*

*The wheat be garnered into heavenly Hosts, with glory
rise.*

*And Holy Spirit kindle in all souls seraphic fire,
Of adoration, ever rising, in Thy Presence, higher.*

HONORA McDONOUGH.



The Friend of all Ages.



FROM the cradle to the grave, our truest friend is Jesus in the Sacred Host, Jesus, who like a fond mother, hastens to guard our tottering steps and smiles at our opening hearts already claiming and instinctively feeling His tender caresses ; Jesus who watches over us with outstretched arms as unconscious of danger we walk the flower-strewn path of life's springtime. Our souls at this period may also be compared to fragrant flowers expanding under the genial warmth of Jesus' love with its ardent thirst to inhale their first perfume ; perfume of innocence that prays and ascends towards heaven.

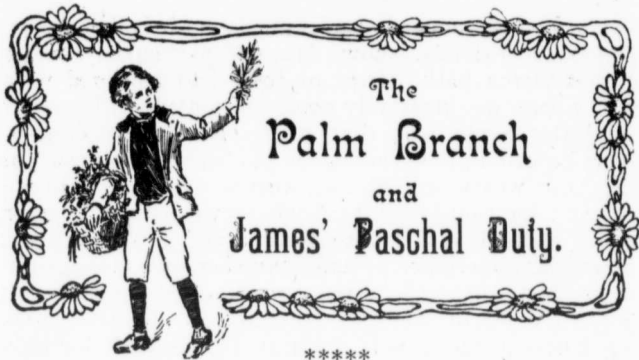
Jesus also watches over our youthful pleasures and smiles at the sound of our merry laugh and lays a hand in benediction on each sunny head with longing greater than that of fondest motherhood to draw us close and make us see above those earthly joys a glimpse of heavenly horizons, to fill us with wishes and desires which some day He will come to satisfy by taking possession of our soul — in First Communion.

O cherished and ever memorable first communion ! Who can ever forget thee ! Thy heavenly fragrance brightens the darkest days, sweetens the saddest life ! Day of days when this young soul, radiant with grace, full of love, became enamoured of its God and yearned and sighed to be more and more divested of self and lost in Him. Calmly now this poor fragile flower that the least storm would crush or ruin will rest secure in His sheltering arms, will grow and be guarded in the conservatory of His gentle heart ; will begin under His tender care this difficult earthly pilgrimage through paths shaded by His love and His grace.

Youth, life's golden summer, passes all too quickly and as if loath to depart meets maturity's or autumn's embrace as reluctantly as the dying sunset sinks into the cold western sky. Still in this age there are beauties that charm, wishes that cannot be ignored, loving hearts

keenly feeling the need of affection. Ah ! it is then Jesus, the best of Friends, shows Himself particularly tender on that barren path, stript of roses and bordered with care, where we invariably come in contact with sorrow and bitter regret ; on that steep route where crosses, those beacon lights leading us to heaven, confront us with their weary weight and seem so heavy and so hard to bear ; on that lonely road where we learn the lesson of the instability of things terrene and go through the still sadder experience of seing our cherished idols crumble to dust, our fond hopes and pleasant dreams melt away. We might well grow discouraged did not Jesus, our truest Friend, still abide with us and lovingly whisper : " Fear not ! I am with you always." And then with renewed courage we tread the beaten way wherein sickness, sorrows and trials afflict us ; wherein thorns and briars beset our path and ruins confront us on every side.

And old age, does it imagine itself forsaken by Jesus ? Does it think that at life's decline He will not still be its dearest Friend ? In that winter's hour, when worm out with the struggle and trembling with love it still yearns for affection ! Take comfort, poor old soul, do not grieve. Jesus will abide with thee for the night is upon thee and in the shadows of death that surround thee He will make thee see athwart their darkness the celestial portals opened wide to welcome thee. Hark ! for the hour of eternal communion is about to strike for thee ? Oh ! that last communion... What consolation it will bring thee ! Rejoice, for soon thy tired heart will lean in perfect rest on that of thy truest Friend. Yes, rejoice and like the wise Virgins wait with gladness and confidence the coming of thy Lord. Is not the lamp of thy heart overflowing with the oil that entertains the sacred fire of love ? — Has He not proved it by pardoning thee, lessening thy sufferings, increasing His love ? Will He not grant that thy last look shall be on the Blessed Eucharist ; thy last act the reception of His Bread of Life ? Will He not accept the last beatings of thy heart as so many paens of thanksgiving and hush it to sleep against His own and waft it to the everlasting delights of an eternal communion.



THIS is not a story invented to please, but a true narration of something that happened yesterday and which I tell you just as it was told to me feeling sure it will interest you.

In the dusk of the evening accentuated by the shadow of the massive pillars of the substantial stone church, among the men entering I thought I caught a glimpse of the last person in the world I expected to see there, James... a good honest working man but a notorious free thinker and a rank republican. Without more ado, I dismissed the thought as an impossibility and forgot all about it until coming out of the church we met face to face in the porch and he gave me his toil hardened hand, still wet with holy water. My surprise was so evident that he said :

“ You are astonished to see me ? ”

“ My God !... ”

“ I admit you have reason to be. Nevertheless, Jim the Miscreant, as some good people justly call him, will surprise you and them still more by making his Easter duty to-morrow morning and being oh ! so glad to make it !

To explain this wonderful change, I will make my confession to you as I have just done to the pastor, as I had already made it in the workshop before all my comrades who, I assure you, listened to me with marked pity.

As you know, I was a sworn enemy of clericalism. Why ? How can I tell ? Force of circumstances, perhaps

foolish pride, persuasion ; and also because I imagined it easier to live like an animal than a Christian,— mistake I now fully realize. When our first baby was born it had to be baptized secretly. I would not allow any mummery of that kind over my boy. His mother named him Lewis ; I registered him at the mayor's office as Brutus. I intended to bring him up free from all religious superstitions, an up-to-date man, as I then thought and as others still think especially those who have no children.

So Brutus reached his fifth year without saying a prayer, at least he said none before me, but you may depend



his mother was not backward in teaching him his prayers every time she got a chance while many a fervent one went up for me from those loving hearts grieving so sorely over my scorn for the religion they prized so dearly.

To cut a long story short, a year ago Palm Sunday, the child said to me: 'Papa don't you think I should have one... like the rest?'

'One... What?'

'Why, a blessed palm, Papa... little mother thinks it would bring us all happiness.'

I answered crossly: 'Make a sacristy of the house? Not by any means. They might put some in the kitchen

if they wished, as it was useful for culinary purposes, but none anywhere else and none blessed, even in the kitchen.'

'Just a little branch,' timidly besought my wife.

'Oh! I know all about those little branches; they do not come without God's blessing, without holy water, without all the things those plotters of Curés impose on stupid people. What then.... we shall live in a Jesuitical atmosphere! Nothing of the kind! I am master here and strictly forbid all such nonsense.'

Shortly afterwards, behind my little lad's cot I saw a white china holy water font in which I could not dip two of my clumsy fingers and a little branch of palm stuck in the arm of a black wooden cross.

I flew into a paroxysm of rage and seizing the palm, holy water font and crucifix threw them roughly on the hard floor. Of the cross and the font nothing remained but pieces; seeing the palm still unharmed I trampled it under foot.

Thinking I heard a sob I turned and to my consternation saw Brutus standing close to me with big tears running down his white set face. Touched by his anguish I felt like putting my arms round him and saying: 'Don't cry, little baby! I will buy you another cross and get you some more holy water. Don't cry.'

But I restrained the impulse and merely said: 'No more such foolery in this house. I won't have your intellect warped by this nonsense. I want you to be a strong-minded man, a free-thinking man.'

*
*
*

Six months from that date the child took sick; it was one of those sicknesses, you know, that distort their little bodies and never give up their prey.

My wife spoke of having a candle burnt before St. Joseph's altar.

'A candle.' More foolishness, more superstition! It is science we must invoke and not God!

The doctor came. A man of my own creed, a free thinker. At a glance he saw the seriousness of the case and his powerlessness to save. Turning to the child's mother, he said kindly: 'Nothing but a miracle can save your

little lad.' A miracle ! Was he jesting ? Was he a hypocrite, a Jesuit in disguise ? Go to Lourdes perhaps with a dying boy... Idiot !

An hour afterwards my boy was dead and I was venting my despair in blasphemous cries. Soon, however I had



to control my bitter sorrow and attend to the funeral arrangements.

When I returned I saw near the white cot on which the body of my boy lay, whiter even than the sheets that covered him, neighbours praying and on a little table close by an earthenware vessel containing holy water and a little piece of blessed palm.

That cursed palm seemed to follow me everywhere. It was it that killed my boy, yes I swear it was. Without a word I grasped the vessel, palm and all, and threw it out of the window. The next day the body was buried and words of praise spoken that I did not hear."

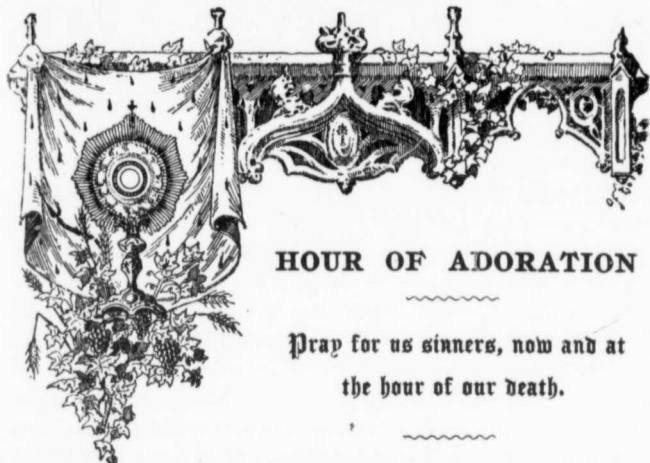
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The narrator wiped his eyes, saying brokenly: "Can you understand what I have suffered; and think you God will forgive me?" Then he continued more calmly: "This year on Palm Sunday, I was walking sadly along absorbed in my grief when my attention was attracted by merry childish voices and looking up I saw a number of children waving palms; the smaller ones with bright, pretty ribbons attached to theirs which they admiringly held up to their parents' fond gaze. The sight reminded me forcibly of my own dear little lad who had longed so earnestly to do just what those happy children were doing now and the brutal way in which I had disappointed him and trampled on his palm and scorned his crucifix right under his loving, believing eyes. Then I saw the bed whereon the little angel lay with the blessed palm near him in practical protest against my impiety. It even seemed to me I could see up there in the blue heavens, the smiling face of my little lad, looking radiantly happy and holding in his hand, but changed into a golden one, the palm I had trampled on.

Distracted, crazed with grief and remorse, I ran to the church, threw myself on my knees, striking my breast and asked God's pardon... and then my little lad's. I got a piece of blessed palm and brought it home with me and thought I proffered no explanation, my wife understood and showing me some faded, yellow leaves, said in quiet gladness: 'You see I kept our child's little palm in the hope that it would bring you happiness.'

The following morning, I was edified by the great respect and deep devotion with which James... knelt at the altar rails and received for the second time in his life the God of Mercies.





HOUR OF ADORATION

Pray for us sinners, now and at
the hour of our death.

I. — Adoration.

Holy Mary, Mother of God.

Let us adore our divine Master, Jesus in union with His blessed Mother and under the tuition of this adept in the science of prayer learn that the most perfect adorers are also the most powerful intercessors. Saint Paul has clearly defined the fundamental quality required by every mediator : holy, innocent, without compromise with sinners, not having like ordinary priests to think about their own sins first.

God cannot entertain relations with sinners, since between His nature and theirs reigns the most absolute incompatibility. God listens only to the prayer of a pure heart, as we may judge from His own words : " These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me ;" an unclean mouth is an abomination in His sight, proved by the anathema : " Woe to polluted lips ;" the hands raised to Him must be free from stain, as His first injunction to the sinner invoking Him teaches : " Cease to do evil... Your hands are stained with blood."

Ah ! Lord, what would become of us were it not for those mediators whose nature allows them to hear the voice of sinners and whose sanctity gives them such close access to Thee ? Pre-eminent among such intercessors ranks the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother

of God, and in consequence we turn towards her and in union with holy Church say with filial confidence : Holy Mary, Mother of God !

O Mary, how holy Thou art ! holier than any of the saints ! only holiness Itself is more perfect than thou. Thy heart is pure, no affection that was not divine ever rested there ; no heart ever will be closer to God than thine. Thy lips are holy, gentle and tender, breathing pure love, distilling maternal sweetness like honey, virginal purity like milk ; those lips that never spoke aught but words of piety, charity or divine praise. Thy hands are holy. What hands, O spotless Virgin, can rival thine in innocence, or be raised so brimful of merits ? Moses' hands uplifted in supplication save Israel, yet in what can they compare with those of the Virgin Mary ? If God's eyes turn away from hands extended by sinners, they rest with delight and fond remembrance on the virginal hands of His mother ; the hands that dressed him, that warmed His little hands and feet, stroked His curly head, caressed His brow, fashioned His garments, prepared His meals, soothed His pain. Hands piously clasped in prayer, joyously opened in fraternal, charity, actively busy in the care of the Nazareth home ! What did they ever refuse God, — those hands, so admirable and so full of grace ? What can the powerful and bountiful hand of God refuse them now ?

Since the divine maternity has notably increased Mary's union with God and moreover bestowed an authority which she maintained over her divine Son, an authority which she can exercise even in heaven ; would it not be folly on our part to place any limits to our confidence in her loving intercession, or to our fidelity in continually invoking her ?

II. — Thanksgiving.

A thought that should penetrate us with the liveliest gratitude is that, as the Son of God came down from heaven for us, for our salvation, the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, is equally given to us for our salvation, for the welfare and the good of our souls. What was the Blessed Virgin's work on earth after the Ascension of her divine Son if not the fruitful work of prayer, prayer for the stability and extension of the Church or, in other words, prayer for humanity's greatest good ?

But what the Blessed Virgin prayed for principally, what she still prays for principally to-day, is the happiness and sanctification of souls and of society and that her Son be more and more known and loved in His Sacrament of Love. To further this end Mary kept up a perpetual mission of prayer and sacrifice before the adorable Eucharist, espousing in her ardent zeal the needs of all the faithful of all times and all places that should inherit and serve the Blessed Eucharist. And as to priests belong the duty and honor of being the apostles of the Blessed Sacrament, the Blessed Virgin prayed continually for the success of preachers, the works of the Apostles, the clergy in general : therein lies the secret of the wonderful success crowning the labors of those Apostolic workers. Mary was there near the throne of mercy pleading for them, helping them to save souls and as every conversion is the result of prayer and that the prayer of Mary could not be refused, the Apostles had in this mother of Mercy their most powerful auxiliary. Things are not different to-day ; we could prove from history that to Mary we are indebted for the greatest apostles of the Eucharist and the providential impetus leading souls to adoration and to practical love of the Blessed Sacrament.

What thanksgiving do we not owe to Mary who through her glorious intercession obtains for us the grace to realize more vividly in the Sacred Host, exposed on our altars Jesus, the blessed fruit of her womb !

III. — Reparation.

Through the light of Calvary's sacrifice in which she participated in such a cruel manner, concurring with her divine Son in the work of our Redemption, Mary understood better than any one else, after Our Lord, the gravity and enormity of sin. There, neath the shadow of the Cross, she became the Mother of Mercy and assumed the title of Refuge of Sinners. Those admirable titles so nobly borne by the Blessed Virgin still cling to her in heaven where her love for us only increases. In being freed from the trammels of the body, she was not divested of the bowels of mercy ; moreover it is not a city of oblivion she inhabits, it is heaven which far from hardening the heart or despoiling of pity does the direct opposite. Consequently, we can and we should more than ever, even and especially in our quality of sinners invoke the Blessed Virgin as

our Mother, our Advocate, our Mediatrix with the supreme Mediator, Jesus.

This tender care of Mary for poor sinners does not interfere with her elevation to the height of sanctity, but on the contrary crowns her with a new diadem thus spoken of in the Book of Canticles : " Come from Libanus, O My Spouse, come from Libanus, my well-beloved ! Thou wilt be crowned with lions from their den and leopards from their mountains." In the Apocalypse Mary appears crowned with a diadem of twelve stars, whereas in this instance her divine Son promises her a crown of wild animals, signifying that sinners in their guilt are like wild animals but after their conversion by the power and mercy of the Blessed Virgin they become like unto stars.

O Mary, multiply the stars in the firmament of the church by converting innumerable sinners and in order that thy immortal crown may shine more brilliantly in the glorious City of God, pray for us poor sinners !

IV. — Prayer.

We ask Mary to help us now and at the hour of our death, that is to say throughout our life in which we are continually pursued by the enemy of our salvation, a prey to moral and physical evil ; and at our last hour, that critical hour when the combat is fiercer and will decide our eternity. Could Mary who loves us so tenderly and sees us exposed to so many dangers be deaf to our prayers ? Mary whose ears are ever attentive to the voice of her children, as is proven by the many spiritual and temporal favors she bestows on them ; the many corporal or moral cures she effects and the numerous miracles she has wrought for them. We are told of a young girl who lay joyously awaiting death with perfect confidence of her eternal salvation and when asked the reason answered : because I have said my beads faithfully every day for so many years and besought my dear Mother to pray for us, poor sinners, now and at the hour of our death that I am firmly convinced she will protect me and bless and take care of me in that solemn moment."

Let us also recite the Hail Mary frequently, recite it with respect, love and confidence in order that we may live holily and die in the peace and joy of the elect. Amen.



Blessed Ida, Virgin.



WONDER whether all the little girls who bear the pretty name of Ida know what a sweet and holy life was that of their patroness.

In these days of materialism, indifference, and open infidelity, it is good to recall the virtues of other times and publish them for the admiration and imitation of Christians.

Blessed Ida was one of the saints of the Benedictine Order. From her earliest infancy she delighted in devotional exercises. In the pious city of Louvain, where she first saw the light, she was looked on as a child of predilection. Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was extraordinary. An angel of innocence and purity, she offered herself as a victim of expiation for the neglect and injuries heaped on the Lord in the Sacred Host.

Her whole life was an uninterrupted exercise of the most severe penance: vigils, fasts, prayers, the mortification of the body in every way, fearful like St. Paul, that it might grow insolent against the spirit.

She was tormented in many ways by the enemy of souls, who inspired her own sister to hate her, and others to calumniate her. She bore all with sweet equanimity, consoled by her Heavenly Spouse, who gave her in every instance a triumph over her persecutors, and inundated her soul with spiritual consolation.

The world grew daily more distasteful to her, and to flee from it, to consecrate herself wholly to Him whom she loved, to serve Him in the sacred privacy of the cloister, was her great desire.

Specially directed by the Holy Spirit, she entered the Benedictine Monastery of the "Valley of Roses," near Malines. Here she was tempted by Satan to abandon the religious life. But by prayers and tears, she overcame the temptation and was rew-



Miraculous Communion of Blessed Ida.

arded by the vision of her beloved Lord, who permitted her, rapt in ecstasy, to see the glory of Paradise and the beauty of the soul in the state of grace.

But still greater favors were bestowed on this chosen soul. One day, while absorbed in contemplation of the Passion of Our Lord, her heart palpitating with anguish,

tears flowing from her eyes, she suddenly beheld the marks of the Wounds in her own hands and feet, and felt in her side the sharp agony of the lance, while in her head she experienced the insupportable suffering of the Crown of Thorns.

Such was the humility of the saint that she sought to conceal the great privilege conferred upon her ; but God willed otherwise, and permitted the marks to be plainly visible.

The life of Blessed Ida was miraculous in every way. Without education, for she was the child of poor peasants, she read easily the Divine Office, the Holy Mass, and all the Latin used in the services of the Church. She had the gift of reading consciences and detecting the presence of mortal sin. She wrought miracles, multiplied bread in a time of scarcity, restored the dying to perfect health, and on one occasion called back to life a dead person.

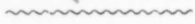
She was often favored with the visits of angels, and she sometimes received that of the Divine Child.

Her most ardent devotion was toward the august Sacrament of the Altar. Her whole life was divided into preparation for and thanksgiving after Communion. To receive the Bread of Angels was such a joy to her that she appeared after Communion transfigured like Moses from contact with the Divinity. All who beheld her felt inspired with increased fervor.

She daily passed long hours in adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament shedding tears of love. She grieved because she could not love God as He ought to be loved. To console her, she received from Heaven an assurance of eternal salvation.

She languished with the desire of seeing her Divine Spouse, whom she loved with an intense love, and whom she received daily in the Most Holy Sacrament. He heard her sighs, and granted her desires. Surrounded by her sisters in religion, to whom she left the beautiful example of her life, speaking calmly with them of the never-ending joys of heaven, she breathed forth her soul, which was borne by waiting angels to her Creator.

Many miracles were wrought at her tomb, inasmuch that the holy remains were finally exposed for veneration.





Is it I, Rabbi?

(See our engraving on frontispiece)

STUDY this picture all you who are preparing to receive holy Communion and see with what artistic skill the renowned painter A. Schmitz has delineated in those figures surrounding Our Lord at the last Supper the different dispositions that should animate those approaching the holy table.

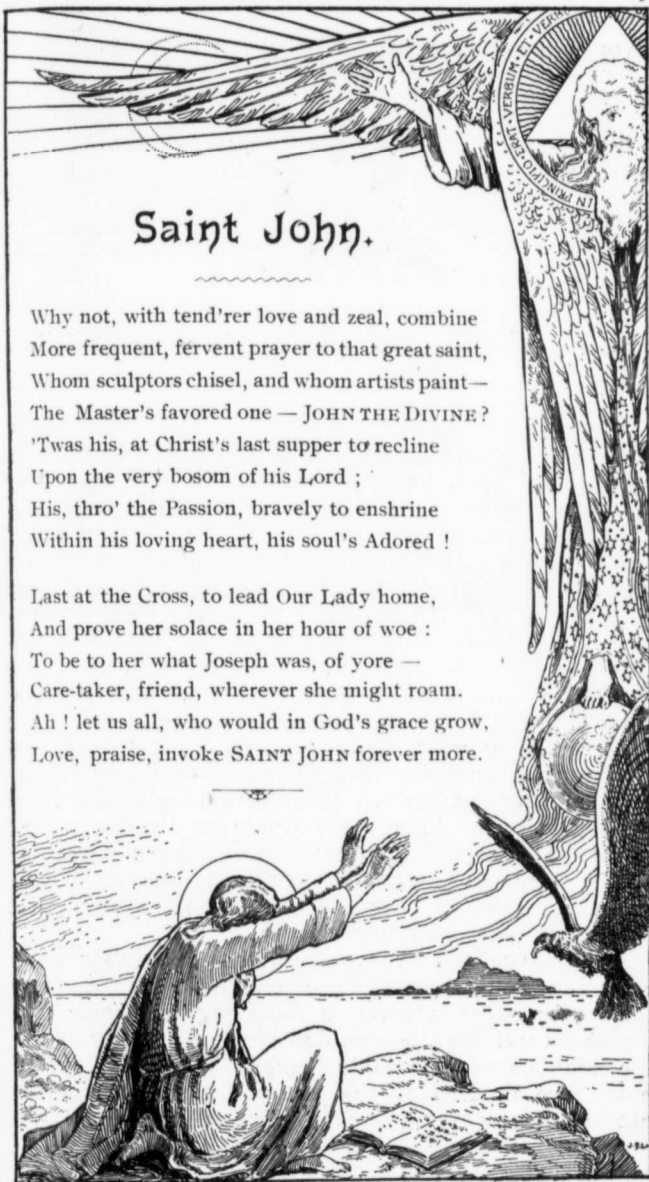
Foremost stands St. John, the Apostle of holy diliction, leaning with happiness beyond artists power to describe, on Jesus breast. Then St. Peter the model of faith, who, when the Blessed Eucharist was promised, protested at seeing his brethren of weaker faith waver. Judas, the one dark spot in a perfect picture, the type of unworthy communicants is there also and at sight of him the gentle Master, who never broke the bruised reed or quenched the smoking flax grows almost stern and says with infinite pathos : " One among you is about to betray Me : " and Judas answered: " Is it I Rabbi ? " — " Thou hast said it," replied Jesus. The Apostles did not all sieze the Master's meaning but Peter and John did. It is this moment following Jesus assertion the artist discribes. At the thought of such treachery John's heart fills with anguish, his love suffers, he leans more foundly on his beloved Lord and tries by this silent testimony to offer Him consolation and reparation. The impetuous Peter is astonished, his faith scandalized. Will he not draw his sword and punish the perfidious wretch. Undoubtedly it is in this hour the generous resolution he gives expression too a few moments later is born. " All may abandon Thee. I will never forsake Thee."

Let us examine our own dispositions before we approach the banquet of Angels. Let us come with Peter's faith to the Sacrament the Church calls : *Mysterium fidei*. Mystery of Faith ; but above all let our hearts throb and burn like that of St. John's resting on God's, that God who is Love and who comes to enkindle and entertain in our hearts the flame of pure and perfect love.

Saint John.

Why not, with tend'rer love and zeal, combine
 More frequent, fervent prayer to that great saint,
 Whom sculptors chisel, and whom artists paint—
 The Master's favored one — JOHN THE DIVINE ?
 'Twas his, at Christ's last supper to recline
 Upon the very bosom of his Lord ;
 His, thro' the Passion, bravely to enshrine
 Within his loving heart, his soul's Adored !

Last at the Cross, to lead Our Lady home,
 And prove her solace in her hour of woe :
 To be to her what Joseph was, of yore —
 Care-taker, friend, wherever she might roam.
 Ah ! let us all, who would in God's grace grow,
 Love, praise, invoke SAINT JOHN forever more.





Four Words that shall not Pass away.



HIS IS MY BODY." — "Those four words strangle me," cried Luther in one of those accesses of mingled candor and rage that frequently escaped the famous Reformer in the impetuosity of his nature. And he was right. They stand like invincible sentinels, those four words, guarding the very portal of the dogma of the Real Presence ; they stand clear, precise, sovereign, defying in their lucidity all ambiguities, negations, sophisms. The more wonderful the institution, the more its Founder wished the formula establishing it should be transparently clear.

Nevertheless, what have the leaders of the Reformation not brought forward against the sacred text ? Preaching sedition, they instinctively realized they could not retain in their creed the dogma that enlightens, the dogma that inspires and nourishes love without hopelessly compromising their satanic work through the natural self-evident fact that sooner or later the heart would triumph and lead the intellect back to the truth.

And to avoid this, what subtilities, what subterfuges, what ingenious schemes were resorted to ; in a word, what vileness of intellect in falsifying the divine text whose natural clearness could so easily and so ably compel the adhesion of reasonable beings. We have counted nearly two hundred diverse interpretations proposed or put in action in trying to change the clear sense and alter

the obvious meaning of those words of Our Lord : " This is My Body."

Yet, in spite of it all those four words remain and according to Luther they strangle. They remain in the serene and victorious majesty of truth, eternal truth.

They live already lighted up as by a preliminary light through those words of the promise wherein Christ declares that whosoever does not eat His flesh and drink His blood shall not have life in Him ; a declaration He renews with sovereign insistence before the Jews scandalized thereat and precursors of the proud Agnostics of our own days.

They remain magnificently affirmed since their first utterance by this wonderful uninterrupted succession of Catholic Tradition or Holy Scriptures, Fathers of the Church, Doctors, Theologians, Mystics each in turn bringing to this fundamental dogma their explicit, striking and unreserved adhesion, their victorious demonstrations, their touching adorations, their loving canticles.

They remain none the less magnificently, none the less victoriously affirmed by those Eucharistic altars in every part of the civilized world whereon, at every hour of the day, according to the prophet's prediction, the August Victim substantially offers Himself to His Father who is in heaven true Sacrifice of the New Law forming the heart itself of Catholic worship and the living chain uniting earth to heaven.

They remain vigorously and we dare assert tangibly demonstrated by this incomparable efflorescence of super-human virtues produced by Christianity alone in the deserts or on the martyr's rack in the cloister or on the throne, in the most humble as well as in the most elevated positions ; tangibly demonstrated by being accessible to weakness as its strength, to sorrow as its consoler, to sin as its purifier and eradicator—Unparalleled phenomena before the coming of Christ and which would still remain the greatest mystery of the moral world did not a divine principle explain it ; did not each of those noble, heroic, chaste souls nourished with the Blessed Eucharist, tell us with the Apostle : " It is not I who live ; it is Jesus who lives in me."



IT is Saturday and the eve of Low Sunday. Seated in his big arm chair grandpa listlessly pokes the expiring log-fire in the hope of seeing it sparkle and brighten, more for cheer's sake than for warmth as the night is almost mild enough to dispense with it entirely. Not succeeding he makes a second and a more energetic effort. Methodically gathering the still live coals, he places them around the partly burnt log, saying in no very patient tone: "Do light up, you nasty black beast"—But the log is as stubborn as an unruly school-boy and only responds by a cloud of smoke and a few tiny sparks as quickly extinguished.

Throwing himself back in his chair, the old man placidly accepts his defeat, thinking: "I must not blame you, for, after all you are like myself, too old for active service. Old, I must admit I am, and, worse still, careless too, though why that thought should haunt me so incessantly those last few weeks, I cannot understand, unless my guardian angel is leagued with the angel of the Resurrection in a last endeavor to open my eyes to the folly of my conduct. Thirty years since I made my Easter duty," and grasping the tongs once more he continues: "thirty years?... what am I saying? It must be nearer thirty-eight, I should think. Let me see if I can find out exactly" and he recapitulates mentally: "Colonel in 1878... Captain in 70... married in 62;... No it is not quite so bad as I thought, it is only thirty-one years! only!"

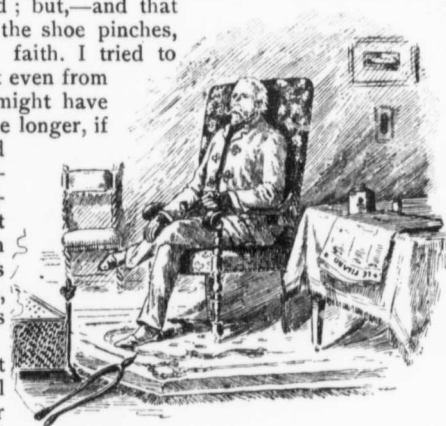
Over his still handsome face spread a strange sad smile as thought followed thought and wove pictures that wrung his heart with bitter remorse. Rousing himself with an effort, he says: "I can't bear this struggle any longer. I

don't want to think about the matter at all, and yet it kept wagging at me all last Sunday, especially during mass. Go and kneel there on the altar steps... before everybody!... It would surely bring on an attack of apoplexy! Even now I can see a certain pompous pew-holder, I know well, looking over his gold rimmed glasses with pardonable surprise and saying: 'not possible!... the commanding officer is taking the plunge at last...' And Madam Smith's half kind, half scornful smile, as she nudges her neighbor and whispers: 'Ah my dear, but God is good!'

However, if I really believed, I could summon up courage to act according to my convictions, for with all my faults I'm no coward; but,—and that is just where the shoe pinches,

—I have no faith. I tried to hide the fact even from myself and might have done so a little longer, if Aileen would only stop coaxing and teasing the dearest Grandpa in the world, as she calls me, to make his Easter duty.

I know what I'll do. I'll write to a dear old friend of mine and abide by his decision."



Paris, March 31, 1893.

Dear Father James,

Will you please help me out of a difficulty which to me seems insurmountable? My family are at daggers drawn with me because I do not make my Easter duty, even my pet grey hound seems to look at me with reproachful eyes. You may judge how much I esteem you and value your judgment when I tell you in all frankness that I cannot make my Easter duty because my faith is dead. The avowal may not surprise you very much since you have so often half in yoke and half in earnest called me a stubborn old renegade. Now please tell me should I under these circum-

stances make my Easter duty? If you say yes, I will do so tomorrow morning at the risk of seeing my trusty old house-keeper start to Jerusalem on foot in a pilgrimage of thanksgiving. I am asking your verdict in all seriousness. So far my life has been honorable and honest, do not advise me to commit my first act of hypocrisy.

Your old friend, Colonel N. B...

My dear old Friend,

Make you commit an act of hypocrisy. You! The very idea is as preposterous as your talk about having no faith is rank nonsense. Had you lived in the time of Clovis, you would have girded on your sword with as loyal a heart and



as stanch a faith as any of his brave crusaders. That faith of yours is not dead but dormant. How could it be otherwise when you have so shamefully neglected your religious duties for such a long time?

Here is my advice as frankly given as asked. Do not go to communion tomorrow. You need more time than that to prepare yourself properly to receive Our Lord worthily. Instead, kneel down every night, note I say, kneel down, and before the crucifix that received your virtuous wife's last sigh.—I know it still hangs at the head of your bed, so my condition is quite feasible,—and pray somewhat after this style: My God, there is no other alternative for me than Thy merciful help. There are many of my comrades

who practise their religion, while I have drifted away from Thee; there are others, even nobler, who have been real heroes, De Sonis, Combe, Mirabel, etc. Thou canst if thou wilt, make me see as clearly as they did. The tree falls as it bends. I want to fall on the right side, only show it to me. And you, my dear wife, who, I know, must be in heaven because you were so good, I depend on your help, obtain light and grace for me.

I will call on you Saturday morning and then teach you how to go to confession. Sunday you will gladden those who love you, among whom, you know you can always count,

Yours very devotedly, Father James.



This Sunday morning undoubtedly marks some new epoch in Grandpa's life. He gets up bright and early without being called, and when partly dressed starts to shave, a feat usually left until much later, may be that is why His hand is so shaky and causes the razor to come in abrupt contact with a pimple right on the end of his nose, making his nerves tingle and I fear his tongue also with an inclination to curse, but with a great effort he controls himself and the rest of the difficult operation is gone through safely. Feeling a gentle pull on his right suspender, he turns quickly and is plainly delighted to see his little Aileen, his favorite grandchild, standing there looking as sweet and fresh as a rose-bud in a dainty white dressing-sack unrelieved by any color save the sheen of her golden locks.

She looks rather serious as she says more gently than usual :

“ Good morning, grandpa ! ”

“ Good morning, little girlie ! ”

“ Did you sleep well, Grandpa ? ”

“ Yes, and dreamed a blue-eyed fairy was calling me the dearest Grandpa in the world and telling me to hurry up and make my Easter duty.”

“ I know that means me and that you want a bear’s hug.”

“ Yes, and my necktie fastened into the bargain.”

Saying which Grandpa throws himself into an easy chair. Aileen with one bound seats herself comfortably in his lap, the warm bright April sunshine enveloping her in a rosy halo, like a ministering angel, but an angel without wings an angel full of mischief, with a world of diplomacy lurking in her innocent blue eyes as she naively asks :

“ Why are you going to such an early mass today, Grandpa ? ”

Grandpa fidgets, coughs, looks uncomfortable and mutters something unintelligible, but Aileen not in the least disconcerted smiles bewitchingly and demurely says :

“ Shall I get you your cup of coffee before you go ? ”

“ No, when I come back.”

And the little diplomat having gained her point throws her arms around his neck, kisses him again and again, whispering : “ You are the dearest Grandpa in the world, the very best, I love you and I kiss you for myself and for the dear Jesus coming this morning to be your Guest.”





Gleanings.

The Paschal Candle. — The Paschal candle blessed on Holy Saturday seems, in its present form, to have originated in Rome. The first Pope who is known to have enjoined its use was Pope St. Zosimus, about the year 417, though we have every reason to believe it is much older than his time.

It was solemnly blessed before the altar by the archdeacon, then lighted from the newly-struck and blessed fire, and carried in procession before the catechumens to the font. It was afterward placed before the altar, and was to burn incessantly until after the solemn Mass of Easter Day. Little by little the time was extended, and now it is lighted at the High Mass from Easter to the Ascension.

A Pretty Custom. — During my sojourn in the ancient little pueblo of Tucson, Arizona, says a traveller, I witnessed much that was interesting, but nothing more pleasing or impressive than a pretty and, to me, novel feature of the celebration of Holy Week. It occurred during Mass on Holy Saturday.

The old cruciform cathedral of Adobe was crowded to its utmost capacity.

They formed a picturesque sight, those simple children of the Western frontier, the women and the maidens wearing black shawls over their raven locks, in imitation of the graceful lace mantilla worn by their more beautiful and more fortunate Spanish sisters, All were wrapt in the solemn devotions of the hour when, as is customary on the occasion, at the singing of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, accompanied by the organ and the joyous ringing of bells, suddenly from all parts of the sacred edifice clouds of rose-leaves were thrown high into the air, only to descend again in fragrant showers on the heads of the worshipers. Again and again the pretty scene was repeated. Hands worn and shrivelled with toil and age, as well as the plump, brown hand of childhood, joined in the graceful task, while glad faces were uplifted toward the altar, and glad hearts went forth in anticipation of the Resurrection morn to greet their risen Lord, as the scent of the roses and the aroma of incense floated down the aisles, mingling with the glo-

rious sunshine that flooded the place. I had been told of the pretty custom ; but though not taken entirely by surprise, I was unprepared for the beauty of the scene and for the emotions it awakened.

After Mass the blossoms lay in thick profusion on the floor, and little children gathered handfuls as they passed out for the pleasure of toying with their delicate beauty.

Seven years without making his Easter duty. — In an hospital lays a mortally wounded soldier awaiting death ! The Chaplain, a fervent young levite, was dearly loved by the patients of all classes and creeds on account of his kind, sympathetic manner. When No 18, as our poor soldier was called, was brought in, he took special interest in his case and persuaded him to make his confession without delay.

After the Blood of Jesus had flowed on his soul, he asked the chaplain if he might receive on the following day. Most certainly, my friend, replied the priest." The next day on making his round the chaplain paid an early visit to No 18, and after minute inquiries about his health and general comfort asked : "Are you very happy, now, that you have been to communion ? "

" Yes, Father, and allow me to tell you I would like to go again to-morrow."

" Very well, you may."

The following day during the course of conversation the priest asked : " Was this second communion as happy as the first ? "

" Yes, indeed, Father, and I would like to receive again to-morrow."

" But — three communions one after another will surprise your comrades."

" Oh ! that does not matter. I don't mind what they think. As long as you give me permission, that is all I want."

" Yes, since you desire it, I give you permission."

The third day the chaplain visited the soldier again : " How are you today ? " he inquired kindly.

" I am growing weaker every hour, Father. I don't think I can last much longer. Please anoint me in good time and if possible let me receive communion again to-morrow,"

" Tell me first, my dear fellow," answered the surprised chaplain, " what motive induces you to communicate so often."

" You know, Father, I was seven years without making my Easter duty ; I long to appear before our Lord with my debt cancelled."

" Then, by all means, communicate until you do."

The poor soldier had the great consolation and happiness of living until the morning on which he had fully cancelled his debt.