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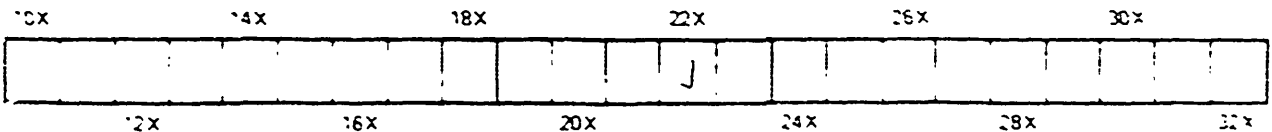
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# THE CROSS.

nd forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is Crucified to me, and I to the world.—St. Paul, Gal. vi. 14.

VOL. I. H<sup>A</sup>LIFAX, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1848. No. 27.

## Weekly Calendar.

- Sept. 3, Sunday XII. after Pentecost,  
4, Monday, S. Rose of Viterbo, Virgin.  
5, Tuesday, S. Lawrence Justinian,  
Bishop and Conf.  
6, Wednesday, S. Benedict II. Pope  
and Conf. (from May 7.)  
7, Thursday, S. Gregory, VII. Pope &  
Conf. (from May 25.)  
8, Friday, Nativity of the B. V. Mary.  
9, Saturday, S. Sergius I. Pope & Conf.

## Instructions on the Holy Communion.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF  
PERE BOURDALOUE.

*“It is a great work, for a habitation is prepared not for man, but for God.”—1 Paralipom, xxix.*

THERE are three periods to be considered with regard to Communion. That which precedes it, the time of Communion itself, and that which follows it. According to this distinction, the following are the different advices which you ought to observe, as rules for a holy use of the Divine Eucharist.

*Advice for the time that precedes Communion.*

I. Be convinced, that the greatest, most holy, and most important action of your life, is Communion: and,

that consequently, there is none in which it is more dangerous to act through custom or habit, none in which your negligence will be less excusable, and in which you can have less hope that God will not be offended by your coldness and tepidity.

II. Consider well, that the greatest crime you can commit, is to abuse that which is most august and divine in our religion, to render yourself guilty of a profanation of the Lord's Body, and to convert into a deadly poison what Jesus Christ has instituted for the spiritual nourishment of your soul.

III. Be well persuaded, that the most essential of all your duties as a Christian, is to place yourself in a proper state for a worthy communion, and to endeavour to purify your soul, that it may serve as a dwelling for Jesus Christ, saying to yourself with more reason than Solomon, *a habitation is being prepared not for men, but for God, the King of Kings.*

IV. Meditate well on these words of St. Paul: “Let a man therefore prove himself before he eats this heavenly bread, for he that eats it unworthily eats his own condemnation, not making a proper discernment of the Lord's Body.” 1 Cor. vi. Ac-

comply, I say, sincerely, and earnestly, this precept of the Apostle ; so that every time you communicate you may be able to testify to yourself, that you are *proved*, and that without presuming to be justified on this account more than St. Paul did, your conscience may reproach you with no essential obstacle to this sacrament ; that is, that it may not be charged with mortal sin, for it is in this, principally, the Council of Trent makes that proof consist, which you must undergo before you approach the holy Communion.

V. Make as exact, as fervent, and as perfect a Confession before Communion, as you would make on the point of death, being well convinced, that to receive Jesus Christ requires no less purity of heart, than to appear before God and undergo the rigour of his judgment. This reflection alone will suffice to prevent you from ever making a sacrilegious communion, and ever hinder you from making lukewarm and imperfect Communion, which are often disposing causes for the former.

VI. Be also convinced, that the proving of one's self before Communion does not consist merely in confessing and detesting your sins, but you must quit the occasions, you must destroy the cause, and repair the scandal of sin. As long as the scandal or occasion of sin remains without the determination to abandon it, so long you do not satisfy the indispensable obligation imposed on

us by St. Paul in these words : *Let a man prove himself.*

VII. Remember, that as purity is the most natural disposition for this sacrament, that is, the most suitable to its dignity, and the most conformable to the inclinations of Jesus Christ—so that sin, which of all others is specially opposed to Communion, and would render you most unworthy of it, is the sin of impurity, because, by profaning your flesh, it dishonours the flesh of Jesus Christ himself. On this account hold it in abomination, and frequently meditate on those astonishing words which St. Ambrose addressed to Jesus Christ : “What goodness O Lord ! That, in order to save mankind, you had no horror of being incarnated in a Virgin's womb !” For if St. Ambrose did not hesitate to speak thus of the blessed virgin, all pure as she was, what would he have said of an unchaste person, who in the attachment and disorders of his crime, should approach Communion, which according to the Fathers, is nothing else than an extension and sequence of the Incarnation ?

VIII. Do not wait for the very day of Communion to prepare yourself, but take a reasonable time for this purpose, and think of it the sooner before hand, as a greater interval elapses between your Communion. Especially on the eve of so holy a day, or even two or three days previously, withdraw from every thing that can dissipate

your mind, such as certain amusements and conversations that are vain and useless, and that even on this account are more opposed to the sanctity of the action which you are about to perform.

IX. Spend the three or four days which precede Communion in sacred reading, which will fill your heart and spirit with the sentiments that ought to animate you on so great an occasion. The Memorial of a Christian Life, by Lewis of Grenada, is most useful for this purpose. You should also join good works, and particularly alms, which will produce for you the graces necessary for you to communicate in a holy and profitable manner. Add, also, a little review of your conduct, to see whether since your last Communion you have been more faithful to God, and whether you have made any progress in the way of salvation. You should particularly note those things in which you perceive you have fallen off. This ought to be the subject of the principal interior acts which should accompany your approaching Communion.

X. If it be possible, arrange an interview with your Confessor some days before Communion, that he may assist you by his advice in the due performance of so holy an action.— Nothing is more calculated to enable you to fulfil all your duty in this respect, than a conference with him who holds the place of God in your

regard, and in whom you have placed confidence.

*Advice for the time of Communion.*

I. Consider the day of your Communion as a day which should be entirely and solely consecrated to Jesus Christ ; so that you may accomplish to the letter the precept of the Holy Ghost : *Let no part of a day escape without profit.* Eccles. xiv. That is, that you should lose no part of so happy a day, and that every thing you do on that day should be referred to the principal action upon which your mind should be engaged—the Communion itself ; getting up, for example, with this thought : *this is the day that the Lord has made for me ;* going to the Church in this sentiments : *Behold the bridegroom cometh, let us go out to meet him.* But above all, we should do no profane or frivolous action, which would betray a relaxed spirit, or one little affected by the things of God.

II. Assist at the Mass before Communion in the same spirit with which you would have assisted with the Apostles at the last supper, when Jesus Christ administered them Communion with his own hands, since what passed then in the person of the Apostles is renewed in you ; and, because by the ministry of the Priest who represents Jesus Christ, you are about to participate in the same honour, and to receive the same grace. For this purpose, entertain yourself during Mass, and until the time of Communion, in the following thoughts and affections.

III. With a lively faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist ; making interior professions of this faith, and saying with the man, who was born blind, in the Gospel : *Yes, Lord, I believe.* I believe that it is yourself I

am about to receive in this sacrament ; you, who having been born for me in a crib, were pleased to die for me on a cross, and who all glorious in heaven, are yet concealed under these adorable species. I believe it, O my God, and I am more certain of it, than if I beheld it with my eyes, because my eyes may deceive me, but your word is infallible. Although my senses and my reason may tell me the contrary, I renounce both, to captivate myself in obedience to faith, and if it were necessary to suffer a thousand deaths in defence of this truth, I would sooner endure them, O Lord, with the assistance of your grace, than deny my faith or my religion on this point

IV. With a respectful adoration, which is, as it were, the natural consequence of this act of faith ; for as it is Jesus Christ himself, whom you are about to receive, it is just that you should render him beforehand the homage that you owe him as your sovereign and your God, after the example of the primitive Christians, who, according to the testimony of St. Augustine, never received the flesh of the Redeemer in the sacred mysteries without having first adored it. Hence, whilst the priest celebrates, but particularly at the Elevation of the Host, frequently repeat in spirit these words of St. Thomas : *My Lord and my God !* (John xx.) adoring Jesus Christ on the altar as the wisemen adored him in the stable of Bethlehem, and protesting to him, with St. Bernard, that the more he has humbled himself for your sake, the greater respect, veneration, and zeal, you will have for him.

V. With a profound annihilation of yourself, being astonished that a God of so great a majesty should vouchsafe to descend from heaven to visit you ; say-

ing with much more reason than the mother of the Baptist, when she received the visit of the blessed Virgin ;— *Whence comes to me this excess of goodness !* (Luke i.) that My Lord and my God should come to visit me. Or, with the Centurion : *Ah ! Lord, I am not worthy you should enter into my house.* Matt. viii. Or, with holy Job : *And what is man, O Lord, that he should be raised to such a degree of glory ?* Job vii. And what am I, a sinner ; I, a worm of the earth, to approach a God so holy as you, to be seated at your table, there to feast on the bread of angels, and to be nourished with your divine flesh.

VI. With an humble confidence ; for if Jesus Christ is pleased, nay, feels honoured that we should confide in him, it is particularly in the mystery, in which he communicates himself to us without reserve. Now, as he gives us himself, how shall he not also give us every thing else, as St. Paul admirably observes ? Can he refuse us any thing at the time he bestows us himself ?— You should, therefore, consider the Eucharist as the throne of the mercy of Jesus Christ ; before which you have the right to present yourself, to expose to him your miseries, your weakness, your blindness, and your errors ; being certain, that if you oppose no obstacle, he will, in virtue of this sacrament, strengthen you, enlighten you, appease the violence of your passions, and deliver you from your evil habits ; that from being proud, he will make you humble, from being lukewarm, will render you fervent, and from being carnal and worldly, will change you into a spiritual man, and a Christian. Approach Jesus Christ, I say, with this confidence, founded on his infinite power and goodness, for you will say

Are you not, O my God, the Master of my heart? And when shall my heart more entirely belong to you, than when you will have taken possession of it by your adorable sacrament.

VII. With a filial fear which should attend this confidence, as if you should say to Jesus Christ: But can I, O Lord, be so unhappy as to have any secret sin which would obstruct the effusion of your intended graces? Is it possible I can be a Judas, to give you to-day the kiss of peace, and betray you to-morrow? Am I about to receive you as he did with a criminal conscience? And, instead of coming to me as a faithful disciple, do you not approach me with horror and indignation as a concealed enemy? Ah! If this be the case, I should say to you with St. Peter: *Depart from me O Lord! for I am a sinful man!* Retire from me, because I am a sacrilegious and impious wretch. But the same confidence which I have in you, O Lord, makes me hope that you have remitted my sin, and that, unworthy as I am, you will not reject me from your presence.

VIII. With an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ; for one of the most necessary dispositions for a worthy Communion, is to desire it as one of the best dispositions to receive food with advantage, is to eat it with an appetite.—Therefore, shew our Lord, not only your desire, but even your impatience and eagerness to be united to him in this sacrament; saying to him with the patriarchs of the old law, who expected his coming; *Come, O Lord! and do not delay.* Ps. 89. Come and take possession of my heart: it is entirely ready, and no one can fill it but you. Or, with the Royal Prophet in that psalm that is so well adapted to a Christian soul at the moment it approaches Communion: *As the heart pants after the fountains of water, so does my soul thirst after you, O my God.* Ps. 89.\*

IX. With a fervent sorrow, which will complete the sanctification of your soul, and place it in that degree of purity that is necessary for the worthy reception of Jesus Christ, making use of these affecting words of the penitent king: I hope, O Lord, that you have already washed me in the Sacrament of Penance; but *wash me more and more from my iniquities and cleanse me from my sins,* (Ps. 50.) that I may be in a state worthy of being presented to you.—*Create in me a clean heart, and renew an upright spirit within my bowels,* (Idem) that spirit of equity and justice, without which my other devotion for Communion would be only an illusion and a dream. As sin, O my God! is the only thing that can displease you in me, I detest and abhor it, because it is displeasing to you. Even should it not subject me to the terrible and fearful chastisements of your justice, even if it should deserve hell, it would be enough for me to hold it in execration, that it separates me from you, and would prevent my union with you in the sacrament of your body.

X. With a perfect love; because if you are obliged to love Jesus Christ with your whole heart, and if this love of preference be commanded you by the divine law, you are still more bound to give him proofs of it in this sacrament, which is alone, and by excellence, the sacrament of his love, and of his charity towards men. You should therefore imagine, that at the moment of Communion, Jesus Christ asks you, as he did St. Peter: *Lovest thou me?* (John xxi.) and you should be able to answer him with the same fervour—*Yes, O Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.* Idem. But the sincere protestation which I this day make you is, that I desire to love you with a solid and effectual love, a love that does not consist merely in words, but in the fulfilment of my duties, in the exact observance of your commandments, in an inviolable attachment to your law, in the fear of offending you, in the avoidance of every thing that displeases you, in an eternal renoucement

the time of Communion, will be inserted at the end of the instructions, for the convenience of the reader.

\*This Psalm, with several others adapted to

of the false maxims of the world, and of every thing that is contrary to the christianity which I profess.

XI. With a particular attention to the words of the Priest, when he presents you the Body of Jesus Christ, and says: *May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve your soul to everlasting life*; words, which should make you comprehend the purpose for which you communicate, which is, to persevere in grace. That is to say, not to communicate in order to observe a certain regularity of life for some days, but to be constantly faithful to God, and to keep yourself in the state in which the sacrament of Jesus Christ has placed you, so that it may be to you a pledge of eternal life.

XII. With a short but loving prayer addressed to Jesus Christ, conjuring him to supply by his grace all your defects, and to place himself in your hearts, the dispositions necessary to receive him worthily; acknowledging with humility, that after all your own efforts for this purpose, you are still infinitely unworthy of this sacrament.

*Advice for the time that follows Communion.*

I. Retire from the holy table with a profound respect for the presence of Jesus Christ, who is in the midst of your heart, and of whom it is true to say, that the plenitude of his divinity dwells at that moment corporally in you. Remain for some time in silence, as if seized with astonishment at the wonderful things that have befallen you, and considering yourself as the living Tabernacle in which the Holy of Holies then resides—a reflection which is admirably calculated to preserve you in entire recollection, and to prevent all the distractions of your mind which would be criminal at such a moment; as if Jesus said to you: *Apply yourself to the contemplation of me, and see that I am your God* (Ps. 45,) since, by virtue of this mystery you have so palpable a proof of it.

II. Enjoy the happiness and advantage you possess in Jesus Christ, who is your sovereign, and who, in Communion, makes himself the pledge, as he is to be the object of your bliss

to all eternity, applying to yourself these words of the Psalm: *Taste and see, how sweet the Lord is!* Ps. 83. He is glorious in heaven, all powerful on earth, and terrible in hell; but he is all sweetness in the Eucharist, and the sweetness with which he fills the soul of the just is the mark of his divine presence. Ah! my God, will you say to him, *May the sweetness of these holy delights take away for ever all relish for the criminal sweets and pleasures of the world, which serve only to poison my heart, and corrupt my reason!* May this foretaste of heaven which you have given me in the adorable Eucharist, correct all the depraved tastes of my passions, which make me love what I ought soverely to hate, and which make me prefer like the prodigal son, the food of swine, that is, what gratifies my sensuality, to the real blessings which you communicate to those who are attached to you. Enter into this sentiment of the holy old man Simon, when, as the crowning of all his desires he saw Jesus Christ in his arms. *Now, O Lord, thou mayest dismiss thy servant in peace,* (Luke ii) because not only my eyes have seen you, but my soul possesses you, and my flesh is replenished with you, who are the source of my life.

III. After Communion, imitate the holy practice of David. *I will listen to what the Lord shall say in me,* (Ps. 84.) for it is then he is properly within you, and if you be attentive, he will not fail to speak secretly to your heart, to tell you many things of which you never think, or which you conceal from yourself, but of which he will convince you. For example, he will reproach you for certain infidelities into which you have fallen, certain disorders in which you live, certain weaknesses which you do not strive to overcome. He will tell you how you are to change your conduct, what sacrifices you are to make to him, and what things you are to renounce. In a word, by explaining himself directly to you, and rebutting all the pretexts of your conscience, he will declare to you his will, and in such a manner that you cannot but be moved as well as convinced. Say to him, like Samuel: *Speak, O Lord! speak; for thy servant heareth.* 1 Kings 3.

IV. Comply with the principal duty which Jesus Christ expects from you after Communion. This is, to testify your gratitude for the inestimable gift you have received from him.—For how ungrateful would it not be, if, after having been filled with his gifts and himself, you should have no feeling thereof, and should deserve to be regarded as a monster in nature, if a love, so perfect as his, should find no return in your soul! *O Lord!* should you say: *Why my right hand itself be forgotten, if ever I forget you. May my tongue cleave to my palate, if I do not remember you for ever!* (Ps. 136.) I have been an infidel, a coward and prevaricator, but I do not wish to be an ingrate. And as the sacrament of your Body is a real *Eucharist*, that is, a sacrament of thanksgiving, I not only wish to prove to you by the whole course of my future life, how much I feel indebted for this precious gift, but I also wish to make it serve as an acknowledgment, for all the other favours you have granted me, and continue to bestow me.—For, what return can I make you, O my God, for all the mercy you have shewn me? O how can I acknowledge the excessive obligations I owe you, the abundant graces you have bestowed me, the singular marks of your protection with which you have favoured me, unless by participating in the mysterious chalice of your passion? Have you taught me any other means than this, for corresponding in some degree of equality with your infinite charity? If I be happy enough to have received Communion in the state of grace, may I not console myself with the thought, that by offering yourself, since you now belong to me, I fully discharge all the obligations I owe you.

V. Make an entire offering of your person to Jesus Christ: protesting to him, that after having received him in Communion, you will live no longer but for him, to verify his word. *He that eateth, me shall live by me, or for my sake.*—John vi. That you wish no longer to conceive any thought, to form any designs, or execute any undertakings, except in the order of perfect submission to him; that you will no longer employ your health, your strength, your talents,

your judgment, your property, in a word, any thing that belongs to you, save for the interest of his glory; subjecting to him all the powers of your soul, so that he may be master, and reign there absolutely. And in order this offering may not be vain, or one of mere speculation, reduces it to practice by the examination which you will make of yourself. For instance, if you have been so unfortunate as to have any attachment in the world, make a sacrifice of it to Jesus Christ at that very moment, saying to him. *No; O Lord!* after the singular favour with which you have honoured me, I will no longer suffer my heart to be divided between you, and any created being.

VI. Implore Jesus Christ whilst he is yet within you, to grant you all the graces you require, compelling him as if, by a holy and amiable violence to bestow them, and saying to him, as Jacob did to the angel, *No, I will not suffer you to depart until you have given me your blessing* Genes xxxii. I do not ask, O Lord, you will say, temporal favours, a good name, prosperity, honours or riches; all these would only serve to destroy me. I ask you for the grace of salvation, for an humble spirit, and a christian heart. I implore of you a hatred for sin, an eternal horror of impiety and libertinism, a fear of your judgments, and above all things your holy love. I ask you for the strength and firmness of mind, that is necessary to preserve me from the corruption of the world, and from being carried away by the torrent of customs, to resist temptation, and the scandal of bad example, to place me above human respect, to guard me against the poison of flattery, and from being a slave to ambition, to avoid yielding to interest, to shun the fatal snares which the demon of my flesh spreads for me on all sides, to preserve the freedom and purity of my religion, in the midst of the dangers to which my state exposes me; in fine, to become a true christian in every respect. Behold, my God, the graces that are necessary for me. I have a right to ask them at all times, but when could I ask them with more faith, or greater confidence of obtaining them, than at this moment, when I possess you who are their author?



VII. Form holy resolutions on the particular points in which you will understand that God requires some change and reformation of life.— For instance, on the most notable fault which you have to correct, on the most vicious habit which you have to overcome, on the most immediate occasion of sin which you have to avoid. And that these resolutions may be more solid, form them in the presence of Jesus Christ, who, in the depth of your heart will ratify and accept them, as if you should say to him: Yes, O Lord! it is to yourself I make my engagements, and I desire that you should raise up against me, if the promises I make you be not sincere and true. *I have sworn, O my God! and have determined to keep all the observances of your divine law.* Ps. 118. I have sworn to be more regular and more exact in my christian duties, to have more charity for my neighbour, to have more restraint on the liberty I take in speaking of others, &c. I have sworn, and I take you yourself as the witness of my oath, that you may confirm it, and that your adorable sacrament which I have received, may be its seal, so that I could never violate it, without being reckoned in your eyes, a perjurer and a reprobate.

VIII. Excite yourself to Christian perseverance, which should be one of the principal fruits of your communion, by asking yourself with St. Paul, *who shall henceforth be able to separate me from Jesus Christ,* (Rom. viii.) after having been so closely united to him? Then answering yourself in the words of the same apostle, *No: I am certain that neither death, nor life, nor prosperity, nor adversity, nor grandeur, nor abasement, nor any other creature whatever shall ever separate me from him.* Ibid. It is not, O my God, through a spirit of presumption, that I speak in this manner. I know my nothingness and misery, and I am aware that if you abandon me to myself, I shall fall back again into all my disorders. But, united to you as I am in this sacrament, I have a right to rise above myself, and to promise, notwithstanding all my weakness and inconstancy, that I will persevere in your love, and in the possession of your grace.

IX. Follow up in your subsequent life the resolutions you have made at Communion, leading such a life after it, that you may be still able to say with St. Paul, *I live: but no; it is no longer I; it is Jesus Christ that lives in me,* (Gal. ii.) remembering that the greatest of all scandals, even in the opinion of the world, is to behold a christian, whose conduct, after Communion, is not more holy and more edifying than before. It is necessary then, as Jesus Christ lives in you by Communion, that He should thenceforth act in you—that he should make you think, act, and speak, and that there should be nothing unworthy of him in your entire conduct. For if, after Communion, you live as before, in the disorders of a negligent and disordered life; if your thoughts be as worldly, your words as indiscreet, your actions as irregular as they were before, that which Salvian said on another occasion, would be verified in you to the letter, namely, that in you Jesus Christ would receive confusion and shame, as for instance, it would be a shame for him that a tongue which was sanctified by the sacrament of his body, should still utter lascivious or impure words, and a confession to him, that a heart of which he has made his dwelling, should be still full of evil desires.

X. Observe, and if possible commit to writing after Communion, some of the most tender and affectionate sentiments, with which you have been moved at the holy table; so that if you afterwards fall into languor or tepidity, you may be able to revive yourself, by the remembrance of those things which then made an impression on your heart. For you will thus profit by the salutary advice of David in one of his psalms, *and the holy thoughts with which you heart was filled at Communion, being collected and preserved like so many precious relics, will make you celebrate a new festival* (Ps. 75.) every time you read or call them to mind.

(To be continued.)

## The Sister of Charity.

—  
 “OH MARY, CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN,  
 PRAY FOR ME, WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO  
 THEE.”

(Concluded.)

“I will not, father. I will not. Oh! why did you not let me be a nun, like my sister? What had I done that you should use me thus?”

“Spouse of Christ,” said the sick man, turning solemnly towards Agnes, “the sins of this unhappy child are upon my soul as my own. By the mercy for which you have taught me to hope, save her from the guilt into which I alone have plunged her.”

The nun was weeping bitterly. A light had broken on her soul.

“Father,” she whispered, “do you not know your child?”

The man gazed earnestly upon her; sickness had dimmed his eyes; but at last he recognized his child, and fell back fainting on his pillow. With some difficulty he was restored, and then pressing gently the hand of Agnes, he pointed to his youngest daughter, who still remained kneeling with her face buried in her hands, and whispered,

“Be a mother to poor Isabel.”

Agnes bowed her head, and taking her sister's arm, she led her from the room. The priest closed the door after them, and then Agnes folded her sister in her arms. The poor girl neither returned nor rejected these caresses.—She did not sob or scream: but the tears fell in torrents from her eyes, and she looked the very picture of shame and sorrow. Then struck by another

impulse, she fell upon her knees, as if wholly unworthy to stand in the presence of one so pure as her sister.

“Oh, sister, sister!” cried Agnes, “treat me not thus. Look not as if you had forgotten me,—your own sister—your Agnes.”

The mighty affliction of the poor sinner's soul found voice at last, and falling on her sister's breast, she cried out aloud,—

“Sister, I am a sinner!”

“And so was Magdalen,—and so are we all!” cried Agnes, her tears falling abundantly on her sister's head. “Oh, sister! let us kneel together, and say once more the prayers that we said in the days of our childhood. We were children then!—we are children still! We will tell our Heavenly Father that we are sorry for our sins, and He will not refuse us his pardon and his love.”

Twined in each other's arms they knelt together, and Agnes prayed aloud. It was years since Isabel had heard that voice, the very tones of which were full of piety and love; it was years since a thought of grace, a hope of pardon had entered her soul; and now, with the prayer of her innocent childhood ringing in her ears, and the repentant love of a Magdalen burning in her bosom, full of fear for the future and remorse for the past, she clasped her sister more tightly in her arms and sobbed aloud.

“Leave me not, sister,—desert me not! Oh, save me from this life of sin, and the God of the sinner and the saint reward you for the deed!”

Agnes folded her sister in her arms.

“My sister, I will never forsake you until I see you restored to God and his holy Church! I leave you no more!”

The priest now recalled them to their father's chamber. He was about to

administer the last awful rites of religion to him. Marie assisted in lighting the candles which her religious sister had now brought from the convent; but Isabel fell prostrate on the floor.—How could she venture to look upon the Holy of Holies?—she, whose life had been full of sin! The priest recited a short prayer aloud, and then, with a heart full of contrition and joy, the dying man received from his hands the awful Sacrament of the Body and Blood of his Saviour and his Judge.—Afterwards, the priest anointed him with holy oil, upon the eyes, mouth, &c., praying aloud, that the sins he had committed through each of the senses might be forgiven in virtue of the sacrament of extreme unction. The poor penitent wept with joy through the whole of this most consoling sight, and answered every prayer in a voice tremulous and broken by emotion. The lights were extinguished, but still the priest remained by the bed of death, and prayed audibly for mercy and grace towards the departing soul. He ceased, and, at a sign from her father, Agnes raised her sister, and led her towards his bed. The dying man raised himself up with difficulty, and extending his hands towards them he said:—

“My children, whom I have wronged, before God and his Saints, I entreat your pardon.”

The words were apparently intended for both, but Isabel felt them to be addressed in a peculiar manner to the injured innocence of her own soul, and bending over his withered hand she murmured softly,—

“God bless you, father.”

“Thank you, my child. I die content.”

A smile was upon his lips as he sank

back upon his pillow. Then turning towards Agnes, he whispered,—

“Remember this unhappy child.”

He closed his eyes, and a shadow, as of death, fell upon his face. The priest saw that the hour was come, and rising up, he read that awful recommendation of the departing soul to the mercy of its Creator, beginning, “Depart Christian soul,” &c. Ere his voice had ceased the man was dead; and kneeling down, he cried out aloud, “From the depths I have cried to thee! Oh, Lord, hear my voice,” &c. And thus, in prayer and supplication, he passed the night by the corpse of the repentant sinner.

The sisters stood beside the grave of their father:—Agnes in the garb of religion, Isabel in the mourning of the world.

“And here we part, my sister,” said Agnes. “We part, but it is to meet again. On earth, in spirit at the foot of the cross. In Heaven, I trust, on the bosom of our Saviour.”

Even as she spoke, the priest who had attended her father’s death-bed, came and took Isabel by the hand.

“My child,” he said, in a kind but solemn voice. “am I indeed to understand that you have determined to forsake your evil ways, and to repent of your sins?”

Isabel fell upon her knees.

“With all my heart, and with all my soul, I do repent them, father! Would to God that all those whom have scandalized by my life could be witness now of my shame and sorrow!”

“I believe you, my child!” The good father hesitated for a moment. “I have spoken to the Superior of the ‘Bon Pasteur,’ and she will gladly receive you. You are now, for a time at least, about to leave the world, and in

prayer and supplication to ask pardon for your sins. But there is *one* who has a claim upon you. You may see her once more before you depart."

The unhappy girl covered her face with her hands, and her whole frame shook with her violent emotion. It was but for a moment; then removing her hands, every trace of emotion vanished from her calm pale face. She said, in a tone of quiet resignation:

"No, my father, the child of sin shall never again bring gladness to the eyes of her mother. I shall see her no more. I commit her to God and Agnes."

"She shall be cared for," said Agnes, in a solemn voice.

The sisters embraced once more; then Isabel drew her veil tightly over her face, and followed the priest.

There is a convent at Angers: and the holy sisters who are professed within its walls have devoted themselves to the noblest work of which the human soul is capable—to the protection and reclaiming of the forsaken sinner.—Others have devoted themselves to the preservation and instruction of innocence, which naturally awakens pity and love in the human heart; but these noble beings have given their lives, their fortunes, their talents, their very souls, to the reformation of those, whom the world indeed has rejected with scorn, but whom Christ once suffered, in the person of Magdalen, to sit at his feet. He who reads all the secrets of the human heart, can more understand the merit of these holy sisters, who, with their pure hearts and spotless reputa-

tions, have devoted their lives to continual contact with coarse ignorance and vulgar crime. He alone can appreciate their sacrifice and reward it, and truly he does reward it, even with the hundred fold. He has promised to His holy servants on earth.

Yes! the sister of the "Good Shepherd" lies down at night upon her humble pallet, the prayers and blessings of the rescued sinner falling like softest dew upon her heart. She rises in the morning to teach those to pray who never prayed before, to engrave the sweet lessons of love and hope upon hearts, that, but for her, had grown hard beneath the influence of crime, desperate beneath the scorn of that world which had lured them to error.—The consciousness of many souls rescued through her means from a life of crime, is a charm to make the rough path she has chosen, pleasant to her feet; and, at the hour of her death, who shall say these grateful spirits may not surround her bed, like ministering Angels, bidding her soul go forth without fear to meet that Judge, whose sorrows she had so often soothed in the sorrows of His poor, whose heaven she had so often made glad, with the joy that Angels feel over one sinner doing penance. It was to this blessed retreat from sin and sorrow that the good priest brought Isabel; and as the gates of the convent closed upon her, she felt she had no wish upon earth but to spend the rest of her life in bewailing her sins at the foot of the Cross.

Years passed away, and the sisters had not met. The one continued in her blessed vocation to hang like an angel of peace over the bed of disease, and to breathe words of contrition and love

over the frozen heart of the sinner.— The other had entered the order of the Magdalens in the “Bon Pasteur,” and had thus devoted the remainder of her days to mourning over the errors of her early youth.

It happened one day, that a young novice who had been sent on her daily duties under the care of sister Agnes, was taken so seriously ill, that the latter was obliged to ask shelter for her in the convent of the “Bon Pasteur,” near which they chanced to be at the time. There she was received with all love and kindness; and a surgeon was sent for, who, upon seeing her, instantly declared that a few hours must terminate her existence. Sister Agnes whispered a few words to the Superior, who replied, in a tone of deep commiseration, “Poor thing, poor thing! she shall be sent for directly.”

A priest now came and administered the last sacraments of the Church to the young girl, and as he went through the awful forms of extreme unction, a look of heavenly joy was upon her dying face. Perhaps at that moment, her good Angel was suggesting to her the sweetest consolations that the soul can know in the awful hour of its departure from this world. Perhaps he told her, that those eyes which the priest now anointed with holy oil, had ever been closed upon the vanities of this world,—that those ears had ever been open to the voice of distress,—those feet been often wearied in seeking its abode,—those hands been ever employed in administering to its wants,—those lips been only unclosed to instruct its ignorance, or to console its afflictions. Well might her soul rejoice in the anticipation of those blessed words, “What you have done to the least of my brethren, you have done even unto me.”—

Since, in the midst of her deep humility, she could not but feel that those senses, for the sins of which the priest was even now imploring pardon, and which by others are so often made the agents of crime, had been used by her but as ministering angels to the sorrows of her Saviour, in the persons of his poor.

So thought those who knelt around her bed; so thought *one* who lay prostrate at the half-opened door, and who, in the depths of her humility, deemed herself unworthy to enter the chamber where a saint was about to depart to the espousals of her Lord! The lights were extinguished, the prayers were said, and then sister Agnes bent over the dying girl and whispered something in her ear. A shadow fell upon that angel face: it seemed as if she had been disturbed in a dream of Heaven. But then she looked at the sister with a smile of acquiescence.

Agnes approached the door, and led to the bed-side the tottering form of the Magdalen who had been prostrate there. Isabel gazed for one moment upon the holy face of her child, and struck by an awful idea of her sanctity, she fell on her knees and whispered softly, “Spouse of Christ, pray for and bless thy mother.”

The girl sat upright in her bed, every feature of her face bright in the holy exultation of her soul, and falling into the arms of her mother, she cried out—

“Mother! my mother! we shall meet in Heaven!”

They laid her back upon the pillow, but she was dead. Isabel hid her face in the coverlet, while they read the prayers for the spirit gone to judgment. The rest of the assistants now departed, and the mother was left alone with the corpse of her child. One of the nuns

soon came to seek her. She rose, imprinted one last kiss upon those lips, where a happy smile was lingering still, and then she followed the nun, her arms folded meekly on her bosom. Agnes met her at the door—she drew her sister towards her,—they gazed wistfully upon each well-known face, then they fell into each other's arms, and lifting up their voices, they wept aloud. It was but for a moment: Agnes withdrew, and the sisters met no more upon earth. But their souls were often blended together in prayer: and in patience and humble hope they awaited the day when they should meet once again upon the bosom of their Lord—that guiltless and that pardoned one!

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## Spiritual Maxims of Saint Vincent of Paul.

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### SEPTEMBER.

1.

We should treat our neighbour with kindness, bear his faults and imperfections with patience, and seek to gain him to virtue by those means which a tender heart that is filled with christian charity knows how to use.

2.

We ought to learn from Jesus Christ to be meek and humble of heart, and ask him unceasingly for those virtues; we should be particularly careful to avoid the two contrary passions, which would cause us to destroy with one hand what we seek to raise with the other.

3.

The use of general confessions, is necessary to remedy the defects that are often found in those that are not made with due dispositions.

4.

Little things which we do to please God, do not expose us so much to the danger of vain glory, as other actions of a more excellent nature; the latter often vanish like smoke.

5.

Many rest satisfied with the sweet entertainment which they enjoy with God in prayer; but if there be a question of mortifying themselves, of bearing sickness, humiliations, or other disgraces with patience, their courage fails. However, we should not deceive ourselves, the apostle declares, that our works alone will follow us into the other life.

6.

The salvation of a soul is so important, that in order to procure it, we should expose not only our property, but our life.

7.

May God vouchsafe to preserve charity and fraternal love in the hearts of all christians! By means of the mutual assistance which they would then afford each other, the strong would sustain the weak, and the work of God would be accomplished.

8.

The zeal which accompanies the

unction of grace and charity, sweetens the bitterness of penance, and brings consolations in the midst of sufferings and labours.

9.

Those whose talents are of the ordinary kind, are in general more suitable instruments in the hands of God, for procuring the salvation of his people, because they have less confidence in themselves; they recur to God with more humility, and to him alone they attribute the success of all their labours.

10.

Murmurs are ravenous wolves, which destroy the flock into which they penetrate.

11.

As carnal prudence and dissimulation have an extensive empire, it is necessary to combat and subdue those vices with the spirit of Jesus Christ, that is by candour and simplicity; never using either duplicity or artifice, and never relying on the deceit and policy of men.

12.

In religious societies, union and peace should be preferred to every other good.

13.

If two ways lead to the same end, it is of little importance which we select; but to submit our own to our neighbour's will is no indifferent matter.

14.

As we take the bitterest medicines to recover or preserve the health of the

body, we should cheerfully endure sufferings, no matter how repugnant to nature, and look upon them as efficacious remedies which God employs to purify the soul, and conduct it to the perfection to which he has called it.

15.

The glory of God, and the salvation of souls, are the only two objects which a superior should have in view; he cannot procure them more efficaciously, than by humility and meekness.

16.

Sinners require to be encouraged, and their confidence strengthened. The devil generally makes use of the rigour and severity of certain persons, to afflict souls with the most violent anguish.

17.

The most assured means of succeeding in any enterprise, is a total abandonment of one's self to Divine Providence, and an entire dependence on his arrangements.

17.

He that has placed his whole confidence in God, may be certain that if the entire universe should arise against him, nothing contrary to the will of God shall happen him.

19.

There is nothing more holy, nothing more eminently perfect than resignation to the will of God, which confirms us in an entire detachment from ourselves, and a perfect indifference for every condition in which we may be placed.

20.

We cannot make a better use of earthly goods, than to employ them in works of charity; by this means we make them return to God, who is their source, and who is also the last end to which everything should be referred.

21.

Although we should speak to every one in terms of politeness, we should not praise those who are present, unless when we consider it proper to encourage timid souls, or engage them to persevere in good works.

22.

Simplicity makes us go straight to God without consulting our own interest, or human respect; it makes us speak and act simply without disguise or artifice, it not only prescribes truth and purity of intention as a duty, it inspires us with the greatest hatred for every kind of duplicity.

23.

A soul always in repose, may be compared to marshy water without motion, which corrupts and exhales a fetid odour; on the contrary, a soul that is exercised by temptation, is like a running stream, always clear, and always agreeable.

24.

When God deprives any one of his bodily strength, he gives him to understand that he has chosen other instruments for the execution of his designs.

25.

When we are vigilant over ourselves, attention to the presence of God soon becomes a habit: I have known a person who reproached himself for having been withdrawn from God's presence three times in a day. Persons of this description will be our judges, and will condemn us before the Divine Majesty, for our frequent forgetfulness of him.

26.

Those who are not changed by the spiritual exercises of a retreat, cannot be converted unless by a miracle.

27.

We should love God at the expense of our arms, and with the sweat of our brow. All the acts of love and complacency, and all the other sentiments which a tender heart can feel, although good and desirable, are, however, open to suspicion, when they do not lead to works of active charity.

28.

To be satisfied with every state in which God places us, and never to abandon them unless we know that it is God's will, is the most excellent and useful virtue that we can practice in this world.

29.

It is of great importance to go on gently in prayer, that we may not overpower the mind, by too violent application, or too much nicety.

30.

Humility is the virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ, of his holy mother, and of the greatest saints. It includes all virtues, and when sincere, introduces all to the heart.

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