

**LECTIONARY
PROPER
TO
THE CONGREGATION
OF
JESUS AND MARY**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Presentation.....

I - Writings of Saint John Eudes

1. Contemplation of the Mystery of the Trinity
- Christian Life:
 2. Christ, the Center of our lives
 3. Christian life, the continuation and fulfillment of the life of Jesus
 4. The Head and the members
 5. What is a Christian?
 6. Faith
 7. Self-denial
 8. Love of the Cross
 9. Prayer
 10. The Christian virtues
 11. Humility
 12. Charity
 13. Divine Will
 14. The Mysteries of Christ and the life of the Church
 15. How to honor the Mysteries of the life of Jesus
 16. Forming Jesus within us
 17. How to form Jesus within us
 18. The Holy Spirit and the Christian
 19. To be a Christian is to confess Jesus Christ
 20. The Mass, a participation in Christ's sacrifice
 21. Loving and serving the Church
 22. Sanctifying our ordinary actions
 23. Martyrdom
 24. Jesus' action in those who suffer
 25. The call to holiness
 26. The apostolic vocation of Our Lady of Charity
- Baptism:
 27. Baptism: a new birth
 28. Baptism: a death and resurrection
 29. Baptism: an admirable covenant between man and God
 30. The Baptismal Covenant and the Father
 31. The Baptismal Covenant and the Son
 32. The Baptismal Covenant and the Christian
 33. Baptized in the name of the Most Holy Trinity
- The Priest:
 34. The priest: an associate of the Trinity
 35. Sent by Jesus to act in his name
 36. Preacher of the Word of God
 37. Witness to the demands of the Gospel
 38. Sharing in the Priesthood of Christ

- 39. Pastors after God's heart
- 40. Zeal for the salvation of souls
- 41. Missionary to the ends of the earth
- 42. The priest and the Virgin Mary

- The Heart of Jesus:

- 43. What the Heart of Jesus is
- 44. Jesus gives us his Heart
- 45. The Heart of Jesus is given to us to be our heart
- 46. Jesus loves us as his Father loves him
- 47. The Heart of Jesus: temple and altar of Divine Love ...
- 48. The Heart of Jesus: purifying and sanctifying love
- 49. Jesus' love for us

- Mary:

- 50. How we must venerate the Virgin Mary
- 51. The life of Jesus in Mary and of Mary in Jesus
- 52. Why we must venerate the Heart of Mary
- 53. The Heart of Mary, full of love for God and for us
- 54. Mary bore Christ in her Heart and still does
- 55. Mary treasured all these memories and pondered them in her Heart
- 56. The Heart of Mary: a marvelous fountain
- 57. The Heart of the Mother of mercy
- 58. The Admirable Mother
- 59. The Magnificat

- Saint John Eudes:

- 60. Saint John Eudes' Last will and testament
- 61. Saint John Eudes' Vow of martyrdom

II- Writings of other authors of the French School

- Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629):

- 62. Jesus Christ, the Father's servant and adorer
- 63. Christ's offering to his Father
- 64. The Virgin's Fiat
- 65. The Virgin's silence at the birth of Jesus

- Charles de Condren (1588-1641):

- 66. Preparation for celebrating Mass
- 67. Holy Communion
- 68. The Holy Spirit

- Jean-Baptiste Noulleau (1604-1672):

- 69. Christian life: Incorporation to Christ

- Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-1657):

- 70. Christ, the Bread of Life
- 71. Christ, the living Host, transforms us into himself ...

72. The life of Jesus in Mary

- Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660):

73. Charity

74. The service of the poor

III - Writings of Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier

- 75. Apostolic zeal
- 76. Imitating the Good Shepherd
- 77. Self-denial of the apostle

IV - Indexes

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PRESENTATION

of the 1977 French Edition
by the Most Reverend Clément Guillon, C.J.M.
then Eudist Superior General

Since Vatican II, the official prayer of the Church has grown remarkably richer. One little known but nonetheless interesting aspect of this enrichment is the possibility offered to all the dioceses and religious communities wishing to do so, to compile particular lectionaries for use in the Office of Readings (cf. *Institutio generalis de Liturgia Horarum*, N. 162).

A Congregation like the Eudists who are heirs to a rich spiritual tradition, owed it to itself to take full advantage of this authorization which offers us, within the very framework of the liturgical prayer life of the Church, the possibility of keeping in touch with the major themes of our spirituality throughout the course of our celebration of the mystery of Christ.

With the assent of the Eudist General Council, after consulting the provincial superiors and all the local communities, I commissioned this collection of readings. It was officially approved on February 14, 1976, by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, not only for the Eudists, but also for the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity. Furthermore, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and other congregations of St. John Eudes' extended spiritual family have expressed their intention of making use of this compendium of spiritual texts.

To one and all, I am pleased to present this book. I will first explain briefly how it was prepared, then I will discuss its contents more at length, and finally I will give a few indications on its use.

PREPARATION OF THIS PARTICULAR LECTIONARY

Preparation of The Lectionary Proper to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary was a lengthy undertaking. As early as 1967, a survey was taken among some forty confreres of all the provinces in order to assemble a collection of texts suitable for presentation to the "Consilium Liturgiae" to be used as alternative readings ("lectio altera") in the Breviary of the universal Church.

Twenty-eight texts were selected and presented, in February, 1969, to the "Consilium Liturgiae". Two of them were incorporated into the official lectionary of the Church: one for the feast of St. John Eudes, the other for Friday of the thirty-third week of Ordinary Time.

The 1967-69 collection of texts still offered abundant material, so it quite naturally served as a starting point when, in August, 1974, the General Council decided to proceed with publication of a Lectionary Proper to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Due consideration was given to most of the suggestions while trying to assemble a body of texts that would reflect all the major themes of Eudist spirituality.

In November, 1974, a first draft was presented to the four Eudist provincial councils as well as to all the local communities, along with a letter of presentation. It was well received and some fifty replies given, ten or more of them being collective answers, such as those from the provincial councils.

There was general agreement on the appropriateness of the project and a number of suggestions were made regarding content; many favored an even wider choice of selections.

Beginning in April, 1975, all these suggestions were carefully examined. We chose not to expand the size of the collection in spite of many recommendations to that effect. On the other hand, some newly suggested readings were chosen in place of some which had been included in the first collection. Some of the readings were shortened or modified in their presentation. Finally, all were carefully revised to eliminate errors and obscure passages as much as possible. The General Council and the provincial superiors were consulted at their meeting in September, 1975, and gave their approval to the text which was then in its final stages of preparation.

Official approval by the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship now gives this booklet the status of a liturgical book.

CONTENTS OF THIS LECTIONARY

This lectionary contains 77 readings: 61 from the writings of St. John Eudes, presented by theme (Christian life, baptism, etc.); 13 are by other authors of the French School of spirituality and 3 were written by St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier.

As in the *Liturgia Horarum* for the universal Church, each text is preceded by a title, a precise reference to the works of the author, and a sub-title, usually taken from the reading itself and underlining one of the essential aspects of its contents. The biblical quotes are printed in italics with their appropriate references.

The average length of the texts corresponds to the length of the readings in the *Liturgia Horarum* for the universal Church. Some texts are as originally written; a large number of others, however, are a composite of passages which are not immediately continuous in the original text. In these cases, every effort was made to ensure clarity and logical sequence. The text is, in principle, the author's; only a few words or archaic expressions have been changed.

Each reading is followed by a response which echoes its major theme in brief form and invites us to reflect on it. Most of the responses are taken as such from the Office of Readings of the *Liturgia Horarum*. A few come from the old Roman Breviary, some others from the Proper of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, and even from our old Proper. Five or six others were composed specially for this Lectionary.

SAINT JOHN EUDES' TEXTS

St. John Eudes is one of the outstanding figures among priests in XVIIth Century France. He was born in 1601 in the small Normandy town of Ri. In 1623, he joined the Oratory which Pierre de Bérulle had founded twelve years earlier, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1625. During more than fifty years, he engaged in intensive apostolic activity focusing particularly on the preaching of parish missions and the formation of priests. In order to better achieve these goals, in 1643, he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudists) to which major seminaries were entrusted. Moreover, during parish missions, he dealt with women of loose morals and young girls in need of protection. Eager to assist them, he had instituted the Order of Our Lady of Charity in 1641. The largest branch of the Order in existence today, the Good Shepherd Sisters, was established at Angers, France, in 1835, by Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier. For the laity, Saint John Eudes founded the Society of the Heart of the Most Admirable Mother, a sort of secular institute which would eventually count among its members Jeanne

Jugan, the foundress of the Little Sisters of the Poor, and Amélie Fristel, who founded the Sisters of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, at Paramé, in France.

John Eudes died on August 10th, 1680. He was beatified on April 15th, 1909, and canonized on May 31st, 1925.

While a member of the Oratory, John Eudes had eminent spiritual masters of whom more will be said later. Having personally assimilated their spiritual doctrine centered on the Word Incarnate and seriously put it into practice in his daily life, he was able to communicate it in simple and concrete terms, progressively enriching it through the discovery of the Heart of Mary and the Heart of Jesus. As is stated in the prayer assigned for his feast day, John Eudes had but one consuming passion: to proclaim by word and deed "the incomparable riches of Christ".

After a beautiful passage in which St. John Eudes contemplates with wonderment the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, comes a series of texts on Christian life, "the continuation and fulfillment of the life of Jesus Christ".

First come the principles: Christ who, as St. Paul puts it, is "all in all things", wants to be our center and our all; he is Life and wants us to live of him; he is our Head and we are his members. In this light are presented the essential attitudes of Christian life: faith, detachment, prayer, the virtues, adherence to divine Will.

The richness of our relation to Christ is multifaceted. We must take the time to explore its varied facets. "Participating in the mysteries of Jesus", "forming Jesus within us", "witnessing to Jesus" are all expressions which need to be meditated upon because each one embodies a particular aspect of the doctrine of the Mystical Body.

Along the way, one discovers the role of the Holy Spirit, "sent to form Jesus and make him live in us", the importance of the Holy Eucharist which enables us to participate in Christ's sacrifice, the mission of the Church, spouse of Jesus Christ. Lastly, we are reminded that Christian living is very concrete: it is incorporated into the fabric of daily life, particularly in our encounter with suffering. It is the road to holiness, the aspiration to martyrdom. It is apostolic witnessing.

Seven texts deal with Baptism. Saint John Eudes unceasingly recalled the importance of this sacrament which incorporates us to Christ who died and rose from the dead, thus admitting us into the family of God, the Holy Trinity. Saint John Eudes liked to see in Baptism a genuine contract between God and us. God did not hesitate to commit himself in our respect. But we too have made commitments whose dignity and requirements are beyond compare. It is up to us to acknowledge and honor them.

The life and ministry of priests were among Saint John Eudes' major concerns. Nine readings bear witness to the fact, underlining the greatness of the priesthood and the responsibilities it entails. Sharing in the priesthood of Christ, a priest acts and speaks in his name. Like him, a priest must be a "good shepherd", eager to spread the Gospel message to the ends of the earth. He is associated with the Holy Trinity and has a "special alliance with the Most Holy Mother of God".

Seven readings deal with the Heart of Jesus. They constitute a synthesis of St. John Eudes' spiritual doctrine at the center of which one finds the Heart of Jesus, since he is the ultimate and living revelation of God's love. It is that Heart overflowing with love for the Father, for the Virgin Mary and for mankind,

which Jesus gives us, thus transforming us from within and enabling us in turn to love.

The Virgin Mary welcomed this gift better than any other created being. Nothing in her was ever in opposition to love. Saint John Eudes never tired of contemplating "the Heart of the Admirable Mother", so closely united to the Heart of Jesus as to be one with it. Here again, the texts selected bring us constantly back to the central point of the mystery of salvation. It is in her relation to Christ and to the Church that we view the Virgin Mary and ask her to open our hearts, like her own, to love that comes from God through the Heart of Jesus.

The last two of Saint John Eudes' texts, excerpts from his last Will and Testament and from his Vow of Martyrdom, bear witness to his humble and ardent desire to belong totally to Christ: "May my whole life be a perpetual sacrifice of love and praise to him." "May my last breath be an act of pure love of him."

TEXTS BY OTHER AUTHORS OF THE FRENCH SCHOOL

St. John Eudes belongs to an important current of spiritual thought known as the French School of spirituality. It seemed useful to include in this collection a few texts by the initiator of this current, Pierre de Bérulle, as well as those of representative members of the French School: Charles de Condren, Jean-Baptiste Noulleau, Jean-Jacques Olier, Saint Vincent de Paul.

Two criteria presided over the choice of texts: either they are characteristic of their author's thinking (for instance, Bérulle's on the Incarnation or Noulleau's on incorporation to Christ), or they accentuate themes which are only briefly touched upon in Saint John Eudes' texts and interestingly complete his (for instance, Saint Vincent de Paul's text on serving the poor).

Pierre de Bérulle

Born in 1575, Pierre de Bérulle, from his youth, was in contact with fervent prayer groups in Paris and discovered very early in life the value of contemplative prayer. Ordained to the priesthood in 1599, he hesitated a long time before discovering his particular calling and in 1611 founded the Oratory of France, a society of priests bound by no special vows, but firmly resolved to living together and respecting all the requirements of a genuine priestly life, so as to contribute to "restoring the spirit of perfection in the clergy". The group expanded rapidly.

Bérulle also played an important role in the religious, even the political history of the times. He is responsible, for instance, for bringing to France the Reformed Carmelites of St. Theresa of Avila. His spiritual influence, thanks to both his writings and his disciples, had profound bearing not only on XVIIth Century France, but on future Catholicism as well. Bérulle died in 1629, six years after John Eudes entered the Oratory.

Bérulle's spiritual doctrine is often labeled "theocentric", that is to say, it strongly emphasizes the greatness of God and the importance of the attitude of adoration on the part of his creatures. But it may be perhaps still more accurate to say that it is "Christocentric". Indeed, since Christ Jesus, the Word Incarnate, is the true adorer of the Father, all Christian life must be a participation in his "divinely human and humanly divine" life. It is imperative, therefore, to seek with all one's strength to "adhere" to him; this is the fundamental attitude every Christian must adopt. But a priest, because of his special association with the priesthood of Christ and his membership in the "order of Jesus" which surpasses

all religious orders in dignity, has more reasons than anybody else to divest himself of his own being in order to live in constant reference to Jesus Christ. In his spiritual teachings, Bérulle allots a major place to the Virgin Mary who was totally open to God's action. He describes her as "a pure capacity for Jesus full of Jesus". Of the admirable pages he wrote about her, two are included in this Lectionary. His two other texts relate to Christ, servant of the Father, come into this world to do his Will.

Charles de Condren

Born in 1588 and ordained in 1614, Charles de Condren entered the Oratory in 1617. When Bérulle died, he became superior general and occupied the post until his own death in 1641. Only moderately endowed for action, he nevertheless exercised widespread influence not only among his fellow Oratorians, but on other priests as well, notably on Jean-Jacques Olier who was later to found the Sulpicians. Saint John Eudes, who knew him well, always professed a great veneration for him.

Condren's spiritual doctrine, though close to Bérulle's, has its proper accents, many of them shared by Saint John Eudes. It places a great deal of importance on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in which all Christians, both priests and laity, must share. The first two texts reproduced in this Lectionary show how this participation takes place through the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and communion. His third text is a marvelous passage on the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, which must animate us.

Jean-Jacques Olier

Born in 1608, Jean-Jacques Olier was ordained in 1633. At about that time, he met Father de Condren, who was then superior general of the Oratory, and chose him as his spiritual guide. He later became pastor of St. Sulpice Parish in Paris as well as founder of the Sulpicians. A little younger than Saint John Eudes, he knew him well and held him in high esteem. He invited John Eudes to preach a mission in his parish in 1651 and, in advance of his coming, spoke very highly of him. He shared with him the same concern for the formation of priests. He died long before him in 1657.

It is indirectly, through de Condren, that Jean-Jacques Olier came to know Bérulle, but he assimilated his spiritual doctrine deeply and discovered how to express it in more accessible fashion, and often very beautifully, emphasizing particularly the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. His first two texts point out the extraordinary transformation which Christ, the Bread of Life, operates in us: he identifies us with himself in such a way that his adoration becomes our own. His third text celebrates the life of Jesus in Mary.

Jean-Baptiste Noulleau

Jean-Baptiste Noulleau, who entered the Oratory in 1624, a year after Saint John Eudes, is much less known than he is. The text presented in this Lectionary is all the more interesting in that it summarizes, with great vigor and in very appropriate terms, often similar to those used by Saint John Eudes, the essentials of Berullian Christocentric doctrine, thus attesting to the influence of the founder of the Oratory.

Saint Vincent de Paul

Saint Vincent de Paul, on the other hand, is well known. Born in 1581 and ordained around 1600, he took some time to discern his true calling. But around 1620, he realized that "the poor are our masters". To imitate Christ's love for them, he took numerous and far-reaching initiatives and invited

others to do likewise. His best known project is the founding of the Daughters of Charity. His death occurred in 1660.

Saint Vincent de Paul's association with the French School of spirituality is not as obvious as in the case of Saint John Eudes or Mr. Olier. True, he knew and appreciated Bérulle, but he was not molded spiritually by him. And while his interior attitude is Christocentric, he never sought to translate it into a strongly structured doctrine. What links him to Saint John Eudes and Jean-Jacques Olier for whom he paved the way, is his founding, in 1625, the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians), a society of priests dedicated to the formation of priests.

His two texts presented in this Lectionary deal with charity which has its source in God and must be both concrete and inventive.

SAINT MARY EUPHRASIA'S TEXTS

Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier is the most illustrious of Saint John Eudes' spiritual daughters. Born on July 31, 1796, in Noirmoutier, France, she entered the monastery of Our Lady of Charity of Tours, October 20, 1814, and became its superior in 1825. Four years later, she founded the Monastery of Angers. On taking charge of this monastery in 1831, she soon discovered that the structures of the Order needed to be modified so that a closer union among the houses could foster a broader and more effective apostolate. In 1835, she was authorized by the Holy See to unite in one centralized Institute all the houses that would be founded by the Angers monastery. Thus came into existence the Good Shepherd Generalate. Thanks to her exceptional human qualities and even more to the impact of her saintly life and apostolic zeal, it was blessed with astonishing expansion. At the time of her death on April 24, 1868, the Good Shepherd numbered 110 houses grouped into 16 provinces all over the world. Saint Mary Euphrasia was beatified April 30, 1933 and canonized May 2, 1940.

Saint Mary Euphrasia always had a great veneration for Father Eudes who, in her day, was less known than today as the proceedings for his canonization had not yet begun. She was deeply consumed by her zeal for the salvation of souls. Often in her letters, and still more often in her conferences, the founder's major themes recur: continuing Christ's life and mission, entering into his sentiments, opening one's being to the love of his Heart which, with Mary's Heart, is the source of our apostolate, fulfilling God's will, living in humility, gratitude, attachment for the Church, etc.

Saint Mary Euphrasia's first text in this Lectionary begins with a beautiful meditation on Christ's coming into the world to save sinners, the "incomprehensible mystery of love" to which we must respond by accepting to be associated with the mission of the Son of God. The second reading is a typically eudist contemplation of the attitude of the Good Shepherd with an invitation to share "his thoughts, his sentiments and his affections". Just as the Good Shepherd puts aside his own interests, so too we must forget ours, that is the theme of the third reading in which Saint Mary Euphrasia's missionary spirit explodes when she says: "I no longer want to be called French ... I belong to every country where there are souls to be saved."

USE OF THIS PROPER LECTIONARY

The Lectionary Proper to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary may be used for the Office of Readings, whether celebrated in community or privately, by the Eudists and by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, who have obtained official authorization. In doing so, one is expected to conform to numbers 247 and 250 of the *Institutio generalis de Liturgia Horarum* according to which on ferial days - except in Lent

and Holy Week, the octaves of Easter and Christmas and the ferial days of December 17 to 24 - in place of the second reading assigned for a given day in the Office of Readings, one may choose, for a good reason, another reading from this optional Lectionary.

This Proper Lectionary may obviously be used for private spiritual reading. This is a practice which a number of religious congregations in which the Office of Readings is not regularly celebrated already intend to adopt. In this case, of course, full liberty is left to the users. It seems to me, however, that it could be more advantageous to read these texts in the very spirit of Saint John Eudes, that is to say, in connection with the Mysteries of Christ to which they are related or with the periods of the liturgical year with which they are especially consonant.

An Index for the Use of the Lectionary, which could be of assistance in the choice of texts, both for liturgical celebration and for private reading, will be found at the end of the collection. Two other indexes will likewise facilitate the use of this collection and the discovery of its wealth: the Analytical Index of The Principal Themes and the Biblical Index.

May this collection help the spiritual heirs of Saint John Eudes to participate ever more intensely, according to the spirit which animated the Saint himself, in the great prayer of praise which the Church, through Christ, offers to the Father!

Rome, January 15, 1977.

I
WRITINGS
OF
SAINT JOHN EUDES

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1. CONTEMPLATION OF THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY

(St. John Eudes, Interior Colloquies, 8, 2-3; O.C. 2, 165-168)

" Father, I rejoice in seeing that your Son and your Holy Spirit love and praise you eternally."

Let us consider what the three Divine Persons are and do with respect to each other. The Father unceasingly communicates to his Son his being, his life, all his perfections, his glory, his happiness, all his riches and all his treasures.

The Son ceaselessly refers to his Father, as to his origin, all that he has received from him, and is in a perpetual state of relationship, glory and praise towards his Father.

The Father and the Son give and communicate to the Holy Spirit all that they are, all that they have, all that they are capable of and all that they know.

The Holy Spirit is constantly referring to the Father and the Son, as to his principle, all that he receives from them.

As a result of these divine communications and relationships, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have but one and the same essence and divinity, live of the same life, have one and the same power, wisdom, goodness and holiness, and are in most perfect unity and association.

These Divine Persons are engaged in mutual and continual contemplation of each other, and are perpetually occupied in an exercise of praise, love and glorification of each other.

" Most Holy Trinity, I adore you, bless and glorify you in all these things. I unite myself to all the love and praise which your Divine Persons give to each other. I offer you all the glory you have in yourself and thank you infinitely for it in union with all the holy Church: We give you thanks for your infinite glory. I give you infinite thanks, eternal Father, for the divine generation of your eternal Son. I give infinite thanks to you, Divine Father and to you, only Son of the Father, for the oneness of principle by which you produce the Holy Spirit. I give infinite thanks to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the love, glory and mutual praise you give one another!

" My God and my Father, how I rejoice to see that your Son and your Holy Spirit love and praise you eternally and forever, with the love and praises befitting your greatness. Only Son of God, how my soul rejoices at the sight of the love and infinite glory you receive from your Father and your Holy Spirit! Holy Spirit, how my heart rejoices at the sight of the love and blessings you are given ceaselessly by the Father and the Son! Oh divine community, unity, association, love and life of the three eternal Persons, what rejoicing, what happiness for me to know that you are filled with glory beyond words, inconceivable bliss and an infinite amount of riches; and to know that you are God, the only God, living and reigning for ever and ever!"

All the perfections of the divine essence and all the marvels that abide in the three eternal Persons are as many obligations, all of them infinite, which we have to serve, honor and love so great and so admirable a God. What honor do his greatness and his supreme majesty demand of us? What love do his goodness and incomprehensible charity deserve? What purity of heart and life does his holiness require of those who serve him?

But what obligations do we have toward the eternal Father for the life and being he gives to his Son by his eternal generation? And to the Father and Son for all they give to the Holy Spirit in his continual production? Infinitely greater obligations surely, than for the creation of a hundred thousand worlds.

And what do we owe the eternal Father for the love he has for his Son? And to the Son for the love he has for his Father? And to the Father and Son for their love for the Holy Spirit? And to the Holy Spirit for the love he has for the Father and the Son? And to all the Divine Persons for the praise and glory they give each other eternally and forever? Surely, we owe them infinitely more in service and obedience for all those things than for all the graces we have received and can still receive from their infinite generosity. The reason for this is that the interests of these three eternal Persons must be infinitely dearer to us than our own interests, since we must love them infinitely more than ourselves. Let us give ourselves to God to serve and honor him in every way he wants us to.

And because what he wants most is that we imitate him, since he is our model and Jesus tells us: Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5, 48), and his Apostle says: Be imitators of God (Eph 5, 1), let us give ourselves to him with an ardent desire to imitate him in his holiness, purity, charity, mercy, patience, vigilance, gentleness and his other perfections. Let us pray that he will imprint upon our souls a perfect image and likeness of the holiness of his life and his divine virtues.

Response

R. Let us bless the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit.

* Let us praise and exult the triune God for ever.

V. Blessed is the Lord in the firmament of heaven; he is worthy of praise and glory eternally.

* Let us praise ...

CHRISTIAN LIFE

2. CHRIST, THE CENTER OF OUR LIVES

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 1, 7; O.C. 1, 114-117)

" The Father has willed that his Son Jesus be all in all things. He sees and loves all things in him, and sees and loves only him in all things."

The first and principal object, indeed, the only object of the attention, the love and good pleasure of the eternal Father is his Son Jesus. I say the only one because, as this divine Father has willed that his Son Jesus, be all in all things (Eph 1, 23), and that in him and by him all things hold together (Col 1, 16), according to the words of the Apostle, so he sees and loves all things in him, and sees and loves nothing but him in all things.

And as this same Apostle teaches us that he has made all things in him and by him (Col 1, 17), so we

learn from him that he has made all things for him (Heb 2, 10). And, as he has placed in him all the treasures of his knowledge and wisdom (Col 2, 3), of his goodness and beauty, of his glory and happiness, and of all his other divine perfections, so he himself proclaims loudly and more than once, that he has placed all his good pleasure and his delights in this only-begotten and well-beloved Son (Mat 3, 17). Which, of course, does not exclude the Holy Spirit, because he is the Spirit of Jesus and is really one with him.

In imitation of this heavenly Father, whom we should follow and imitate as our Father, we should make Jesus the sole object of our minds and our hearts. We should see and love all things in him, and should see and love only him in all things. We should do everything in him and for him. We should place all our satisfaction and our paradise in him, for, as he is the paradise of the eternal Father, in whom he takes his pleasure, so this holy Father has given him to us; in fact, he has given himself to us, to be our paradise. This is why he commands us to make our dwelling in him: Remain in me (John 15, 4). And his beloved disciple repeats this commandment twice: Remain in him, my little children, remain in him (1 John 2, 28). And St. Paul, to induce us to do so, assures us that there is no condemnation for those who remain in Jesus Christ (Rom 8, 1).

But when I say that we should make Jesus our only object in life, this does not exclude the Father and the Holy Spirit. For Jesus also assures us that those who see him, see his Father (John 14, 9), those who speak about him, speak also about his Father and his Holy Spirit; those who honor him and love him, likewise honor and love his Father and his Holy Spirit; and those who make him the only object of their attention, behold at the same time the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Look then upon this very lovable Savior as the unique object of your thoughts, desires and affections; as the sole goal of all your actions; as your center, your paradise and your all. Go to him from wherever you are as to a place of refuge - by lifting up your mind and your heart to him. Remain always in him - that is to say, let your mind and your heart, all your thoughts, desires and affections be in him, let all your actions be done in him and for him.

Remember, from time to time, that you are before God and in God himself (cf. Acts 17, 28); that Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his divinity, surrounds you on all sides, indeed penetrates and fills you, so much so that he is more in you than you are yourself; that he never stops thinking of you, and that his eyes and his heart are always turned towards you.

Response Col 1, 18, 17.

R. Christ is the head of the body, the Church, the first-born from the dead,
* that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

V. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together,
* that in everything...

3. CHRISTIAN LIFE, THE CONTINUATION AND FULFILLMENT OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, p. 2; O.C. 1, 161-166)

"As I am in the Father, living his life which
he communicates to me, so are you also in me,
living of my life, and I am in you communicating it to me."

Not only is Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, King of men and of angels, our God, our Savior and our sovereign Lord; he is also our Head and we are members of his body, as St. Paul puts it (Eph 5, 30).

It follows that we are united to him in the most intimate union possible, comparable to the link there is between members and their head. Spiritually, we are united to him by faith and by the grace he gave us in holy Baptism. Bodily, we are united to him by the union of his most holy body with ours in the Blessed Eucharist. As a necessary consequence, just as the members are animated by the spirit of the head and live of the same life, so too must we be animated by the spirit of Jesus, live of his life, walk in his ways, be clothed with his sentiments and inclinations, perform all our actions with the same dispositions and intentions with which he acted. In a word, we must continue and fulfill the life, religion and devotion which he had on earth.

This proposition is based on the sacred words of the one who is Truth itself: I am the Life. I have come that you might have life. I live and so will you. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you (John 14, 6; 10, 10; 14, 19-20). In other words, just as I am in my Father, living of his life that he communicates to me, so are you also in me, living of my life, and I am in you, communicating that same life to you. Thus, I live in you and you live with me and in me.

All these sacred texts teach us that Jesus Christ must live in us, that we must have no life but in him and that our life must be a continuation and expression of his.

To understand more clearly this fundamental truth about Christian life and to root it strongly in your soul, bear in mind that Jesus Christ has two kinds of body and two kinds of life.

First, there is his personal body, which he received from the Blessed Virgin, and the life which he lived in his human body while on earth. His second body is his mystical body, the Church. St. Paul, indeed, calls her the body of Christ (1 Cor 12, 27). His second life is the one he lives in this mystical body and in all Christians, its members.

The first kind of life, mortal and limited in time, which he lived in his natural body, was fulfilled and ended with his death. But he wills to continue living in his mystical body until the end of time in order to glorify the Father by the actions and sufferings of a mortal life of work and toil, not only during thirty-four years, but until the end of the world. In this way, the mortal and temporal life Jesus has in his mystical body, that is to say, in all Christians, is not yet fulfilled, but proceeds towards fulfillment day by day in each true Christian and will not be perfectly complete until the end of time.

St. Paul writes that he is fulfilling the sufferings of Jesus Christ. We can also rightly say that a true Christian, as a member of Jesus Christ united with him by grace, continues and fulfills the actions that Jesus performed while on earth by every one of the actions he performs in the spirit of Jesus. So, when a Christian prays, he continues and fulfills the prayer of Jesus; when he works, he continues and fulfills Jesus Christ's work life, and so on, in all the other actions done in a Christian manner.

So, you see what Christian life is: a continuation and fulfillment of the life of Jesus. You see that our actions must be a continuation of Jesus' actions and that we must be so many other Jesuses on earth, in order to continue here his life and work, to do and suffer everything he wants us to do and suffer in a holy and divine way, in the spirit of Jesus, that is, with the divine and holy dispositions and intentions which Jesus had in all his actions and sufferings.

Response 1 Cor. 1, 30-31; John 1, 16.

R. Christ Jesus was sent by God to be our wisdom, our justice, our sanctification and our redemption.

* So, as it is written: Let him who would boast, boast in the Lord.

V. Of his fullness we have all had a share, grace in return for grace.

* So, as it is ...

4. THE HEAD AND THE MEMBERS

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart, Book 1, Chapter 5; O.C. 6, 107,113-115)

"Jesus wants to be your heart and your life."

My dear brother, this same Jesus who chose to be the Heart and life of his most holy Mother, also wants to be your Heart and your life: Christ, your life (Col 3, 4). Having granted you the grace of becoming one of his members, he must live in you in such a way that you may say with the Apostle: Christ is living in me (Gal 2, 20). This is his plan, his most ardent desire.

I ask you to consider that Our Lord Jesus Christ is your true Head and that you are a member of his body. Five major consequences result from this fact.

He belongs to you as the Head belongs to the body. All that is his is yours: his spirit, his Heart, his body, his soul with all its faculties. You must make use of them to serve, praise, love and glorify God, as though they belonged to you.

You belong to him as members belong to the head. So he strongly wishes to use all your faculties to serve and glorify the Father as if they were his.

Not only does he belong to you, but he wants to be in you, living and reigning there, as the head lives and reigns in the body. He wants all that is living and reigning in him to live and reign in you: his Spirit in your spirit, his Heart in your heart, all the faculties of his soul in yours, so that these divine words may be fulfilled in you: Glorify and carry God in your body (1 Cor 6, 20) that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in you (cf. 2 Cor 4, 10).

Besides, not only do you belong to the Son of God, but you ought also to be in him, as members are in the head. All that is in you must be incorporated into him, receive its life from him and be ruled by him. There is no real life for you except in him who is the unique source of true life. Apart from him there is only death and destruction for you. He must be the sole generator of all the movements, uses and functions of your life. He must be both the source and the purpose of your life, so that you may fulfill these divine words: None of us lives as his own master and none of us dies as his own master. While we live, we are responsible to the Lord, and when we die, we die as his servants. Both in life and in death, we belong to the Lord. That is why Christ died and rose to life, that he might be Lord of the living and the dead (Rom 14, 7-9).

Finally, you are one with Jesus as the body is one with the head. As a result, you must have but one spirit with him, one soul, one life, one will, one mind, one heart. And he himself must be your spirit, your heart, your love, your life and your all.

In a Christian, all these great gifts originate from Baptism. They develop and are strengthened through the sacrament of Confirmation and the good use one makes of the other graces God gives. Through the Holy Eucharist, they are brought to perfection.

(**N.B.**) This reading is in the "Liturgia Horarum"
for August 19th, Vol. IV, 1331-1332).

Response Rom 14, 9, 8, 7.

R. Christ died and rose to life, that he might be Lord of both the living and the dead.

* Whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

V. None of us lives just for himself and none of us dies just for himself alone.

* Whether we live ...

5. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN ?

(St. John Eudes, Interior Colloquies, 9; O.C. 2, 168-173)

"To be a Christian is to be a child of God,
a brother of Jesus Christ, a temple of the
Holy Spirit."

To be a Christian is to be a child of God and have the same Father as Jesus Christ, his only Son: To all who did accept him, he gave power to become children of God (John 1, 12). I am ascending to my Father and your Father ..., says the Lord (John 20, 17). Think of the love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children, and that is what we are, says John (1 John 3, 1). Through creation, God is our maker and our principle, our efficient cause, our king and sovereign; and we are his creatures, the work of his hands, his subjects and servants. But through our regeneration and the new birth which takes place in Baptism when we receive new being and a new life, this one divine, God is our Father and we are his children. This enables us to say: Our Father who is in heaven.

As a result:

1) As we came out of the womb of God our Father in this new birth, we also remain forever within it, and it is necessary for him to carry us continually in his womb. Otherwise, were he to stop carrying us for an instant, we would lose the new being and new life received from him in Baptism.

2) We are brothers of Jesus Christ, of the same blood, of his royal and divine race, we enter into his genealogy. This is the basis on which a Christian, the new man and new creature that is born only of God, knows no other genealogy than that of Jesus Christ, no other Father but God: You must call no one on earth your father (Mat 23, 9). From now on, we do not judge anyone by the standards of the flesh, says St. Paul (2 Cor 5, 16). And the Lord Jesus himself said: What is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3, 6).

3) We are coheirs with the Son of God and heirs of God. Oh marvel! Oh dignity! Oh greatness of being a Christian! Let us renounce Satan, give ourselves to God with a great desire to live henceforth as true children of God, and avoid degrading the nobility of our birth, harming our race and shaming our Father.

A Christian is a member of Jesus Christ. As such, we have entered into an alliance and contracted a union with Jesus Christ which is much nobler, stronger and more perfect than what exists between members of a human and natural body and their head.

As a result:

- 1) We belong to Jesus Christ as the members belong to their head;
- 2) We depend on him and are under his control as members depend on and are controlled by their head;
- 3) We are one with him as the members are one with their head.

Let us give ourselves to Jesus as his members and profess henceforth to live of his life. For it would be a monstrosity for a member to live a different life from that of its head. This is why St. Gregory of Nyssa said that Christianity consists in professing to live of the life of Jesus Christ.

A Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit: Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? asks St. Paul (1 Cor 6, 19). And again: The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts (Gal 4, 6). The Holy Spirit is given to us to be the spirit of our spirit, the heart of our heart, the soul of our soul, and to be always with us and in us as in his temple.

Let us attentively reflect on these truths and engrave them in our hearts to incite us to bless and love God for the infinite obligations we have towards him for having made us Christians; to incite us also to detest our ungratefulness and our past sins, and henceforth to lead a life worthy of the perfection of the Father whose children we are, of the holiness of the head whose members we are and of the purity of the Spirit whose temple we are.

Response

Rom 8, 17; 5, 9.

R. We are heirs of God and coheirs with Christ,
* sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory.

V. Now that the blood of Christ has made us righteous, we will be saved from God's anger by him.
* sharing his sufferings ...

6. FAITH

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, 4-5; O.C. 1, 168-172)

"Seeing with the eyes of Jesus Christ."

The first foundation of Christian life is faith. St. Paul tells us that if we want to go to God and have access to his divine Majesty, the first step is to believe; without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11,6). Faith is the substance and foundation of the blessings we hope for (Heb 11, 1). It is the cornerstone of the house and kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is a heavenly and divine light, a participation in the eternal and inaccessible light, a radiating beam from the countenance of God. In scriptural terms, faith is like a divine stamp by which the light of God's countenance is imprinted on our souls (Ps 4, 7).

It is a communication and a kind of projection of the light and divine knowledge which was infused in the holy soul of Jesus at the time of his Incarnation. It is the science of salvation, the science of saints and of God himself which Jesus drew from the bosom of his Father and brought to us on earth to dispel our darkness, enlighten our hearts and give us the knowledge we need to serve and love God perfectly, to submit and subject our minds to the truths he has taught and still teaches us by himself or by the means of his Church.

In this way, faith allows us to express, continue and fulfill in ourselves the submission, docility and voluntary and clear subjection his human spirit had regarding the lights imparted to him and the truths taught him by his eternal Father. Faith is thus a continuation and fulfillment of the loving and most perfect submission of Jesus Christ's human mind to the truths revealed to him by his eternal Father.

It is this light and divine science that gives us, so far as it is possible in this life, perfect knowledge of all things, whether in God or outside of him. Reason and human science most often lead us into error because this light is too limited and feeble to arrive at knowledge of the things of God which are infinite and beyond our grasp. This deception also stems from their being too full of darkness and obscurity, due to the corruption of sin, to attain even to a genuine knowledge of things outside of God.

On the other hand, the light of faith cannot mislead us because it is a participation in the truth and light of God. Quite the contrary, it allows us to see things as God sees them, that is to say, in their truth and just as they are in the eyes of God.

Consequently, if we contemplate God with the eyes of faith, we will see him in his truth, just as he is and in a way face to face. For, although faith is accompanied by obscurity and makes us see God, not clearly as he is seen in heaven, but rather obscurely as through a cloud; nevertheless, it does not lower his supreme greatness to fit the capacity of our minds as does science; but, cutting through shadows and darkness, faith goes straight to the infinity of his perfections and reveals him as he is, that is to say, infinite in his being and in all his divine perfections. Faith allows us to know that all that is in God and in Jesus Christ, the God made man, is infinitely great and admirable, infinitely adorable and lovable, infinitely worthy of being adored, glorified and loved for his own sake. Faith shows us that God is trustworthy, true to his word and unailing in his promises; that he is all goodness, all gentleness and all love towards those who seek him and put their trust in him.

Just as we must consider all things in the light of faith if we would truly know them, so must we perform all our actions under the guidance of that same light if we would do them in holy fashion. Considering how God is led by his divine wisdom, and angels by their angelic intelligence, how men

deprived of the light of faith are led by reason, worldly people by worldly maxims, and voluptuous people by their senses, so Christians must guide themselves by the same light that guides Jesus Christ, their head, that is to say, by faith, which is a participation in the knowledge and light of Jesus Christ.

For this reason, we must strive, by all sorts of means, to learn this divine science of faith and never undertake anything except under its guidance. To that end, before beginning any action, especially the most important ones, let us place ourselves at the feet of the Son of God. Let us adore him as the author of faith and its fulfillment, as well as the one who is himself the true light enlightening every one who comes into this world, and the Father of lights.

Response Gal 2, 16; Rom 3, 25.

R. We acknowledge that what makes a man righteous is not obedience to the law, but faith in Jesus Christ.

* That is why we have believed in Jesus Christ, in order to become righteous through faith in Christ.

V. God exposed Christ on the cross so that, through the offering of his blood, he might gain forgiveness for those who believe in him.

* That is why ...

7. SELF-DENIAL

(St. John Eudes, Memorial of Ecclesiastical Life, Part 5, 14; O.C. 3, 204-208)

" Make yours the sentiments of Jesus Christ:
he emptied himself, though he was in the form of God."

Adore Jesus saying: If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself (Luke 9, 23). Adore the views, plan and design he had regarding you when he said this. Beg his forgiveness for having placed obstacles in the way of their fulfillment. Give yourself to him in order to accomplish what he meant by these words. Acknowledge that he himself first did what he is asking you to do, having given the perfect example of self-denial.

Indeed, while on earth he was never guided by his own desires, but rather by the Spirit of his Father. He never did his own will, but the will of his Father. He never sought his own satisfaction nor his own

interests: Christ did not seek to please himself (Rom 15, 3), but the interests of his Father. He did not live for himself, but for his Father. He shed his blood to the very last drop, gave his very life, emptied himself (Phil 2, 7), and, till the end of time, will remain in a prodigious state of annihilation of both his humanity and his divinity in the Blessed Sacrament.

Thank him for all the glory he has given and will ever give to his Father through this self-denial, as well as for the graces he has merited for us. Give yourself to him to share his sentiments and follow him in this denial of self: Make yours the sentiments of Jesus Christ: he emptied himself though he was in the form of God (Phil 2, 5-7).

Consider that Jesus requires us by these words not only to renounce the world, Satan, some vice or bad habit, or something dear and precious or even a part of ourselves. But he also says: If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, he must renounce himself: You have put aside your old self (Col 3, 9); he must die to himself: You have died (Col 3, 3); he must lose his life: Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it (Mat 10, 39); he must despise himself: If anyone comes to me without hating his own life, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14, 26).

There are three reasons for practising self-denial:

First, we do not belong to ourselves: You are not your own property (1 Cor 6, 19). We belong to God by an infinity of titles. So we have no right to dispose of ourselves; no right even to exist, to live, do, say or think anything for ourselves, but only for him to whom we belong infinitely. This compels us infinitely to deny ourselves entirely in order to be fully God's.

The second reason is our obligation to follow Jesus if we want to be united to him. Now, it is impossible to follow him without renouncing ourselves for, on our own, we are but darkness, sin, death and hell; and darkness cannot copy or imitate light, nor sin grace, nor death life, nor hell paradise.

A third reason for self-denial is that nothing in the world is more opposed to eternal salvation than our own selves. Indeed, we bear within us four sources of evil. The first is our own mind, filled as it is with darkness and poisoned by the venom of sin. The second is our own will and the third is our self esteem, the source of infinite disorders. The last of them is ambition, pride and arrogance, the root of all vices.

Be sure to renounce yourself when you begin at least your principal actions, and surrender yourself to Jesus to do them in him, in his virtue and spirit.

Response 2 Cor 4, 11-16.

R. We, the living, are consigned to death every day for the sake of Jesus,

* So that in our mortal flesh the life of Jesus may be openly manifest.

V. Though the outer man in us may be falling into decay, the inner man is renewed day by day.

* So that in our mortal flesh ...

8. LOVE OF THE CROSS

(St. John Eudes, Memorial of Ecclesiastical Life, Part 3, Chapter 19; O.C. 3, 98-100)

" One of the greatest favors Our Lord can grant us in this world is to allow us to share his cross."

One of the greatest favors Our Lord can grant us in this world is to allow us to share his cross. In letting us drink from his cup, he gives us what he cherished most on earth, namely: his cross, the prime object of his love, next to his eternal Father. It is by the cross that he destroyed sin, the source of all evil, and made all that is good on earth and in heaven. He gives us what he took for himself and what he gave to his most worthy Mother, the person he loved most on earth, and to his apostles and his best friends. The Holy Spirit tells us that all those who have been pleasing to God have known many tribulations. And the Angel Raphael told Tobias: because you are pleasing to God, it was necessary for you to be tried by suffering.

On this basis, Holy Scripture proclaims the cross and suffering to be a Christian's glory and treasure, paradise and sovereign good on earth. God forbid, says St. Paul, that I should boast about anything save the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 6, 14). Speaking in the name of all Christians, he says: We can boast about our sufferings (Rom 5, 3). And the Holy Spirit, through St. James, reminds us that tribulations should be our greatest source of joy.

So, we can say that whoever meets with great affliction has come upon a great treasure, one which will forever make him rich if he puts it to good use. The greatest consolations we can have in this world, even the spiritual and divine, are but tiny flowers that wither and soon pass away. In comparison, a great affliction is like a solid and enduring gold piece, a priceless gem, a fertile field which will enrich its owner with an infinity of heavenly and eternal gifts when cultivated with care.

Indeed, nothing purifies the soul like suffering. Nothing beautifies it more. Nothing makes it more pleasing to God. Nothing makes it nobler than the true Christian nobility which consists in identification with our great King and most lovable Crucified Savior.

Finally, it is important to turn suffering to good advantage.

First, because the person who bears suffering in a true Christian spirit gives great glory to God, indeed, the greatest that can be given him on earth. For, the Son of God himself, when he came to earth to pay homage to his Father and make amends for the disgrace of sin, chose no better way to do so than through the cross and suffering.

Secondly, suffering is a way of acquiring inestimable treasures of grace on earth and glory for eternity.

On the contrary, the person who fails to accept suffering willingly deprives God of the glory beyond compare which he would have derived through all eternity. Moreover, this individual's personal loss is such that if he knew its extent he would be inconsolable.

Whenever affliction befalls us, we must adore the holy will of God, submitting and abandoning ourselves entirely and without reservation to all its designs on us.

We must also bless, praise and thank God in times of affliction. I will bless the Lord at all times, but I must bless and praise him with more affection in times of desolation than in consolation because afflictions are the greater proof of God's goodness.

We ought to adore Jesus Christ crucified, the man of suffering, and abandon ourselves to the boundless love that nailed him to the cross. In union with that boundless love, we must accept and embrace all our crosses wholeheartedly, offering them up to honor his own crosses and give thanks for them. We must beg him to join them to his, to bless and sanctify them through his own, asking him to supplement what is lacking in us and do for his Father what we should be doing ourselves. May he make the same use of our sufferings as he did of his own, namely: to glorify his Father as his own sufferings did.

Response

Gal 6,14; Phil 1, 29.

R. Let us take pride only in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In him we have salvation, life and resurrection.

* Through him we are saved and liberated.

V. Through God's bounty, you have been given the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well.

* Through him ...

9. PRAYER

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, XI; O.C. 1, 191-193)

" Praying is a continuation of Jesus
Christ's prayer."

The holy exercise of prayer must be considered one of the chief foundations of Christian life and sanctity since Jesus' whole life was one of perpetual prayer which it is our duty to continue and express in our own life as one of its important and necessary functions. The earth on which we live, the air we breathe, the bread we eat, the heart that beats in our chests are not as necessary to man for his bodily life as prayer is to Christian living.

Prayer is indeed, a respectful and loving elevation of mind and heart to God. It is the Christian soul's tender dialogue, holy communication and divine conversation with its God. In prayer, the soul contemplates him in his divine perfections, his mysteries and his works. It adores and blesses him, loves and glorifies him, gives itself to him, humbles itself before him because of its sins and thanklessness. It begs for his mercy and learns to be like him, imitating his divine virtues and perfections. Finally, the Christian soul asks for all it needs to serve and love him.

Prayer is a participation in the life of the angels and the saints as well as in the life of Jesus Christ and his most blessed Mother, in the life of the triune God himself. The life of the angels and the saints, of Jesus and his blessed Mother is indeed nothing else but a continual exercise of prayer and contemplation. They are constantly engaged in contemplating, praising and loving God, asking him to grant us the things we need. The life of the three divine Persons is perpetually occupied with contemplating, praising and loving each other, and that is what occurs first and foremost in prayer.

It is perfect delight, supreme happiness and real earthly paradise. In this divine exercise, the Christian soul is united to God, the center of its being, its goal and its supreme good. In prayer, the soul possesses God and is possessed by him. It is through prayer that the soul serves him, pays him homage, gives him adoration and love. In prayer, it receives his enlightenment, his blessings and a thousand tokens of his exceedingly great love. It is during prayer that God delights in us, according to his own words: My delights are to be with the children of men (Pr 8, 31). During prayer, he allows us to experience that true joy and perfect satisfaction are to be found in God. A hundred, a thousand years of the shallow pleasures of this world cannot compare with a single moment of the true delight God provides for the souls who find their satisfaction in conversing with him in holy prayer.

Finally, prayer is the most worthy, the noblest, loftiest, greatest and most important act in which you can engage, since it is the ceaseless occupation of the angels and the saints, of the Blessed Virgin, of

Jesus Christ and the most Holy Trinity throughout all the vastness of eternity. It is even to be our unending activity in heaven. Indeed, it is our one true and proper function as human beings and as Christians, created as we are only for God and to be with him, since a Christian has no other purpose on earth than to continue what Jesus Christ did while he lived among us.

I urge you, therefore, with all my power, and beg you in the name of God, since our most lovable Jesus delights in being with you and conversing with you through prayer, do not deprive him of this pleasure; but experience rather the truth of what the Holy Spirit says: His conversation has no bitterness, nor his company any tediousness, but joy and gladness (Wis 8, 16). Consider prayer as the first, the principal, the most necessary, most pressing and most important of all your undertakings.

Response Rom 8, 26; Za 12, 10.

R. We do not know how to pray properly.

* The Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words.

V. When that day comes, over the house of David and the citizens of Jerusalem, I will pour out a spirit of kindness and prayer.

* The Spirit himself ...

10. THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, XXII; O.C. 1, 205-208)

"Continuing the virtues of Jesus Christ."

If you want to live a holy Christian life, rather if you want to make Jesus live and reign in your heart, it is necessary for you to work diligently at acquiring the virtues which Our Lord practised on earth. Since we must continue and fulfill Jesus' holy life on earth, we must also continue and fulfill the virtues he practised.

1. Those who are guided by the spirit and grace of Jesus Christ in the practice of virtue, look upon it not only in itself, but also in its principle and source, namely in Jesus who is the source of all grace, embodying all virtue eminently and to the highest degree, the one person in whom virtue reaches infinite excellence. Since all that is in Jesus is holy, divine and adorable, virtue is sanctified and deified in him, and thus worthy of honor and infinite adoration. If, therefore, we consider virtue in Jesus, our view of it will be infinitely more effective in leading us to appreciate, love and seek it than if we regarded it merely because of its own excellence or because of the esteem given to it by the human mind.

2. Those who are guided by a Christian spirit in the practice of virtue, know full well that they are unable to perform the slightest act of virtue by themselves. On the contrary, if God were to withdraw from them, they would fall into an abyss of vice in that very instant, just as they know that virtue being a gift of God's mercy, it is necessary to ask him for it with confidence and perseverance. That is why they persistently and continually ask God for the virtues they need, without ever growing weary of asking, while applying great vigilance and doing all they humanly can to practise them.

At the same time, they guard against relying on their own efforts and vigilance, exercises and practices, desires and resolutions, or on their prayers alone. Instead, they expect everything from God's goodness, without growing anxious when they fail to find in themselves the virtue they are seeking to acquire. Far from being disturbed and discouraged, they remain at peace in humility before God, recognizing that their failures are due to their own infidelity. They realize that if God were to treat them as they deserve, not only would he give them nothing they ask for, but he would strip them of all the graces he ever granted; what is more, he is doing them a great favor by not rejecting them and abandoning them entirely. As a result, a fresh flame of love and new confidence in the presence of this infinite goodness is enkindled in Christian souls, along with a most ardent desire to seek, by all possible means, to acquire the virtue they need to serve and glorify him.

3. They want to acquire virtue, so they often perform interior as well as exterior acts of love of God, of charity toward their neighbor, of patience, obedience, humility, mortification and the other Christian virtues, not for themselves, nor for their own interest, satisfaction and reward, but for God's good pleasure and interest, in order to model their lives after the pattern of their divine Head, Jesus Christ, to glorify him and continue to practise the virtues he practised on earth.

It is, indeed, in this that Christian virtue consists. As Christian life is nothing else but a continuation of the life of Jesus Christ, so too the Christian virtues are a continuation and fulfillment of Jesus' virtues. To practise the virtues in a Christian manner, one must do so in the same spirit as Christ practised them, that is to say, with the same motives and intentions. Thus, Christian humility is a continuation of Christ's humility, Christian charity is a continuation of his charity, and so on with all the virtues.

Response

John 15, 1. 5.9.

R. I am the true vine, you are the branches.

* Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears abundant fruit.

V. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.

* Whoever ...

11. HUMILITY

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2; O.C. 1, 214-225)

"True humility of heart consists in being as humble as Jesus Christ was on earth."

If you want to live a holy Christian life, one of your main concerns must be to master Christian humility. It is this virtue that Our Lord recommends strongly in these divine words: Learn from me that I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Mat 11,29). This is the virtue St. Paul identifies as the most characteristic of Christ. Without humility it is impossible to be truly

Christian.

This virtue, together with burning love, makes saints, great saints. Give me a genuinely humble person and I will say he is a real saint; if he is greatly humble, then he is a great saint; if he is extremely humble, then he is a very great saint.

Humility is of two kinds: humility of the mind and humility of the heart. Put them together and you have the perfection of Christian humility.

Humility of the mind is a profound knowledge of what we really are in the sight of God. Indeed, to know ourselves well, we must see ourselves, not as we appear in the eyes and deceptive judgment of men, nor in the vanity and presumption of our own opinion, but as we are in God's eyes and judgment. To do this, we need to see ourselves in the light and truth of God, through the medium of faith.

Now, if we consider ourselves in that light, we will see that, as humans, we have nothing, can do nothing and are nothing of ourselves. As children of Adam, and sinners besides, we are born with original sin, God's enemies, powerless to do any good on our own.

Note, however, that although humility of the mind awakens you to what you are by yourself and in Adam, it must not keep you from seeing what you are in and through Jesus Christ. It does not oblige you to disregard the graces God has given you through his Son. On the contrary, it obliges you to admit that all the good in you comes purely from God's great mercy without any merit on your part.

But, it is not enough to have humility of the mind which makes us aware of our wretchedness and unworthiness. Humility of the mind without humility of the heart is diabolical. We must learn from Jesus to be humble both of mind and of heart.

For humility of the heart consists in loving our lowliness and our abject state, in being content with being little, abject and contemptible. It consists in treating oneself as such privately and rejoicing in being judged and treated as such by others. It means refusing to excuse or justify oneself except in cases of grave necessity, never complaining about anybody. It also means loving to be despised, humiliated, reviled and belittled in every way.

Finally, the true humility of the heart which Jesus Christ wants us to learn from him, which is perfect Christian humility, consists in being humble as Christ was on earth. That means being repelled by any form of notoriety and vanity, loving contempt and obscurity, always choosing whatever is cheapening and humiliating, being ready to be humbled to the point where Jesus himself was humbled in his Incarnation, his life, his passion and death.

Response

Cf. Mat 11, 29.

R. Listen, my children, become my disciples, for I am gentle and humble of heart

* And you will find rest.

V. Place these words in your heart and live in humility and love

* And you will find rest.

12. CHARITY

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, XXXV; O.C. 1, 257-260)

"Loving one another as Jesus Christ

loves us."

When the Son of God says, in his Holy Gospel, that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart and soul and all your strength, it is with good reason that he goes on to declare that the second commandment, namely: to love one's neighbor as oneself, is like unto the first. Love of God and love of neighbor cannot be separated since they are not two loves but one and the same. We are bound to love our neighbor with the same heart and love with which we love God because our neighbor should be loved, not in and for himself, but in and for God; better still, it is God himself that we should love in our neighbor.

This is the way Jesus loves us: in and for his Father, rather he loves his Father in us and wants us to love one another as he loves us. This is my commandment, Jesus said, love one another as I have loved you (John 15, 12).

This is what constitutes Christian charity: loving one another as Jesus loves us. So great indeed is his love for us that he gives us his whole life, body and soul, his time and his eternity, his divinity and his humanity, all that he is, all that he has and all that is in his power. He is all charity and love for us.

13. DIVINE WILL

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, 31-34; O.C. 1, 245-256)

"On coming into this world, Jesus said:
I have come to do your will, O God."

Continual submission to the holy will of God is the most universal of all virtues and its practice should be most familiar to us since, at every moment, opportunities arise for renouncing our own will and submitting to the will of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, from the very first moment of his life and entry into this world, professed never to act according to his own volition but instead to prefer his Father's will, according to St. Paul's testimony when writing to the Hebrews: On coming into the world, Jesus said (speaking to his eternal Father): Here I am, in the beginning of the book it is written about me that I do your will, O God (Heb 10, 5). Christ himself said: I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will of the one who sent me (John 6, 38).

In fact, he never followed his own will, holy, divine and adorable as it was. He renounced and, as it were, annihilated it, in order to follow his Father's will, repeating incessantly to him in all things what he said on the eve of his death, in the Garden of Olives: Father, not my will, but yours be done (Luke 22, 42).

Submission and Christian obedience consist in continuing Christ's most perfect obedience not only to the desires directly expressed by his Father, but also to those communicated to him through his holy Mother, through St. Joseph, the angel who led him into Egypt, the Jews, Herod and Pilate. Indeed, not only did he submit to his Father, but he became subject to all creatures for his Father's glory and out of love for us.

Not only did Our Lord Jesus Christ do everything his Father willed, and submit to him and to all things out of love for him, he also found all his contentment, happiness and paradise in doing so. My food,

said he, is to do the will of the one who sent me (John 4, 34). In other words, he finds nothing more desirable, more delightful than doing his Father's will. In everything he did, he found infinite satisfaction because that was his Father's will. He found joy and happiness according to the spirit in the sufferings he bore, because they were his Father's good pleasure. The Holy Spirit, speaking about the day of Christ's passion and death, calls it the day of his heart's joy (Song of Songs 3, 11). He likewise found peace of mind in all the things he saw happening and destined to happen in the world, because in them he considered only his Father's most lovable will.

In much the same way, as Christians who ought to be invested with the same sentiments and dispositions as our Head, we must not only submit to God and to all things out of love for God, but we should also find all our satisfaction, beatitude and paradise in doing so. This is what we ask for daily: Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I am not saying that you should derive tangible pleasure and joy from all that you do or suffer, or from all that happens in the world - that is reserved for the blessed. But I am speaking here of joy and satisfaction of the spirit and the will which may easily be yours with the help of Our Lord's grace, since all you need do is say: "My God, if it be pleasing to you, I want to take all my pleasure in willing, doing or suffering this or that out of love for you, because it is your will and pleases you." Thus, you will obtain satisfaction of mind and will in all things.

Moreover, frequent repetition of this practice will diminish and destroy whatever pain and natural distaste you may happen to feel in various situations, and will help you to enjoy sweetness and satisfaction, even of the senses, in cases where you found bitterness and pain before.

Response Mat 7, 21; Mark 3, 35.

R. Whosoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven,

* That person will enter the kingdom of heaven.

V. Anyone who does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.

* That person ...

14. THE MYSTERIES OF CHRIST AND THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 3, 4; O.C. 1, 310-313)

" The Son of God wills to give us a share in his mysteries and somehow to extend them to us. He wills to continue them in us and in all his Church."

We must strive to follow and fulfill in ourselves the various stages of Christ's plan as well as his mysteries, and frequently beg him in prayer to bring them to completion in us and in the whole Church. For the mysteries of Jesus are not yet completely perfected and fulfilled. In the person of Jesus they are complete, but not in us, who are his members, nor in the Church, which is his mystical body. The Son of God wills to give us a share in his mysteries and somehow to extend them to us. He wills to continue them in us and in all his Church. This is brought about first through the graces he has resolved to impart to us, and then through the works he wishes to accomplish in us by way of these mysteries.

For this reason, St. Paul says that Christ is being brought to fulfillment in his Church, and that all of us contribute to this fulfillment (Eph 1, 22-23; 4, 13). Thus he achieves the fullness of life, that is to say, the mystical stature that he has in his mystical body, which will reach completion only on judgment day. And in another place St. Paul says: I complete in my own flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ (Col 1, 24).

This is the plan by which the Son of God wants to complete and fulfill in us all his various states and mysteries. He wishes us to perfect the mystery of his Incarnation, of his birth and his hidden life, by forming himself in us and being reborn in our souls through the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, causing us to live a spiritual and interior life hidden with him in God.

He intends to perfect in us the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection, by causing us to suffer, die and rise again with him and in him. Finally, he wishes to fulfill in us the state of his glorious and immortal heavenly life, when he will cause us to live a glorious, eternal life with him and in him in heaven.

In the same way, he wants to complete and fulfill in us and in his Church all his other states and mysteries. He wants to give us a share in them and to accomplish and continue them in us. So it is that Christ's mysteries will not be completed until the end of the time he has ordained for their completion in us and in his Church, that is to say, not until the end of time.

The life we have here on earth is given to us only for the fulfillment of Christ's infinite designs on us. That is why we must spend all our time, days and years, cooperating with Jesus in the divine task of completing his mysteries in ourselves by good works and prayer, by frequent application of mind and heart to contemplating, adoring and venerating the sacred mysteries of his life, by giving ourselves to

him that he might work in us, through them, all that he wishes to accomplish for his pure glory.

(N.B. This Reading is found in the "Liturgia Horarum",
Friday of the 33rd Week of Ordinary Time, Vol. IV, p. 559-60).

Response Col 1, 24-29.

R. I rejoice in my sufferings.

* In my flesh I do all I can to complete what has yet to be endured by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church.

V. For this I struggle and press on, with the power of Christ working in me to make me strong.

* In my flesh ...

15. HOW TO HONOR THE MYSTERIES OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 3, 7; O.C. 1, 322-329)

"Jesus, in his Mysteries, has some thought,
some plan and some special love for us."

Among the infinite wonders contained in each of the Mysteries of the life of Jesus, there are seven main aspects which we should consider and honor in them, for knowledge of them will give you much light and insight as well as facility in concentrating on his mysteries.

The first is the body or external aspect of the mystery, that is to say, all its outward manifestations. For instance, the visible exterior elements in the Mystery of Jesus' birth are the nakedness and poverty of the newborn Infant, the cold, his weakness and frailty.

The second aspect is the interior spirit of the mystery, that is, the particular virtue, power and grace which reside in the mystery and are special to it, since each mystery has its own virtue and spirit of grace. This includes the thoughts and intentions, the affections, sentiments, dispositions and interior activity with which the mystery was accomplished. In a word, it includes all that took place inwardly in the mind, heart and holy soul of Christ as well as in the minds and hearts of all those who participated in the mystery.

All this is what may be called the spirit and interior of the mystery, its soul. And that is what it is most important to consider and honor in Jesus' mysteries, since they are not things of the past, but are actually ever present according to their spirit, their interior aspect, truth and substance, rather than the body and exterior aspect which are passing.

The third aspect is the effect each mystery had at the time it took place and its continually renewed effect. Holy Scripture calls the Son of God: The Lamb who was slain at the world's beginning (Rev 13, 8), since, from the very beginning of the world, by his death, his Incarnation and all his other mysteries, he has brought about many wonderful effects of glory, felicity, light, grace, mercy, justice and terror, in heaven, on earth and in hell, upon men and women, angels and all the other creatures.

The fourth aspect to be adored in all Christ's mysteries is the special intention present, for in each mystery Jesus sought to carry out some particular intention, like glorifying his Father and himself, or glorifying the mystery itself in ways that are unknown to us, or sanctifying souls and accomplishing all the untold effects of grace bound up in each mystery.

A fifth aspect is the association of the Blessed Virgin Mary with each of his mysteries.

A sixth is the participation of the angels and the saints who are particularly associated with each mystery.

Finally, the seventh aspect to be considered and revered is our own singular and special share in them. In each of his mysteries, the Son of God has some thought, some plan, some special love for each one of us. He planned to impart some special graces and favors to us, both on earth and in heaven, by each mystery of his life.

Response

Col 1, 24-29.

R. I rejoice in my sufferings.

* In my flesh I do all I can to complete what has yet to be endured by Christ for the sake of his body,

the Church.

V. For this I struggle and press on, with the power of Christ working in me to make me strong.
* In my flesh ...

16. FORMING JESUS WITHIN US

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, 40; O.C. 1, 271-279)

"The Father's plan is to see his Son live and reign in us."

The mystery of mysteries and the work of works is the formation of Jesus in us. St. Paul puts it in these words: My little children, I must go through the pains of giving birth to you all over again until Christ is formed in you (Gal 4, 19). It is the greatest mystery and the greatest work ever accomplished either in heaven or on earth by the most excellent Beings in existence, namely: the Father, the Son, the

Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Holy Mother Church.

It is the greatest act performed by the eternal Father in all that eternity during which he is continually occupied producing his Son within himself. And outside of himself, he accomplished nothing more astounding than when he formed the human nature of his Son in Mary's womb at the moment of his Incarnation.

It surpasses all the works of the Son of God on earth, forming himself within his holy Mother and in his Eucharist.

It is the noblest of all the works of the Holy Spirit who formed him in Mary's virginal womb.

The Virgin Mother never did, nor will she ever do anything more worthy than when she cooperated in that divine and wonderful formation of Jesus in her womb.

It is the greatest and holiest of all the works of the holy Church. She exercises no function more exalted than when she brings him forth in a sure and wondrous way, by the lips of her priests, in the Holy Eucharist, and forms him in the hearts of her children.

So, forming Jesus in us should be our wish, our concern and our chief occupation, that is to say, causing him to live and reign in us together with his spirit and devotion, his virtues and sentiments, his inclinations and dispositions. This should be the aim of all our acts of piety. This is the task that God puts into our hands for us to work at continually.

And we should be inspired to work most energetically towards completing this task for two very compelling reasons:

1 - So that the eternal Father's plan and his great yearning to behold his Son living and reigning in us be fulfilled.

Indeed, since his Son annihilated himself for his glory and out of love for us, the Father wants to repay him by establishing him in all things and making him reign over all created beings. He loves his most lovable Son so much that he wants to see nothing but him in all things, nor does he want any other person or thing to be the object of his contemplation, delight and love. That is why the Father wants him to be all in all (1 Cor 15, 28), in order for him to see and love nothing but Jesus in all things.

2 - So also that, once he is formed and established in our hearts, Jesus might give his eternal Father and himself the love and glory they deserve, according to the words of St. Peter: So that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 4, 11), since he alone is capable of loving and glorifying his Father and himself worthily.

These two reasons should enkindle in us the most ardent desire to form and establish Jesus within ourselves and to seek out every possible means of achieving that end.

Response Eph 4, 15; Gal 4, 19.

R. By living sincerely in love,

* We will grow to the full maturity of Christ, the Head.

V. My little children, I must go through the pains of giving birth to you all over again until Christ is

formed in you.

* We will grow ...

17. HOW TO FORM JESUS WITHIN US

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, 41; O.C. 1, 273-275)

" Most powerful and good Jesus, by your power and infinite goodness
establish yourself within me."

There are four things to be done to form Jesus within ourselves.

1 - We must acquire the habit of seeing him in all things, and having no other objective than him and all his states and mysteries, virtues and actions, in all our devotions and actions. He is, indeed, all in all things. He is the being of all that exists, the life of all living things, the beauty of all things beautiful, the power of the powerful, the wisdom of the wise, the virtue of the virtuous, the sanctity of the saints.

There is hardly any action of our ordinary life that does not find some counterpart in the actions he performed while on earth; so we must keep our eyes on his actions and imitate them when performing our own. By this means, we will fill up our understanding with Jesus, as we form and establish him in our own mind by thus thinking of him often and seeing him in all things.

2 - Not only must we form Jesus in our minds by thinking of him and seeing him in everything, but we must also keep him alive in our hearts by the frequent practice of his divine love. To do this, we

should get used to lifting up our hearts to him in love, doing everything for love of him and consecrating every affection of our hearts to him.

3 - Moreover, we must form Jesus within us by completely annihilating ourselves and all things within us. If we want Jesus to live and reign in us perfectly, we must destroy and annihilate all created beings in our hearts and our minds. We must no longer look upon them or love them in themselves, but only in Jesus, loving and seeing Jesus in them. We must see to it that the world and all that is in it, so far as we are concerned, is annihilated and nothing remains in it for us save Jesus whom we long to please, contemplate and love above everyone else.

We must also work at destroying ourselves, that is to say, our own views, our own will, self-love, pride and vanity, all our perverse inclinations and habits, all the desires and instincts of a deprived nature, in order to allow Jesus to live and reign perfectly in us.

Therein lies the main foundation, the first principle and first step in Christian living. It is what Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church call being lost to self, dying to self, self renunciation. It must be one of our chief concerns, one of our principal tasks to practise abnegation, humiliation and mortification, both internal and external, and one of the most effective means of forming and establishing Jesus within us.

4 - But, because this great work of forming Jesus within us is incomparably beyond our own capacities, the fourth and chief means is to have recourse to the power of divine grace and to the prayers of the Most Blessed Virgin and the saints.

Let us, therefore, often turn to Our Blessed Mother, the angels and the saints in prayer, asking them to help us. Let us surrender ourselves to the power of the eternal Father and to his burning love and zeal for his Son, begging him to totally annihilate us in order for his Son to live and reign in us.

Let us offer ourselves to the Holy Spirit for the same intention and address the same prayer to him.

Response Eph 3, 16. 17. 19; Col 2, 6. 7.

R. May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith.

* May charity be the root and foundation of your life. Then, knowing the love of Christ, you will attain to the fullness of God.

V. Continue to live in Christ Jesus, rooted in him and built up in him, growing ever stronger in faith.

* May charity ...

18. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN

(St. John Eudes, Interior Colloquies, 9-10; O.C. 2, 172-173. 176-177)

"The Holy Spirit is sent to form and make Jesus live within us, to incorporate us and unite us to him, to give us birth and make us live in him."

The Holy Spirit shared in making us Christians, since he formed in Mary's womb the one who is our Redeemer, our Ransomer and our Head. He animated Christ and guided him in all that he thought, said, did and suffered, even to sacrificing himself on the cross, to make us Christians: He offered himself as a perfect sacrifice to God through the eternal Spirit (Heb 9, 14). Once Jesus had ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit came into the world to form and establish the Body of Christ which is the Church, and to apply to her the fruit of Christ's life and blood, of his passion and death.

Without that, Christ's sufferings and death would have been in vain. Moreover, the Holy Spirit comes to us at the time of our Baptism to form Christ in us and incorporate us to him, to give us new birth and new life in him, to apply the effects of his blood and his death to us, to animate, inspire, lead and guide us in all we have to think about, say, do and suffer as true Christians for love of God. For that very reason, no one can speak the name of Jesus properly and no one can have a single good thought except in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12, 3).

As a result, a Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit: Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor 6, 19) Because we are children of God and one with the Son of God, as members of the body belong to its head, it follows necessarily that we must be animated by the same spirit. That is why St. Paul says: Because you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts (Gal 4, 6) and Unless you possessed the Spirit of Jesus Christ, you would not belong to Christ (Rom 8, 9).

So, the Holy Spirit was given to us to be the mind of our mind, the heart of our heart, the soul of our soul, and to always be with and within us, not only as his temple, but as parts of his body, that is to say, parts of Christ's Body which is the Spirit's and must be animated by the Spirit, since the members and every part of body must be animated by the same spirit that animates the Head.

What great and marvelous things were done by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to make Christians of us! How fitting it is to proclaim the marvels of being Christians! Oh blessed St. John, how right you are when, speaking for all Christians, you say: the world does not recognize us (1 John 3, 1). What obligations we have to bless and love the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for having called us and raised us to the dignity of Christians! What kind of life must we lead? One that is all holy, divine and spiritual because Our Lord tells us that what is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3, 6). Oh divine Spirit, I give myself totally to you. Possess and guide me in all things and make me live as a child of God, a member of Christ, a being born of you and belonging to you which must be possessed, animated and guided by you.

This being so, who can conceive and properly express what really is the dignity of a Christian, who is a child of God, a member of Christ, animated by his Spirit? what obligations we have to God for this gift? how holy a life we must lead and how guilty is the person who sins grievously?

Such a person chases the Holy Spirit out of his temple and turns it over to Satan. He crucifies and destroys Jesus in himself, because he stifles Christ's Spirit who kept him spiritually alive and turns his life over to Satan, Christ's enemy.

Response Gal 5, 18. 22. 23-25.

R. If you are guided by the Spirit, you are no longer under the law.
* The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace.

V. Since we live by the Spirit, let us be directed by the Spirit.
* The fruit ...

19. TO BE A CHRISTIAN IS TO CONFESS JESUS CHRIST

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, 38, Part 7, 13; O.C. 1, 265-269, 515)

"Let our whole lives be a continual sacrifice of praise and love of God."

For Our Lord Jesus Christ, devotion was a matter of accomplishing, with the greatest perfection, everything his eternal Father willed. It consisted in serving his heavenly Father and serving men out of love for his Father and in doing everything for the greater glory of his Father, having taken the form and lowly condition of a servant.

There were three solemn vows Jesus made from the very first moment of his Incarnation and carried out most perfectly during his lifetime and in his death.

1 - At the moment of his Incarnation, he vowed to obey his Father, that is to say, never to do his own will, but rather to conform perfectly to everything willed by his Father and to find his bliss and joy therein.

2 - He professed submission to his Father. It is the character given to him by his Father, saying through the prophet: You are my servant, Israel (Is 49, 3). And it is the character he adopts himself: assuming the condition of a slave (Phil 2, 7), lowering himself to the state and condition of a humble and servile life with respect to his creatures, to the cruel shame and servile death of the Cross, for love of us and the glory of his Father.

3 - He professed to become a host and victim entirely consecrated and immolated to his Father's glory from the very first to the very last moment of his life.

Such was Jesus' devotion. Since Christian devotion is none other than Jesus Christ's devotion, our own must consist of similar vows of submission.

Professing at the time of our Baptism to adhere to Jesus and remain in him, we make three great, holy and divine vows upon which we must often reflect.

1 - With Christ we profess never to do our own will, but rather to submit to everything willed by God, to obey all kinds of people in all that is not contrary to God, and to seek our total satisfaction and paradise in doing so.

2 - We profess submission to God and to his Son, Jesus Christ, and to all Jesus' members, according to the words of St. Paul: We are your servants for love of Jesus (2 Cor 4, 5). Because of this profession, no Christian can call anything his own. Nor has a Christian the right to any use of the faculties of his soul, or of the members and sentiments of his body, or the powers of his soul, his life, his time, the temporal goods he possesses, except for Jesus Christ and for his members.

3 - We profess to become hosts and victims continually sacrificed to God's glory. St. Paul says: My brothers, think of God's mercy and worship him, I beg you, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God (Rom 12, 1).

So, we are obliged to glorify and love God with all the powers of our body and soul, to do everything possible to have him glorified and loved, to seek nothing in all our actions and in all things save his pure glory and love, and to live in such a way that our whole life be a ceaseless sacrifice of praise and love of him. Each one of us should be ready to be immolated, consumed and annihilated for his greater glory.

In a word: Christian living is witnessing to the life of Christ, says St. Gregory of Nyssa. St. Bernard assures us that Our Lord does not admit to the ranks of those professed in his religion, anyone who does not live the life of Jesus.

That is why we bear witness to Jesus at Baptism. We bear witness not only to his poverty or chastity or obedience, but we profess Jesus himself, that is to say, his life, his spirit, his humility, charity, purity, poverty, obedience and all the other virtues that are in him. In a word, we make the same profession he made before his Father from the first moment of his Incarnation and fulfilled perfectly during his whole lifetime. In other words, we profess never to do our own will, but to delight totally in doing all that God wills, to be as servants before God and man for love of God. We profess to adopt a constant state of host and victim sacrificed to the glory of God.

Response Col 2, 6. 9; Mat 23, 10.

R. It is in Christ as you have received him that you must walk.

* For it is in his body that the fullness of divinity lives.

V. You have only one teacher, the Christ.

* For it is ...

20. THE MASS, A PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 6; O.C. 1, 459-463)

" To offer with Jesus himself the Sacrifice that is offered to God on the altar."

As soon as you leave the house to go to Mass, you should realize that you are going not just to attend or

watch, but actually to perform the holiest and most divine, the noblest and most important of all actions on earth. So, you must perform it in a holy manner as the most momentous of all your actions. I stress that you are the ones who are going to perform this momentous action. Indeed, all Christians being one with Christ, the Sovereign Priest, and sharing in his Priesthood, since Holy Scripture calls them priests, are entitled not only to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but also to participate in the priest's action, that is to say, to offer with him and with Jesus himself the Sacrifice which is offered to God on the altar.

Begin by adoring Our Lord Jesus Christ who becomes present on the altar and praying that he who changes the base and earthly nature of bread and wine into his body and blood, might also change and transform the heaviness, frigidity and dryness of our earthly and arid hearts into the ardor, tenderness and vitality of the affections and holy dispositions of his Heart.

Then, remember that all Christians are one with Christ as members with their head. Remember also that Jesus consummates this sacrifice as both priest and victim at the same time. Likewise, all those present at Mass must attend both as priests offering with Jesus, the Sovereign Priest, the same sacrifice he offers, and as hosts and victims forming one host with Christ to be immolated and sacrificed with him to the glory of God.

Thus, you participate in the priesthood of Christ. As a Christian and member of Jesus Christ, you bear the name and character of priest. Therefore, you must act in that capacity and exercise the right it confers upon you, the right to offer up to God, together with the priest and with Jesus himself, the sacrifice of his body and blood in Holy Mass, and offer it as much as possible with the very same dispositions as Jesus. Unite yourself in desire and intention to his dispositions. Pray Jesus to imprint them in you, thus enabling you to offer up his divine sacrifice with him and with the same dispositions.

In the role of hosts, you also have obligations. When offering Jesus to God as victim in Holy Mass you must also offer yourself along with him. Better still, pray Jesus to enter into you and draw you into himself, to unite and incorporate you with himself as host to sacrifice you with him to the glory of his Father.

Because the host to be sacrificed must be immolated, then consumed by fire, you must implore Jesus to make you die to yourself, that is, to your passions, your self-love and all that displeases him, so that he might consume you in the fire of his love and cause your whole life to be a perpetual sacrifice of praise, glory and love for his Father and for himself.

Response 1 Peter 2, 5-9.

R. Be living stones used to build the spiritual Temple and you will be the holy priesthood,
* Presenting spiritual offerings that God may accept because of Christ Jesus.

V. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart, belonging to God.
* Presenting spiritual offerings ...

21. LOVING AND SERVING THE CHURCH

(St. John Eudes, Memorial of Priestly Life, Part 5, 28; O.C. 3, 218-222)

" Men who lived not for themselves, but for the Church."

Adore the Most Holy Trinity in all that it is in the Church. Adore its incomprehensible love and lofty designs upon her from all eternity. Adore and bless all that the Trinity has accomplished and continues to do in her. Abandon yourself to the love and zeal the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have for her.

To prompt you to love and serve her, consider that she is the beloved daughter of the eternal Father, who loves her so much that he gave her his only Son to be her spouse, and his Holy Spirit, that is to say, his very heart, to be her own heart and soul. She is Christ's sister, mother and spouse, as well as his body and his fullness, as St. Paul puts it, that is to say, his complement and perfection, his inheritance, his kingdom, his dwelling place, his treasure and crown, his glory and delight.

The Church is your mother having engendered you for God through holy Baptism and she still carries you in her womb. She is your nursemaid who feeds you the heavenly bread of the divine Word, the deified

body and precious blood of her spouse. She is your queen, your governess and directress who rules, governs and guides you most carefully and surely on the road to paradise. She is your teacher who instructs you in heavenly truths concerning all you need to know and do to be pleasing to God.

How you should love and respect her! With what zeal you should honor her and serve all her interests! What submission you should have to her teachings! What obedience to her dictates! What veneration for all her sacraments, ceremonies and customs! What sorrow when she suffers! What a duty you have to thank God for all the blessings with which she has been favored! How you must pray God to preserve her, develop and sanctify her day by day, and especially bless her with pastors and priests according to his heart!

Picture the burning love of the holy Apostles and all holy priests for the Church. Study how zealous and vigilant they were about the sanctification and growth of the Church; how faithful they were to her laws and with what holiness and fidelity they administered her sacraments; how they applied themselves to preaching the Word of God with sincerity; how worthily they discharged all their duties, especially anxious at all times to ensure the salvation of her children.

See what sacrifices and sufferings they endured on the Church's behalf. See how they lived, not for themselves, but solely for the Church, using their affections, thoughts, words and actions, their possessions, strength and time, their minds, bodies and souls, their life, all they had, all they knew and all that was in their power for the Church. Truly each one of them could say with St. Paul, when speaking to the faithful: I will gladly spend myself and be spent in the interests of your souls (2 Cor 12, 15).

Pray the holy Apostles and holy priests to obtain for you a share in their zeal and love for the Church and entertain in your hearts the desire to follow them along that road.

Response Heb 3, 6; Eph 2, 21.

R. Christ was faithful as the Son placed over God's house.

* And we are that house.

V. Through him the whole structure is fitted together and takes shape as a holy temple in the Lord.

* And we are that house.

22. SANCTIFYING OUR ORDINARY ACTIONS

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 6, 1 and 18; O.C. 1, 440-444. 452)

" Performing all our actions in and for Jesus Christ, in his Spirit."

It is most important for everyone to understand that not only Religious, but all Christians, no matter what their state in life, are obliged to live the life of their Head, as members of Jesus Christ, that is to say, a thoroughly holy life, and to perform all their actions, whether great or small, in a Christian manner.

What do I mean when I say in a Christian manner? I mean in a divine and holy manner, the one which characterized Jesus in everything he did. I mean with the spirit of Jesus and with his holy and divine dispositions.

There are countless reasons why you are obliged to act this way. I beg you to return often to considering the fact that Christ is our Head and all of us are his members, that our union with him is much more perfect and intimate than that of the members of a natural body and their head, because this union is rooted in grace. Hence, we are obliged to do everything in him and for him. For him, because all our actions belong to Jesus, since everything that is in the members belongs to the head. In him, that is, in his spirit, dispositions and intentions, because the members must follow and imitate their head and must be animated only by its spirit with no other dispositions and intentions but those of the head.

You may object: Who is able to know the dispositions and intentions with which Jesus performed his actions? In answer to that question, let me tell you two things:

1 - The gift of faith reveals to us that his dispositions were humility, meekness, patience, charity towards others, recollection of God and all kinds of other virtues. His intentions were to love his eternal

Father, to glorify him, to please him and carry out his divine will.

2 - It is not even necessary to know them. It is sufficient to have the desire and intention of performing your actions in the spirit of Jesus, with his dispositions and intentions. So, it is really easy, with the help of God's grace, to do all that you do in a Christian and holy manner.

Make a point then, of lifting up your heart to Jesus when you begin an action, at least any of your important actions, and of assuring him:

(1) that you renounce yourself, your self-love and your own mind, that is to say, all your own personal dispositions and intentions.

(2) that you surrender yourself to him, to his love and his holy Spirit, in your desire to perform your actions with the same dispositions and intentions which he had when performing his own actions.

By this means, you will give him very much glory in everything you do, and will make great progress, in a short time, along the road of his grace.

I have suggested these practices to you to point out the way you must follow in order to walk at all times before God and live in the Spirit of Jesus. This very Spirit will teach you many other methods if you make a point of giving yourself to him at the beginning of all your actions. For, I beg you to note that the practice of practices, the secret of secrets, the devotion above all devotions, consists in being attached to no particular practice or exercise of devotion, but in taking care, in all your exercises and activities, to surrender yourself to the Holy Spirit of Jesus, with humility, confidence and detachment from all things.

Once you are free from attachment to your own way of looking at things and your own dispositions and tastes, he will have complete power and freedom to act in you according to his holy will and engender in your soul whatever dispositions and devout sentiments he desires and to lead you along whatever paths he may choose. After you have given yourself to him, you should progress and be faithful in cultivating the good sentiments and dispositions he will foster in you and in following his promptings, inspiration and guidance.

Response

Col 3, 17.

R. Whatever you say and whatever you do,

* Let it be in the name of the Lord Jesus.

V. Giving thanks to God the Father through him.

* Let it be ...

23. MARTYRDOM

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 2, 44; O.C. 1, 284-290)

" The culmination and perfection of Christian life and holiness."

The culmination and perfection of Christian life is holy martyrdom. The grace of martyrdom is the most powerful miracle that God can possibly work in Christian souls, and to suffer martyrdom for his sake is the greatest and most magnificent thing a Christian can achieve for God.

This immeasurable favor, conferred by Jesus Christ on chosen souls by perfecting their resemblance to him not only in life but in their very death, and making them worthy to die for him even as he died for his Father and for them, is the most excellent favor he can grant to those he loves with the most special love. Nowhere is the outstanding power of his divine love more evident than in the lives of the holy martyrs. Among all the saints, the blessed martyrs command the greatest admiration in the presence of God. They are Christ's own saints. He himself calls them that, speaking through the oracle of his Church: My saints. Although each and every one of the saints belongs to Jesus, the holy martyrs belong to him in an entirely unique and special manner, because they lived and died for him. For that reason, he shows them extraordinary love and promises them the greatest and most beneficent rewards.

How blessed are they who are loved by Jesus and who love him in return! How blessed are they who bear in themselves a perfect image of his holy life and his most loving death! How blessed are they who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb! How blessed are they who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb! How blessed are they who want no life on earth except to spend it all for his glory, and sacrifice it for the love of this most sweet Lamb, so worthy to be loved! And all the more so because, to borrow the words of the Holy Spirit, this is the end of all fulfillment and perfection, the final and perfect consummation of all sanctity; because man can do nothing greater for his God than to sacrifice to him what he holds most dear, that is, his blood and his life, and to die for him.

There are, however, various kinds of martyrs and martyrdoms. Those who are truly disposed and willing to die for our Savior are martyrs before God in a certain sense, even though they may not actually die for him. St. Cyprian affirms that those who are ready to die rather than offend Almighty God are also martyrs in a certain sense. St. Isidore says, furthermore, that to mortify the flesh and the passions, to resist unruly appetites and to persevere to the end in self-abandonment for love of Our Lord is likewise a kind of martyrdom. And, according to St. Gregory the Great, if, for pure and sacrificing love of Christ, one patiently suffers the privations and miseries of poverty, starvation, deformity or any other sore affliction; or else meekly endures insults, calumny and persecution, not returning evil for evil, but blessing those who harm him by hurtful words, and loving those who hate him, this also is a species of martyrdom.

But true martyrdom consists not only in suffering, but in loss of life. Consequently, death belongs to the essence and nature of full and perfect martyrdom. This means that it is necessary to die, and to die for Jesus Christ, if one is to be a real martyr, in the sense in which the word "martyr" is taken by Holy Church. If one is to be a true martyr, one must die, and die for Our Lord himself, or for the honor of his mysteries and sacraments, in defense of the Church, or in support of one of his teachings or one of the virtues he practised.

(This Reading is already included in the Eudist
September 2nd.)

Proper for the Office for

Response cf. Eph 4,4. 5.

R. These holy persons shed their blood for the Lord; they loved Christ in life and followed him in death.

* And so they were given the crown of glory.

V. They were of one spirit and one faith.

* And so ...

24. JESUS' ACTION IN THOSE WHO SUFFER

(St. John Eudes, Letters, 9; O.C. 11, 30-33)

Letter to Madame de Budos, Abbess of Holy Trinity Monastery at Caen, when she was ill.

" In your suffering I see only Jesus."

I am filled with compassion for you at the sight of your incessant pains and weakness and I would also be filled with sorrow if I did not perceive Jesus in your sufferings. In them I see only Jesus, his goodness and love.

He is there, abiding with you, present in your anguish and suffering. He is there, all love and completely transformed into love with you. He is there, preparing and ordaining these sufferings out of love for you.

He is there, guiding and leading you along the paths of his love, drawing you towards the perfection of love by means of these trials and adversities.

He is there, bearing with you, through his love, all the anguish of mind and body that you are bearing. Even though you may not often be aware of it, he is nonetheless infallibly present, otherwise you would find it impossible to support even the least of the ills you are suffering now.

He is there, purifying and sanctifying you and preparing greater things for you, provided you, on your part, cooperate with him.

He is there for the purpose of filling you completely with love for him, and much more than you are filled with suffering now. I will go even further: not only does he wish to imbue you with his love, but he wants to transform you entirely into love for him through crosses and sufferings, just as his own cross and sufferings transformed him into love for you.

He is there, finally, with a most ardent desire to draw you to him, to perfect and consummate you in himself, through these same sufferings. St. Paul says that it was fitting that Jesus Christ should be made perfect through suffering (Heb 2, 10).

Oh dignity, sanctity and admirable excellence of suffering that it should be used to perfect and consummate a God, to perfect Jesus, God and man, to consummate him who is the consummation and perfection of all things!

What a great humiliation it was for Jesus to humble himself to a state in which he was capable of being perfected and consummated! But what a sublime dignity suffering has that it should be chosen and used by him and his eternal Father to achieve this perfection and consummation!

Is it not a great honor for you, is it not a great favor, and should it not be a great comfort to you to be consummated and perfected through suffering as Jesus was? Does not Jesus show a rare and singular love for you by using the same means for your fulfillment and consummation as he used for his own? May the crucified Christ be forever blessed for granting you a share in the blessings of his cross!

I see an infinite number of crucified persons in the world, but few who are crucified for love of Jesus. Many are crucified by their self-love and an inordinate love of the world. But, happy are they who are crucified for love of Jesus! Happy are they who live and die on the cross with Jesus! You will be numbered among these if you bear your cross lovingly, like Jesus, accepting, embracing and cherishing it with all your heart in honor of and in union with the same love with which he accepted and bore his

for you.

To achieve that end, cast your eyes frequently upon Jesus who is always with you, who penetrates and pervades you much more than do the pain and suffering which seem to have taken complete possession of you. See only Jesus in your pain and suffering. See only his goodness and love which are responsible for all that is happening to you. Adhere only to him. Be attentive to him alone. Forsake your weariness and displeasure, disregard and ignore them totally. Turn your mind gently and firmly from all thoughts and objects which may cause you to worry. Turn entirely to Jesus, who is turned toward you and always has his eyes cast lovingly upon you. Cling closely to him and to his divine love as to the one who is your all and outside of whom you wish nothing.

Response

Col 1, 24. 29.

R. I rejoice in my sufferings.

* In my own flesh I do all I can to complete what has yet to be endured by Christ for the sake of his body, the Church.

V. For this I struggle and press on, with the power of Christ working in me to make me strong.

* In my own flesh ...

25. THE CALL TO HOLINESS

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart, Book 4, Chapter 4; O.C. 6, 386-394)

" He chose us in his Son, before the world began, to be holy and blameless in his sight."

Harken to the Holy Spirit who tells you by the mouth of the Apostle: It is God's will that you grow in holiness (1 Thes 4, 3).

You might say that it is well and fine for those who live in cloisters and monasteries. To that my answer is that Religious must be holy and models of holiness because of their sacred profession and because they have all sorts of means to achieve holiness. But, whoever is baptized is likewise obliged to be holy for many reasons.

Holy, because of the name he bears, namely: that of Christian which is most holy.

Holy, because he is a child of him who is holiness itself and the source of all holiness.

Holy, because through Baptism he received divine grace, a participation in the holiness of God, making all who are baptized and remain faithful to this holy grace sharers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1, 4).

Holy, because through Baptism he is a member of a Head who is the Holy of holies, and of a most holy body, that is, a member of Jesus Christ and his mystical body, most holy Church.

Holy, because he must be animated by the same spirit as his Head, the Holy Spirit. St. Paul declares: If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ (Rom 8, 9).

Holy, in so much as he must be clothed with Jesus Christ, that is, with his holiness and all his virtues: All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with him (Gal 3, 27).

Holy, in so far as he is fed a most holy and divine food, the deified body and most precious blood of the Son of God.

Holy, in that he is a child of the Queen of all the saints.

Holy, in as much as he is also a child of all the saints: patriarchs, prophets, apostles and the other saints who contributed to his spiritual birth; we are, indeed, children of the saints.

Holy, because taught in a holy school and professing to follow a most holy law.

Holy, because God chose us in Christ, before the world was made, to be holy and blameless in his sight (Eph 1, 4).

Holy, because the Son of God redeemed us that we might serve God in his holiness and justice all the days of our lives (Luke 1, 68. 74. 75).

You may ask how man, fragile, weak and miserable creature that he is, can be holy as God is holy. My answer is that although this is impossible in our human weakness, it is possible, even easy, with God's grace which he never refuses to those who are willing to ask for it.

What must we do, then? Only one thing and one that is most delightful. What, indeed, is easier and more delightful than to love? What is more pleasant than to love the one who is infinitely good, beautiful, perfect and lovable; the one who is all goodness, beauty and perfection, who never caused any harm, but rather an infinite amount of good; the one who is all heart, all charity, all love for you? Love the most good and lovable God and you will be holy.

Don't you know that love transforms the lover into the object of his love? "If you love the things of this earth," says St. Augustine, "you become earthly. If you love heavenly things, you become heavenly. If you love divine things, you become divine." So, love the Holy of holies and you will become holy. Love God and you will become one with God by participation and resemblance.

But, if you love God, hate what he hates: You who profess to love the Lord, hate evil (Ps 97, 10), that is, sin, which is the only thing God hates. If you love God, love what God loves, that is, all the virtues, especially humility, charity, purity of mind and body. If you love God, separate your heart and your affections from all created things and give them over without reservation to him who gave himself totally to you. If you love God, do what is pleasing to God, following his divine dictates made manifest to you by his holy commandments, by the rules and obligations of your state in life and your profession, and by the orders of your superiors: Anyone who obeys my commandments is a person who loves me (John 14, 21).

Response Ez 36, 23. 25. 26. 27; Lev 11, 44.

R. I mean to display the holiness of my great name. I shall pour clean water over you and give you a new heart, and I shall put my Spirit in you.

* Then, you will keep my laws, respect my observances and be faithful to them.

V. Keep yourselves holy because I am holy.

* Then, you will keep ...

26. THE APOSTOLIC VOCATION OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY

(St. John Eudes, Letters, 2, 8; O.C. 10, 511-514)

Letter to the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity at Caen.

" You have but one and the same vocation with the Mother of God."

My dearest daughters, you have, in a way, but one and the same vocation with the Mother of God. For, just as God chose to form his Son within her, and in the hearts of the faithful through her agency, so too he called you to the holy community in which you are now so that his Son might live in you, and through you restore him to life again in the souls in which he has been allowed to die. What a holy vocation! How prodigious is God's goodness to have called you to a truly apostolic Order!

But, remember that the evil spirit will not fail to tempt you regarding your vocation, since this kind of work is singularly displeasing to him and there is no one he hates so much as those who labor for the salvation of souls.

He will remind you of the troubles and difficulties you must suffer. But, remember, my dearest daughters, that there is no state in life exempt from work and suffering. Remember, if you do not suffer with Jesus, you will not reign with him. Remember that all our happiness on earth consists in being crucified with him.

That is why there is nothing we should fear more than being without a cross. Cast your eyes on a crucifix and see what Christ suffered to save souls. Is it reasonable that you should be associated with him in the greatest work for which he came into the world, namely: to save sinners, a work which cost him so dearly, and yet that you should expect to be spared any trial?

Should we not die of shame at the sight of our own weaknesses and cowardice? The slightest difficulties dishearten us, the smallest trials discourage us, flies become elephants for us. We are saddened by what should cause us to rejoice; we tremble when there is no reason to fear. We want to enjoy the advantages of our holy religion, but want no share in its crosses. How badly we deceive ourselves! Any devotion which is not based on self-denial, repudiation of one's own will and satisfactions, on bearing one's cross, following in the footsteps of Jesus when he himself was seeking out lost souls, is nothing else but pure illusion and fraud.

Don't you know, my dearest Sisters, that the broad road leading to heaven is the way of the cross, that it is the only one, and that the true and stable virtues necessary for us to be pleasing to God are acquired only through a great deal of trials, labors, self-imposed mortification and penance? Don't you hear the Lord telling us that because the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, only those who do themselves violence can take it by force? Don't you hear him tell us that he himself had to undergo an infinite number of tribulations to enter into the glory which is rightfully his by virtue of so many claims?

How can you be numbered among his members and spouses unless you conform to him? Must a new Gospel be written for you or do you want God to send another Messiah, one of honey and roses? Would you prefer to go to heaven by a different path from the one the Mother of God and all the saints traveled? Or is it your wish to go there alone leaving your poor sisters on the road to hell because you are so frail that you are afraid to make the effort to lend them a helping hand?

I tell you, my dearest daughters, it is impossible for Our Lord to allow anyone to fall who, out of love for him, helps others to rise. Purity, when allied with true charity, can never be sullied, any more than rays of sunlight can be contaminated by mud. So, cast aside these futile fears and trust in him who has called you to this divine work. If you mistrust yourselves and rely wholly on him, he will not withdraw and allow you to fall.

Response

1 Cor 9, 16. 22.

R. I do not boast of preaching the Gospel since it is a duty which has been laid on me.

* Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.

V. I made myself all things to all men in order to save them all.

* Woe to me ...

BAPTISM

27. BAPTISM: A NEW BIRTH

(St. John Eudes, Interior Colloquies, 11, 2; O.C. 2, 181-182)

" A remarkable birth, the image of the eternal and temporal birth of the Son of God."

Holy Scripture calls Baptism a regeneration and a rebirth: by the cleansing water of rebirth (Tit 3, 5). Unless a man is born again through water and the Spirit (John 3, 5). Baptism is a generation and birth whose prototype is the eternal generation and birth of the Son of God in his Father's bosom, and his temporal generation and birth in the virginal womb of his Mother.

In his eternal generation, the heavenly Father communicates to his divine Son his being, his life and all his divine perfections. So too, in our Baptism, this same Father gives us, through his Son and in him, a being and a life that are all holy and divine.

In the temporal generation of the Son of God, his Father gives him a new being and a new life. Although this life is all holy and divine, it is nonetheless clothed in mortality, passibility and all the wretchedness of human life. Similarly, the new life God gives us in Baptism is wholly surrounded and besieged by frailty, weakness, mortality and all the infirmities of human life to which it is united.

The Holy Spirit was sent to form the Son of God in the sacred womb of the Blessed Virgin. He is likewise sent to form Jesus and make him live by Baptism in the depths of our souls, to incorporate and unite us with him and to give us birth and life in him: Unless a man is born again through water and the Spirit.

As the three divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity have cooperated by the same power and goodness in the admirable work of the Incarnation, so too are they present in our Baptism, cooperating to give us the new being and new life in Jesus Christ which is conferred on each neophyte.

Baptism is thus an ineffable generation and a remarkable birth. It is a living image of the eternal and temporal generation and birth of the Son of God. Therefore must our life be a perfect image of his. We are born of God (John 1, 13); we are born in Jesus Christ: created in Christ (Eph 2, 10); born and formed by the work of the Holy Spirit: what is born of the Spirit (John 3, 6). Therefore, we must live only of God, in God and for God. We must live no other life than the life of Jesus Christ, be guided only by his Spirit who should animate and possess us completely.

Let us be humbled to find ourselves so far removed from this life which should exist in all

Christians. Let us give ourselves to God with a great desire to begin to live that life. Let us implore him to destroy in us the life of the world and of sin, replacing it with his own life, in order that we may not be like those whom St. Paul says are estranged from a life in God (Eph 4, 18).

Response

John 3, 5. 6.

R. Jesus said to Nicodemus: I tell you solemnly,

* Unless one is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

V. What is born of the flesh is flesh, what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

* Unless one is born ...

28. BAPTISM: A DEATH AND RESURRECTION

(St. John Eudes, Interior Colloquies, 11, 3; O.C. 2, 182-184)

" We are dead to all that is not God, to live only in God and with Jesus Christ."

Baptism is a death and a resurrection.

It is a death. If one died for all, then all were dead, says St. Paul (2 Cor 5,14), that is to say, all who are incorporated in Christ as his members through Baptism. Because we are members of a Head that was crucified and died, we must be crucified and dead to the world, to sin and to ourself.

It is a resurrection, because by baptism we leave the death of sin to enter into the life of grace.

The particular death and resurrection linked to Baptism have as a prototype Jesus Christ's own death and resurrection.

- His death: When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized in his death, says St. Paul. We went into the tomb with him and joined him in death.

- His resurrection: As Christ was raised from the dead and entered a new life, so too must we live a new life (Rom 6, 3-4).

This is so true that, because of our Baptism, we are obliged to die to everything, to live an all-heavenly life with Christ, as though no longer belonging to earth, but to heaven as persons whose mind and heart dwell in heaven, according to the words of the first Christians speaking through St. Paul: Our conversation is in heaven (Phil 3, 20), and his own exhortation: Since you have been brought back to life with Christ, seek the things that are above, not those that are here on earth (Col 3, 1-2).

Finally, Baptism obliges us to verify in ourselves the following words: You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col 3,3). We must be dead to all that is not God, to live only in God and abide with Jesus: as dead persons brought back to life, says St. Paul (Rom 6, 13). As risen beings we must lead a heavenly life on earth. It must be a continual exercise of love, adoration and praise of God and of charity toward our neighbor.

Such should be the life of all baptized persons. Those who, instead of doing so, live the life of the world which St. Ambrose calls the body of the dragon, the life of pagans, beasts and demons, repudiate their Baptism and render themselves far more guilty than pagans and demons.

How dreadful is sin which extinguishes in us a life so noble and so precious as the Christian life we received in Baptism, the life of God, of Jesus Christ in our souls, establishing in us instead the horrible life of sin, a diabolical and detestable existence! Let us detest our sins and with all our heart renounce the life of the world and of the old Adam. Let us give ourselves to Jesus Christ, begging him to destroy the old life in us and establish his own in our regenerated souls.

Response

Rom 6, 3-4.

R. All of us who were baptized in Christ, it is in his death that we were baptized.

* That we might live a new life.

V. By baptism in his death, we went into the tomb with Jesus.

* That we might live ...

29. BAPTISM: AN ADMIRABLE COVENANT BETWEEN MAN AND GOD

(St. John Eudes, Interior Colloquies, 12, 1; O.C. 2, 184-187)

" Baptism introduces us into **an** admirable fellowship
with God."

Baptism is a divine contract of man with God, containing three great provisos.

First, God, in his incomprehensible goodness and mercy, delivers us from our cursed alliance with Satan whose children and members we are because of sin, and allows us to enter into a wonderful fellowship with him: You have been called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ, says St. Paul (1 Cor 1, 9). What we have seen and heard we are telling you, says St. John, so that you too may be in communion with us. This fellowship of ours is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 1, 3).

Just what is this fellowship? It is the noblest and most perfect that can exist. It is not merely an alliance among friends or among brothers, of children with their father, of a bride with her bridegroom, but of members with their Head, and that is the most intimate and closest of all unions.

But, what is more, the natural and bodily union of branches and a vine with the stalk, and of members of the human body with the head, is the most intimate of all imaginable unions in nature. Still, that is only a figure and shadow of the spiritual and supernatural union we have with Christ in Baptism.

There is more. The solidarity we contract with Jesus by Baptism, and through him with the eternal Father, is so lofty and divine that it merits being compared by Jesus himself to the unity existing between the Father and the Son: That they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me, may they be completely one (John 17, 22-23). So, the unity of the Father and Son is the ideal of our union with God by Baptism, and this union is the living image of that adorable unity.

Moreover, the wondrous alliance with God we entered into by Baptism is exalted and ennobled by being founded, so to speak, on the Precious Blood of Christ and constituted by the Holy Spirit. Thus, that same Spirit who is the unity of the Father and the Son: In the unity of the Holy Spirit, is the sacred bond of our fellowship and union with Jesus and, through him, with the eternal Father, a union underlined by these divine words: That they may be completely one.

We see then, that we become one with Christ by Baptism and, through him, one with God, in the most exalted and perfect concordance possible next to the hypostatic union of human nature with the eternal Word. Oh incomparable alliance! Oh ineffable communion! How deeply indebted we are to the infinite goodness of God for so great a covenant! What praise and thanksgiving we owe him! Thanks be to God for his incomparable gifts (2 Cor 9, 15).

Since we are thus associated with the Holy of holies in so intimate a union, how holy our lives should be. Surely, being one with God, we should be of one heart, one mind, one will, one affection with him: Anyone joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him (1 Cor 6, 17).

We must love only what he loves and hate what he hates. How deserving of hate sin is! What is sinning grievously? It consists in violating and breaking the divine covenant we entered into with God by Baptism, to return to our contract with Satan, his enemy. It is to dishonor the unity of the Father and the Son by destroying its image. Sin desecrates and renders fruitless the adorable Blood of Christ, the very foundation of this fellowship. It extinguishes the Spirit of God who is its sacred bond, according to the heavenly admonition: Do not stifle the Spirit in you (1 Thes 5, 19).

How horrifying the thought of our past sins! How fearful we should be of relapsing into them! How careful we should be to preserve our rich and precious covenant with God, and to associate with it our entire life and activity.

Response

2 Cor 1, 21. 22; Dt 5, 2.

R. It is God himself who assures us all of our standing in Christ and has anointed us.
* He marked us with his seal and gave us the pledge, the Spirit, that we carry in our hearts.

V. The Lord, our God, has made a covenant with us.
* He marked us ...

30. THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT AND THE FATHER

(St. John Eudes, Man's Contact with God in Holy Baptism, Chapter 3; O.C. 2, 212-214)

" The Father's commitment to us."

The eternal Father having granted you the honor of entering into a covenant with you by Baptism as one of his children and a member of his Son, is obliged to look upon you with the same eyes, love you with the same heart and lavish upon you the same love he bestows on his beloved Son, Jesus, since you are one with him as a member is one with the head. Christ himself, speaking to his Father about those he gave him to be his members, said: To them I have revealed your name, so that your love for me may live in them (John 17, 26). And earlier in the same context, he said: You loved them as you love me (John 17, 23).

Would you like to know the wondrous effects of the heavenly Father's love for you? Consider the ineffable gifts he bestowed upon you when he welcomed you into his holy covenant in the sacrament of Baptism.

First of all, he adorned your soul with grace, the least amount of which is worth more than all the dominions of the earth.

Next, he endowed it with the inconceivable gift of faith, with the precious treasure of hope, with charity, that abyss of inestimable blessings; and with all the virtues, gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, as well as the evangelical beatitudes.

What is still more important, the Father gave himself to you together with his Son and his Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart. If you have not closed your heart to him, he has continued to abide within you, according to this promise of Truth eternal: Anyone who loves me will be true to my word, and my Father will love him; we will come to him and make our dwelling place with him (John 14, 23).

Since then, his fatherly eyes have been constantly upon you: I will counsel you, keeping my eye on you (Ps 32, 8). His mind has been constantly busy thinking about you; his heart, constantly engaged in loving you; his power, wisdom and goodness have ceaselessly been at work protecting and guiding you, and dispensing infinite blessings, corporal as well as spiritual, upon you.

Besides all that, he promises you will be his heirs and co-heirs with his Son if you are faithful to the conditions of your covenant with him. You will come to possess eternally as great and admirable gifts as any eye has ever seen, any ear has ever heard of, any mind has ever grasped.

This is the Father's commitment to us.

Response

2 Cor 1, 21. 22; Dt 5, 2.

R. It is God himself who assures us all of our standing in Christ and has anointed us.
* He marked us with his seal and gave us the pledge, the Spirit, that we carry in our hearts.

V. The Lord, our God, has made a covenant with us.
* He marked us ...

31. THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT AND THE SON

(St. John Eudes, Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism, Chapter 3; O.C. 2, 214-218)

" The Son's commitment to us."

When he welcomed you into his covenant as one of his members, the Son of God pledged himself to look upon you, love and treat you as a part of himself, bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh, spirit of his spirit, as a person who is one with him.

He pledged to give you his eternal Father as your own father: I am ascending to my Father and your Father (John 20, 17).

He pledged to give you his Spirit and his divine Heart to be the spirit of your spirit and the heart of your heart: I will give you a new heart. I will put my spirit in you (Ez 36, 26-27). The proof that you are sons is that God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts (Gal 4, 6).

He pledged to give you his most holy Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, to be your Mother: This is your mother (John 19, 27).

He pledged to give you his Church to also be your Mother.

He pledged to give you his flesh and his blood in the holy Eucharist as nourishment for your soul: I am the bread of life (John 6,35). He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and possesses me within himself (John 6, 55-56).

He pledged to house you and make you dwell and take your rest eternally in the same place as he, that

is to say, not only in heaven, but also in his Father's bosom and heart, which is his abode: Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am (John 17, 24).

He pledged to give you the same dominion and the same glory his Father gave him: I, for my part, assign to you the dominion my Father has assigned to me (Luke 22, 29).

He pledged to seat you on his throne as he is seated on his Father's throne (cf. Rev. 3, 21).

He pledged to give you his own name and endow you with the most excellent qualities he received from his Father. For he is indeed the Son of God: They will be called children of God and that is what they are (1 John 3, 1).

Do not be surprised by all these wondrous things. From infinite power and goodness we can expect infinitely rare and precious effects. Since it pleased our Redeemer to have you enter a union with him so intimate that he and you become one as the head and its members are one, it follows necessarily that he must love you as he loves himself; that you must have one and the same Father, one and the same Mother and Spirit, one and the same heart, life, dwelling place, kingdom, glory, throne and name.

Such, my dear brother, are the commitments your Head chose to make with regard to you when he incorporated you with him as one of his members by holy Baptism. Remember that he is called: The Faithful and True (Rev 19, 11).

Response

Col 2, 6. 9; Mat 23 10.

R. Continue to live in Christ Jesus, the Lord, in the spirit in which you received him.

* For, in Christ the fullness of divinity resides in bodily form.

V. You have only one Teacher, the Christ.

* For, in Christ ...

32. THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT AND THE CHRISTIAN

(St. John Eudes, Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism, Chapters 4 and 9; O.C.2, 220-221. 242-243)

" The Christian's commitment."

When you entered into a covenant with God by your baptismal contract, you offered, gave and consecrated yourself to his divine majesty. Then, you committed yourself to two things:

1 - Through your godparents you promised to renounce Satan and all his works.

2 - You promised to adhere to Jesus Christ through faith, hope and love, that is, you promised to follow him through faith in his teachings; through hope in his promises; through love of his commandments, dictates, sentiments and virtues, of his life. You promised, moreover, to follow him, not as a servant follows his master, but as a member follows the head, and so to live of his life.

That is what inspired St. Gregory of Nyssa to say: Being a Christian is nothing other than being one with Jesus Christ; consequently, being a Christian consists in living of the life of Jesus Christ. For, just as the life of the arm is a continuation and extension of the life of the head, so too Christian life is a continuation and extension of Jesus' life on earth.

As a result, whoever has been grafted onto the divine tree and incorporated with this adorable Head by Baptism must live of his life and walk along the same path as he walked: Whoever claims to be living in him must live the same kind of life as Christ lived (1 John 2, 6).

These are the obligations you contracted by the baptismal promises you made, not to a child or a mortal man, but to the great and immortal God, publicly and solemnly, in the face of the whole Church. Promises written by the angels, says St. Augustine, with the blood of Christ, in the books of eternity and consecrated by the sanctity of the great sacrament of Baptism.

It would be useful for Christians to renew their baptismal vows, not just once a year, but every day.

In the morning when you awaken, after pronouncing the holy names of Jesus and Mary and making the sign of the Cross, you could voice these words with all your heart: I renounce you, Satan. I adhere to

you, Oh Jesus, my Lord and Redeemer, my Head and my dearest Life. It is good to do likewise at bedtime and in times of temptation.

The four terms: Lord, Redeemer, Head, Life, should remind you of the four principal titles by which you belong to Jesus Christ and are obliged to adhere to him in order to follow him in the holiness of his life and conduct, in keeping with your baptismal vows.

Yes, you belong to him:

1 - because he is your sovereign Lord and as such, your creator, preserver and governor;

2 - because he ransomed you, paying the infinite price of his Precious Blood;

3 - because he is your Head and you are his members incorporated with him by the sacrament of Baptism;

4 - because he gave himself so many times to you in the Holy Eucharist as your nourishment and your life: Christ, our life (Col 3, 4).

Response 1 Cor 6, 19-20; Lev 11, 43-44.

R. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within - the Spirit you have received from God. You are no longer your own. You have been purchased very dearly.

* So, glorify God in your body.

V. Do not defile your soul: keep yourselves holy because I am holy.

* So, glorify God in your body.

33. BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 7, 9. 14. 15; O.C. 1, 510. 517. 518).

" The three divine Persons are present
at holy Baptism."

It is by Our Lord Jesus Christ that we are baptized, but it is in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. For, the three divine Persons are present in a special manner at holy Baptism.

The Father is there generating his Son in the soul and us in his Son, imparting a new being and new life to his Son in us, and giving us a new being and new life in his Son.

The Son is present, being born and receiving life in the soul, transmitting his divine sonship by which we become children of God, just as he is Son of God.

The Holy Spirit is there, forming Jesus in each soul as he formed him in Mary's womb.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are present, separating us as new-born Christians from all things, taking possession of us and consecrating us especially to themselves, imprinting their divine character and image on our souls and establishing their dwelling place within us, as well as their glory, kingdom and life.

Consequently, were it not for sin standing in the way, the three eternal Persons would always dwell in us in a special ineffable way. They would most wonderfully glorify one another, by living a most holy and divine life in our souls and reigning perfectly in them.

So too, it follows that we belong to God as creatures entirely consecrated to him, who must pursue no other purpose in life save his glory and service.

Oh holy and adorable Trinity, I adore you in your divine essence and your three eternal Persons. I adore you for having been present at my Baptism and I adore all the designs of your Providence on me. I beg you to forgive me for blocking their fulfillment. In reparation I offer you all the life, actions and sufferings of my Lord Jesus and his most holy Mother. I give myself to you, Oh divine Trinity, that these designs may be fulfilled. Oh eternal Father, Oh only Son of God, Oh Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son, enter into my heart and soul, separate me from all that is not yourself, draw me to yourself, live and reign in me, destroying in me all that displeases you, and cause my being and my life to be completely consecrated to your pure glory.

Oh my Savior, separate me from myself and all that is not you; unite and incorporate me with you. Empty me of myself and all things, annihilate me completely, so that you may fill me with yourself and form and establish yourself in me. Make me, from now on, a perfect image of yourself, as you are a most perfect image of your Father. May I share in the filial love you have for your Father since he is my Father too. May I live of your life, that is, a holy and perfect life, truly worthy of God, since you made me God by participation. Lastly, may I be so totally clothed in you and your qualities, perfections,

virtues and dispositions, and so transformed in you, that in me people may see only Jesus, only his life, his humility, his meekness, charity and love, his spirit and his other virtues and qualities, since it is your will that I be another Jesus on earth.

Response Lev 26, 11. 12; 2 Cor 6, 16.

R. I will set up my dwelling place among you and I will not cast you off.

* Ever present in your midst, I will be your God and you shall be my people.

V. You are a temple of the living God, just as God has said.

* Ever present ...

THE PRIEST

34. THE PRIEST: AN ASSOCIATE OF THE TRINITY

(St. John Eudes, Memorial of Priestly Life, Part 1; O.C. 3, 14-16)

" I look upon you as the associates of the Father,
the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Oh priests, you are the noblest part of the Mystical Body of Christ. You are the eyes, the mouth, the tongue, the heart of the Church of Jesus; better still, you are Jesus' very eyes, mouth, tongue and heart.

You are his eyes. It is through you that the Good Shepherd continually watches over his flock. Through you he enlightens and guides his sheep. Through you he weeps over those of his flock who are in the snares of the infernal fox, the devil.

You are his mouth and his tongue. It is through you that he speaks to his people. Through you he continues to preach the gospel that he preached in person when he was on earth.

You are his heart. Through you he imparts life: the life of grace on earth and the life of glory in heaven to all the true members of his body.

I look upon you and respect you as the associates of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in most sublime and admirable intimacy.

For the eternal Father associates you with himself in the highest of all functions, the ineffable generation of his divine Son whom he causes to be born from all eternity in his fatherly bosom. He embraces you in the most excellent of his attributes, namely: his divine fatherhood, making you, in a way and a most admirable one, fathers of that very Son since he gives you the power to form and generate him in Christian souls. He has chosen you to be the fathers of his members, the faithful, their real fathers. You bear within you a living image of the heavenly Father's divine fatherhood.

The Son associates you with himself in his noblest perfections and the most divine of his actions. He makes you participate in his role of mediator between God and man, in his dignity of sovereign judge of the universe, in his name and office as Savior of the world. He gives you power to offer with him to his eternal Father the same sacrifice he offered on the cross and renews daily on our altars, the most sublime and holiest action he ever did and ever will perform.

The Holy Spirit associates you with him in the greatest and most admirable action he has performed and continues to perform daily. Why, indeed, did the Holy Spirit come into the world? Wasn't it to dispel the darkness of ignorance and sin which covered the earth? Wasn't it to enlighten men's minds with celestial light, enkindle their hearts with the sacred fire of divine love, reconcile sinners to God, destroy sin, communicate grace, sanctify souls and establish the Church? Wasn't it to apply to mankind the fruits of the passion and death of the Redeemer, destroy the "old man" and bring to life and form Jesus within us?

Now, isn't it your duty and ordinary occupation to concern yourselves with all these functions? Haven't you been sent by God to form his Son Jesus in the hearts of his people?

Truly, you have a marvelous alliance with the three eternal Persons. You are their associates and cooperators of the Almighty in his greatest works.

Response 2 Cor 3, 4. 6. 5.

R. Through Christ we are confident before God.

* He is the one who made us ministers of the new covenant, a covenant not of a written law, but of the Spirit.

V. Not that we are entitled of ourselves to take credit for anything. Our sole credit is from God.

* He is the one ...

35. SENT BY JESUS TO ACT IN HIS NAME

(St. John Eudes, Memorial of Priestly Life, Part 5, 10, no. 2; O.C. 3, 187-189)

" A priest is another Christ living and walking on earth."

A priest is truly another Christ living and walking on earth. He takes Christ's place, represents his person, acts in his name and exercises his authority. Our blessed Lord said: As the Father has sent me, I also am sending you (John 20, 21), that is to say, I send you to dispel the darkness of hell which covers the face of the earth, and to illuminate the world with heavenly light. I send you to work for the destruction of the tyranny of sin and the establishment of the kingdom of God. I send you to perpetuate on earth the life I led and the virtues I practised. I send you to continue my own office of mediator between God and man, of judge and savior.

These three functions are the principal qualities with which Christ has endowed priests, especially

pastors.

First of all, priests are mediators between God and man, making known his divine will. Theirs is the duty of drawing men to God and of reconciling them with him; theirs is the obligation of rendering to him the homage, adoration, praise and satisfaction due to him. Between God and man they must deal with the greatest and most important relations in heaven and on earth, those which have to do with his glory, the salvation of the world, the completion of the sufferings of his Son by their application to men's souls.

With the Son of God, they are judges of the world, not in earthly and temporal things, but in things heavenly and eternal. With Christ, priests are saviors of the world. The Son of God shares with them the heavenly prerogative of Savior, desiring that they should be associated with himself in the salvation of souls: We are God's coadjutors (1 Cor 3, 9). He wants them to discharge the office of saviors and be employed in the continuation and fulfillment on earth of the greatest and most divine of all his works, the redemption of the world. Towards this one end, every duty and office of the priestly life is primarily directed.

In the work of saving souls, Our Lord Jesus expended himself completely, spent every moment of his time, all his thoughts, words and actions, his works, his blood and his very life. Thus too, priests, and more so pastors, must give to this work their heart and soul, their thoughts and affections, their time, their strength and ten thousand lives if they had them to give, in order to be able to truly say with St. Paul: I mostly gladly will spend and be spent myself totally for your souls (2 Cor 12, 15). Otherwise, if a single soul is lost through the negligence of priests, all the wounds of Christ, his sufferings and the Blood he shed for that soul will cry vengeance against them at the hour of death: I will require his blood at your hand (Ez 3, 18).

Truly, the priest is another Christ living and walking on earth. Consequently, our life and our conduct should be a perfect and living image, or rather a continuation of Jesus' life and conduct.

We are obliged then, to study carefully what he said and did while he was on earth, the virtues he practised, his way of living and acting, his horror for sin, in order to express them and continue to practise them in our own lives.

Response Luke 10, 2; John 4, 35.

R. The harvest is rich but the workers are few.

* Pray the harvest-master to send workers to his harvest.

V. Open your eyes and see! The fields are ripe for the harvest!

* Pray the harvest-master ...

(This Reading and response are in the Eudist
August 19th.)

Proper for the Office for

36. PREACHER OF THE WORD OF GOD

(St. John Eudes, The Apostolic Preacher, Chapter 2; O.C. 4, 12-16).

" Preaching is making God speak."

Preaching is making God speak. Having spoken to mankind of old through the prophets of the Old Testament and by his Son in the new Law, God now wants to speak to us through the members of his Son, to make known his desires and prompt us to act accordingly.

Preaching is giving God's children the bread of life, and of eternal life, to enrich, strengthen and perfect in them the divine life they received from the heavenly Father in their new birth in Baptism: You have the words of eternal life (John 6, 69).

Preaching has its origins in the bosom of God himself, from which emanated the divine Word, Christ, the first preacher. From this source flowed all the truths he preached himself on earth and wants to see preached even now.

The end and purpose of this heavenly office is to give birth to Jesus Christ and form him in the hearts of men as well as to cause him to live and reign there. It is to dispel the darkness of hell and replace it in men's souls with the light of heaven. It is to attack and destroy sin and open the floodgates of divine grace. It is to overthrow Satan's tyranny in the world and establish God's kingdom, to reconcile men with their God, transforming them into his children.

Because it is so important and so holy, this office must be carried out with the holiest of intentions.

Being associated with Jesus' Apostles and the greatest saints, preachers should walk in their footsteps and imitate their holy lives.

Likewise, as God's heralds and Jesus' ambassadors, dispensers of his mysteries and oracles of the Holy Spirit, they must be clothed with the virtues of the Son of God, possessed and animated by the love, zeal and strength of his divine Spirit.

They must study and assiduously practise what St. Paul says: We speak as envoys of God and, in his presence, we speak in Christ (2 Cor 2, 17).

As God's envoys means preachers should not preach their own thoughts or ideas, but should find their material in Holy Scripture and in prayer.

In God's presence means that preachers should have no other aim or object in mind save God and his glory and the salvation of souls.

We speak in Christ means preachers should make a complete renunciation of self and give themselves to Christ in order to speak in him, preach in his spirit, with the same dispositions and intentions he had when he preached himself and wants to continue to preach today through them.

Response 1 Peter 1, 25; Luke 1, 2.

R. The word of the Lord endures forever.

* It is this very word that is brought to you when the Good News of salvation is preached.

V. This is what was handed down to us by the original eyewitnesses and ministers of the word.

* It is this very word ...

37. WITNESS TO THE DEMANDS OF THE GOSPEL

(St. John Eudes, Letters, 1, 53; O.C. 10, 441-444)

Letter to the priests of the Seminary at Caen, relating an address to the Queen of France, at the Benedictine Monastery in Paris, on February 8, 1661, feast of the Holy Heart of Mary.

" I am acting as Christ's ambassador."

The Queen arrived toward the end of my sermon and I told her many things with respect to the fire which burned a section of the Louvre. I began addressing her in this manner.

Madam, I have nothing to say to Your Majesty except to implore you most humbly, since his Divine Majesty has brought you here, never to forget the powerful sermon that God has preached to you and the King through the fire which destroyed parts of the Louvre. You are well aware that for Christians nothing happens by chance, but that everything takes place through the providence and will of God. This fire means several things.

It reminds us that kings are allowed to build Louvres, but that God orders them to lighten the burden of their subjects, to take pity on so many widows, orphans and people overwhelmed by poverty.

That kings and princes are allowed to indulge in decent amusements, but to spend all their days, weeks, months, years and even a whole lifetime doing so is not the road to paradise.

That, if the temporal fire has not spared the royal house, the eternal fire will spare neither princes nor princesses, kings nor queens, unless they live like Christians and take pity on their subjects, and unless they use their authority to destroy the tyranny of the devil and sin and to establish the kingdom of God in the souls of their subjects.

I added that my sole interest in saying these things was the interest of my Master and my God, as well

as the salvation of my King and Queen for whom I would lay down a thousand lives.

That it was indeed a pity that the great personages of this world are besieged by hordes of flatterers who are so poisoning and destroying them that they almost never hear the truth; that preachers are very guilty in the sight of God when they suppress the truth unjustly, and that I should consider myself most guilty if I did not say all these things to her Majesty.

Finally, I entreated her to accept them as coming not from a man but from God; that I was only a worthless creature and miserable sinner, but that in the place where I was standing and as a representative of God, I could say like St. Paul: For Christ, I am an ambassador (2 Cor 5, 20), to bring the words of the King of kings to a great Queen, and that I implored her to accept them as such.

That is what I said almost word for word. I am writing you this so that you and your friends may know the truth.

May it please God to bestow his universal blessing, granting us the grace never to seek anything save to please him and to do and say whatever he asks of us.

Response 1 Thes 2, 4. 3.

R. God put us to the test before entrusting us with the Gospel, that is why we speak.

* We are not trying to please men but God.

V. The exhortation we deliver does not spring from deceit or impure motives or any attempt to deceive you.

* We are not trying ...

38. SHARING IN THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

(St. Johnn Eudes, Memorial of Priestly Life, Part 5, 10, no. 3; O.C. 3, 189-192)

" Because we are clothed with the priesthood of Christ, we are obliged to be clothed with holiness."

Christ associates us with him in his eternal priesthood and his divine prerogatives by which we are clothed with his powers and holiness and are obliged to continue on earth his life and his priestly functions.

Consider him in what he is and does, first with regard to his Father; secondly, with regard to men, especially the Church; and thirdly, with regard to himself. Thus, we can discover how to follow in his footsteps.

To his Father, Jesus is all, and his Father is all to his Son. Jesus loves only his Father, and the Father loves only the Son. Jesus' only desire is to make his Father known and loved. The Father's only thought is to manifest the glory of his Son and have him adored and loved by men. Christ is the Father's delight and treasure, and in turn the Son's wealth, honor and supreme happiness consist in glorifying his Father and doing his will. It is to that end that Christ directed every gesture and act of his priestly life, fulfilling them with truly divine dispositions.

The priest is also God's inheritance and God is his portion as he freely promised on entering the clerical state saying: Lord, you are my allotted portion (Ps 16, 5). He must, therefore, be all in all to God and God must be everything to him. He must look upon God as his only inheritance and not expect to have any other fortune or treasure but God to whom he must give his whole heart and all his affections. Consequently, he must apply himself to discharging in a holy manner all his priestly duties, such as celebrating Mass, praying the Divine Office, administering the sacraments and preaching the Word of God.

Since these offices are of such a divine and saintly character, they should be carried out in a manner worthy of God, worthy of their own excellence, of the holiness of the Sovereign Priest with whom we are co-ministers, and worthy of the infinite price of his precious blood, in the shedding of which he elevated us to the dignity of the priesthood and merited for us the graces we need to carry out its duties.

To know what Jesus is and what he does with regard to mankind and especially with regard to his Church, look with the eyes of faith at his accomplishments while he was on earth, especially his sufferings. These deeds are as so many tongues crying out to us: This is how God loved the world, how Jesus loved the Church, how Christ loved souls. With the same breath, they say to us: This is how you

must love Jesus' Church, how you must work for the salvation of the souls which are so dear to him. This is how you must do all things, have all things, suffer all things, sacrifice everything, even the blood and life of God if it were yours to give, in order to be instrumental in saving a single soul: the most divine of all things divine is to cooperate with God in saving souls.

When we consider Christ in regard to what he is in himself and does, we learn that, as Sovereign Priest, he also wants to assume the condition of an offering. Thus destined to death and sacrifice for the glory of his Father, he humbles and annihilates himself constantly (Phil 2, 7). His whole life on earth is but a continual death so far as the things of this world and its volitions are concerned: I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of the one who sent me (John 6, 38). His life is an unending sacrifice of all that is in him for the honor of his Father.

So too, he who has been called to participate in Christ's priesthood must be one with him as a sacrificial offering.

Response

2 Cor 3, 4. 6. 5.

R. Through Christ we are confident before God.

* He is the one who made us ministers of the new covenant, a covenant not of a written Law, but of the Spirit.

V. Not that we are entitled of ourselves to take credit for anything. Our sole credit is from God.

* He is the one ...

39. PASTORS AFTER GOD'S HEART

(St. John Eudes, Memorial of Priestly Life, Part 1; O.C. 3, 24-31)

" Ever ready to give his blood and sacrifice his life."

What is a pastor after God's heart?

He is a real father to God's people, with a heart filled with truly fatherly love for his children. That love prompts him to work unceasingly to nourish his flock with the bread of the sacred Word and of the sacraments, to clothe the faithful with Christ and the Holy Spirit, to enrich them with all possible advantages regarding their eternal salvation.

He is an evangelist and an apostle whose chief work is to preach, both publicly and privately, by word and example, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is to continue and perpetuate the functions the Apostles were commissioned to perform, and to practise the virtues they practised.

He is the sacred bridegroom of the divine Spouse, that is, the Church of Christ. So consumed with love for her is he that his only thought is to seek all sorts of means to embellish and adorn the Church, enrich and make her worthy of the eternal love of her heavenly and immortal Spouse.

He is an ever burning and shining light set on the candelabra of Mother Church, burning before God and shining before men; burning with his own love for God, shining by his charity for his fellowman; burning with the perfection of his inner life, shining by the holiness of his exterior conduct; burning in continual prayer to God for the needs of his people, shining by his preaching of the Word of God.

A holy priest is a savior and another Christ, taking the Master's place on earth, representing him, clothed with his authority, acting in his name, adorned with his qualifications, exercising his judgment on earth in the tribunal of Penance. He is consecrated to exercise the highest functions Christ ever performed on earth, to continue the work of salvation. In imitation of his Redeemer, he gives himself: mind, heart, affections, strength, time, all for God. He is ever ready to sacrifice his very blood and even life itself to procure the salvation of souls, particularly those of his own flock.

He is a living image of Christ in this world, the Christ who watched, prayed, preached, catechized, worked, went from town to town and village to village, suffering, agonizing, dying and sacrificing himself for the salvation of all the souls created in his image and likeness.

Response Ez 34, 15. 16.

R. I myself will pasture my sheep. I myself will show them where to rest, says the Lord God.

* I shall look for the lost one and bring back the stray.

V. I will make the weak one strong and watch over the fat and healthy one.

* I shall look ...

40. ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS

(St. John Eudes, The Good Confessor, Chapter 2; O.C. 4, 166-172, 196-197)

" Let us take pity on the souls of so many of our brothers and sisters
created in the image and likeness of God, ransomed by the precious

blood of his Son."

What does it mean to save souls created in the image and likeness of God and ransomed by the precious blood of his Son? It is God's greatest work. It is also the greatest work of the God-man and of his holy Mother. It is the mission of God's Church, the most important assignment of priests and pastors. It is the supreme work among all works, incomparably surpassing all others.

How is it the greatest of the works of the God-man, Jesus Christ Our Lord?

All the mysteries of Our Lord, his Incarnation, birth, circumcision, his presentation in the temple, his flight to Egypt, his childhood, his hidden and work life, his solitary and penitent life as well as his public life, his passion and death, all his thoughts, words and deeds, his sufferings and humiliations, all his wounds and the pain he endured, every drop of blood he shed and all the love with which he did and suffered all this, are as so many voices crying out: This is how much Jesus loved souls. This shows how he loves them more than anything else: more than his rest, his satisfaction, his reputation, his human interests, more than his blood, even his very life. This is why he left everything, divested himself of everything, gave everything, did and suffered everything to save them. This is why for thirty-three years he set aside the infinite glory and happiness to which he was entitled from the very first instant of his Incarnation, in order to make souls forever glorious and happy.

Oh my Savior, who could conceive and express the extent of your love for souls? Oh my Jesus, since you love souls so much, it can rightly be said that none are dearer to you than the persons who cooperate with you in saving souls. On them you lavish all kinds of favors and blessings abundantly and without reservation.

Let us pity the many souls who perish each day. Created in God's image and likeness, ransomed at the price of his Son's Precious Blood, they are the souls of our brothers and sisters. Let us deplore the amount of work Our Savior did for them, the many wounds and the pain he suffered, the tears and blood he shed. Let us commiserate with the shameful and cruel death he suffered for their sake. Let us be compassionate with his most holy Mother for her tears and the inconceivable anguish with which her maternal Heart was filled for the same cause. Let us not allow a day to pass without doing some good to someone and let us never tire of doing so.

Let us often and ardently pray the Master of the heavenly harvest to send workers into his vineyard. Let us imitate the Apostles and the Redeemer's disciples, of whom it is said that they were constantly occupied in the temple, publicly and privately, on the street and in homes, teaching and preaching Jesus Christ, that is, Jesus' life, mysteries, works, virtues, maxims and doctrine. If our labors do not produce the results we hoped for, let us not be discouraged. Even if we should keep only one soul from committing a mortal sin, we would have done more good than if we had preserved or delivered the world from a universal plague or all the other evils that could happen to it.

Response

1 Cor 9, 16. 22.

R. I do not boast of preaching the Gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me.

* Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.

V. I made myself all things to all men in order to save them all.

* Woe to me ...

41. MISSIONARY TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

(St. John Eudes, Letters, 1, 60; O.C. 10, 449-450)

Letter to Mr. de Sesseval, when he left for the foreign missions.

" Go in the name of the Blessed Trinity,
to make it known and adored."

Go in the name of the Blessed Trinity, to make it known and adored in places where it is neither known nor venerated.

Go in the name of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, to bring to souls the fruits of his Precious Blood which he shed for them.

Go under the protection and in the safe-keeping of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to imbue those hearts with the respect and veneration due her, and under the guidance of blessed St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, your guardian Angel, and the holy apostles of the places where you are going, to work with them for the salvation of lost and abandoned souls.

Go in the name and on behalf of our little Congregation, to accomplish in China and the other places where Providence directs you what we should like to do throughout the whole world, even to shedding our last drop of blood: destroy Satan's tyranny there and establish the kingdom of God.

But remember that, because this work is entirely an apostolic mission, you need to have a very pure intention of seeking only the glory of God, and a most profound humility and mistrust of yourself, boundless confidence in his infinite goodness, complete submission to his most adorable will and that of the prelates placed over you in his stead, unconquerable patience in your labors, an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, and a most sincere charity towards other ecclesiastics.

Meditate frequently on these virtues, earnestly asking God for them, and try to practise them faithfully. May God in his divine goodness grant you them in their perfection, together with all the other graces necessary and expedient to accomplish perfectly his most holy will, and to conduct yourself everywhere both as a true missionary of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and as a true child of their most lovable Heart.

May Jesus and Mary grant you their holy blessing for that purpose. May it remain always with you and precede, accompany and follow you everywhere and in all things.

With this wish do we pronounce over you, in the name of Jesus and Mary, and in the sacred love of their most charitable Heart, these precious words of Holy Mother Church: *Nos cum prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria* - May the Blessed Virgin Mary and her divine Child bless us.

Response Mark 16, 15. 16; John 3, 5.

R. Go into the world and proclaim the Good News of salvation to all creation.

* He who believes in it and accepts baptism will be saved.

V. Unless one is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

* He who believes ...

42. PRIESTS AND THE VIRGIN MARY

(St. John Eudes, Memorial of Priestly Life, Chapter 5, 17, nos. 2-3; O.C. 3, 216-218)

" Priests have a special alliance with the most holy Mother of God."

Priests have a particular alliance with the holy Mother of God. As the eternal Father made her a partaker of his divine paternity, giving her the power of forming Christ within her womb as he does, so too, he communicates this same fatherhood to his priests in giving them the power to form Christ in the Blessed Eucharist and in the hearts of the faithful. Christ made Mary his cooperator and coadjutor in the work of redemption; he also makes his priests cooperators and coadjutors in the salvation of souls. The Holy Spirit associated Mary with himself, in an ineffable way, in the most divine of all his operations and his masterpiece which is the mystery of the Incarnation; he associates priests with him to continue and extend this mystery in each Christian soul where the Son of God is enfleshed so to speak, by Baptism and in the holy Sacrifice of the altar.

As the eternal Father gave us his Son through Mary, so he gives him to us through his priests. Since all the graces coming from God pass through Mary's hands, so too, they are given to us by the ministry of his priests. Mary is the treasurer of the Blessed Trinity; priests also share this prerogative. Finally, as through Mary, Jesus was offered to his eternal Father at the very first moment of his life when she welcomed him into her womb, as well as at the very last moment when she accompanied him in the sacrifice he made of himself to the Father on the Cross; so too he is immolated and offered to God daily by

his priests on our altars.

Because of their close alliance with Mary and their marvelous conformity to her, priests owe her particular marks of love, honor and service. They should be clothed with her virtues, her spirit and dispositions. Humiliate yourself for being so far from this ideal. Form a great desire to fulfill your obligations worthily. Offer yourself completely to Mary and beg her to assist you.

If you have a true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, seek the means of honoring and serving her.

You may honor her by thought, applying yourself to the consideration of her mysteries, qualities and virtues, her actions and her sufferings, as well as by the interior acts of veneration and praise for her perfect cooperation with the grace of God, rejoicing in the fact that God made her what she is. You may also honor her by words, extoling her excellence to others and suggesting ways to serve her, and by vocal prayer, principally the Rosary, the prayer which pleases her most. Lastly, you may serve by action, offering and dedicating to her every deed you do in honor of hers, particularly almsgiving, fasting and mortification.

But, the most efficacious of all means is the imitation of her virtues.

Response

R. Rejoice with me, all you who love the Lord, because in my nothingness I was found pleasing by the Most High God.

* From my womb I gave the world the God-man.

V. All generations will call me blessed because God has looked with favor on his lowly handmaid.

* From my womb.

THE HEART OF JESUS

43. WHAT THE HEART OF JESUS IS

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 12; O.C. 8, 344-347)

" Three Hearts which make but one single Heart."

We have three Hearts to adore in our Savior which, nevertheless, are but one single Heart by their intimate union.

The first is his divine Heart, which is God, for God is love itself. It is also the eternal love of the Word in the bosom of the Father which, with the love of the Father, is the source of the Spirit.

The second is his spiritual Heart, which is the higher function of his soul, where the Holy Spirit wonderfully lives and reigns, and where the infinite treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God dwell. It is also his human will, whose work is love, love to the extent of laying down his life for our salvation in obedience to the Father.

Finally, his third Heart is the organ of the body hypostatically united to the Word, shaped by the Holy Spirit from the blood of the Mother of love and pierced by a lance on the Cross.

The most lovable Heart of Jesus is a furnace of love. He loves the Father eternally, immensely, and infinitely. He loves his Mother without measure or limit, which is abundantly proven by the inconceivable graces he has granted her. He also loves the Church triumphant, suffering and militant, whose sacraments - especially the Eucharist, the summary of all the wonders of God's goodness - are so many inexhaustible sources of grace and holiness flowing from the immense ocean of the Sacred Heart of our Savior.

Finally, he loves each and every one of us as he is loved by the Father. That is why he did everything and suffered everything to withdraw us from the abyss of evil in which we had been thrown by our own sinfulness, and made us children of God, members of Christ, heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ, possessing the same kingdom that the Father gave his Son.

44. JESUS GIVES US HIS HEART

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 12; O.C. 8, 311-312)

" He gives us his Heart which is the source and origin of all his other gifts."

Adore and consider our most lovable Savior in the excess of His kindness and the generosity of his love towards us. Consider attentively his boundless beneficence. He gives us life and all the benefits that spring from the gift of life. He gives us this vast universe filled with a multitude of things to satisfy our many needs and provide even for our leisure. He gives us his Angels to be our protectors and his Saints to be our advocates and intercessors. He gives us his most holy Mother to be our Mother. He gives us his Church, our second Mother, together with all the sacraments and mysteries of his Church for our salvation and sanctification. He gives us his eternal Father to be our true Father. He gives us his Holy Spirit to be our light and guide. He gives us all his thoughts, words, actions and mysteries, all his sufferings, and his very life which he spent and sacrificed for us, even to the last drop of his Precious Blood.

Moreover, he has given us his most lovable Heart, the principle and source of all his other gifts. The charity of his divine Heart impelled him to emanate from the adorable bosom of his Father and come upon this earth so that he might give us all these priceless graces. This Heart, humanly divine and divinely human, merited these graces by his sufferings endured for us on earth.

How shall we repay our loving Redeemer for so much love? We must render love for love. In return for the gift of his sacred Heart, we must give him our hearts without reserve. To return to Our Lord love for love, we must offer our love wholly and completely to him. He has given us his Heart eternally; we must give him ours forever. He has given us his Heart with infinite love; let us give him ours in union with that infinite love. He is not satisfied with giving us his own Heart, he also gives us the Heart of his eternal Father, the Heart of his most holy Mother and the hearts of all his Angels and Saints. He even gives us the hearts of every human being and they are all commanded to love us as they love themselves, even as he loved us: This is my commandment: love each other as I have loved you (John 15, 12).

Let us also offer him in thanksgiving the Heart of his eternal Father, the Heart of his holy Mother, the hearts of all the Angels and Saints and of all men. These are ours to give as though they belonged to us. St. Paul assures us that with the gift of his Son the eternal Father has given us all things: He gave us all things when he gave us his Son (Rom 8, 32), and that all things are ours (1 Cor 3, 22). But above all, let us offer him his own Heart. He has given it to us. Therefore, it is ours and is the most acceptable offering we could make to him. It is his own Heart and at the same time the Heart of his eternal Father, one by unity of essence. It is also the Heart of his most holy Mother, whose Heart is one with his by unity of will and affection.

Response

Ez 36, 26. 27; Gal 4, 6.

R. I will give you a new heart.

* I will put my Spirit in you.

V. The proof that you are sons is that God has sent forth into your hearts the Spirit of his Son.

* I will put my Spirit in you.

45. THE HEART OF JESUS IS GIVEN TO US TO BE OUR HEART

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 3, Chapter 2; O.C. 6, 261-265)

" Give yourself to Jesus to enter into the immensity of his great Heart."

Oh my God, how excessive is your kindness and your admirable love for us! You are infinitely worthy of being loved, praised and glorified, and we have infinite obligations of doing so. But because our hearts and minds are neither worthy nor able to fulfill such obligations, your incomprehensible wisdom and boundless kindness found and gave us a means to do so completely and perfectly. You gave us the Spirit and Heart of your Son, who is your own Spirit and Heart, to be our own, as you had promised through your prophet: I will give you a new heart. I will place a new Spirit in your midst (Ez 36, 26). And so that we might be able to identify this new spirit and this new heart you promised, you added: I will place my Spirit, who is my Heart, in your midst.

Only God's own Spirit and Heart are worthy of loving and praising him, of blessing and loving him as he deserves. That is why, my Lord, you gave us your Heart, which is the Heart of your Son Jesus, as it is the Heart of his Blessed Mother and the hearts of all his Angels and Saints who together form but a single heart.

You who read these lines, take note that this Heart was given to you, that you might serve and honor God and do his will with a willing spirit and with generous love (2 Macc 1, 3), that is, with a heart and love befitting his infinite greatness.

For that to take place, renounce your own heart, that is to say, your own spirit, your will and self-love. Give yourself to Jesus to enter into the immensity of this great Heart which contains his Mother's and the hearts of all the Saints. Lose yourself in this abyss of love, charity, mercy, humility, purity, patience, submission and holiness.

Do not be satisfied with loving God with your human heart for that is too little, it is really nothing at all. Love him rather with all your heart and willingly: *Corde magno et animo volenti*, with all the love of your great Heart, Jesus. When anybody asks if you love God, you can answer: "Yes, and I want to love him with all my great Heart and give myself to him with that in mind."

If you love your neighbor and want to show him your love, do so in the charity of your great Heart. If you must suffer, let it be in a spirit of humility, patience, submission and love. If you intend to fulfill an obligation, make a gift or sacrifice something to God, whether it be your own person or something external to you, let it be done in a spirit of love and the zeal of your great Heart. When you say these holy words: I will praise you, Lord, with all my Heart (Ps 111, 1), let it be with the intention of speaking about your great Heart. Finally, whatever you do, do everything in the spirit and dispositions of your great Heart, putting aside your own and giving yourself to Jesus to act in the same spirit which animates his own.

Response 2 Cor 1, 3; cf. Dan 3, 61; John 3, 16; Rom 8, 22.

R. Father of mercies and God of all consolation, may all the angels bless you.

* You loved us so much that you gave us your only Son and with him all that is good.

into the house of the least of his subjects to say to him: " I come here purposely to assure you that I love you and intend to prove my love for you," what a joy this poor soul would experience! In our case, we have infinitely more than that. For, the King of kings, the Holy of holies, the only Son of God and of Mary came down from heaven purposely to tell us: I love you. I who am the Creator of all things, who govern the entire universe, who possess all the treasures of heaven and earth, who do all I want and to whose volition nobody can resist, I love you!

But, just how does this adorable Savior love us? Listen to him: I love you as my Father loves me (John 15, 9). I love you with the same Heart and the same love with which I am loved by my Father.

The Father's love for his Son is infinite, that is to say, boundless, limitless, beyond all measure. It is eternal, always has existed and always will. It is immense, filling heaven, earth and even the netherworld. It is an essential love because the Father loves his Son with all that he is, being totally heart and love for him.

Our Savior loves us in the same way: with a love that is infinite, eternal, immense and essential. All that is in him: his divinity and humanity, his soul, his body and blood, his thoughts, words and deeds, his privations, humiliations and sufferings, in a word, all that he is, all that he has and all that he can do is engaged in loving us.

Oh human heart, will not such an ardent love succeed in touching you? For, after saying these words: I love you as my Father loves me, he adds: Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love just as I kept my Father's commandments and remained in his love (John 15, 9-10). And he goes on saying: I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy be complete (John 15,11). Would you like to cause great joy to your Savior and render your own heart ever joyous? You have only to love your most lovable Savior above all else and love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Oh Jesus, I offer you all the capacities of my soul, all the feelings of my body, all my members and my heart and my inmost self, sacrificing myself entirely to your adorable will. To please you is what I want most. Do with me whatever you want. I place myself in the divine hands of my God who wants my welfare more than I do myself. He alone knows what it is and has the ability to provide me with it.

Response John 15, 9-11.

R. As my Father has loved me, so I have loved you.

* Remain in my love.

V. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and you may be full of joy.

* Remain in my love.

47. THE HEART OF JESUS: TEMPLE AND ALTAR OF DIVINE LOVE

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 12; O.C. 8, 337-339)

Rejoice, O Sovereign Priest,
Victim in all equal to God,
Holy Sanctuary worthy of God,
And Altar perfectly holy.

(St. John Eudes' Office
for the Feast of the
Sacred Heart)

The Holy Spirit, love uncreated and eternal, built this magnificent Temple and fashioned it from the virginal blood of the Mother of love. It was dedicated by Jesus, the Supreme Pontiff and by the anointing of the Godhead. It is dedicated to eternal Love. It is infinitely more sacred, more noble and more venerable than all the temples, material and spiritual, in heaven and on earth. In this Temple, God receives worship, praise and glory worthy of his infinite greatness. In this Temple, the supreme

Preacher continually teaches us. It is an everlasting Temple that shall have no end. It is the center of all holiness, incapable of being profaned.

Let us rejoice at the sight of all the splendors of this wonderful Temple and all the glories rendered there to the divine majesty.

The Heart of Jesus is not only the Temple, but it is also the Altar of divine love. On that Altar the sacred flame of that love burns night and day. On that Altar, Jesus, the great High Priest, continually offers manifold sacrifices to the most Holy Trinity.

First, he offers himself as a sacrifice and victim of love, the most holy and precious victim that ever was or can be. He sacrifices utterly and entirely his body and soul, his blood and his whole life, all his thoughts, all his words, all his actions and all that he suffered on earth. Moreover, he makes that sacrifice perpetually, with a love that is boundless and infinite.

Secondly, he sacrifices everything the heavenly Father gave him, namely: all rational and irrational creatures, animate and inanimate, which he immolates as so many victims in praise of his Father; but, above all, he sacrifices mankind.

Thus, the great High Priest sacrifices all things to the glory of his Father on the Altar of his Heart. Therefore, he alone may rightly say: With an honest Heart, I have willingly given all this (1 Chronicles 29, 17).

Let us offer ourselves to him and beg him to rank us with the victims of his love, to consume us as holocausts of his love in the divine flames burning ceaselessly on the Altar of his Heart.

Response Heb 10, 5. 6. 9; Ps 40, 9.

R. On coming into the world, Christ said: You did not accept the holocausts or the sin offerings, so I said:

* Here I am, Lord. I have come to obey your will.

V. My God, to do your will is my delight and your law is deep in my heart.

* Here I am ...

48. THE HEART OF JESUS: PURIFYING AND SANCTIFYING LOVE

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 12; O.C. 8, 350-352)

" Purifying, illuminating, sanctifying..."

The Heart of our Savior is a burning Furnace of love for us, of purifying, illuminating, sanctifying, transforming and deifying love.

His love is a purifying one in which hearts are purified more perfectly than gold in a furnace; an illuminating love which scatters the darkness of hell with which the earth is covered and admits us into the wonderful brilliance of heaven: He called us from darkness into his own wonderful light (1 Peter 2, 9); a sanctifying love which destroys sin in our souls in order to establish the kingdom of God there; a transforming love which makes doves out of serpents, lambs out of wolves, angels out of beasts, children of God out of children of the devil, children of grace and blessing out of children of wrath and malediction; a deifying love which makes gods of men, letting them share in the holiness of God, in his mercy, his patience, his kindness, his love, his charity and his other divine perfections: sharing in the divine nature (2 Peter 1, 4).

The Heart of Jesus is a furnace of love which spreads its fiery flames in all directions, in heaven, on earth, and throughout the whole universe. Its fiery flames would have consumed the hearts of the

Seraphim and enkindled all the hearts of earth if the terrible chill of sin had not set in.

Jesus has an extraordinary love for men, the good as well as the wicked, for his friends as for his enemies, for whom he has such intense charity that even the overwhelming torrents and floods of their innumerable sins are not able to extinguish it: A love no flood can quench, no torrents drown (Song of Songs 8, 7).

Ohsacred fires andflames of the Heart of my Savior, rush in upon my heart andthe hearts of all my brothers.

Imagine all the charity, all the affections, all the tender and intimate feelings of all the hearts that the omnipotent hand of God might fashion as being collected and united in one heart large enough to contain them. Would they not all be capable of forming one unimaginable furnace of love? Know, then, that all the fires and flames of such a furnace would not make one tiny spark of the immense love with which the loving Heart of Jesus is inflamed towards you.

Oh, who will grant me to be plunged into that burning fire? Oh Mother of Jesus, Oh all you Angels, Oh all you holy Saints of Jesus, I give myself to you and I give you all my brothers and sisters in Christ, all the inhabitants of the earth, that you may cast us all into the abyss of that sacred furnace!

Response

Ps 19, 6. 7; Luke 12, 49.

R. Like the bridegroom who comes out of the bridal chamber, exulting like a hero, he will run his race.

* And nothing can escape his ardor.

V. I have come to bring fire to the earth.

* And nothing ...

49. JESUS' LOVE FOR US

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 4, 8, 31; O.C. 1, 397-401)

" You love me as if I were of great concern to you, as though I were truly necessary to you."

Jesus, God of my life, you are engaged in loving me. You employ all your powers and all that you created in heaven and on earth, to testify to me of your love.

Everything that I hear, everything I see, taste, touch and smell, everything that can be known and desired by my memory, understanding and will, all things visible and invisible that are contained in the order of nature, grace and glory, all the temporal and eternal graces I have received from you, all the angels and saints, all the encouraging examples they have given me by their virtues and their holy lives, all the wonders you have worked on behalf of your holy Mother, all the perfections inherent to the essence of your divine Person, all the states and mysteries of your divinity and humanity, all your divine attributes and virtues, all your thoughts, words, deeds and sufferings, every step you took on earth, every drop of your Precious Blood, all the wounds of your sacred body; in a word, all things that are or ever were in created or uncreated beings, in time and eternity, constitute so many tongues by which, Oh Jesus, you continually proclaim to me your goodness and your love.

My Lord and my God, how wonderful is your love for me! You love, desire and seek me with intensity and fervor, as if I were of great concern to you, as if I were indeed truly necessary to you. You want to possess me and are afraid of losing me as if I were a precious treasure. You pursue my friendship with as much insistence as if your happiness depended on it. Would there be anything more you could do for me, Lord, even if your whole happiness and glory depended on my love? Oh profound kindness, I lose

myself in your fathomless depths!

What can I do, Lord? How can I answer the cry of all these voices by which you invite me to love you? If it pleases you, I want to dedicate my thoughts, words and deeds, all the functions and senses of my body and faculties of my soul, my every breath and heartbeat, every pulse of my veins, every instant of my life, all things that have been, are, and shall be in me, even my sins, so far as it is possible, to your wisdom which well knows how to make all things cooperate for the good of those who love you. I want all these things to turn into so many voices by which I may continue ceaselessly and eternally telling you, with all the love in heaven and on earth: My Lord Jesus, I love you.

Response

Ps 103, 1. 2. 13.

R. Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, from the bottom of your heart, bless his holy name.

* Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, and remember all his kindnesses.

V. As tenderly as a father treats his children, so God treats those who adore him.

* Bless the Lord ...

MARY

50. HOW WE MUST VENERATE THE VIRGIN MARY

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 3, 11, Part 6, 36; O.C. 1, 337-339, 487-488)

" Of herself and by herself she is nothing
but her Son Jesus is everything in her."

We must never separate what God has so perfectly united. So closely are Jesus and Mary bound up with each other that whoever beholds Jesus sees Mary; whoever loves Jesus loves Mary. A man is no true Christian if he has no devotion to the Mother of Jesus Christ and of all Christians.

To honor her as God requires of us and as she desires, there are three things we must do:

1 - We must see and adore her Son in her, and see and adore only him. It is thus that she wishes to be honored because, of herself and by herself she is nothing, but her Son is everything in her: her being, her life, her sanctity, her glory, her power and her greatness. We should thank Our Lord for the glory he has given to himself in and through his admirable Mother. We must offer ourselves to him and ask him to give us to her, causing all our life and all our acts to be consecrated to the honor of her life and her actions. We must pray that he will make us participate in her admirable love for him and in her other virtues. We must ask him to employ our life in her honor, or rather to honor himself in her, in whatever way he pleases.

2 - We must recognize and honor her first as the Mother of God, then as our own Mother and Queen. We must thank her for all the love, glory and perfect service she rendered to her Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. We must refer to her, after God, our being and our life, subjecting ourselves entirely to her, imploring her to direct us in all our affairs and to assume full power over us, as over something belonging entirely to her, and to dispose of us as she pleases, for the greater glory of her divine Son. We must beg her to employ all our actions to honor the infinite works of her Son, and to associate us with all the love and praises which she ever gave him and ever will throughout all eternity.

3 - We can and should honor the most holy Virgin Mary by thoughts, meditating on the holiness of her life and the perfection of her virtues; by words, taking pleasure in speaking of her perfections and

in hearing them discussed; by actions, offering them to her in honor of and in union with her own; by imitation, striving to imitate her, especially in her charity, her pure love, her detachment from all things and her most divine purity, the thought of which ought to arouse in us a powerful desire to shun and fear more than death the least fault against purity, whether in thought, word or deed.

Finally, we may honor the Blessed Virgin by prayers or works of devotion, such as the Rosary which ought to be in common use among all Christians. It is an excellent way to honor the first mystery of the life of Jesus and the greatest marvel ever performed by God in heaven and on earth, the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. One cannot say too many Hail Marys since we cannot too abundantly honor this mystery.

Response

R. Rejoice with me, all you who love Christ because, being of little importance, I was found pleasing by the Most High God.

* In my womb I conceived the God-man.

V. All generations will call me blessed because God has looked upon his lowly handmaid.

* In my womb ...

51. THE LIFE OF JESUS IN MARY AND OF MARY IN JESUS

(St. John Eudes, The Kingdom of Jesus, Part 5, 9; O.C. 1, 432-34)

" Oh Jesus, I contemplate and adore you living and reigning in your most holy Mother."

Oh Jesus, only Son of God and only Son of Mary, I contemplate and adore you living and reigning in your most holy Mother. St. Paul says: You are all and do all in all things (Eph 1, 23; 1 Cor 12, 6), so surely you are and do all in your most holy Mother. You are her life, her soul, her heart, her spirit, her riches. You are in her, sanctifying her on earth and glorifying her in heaven. You are in her, clothing her with your qualities and perfections, inclinations and dispositions, imprinting in her a most perfect image of yourself, of all your states, mysteries and virtues, and making her so like you that whoever sees Jesus sees Mary, and he who sees Mary beholds Jesus. Blessed are you, Oh Jesus, for all that you are and all that you accomplish in your most holy Mother! I offer you all the delights, all the love and glory you have had and will ever have in her.

Oh Mother of Jesus, I honor and venerate your most holy and admirable life in your Son Jesus: a life resplendent with every kind of virtue and perfection; a life of which one single moment is dearer to God than all the lives of angels and men; a life that gives more honor and love to God than all other lives combined in heaven and on earth. This life is none other than the life of your Son Jesus, which he communicates to you from moment to moment by a most particular and ineffable favor. Blessed are you, Oh holy Virgin, for all the honor you have given your beloved Son in your whole life. I offer you all my life, Oh Mother of life and grace, and I consecrate it all to the honor of your life. With my whole heart I beg your Son Jesus, the God of life and love, to grant me his goodness that my whole life may pay continual and eternal homage to his most holy life and yours.

Oh Jesus, God of my life and my heart, you have a very great desire to dwell in me and make me live in you an entirely holy and heavenly life. Forgive me for all the ways I have obstructed the fulfillment of your desire by my sins and infidelities. Eradicate in me the corrupt and deprived life of the "old Adam" and, in its place, establish your holy and perfect life. Dwell in all your fulness in my spirit, heart and soul, and accomplish there all the works you desire for your glory. Love yourself in me and glorify yourself in me in every way you desire. Oh Mother of Jesus, if it pleases you, obtain from your Son the accomplishment of these things in me.

Response

R. Blessed are you, Oh Virgin Mary, and deserving of all praise.

* From you was born the sun of justice, Christ Our Lord.

V. Pray for the people, intercede for the clergy and for consecrated women; may all who celebrate your memory receive your help.

* From you

52. WHY WE MUST VENERATE THE HEART OF MARY

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 2, Chapters 4 and 5; O.C. 6, 148. 182; 8, 431)

" The heart represents the whole interior of a person, but it is principally the symbol of love."

Although the heart represents the whole interior of a person, it is principally the symbol of love. So, in venerating the Heart of Mary, we wish to honor, not a particular mystery, action or quality, not her very worthy person, but the source and origin of what makes all that worthy and holy, that is to say, her love and charity.

That love did, in fact, sanctify all her actions, all her faculties, all her life, both internal and external, all her virtues and perfections. It made her worthy of becoming the Mother of Jesus and of all his members, and made her an inexhaustible source of blessings for us.

All you who thirst, come and drink at this spring. Hurry ! Why delay a moment longer? Because you are afraid to offend the goodness of your Redeemer if you go to the Heart of his Mother? Don't you know that Mary is nothing, has nothing and can do nothing except from Jesus, through him and in him? Don't you know that it is Jesus who is everything in her, can and does everything in her? Not only does Jesus live and remain continually in the Heart of Mary, he is himself the heart of her Heart. So, to have recourse to the Heart of Mary is to come to Jesus; to honor her Heart is to honor Jesus; praying to the Heart of Mary is praying to Jesus.

This admirable Heart is the prototype and model of our own hearts. Perfection consists in transforming them into living reproductions of the most holy Heart of Mary. Moreover, the eternal Father gave Mary the power to conceive his Son, first in her Heart, before conceiving him in her virginal womb. So too, he has given her the power to do the same in the hearts of the children of Adam. This is why she cooperates in our salvation by her use of this special power with incredible love. Just as she carried her Son Jesus in her Heart and will continue to carry him eternally, she carries and will continue to carry the holy members of this divine Head, as her beloved children and the fruit of her motherly Heart which she offers up continually to God's divine Majesty.

Response Ps 34, 4; 73, 26; 47, 2.

R. Glorify the Lord with me, let us together extol his name.

* God is the rock of my heart, he is my portion forever.

V. All you people, clap your hands, acclaim God with shouts of joy.

* God is the rock ...

(N.B. This reading and its response are in the Eudist Proper for February 8)

53. THE HEART OF MARY, FULL OF LOVE FOR GOD AND FOR US

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 9, Chapter 4; Book 11, Chapter 2; O.C. 7, 461-462; 8, 114-122. 139-140)

" It never loved anyone but God and what God wanted it to love in him and for him."

Among the feasts of the Virgin Mary, the Feast of the Holy Heart is the heart and queen of them all because the heart is the seat of love and charity. What is the object of this feast? It is the heart of the only and beloved Daughter of the eternal Father, of the Mother of God, of the Bride of the Holy Spirit, the Mother of all the faithful. It is a Heart afire with love for God and for us.

It is full of love for God. It never loved anyone but God and what God wanted it to love in him and for him. It is full of love because the Blessed Virgin always loved God with all her heart and soul, with all her strength. It is full of love not only because she always wanted what God did and never wanted anything he did not want, but also because she always found satisfaction in doing God's most lovable will.

It is full of love for us. She loves us with the same love with which she loves God since it is God she sees and loves in us. Her love for us is the same as her love for the God-man, her Son Jesus, because she knows he is our Head and we are his members, that we are one with him as members are one with the head. That is why she sees and loves us somewhat like her Son and her own children.

A first reason is that, being the Mother of the Head, she is Mother of the members. A second reason is that our Savior on the Cross gave us to her as her children. Not only did he give her to us as our Queen and Sovereign, but in the most advantageous capacity we could ever imagine, that is, as our Mother, repeating to each one of us what he said to his beloved disciple: Behold your Mother.

He gives us to her, not as servants or slaves, which would be a great honor, but as her children: Behold your son, he said to her, meaning each one of us, as though he were saying: "Behold all my members which I am giving to you to be your children. I leave them in place of me. Give them the consideration you would give me. Love them as much as you would love me. Love them as much as I love you." Oh Mother of Jesus, you look upon us and love us as your children, as brothers of your Son Jesus, and with the same Heart. You love us and will continue to love us eternally with the same motherly love as you lavished on him.

That is why (my dearest brother), in all your deeds, needs, problems and afflictions, have recourse to the Heart of our most charitable Mother. It is a Heart which is always watching over us. The least thing that concerns us is of concern to her. It is a heart so full of kindness, meekness, mercy and liberality, that never any of those who humbly and confidently had recourse to it came away without being consoled. It is a most generous, strong and powerful Heart in the battle against our enemies, helping us to repel and annihilate all that is contrary to our best interests, and obtain from God all this Heart asks of him and all sorts of blessings for us.

Response Luke 1, 45. 46; Ps 66, 16.

R. Happy is she who trusted that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled. Mary then said:
* My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

V. Come, listen while I tell you what he has done for me.
* My soul proclaims ...

54. MARY BORE CHRIST IN HER HEART AND STILL DOES

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 7, Chapter 1; O.C. 7, 245-246)

" Happy are you, Mary, who bore the Creator of the world; but happier still because, before you carried him in your body, you bore him in your Heart."

(Antiphon for Sext on the Feast of the Heart of Mary)

A testimony of St. Augustine's ardent devotion to the Admirable Heart of Mary is found in his book on her Virginity: The divine maternity would not have profited Mary if she had not first borne Jesus Christ in her Heart more happily and advantageously than in her womb.

This is one of the noblest praises one can give to the Heart of the Queen of heaven since, in St. Augustine's words, her Heart is preferred to this divine Mother's blessed womb. And not without reason.

First, this incomparable Virgin conceived the Son of God in her virginal Heart before she conceived

him in her womb.

Secondly, she had made herself worthy of conceiving him in her womb, having first conceived him in her Heart.

Third, she bore him in her womb for only nine months whereas she bore him in her Heart from the very first moment of her life and will carry him there eternally.

Fourth, she bore him in a more noble and holier manner in her Heart than in her womb, since her Heart is a living heaven in which the King of heaven and earth is loved more passionately and glorified more perfectly than in heaven.

Fifth, the Mother of our Savior bore him in her womb only when he was in his temporal and mortal state with all the weaknesses of infancy whereas she will bear eternally in her Heart the glorious, impassible and immortal Jesus. That is what allows St. Augustine to rightly say: She bore him in happier and more excellent fashion in her Heart than in her womb.

Response Gal 4, 19; Luke 1, 42.

R. Happy are you, Oh Virgin Mary, and worthy of all praise.

* You formed Christ in your Heart by your faith and love.

V. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

* You formed Christ ...

55. MARY TREASURED ALL THESE MEMORIES AND PONDERED THEM IN HER HEART

(St. John Eudes, Devotion to the Holy Heart of Mary, Part 1, 3; O.C. 8, 429-431).

" Ark incomparably holy,
Treasure that collects and stores
For us, with heavenly care,
All the mysteries of the Lord."
(Hymn for the Feast of the Heart of

Mary)

The Heart of the Blessed Virgin is the repository and faithful guardian of the marvelous mysteries of the life of our Savior.

Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart (Luke 2, 19 and 51).

Our Lady cherished the mysteries and marvels of her Son's life, in a way, in her material and corporal Heart, the principle of life and seat of love and all the other physical emotions. All the movements, every beat of this virginal Heart, the material functions that it accomplished and the emotions that swayed it, existed solely for Jesus and for the things that concerned him. Her love was spent loving him, her hatred in hating all that is contrary to him, her joy in rejoicing in his glory and his grandeurs, her sorrow and compassion bewailing his trials and sufferings. The same may be said of every emotion of her bodily Heart.

Secondly, Mary kept all these things in her Heart, that is, in the noblest part of her soul, in her

memory, her will and in the inmost recesses of her mind. All the faculties of her soul were constantly applied to recalling, meditating, contemplating and adoring everything that took place in the life of her beloved Son, down to the very smallest details, mindful that everything in him was infinite and adorable.

Third, she kept them in her Heart, that is, in her soul, striving ceaselessly to fulfill these divine words: Place me like a seal on your heart (Song of Songs 8, 6). She worked at imprinting in her soul and her interior life as well as the exterior, a perfect image of the holy life and eminent virtues of her Son. Thus, she kept all these things in her Heart in the most excellent manner possible, namely: by perfect imitation.

Fourth, she kept them in her Heart with the help of the Holy Spirit who was the Spirit of her spirit and Heart of her heart, keeping them for her, suggesting them to her and reminding her of them in due time, so that they might serve to nourish her soul in contemplation as well as render the homage and adoration owed him, and tell them to the holy Apostles and Disciples.

Fifth, in the same way, she kept them in her Heart through her Son Jesus. He filled her completely, possessed and governed her more than her own spirit and heart. He enlightened her with endless inspiration and filled her soul with the greatest respect and veneration for the mysteries which took place within her or in her presence.

Sixth, she kept them in her Heart, employing all her natural and supernatural capacity for loving, in a constant exercise of love, a very strong, pure and ardent love for her Son Jesus, the sole object of her affections, and for all that was taking place in him exteriorly and interiorly, in his humanity and his divinity. Through his love, Jesus was always present, living and reigning in her Heart, because the most powerful means of attracting him and keeping him in us is to love him, as he stated himself: If anyone loves me, we will come to him and make our dwelling place in him (John 14, 23).

Response

Luke 2, 18-20.

R. All were astonished at the report given them by the shepherds.

* Mary treasured all these events and pondered them in her Heart.

V. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, in accord with what they had been told.

* Mary treasured ...

56. THE HEART OF MARY: A MARVELOUS FOUNTAIN

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 2, Chapter 5; O.C. 6, 168. 187-189)

" I am the one who built this beautiful fountain. I made it my dwelling-place. I filled it with an infinity of blessings for you."

An image of the holy Heart of the most blessed Virgin is the marvelous fountain God called forth from the ground when the world began. It is mentioned in these terms in the second chapter of Genesis: A fountain rising from the earth and watering all the surface of the soil (Genesis 2, 6).

Oh my Jesus, I find in the Gospel that one day, when you were going on foot from town to town and from village to village proclaiming the divine word of your Father, you sat down by a fountain known as Jacob's well, to rest from the journey. A woman came to fetch water. You took this opportunity to instruct her. Among other things, you told her you could provide her with water, and that all who would drink this water would never again be thirsty, that is to say, they would never again thirst after the poisoned waters which the world gives to its followers.

In the same place in the Gospel, I also find that your infinite goodness towards men enkindled in your heart an infinite desire to give this water to all of them to drink. One day, when you were in the Temple in the midst of a large number of worshipers, you shouted in a loud voice: If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink (John 7, 37).

What you did then, Lord, you still do every day. Indeed, I see you, not at Jacob's well, but in the middle of the divine fountain referred to here, and I hear you shouting ceaselessly: If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.

Come to me all you who are burdened, tired and thirsty along life's path laden with toil and pain. Come to me here at the fountain, that is to say, not to Jacob's well, but to the Heart of my most worthy Mother, where you will find me, since I have established my dwelling there. It is I who built this beautiful fountain and I did it with much more love for my children than the one I made for the children of Adam when the world began.

I made it for you. I filled it with countless blessings for you. I am there for you, to help you discover the great treasures hidden there and distribute them to you. I am there to refresh you, to give you strength and a new life through the living waters it holds. I am there to satisfy you with the milk and honey and inebriate you with the wine that flows from it. I beg you, come to me!

Lord, you have been extending this invitation for a long time, but so few people open their ears to your voice. If the world refuses to hear the Master, it will not hear his servant either. So what! Let me shout with you so that the servant may copy what the Master does.

Oh, who will give me a voice strong enough to be heard at the four corners of the earth, to call to every man and woman on earth: All you who are thirsty, come and drink the beautiful and refreshing waters of our miraculous fountain. Even if you have no money, hurry and come, for the milk and honey from this fountain are free (Is 55, 1).

Response Is 12, 3. 4; John 4, 14.

R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

* And, on that day, you will say: Give thanks to the Lord and call his name aloud.

V. The water I will give will turn into a spring of living water, welling up to eternal life.

* And, on that day ...

57. THE HEART OF THE MOTHER OF MERCY

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, 5, 2; O.C. 7, 32-33)

" Mother of mercy, look kindly on so many miserable, defenseless, anguished hearts."

Oh most meek and pious Virgin, cast your eyes kindly upon the misery and the pitiful people that fill the world. There are so many poor people, widows, orphans and all sorts of sick people, so many captives and prisoners, so many who have been subjected to the malice of men, so many travelers and pilgrims exposed to danger on land or sea, so many laborers for the Gospel exposed to thousands of hazards to save souls in peril, so many anguished hearts, so many assailed by temptation, so many who suffer the torments of purgatory; above all, there are so many souls in a state of sin and perdition, the greatest of all tribulations.

Finally, Oh most good Virgin, look kindly upon the practically infinite number of miserable people all over the world whose misery constitutes as many voices crying out to you: Oh Mother of mercy, consoler of the afflicted and refuge of sinners, open the eyes of your clemency to our desolation. Open the eyes of your kindness to hear our supplications. These are the miserable children of Eve, banished from their heavenly Father's house, moaning and crying in this valley of tears, appealing to your incomparable kindness. Listen to our sighs and our pleas and see our tears.

Oh most kind and powerful Advocate, show that you really are the Mother of Mercy. Turn the merciful eyes of your maternal pity upon us and deliver us from misery in this world and the next. And once our earthly pilgrimage is over, obtain for us the delight of seeing the face of Jesus, the blessed fruit of your virginal womb. Oh clement, Oh merciful, Oh sweet Virgin Mary! Oh most merciful Mary, let us feel the effects of your clemency. Oh most pious Mary, have pity on us. Oh sweet Mary, let us enjoy the ineffable sweetness of your Heart.

Response

R. You are the blessed Daughter of the Lord, since it is by you that we have entered into communion with the fruit of life.

* Alone and beyond compare, you were found pleasing to Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

V. Do not reject our supplications in our distress, but deliver us from all sorts of danger, Oh Holy Mother of God.

* Alone and beyond compare ...

58. THE ADMIRABLE MOTHER

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 1, Chapter 1; O.C. 6, 20-25)

" Hail Mary, Mother most admirable!"

Oh Admirable Mother, you are rightly given this title for you are truly worthy of admiration in all things and in all ways.

You are Admirable in the angelic beauty and seraphic purity of your virginal body. Admirable in the most eminent holiness of your blessed soul. Admirable in all the faculties of your body and soul which you have put to such holy use for the glory of the Holy of holies.

Admirable you are in all your thoughts, words and deeds.

- In your thoughts which never had any other object than to please only God.
- In your words which were always like God's, faithful to the divine precept: If you speak, speak in words which seem to come from God (1 Peter 4, 11).
- In your deeds which were all consecrated to his divine Majesty.

Admirable in your sufferings which made you worthy of being associated with the Savior in the Redemption of the world.

Admirable in all the states and mysteries of your life which are so many profound marvels.

Admirable in your marvelous Immaculate Conception.

Admirable in your holy Birth, the subject of unspeakable and everlasting joy throughout the universe.

Admirable in your holy Name, Mary.

Admirable in your encounter with the holy Archangel Gabriel when he announced the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation to you.

Admirable in all the wonderful things that happened in you at the happy moment when that incomparable mystery took place.

Admirable in every moment of the nine months during which the Word Incarnate lived in your womb as the only Son of Mary.

Admirable in all the words of the divine Canticle you spoke after visiting your cousin, Elizabeth.

Admirable in each step you took on the road to Bethlehem to bring the Savior into the world.

Admirable in the mystery of his Epiphany, that is, his manifestation to the holy Kings who found the Child in Bethlehem with Mary, his Mother, and adored him with her.

Admirable in the holy conversation you had with your beloved Son, particularly during the first thirty years of his life.

Admirable in the share your charity afforded you in his first miracle at the wedding feast at Cana.

Admirable in your sharing in his Cross and sufferings and in the sacrifice he made of himself to you at the foot of the cross.

Admirable in all that happened when he visited you after his resurrection.

Admirable in the dispositions with which you welcomed the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Admirable in your holy Death, your glorious Assumption and the beatific Life you now have in heaven.

Admirable in all the qualities with which God adorned you: Eldest Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son of God, Bride of the Holy Spirit, Sanctuary of the most Holy Trinity, Queen of men and angels, Mother of Christians, Consoler of the afflicted, Advocate of sinners, Refuge of all who are in trouble.

Response

- R. Holy and Immaculate Virgin, with what praises should I honor you
* Since you bore in your womb the one the heavens could not contain.
- V. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
* Since you bore ...

59. THE MAGNIFICAT

(St. John Eudes, The Admirable Heart of Mary, Book 10, Chapter 2-4;
O.C. 8, 9-10)

" Canticle of the Blessed Virgin's Heart "

I call the Magnificat the true Canticle of the most holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary for several

reasons.

First of all, it originated in her Heart and vibrated there before it found voice on her lips.

Secondly, the words were sung only through the impetus from her Heart, her corporal, spiritual and divine Heart. The corporal Heart of Mary, being filled with acute and extraordinary joy, impelled her most holy mouth to sing this Magnificat with extraordinary fervor and jubilation. Her spiritual Heart, being wholly delighted and enraptured in God, brought forth from her hallowed lips these ecstatic words: And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior (Luke 1, 47). But her divine Heart, that is to say, the divine Child who was hidden in her blessed womb and dwelling in her Heart, the soul of her soul, the spirit of her spirit, and the Heart of her Heart, is the primary author of this Canticle. It is this divine Heart which inspired the mind of the holy Mother with the thoughts and truths contained in the Canticle. It is the Heart of Jesus who pronounces through her its prophetic utterances.

Thirdly, the Magnificat is the Canticle of the Heart of the Mother of love, that is, the Canticle of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit and the Heart of the Father and the Son. He is also the Heart and the Spirit of the Virgin Mother, pervading and possessing her so completely that her very presence and voice filled with the same spirit St. Zachary, St. Elizabeth and her unborn child, St. John the Baptist.

Finally, it is the Canticle of the Heart and the love of the most lovable Virgin, because it is the divine love inflaming her utterly that inspired her to pronounce the words of this marvelous Canticle.

My Spirit rejoices in God my Savior

Mary rejoiced in God, that is to say, because God is infinitely powerful, wise, good, just and merciful, and because he so admirably displays his power, his goodness and all his other attributes in the mystery of the Incarnation and the redemption of the world.

Mary rejoiced in God, her Savior, because he had come into the world to save and redeem her first and foremost, preserving her from original sin and overwhelming her with his graces and favors in such an abundance that he made her his Mediatrix and Cooperator in the salvation of mankind.

Her Heart was overcome with joy because God looked favorably upon her, that is, loved and approved of the humility of his handmaid, in which he found most singular happiness and pleasure.

St. Augustine says that this is the cause of Mary's joy - that he beheld the humility of his handmaid - as if she were saying: "I rejoice because of the grace that God has granted to me, for it is from him that I have received the reason for this joy; and I rejoice in him because I love his gifts for love of him."

Mary rejoiced for the great things that God's omnipotent goodness accomplished in her, the greatest wonders that had ever come to pass in all the preceding centuries, and the greatest that will ever take place in all the ages to come.

Mary rejoiced not only for the favors she had received from God, but also for the graces and mercy he showered upon all men disposed to receive his priceless gifts.

These words reveal to us the ineffable joy which filled the Heart of the Mother of the Savior at the moment of the Incarnation of the Son of God within her, and during all the rest of her life.

Response

Luke 1, 46. 49. 48.

R. My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

* For the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his Name.

V. From this day, all generations will call me blessed.

* For the Almighty ...

SAINT JOHN EUDES

60. SAINT JOHN EUDES' LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

(St. John Eudes, Last Will and Testament, O.C. 12, 169-175)

" I bequeath this Heart as something which belongs to me."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and in honor of and union with the last will and testament made by my Jesus on the final day of his mortal life on earth, I am drawing up this will solely for the glory of my God, and in the following form:

I bequeath myself with all my heart to my Savior, that I may unite myself with the perfect faith of his most Holy Mother, his Apostles, his saints and the entire Church. And, in union with this faith, I protest before heaven and earth that I wish to die as a child of the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, and in the belief of all the Christian truths she teaches. I offer myself to God so that I may suffer, with the help of God's grace, all imaginable torments and all possible deaths to that end.

With all my heart I bequeath myself to the infinite love through which my Savior died on the Cross for me and for all men. In union with this love, I accept and embrace my death, whenever and however it may please him to send it, in honor of and thanksgiving for his holy death and that of his glorious

Mother. I most humbly beseech him, by the Holy Heart of this Blessed Mother, and by his own adorable Heart broken and shattered for love of us and by his sufferings on the Cross, to grant me the grace to die in his love, through his love and for love of him.

To the fullest extent of my will, I give myself to that incomprehensible love through which my Jesus and my all-good Mother gave me their most lovable Heart in a special manner. In union with this same love, I bequeath this Heart as something which belongs to me, and of which I can dispose for the glory of my God.

I bequeath it, I repeat, to the little Congregation of Jesus and Mary, to be the portion, the treasure, the chief patron, the heart, life and rule of the true children of this Congregation. In like manner, I offer and dedicate the Congregation to this divine Heart, to be consecrated to its honor and praise for time and eternity. I beseech and urge all my beloved brothers to strive to render to it and have rendered to it all the honor within their power; to celebrate with the most fervent devotion possible its Feasts and Offices on the days indicated in our Proper, and to give exhortations on this subject in all their missions; to strive to imprint on their hearts a perfect likeness of the virtues of this most Holy Heart, and to look upon it and follow it as the pristine rule of their lives and conduct. I entreat them to give themselves to Jesus and Mary in all their actions and exercises, in order to perform them in the love, humility and all the other dispositions of their Sacred Heart, so that, by this means, they may love and glorify God with a Heart truly worthy of God, *Corde magno et animo volenti*, and that they may be like unto the Heart of God and true children of the Heart of Jesus and Mary.

I likewise bequeath this most precious Heart to all my dearest daughters, the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, to the Carmelites of Caen, and to all my other spiritual children, particularly those who have a special love for their most unworthy father and whose names are written in the book of life. I give all of them, and each one individually, to this most kind Heart for the aforesaid intentions indicated in the preceding article, and I promise them that, if my Savior grants me forgiveness, as I hope from his infinite mercy and the incomparable charity of his Blessed Mother, I will take very special care of them in heaven. I hope that God may grant me the grace to assist them in their hour of death, in company with the most kind Virgin.

In conclusion, I bequeath myself with my whole heart to my dearest Jesus, that I may unite myself with all the holy dispositions with which he, his most Holy Mother and all the saints died, embracing for love of him all the pains of mind and body which may be mine during my last days, protesting to him that I wish my final breath to be an act of purest love for him, and imploring him to accept and reserve for my hour of death all the sentiments and acts of religion indicated here.

Response Phil 4, 9; 1 Cor 1, 10.

R. Brothers, live according to what you have learned and accepted, what you have heard me say and seen me do.

* Then will the God of peace be with you.

V. I appeal to you in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ to make up the differences between you.

* Then will the God of peace be with you.

61. SAINT JOHN EUDES' VOW OF MARTYRDOM

(St. John Eudes, O.C. 12, 135-137)

" Elevation to Jesus to offer myself to him as a sacrifice and victim which must be immolated to his glory and his pure love."

Oh my most lovable Jesus, I adore you and glorify you endlessly in the most bloody martyrdom you suffered through your Passion and Cross.

I adore you and bless you with all my might in the state of offering and victim in which you are present in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, where you are continually sacrificed for the glory of your Father and out of love for us.

I honor and venerate you in the most sorrowful martyrdom suffered at the foot of the Cross by your Holy Mother.

I praise you in the martyrdoms of your saints who endured so many atrocious torments for love of you.

I adore and bless all the thoughts, intents and infinite love you have had from all eternity with regard to all the blessed Martyrs there ever were in your holy Church since the beginning and will continue to be until the end of the world.

I adore and venerate, in every way I can, your extreme desire and most ardent thirst to suffer and die in your members until the end of the world, in order to fulfill the mystery of your Holy passion and glorify your Father through suffering and death until the end of time.

In honor of and in homage to all these things, and in union with the boundless love in which you offered yourself to the Father from the very first moment of your Incarnation, as a sacrifice and victim, in order to be immolated for his glory and for love of us through the most sorrowful martyrdom of the Cross; in union also with the love of your Holy Mother and all you holy Martyrs, I offer and abandon myself, I vow and consecrate myself to you, my Lord Jesus, in the capacity of sacrifice and victim, that I may suffer in body and soul, according to your pleasure and with the help of your holy grace, all manner

of pain and torments, even to shedding my blood and sacrificing my life for you through any death pleasing to you; and this, for your sole glory and for pure love of you.

I solemnly promise, Oh my Lord Jesus, never to revoke, that is to say, never to make a formal act of disavowal of this my oblation, consecration and sacrifice of myself to the glory of your Divine Majesty. And should there arise an occasion on which I should have to choose between dying or renouncing your holy faith, or else doing something of consequence against your divine will, I make a vow and promise to you, as firm and constant as possible, while trusting in your infinite goodness and the help of your grace, to confess, acknowledge, adore and glorify you in the presence of everyone, at the price of my blood, my life and all the martyrdoms and torments imaginable, and to suffer a thousand deaths, with all the tortures of earth and hell, rather than deny you or do anything serious that is contrary to your holy will.

Oh good Jesus, receive and accept this vow of mine and this sacrifice which I make to you of my life and my being in homage to and by the merits of the most divine sacrifice you made of yourself to your Father on the Cross. Look upon me henceforth as an offering and victim dedicated to be wholly immolated to the glory of your holy name. Grant, through your great mercy, that my whole life may be a perpetual sacrifice of love and praise for you. Let me live a life that may perpetually imitate and honor your own holy life and that of your Blessed Mother and your holy martyrs. May never a day go by without my suffering something for love of you. May I die a death in keeping with your holy death.

Response Phil 1, 23; 3,8; 1, 21; 2, 17.

R. I long to be free from this life and be with Christ. For his sake, I have forfeited everything, I have accounted all else rubbish so that Christ may be my wealth.

* To me, life is Christ, but then death would bring me something more.

V. Even if my blood is to be poured out as a libation over the sacrificial service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

* To me ...

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II
WRITINGS
OF
OTHER AUTHORS
OF THE FRENCH SCHOOL
OF SPIRITUALITY

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PIERRE DE BERULLE (1575-1629)

62. JESUS CHRIST, THE FATHER'S SERVANT AND ADORER

(Bérulle, Jesus' Grandeurs, II, Migne 183-184)

" You are that select servant who alone serves God as he deserves to be served."

Oh Jesus, in the eternal Father's house you are both Son and servant: ever Son and ever servant, only Son and only servant, only Son by nature among all God's children, and only select and singular servant among all God's servants.

You are that chosen servant in whom alone the Father takes pleasure: Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I am pleased (Is 42, 1). You are that select servant who alone serves God as he deserves to be served, that is, by an infinite service since he is infinitely worthy of being served and adored. Indeed, before you that supreme majesty could be served and adored neither by men nor by angels by such service, that is, in a manner befitting its greatness, the divinity of its essence and the majesty of its Persons. From all eternity, an infinitely adorable God has existed, but there was not yet an infinite adorer; there was always a God worthy of being infinitely loved and served, but no infinite man nor servant habilitated to render infinite service and love.

Oh Jesus, you are now this adorer, this man, this servant with the infinite power, quality and dignity to fulfill this duty totally and render this divine homage. You are that loving and adoring man. You are the servant of the supreme majesty equally worthy of being loved, served and honored. Oh greatness of Jesus, even in his state of debasement and service to be the only one worthy of rendering homage perfectly to the Divinity!

Thus, Oh Jesus, you are humble, great and admirable! So you are both vassal and sovereign! You are both the Son and the servant of the Most High! You are both God and man! These different natures, states and mysteries exist and subsist in one and the same person whom I adore and love, whom I want to acknowledge and serve in all his greatness, offices and volitions.

By your grace and might, in your honor and in honor of the love and service you render the eternal Father and deign to render even to men, grant that they may come to know, love and serve you. May men contemplate your greatness, give and consecrate their lives to yours. May they penetrate the marvels and secrets of your life.

Oh Jesus, you are life itself and your life is dual since you have a dual nature. Each one of your natures, the human and the divine, is living and is holily and divinely alive. Your life is doubly hidden, that is to say, it is hidden in its own greatness and sublimity and in its admirable debasement and humility.

Response Heb 10, 5. 6. 9; Ps 40, 9.

R. On coming into the world, Christ said: You did not accept the holocausts or sin offerings, so I said:
* Here I am, Lord, I have come to obey your will.

V. My God, to do your will is my delight and your law is deep in my heart.

* Here I am ...

63. CHRIST'S OFFERING TO HIS FATHER

(Bérulle, The Life of Jesus, 27, Migne 488-492)

" Oncoming into the world, Christ said:
obey your will."

Here I am, I have come to

Oncoming into the world, Christ said: You did not accept holocausts or offerings, but you prepared a body for me... then I said: Here I am, I have come, O God, to obey your will (Heb 10, 5-7).

The Gospel reports a heavenly conversation between an angel and the Blessed Virgin, but here is a conversation far more heavenly and worthy of consideration. The speaker is the Incarnate Word and he speaks from the first moment of being made flesh. His topic is his Incarnation, the purpose and use of this august mystery and the New testament as a replacement for the Old. The person he is speaking to is the living God, the God of the Old Testament, the God by whom the faith and worship of the Old Covenant was established, the God to whom were offered sacrifices which he no longer accepted in order to make way for the New Covenant. In a word, it is God his Father, author of the mystery of the Incarnation, the God who, in this mystery, gave a body to his only Son, clothing him with human nature: You prepared a body for me.

Jesus offers and presents to God his body which is destined, consecrated and already marked for service, for the cross and death. He does so as an offering to the glory of his Father and the salvation of the world, in place of all the sacrificial offerings God his Father has received to this day. Jesus who comes into the world with so many offices and qualities, seems to put these aside and, in his first colloquy with God his Father, assumes the condition of sacrificial offering and presents himself as such to him. It is his first gesture with respect to his Father, his first exercise by which he wills to take the place of all previous hosts.

Here I am. I come to obey your will. He knows and accepts God's plan for him. He aligns his will to God's. He begins to exercise the condition of sacrificial offering.

So Jesus comes into the world and offers to God his Father the first use of his being, of his life and of his will, the firstfruits of his heart and of his thoughts, of the fruits of that tree of life appropriately planted in the paradise of the Virgin; his first volition, the one that was to direct all the others and all the states of his life on earth. This first volition of his is so noble and of such consequence and effectiveness that the Apostle adds in his letter to the Hebrews: By this will we have been sanctified (Heb 10, 10). A great pronouncement which teaches us that the internal oblation and first volition of Jesus when he came into the world is the origin of our salvation, a kind of original justice we have, no longer in Adam, but in Jesus. It is the new justice we have in the new Adam, one far more excellent than the one we were destined to have in the old Adam.

That mutual and reciprocal will of the Father with regard to his Son, making him a sacrificial victim, and of the Son towards the Father, offering himself to him as such, is the source of all that we might possess on earth and in heaven. It is the foundation of the New Testament condition. It abolishes the first regime to establish the second.

Let us adore the first oblation and volition of Jesus' soul. In this exercise and this volition of Jesus is comprehensively included, originally and divinely, the salvation and life of the universe. During the entire course of our lives, the Spirit of Jesus derives and imprints in our minds the salutary effects of this oblation, of this interior life, of Jesus' relationship and communication with God his Father. Its effects are applied to us by the generation of Jesus in us by Baptism, and by all the actions and institutions of the Christian religion. They constitute so many new links which unite us to Jesus and enable us to share in the effects of his grace, to participate in his holy life and to receive his holy spirit in our souls.

Response

Heb 10, 5. 6. 9; Ps 40, 9.

R. On coming into the world, Christ said: You did not accept the holocausts or sin offerings, so I said:
* Here I am, Lord, I have come to obey your will.

V. My God, to do your will is my delight and your law is deep in my heart.
* Here I am ...

64. THE VIRGIN'S FIAT

(Bérulle, The Life of Jesus, 15; Migne 455-459)

" Living word penetrating to the very bosom of the eternal Father
from which is drawn the only Son of God to be lodged and
carried in Mary's virginal womb."

The Virgin accepts the angel's message, obeys God's word and says: I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your will (Luke 1, 38).

This "Fiat" of the Blessed Virgin is not a word of common piety and ordinary significance. It is a humble yet powerful word in which heaven rejoices. It consecrates the salvation of the world and draws the eternal Word to earth from the heights of heaven. When this humble, silent and modest Virgin opens her mouth to utter it, she is in the hands of the eternal Word who is with her, will take flesh in her and wants her to become his Mother. It is this divine Word who inspires this word and imprints this disposition in it.

This later word of the Virgin to the angel is quite different from her first. It does not convey

astonishment like the first, but consent. Not human interrogation, but divine resolution. Not hesitation, but ardent inclination towards the fulfillment of God's will and of his work. Noble, memorable and precious word! Word of grace, love and life, a life that will never end! Indeed, it gives life to the living God and gives a henceforth eternal state to the eternal Son of God himself. Let us not search for diamonds, but for heavenly hearts and divine spirits in which to engrave this holy word, make it eternal and imprint it on a background equal to its worth. For, it is also written in the book of life and in the divine heart of Jesus and Mary.

How powerful, fertile and fortunate this word is! What secrets, favors and effects it contains! It is uttered by the Virgin at a very holy and happy time for her, the time of her greatest power and of the greatest fertility which will ever be given to any creature, that is to say, at the very time where she is about to conceive and bring forth the Incarnate Word, who is the virtue, light and power of the Father.

When, therefore, the Virgin pronounces this word, she is in a particular state of grace: a divine state, an admirable disposition and subject to excellent movements and effects. She humbles herself at that time and, in so doing, is elevated above the heavens. Then, she melts in God's hands as nothing before the Creator, and becomes the Mother of her very Creator. At that moment she enters into his greatness through her own debasement. She enters into her maternity through her virginity, into her sovereignty through her obedience. At that moment, she makes herself the Lord's servant and becomes his Mother, both Mother and servant at the same time, ever Mother and ever servant, just as her Son is both God and man at the same time, ever God and ever man. Then also she remains a Virgin, yet becomes a Mother. These two benefits of the heavenly court which were heretofore incompatible, are now united in Mary by the privilege befitting the dignity of her role and her person. This is so true that not only is her virginity preserved, it is elevated and crowned, made more flourishing than ever by her maternity. Likewise, her maternity is prepared in holy fashion, happily acquired and divinely fulfilled in her virginity.

Response

cf. Luke 1, 31. 42.

R. Oh Virgin Mary, receive the message the angel brings you from the Lord: You will conceive a son who will be both God and man.

* So that you may be called blessed among all women.

V. In truth, you will bear a child without loss of your virginity.

* So that

65. THE VIRGIN'S SILENCE AT THE BIRTH OF JESUS

(Bérulle, Short Devotional Works, Rotureau, LX, 233-235)

but to " Mary's silence is not due to stuttering or an inability to speak, enlightenment and rapture."

(At the time of his birth) the Son of Man is silent, even incapable of speaking, and it is for our sake that he is in such a state. This state of silence which I see in Jesus enraptures me and draws me into silence myself as I see it enrapturing and drawing his most holy Mother into silence too. It is most appropriate for honoring such great and profound moments.

It is the Virgin's lot at this holy time to be silent. It is her state, her way, her life. Her life is indeed one of silence, adoring the eternal Word. Seeing before her eyes, in her womb and in her arms the divine Word, the substantive Word of the Father, mute and reduced to silence in the state of his childhood, Mary enters into silence anew and is transformed there as was the Incarnate Word, her Son, her God and her sole love.

Her life goes on thus from silence to silence, from the silence of adoration to the silence of transformation, her senses and her spirit conspiring equally to form and perpetuate in her this life of silence. Yet a subject so great, so present and proper to her would be worthy of her words and praises. For, to whom does Jesus belong more closely than to Mary who is his Mother? She alone is his Mother on earth without there being a Father, as God is his Father in heaven without there being a Mother there. Who has a better right to speak about him than she who is both mother and father to him and shares with no other being the quality with which he clothed her? Who knows Jesus' state, titles and debasements better than Mary in whose womb he remained for nine months and from whom he took the tiny body that hides the splendor of his divinity as a light cloud hides the sun and as a draped veil hides the true sanctuary?

Who could speak more worthily, more highly, more divinely of things so great, so deep, so divine, than she who is the Mother of the eternal Word, in whom and through whom these very things took place? Who better than she who is the only person the Trinity chose and linked to itself to accomplish these marvels? Yet, she remains silent, enraptured by the silence of her Son, Jesus. It is one of the sacred and divine effects of Jesus' silence to put the most holy Mother of Jesus into a life of silence; a humble, profound silence, one which adores the incarnate wisdom with more holiness and more eloquence than the words of all the angels and saints.

This silence of the Virgin is not due to stuttering or an inability to speak; it is a silence of enlightenment and rapture, one more eloquent in praising Jesus than eloquence itself. It is a mighty and divine effect in the order of grace, that is to say, it is a silence brought on by the silence of Jesus imprinting this divine effect on his Mother, drawing her into his own silence and absorbing into his divinity every word and thought of his creature.

Thus is it marvelous to see that in Jesus' state of silence and infancy, all the world speaks but Mary does not, Jesus' silence having more power to hold her in a sacred silence than the words of the angels and the saints have to make her speak about things so worthy of praise, things which heaven and earth unanimously celebrate and adore. The angels speak about them among themselves and to the shepherds, but Mary remains silent. The shepherds hurry about and speak, but Mary remains silent. The kings arrive, speak and cause the whole town to speak, the whole province and whole sacred synod of Judea, but Mary retreats within herself and is silent. Simon speaks in the temple and so does the prophetess Anna and all who await the salvation of Israel, but Mary presents, gives, receives and takes back her Son in silence. Such is the power and secret influence of Jesus' silence on the Virgin's spirit and heart that it keeps her divinely occupied and enraptured in silence.

Furthermore, during the entire period of Jesus' childhood, we have but these words reported to us about the Virgin's conduct and her devotion to her Son and the things said about him and accomplished in him: Mary carefully treasured all these memories and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2, 19). Such are the state and occupation of the Virgin Mary, thus is her life with respect to Jesus during his holy childhood.

Response

Luke 2, 18-20.

R. All were astonished at the report given them by the shepherds.

* Mary, however, treasured all these events and reflected on them in her Heart.

V. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, in accord with what they had been told.

* Mary, however, ...

CHARLES DE CONDREN (1588 - 1641)

66. PREPARATION FOR CELEBRATING MASS

(Charles de Condren, Letters, Auvray Edition, 126-128)

" How to be pure members of Jesus Christ in this action."

Always begin your preparation by purifying yourself in the presence of Jesus Christ who is the sovereign Priest and source of the spirit of the priesthood. Purify yourself of sin, self and the world around you: these are the three things which may occupy in us the place Jesus should and leave no place for him.

Once you have made your act of humiliation, contrition and renunciation of self concerning these three impediments, pray him to purify you himself. He washed his Apostles' feet before the first eucharistic celebration. He told St. Peter that unless he let him wash his feet, he would not share in his communion. Unless he washes us in his blood and we wash ourselves in spirit, we cannot be worthy of his sacrifice.

Next, give yourself to him to make the sacrificial offering not only in his spirit and intention, but also in his name and person. For we must annihilate ourselves in this action and be pure members of Jesus Christ in it, offering and doing what he is offering and doing himself as if we were not ourselves. We cannot forget ourselves enough in this holy ministry, nor say simply enough in Jesus Christ: This is my Body.

Thirdly, offer Jesus to the divine Majesty in honor of all that he is, in thanksgiving for all his blessings to his Church and even to all creatures, and in satisfaction for all men's offenses, in order that the divine Majesty may receive in Jesus Christ the homage and worship due its divine perfections, the thanksgiving its charity deserves and the reparation of its violated honor.

Offer it to him also as the prayer of the Church and yours, for Jesus is and contains all that we can desire and ask of God. Our most perfect and most fervent prayer must be that this sacrifice be fulfilled in us and in our brothers and sisters.

You must remember that the sacrifice you offer is not offered just by the Son of God alone, but rather that it is the sacrifice of the Head and its Members, of the whole Jesus Christ, and that includes his Church. He, indeed, communicates his priesthood to her and she offers the sacrifice with him and he offers it with her. At the altar, you are, therefore, a member not just of Jesus Christ, but also of the Blessed Virgin, of all the Saints in heaven and of all the faithful on earth. You must, therefore, forget yourself to be what they are, and offer the sacrifice in their name and person as well as for their intentions and in their spirit. At the altar, you must also be in spirit what they are and cease to be yourself.

Response

cf. Luke 22, 19. 20; Proverbs 9, 5.

R. This is my Body, given up for you. This cup is the new Covenant of my blood shed for you.

* Do this in memory of me.

V. Come and eat my bread and drink the wine I have prepared for you.

* Do this in memory of me.

67. HOLY COMMUNION

(Charles de Condren, Assorted Selections, Auvray Edition of the Letters, 541-543)

" Communion gives us Jesus Christ, but it also gives him to us."

1 - We have to receive holy communion first of all so that Jesus Christ may be all he should be in us and so that we can stop being all that we are, the idea being to lose ourselves in him and deprive ourselves of self.

Secondly, so that he may come and destroy in us all that is contrary to God, such as Adam's generation and its revolt, the reign of sin, Satan's dominion and the domination that we usurp by our self-love. He has to be allowed to exercise real justice in our souls, crucifying the "old man" and establishing God's kingdom. That is how our imperfections should make us long for communion prompted by the zeal we should have to counter them.

Thirdly, the gifts and graces God, in his bounty, chooses to lavish upon us should incite us to receive communion so that it may please Our Lord to come into our hearts to take possession of his gifts and treasures and prevent us from usurping this wealth and appropriating it for our own benefit out of malice.

We must receive communion to obey Jesus Christ's desire to receive us in him, in his life and his being, destroying our present life and being to make us become what he is, namely: life, love, truth and virtue for God. We must also receive communion to obey the will he has to count us among his members in whom he may live for his Father and through whom he may function in this time frame as he did during his mortal life.

Although our spiritual advantage may prompt us to receive frequently, that should not be our first motive, nor is it the best one nor the most compelling.

Our first obligation is to conform to the desire Jesus Christ has to receive and possess us, since not only does communion give us Jesus Christ, but it gives us to him, as he himself states when he says that whoever receives him remains in him. Now, the desire he has to receive us is of the same scope as his charity and of the same dimension as the rights over us and love for us given him by his merits. It is a monstrous infidelity to thwart these desires of Jesus Christ if no real impediment beyond our control stands in the way.

2 - St. Paul teaches that we are the fullness of Jesus Christ who fills himself with us and grows in us as his spiritual members. We can call upon the comparison of the soul of a child which does not grow in substance since that is immortal and not subject to change, but in its actual perfection and fulfillment when the child's body, with proper nourishment, grows and fills the capacity the soul has to vivify and possess it. So too, through communion, Our Lord fills himself with us, and we cause him harm when we abstain from communion, much like a person who would take food away from the child and keep him from growing would harm his soul by preventing it from reaching its full development.

3 - The Son of God is not content with being offered up to his Father in just one place; his wish is to be offered up in several. Although it is one and the same sacrifice, not only the sacrifice itself but its extent also renders homage to God. Now, the soul that receives communion is really an altar containing Jesus Christ and offering him to God continually, not only by intention or thought as we can offer him

without physically receiving communion, but really and in truth in itself. Jesus Christ finds more delight and Godmore glory in being thus offered up in all souls than on all the altars throughout the world.

Response

1 Cor 10, 16-17.

R. Is not the cup of blessing we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ?

* Is not the bread we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

V. Because the loaf is one bread, we, many though we are, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

* Is not the bread ...

68. THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Charles de Condren, Letters, Auvray Edition, 457-460)

" The Holy Spirit makes us enter into the grace of the Son of God and of all his mysteries."

Pentecost has to be the most important feast of all the year. From the standpoint of God's grandeurs, the Feast of the Holy Trinity is the most important, but Easter is the one the world celebrates most, whereas the most useful of them all is Pentecost.

Indeed, if the Spirit had not been given, the Son of God would have taken on our humanity and shed his blood for us uselessly. Without the Holy Spirit we could have done nothing in the line of our salvation for we could not have benefited from the graces Jesus Christ merited for us. The Holy Spirit is the one who applies them to us and makes us enter into the grace of the Son of God and of all his mysteries. We must, therefore, acknowledge the importance of this gift and let that consideration motivate us in welcoming it, recognizing the need for faith to introduce us to knowledge of the Spirit.

If somebody promised us the mind of Aristotle or Solomon or Adam or some other talented person, we could consider that advantageous. If he went further and offered us the mind of an angel so that we could converse with men like angels, or the spirit of a seraphim, no doubt we could consider that a favor beyond our limited ability to thank that person adequately. Well, God, in this feast, gives us, not the spirit of a rare individual nor of an angel, but it is his very own Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, Spirit of the eternal Father and Spirit of the Word that is given to us. It is the Spirit of the God-man, not that it originates in the humanity of Jesus, no, it proceeds from the Person who sustains and maintains that holy humanity.

So it is that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. When God gave us his Spirit, he gave us the Spirit of the crucified Jesus, of Jesus the child and of the dying Jesus. The Spirit given to us is not only a spirit of might and glory, but also one of mortification, scorn and debasement. As a result, if we want him to come to us, we must begin by renouncing self and placing ourselves in the hands of the Spirit for, if we focus on ourselves, we will never live in the Spirit of Jesus.

I suggest you do three things for the Feast of Pentecost.

First, adore the Holy Spirit as he is himself, proceeding from the Father and the Son, in his kindness, charity, love and other perfections which are properly his. Next, adore him in all the effects of his action, for there is no fruit or good action produced without its being commissioned by the Holy Spirit. When the Word became man at the Incarnation, it was through a mission of the Holy Spirit, his noblest; and that is also the case at Christ's birth and in all the other states of the life of the Son of God. The Holy Spirit's mission is evident in the sanctification of each soul in particular and of the Church as a whole. So, we must adore all the missions of the Holy Spirit and honor all the events connected with them.

The second practice for the Feast of Pentecost is to renounce self in order to enter into Jesus' dispositions and inclinations, begging the Holy Spirit to make us do so by having us renounce completely our own movements and impulses.

The third is to pray for the Holy Spirit's interests and give up our own. You will pray that the world prepare itself to welcome him worthily, that his name be hallowed and his reign established in all souls. Lastly, you may also beg forgiveness of the Holy Spirit for all your past infidelities with respect to his graces.

Response

Gal 4,6; 3,26; 2 Tim 1,7.

R. In Christ Jesus, each one of you is a son of God because of your faith.
* God has sent forth into your hearts the Spirit of his Son which cries out: Abba, Father.

V. The Spirit God has given us is no cowardly spirit, but rather one that makes us strong, loving and

wise.

* God has sent forth ...

JEAN-BAPTISTE NOULLEAU (1604-1672)

69. CHRISTIAN LIFE: INCORPORATION TO CHRIST

(Jean-Baptiste Noullelleau, priest of the Oratory which he joined in 1624, a year after St. John Eudes, The Spirit of Christianity, (1664), 525-534)

" Whoever wants to go to God must be united to and incorporated to Jesus Christ as a part of himself, in order to reach that goal with him."

There are three ways of expressing what the Christian religion consists in, all three making one, that is, the very intimate union of the soul with Jesus Christ and, through him, to God.

The first one: Christian worship consists entirely in Jesus Christ's constant contemplation of God, his communion with him and, so to speak his perpetual journey towards him.

The second: Christian worship consists entirely in adoring God in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as well as in loving God after the Heart of Jesus Christ. This is the true adoration of all Christians in spirit and in truth. What a fantastic way to adore God as he wants to be adored and to do so in the spirit of Jesus

Christ! What better means of loving him truly as he wants to be loved than to love him, so to speak, with the very heart of Jesus Christ which belongs to us and which we can use for that purpose, as well as his whole person, whenever we want, in that Spirit and that Heart which are more ours than we are ourselves, to adore as he adored, love as he loved, suffer as he suffered, live as he lived, and die as he died.

The third way: Christian worship consists in adopting in all things Our Lord Jesus Christ's sentiments, his way of doing things, thinking as he thought, wanting only what he wanted, doing only what he did. Thus we will be interiorly and exteriorly perfect copies of this perfect original prototype of all Christian souls. I do things but I no longer do them on my own; it is Jesus acting in me. I constantly present myself before God as a creature unable to live without him, but I no longer do so on my own, Jesus is the one who presents himself in me as one of his members.

In order to understand these three ways and assess the dignity of Jesus Christ as the character, impression and form of all the perfection and holiness of Christians, let us always remember that Jesus Christ is that Man, that unique Creature among all the created beings of the world, in whom God placed and focused all his spirit, thoughts, concerns, all his heart, love, graces and treasures. God put everything in this Man, in him he poured everything to the limit.

So, whoever expects to be considered by God must be in this Man, the sole object of God's consideration and vision since he has eyes for him alone. Whoever wants to be loved by God must be in Jesus Christ, the sole object of God's love since he has a heart only to love him. Whoever wants to go to God must be united to Jesus Christ and incorporated to him as a part of himself in order to go to God with him. Our God loves Jesus Christ, he draws to himself only Jesus Christ. Finally, whoever wants a share in God's graces and infinite mercies must be totally in that Man in order to draw them upon himself, totally in his spirit and his heart.

Response Eph 1, 5. 4. 6.

R. He predestined us through Jesus Christ to be his adopted sons.

* He chose us in Christ.

V. This is the grace he bestowed on us in his beloved Son.

* He chose us in Christ.

JEAN-JACQUES OLIER (1608-1657)

70. CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE

(Jean-Jacques Olier, Letter 293, II, 121-125)

" What previously was in Jesus Christ alone, he now shares with us."

We have to consider the most holy sacrament of the altar as a living bread, not a dead one: I am the bread of life (John 6, 48). We must look upon this sacred bread not simply as making our souls holy and providing them with an increase of grace. If that were the case, we would be communing to the grace of Jesus Christ, not to Jesus Christ himself who says in the Gospel (John 6, 57), according to St. Hilary's interpretation, that he makes us commune to his entire self, just as his Father makes him commune to all the Father is.

The soul in communion with Jesus Christ participates in his love for God and neighbor, and in an increase in charity for God and for all his Church. What previously was in Jesus Christ alone, he now shares with us, so that the life of Jesus loving souls fills our hearts, expands our chests, attunes us enthusiastically to the needs of the Church. The soul which previously languished for love of its brothers, becomes ardently in love with Jesus.

And since he is a living bread as well as a life giving one, Jesus pervades the intentions of the person he vivifies and nourishes; he sees that person's needs and wishes; he nourishes the part that wants life and strengthens the appetite that calls for and desires him. The disciples at Emmaüs were enlightened by Jesus Christ when they broke bread with him. Light has the property of dispelling darkness. Our

souls are wrapped in ignorance. Jesus Christ enlightens us when he comes into our souls, reveals our brothers' needs to us, makes us understand the misery of their condition and touches us that we might show kindness and compassion for their souls.

The original religion is in Jesus Christ and resides in its fullness in the depths of his divine soul which is the real religious of God, his Father. As august founder of the Christian religion, Jesus made the religion he established on earth a participation in his own. If there is a true adorer, he is so because he participates in the adoration and praise proper to Jesus. If there is a true worshiper, it is because that person participates and communes in Jesus' prayer. This is so true that the masterpiece of our perfection and our devotion is to enter into that communion with Jesus Christ which makes his interior being and ours one and the same through participation. And this happens in the Blessed Sacrament. It is what caused all the Fathers of the Church to say that holy communion is our highest point of achievement. For, in the Eucharist, the adoration of Jesus Christ becomes ours and his holy prayer, penetrating our interior being, makes it pray Jesus' prayer.

Response

Matt 26, 26; Job 31, 31.

R. During the meal, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying:

* Take this bread and eat it. This is my body.

V. The people of my household said: Who will give us his flesh that we might be filled?

* Take this bread ...

71. CHRIST, THE LIVING HOST, TRANSFORMS US INTO HIMSELF

(Jean-Jacques Olier, Selected Thoughts, Letourneau Edition, 58-61)

" He communicates the movements of his own Heart to us."

In the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lord is a host who prays, praises and adores his Father. He is a host offering himself to satisfy the Father's justice and, in general, to render him all the praises of religion. He is also a host desirous of uniting himself to souls and giving them his interior sentiments, along with his Person, to make of them victims capable of giving similar homage to the divine Majesty. Holy communion is, indeed, the real means for making Christians capable of doing their duty with respect to God. Our Lord loves, prays, adores and offers himself in the soul that welcomes him, as on a new altar and in a new ciborium. He communicates to that soul the movements of his own heart. As they are all directed to the glory of God, the person who welcomes them fully becomes perfectly religious with respect to the divine Majesty. The dispositions of prayer, penance, and thanksgiving and the other dispositions which Our Lord inspires, those which make a person enter into the dispositions of a sacrificial offering, make it possible for such a person to fulfill his duties to God.

In this way, the divine Savior brings about a spiritual consummation in that person while awaiting the corporal consummation; one by interior disposition while awaiting the absolute consummation. When this does happen, the soul will be entirely clothed with Jesus and his glory; it will be transformed into him, so perfect will the union be that they will be the same gifts, the same graces, the same glory, the same spirit, the same Christ.

Then will take place the perfect fulfillment of Christian religion. All the members of Jesus Christ will worship God in him, as consecrated hosts worship by way of the same substance which is that of Jesus concealed under the sacred species. All the saints in heaven will be consumed in him, like one and the same flame emanating from the several wicks of a single torch permits them all to be consumed in the one fire. The divine Savior begins this marvel here on earth through holy communion, by making one single host to the glory of God out of all Christians. If we could see inside a soul which has just received holy communion, we would perceive something like a gold nugget or a flower in a crystal setting. There Jesus praises, blesses and glorifies his Father as in a living tabernacle and delights in it far more than on an altar or in a gold ciborium.

For, not satisfied with having worshiped his Father during his lifetime, with having offered his sacrifice on Calvary and continuing to do him homage in his own person, Jesus enters into our hearts by the Holy Eucharist and, in that masterpiece of his love, finds the means of satisfying the full extent of his devotion and proclaiming everywhere the glory of his Father.

Response

John 6, 56; Deut 4, 7.

R. He who eats my body and drinks my blood

* He remains in me and I in him.

V. What great nation is there that has gods so close as the Lord, our God, is to us?

* He remains in me ...

72. THE LIFE OF JESUS IN MARY

(Jean-Jacques Olier, Short Works, About the Life of Jesus and Mary, The Christian Day, Paris (1925), 321-326)

" There is nothing more admirable than the life of Jesus in Mary."

For having sacrificed his human life to God, Jesus Christ received from his Father the privilege of being in the Church a source of divine life of which he bears the fullness in himself for all his children. He is in them their entire life, their grace and their virtue. He is in them all they have from God, who himself in Jesus is all in all things, totally consuming the work of his creation in himself.

What Our Lord is to his Church, he is par excellence in his most holy Mother, giving her the fullness and superabundance of life suitable to so vast an object of love, and to one with so great a capacity for his delight and his divine life.

We must, therefore, consider Jesus, our All, as living in the most holy Virgin in the fullness of God's life. It is in her that we must see all the treasures of his riches, the sparkle of his beauty and the delights of his divine life. There we can see summarized the glory which the humiliations of his Passion wrought on the Church, all the joy he acquired for her through his sufferings, all the riches he merited for us through the misery and poverty of the Cross.

There Jesus Christ triumphs in his gifts. There he takes pride in his masterpiece. There is his glory. Oh adorable sojourn of Jesus in Mary!

There is nothing more admirable than this life of Jesus in Mary, that holy life he lives continually in her, that divine life with which he animates her, loving, praising and adoring God, his Father, in her as a worthy supplement to her heart inside of which he swells up with pleasure. All Jesus' life and all his love in the rest of the Church, even in his Apostles and most beloved disciples are nothing compared to what he is in Mary's heart. He lives there fully and works there through his divine Spirit. He is but one heart, one soul, one life with her. Nothing is more admirable than this union. In its consummation it is beyond our understanding. What is consoling in all this is that this masterpiece will exist forever.

Oh, how adorable Jesus is in his Mother! We cannot fully understand what he is in her and in what fashion God makes him be in her. It is a work of faith, and the more it is rooted in faith, the holier and more divine it is, the more satisfaction it provides inside the soul. It is an inconceivable abyss of love and charity, for we cannot know the extent of Jesus' delight in Mary, nor the strength and purity of Mary's love for Jesus. Let us lose ourselves in him in order to be all that he is with respect to his Father and his divine Mother.

Response

Gal 4, 19; Luke 1, 42.

R. Blessed are you, O Virgin Mary, and worthy of all praise.

* You formed Christ in your Heart through faith and love.

V. You are blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

* You formed Christ ...

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL (1581-1660)

73. CHARITY

(St. Vincent de Paul, Conferences, Op. 9, 475-476, 593; Op. 11, 43-44, 475-477)

" Let us love God, but let it be at the expense of our arms."

You have to know that the love of Our Lord is practised in two ways: affectively and effectively.

Affective love comes from the heart. A person who loves is full of taste and tenderness, continually experiences God's presence, finds satisfaction in thinking about him and spends his life imperceptibly contemplating him. Thanks to this love, such a person has no difficulty in doing the hardest things, even does them with pleasure. This person is on the lookout for all that can make him pleasing to God. Finally, he basks in divine love and delights in no other thoughts.

Affective love is tenderness in love. You should love Our Lord tenderly and affectionately like a child who cannot bear to be separated from his mother and cries "Mommy!" as soon as she wants to leave him. So too, a heart that loves Our Lord cannot suffer his absence and must keep close to him by that affective love which produces effective love.

Now, effective love consists in doing the things the loved one commands or desires, and that is the kind of love Our Lord speaks about: If anyone loves me, he will be faithful to my word (John 14, 23). Effective love exists when one acts for God without feeling any consolation. Such love is not discernible by the soul but, although it produces no feeling, it does produce its effects and achieves results.

There are some among you who do not feel God's presence. They have never felt it, don't know what it is to taste God in prayer, don't feel they have any devotion, but pray just the same, continue to live a virtuous life and work a lot although reluctantly. Do they stop loving God? Of course not, because they do everything the others do, and with all the more love as they experience less feeling. That is effective love, one which does not cease working even though it is not felt.

The first kind of love does not suffice. We must go from affective to effective love, the one which consists in engaging in works of Charity and serving the poor with joy, courage, constance and love.

Let us love God, my brothers, but let it be at the expense of our arms and the sweat of our brows. For, very often, so many acts of love of God, of kindness, courtesy and other similar affections and internal practices of a tender heart, although very good and desirable, are nevertheless suspect when they do not lead to effective love. In this, says Our Lord, my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit.

And that is what we must be very careful about because many who have a composed exterior and are filled with grand sentiments with respect to God, go no further and come up short when the time comes to act. They flatter themselves on their vivid imagination and are satisfied with the tender conversation they have with God in prayer, they even speak about it like angels. But after prayer, let there be work to be done for God, suffering and mortification to endure, poor people to instruct, a lost sheep to rescue, a lack of comfort to sustain, sickness or disgrace to bear, alas, there is no one around, their courage has abandoned them!

Response

1 Thes 5, 14. 15; Rom 15, 7.

R. Care for the weak, always pursue good towards all.

* This is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

V. Welcome each other in the same way as Christ welcomed you for the glory of God.

* This is what God expects ...

74. THE SERVICE OF THE POOR

(St. Vincent de Paul, Conferences, Op. 9, 59-60, 119, 249-252; Op. 10, 679-680).

" To represent to the poor God's kindness."

What God asks of us particularly is to apply ourselves to serving the poor who are our masters. Oh yes, they are our masters!

We must serve them in their bodies but also spiritually. Providing the poor with food and medicine

would not be doing enough for God and neighbor if we did not help them, as God intends, by providing also the spiritual service we owe them.

One way of doing so as God intends is to do it out of charity. Oh how excellent that will make your service! But do you know what "doing so out of charity" means? It consists in acting in God, since God's charity or love, and acting purely for God. It means acting in God's grace since sin separates us from God's charity. And that cannot happen until you purify your motives, uproot your bad habits and break your particular ties.

You will be imitating Jesus Christ. How, indeed, did he serve the poor? Corporally and spiritually, going from one to the other, healing the sick and instructing the poor about salvation.

To serve the poor is to serve Jesus Christ. How true! You serve Jesus Christ in the person of the poor. A sister can visit the sick ten times a day and she will meet God ten times. As St. Augustine says: what we see is not so sure because our senses may deceive us, but God's truths never deceive. Go see the men in the chain gang, and you will find God there; serve the little children, and you will find God there. How obliging this is! Go into the houses of the poor, and you will find God there.

The poor you must treat with tenderness and respect. With tenderness, remembering that they will be the ones to open the gates of heaven for you, for that is one of the privileges of the poor, as Our Lord said: Make friends for yourselves through your use of this world's goods so that they will welcome you into the tents of eternity (Luke 16, 9). With tenderness and respect, remembering that it is Our Lord himself you are serving, since he considers what you do for them done for himself.

I pray to God, source of all charity, to give you the grace of discovering how to serve the poor corporally and spiritually in his spirit and in perfect imitation of the spirit of his Son.

Response

Matt 25, 35-40; John 15, 12.

R. I was hungry and you gave me food; thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome.

* I tell you solemnly, each time you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.

V. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

* I tell you solemnly ...

III
WRITINGS
OF
SAINT MARY EUPHRASIA PELLETIER

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* I know my sheep ...

76. IMITATING THE GOOD SHEPHERD

(St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, Colloquies, Ch. 6, Angers (1907), 39-41)

" You are destined to become
so many good shepherds."

Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, is the real model we must strive to emulate in order to fulfill our

calling. Because he chose to associate us with his work and put us, in a way, in his place in the fold into which he has gathered so many unfortunate sheep, we must conform to his spirit and live of his very life. You will do good, my dear Daughters, you will have the spirit of your vocation only once you become imbued with the thoughts, sentiments and affections of the Good Shepherd of whom you must be living copies.

Now, what did Jesus say about himself? I have come to seek out and save what was lost (Luke 19, 10). And what did he do? He went after sinners with a father's solicitude and endured all sorts of hardships to bring them back to him. Remember the ineffable kindness with which he welcomed Magdalen! See him sitting by Jacob's well: weary, he is resting a bit; in fact, he is waiting for a soul; his intention is to convert the Samaritan woman. Consider him after his resurrection, continuing in his role as Good Shepherd, going after those two discouraged and downhearted sheep who had fled Jerusalem, the city of peace, and were headed for Emmaüs, the bastion of confusion. He joined up with these two disciples whose souls were disturbed and whose faith was wavering. He journeyed with them, walking neither faster nor slower, sharing in their conversation, going along with their weakness in order to instruct them and dispel the darkness from their minds.

This, my dear Daughters, is the example we should imitate because you are all destined to become so many good shepherds, and you must imitate the selflessness, the spirit of charity and persistence of Jesus Christ himself. Like him, you will go to Emmaüs seeking out stray sheep and, fulfilling the offices of a good shepherd in their regard, you will bring them back to the fold.

Your task is difficult, but noble, even divine in the eyes of faith. You must never turn away from it because you meet with obstacles along the way. God himself sometimes puts them in our path to test our zeal when we could be tempted to become tepid. The object of our thoughts, desires, words and actions must be the salvation of our dear sheep, in imitation of Our Savior whose thoughts, desires, undertakings and activity had no other purpose. Besides, the marvels he performs so often in them show us clearly how much he wants their salvation.

Be, therefore, full of holy zeal to save these souls entrusted to your care. Let it be your life's occupation. Let this thought be with you in your prayers to make them more fervent, in your communions to enliven them with holy affections, in fulfilling your duties to enkindle in you ever more the fire of charity and zeal. Do not forget that to work usefully at saving souls, one must be holy, belong totally to God and stop thinking about oneself or about any created being. Jesus Christ selected you, associated you with his mission among the people of the earth, that you might bear fruit. What fruit? Those of conversion and salvation. That is how you will attract ample blessings and abundant graces upon yourselves. Make yourselves worthy of your sublime vocation by an ardent, active, vigilant persistence and a limitless charity, looking always to the Shepherd of shepherds as your model.

Response Phil 2, 2. 3. 4; 1 Thes 5, 14-15.

- R. Be united in love, be humble enough to consider the other person as better than yourself.
* Think not of your interests first, but of other people's.
- V. Welcome the weak; be patient towards all; always seek one another's good and the good of all.
* Think not ...

77. SELF-DENIAL OF THE APOSTLE

(St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, Colloquies, Ch. 6, Angers (1907) 42-43)

" I belong to every country where there are souls to be saved."

What does a good shepherd do? He forgets himself and suffers hunger, thirst, fatigue and trouble. No matter, he is happy if his sheep do not suffer and if he finds those that went astray. What pains doesn't he take to lead his flock to good pastures! In the summer, he looks for places where there is water and shade. In winter, he leads them where the cold is not as bitter and where the grass is taller and more plentiful. If he spots poisonous plants near the lambs, he hastens to uproot them. He watches night and day to keep the wolf away and never gives in to sleep completely.

That is what you must do for the persons, the children of God entrusted to your care. Watch over them assiduously, noticing what they need for their souls and their bodies, leading them prudently into spiritual pastures, adapted to each one's state and condition. That is why it is essential for you to enter deeply into the spirit of our Institute. It will show you the real way to fulfill such an important office.

When grass runs out in a pasture, the shepherd rolls up his tent, asks other shepherds to help him if need be, and looks for another grazing land where the grass is plentiful, even though he himself might not be very comfortable there and may have to leave his parents and friends to go into foreign country. His trials don't count, what does it matter that the sheep find good grazing land. Now, all that we see shepherds do for their flock, are we not prepared to do for those souls which cost the blood of Our Lord and, for that reason, should be dear to us?

You will set up your tents from one end of the world to the other. A city, a foundation must not place a limit on your zeal; it must encompass the entire world.

St. Paul said: I am neither Greek, nor Roman, I belong to every country. And St. Francis Xavier used to say: I am not only Spanish but I am also Indian, Chinese, Japanese. I belong to every place where I have the good fortune to preach the Gospel. These, my dear Daughters, should be your sentiments. It is with these dispositions that a true soul of the Institute must live. We must wake up and get going. Since we are all shepherds or, if you prefer, shepherdesses, we must not be tied down to a small piece of earth. As for me, I no longer want to be called French. I am, indeed, Italian, English, German, Spanish, American, African, Indian, etc.; I belong to every country where there are souls to be saved. We must not be afraid to pitch our tents on far away beaches when we see that there are sheep to be brought back to the fold there too. Sheep of Italy, Bavaria and all parts of Europe; sheep of America, Africa, Asia, Indonesia, we must go after them all.

Response 1 Thes 2, 8; Gal 3, 28; 4, 19.

R. We would like to give you not only the Gospel of the Lord, but our whole lives as well, since you have become so dear to us.

* There are no longer Jews nor pagans since all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

V. My little children, you for whom I suffer the pains of childbirth all over again, until Christ is formed in you.

* There are no longer ...

IV
INDEXES

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INDEX

FOR THE USE OF THE LECTIONARY

(References indicate the numbers of the readings, not the page numbers)

A - LITURGICAL USE

I - According to the Seasons of the Liturgical Year

Advent Season	13, 15, 50-54, 62-64, 72.
Christmas Season	43-46, 55-59, 62, 65.
Easter Season	2-6, 16-17, 19, 25, 27-33, 44-46, 69-71.
Ascension and Pentecost Seasons	14-15, 18, 34-42, 68.
Ordinary Time	2-6, 9-13, 19, 21-22, 25, 49, 66-67, 69, 73-74.

II - By Topic

On Christian Life	Ordinary Time.	
(1-26, 69, 73-77)		
On Baptism	Easter Season or January.	
(27-33)	(St. John Eudes encouraged meditation on	baptism from
January 18 to 21).		
On the Priest	Ordinary Time, especially in November.	
(34-42, 62-63)	(St. John Eudes celebrated Nov. 13 as the	
	Feast of the Priesthood).	
On the Heart of Jesus	Beginning of June (the period during which the	
(43-49)	feast is celebrated today)	
	or the end of October (the feast and its Octave	as established by St. John
Eudes for October	20).	
On Mary	Advent Season; Saturdays	
(50-59, 64-65, 72)		
On the Heart of Mary	Beginning of February (the period of	
(52-57)	preparation and the Octave of the feast	established by St.
John Eudes for Feb. 8).		
On the Eucharist	Around the Feast of Corpus Christi.	
(20, 66-67, 70-71)		

B - USE FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

(The indications given above for liturgical use are obviously appropriate for private prayer as well).

Moreover, a number of readings would be particularly suitable
for the Lenten Season 7-13, 19-20, 23-24, 26, 62-63, 73-77.
or for certain feasts, e.g.:
Feast of the Holy Trinity 1, 33, 34.

ANALYTICAL INDEX

OF THE PRINCIPAL THEMES

(References indicate the numbers of the readings, not the page numbers)

Apostolic spirit - 26, 35, 36, 40, 41, 75, 77.

Baptism - New birth, 27. - Death and resurrection 28. - Covenant with God, 29. - Contract, 30, 31, 32. - Baptism and the Trinity, 33.

Christ - Servant of the Father and of men, 19, 62, 63. - Offering himself to the Father, 47, 63. - Obeying the will of the Father, 13, 19, 63.
 - Center of our life, 2. - Living in Christians, 3, 4, 22, 45, 69.
 - Through his mysteries, 14. - Through the Eucharist, 67, 70, 71.
 - Living in those who suffer, 24. - Christ, Sovereign Priest, 19, 38.
 - Good Shepherd, 35, 39, 76, 77. - Love of Christ (see Heart of Jesus)

Christian - Child of God, 5. - Loved by God and saved by him, 12, 46, 48. - Member of Christ, 5. - Christ, center of a Christian's life, 2.
 - Christian life, witness to Jesus Christ, 19. - Continuation of the life of Jesus, 3, 4, 22, 45, 69. - Servant with Christ, 19. - Temple of the Holy Spirit, 5, 18. - Priesthood of Christians, 19, 20.
 (See also Apostolic spirit, Baptism, Forming Christ in us, Holiness, Love, Mysteries, Mystical Body).

Christians' love for God - 1, 12, 13, 25, 44, 45, 46, 49.

Christian virtues - 10.

Church - Christ, center and life of the Church, 2, 3. - The Church and the Mysteries of Christ, 14. - Our love for the Church, 21. (See Mystical Body).

Cross - Love of the cross, 8, 26. (See Suffering in union with Christ).

Detachment - In Christian life, 7. - Detachment of the apostle, 77.

Faith - 6.

Forming Christ in us - 16, 17. - Through participation in his mysteries, 14. - Through the Eucharist, 67, 70, 71. - Through the virtues, 10.
 - Through charity, 45, 74.

Glory of God - 1.

God's gifts - 30, 31, 44, 45.

Heart of Jesus - The three hearts, 43. - Christ's gift of his heart to us, 44, 45. - Jesus' love for his Father, 43, 47, 63. - for Mary, 50, 51, 54, 72. - for us, 12, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 60.

Heart of Mary - Why we honor her, 52. - Her love for God and for us, 53.

- The heart of Mary and the Mysteries of Jesus, 54, 55. - The Heart of Mary, a marvelous fountain, 56. - The Heart of the Mother of mercy, 57. - The Canticle of Mary's Heart, 59.

Holiness - All Christians called to holiness, 25.

Holy Eucharist - The Eucharist, participation in the life of Christ, 3.

- in his sacrifice, 20, 71. - Preparation for celebrating Mass, 66.
- Holy communion, 67. - Christ, Bread of life, 70.

Holy Spirit - 1, 18, 31, 33, 34, 68.

Humility - of Christ, 7, 62. - of Mary, 59, 64. - of the Christian, 11, 17, 41.

John Eudes - His last will and testament, 60. - His vow of martyrdom, 61.

Love of God - Within the Trinity, 1. - for us, 2, 29, 30. (See Heart of Jesus).

Love of neighbor - Motives, 12, 46. - Love of the poor, 57, 73, 74.

Man - Loved by God and saved by him, 12, 46, 48. (See Christian).

Martyrdom - 23, 61.

Mary - Jesus lives in her, 50, 51, 72. - In her Heart, 54, 56. - Mary's love for God and charity towards mankind, 53. - Mother of mercy, 57.

- Admirable Mother, 58. - Mary's Fiat, 64. - Her Magnificat, 59.
- Her silence, 65. - Participation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Mary's vocation, 26. (See Heart of Mary).

Mission - 35, 36, 41. (See Apostolic spirit).

Mysteries of Christ - 14, 15.

Mystical Body - 4, 5.

Paschal mystery - Baptism, a participation in this mystery, 28. (See Cross, Sacrifice).

Pastor - Good Shepherd, model of priests and pastors, 35, 39. - Model of Religious life, 76, 77.

Prayer - What it is, 9. - Contemplating Jesus and honoring his mysteries, 15, 17, 24, 44. - Praying at the beginning of our actions, 22. - Prayers to God, 45. - to the Trinity, 1, 33. - to Jesus, 33, 46, 49, 51, 61, 62. - to Mary, 51, 57, 58.

Priest - Associate of the Trinity, 34. - His participation in the priesthood and mission of Christ, 35, 38. - The priest and Mary, 42.

(See Apostolic spirit, Mission, Pastor, Word of God).

Priesthood of Christians, 19, 20.

Sacrifice - of Christ, in which Christians participate, 8, 19, 29, 47, 61, 63.

Servant - Christ, servant of the Father and of mankind, 19, 62, 63.

- The Christian, servant with Christ, 19.

Suffering - in union with Christ, 8, 24.

Trinity - Contemplation of the mystery, 1. - The Trinity's love for us, 33, 75. - Priest, associate of the Trinity, 34.

Will of God - Christ obeyed it perfectly, 13, 19, 63. - The Christian and the will of God, 13.

Word of God - The priest must proclaim it, 36, 37.

(Blank Page)

BIBLICAL INDEX

Bible quotes in the Readings

(References indicate the numbers of the Readings, not the page numbers)

Genesis

2, 6 A fountain rising from the earth and watering all the surface of the soil (56).

1 Chronicles

29, 17 With an honest heart, I have willingly given all this (47).

2 Maccabees

1, 3 That you might serve and honor God and do his will
with a willing spirit and with generous love (45; cf. 60).

Psalms

4, 7 A divine stamp by which the light of God's countenance
souls (6). is imprinted on our

16, 5 The Lord is my allotted portion (38).

32, 8 I will counsel you, keeping my eye on you (30).

97, 10 You who profess to love the Lord, hate evil (25).

111, 1 I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart (45).

Proverbs

8, 31 My delights are to be with the children of men (9).

Song of Songs

3, 11 The day of his heart's joy (13).

8, 6 Place me like a seal on your heart (55).

8, 7 A love no flood can quench, no torrents drown (48).

Wisdom

8, 16 His conversation has no bitterness, nor his company any tediousness, but joy
and gladness (9).

Isaiah

42, 1 Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I am pleased (62).

49, 3 You are my servant, Israel (19).

55, 1 All you who are thirsty, come and drink the beautiful and refreshing
waters of our miraculous fountain. Even if you have no money, hurry and come, for the milk
and honey of this fountain are free (56).

Ezekiel

3, 18 I will require his blood at your hand (35).

36, 26-27 I will give you a new heart. I will put my spirit in you (31; 45).

Matthew's Gospel

- 3, 17 He has placed all his good pleasure and his delights in his only-begotten and well-beloved Son (2).
- 5, 48 Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (1).
- 10, 39 Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it (7).
- 11, 29 Learn from me that I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls (11).
- 23, 9 You must call no one on earth your father (5).
- 25, 40 Whatever you do for the least of his brothers, he will consider done for himself (12).

Luke's Gospel

- 1, 38 I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your will (64).
- 1, 47 My spirit rejoices in God my Savior (59).
- 1, 68-75 The Son of God redeemed us that we might serve God in holiness and justice all the days of our lives (25).
- 2, 19. 51 Mary carefully treasured all these memories and pondered them in her heart (55; 65).
- 9, 23 If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself (7).
- 14, 26 If anyone comes to me without hating his own life, he cannot be my disciple (7).
- 16, 9 Make friends for yourselves through your use of this world's goods so that they will welcome you into the tents of eternity (74).
- 19, 10 I have come to seek out and save what was lost (76).
- 22, 29 I, for my part, assign to you the dominion my Father has assigned to me (31).
- 22, 42 Father, not my will, but yours be done (13).

John's Gospel

- 1, 12 To all who did accept him, he gave power to become children of God (5).
- 1, 13 Born of God (27).
- 3, 5 Unless a man is born again through water and the Spirit (27).
- 3, 6 What is born of the Spirit is spirit (5; 18; 27).
- 4, 34 My food is to do the will of the one who sent me (13).
- 6, 35. 48 I am the Bread of life (31; 70)
- 6, 38 I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but to do the will of the one who sent me (13; 38).
- 6, 55 My flesh is real food and my blood, real drink (31).
- 6, 56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and possesses me within himself (31).
- 6, 69 You have the words of eternal life (36).
- 7, 37 If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink (56).
- 10, 10 I have come that you might have life (3).
- 14, 6 I am the Life (3).
- 14, 9 Those who see him, see his Father (2).
- 14, 19-20 I live and so will you. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you (3).

14, 21 Anyone who obeys my commandments is a person who loves me (25).
14, 23 Anyone who loves me ... my Father will love him; we will come to him and
make our dwelling place with him (30; cf. 55 and 73).
15, 4 Remain in me (2).
15, 9-11 I love you as my Father loves me ... may your joy be perfect and complete
(46).
15, 12 This is my commandment: love each other as I have loved you (11; 44).
17, 22-23 That they may be one as we are one. With me in them and you in me,
may they be completely one (29).
17, 23 You loved them as you loved me (30).
17, 24 Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am (31).
17, 26 To them I revealed your name, so that your love for me may live in them
(30).
19, 37 Behold your Mother (31).
20, 17 I am ascending to my Father and your Father (31).
20, 21 As the Father has sent me, I also am sending you (2).

Romans

5, 3 We can boast about our sufferings (8).
6, 3-4 We were baptized into the death of Jesus Christ ... We must live a new life
(28).
6, 13 As dead persons brought back to life (28).
8, 1 There is no condemnation for those who remain in Jesus Christ (2).
8, 9 If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ (18;
25).
8, 32 He gave us all things when he gave us his Son (44).
12, 1 I beg you ... to offer your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to
God (19).
14, 7-9 None of us lives as his own master ... Christ died and rose to life that he
might be Lord of the living and the dead (4).
15, 2 Pleasing our neighbor so as to do him good by building up his spirit (12).
15, 3 Christ did not seek to please himself (7).

1 Corinthians

1, 9 You have been called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ (29).
3, 9 We are God's coadjutors (35).
3, 22 All things are ours (44).
6, 17 Anyone joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him (29).
6, 19 Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? (5; 18).
6, 19 You are not your own property (7).
6, 20 Glorify and carry God in your body (4).
12, 3 No one can speak the name of Jesus properly ... except in the Holy Spirit
(18).
12, 6 You do all in all things (51).
12, 27 The Church, Body of Christ (3).
15, 28 Christ is all in all things (16).

2 Corinthians

2, 17 We speak as envoys of God and, in his presence, we speak in Christ

(36).
 4, 5 We are your servants for love of Jesus (19).
 5, 14 If one died for all, then all were dead (28).
 5, 16 From now on, we do not judge anyone by the standards of the flesh (5).
 5, 20 For Christ, I am an ambassador (37).
 9, 15 Thanks be to God for his incomparable gifts (29).
 12, 15 I most gladly will spend myself and be spent totally for your souls (21 ;
 35).

Galatians

2, 20 Jesus Christ is living in me (4).
 3, 27 All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with
 him (25). Spirit of his Son into your
 4, 6 The proof that you are sons is that God sent the giving birth to you all
 hearts (15; 18; 31).
 4, 19 My little children, I must go through the pains of formed in you (16).
 over again until Christ is
 6, 14 God forbid that I should boast about anything save the Cross of Our Lord
 (8).

Ephesians

1, 4 God chose us in Christ, before the world was made, to be holy and
 blameless in his sight (25).
 1, 22 Christ is brought to fulfillment in his Church (14).
 1, 23 Christ is all in all things (2; 51).
 2, 10 Created in Christ (27).
 4, 13 All of us contribute to Christ's perfection and the age of his fulfillment (14).
 4, 18 Pagans are estranged from a life in God (27).
 5, 1 Be imitators of God (1).
 5, 30 We are members of Christ's body (3).

Philippians

2, 5-7 Make yours the sentiments of Jesus Christ ... he emptied himself (7 ;
 cf. 19).
 3, 20 Our conversation is in heaven (28).

Colossians

1, 17 He has made all things in him and by him (2).
 1, 24 He completes in his own flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ
 (14).
 2, 3 In him he has placed all the treasures of his knowledge and wisdom
 (2).
 3, 1-2 Since you have been brought back to life with Christ, seek the things that
 are above, not those that are here on earth (28).
 3, 3 You are dead and your life is hidden with Jesus Christ in God (7; 28).
 3, 4 Christ, your life (4; 32).
 3, 9 You have put aside your old self (7).
 3, 11 All things hold together in him and through him (2).

1 Thessalonians

- 4, 3 It is God's will that you grow in holiness (25).
5, 19 Do not stifle the Spirit in you (29).

Titus

- 3, 5 The cleansing of rebirth (27).

Hebrews

- 2, 10 It was fitting that Jesus Christ should be made perfect through suffering
(24).
2, 10 He has made all things for him (2).
9, 14 He offered himself through the eternal Spirit (18).
10, 5 On coming into the world, Jesus said: Here I am, in the beginning of the
Book it is written about me that I do your will, Oh God (13; cf. 63).
10, 10 By this will we have been sanctified (63).
11, 1 Faith is the substance and foundation of the blessings we hope for (6).
11, 6 Without faith it is impossible to please God. If we want to go to God... the
first step is to believe (6).

1 Peter

- 2, 9 He called us from darkness into his own wonderful light (48).
4, 11 If you speak, speak in words that seem to come from God (58).
4, 11 So that everything in God may be glorified through Jesus Christ (16).

2 Peter

- 1, 4 Sharers of the divine nature (25; 48).

1 John

- 1, 3 We are telling you what we have seen and heard so that you too may be in
communion with us. This fellowship of ours is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus
Christ (29).
2, 6 Whoever claims to be living in him must live the same kind of life as Christ
lived (32).
2, 28 Remain in him, my little children, remain in him (2).
3, 1 See what love our Father has for us wanting us to be called, and indeed
be, children of God (5; cf. 31).
3, 1 The world does not recognize us (18).

Revelation

- 13, 8 The Lamb who was slain at the world's beginning (15).
19, 11 The Faithful and True (31).

