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Novena in honor of St. Anne
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NOVENA

in honor of

St. Anne



**MEDITATIONS
ON PIETY**





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R. P. P.-A. GRANGER, O. P.



NOVENA

IN HONOR OF

ST. ANNE



MEDITATIONS ON PIETY.



Authorized Translation

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THE NATURE OF PIETY

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



Each year at this time you usually prepare yourselves by a novena of prayer for the feast of the great wonder-worker, the glorious St. Anne. Divine Providence has ordained that this time I should lend you the assistance of my feeble words.

It is my intention to speak to you on the subject of piety. I know of no subject which is of more vital interest to a Christian, and also, it must be admitted, of no subject more disregarded and unfamiliar. Ask the people of the world what they think of piety. They consider it beneath them, a lessening of human dignity. They criticize it, they laugh at it, they condemn it, and all this because they do not understand it. And why is it that they do not understand it? Because, no doubt, of their passions and prejudices, of their ignorance of things divine. Are they the only guilty ones? How little we understand what true piety is! Sometimes our notions concerning it are so indefinite and our practices far from supernatural! Here, as in all things, the exact idea is of sovereign importance and gives birth to a multitude of consequences.

What then is real piety? St. Thomas Aquinas defines it, "a disposition of the will, which causes man to embrace the services of God eagerly." Three thoughts sum up this definition perfectly: piety is a disposition of the will; it manifests itself by a readiness and promptitude; it refers solely to the service of God.

First of all piety is a virtue of the will, and,

consequently, a virtue which proceeds from within. It is not therefore a question of imagination; it is still less a matter of exterior practices—two false notions which must be set aside.

Man's imagination! It is not necessary for me to tell you of the power with which it is endowed, of what excesses it is capable, and how it can lead to the most exalted heroism as well as to the most shameful degradation. From it exterior objects receive their attraction or their repulsion, their charm or their loathsomeness, their beauty or their repugnance. Does it not occasionally go to the extreme of creating its fictions, of living on idle fancies, which have never existed and never will? Is it not the mother of illusion and consequently of discouragement, of disenchantment and even of despair? Man's imagination is a creative force like no other in the world, for it has received the often fatal gift of seeing things and persons, not as they are in reality, but as it figures them to be. Let it be kept under the yoke of wisdom and prudence, it will remain an astonishing force for good; let it loose, and there is no telling where it will stop on the road to evil.

And here permit me to remark that in the education of children, of young girls especially, too little importance is attached to the directing of the imagination; not that it must be suppressed (you would cause them to lose a precious auxiliary), but would it not be of the greatest importance to accustom children to distinguish always between the will and the imagination and to heed in all things the voice of reason and wisdom! "Alas!" wrote, not so long ago, a most cultured lady, "as a rule we are

very poorly reared, it seems, and quite contrary to our destiny. We, who must suffer so much, we are bereft of strength; our culture is directed to our nerves, to our sensibility and, in addition, to our vanity, to our religion, to our morals for form's sake, without making them a direction for our mind." (Melle Eugenie de Guerin). Quoting these words Monseigneur Landroit, adds: "Later on, these young existences are launched upon life, like vessels without rudders or sails, and they learn, by cruel experience, of the faults of their early education. Life shows itself to them with all its austere realities; each year, each day destroy the flowers of their illusions; the golden clouds become more and more dark and gloomy, so much so that sometimes before maturity they have passed, with a rapid bound, from confidence which always hopes to a despair which has confidence in nothing."

It is above all in religious matters that the imagination can present serious disturbances if it is not ruled by a severe discipline. A need of activity, linked with an exterior necessity for changing—behold the character which betrays the piety of the imagination. Today the heart is ardent, anything can be undertaken, nothing is difficult, it would be an easy matter to overturn the whole world. Willingly hours of rest are sacrificed for assistance at Mass, marked by a devotion which would have been the envy of the saints themselves, and, during the day, the ordinary duties of one's state of life are sadly neglected. Today, numerous prayers, the recitation of the rosary, litanies, but how about tomorrow? On the morrow, it is apathy, neglect, abandonment, and repugnance. What has happen-

ed? Surely it would be interesting to know, but no one can find out, not even the pious one. Piety of the imagination, that which goes thus from esteem to scorn, from ardor to laziness, from love to hatred, yielding to all impressions, to all fluctuations, the poor victim has not been able to adopt a conduct which is stable, persevering and energetic. Such, on certain wintry days and in the midst of a fog, appears a ray of sunlight, magnificent and victorious, bringing back hope and faith in a splendid day; but no, a small cloud is sufficient to blot out the light, and nature is once again surrounded by mourning and death. Such, a flame which rises bright, vivid and warm towards heaven; one would think that an immense fire is kindling and is about to devour everything; but no, rapidly the flame decreases, and when the ashes are raked over, one can hardly find a bit of warmth and life. It is true that a new whim could revive this almost extinguished fire, but always it will be a whim, which in turn will give way to another whim. And thus piety of the imagination passes from one excess to another excess, with no other law than that of fancy, odd fancy, dangerous fancy.

Real piety is not such. Real piety, I have told you, is a disposition of the will, namely a disposition which is fixed, immovable, convinced. Convinced! Yes, at the base of our piety are to be found the most solid of religious convictions. Without this foundation, the edifice of our Christian devotion is threatened with ruin. It may, for a while perhaps, lean more or less happily upon certain routine practices, but it will crumble. The least breeze from the passions or the world will make it vanish.

Alas! What can be said of our piety right now? What is its structure? Has it not been reduced to pure exterior formality? When, morning and night, we kneel to say our prayers, what is the motive behind our actions? Is it a deep-rooted sentiment which shows us God as the supreme Master of men and creatures, Him, Whose Providence governs our days and from Whom we implore by the means of prayer, light for our intelligence, strength for our life, consolation for our heart: or rather do we not follow in all this some trace of our early education, some vague and indefinite memory of what happened at home, some remains of our piety which floated on when all the rest had sunk beneath the waves? When on Sunday we assist at a Mass, which we have chosen because it is the shortest one possible and it seems never ending, what motive brings us to church? Is it the motive of Christian faith, based upon God's commandment and the invitation of the Church, or rather is it the motive of law or custom, because it is proper for a well-bred person to have at least this veneer of devotion; or is it the motive of levity which manifests itself by dissipation and laughter; or is it the motive of vanity which tries to show itself even in the House of God? Ah! How far we are from the piety of the will, from the piety of conviction, from that piety which is always even and which never belies itself, which proceeds from the interior as from a vital principle from whence flow exterior manifestations, as a river flows from its source, as an effect flows from its cause. Once again, I repeat, if our piety is not interior, and from the interior, we are simply deceiving ourselves.

This voluntary devotion, how inspiring we find it in the life of the glorious St. Anne! It is in deep-rooted faith that this great saint drew that ardour of conviction which fortified her in the days of trials as well as in the happy hours of God's manifestations. Always of an even disposition and united to God in good as well as bad fortune, she has become a perfect model of Christian life and perfection.

Let us then be devout, not only in appearance and upon the surface, but because of the conviction of our soul and the love of our heart. Let us beg of St. Anne that she obtain for us that interior flame of piety which enlightens, sustains and gives life.

Prayer:

O good St. Anne, with the greatest of confidence I kneel at your feet. Before you I make bare all my deficiencies. You know all the needs of my soul; you know how much I am in need of piety. Obtain for me the grace of piety, a solid and vivifying piety. Pray that my soul be steeped in it. Since you are all-powerful with Jesus and Mary, prove that your kindness equals your powers. Obtain for me that I may make this novena with a spirit of faith and a tender devotion. At this moment I formulate my intentions. Pray for me that I may obtain the favor which, with great confidence, I am petitioning from the mercy of God. Do not despise my humble prayer, but graciously hear it and deign to have it granted. Amen.

THE QUALITIES OF PIETY

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



Piety, as we have said in our preceding meditation, is a disposition of the soul, a virtue of the heart. Proceeding from our inner selves it becomes the source from which flow our external manifestations and practices.

The second part of the definition is yet to be explained: piety is a disposition of the will which causes the soul to embrace the service of God eagerly.

Eagerness, promptitude, generosity—behold the essential qualities of Christian piety.

Eagerness, namely, that flight of the soul which is happy when it finds itself with God and which feels itself irresistibly attracted to Him as to the kindest of Fathers and to the best of Friends; promptitude, that is to say, obedience to all divine calls, correspondence to all the inspirations of grace, even the anxiety of anticipating an order before it is given; generosity, in other words, that virtue of the heart which consecrates itself, which gives itself up entirely and without reserve, in a word, which devotes itself—for piety is nothing if it is not devotion. The word itself makes it clear: to be pious is to be devout, and it has required I know not what strange aberration to take this word from its primitive significance and to attach to it the ridiculous sense it now has.

Eager, devoted and generous are these characteristics of our piety?

Alas! It must be admitted that the least effort is most difficult for us when it pertains to heaven. The pious exercises which God and the Church command, appear too monotonous, or too long, or too difficult. We shrink from their weight as too heavy for our shoulders and we reduce them to the simplest expression. It is a chain, I was on the point of adding that it is a bill, which we drag attached to our feet, and we are hardly decent enough to repress a sigh of satisfaction when the devotions are finished. Not unlike misers, who give up of their treasures only what they cannot keep for themselves, we surrender to God, very parsimoniously our time and our efforts. We limit our piety and we give it the command: "You shall go so far, and you shall not go farther." After all, does it not suffice to avoid sin and to live in a virtuous manner? Does God really demand more than this?

Let us beware for here we have a dangerous pitfall. When we stand on the exact limits of good and evil, aided by our weakness, we easily veer toward evil. "There is only one way to practice virtue, that is to practice piety." (Joubert). This utterance of a philosopher is remarkably true: virtue in itself is austere; it requires a struggle, a struggle every day and every moment without truce or mercy and this renewed struggle fatigues, enervates and discourages. Our soul must find a sustaining strength and this strength is piety.

Now what happens most frequently? What happens? We neglect this source of strength. For the world, for the pleasures of the world, for the satisfactions of the world, we impose upon ourselves privations, hardships, sacrifices; never do we do

enough. For God, for Heaven, we feel that we always do too much.

Here again, I fear that you are neglecting the education of your children, the majority of whom show but very little inclination and very little eagerness for anything related to piety. Have you not often remarked an indescribable expression of weariness when you spoke of their duties to God and to their religion? Did not a young girl one day remark to her mother who was forcing her to go to Mass, 'Ah! What a tiresome task, this business of going to Mass!' I beg of you to inculcate in your children the love of a piety which is prompt, ardent and eager. Let them learn more from your example than from your word that beautiful generosity which does not count, which does not calculate, which gives without hesitation to our duties of state that which belongs to them, but which knows above all how to render to God the things which are God's.

To render to God the things which are God's—that is the true character of piety. It can never be repeated too much that piety does not consist in long or numerous prayers or in spending long hours in church; neither does it consist in being devoted to all the saints: nor in being a member of all the Third Orders and of all religious confraternities, nor in covering one's self with medals and scapulars. Piety consists in loving God with one's whole heart and with true filial love; piety consists in seeking God and in seeking nothing but God. Piety has reference solely to the service of God.

What is meant by the words "to seek God only"? They mean not to seek one's self in selfish affection, not to love the means of perfection for

themselves but for the goal to which they lead and not to mix, in an abominable alloy, God and the world. These are the requirements of true piety.

How numerous are the souls who seek themselves! Their piety belongs to them, only to them for themselves and for themselves alone. They must have consolations, sensible joys and even tears. And when a prayer is offered up in coldness and indifference, discouragement sets in, dark and full of anguish. They do not realize that it is God who leads the soul as He pleases, and that it does not behoove the soul to lead God. False piety would like to place God at its beck and call. Real piety is submissive to the will of God, and therefore it does not attach itself to the means of perfection to the point of forgetting perfection itself. Prayers, meditations, lectures, intercourse with holy souls, confessions, communions, confraternities are, for sincerely pious souls, nothing but means which lead to the goal of their desires, nothing but mystical flowers which a living daughter's affection gathers for her celestial Father, nothing but so many precious stones with which she adorns herself to please and honor Him. Diametrically opposed is false piety. It attaches itself to prayer for the satisfaction it finds therein, to spiritual readings for the satisfaction they afford, to confession more for the sweetness of the outpouring of the soul than for the benefits of sincere amendment, and even to Holy Communion for the satisfaction of the most hidden and most refined self-love. This false piety can easily be compared to a traveller who decides to go some where more for the beauty of the scenery which will charm his eye along the road, more for the charms of a

delightful conversation, than for the object of the voyage itself. Is it necessary to remark that this piety of sentimentality is not sufficient?

Much more reprehensible is that piety which leagues itself with the pleasures of the world and tries to team the austere obligations of virtue with the enervating distractions of the world. In spite of all our intentions, the world shall always be the enemy of piety. It is impossible, remarks a spiritual writer, in the morning to become intoxicated with the perfume of incense and in the evening with that of flowers, in the morning to shed tears before the tabernacle and in the evening before the stage while attending the opera, in the morning to be on one's knees and begrimed with the dust of a church and in the evening to be scantily gowned and intoxicated with the pleasures of the ballroom, in the morning to read holy meditations, and in the evening novels that are more than frivolous, briefly to be clever and energetic in accomplishing the perfect union of a pious life and a worldly life. This alliance of two lives, destined to exclude each other, is a scandal for the world and a plague for religion.

What can be done about it? There are no two ways. You practice Christian piety or you do not. There is no middle course. How happy you would be and how completely satisfied your heart would be if instead of trying to effect the union of God and the world, you sought the union of your soul with God! God is our Master. God is our Father, God is our Friend; and how worthy this Master is of all our adoration! How worthy this Father of all our filial love! How worthy this Friend of all our affections! Earthly masters are hard and violent at

times; our heavenly Master is patient and tolerant. Earthly fathers are sometimes unmindful of their children; our heavenly Father continually thinks of and watches over us with the fondest solicitude. Earthly friends are selfish and fickle; our heavenly Friend is generous and persevering in His liberalities.

To be united with God, this should be the ambition of our piety. The human heart craves union because it craves love. And where is it to be found? Certainly not in the joys and the affections of this earth. Those which are guilty leave in their wake nothing but sadness and remorse; those which are legitimate do not suffice at all, and even if we possessed them all at once we would still hear the plaintive wail of our soul, "Thou hast made us for Thee, O Lord and our hearts can find no rest till they repose in Thee".

Saint Jeanne de Chantal relates that St. Francis de Sales in the last years of his life would continually keep himself in the presence of God, full of confidence, just as a child of love.

What a beautiful attitude! What a beautiful disposition! As a child of love! Such was always the preferred attitude of the great saint in whose honor we are making this novena. Was there ever a soul more united to God than her's! Was there ever a piety more tender, more ardent, more generous! Can it not truthfully be said that Saint Anne's whole life was a hymn of love addressed to Almighty God!

Can we truthfully say of ourselves that we are really pious? Is our heart filled with a love that is filial, eager, tender, generous, efficacious? Is

God for us always a beloved and cherished Father?
Are we always for Him children of love?

If we are so let us bless and thank God for such a gift, if we are not, or only partly so, let us endeavor to become and to be so entirely by our hearts, by our actions and by our lives. Let us pray Saint Anne to inspire us with that ardor of devotion for God which is the principal character of true Christian devotion.

Prayer

O good Saint Anne, obtain for me that spirit of devotion which causes me to see in God a Father and the best of fathers. At all times make me feel His divine presence; make me find pleasure in conversing with Him, in asking Him in prayer, in observing His commandments faithfully, in abandoning myself without reserve to the dispositions of His Providence. Make me find joy in loving and serving Him here below, that I may merit His eternal reward. Amen.

EXERCISES OF PIETY

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



In my two preceding instructions, I have endeavored to make you understand that our piety must be interior, that it must proceed from within, and give an impulse to our whole being. This true ideal, the only true ideal of Christian piety, must all the more necessarily be retained and incorporated into our life that willingly and easily we would pursue exterior practices, practices maintained by a routine and habit, and which do not spring from the source of a will enlightened, firm and constant. This is, I am convinced, one of the greatest dangers of our piety. We are attracted by the outside, by the surface, by words; we never penetrate as far as the true sense, as far as the interior pith. We meander through the avenues of devotion, occasionally agreeable and engaging; we never penetrate the sanctuary where God is found. Thus the visitor is attracted into one of our church edifices by the irresistible beauty of art. He admires the harmony of the proportions, the daring height of the arches and the correctness of the lines; he is captivated by the perfect ornamentation of a capital, by a perfectly carved bas-relief; in a word, he examines every nook of the edifices, but he forgets Him who lives there—God in His tabernacle. Are we to conclude that we should condemn these ornamentations and these artistic marvels, and consider practices of devotion as childish extravagance? To think and to act thus would indicate a complete ignorance of human nature. My intention now is to speak of practices of piety.

We practice piety as we practice any other art. *EXERCE AUTEM TEIPSUM AD PIETATEM*, says the Apostle, St. Paul—exercise thyself unto piety. Necessarily then there must be exercises of piety.

Yes, there must be exercises of piety to satisfy the demands of our human nature. Our human nature is so constructed that it partakes both of the immutable beauty of the spirit and the changing vicissitudes of matter. We are composed of a soul and a body, or as Pascal has put it, we are part angel and part beast, and necessarily each one of our acts is at the same time spiritual and corporal. To desire and to perform only the acts of angels would be above us. To desire and to perform only the acts of beasts would be to degrade one's self. Therefore, in our practice of piety, both the soul and the body must be considered. The part of the soul consists in that interior disposition which we mentioned, and which is made up entirely of good will, of eagerness, and of love. The part of the body consists in practices of devotion.

What then is a practice of devotion? This could mean, in a large sense, all exterior forms of worship which facilitate piety or flow from it. In all our actions we feel the need of sensible things to excite and move us on towards things spiritual. For instance, I kneel to say my prayers; in this humble position of my body my soul all the more easily bows down before the presence of God. I contemplate the heavens; this pious gesture causes my heart to rise more rapidly than my eyes and seek there above Him Whom it desires. I tell my beads, and this succession of Ave Marias, unless it proceeds from routine, increases and develops my devo-

tion to the Blessed Virgin. These are many sacred signs which penetrate our senses and go up to the soul that they may awake it when it sleeps, stimulate it when it languishes, recall it to duty when it forgets, or strengthens it when it complains of its weakness.

All this has been admitted by philosophers well known for their lack of Christian piety, and one of them has written these lines too beautiful for you not to receive with the greatest of pleasure: "The Catholic religion is the only one which has completely understood the necessity of warming souls and wresting them away from matter by sensible signs. Not satisfied with multiplying churches and chapels, the Church raises crosses wherever she dominates, on monuments, over graves, at the cross roads. She girdles her faithful with her rosary; she is most ingenious in creating new pious articles. Every inch of the interior of her temples is covered with paintings, with statues, with pictures, and with the sentences taken from scripture, or with ex-votos. The love for domestic shrines, for beads, for holy pictures is essentially Catholic. Very zealously she aims to unite prayer to each and every action of life; she multiplies prayers and the sign of the cross; to some she recommends mental prayer, to others practices of devotion, which need hardly any attention and which go on just the same while one works. To all she gives prayers, formulas, and acts with are nothing but adoration and love. Unbelievers do not fail to say that religion is in these exterior forms, and it happens that simplicity and hypocrisy seem to decide in their favor by distorting the meaning of religion and transforming it into

superstitious practices. But taken as a whole, this network of obligations which entwines life itself, these bells which twenty times a day ring in our ears, these churches, these calvaries, these pictures which fill our eyes are nothing else but this unique sentence, repeated in a thousand forms and in a thousand different languages: Think of God, adore God, pray to God." (Jules Simon.)

To adore God, such is the goal of all practices of piety. Therefore, to treat practices of devotion with contempt or indifference would be to disregard the essential laws of human nature, to disregard above all the solemn precept of adoration and love of God. Our whole being must adore God, in its intimate thought as well as its exterior action. Vocal prayer and mental prayer, elevation of the heart and manifestation of the senses, interior union and sacramental communion, private prayer and public devotions, solitary meditation in the silence of one's room and assistance at the offices of the Church, all this, but all this gathered together, all this prudently regulated and intelligently arranged, constitutes true religion, because all this repeats the hymn of adoration and love. So I shall very frankly admit that I have no use for the piety of those persons who are satisfied, so they say, to live interiorly with God, to contemplate His immutable essence and to love Him before the tribunal of their consciences. He who loves manifests his love, he proclaims it, he sings it. Divine charity, when it urges the soul, can much less than human affection be confined to the interior: it feels a need of expansion and reproduction. Not unlike certain forests filled with breezes and stormy winds, not unlike certain moun-

tains undermined by subterraneous fires, not unlike certain clouds too loaded with moisture, the soul tormented with the desire of pleasing God, sighs, moans, bursts forth through the medium of the senses into formulas and exterior acts. And thus man, by the sacred vestments he dons, by the sacred sign a pious hand traces over him, by the humble postures of his body, by the ardent prayers he recites, by the mortification of his flesh, by the movements of his body, the reverberations of his voice, man offers to God by one single act a complete homage of his whole self.

All this proves that there does not exist as great a difference between religion and piety as is commonly believed. The world, it is true, establishes a line of demarcation between those it deems fit to call good Christians and those whom with contempt it terms devout. Truly and before God, a soul which is sincerely Christian must necessarily be pious. From all this we can conclude that practices of devotion are indispensable in our life, and that viewed in this light piety by which we adore God with our whole being, and by which we love Him with our whole heart, is not only of counsel but also of precept; it is not optional, it is obligatory; it is not only a gracious gift which good and generous people make to God voluntarily, but it is a debt which we owe; a debt of honor, of justice, of gratitude and love. Piety is not merely to Christianity what the flower is to the tree, its splendor, its aroma, and its glory; it is to Christianity what a part of its sap is to the tree, namely one of the very elements of its life, so much so that we must say that if a soul is completely without piety, there is no hope for its

salvation. How can it be helped? We must love God. Now, we do not love God sincerely, completely, and perfectly if we set aside piety and its exercises. Definitely what is piety, if not that ensemble of habits and procedures, that harmonious blend of respect, obedience, eagerness, and love which we owe God?

In the manifestations of the most tender and the most filial piety St. Anne showed her love for God. Never was there a soul who better understood the holy requirements of the service of God. Everywhere, in the solitude of her home as well as in the public prayer of the temple, she always rendered to God that exterior worship which He solicits and demands. The voice of tradition is unanimous in picturing her as a soul entirely devoted to God, lifting her voice to Him in prayer through the medium of the most famous hymns of Scripture.

Let us beg of St. Anne to obtain for us the love of piety and above all a great fidelity to all the exercises of divine worship.

Prayer

O Good St. Anne, you know how little I relish pious exercises, how indifferent I am to private as well as public prayer, how lukewarm I am in God's holy service. Obtain for me a greater devotion. Make me faithful to that which religion has a right to expect from me. May my soul each hour of the day soar to God. May my piety be less a habit than a continuous bound of my heart. May my whole life be nothing but an act of love for God, that one day I may bless and glorify Him forever and ever. Amen.

HOW WE SHOULD CHOOSE OUR PIOUS EXERCISES

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



Pious exercises are obligatory. It is true, as St. Paul tells us, that we have not been given the spirit of fear which makes slaves, but the spirit of love which makes us children of adoption; if it be true that we do not lie when we repeat each day and each hour of the day, "Our Father Who art in heaven;" if it be true that God is for us the best and the most tender of Fathers; if it be true that He loves us as a mother alone can love and more than a mother can love her child, it is easily understood that He is not satisfied with correctness, with ceremonious politeness. We must show Him all the love of which we are capable. Now when we love, we must say so, we repeat it in every fashion and in a thousand different ways.

But if practices of piety are indispensable in serious Christian life, it is not the less indispensable to choose them wisely. Just as we must be convinced of their necessity, so must we guard against disorder and abuse. We must in all things be wise and orderly, that is, we must regulate all things by the light of reason aided by the light of faith.

Therefore the subject of this discourse will be practices of piety.

Without the least difficulty you understand that speaking to an audience whose conditions of life, of environment, of education, of health, and of circumstances are entirely different, it is impossible to fix either the number or the nature of the exercises of

piety suited to each of you. This, moreover, is a matter for your confessor to decide, and I must limit myself to the presentation of the general principles, which must enlighten and guide you in your choice.

Shall I amaze you if first and foremost I recommend moderation? St Francis de Sales, that great doctor of piety, held as a maxim: Good and few. He derided sweetly, amiably, as he did all things, intemperance in this matter. "Some there are," he would say, "who seek and embrace many exercises in the hope of sooner obtaining perfection, just as though perfection was to be found in the multiplicity of the acts we perform and not in the holiness with which we perform them. They resemble," he would add, "those who at a banquet pick at each dish and eat a little of everything to the detriment of their stomachs and their health." And I imagine that with a sly smile he would warn his spiritual children against the danger of spiritual indigestion.

Holy Mother Church, we could say with St. Francis de Sales, is a mother who prepares a sumptuous repast. Never could the guests be more numerous since all Christians are invited. There must, therefore, be a great variety of spiritual foods and they must be almost innumerable in order to satisfy the palate and the needs of everyone. These spiritual viands are the pious exercises, the practices of piety, the indulgences and all that which pertains to exterior worship. But in this immense banquet of souls we must imitate the temperance of a prudent guest, take what agrees with us, leave the rest alone, leave it without contempt and with the highest of respect. The temperate soul prefers thus to

add rather than to subtract, and in moderating itself forces upon itself the obligation of doing all things well and of remaining faithful to God. What stands out most, when we read the history of the lives of the great saints who have honored the Church, is the regularity of their conduct and the simplicity of their lives. How many among them did much less than other men, but they did a thousand times better what they had to do.

Piety temperate and moderate could be more easily and more wisely coordinated. Regulation is easy where there is moderation. Overloading and intemperance are pregnant with disorder. To provide orderly for our Christian life, that is, to prearrange our days and the actions thereof, to foresee our occupations and to be faithful to them, to make room for each thing in its own time and each duty at its own hour, that is something rare, yet of sovereign importance.

People of the world, for the most part, are led by the whims of their caprices. Nothing is regulated for them, rest, legitimate recreation, not even their own lives for themselves, their environment. Nothing but confusion in a state of permanency. This does not mean that they are idle. On the contrary, they seem to be very much occupied, and to hear them talk, one would conclude that no one in the world is more busy.

This self-same confusion and this self-same disorder are to be found in pious exercises. No distinction is made between necessary and essential practices and those which are only accidental and supererogatory. Duties of state do not stand out as the clear expression of God's holy will, and

they fail to grasp the idea that piety far from hindering our duties of state requires that they be given always the foremost place. Trifles are given an exaggerated importance, while neglect cloaks those serious and important acts which are the very basis of Christian life. In approaching a sacrament, there is a conspicuous neglect of the essential conditions such as preparation and thanksgiving, while great attention is paid to a number of prayers found in the book. Have you ever noticed how meticulously the First Friday devotions are observed by some who, for no reason at all, miss Sunday Mass? Some even impose mortifications upon themselves to satisfy their private devotion, while they easily dispense themselves from the obligation of fast and abstinence. How often has it been noticed that those who are the most punctual in making long trips and long visits to their favorite shrine, neglect the cleanliness of their homes and the care of their children?

Is it necessary to remark that well ordered piety does not act thus? It knows the value, the dignity, the hierarchy, if I may be permitted this expression, of the exercises of piety. It leaves in the background that which is less useful and gives all its esteem to everything that can bring it closer to God. Preference is given to the pious exercises which are the noblest, the most ancient, the most venerable and the most universal. Far from seeking novelties and singularities, well regulated piety places nothing above devotions which are essentially Catholic.

The wisely pious soul, first of all, accomplishes with exactitude and firmness the exercises required

by divine and ecclesiastical law. She understands her great dependence upon God, and morning as well as night, filled with respect and love, she kneels to call down from heaven the graces for the day and to offer thanks for favors received. Come what may, nothing can make her unmindful of the great and holy precept of Sunday. Then come the duties of state and after them follow the exercises of piety which properly are so called: assistance at daily Mass, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading, meditation, the Rosary, etc.

Finally, and this is my last consideration, she must perform her exercises of piety with profound reflection and a real spirit of piety. This is their essential quality, just as routine, their opposite vice, is their capital fault.

Routine, that is to say, a certain habit acquired by force of repetition of certain acts, and blindly followed, is an irregularity which must be studiously avoided. Never shall we be able to say how much we are creatures of habit and consequently how much we need to be attentive and of a reflecting mind always. It matters not how noble, how elevated, how sublime our exercises may be! It suffices that they be frequently repeated to be threatened with routine.

At a very tender age we were taught to love piety, we were shown how to pray, we were led into the confessional, we were invited to the altar rail, and we have felt in certain moments of fervor that in the fulfillment of these duties was to be found not only our happiness, but also our eternal salvation. With all the ardor we could muster we were faithful to these practices, then suddenly since the

obligations of life were always the same, our occupations reappeared each day on the same scene and the same sphere, our devotional exercises consisted of dry forms, which were neither animated nor vivified by solid reflection. We have become accustomed to prayer, to church, to the confessional, to Holy Communion and even to the performance of works of charity. We assist at every service, we satisfy every requirement, at least in appearance, because we have been told that this is what we should do, and because we see others doing the same things, without asking ourselves the why of our conduct. In reality, there is nothing or little done for God. We kneel in prayer without even giving a thought to the presence of God, and then we pray mechanically. Often we enter a church without even the vaguest idea of the Real Presence, and then we talk or are distracted. We confess our sins without any desire of amendment, and naturally we do not derive any benefit from these confessions. Without liking or fervor we communicate, and then our soul remains cold and insensible. Days, weeks, months, years pass and we always remain the same. We complain of lack of progress and we deplore it. Whose fault is it? Our own. Nothing has been made fruitful by dew from heaven, nothing has been made supernatural, nothing has been vivified. Nothing but barrenness, sterility, death. That which is lacking in our lives, is the rain which transforms our actions and makes them fruitful, and this beneficial rain is interior recollection; this life-giving dew is the spirit of faith.

Let us contemplate St. Anne. How well everything was regulated in her life! Faithful to God,

faithful to her duties of state, she filled all exercises of piety with a spirit of faith and with the desire to correspond with the grace which comes from on high.

Let us live then in a continual spirit of interior recollection. Let us be alive to the presence of God, that, when we meet with the occasion of practicing a pious exercise, we may without effort direct our intention, give to God the purest homage of our heart and thus derive from our acts all the merit and the fruits they produce or beget.

Prayer

O Good St. Anne, obtain for me a prudent and enlightened piety. Cause me to love all that Jesus loves, to make His will my will, His passion my passion, His love my love. Grant that I may love Holy Mother Church, the Blessed Virgin, the saints, the Souls in Purgatory and all my brothers in Christ. Make my piety amiable, joyful and appealing. Obtain for me the power to do all things with the intention and the desire of pleasing God and of procuring His greatest glory. Amen.

ADVANTAGES OF PIETY

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



Eager and interior disposition of the will, exterior practices of devotion selected with sobriety and order, intimate affection of the soul and manifestation of its affection by words and acts, such is the economy of Christian piety. The interior feeling bereft of the exterior manifestations could not satisfy our complex nature, composed of soul and body, just as the exterior exercises without the spirit of faith which animates them would be nothing but acts without force, without merit and without life. These practices would then resemble parched and arid lands which the dew of heaven never fertilizes, and which await in vain a beneficial rain to come back to life and to produce their fruits. This beneficial rain in the moral order is faith; this celestial, generating dew is the spirit of faith. Do not allow my insistence in reminding you of this truth provoke on your part either astonishment or weariness. I am so well convinced that there exists a danger for your piety in these exterior practices which are not animated by the soul that I would like to make you partaker of my conviction and absolutely convinced that there is nothing true, good, serious, Christian or supernatural in our life unless it proceeds from the interior.

Necessarily, I have explained, for any soul who seriously and sincerely wishes to work out its salvation, Christian piety has numerous and important advantages which must be considered attentively. Among so many divine things, the Apostle St. Paul

has said: "*Pietas ad omnia utilis est, habens promissionem vitae quae nunc est et futurae*"—godliness is profitable for all things; it has promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. It is profitable for all things, mark well, profitable everywhere, profitable always. Therefore let us see what the principal advantages of piety are.

Every human existence may be summed up in two words—joy and sorrow. Hence all the science of life consists in making of our joys and sorrows so many means of sanctification and salvation. To moderate the former, and to accept the latter courageously is true wisdom and also the double effect of piety.

Have you ever remarked how difficult it is to adopt a middle course in the joys of life! We are not considering those which our conscience condemns; but those which are legitimate and lawful. When one of these joys, always very rare and very short-lived, crosses our path, instinctively our heart clings to it, gives itself up to its possession entirely and without measure, considering nothing beyond, not even God who has given this joy. Plainly we see the hand of God when we are visited by some great misfortune, and, strengthened by our faith, we bless the hand that smites us, but not often in the midst of great joys do we think of the giver of every perfect joy. Turn back the pages of your life, see this unexpected success, this fortune regained, this cure obtained, this friendship won in loyalty and long maintained, and tell me if in the depths of your selfish soul you did not drink in these joys forgetful of all else, even of God Himself. Yes, in human happiness there will always be for us a temptation

to forget God. Could this be the reason that here below happiness is meted out to us in such parsimonious quantity? The few scattered bits sown here and there at long intervals on our path already have the sad privilege of tormenting and troubling us; they bend us down towards earth as they keep our souls from lifting their glances to heaven. What would happen then if all the joys of the world uniting themselves took possession of our poor hearts? They would overwhelm it.

Thus a sincerely pious Christian understands these austere truths. He knows that the joys of this earth are not the goal of life, but that they ought to be the means of gaining heaven. Therefore, far from attaching himself to them and setting his heart upon them, he knows how to be moderate in all things and to direct all his affections toward God. For him the joys of life are a few flowers which he plucks with a grateful hand, but the perfume of his life is God. These joys are to his soul cooling drops, but God is the ocean where he lives and breathes. The Lord having thus taken possession of this soul through piety, there is no anxiety, no worry, in the acceptance of sensible joys; God makes all perfect by deifying all, for piety is God in the heart. Piety in the existence of a Christian, is God living in his soul, putting everything in order, establishing peace and perfect equilibrium, harmonizing all his faculties and making of his whole life an admirable concert never interrupted by the least discordant note.

Though necessary for the sanctification of our joys here below, piety is none-the-less required to help us endure with patience and resignation the

trials and the austerities of this vale of tears. And now, I feel more at ease to speak of the advantages of piety, since suffering is the universal law of our existence. "For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even till now." Suffering is everywhere, it is part and parcel of our being. To give us life is to give us up to death, and our first utterance as we pass through the portals of life is a wail and a sob. To suffer in our soul and in our body pains the variety of which is equalled only by their intensity, to suffer as we die, such is the lot of our poor human race. And the most disconcerting fact of it all is that no one escapes suffering. In vain would I try to delude you, in vain would I try to make you immune to this law of universal suffering, you who live so peacefully in the midst of your families. I see among you, young men and young women anxiously awaiting what the future holds in store for you, I see heads of families loaded down with care and worn out by daily toil, I see also wives and Christian mothers; and does there exist a person who does not know that without suffering it is impossible for a Christian to accomplish the sublime function for which Divine Providence has destined him?

Now a pious soul illumines every trial and every suffering with the light of faith and finds in recourse to God energies which are nothing short of divine. When the tempest is raging at its highest, the pious soul seeks the harbor of prayer. And what does the pious soul learn from this spiritual intercourse? She learns that suffering imposes itself upon man as a law which is both necessary and merciful, necessary because man is a sinner, merciful because man may

thus atone for his sins. She learns that this life is of short duration and that the one to come with its ineffable joy will last forever. She learns that Christians, at least those who are truly so, are always consoled when they glance upon the crucifix with love and compassion. She learns that she is not the only one to suffer, but that God, giving her the example of suffering gives her also the strength to bear it. Lastly she learns that in spite of these apparent severities, God loves us as a Father, or, in the words of the Prophet, as a mother who with tenderness carries us on her bosom, so whatever may be the course which Divine Providence has chartered for her, whatever may be the trials, the sickness, the separations, the afflictions imposed upon her, lovingly she throws herself into the arms of God, takes refuge in His heart and blindly allows herself to be led in joy and peace like a child of predilection. The thought of belonging entirely to God is sufficient to make her perfectly happy, to inspire her with the courage and the confidence which nothing can disturb.

“Love,” says the author of the Imitation, “by itself maketh everything that is heavy, light; and maketh everything that is bitter, sweet and savory”. Long before his time, St. Augustine had presented the same thought in expressive and well known words: “*Pondus meum, amor meus.*” My love is a weight which enlivens me. To him who loves God with all his heart, the trials of life are not a burden; they are a source of strength and consolation.

Think of St. Anne. How did St. Anne bear until the very end the heavy trial God had in store for her: the downfall of her family and the greater hu-

miliation of her sterility, double calamity which dishonored her in the eyes of all her people? How? By having recourse to God in her affliction, and in shedding at His feet the tears of her loving and bruised soul. It was her piety which upheld her in her sorrow, just as it was her piety that sanctified her joys when she beheld herself in the temple and the object of divine blessings.

Love carries its own burden without feeling its weight and renders secret that which is most bitter.

Consider the saints. Whence came to them that serenity with which they accepted contradictions, persecutions and even death? From their piety, from their ardent love of God. "Ibant gaudentes," we read in the Acts of the Apostles. Joyful they went their way, always, even when they went to their execution. Is it possible! To place one's joy in suffering, to love and to desire suffering? Yes indeed! There are some saints who loved and desired suffering. Saint Theresa in the ecstasy of divine love cried out: "Either to suffer or to die!", having no desire for a life without suffering, which in her mind would be a life without love.

And so shall it be with us if we are truly pious. Piety will regulate our affections. Loving God with all our hearts, we will love our neighbor with greater facility and greater disinterestedness. Piety will sanctify our joys. If on certain days we feel happiness flooding our soul to such a point that we cry out with the Apostle, St. Peter: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" we shall be prompted thereby to love God with more effusion and more tenderness. Lastly piety will lessen our sufferings. Surrounded by the light of Faith, we will understand better that

to suffer for God is to love God and that "whatever crucifies us here below is nothing but the answer of human love to the love of a God who was crucified for us."

Therefore let us be pious, of that piety which is always uniform, of that piety always serene in the midst of joys as well as in the presence of adversity, of that piety always united to God and always submissive to His holy will.

Prayer:

O Good St. Anne, purify my joys and sanctify my sufferings. Cause me to find bitter any enjoyment which is not according to God's holy law, impossible any desire contrary to His holy will, unbearable any consolation which does not come from Him. Obtain for me resignation in my tribulations. Let me be simple in my humility, calm in my joys, and never depressed in my trials. Let me speak in a straightforward manner, let me fear without despair, hope without presumption, be pure without pride, love without pretence, edify without ostentation, suffer without murmuring. Obtain for me that my heart be submissive and resigned, that my soul calm and serene be ever ready to do God's holy will. Amen.

THE ADVANTAGES OF PIETY—II

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



Piety, while of paramount importance for sanctifying the joys of this world, and to help us bear with patience and resignation the contradictions of life, also has the power to transform us.

By piety our intelligence is rendered perfect. It is a commonly admitted fact that pious souls have a greater comprehension of things divine. This is true not only of learned persons with brilliant natural endowments, but also of simple, illiterate people who are really pious and totally given over to the illuminating action of grace. How many women taken from the rank and file of the people are there, whose judgments concerning events and doctrines which interest the faith are saner than those of the wisest doctors? "Pie agentibus Deus dat sapientiam," says Holy Scripture: to the godly the Lord hath given wisdom.

The heart is improved by piety because it fills it with truth. How much hypocrisy we find in the pretended affections of the world! There love is a matter of pride, of interest, of ambition, animated by all sorts of motives emanating from selfishness. Piety destroys selfishness and substitutes for it true charity. The pious soul loves God and loves for God alone. It pays no attention to the perishable and secondary qualities of the body. It seeks first of all in those who are loved the qualities of the soul, and though it endeavours to make this present life more agreeable it strives above all to obtain heaven for them, accompanying them as they go. The Holy

Ghost has said of these friendships that: "a faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality"—*medicamentum vitæ et immortalitatis*.

The will is rendered perfect by piety. What gives to the Christian the necessary strength to resist the allurements of the world, to turn a deaf ear to flattery and to close his eyes to vanity, to ignore the appeal of passions and to avoid the occasions of sin? Piety. What gives him the courage to pardon enemies and to bear mockeries and insults fearlessly and joyously? Piety. What gives the strength each day to begin anew monotonous daily tasks? Piety.

Lastly, even the body sometimes feels the influence of piety which transforms it. It has been known that upon certain Christians piety and love of God have worked real miracles of transfiguration.

Here then are some most appreciable personal advantages. But as you are well aware, you are not alone in the world, and your perfection requires that you give to others as much as, and more sometimes than to yourselves, that you forget yourselves in certain circumstances to think only of others. It is plain, therefore, that your life at home must be one of abnegation, of duty, of sacrifice. And, here again, piety offers many advantages which it behooves us to recall to your mind.

You must be thoroughly convinced that whosoever does not place the spirit of duty and sacrifice at the base of his relations with his own people, shall never have a supernatural and Christian influence over the persons around him. I beg of you not to believe that this influence in order to be

efficacious, must be striking and manifest itself by a multitude of words, remarks and advice. No, this influence is discreet, and all the more powerful because it appears to be inactive. This influence may easily be compared to those hidden fire-places which send heat to every part of the house. Almost unconsciously a warm atmosphere steals over one. Especially is this influence marvellous in the Christian animated by sincere piety. Watch this sincere Christian in action. Each day he endeavors to make his soul more pure, he corrects his faults, he tones down the harshness of his temper, he immolates himself continually, and this spirit of sacrifice gives to his heart a flexibility, a goodness, a neglect of self, a gracious kindness, a continual attention to the needs of others, so many virtues which animate and render fruitful the true Christian apostolate.

And I say that piety alone can prompt this spirit of self-denial and sacrifice which denies itself for the sake of duty, and makes one so happy that the most difficult task seems to cost nothing in the way of effort. Calculate as much as you please and reason as much as you like, read the most remarkable writings on human dignity and worth; nothing of all this will satisfy you, for as soon as you set to work, you will be face to face with your nature and here you will find selfishness, vanity, self-love, and consequently the neglect of others, susceptibilities, harshness, irritation, outbursts of temper, all traits which may be overcome only in the Christian school of piety.

At this school most particularly we learn two things necessary for the effacement of self: to tolerate and to forgive. Toleration deals with imper-

fections, forgiveness deals with sin. Holy Scripture says that we are a burden to one another. Differences of opinion, varieties of temperament, oddities of character, all these are the object of toleration. Intimate clashings, heartaches, desertion and cowardice, these are the object of forgiveness. Toleration is laudable; it is the characteristic of a soul which soars and goes searching to God for its light and power. The one, toleration, is Jesus in the midst of His own, in His daily dealings with the Jews, with His Disciples, with the Twelve, all crude, ignorant, badly educated folk, imbued terrestrial prejudice and painfully offending His infinite tenderness. The other, forgiveness, is Jesus nailed to the Cross, unmindful of His own sufferings, forgetting even His executioners or rather mindful of them but only to forgive. Toleration springs from patience, forgiveness springs from love and both are nurtured by the abundant sources of Christian piety. Yes, piety is a source, humbly hidden as all sources are and gives birth to all those virtues, which like so many channels, flow through domestic life to nourish and develop it.

I have just mentioned family life. What occasions of practicing toleration and forgiveness does it not sometimes offer? To speak only of the wife, does she always find in her home that solid and faithful affection upon which she may lean and rest without fear? Over the roof of this house which exteriorly bespeaks prosperity, are there not hovering storm-brewing clouds, and is there not reason to fear a dark and threatening future? Is mutual confidence still to be found there, simple, consoling as in the days gone by; and if it does exist still, how

long will it last? And the child, the child of sorrow and suffering, what will he become? What has he already become? Ah! If it be true that our love for someone be measured by the intensity of our suffering for such a one, I begin to understand that maternal love is beyond all expression, since maternal sorrows are beyond all measure! What shall become, in her dark moments, of the mother who is not directed and strengthened by piety? Truly, it is impossible to foresee where she will find the necessary strength and energy, and it is plain that it will be simply miraculous if the burden does not prove to be unbearable. Unless she drift along or be unable to grasp the importance of her obligations, it is impossible to conceive of a more unhappy being than this woman going thus through life without the help and light of piety. Should we be astonished if she bow down under the load and declare that it is impossible for her to proceed any further? Or otherwise her existence becomes a mere sham, empty, lost for time and eternity.

Confronted with such situations nothing but piety can inspire enough grandeur of soul to bear all, to forgive all. And then, as we have been told, there are some things so divine that they must be blessed by God even in this world. Devotion and sacrifice are as fertile seeds which, sooner or later, bring forth respect and affection. Man cannot with impunity always despise or constantly trample under foot that which is noble and great; he cannot always remain cold in the presence of the beauty of a soul unhappy but always dignified, a beauty which sorrow places in relief surrounding it with a soft and somber light. The hour of reckoning comes

sooner or later. It is not only the husband of the energetic wife who will rise to sing her praises: "vir ejus et laudabit eam," the husband of the unhappy wife also shall stand some day to exalt the hidden virtues of the woman, whose heart he had broken many times and to beg a forgiveness to which he knows he is no longer entitled. And the children shall also rise in their turn to acclaim and bless their mother.

See this woman kneeling in the semi-obscurity of a chapel, and setting both her eyes and her heart on the tabernacle. She is attired in widow's weeds, for she is overcome with grief at the death of her husband who died as the result of a hunting accident. She resides in the castle of her father-in-law, a violent and vain man, and she submits to the domination of a servant, she, the daughter of a president of Parliament. For seven years she is the victim of violences without name. Humiliated, insulted, she sees the children of a servant given preference over her own and animated with the most sublime abnegation, she cares for the children of this servant as though they were her own. Could greater sufferings be endured? Could greater humiliations be imagined? And yet I know that this woman is by nature proud and domineering. Where does she acquire the courage and strength to conquer and triumph over self? Follow her, attending Holy Mass each morning in the village church, uniting her sufferings with those of Jesus and Mary, shedding fortifying and salutary tears, receiving in Holy Communion courage for the whole day, rising from her knees consoled, almost radiant, and returning to the castle ready to accept all, to suffer all.

This woman is Jeanne de Chantal, model of all wives and of all Christian mothers as well as the model of all pious souls.

St. Anne also had her domestic troubles. Painfully did she suffer in her wifely heart; for a long time and in vain, did she aspire to the honours of motherhood. Always her piety sustained her. She emerged from the trial noble and purified.

Let us be devout and we shall become saints, and we shall become apostles. Be pious, you especially who are living in the married state, and more easily shall you put up with its austerities. And thus piety will hold for you not only the promises of this life, but also and above all the promises of the life to come.

Prayer:

O Good St. Anne, august mother of the Virgin Mary, I implore you for those who are dear to me. See my needs and those of my family. Obtain for me, from Jesus, all the graces I need faithfully to fulfill my duties of state. Beg for me the fear of God, the love of labor and good works, the liking for prayer and things holy, chastity, meekness, patience and all the other Christian virtues. I make you the mother and protector of my children; train their hearts to love piety; obtain such help that they may never deviate from the path of virtue; that they may preserve their innocence, and that they may never tarnish the purity of their bodies, their minds and their hearts. Watch over our home in order that adversity, sickness and above all sin may be kept from it. Pray that we may all lead a holy life here on earth, that we may meet in heaven, and celebrate your kindness eternally.

THE ENEMY OF PIETY

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



In our preceding instructions we have established the correct idea, that is to say, the Christian idea of piety, and we have pointed out the precious advantages it bestows. These different considerations must have convinced us that the spirit of piety should animate our entire being, illumining our intellectual life with the rays of faith, and warming our moral life with the rays of divine love. Where there is equality of talent, it must be admitted that a pious soul will be more accurate in her judgments and far more reaching in her conclusions than a soul, I shall say not impious, than a soul of lesser piety, than a soul without piety. And what has just been said of gifted talents can more easily be said of tenderness, of devotion, of geniality of the heart.

To this spirit of piety, which must penetrate all the actions of a Christian soul, is opposed an irreducible and irreconcilable enemy, another spirit: the spirit of the world, which is really the only obstacle to piety, as all other obstacles dwindle down and come to this one. You are all familiar with the words of our Saviour: "No man can serve two masters." This saying is especially true of the subject with which we are concerned. Should we care to analyze each one of our sins, we would learn, after all, that we are trying always, but in vain, to solve this never to be solved problem: to unit two things which exclude each other, to unite a piety more or less enlightened, more or less firm, to that entire

ensemble of prejudices, of distractions, of lies which constitute the spirit of the world.

What, then, is this spirit of the world, and what should we think of this world reproved by God and against which Our Lord has hurled His most terrible anathemas?

This word "world", spirit of the world, is a very complex word, susceptible of many meanings and employed even in the Gospel to express different realities. Therefore it is of the greatest importance to separate from these significations the one which is taken in bad part, and which indicates the enemy of piety.

"God," says the Evangelist St. John, "so loved the world as to give to it His only begotten Son." Evidently, the sense here is humanity, buried in darkness and fettered in the servitude of sin, and God was taken with such an intense love for this miserable humanity that, in order to save it, He did not hesitate to sacrifice, in a sad holocaust, His only begotten and beloved Son. "*Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum ut Filium unigenitum suum daret.*" And we, too, must love this humanity, our neighbor in other words, as God has loved him, and because God loves him. The pretext of not wishing to intrude and of avoiding trouble does not justify our indifference to the misery and the shortcomings of the world. We are obliged to help the former and to mourn over the latter; and selfishness, even in religion and above all in religion, always remains selfishness. Among our neighbors there are some whom we must love in a special manner and with whom we must entertain unwearied and affectionate relations. The first word of the law expresses the formal com-

mand to love, to love God, and to love our brethren, to love our family, to love husband, wife and children, more for themselves than for ourselves, and more for God than for them. This is the order of charity, and if this order is respected, piety remains wholesome. Don't speak to me of a harsh piety, of a disagreeable piety; I demand, moreover, a piety which, when the occasion warrants it, can sacrifice itself for the exigencies of the world, when these exigencies are the factors of peace, of union and furthermore are blameless. One need not be afraid to surrender one's heart generously to these affections and these friendships, which our Lord by His law as well as by His example deigned to purify and to elevate, and far from believing that religion forbids and stifles them, let it be well understood that it exalts, supernaturalizes, and deifies them.

Surely, I have conceded enough to the world now to have the right to disavow it in its wrongs and its contradictions with piety. Moreover, it is impossible to do so in more expressive terms and with more pronounced sincerity than the Holy Gospel does. Let us consider this scene and all the circumstances of this scene. The Master is dying, and who does not know that at the moment of death there are to be found on the lips only words of pardon, and in the heart, sentiments of generosity. Behold! Jesus before breathing His last expresses in a supreme prayer His desires and His wishes. He prays for His Apostles that they may be preserved from harm; He prays for His Church that all the faithful may be united among themselves as He and the Father are one. He forgets no one, He prays for His friends as, in a few moments,

on the Cross He will pray for His enemies, when suddenly He utters this strange, incomprehensible word: *non pro mundo rogo*. I pray not for the world. What! Lord, to declare that you pray not for some one, is it not to declare that you condemn him? To affirm that you pray not for the world is it not by the same token to affirm that you condemn the world? It is plain that Jesus has condemned the world. Why? Because "the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not." Christ came down upon earth to teach humility to men, and the pride of the world set itself up against Christ. Christ came down upon earth to make us love poverty and the rich of the world have fettered the work of Christ. Christ came down on earth to attract souls to purity, and the lust of the world has worked against the sanctifying action of Christ.

Wherever Christ penetrated there also did the world endeavor to enter. Where Christ wished to work salvation, the world tried to effect perdition. And this antagonism has never ceased. There always has been set up against the spirit of truth, of self-denial and of love, which is the spirit of Jesus Christ, a spirit of untruth, of egotism and hatred, which is the spirit of the world. And this antagonism has passed on into works, and this antagonism in actions has been so noticeable that even the pagans have remarked it and one of them has defined the world in these terms: to corrupt and to be corrupted, such is the world, "*corrumpere et corrumpi saeculum vocatur*". More emphatic still is St. John, the Evangelist, when he makes this terrible declaration summing up the malice of our poor humanity: "the whole world is seated in wicked-

ness", mundus totus in maligno positus est, and when he concluded: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world, for all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."

And in this sense what then is the world? Nothing but concupiscence. This concupiscence is a part of our very selves. We cast our personal concupiscences upon the common heap of concupiscences, and this reunion, this ensemble, this mass of concupiscences, of false principles, of perverted maxims, of works of darkness and of contaminations of all sorts, such is the world, such is the spirit and the life of the world.

Concupiscence of the eyes. To see and then be seen is this not the world? Once again, I do not intend to exaggerate. There exists an allowable charm, a charm necessary in the relations, in the decent pleasures of the world, but when this becomes an intoxication, a giddiness, it is quite another matter. It is meet and it is just, that by her very exterior charm, a wife, a mother desires to please her own, and have consideration for her immediate household, but to live only to see and to be seen, as it happens, to strut in indecent and extravagant clothes, to think only of exhibiting and introducing one's self, is nothing but excess and abuse, and every abuse should be condemned.

Concupiscence of pride. To surpass all others, to out-shine all, to dominate, to crush every one around, once again is this not the world? And what numerous sins do this vanity and this worldliness cause their authors or their witnesses to commit?

Concupiscence of the flesh. Surely, it suffices to name it among you to make you clearly understand my meaning. You know how easily it slips into what are known as the pleasures of the world, when they are enjoyed without reserve and without prudence. You know how far it can go and how true are the words of St. John: "The whole world is seated in wickedness". There are things so profoundly delicate that they make themselves known by their very existence. These things are sad, but we must not put a bandage over our eyes; it is not necessary to be unaware of the dangers for virtue which are met in the conversation, the lectures, the recreation, the theater of the world, in the giddiness which, at any sacrifice, we must avoid if we wish to save our souls. Even if you put aside the sad things, you will always recognize the world by these infallible signs: its levity, its frivolity, its thoughtlessness, its uselessness.

And do you understand now the severity of religion towards the pleasures of the world, when she declares with the authority of St. Francis de Sales that most of them are bad and that the rest are worthless? Do you realize that the worldly life, that life of concupiscence and frivolity can in no possible manner be united with a life of sincere piety and true devotion? To attempt a union of this sort would be to add hypocrisy to all other faults. And since it is impossible to divert the torrent of the world, or to direct it, what is to be done? It must be stopped by a dam, and this dam is piety, exercises of piety and the seriousness which is given the soul by habitual thoughts of piety.

Consider St. Anne. She lived in the midst of the

world without conforming to its customs and without being tainted by its spirit. Always amiable, always agreeable and prepossessing, she obtained the affection and the sympathy of all.

So let it be with us. Let us live in the world without surrendering to the world. Let us make a judicious choice of the pleasures and the amusements of the world. Let this be our rule of conduct: the pleasures, which, surrounded by prudence and watchfulness, constitute in our home a distraction indulged in with simplicity of heart and purity of intention, are innocent. The amusements divorced from their essential evil, and to which we submit by duty without attaching our heart to them, are tolerated, the amusements which by themselves or by their circumstances are proximate occasions of sin, are forbidden.

Therefore, let us be sincere with ourselves and with our consciences. Above all our thoughts, let us place the thought of God; above all our hopes, hope in God, above all our affections, the love of God. It is the love of God that saves. Let us love God with all our hearts and nothing will preserve us from worldliness more surely.

Prayer

O Good St. Anne, you who lived in the midst of the world without being attracted by it and without its weaknesses, obtain for me a heart profoundly in love with God, never to be separated from Him either by sight or by hearing; a heart faithful and true, which neither wavers nor lowers itself; an

indomitable heart, always ready to fight after each storm; a free heart, never captivated, never enslaved; a heart which never loses itself in the ways of sin. Pray that my every thought may be for God and that Jesus alone may be my love and my delight. Amen.

PIETY AND ITS SOURCE

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



I have told you what constitutes piety, and how it must proceed from within to give to our acts their full value and their merit. I have told you the importance of making a judicious selection of your exercises of piety and of vivifying them always with the spirit of faith. I have reminded you of the advantages of Christian piety and the happy transformations it brings about in us. Last of all I have warned you against the enemy of piety: the world, its maxims, its pomps, its amusements, its pleasures.

In order to complete the edifice we have tried to build together, would you allow me to indicate the very source of Christian piety? This abundant and unexhaustible source is Holy Communion.

St. Francis de Sales, whom I have previously quoted with great pleasure, wrote: "Experience has proven to me very clearly, in the twenty-five years I have devoted to the service of souls, the omnipotent force of this divine Sacrament to fortify souls in the conquest of good, to deter them from evil, to console them, and in a word to edify them in this world, provided that it be received with the required faith, purity and devotion."

These words are a sermon in themselves and I shall limit myself to a brief commentary of them.

In holy Communion we receive Our Lord.

It is a dogma of faith that the Blessed Eucharist contains truly, really and substantially the adorable person of the Word. *Vere, realiter et substantialiter*, are the words used by the Council of Trent.

When we communicate, we therefore receive Our Lord. We receive Him, not in a sign which symbolizes Him, not in a figure which represents Him, but in reality; not in a virtue emanating from Him, but in His very substance; not morally, by thought and desire, but sacramentally; not in part, but entirely whole, His body, His blood, His soul and His divinity. We receive Him as a food, a living food which gives life, a food for our souls. "For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life". We receive Him within us, in our bosoms, in our hearts, which become tabernacles. Like the spouse of the Canticles of Canticles we may exclaim, "My beloved is mine and I am His."

"In the Eucharist," says Saint Thomas, "the soul tastes the very source of spiritual sweetness." It overflows with peace, with confidence, and with love. "When I receive Holy Communion," said St. Catherine of Sienna, "I am so full of joy that I can not contain myself and I am astonished to find that my entire being does not dissolve." Certainly, this is not yet our eternal happy home, because to the possession of God there is lacking the beatific vision and the beatific love; but if this is not heaven, it is at least the road which leads there and a certain anticipated taking possession.

In Holy Communion we feast on Our Lord.

Holy Communion in the spiritual order constitutes a real food. What material bread is to the life of the body, the Eucharist is to the life of the soul. In addition to being the vehicle of grace as well as its sign, the Eucharist possesses in itself a vivifying virtue. It is through Holy Communion

that the supernatural life which we have received in baptism is developed and fulfilled in every one of us. Not only does it keep up in us this supernatural life, but communicates to it a new development; not only does it replace its losses and impede its abating, but also it assures its increase so much so that Saint Augustin did not hesitate to say: "Whosoever wishes to live knows from now on where he can find life, where he can be fed and nourished. **Habet ubi vivat, habet unde vivat.**

In Holy Communion we unite ourselves to Our Lord.

The Blessed Eucharist, being a food, possesses all the essential qualities of a food: it incorporates itself in our body, it unites itself to us, it identifies itself with us. But in this case the food being infinitely more perfect than the being which receives it, it is not Jesus who transforms himself into us, it is we who are changed into Him and who become a single identical thing with Him. "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me".

It is evident that this union does not go so far as to take away our personality from us: we always remain human beings, subjected to the weaknesses of the flesh and to the allurements of passion, but like Saint Paul, we can say: "Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat"—I can do all things in Him who strengthened me. Neither does Holy Communion effect a simple moral union which unites two hearts in one friendship; it is a union of a special kind, the union which produces nutrition and assimilation. Two pieces of wax melted in the same crucible, incandescent iron and the fire which brightens it, behold, according to the Holy Fathers, a perfect

image of the union which Holy Communion establishes between Jesus and the Christian soul.

A truly deifying union, which according to the expression of Saint Thomas, transforms us into Christ, which causes God to be in man, and man to be in God which makes us his members, and makes us incorporate ourselves in Him, *corporei, consanguinei*, just as really as the shoot is to the plant, *complantati*, as the root is to the tree, *radicati*; union which more and more makes us partakers of the divine nature, *divinae consortes naturae*.

In Holy Communion we sanctify ourselves in Our Lord.

Holy Communion brings us in contact with the holy life of the Savior, with His infinite merits, and then, it is our entire being which rises, becomes spiritualized, sanctified and deified, the body as well as the soul.

When we receive Holy Communion, there happens between God and us something akin to what happened to Jesus Christ at the moment of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, God became man by uniting himself to humanity. In Holy Communion, the body the Savior unites itself to our body, His blood unites itself to our blood, His soul unites itself to our soul. "The Christian who communicates," says St. Francis de Sales, "has God in his head, in his heart, in his feet, in his hands, everywhere." But, as in Jesus Christ the divine nature is intimately united to the human nature, it follows that by this holy transformation, we become after a certain fashion deified beings. The flesh of Christ, that flesh without sin and without concupiscence, purifies and sanctifies our own; His precious blood

taken from the most pure blood of the Virgin Mary creates divine morals in us; His immensity dilates our charity; His immutability strengthens us in righteousness; His power gives us strength in temptations and makes us accomplish great things for the glory of God, the service of the Church and the welfare of souls; His holiness separates us from sin and clothes us with the virtues which makes saints: lastly, His heart, His loving and infinitely compassionate heart, becomes our heart, our heart to love God and to love souls, our heart to adore, to praise and to thank the All-Mighty according to the grandeur of His mercies.

Qui manducat me vivet propter me. Well! Yes, Christ in Holy Communion assimilates our souls and in an embrace as strong as the love of God He makes us like unto Himself. We communicate to become more Christ-like, to allow Christ to grow in us until He reaches His plenitude. Therefore it has truthfully been said that all love, every burst of love, every apostolate, every saintship, all fervor, all enthusiasm, every abnegation, every self denial every complete surrender of self, every immolation, all heroism, all sublime vocations spring forth from the altar. Priests, apostles, confessors of the Faith, virgins, all who ascend, all who labor, fight, and sacrifice themselves for God, all those who consecrate themselves, all those who surrender themselves, who merit and implore, who pray, all that can be termed zeal, ardor, or holocaust, all these spring from the altar and there also seek their vigor.

What is the reason for so many admirable works performed in the Church for more than nineteen centuries? Where did the martyrs find that

heroic courage which made them so admirable in the face of persecution? Listen to the words of Saint Cyprien: "Those we send into the fray are not without arms; we place them under the protection of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, we give them Holy Communion, and, strong as lions, they brave the greatest dangers."

And even today what turns the priest into an apostle? Who makes the humble, the meek, the poor, the mortified, the merciful, the chaste, the valorous? Why is it that the non-Christian religions and all the profane philosophies have never brought forth a single missionary nor a single Sister of Charity? Two words of explanation suffice: there we find no altar and consequently neither the altar-rail nor communion. The principle of life is missing, the fruits of perfection and holiness are not possible.

Lastly, in Holy Communion we elevate ourselves to the glorious life of Christ.

The glorious life, life in God in heaven, is nothing but the expansion and the crowning of life in God upon earth. Therefore it exists in embryo even here below. This beginning is supernatural life, such as sanctifying grace establishes in our souls.

Now Holy Communion completes in us the life of grace, fructifies, develops, and prepares it for definite expansion.

Upon entering the abode of the Blessed we shall be transfigured, we shall become capable of the most extended pleasures, we shall be in possession of the glorious life; but, again, it is Holy Communion which prepares all, nourishes all, renders all fruitful. Holy Communion, sings the

Church in her liturgy, is eternal life in its root, *futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur*.

Every human life ends in death; life through the Eucharist has its prolongation into eternity. God has promised it and He is infallible in His promises: "Qui manducat hunc panem, vivet in aeternum."

What matters then the death which awaits us! Our hope shall not be in vain. When our soul marked with the Eucharistic seal, will appear before God, it will be the object of His kind attentions and will have access into heaven.

So also will it be with our body. Surely, before long, it will rend "like a used garment"; it will fall to ruins "as old edifices fall"; it will become "a bit of dust carried by the wind one knows not where"; but our body also, our body which will have been the receptacle of the Blessed Eucharist, God, at the end of time, will reunite its scattered ashes to weave them into a garment of glory and immortality: *Futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur*.

Yes, to him who communicates and communicates worthily; life, supernatural life in this world, life glorious and eternal in the next, life in God for ever, the life of the elect, the life of the angels and the saints. *Vivet in aeternum!*

I desist. Do we wish to be pious Christians, marked with that piety whose beauty and fecundity I tried to portray for you? Let us love the Blessed Eucharist, let us love Holy Communion.

Saint Anne through hope alone knew the Eucharist. Making of Holy Writ her daily food, oftentimes she must have stopped to meditate upon certain passages of the Old Testament whose pro-

phetic sense is particularly applied to the Blessed Eucharist. Did God reveal to her what came to pass under the new law? We know not. What we are certain of is that like all the great personages of her race, she ardently desired the Redemption and all that it admitted of the supernatural and divine.

More fortunate than Saint Anne, we possess in reality what she could have attained only in desire. Let us beg of our great patron that all our Communion be received with such dispositions that will make of them a source of piety here, the source and the guarantee of everlasting glory.

Prayer

O Good Saint Anne, inspire me with a tender piety towards the Blessed Eucharist. It is the source of every grace, of every joy and of every consolation. Obtain for me a desire to assist at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. May my Communion be accompanied by faith, confidence, and good and holy desires. May my visits to the Blessed Sacrament be more numerous and more fervent. Jesus is not exacting; He does not require long prayers; a quarter of an hour, five minutes, the time it takes to pour out my soul in His presence, to tell Him of my gratitude and my love. Implore Jesus that I become a Eucharistic soul, in the first rank of those who understand and exalt the great Sacrament of divine love. Amen.

MODEL OF PIETY

Exercise thyself unto godliness. (I Tim. IV-7)



We celebrate today (July 26) the feast of Saint Anne. Will you allow me to propose this great saint to you as a model of piety?

Piety exercises and manifests itself in the meritorious accomplishment of one's duties of state. "Unusquisque in qua vocatione vocatus est in ea permaneat," said the Apostle Saint Paul—"let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called." Now who better than Saint Anne ever understood this teaching and put it into practice?

Saint Anne, like most mothers, unheralded came on earth, fulfilled in silence, work, and virtue, her role of spouse and mother, and left the world without ostentation.

The Gospel which needs but one word to exalt one to the pinnacle of glory says nothing of the mother of Mary; it does not even mention her name. A careful perusal of the New Testament reveals no word, no trace, nor allusion to Saint Anne. It is only the Christian generations which have treasured in their hearts and deeply impressed in their memories a few facts about her, who, by the sanctity of her life, by the splendor of her virtues, won the honor of becoming the mother of the purest and noblest creature who ever lived, the august and venerated mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Here is the contribution of Tradition. "Born at Bethlehem of the royal family of David and of the sacerdotal race of Aaron, by the union of Machan,

her father, with **Mary**, daughter of the tribe of Judah, St. Anne would have had the right of living in the royal palace and of occupying the splendid apartments reserved for the priests at the approach of the temple, in the holy City. On account of reverses of fortune, she was forced to renounce this honor and live in retirement with her parents in the town of Bethlehem.”

“There never existed a couple better suited to each other, never were husband and wife better matched. Anne and Joachim had the same preferences, the same inclinations. Their thoughts, their desires, their aspirations tended only to the glory of God and to the relief of the misery they found around them. They were happy.”

“A cruel cross was soon to be laid upon their shoulders. It seemed as though God did not want to bless their union. They had been married twenty years, were childless, and Anne was sterile. This shame was considered the most humiliating, for Jewish men looked upon sterility as a disgrace and punishment from heaven. Therefore Anne envied those fortunate mothers, who by their offspring kept alive in Israel the hope of a Liberator to come.”

“So great was her sorrow and so ardent her supplications that God finally answered her prayer and Anne gave birth to a daughter whom she named **Mary**.”

“With what great joy she must have been filled, when she learned, by divine revelation, that her child was predestined to be the mother of the Savior of the world, and that because her divine maternity had been foreseen, God had preserved her from

sin and filled her with grace from the very first moment of her conception!"

"It certainly was for her an incomparable honor to have been chosen to be the mother of Mary and the grandmother of the son of God. This glory, Saint Anne made greater still by the tender and delicate care with which she surrounded her beloved daughter. To her came the honor of having formed this vessel of election chosen by God to accomplish in the world the designs of His mercy. She it was who initiated Mary into the practice of all the Christian virtues and piety, and when Tradition pictures her, close by her daughter, holding open before her eyes the book of divine Scriptures and teaching her how to read from it, it only glorifies this eminently educational role which she zealously fulfilled with regard to her daughter."

"Lastly, when Mary had been presented in the temple, Saint Anne, having become widowed, abandoned her home and established herself in Jerusalem."

"From then on, her life was nothing but one uninterrupted contemplation. Continuously she enjoyed those torrents of spiritual delights which are like a foretaste of the celestial joys which God lavishes upon true servants, and which were soon to be hers for all eternity."

"Her death," says Saint John Damascene, "was that of the predestined."

It was not long before the Christian nations placed themselves under her protection. Why did devotion to her spontaneously spring from the heart of the faithful? Ah! It is because Saint Anne has a title of glory which is truly incomparable, only

one title, but the greatest of all: she was the grandmother of the Savior.

Does there not exist also another motive? Yes! For we find that the very essence of the devotion we have for her is the fact that we know her to be a perfect model of Christian life and perfection.

Saint Anne lived the most humble life. It was in the midst of labors imposed upon her by the fall of her family, and in struggling with adversity, that she attained that degree of sanctity which characterizes her. With her piety was a conviction of the soul. Continuously united to God by the thoughts of her mind and the affections of her heart, she walked always in His presence and directed toward Him every act of her life. Fidelity to duty in its multiple forms, to duty often obscure and despised because it is the monotonous performance of daily work; respect for and entire submission to the Divine Will, even in the midst of anxieties and contradictions, such was the entire secret of her exalted virtue.

Therefore we derive from her life a most powerful encouragement.

Ordinarily our idea of holiness, to say the least, is very strange. The perfection of the saints appears to us an ideal so far above our weaknesses that for this very reason we believe that we cannot attain it, though we may be actuated by the most legitimate ambitions. Now this is nothing but a false idea, a prejudice which too often masks our unconcern and cowardice. To be holy does not mean to do extraordinary things, to multiply miracles at every step, to fast, to mortify one's self, to pass long hours in church; no, to be holy, is to serve God in

the best possible manner in that state of life where His Providence has placed us, to be holy is to accomplish one's duties and one's obligations faithfully, respecting the law of God and obeying His commandments. Sanctity, therefore, is not beyond our strength, not beyond the energies of our nature upheld and vivified by grace. Entirely composed of self-denials and sacrifices, it finds its principle and its base in the faithful performance of the duties and obligations of each day.

"What must one do to be a saint?" one of his sisters, who lived in the world, asked of Saint Thomas Aquinas. "To will it," answered the holy doctor.

To will it! Is this not, I ask you, a consoling doctrine? How often do we hear the people of the world exclaim: "I would like to be a saint, but how can I become one in my state of life, in the midst of the toils, the anxieties and the requirements of my miserable existence? No, holiness is not for me, it is too difficult!" Too difficult! Let us see: Have we not the same graces which the saints had? Have we not the same means of sanctification—prayer, the sacraments, the practice of virtue. Were they exposed less than we to the world and its dangers, less subject than we to the rebellion of the flesh and to the sway of passions? Had they not, as we have, battles to fight, struggles to maintain, temptations to repel, victories to win? The saints were what we are, Christians, but they were better than we and lived in a more perfect manner. "God," says St. Francis de Sales, "does not measure His elect by the splendor and multiplicity of the work they accomplish, but by the fervor of the charity which

animates them". Never has holiness been acquired in any other way than through ardent and continuous efforts.

And this is the lesson which is to be found in the feast which we celebrate.

Let us imitate St. Anne, the model of a humble and resigned life. Let us imitate her by a greater fidelity in accomplishing our daily tasks. As she did, let us have a salutary fear of sin, a tender and solid piety for the practices of divine worship, an unalterable patience in the trials of life, an ardent love which causes us to suffer everything in order to please God; and thus protected and blessed by our illustrious patron, we shall obtain, as she did, a happy death.

Tradition has it that in her last moments, St. Anne was assisted by her immaculate daughter, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who by her exhortations, her fervent prayers, and all the love of her filial affection soothed her in the supreme hour of her agony.

What a marvelous ending of a holy life! May we die thus, in perfect peace in the arms of Mary!

Prayer:

O Good St. Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary and very holy grand-mother of Jesus, I choose you today for my mother and powerful protectress. I confide and I recommend to your maternal keeping my whole being, my body, my soul, my life, my death, my sorrows, my joys, my hopes; in the bosom of your mercy full of tenderness I place them, together with my family and all that I hold dear in this world. I promise to serve you, to love you, to

venerate you, I purpose to spread your devotion and your love as far as is within my power. So, good and kind Mother, deign to accept me as your child and as such to surround me with your beneficent affection. Obtain for me grace to imitate those virtues by which you delighted the heart of God that I may always be pleasing to Jesus, to Mary and to yourself, O good Saint so beloved! Obtain for me a happy death; come in my last moments to help and console me; intercede for me with the Savior that I may atone for my sins, escape the pains they have deserved, and, thus free from every stain, pass from this mortal body to everlasting peace, close to you, Jesus, and Mary. Amen.

GOOD SAINT ANNE
The Wonder-Worker of
North America

God has given to St. Anne the power of working miracles. This power she has exercised particularly in favor of the inhabitants of our North American continent. She is our wonder-working saint.

On the other hand, there is to be found in the heart of our people a tenderness full of confidence for the glorious patroness of Canada. Truly it may be said that devotion to St. Anne has become a country-wide devotion.

A few facts taken from history will prove the great protection St. Anne exercises over our North American continent.

On the feast of St. Anne, July 26, 1535, ten days after the landing of Jacques Cartier in America, the intrepid explorer saw coming back to Blanc Sablon two of his vessels which he thought had been lost in the storm. This signal favor he attributed to Saint Anne.

On the twenty-sixth of July, 1609, Champlain in an expedition on the lake which bears his name, marked out on Ile La Motte a location propitious for the construction of a fort to be called Fort Saint Anne.

In the year 1635, a fortification was raised in the bay of Chibou on Cape Breton, the point most exposed to attacks from the enemies of New France,

and everywhere it was known under the name of Fort St. Anne.

On the fifteenth of May, 1639, a group of young ladies left France to come to Canada to establish the Congregation of the Ursulines. And Madame La Frete, their leader, receiving the good wishes of the king of France, received also the command that the first church whose pointed spire should pierce the virgin sky of the New World should be an homage to St. Anne and bear her name.

In the year 1647, the church of Notre Dame, raised from the ruins of the chapel of La Recouvrance, had within its walls an oratory which, "to satisfy the desires of the citizens as well as their filial love and their devotion," was dedicated to St. Anne.

Ten years later, on the tenth of April, Reverend Father de Quen signed the establishment of the first confraternity erected in Canada; St. Anne became its patroness at the express and reiterated demand of its members.

As it can clearly be seen, the budding colony which was to become the Canadian people, a nation strong in its faith, true to God, simple and fervent in prayer, grew and developed under the vigilance and protection of St. Anne, the great St. Anne of the North, as she was then known.

But it is time now to mention the erection of the sanctuary of Beaupre, which has witnessed so many wonders worked through the prayers of St. Anne.

It was about the year 1635, a vessel manned by

Breton mariners navigating the St. Lawrence was headed for Quebec. Already in the distance, when through the mists of the river and the twilight of evening appeared the rugged line of the famous heights where Champlain had breathed his last, the joyful singing which accompanied the rythmic movement of the oars suddenly stopped, and anxiety darkened the faces of all. A storm appeared in the offing. In the twinkling of an eye the wind heaved the waves, rain, a diluvial rain fell furiously, sinisterly the thunder reechoed from mountain to mountain, while blinding lightning shattered the clouds.

Nonsense! The vessel is sturdy and the mariners are Bretons!

Alas, suddenly a streak of lightning more glaring than the rest rends the atmosphere and in a second disables the vessel.

The sailors are lost! Their grave is there: right there at the bottom, between two waves. And resigned, they prepare for death, when suddenly one of them cries out, "Saint Anne! Pray for us."

And every one answers; "Saint Anne! Pray for us."

Again, a strong voice is raised through the furies of the skies: "A church to Saint Anne if we are saved." And, miraculous as it may seem, not one sailor was lost. The vessel, however, was dashed to pieces.

A few days later, on the North shore of the St. Lawrence, in a wild and deserted spot, a humble chapel was erected in a primeval forest, and men, sailors, their eyes full of tears, prayed to Good Saint Anne and offered her this rustic sanctuary,

first chapel of Saint Anne de Beaupre, to fulfill their vow, and in gratitude for her protection.

Legend or history, this narrative is nothing but the prelude of a long series of supernatural facts and miracles which for three centuries have filled the records of St. Anne de Beaupre.

Skeptics have been attracted to this sanctuary by curiosity, and they have gone away, if not converted, at least affected and touched by the thrilling impression which captivates all the souls who draw near to Saint Anne.

For example, MacDonald Oxley, editor of a fashionable New York magazine, who wrote that there are delights for the soul which opens its doors to incipient faith. Impressed by the pious and recollected throngs at Saint Anne, he could not help but feel the respectful admiration which is born in the presence of the supernatural.

A second example is Cleveland Moffet, American Protestant, who devoted sixteen pages of a Protestant review to narrate the miracles of St. Anne de Beaupre; of the Good Saint Anne, as he calls her.

A third example is Joaquin Miller who, in spite of an heterodox belief, wrote with a good deal of conviction: "Yes, it is the truth and I know that the miracles attributed to the Good Saint Anne de Beaupre, as she is called, are authentic, and if there have been miracles in the past, there are still many today." This is a statement from a San Francisco journal of 1884.

All this proves that Saint Anne in a special manner extends her protection over the people as

well as the land of our North American continent, and that many of her choicest blessings as well as her rarest gifts are showered upon us.

The first inhabitants of Canada as well as those of today were much alive to this great fact.

Let us listen to His Excellency Monsigneur Laval, first Bishop of Quebec and of Canada. "We confess that nothing has helped us to bear up under the load of the pastoral burden of this new-born church more efficaciously than the special devotion which the inhabitants of this country have for Saint Anne, devotion which we affirm with great certitude, distinguishes them from all other peoples."

About the year 1667, M. Morel writing his memoirs, penned these lines: "It is certainly to attain this same end, namely to make of Saint Anne a favorable shelter and a secure refuge for the Christians of the New World, that God has impressed in the hearts a special devotion for this great saint and an extraordinary confidence in her."

And the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation, the thirtieth of September, 1665, writes to her son: "that there is near Quebec, a church of Saint Anne where Our Lord performs great wonders in favor of this holy mother. There one sees the paralytic walk, the blind recover their sight, and the sick, no matter from what malady they suffer, regain their health."

Father Mercier, Superior of the Missions of New France, in 1667 described the wonders worked at Beaupre and he stated "that the happy results and beginnings cause him to hope, that through the in-

tercession of Saint Anne, God will lavish His blessings upon this new country of Canada."

Let us signal out one more illustrious person who exalted Saint Anne, Monsieur d' Iberville.

This hero, always victorious, related "that through the intercession of Saint Anne marked favors were granted." During his adventurous travels through Louisiana, in the midst of his hazardous trips over many oceans, d'Iberville was upheld, encouraged and fortified by the protection of Saint Anne, the patron saint of Canada.

Finally, we wish to mention the respect, the veneration and the confidence of the Indians, those intrepid children as free as the oaks of the forest, who feared no obstacle and who retreated before nothing, not even death, and who, however, at the approach of July 26, according to the Relations, set out for the Sanctuary of Beaupre to beg the Patron Saint of Canada to bless their hunting expeditions, protect them against sickness and famine, make them victorious over their enemies, and who as they approached the hallowed spot where they prayed to the good Saint Anne of the North, knelt down and advanced on their knees to the very door of the chapel. And there, what a touching spectacle it was, to see tears flowing from their eyes as they fixed their gaze upon the rough statue of the Saint, while from their lips instinctively, in their own national tongue, came forth songs and hymns of love and praise.

Let it not be said that it is an easy matter to scan through three centuries and find there a few

facts and testimonials, and then group them together to exalt without reason a hero or a heroine.

This objection can be answered easily by saying that the contrary is proved by a visit to the Sanctuary of Beaupre and one glance at the testimonials accumulated in the sanctuary and the nave of the majestic basilica erected by numerous alms of pious pilgrims. Let a careful count of the ex-votos be taken; let a careful perusal of the manuscripts and records of the parish be made, and then it will be possible to realize the great number of spiritual and temporal favors which form a crown of glory and gratitude for Saint Anne, without making mention of marked favors which do not appear upon the walls of a church nor in its archives, but which are impressed in the hearts of the favored many, the converts and the answered petitioners. Let us ask the million and more pilgrims who each year come to kneel at the foot of the beloved statue what they have felt at the sanctuary of the great wonder-worker, and what sentiments of confidence and love they have experienced from their visit to the great saint!

And if this be not sufficient, let us stop at every hamlet village, city, not only of Canada but of the United States as well, and wherever we meet with Catholic families, let us ask the children as well as the parents, their sentiments regarding St. Anne. Almost unanimously they will answer, "Good St. Anne is our mother, our protectress, the confidant of our souls, and we love to pray to her each day."

Moreover, should we travel through the entire North American continent in search of tangible evi-

dence, everywhere, whether it be in the large cities themselves, or on the banks of rivers, or on the slopes of mountains, or in the valleys, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, are to be found sanctuaries dedicated to Saint Anne, chapels dedicated to her name, statues erected in her honor, villages placed under her protection, confraternities who proudly bear her name, and in innumerable families faded pictures of the saint which have grown yellow with age.

In the United States Saint Anne is honored in a special manner, although her shrine at Beaupre is the magnet which attracts hundreds of thousands of their citizens each year. This is conclusively proved by the fact that of their forty-eight states there are only four having no religious buildings or institutions dedicated to Saint Anne. The Reverend and learned Father Aubin, C. SS. R., has counted and enumerated more than two hundred and fifty churches, chapels and shrines dedicated to Saint Anne in the United States.

May Saint Anne continue to extend over us her remarkable protection and shower upon us the choicest gifts of heaven! May we ever strive to be more and more worthy of them!

LITANY IN HONOR OF SAINT ANNE

To be said privately

Lord have mercy on us.

Lord have mercy on us.

Christ have mercy on us.

Christ have mercy on us.

Lord have mercy on us.

Lord have mercy on us.

Christ hear us.

Christ graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven.

Have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

Have mercy on us.

God the Holy Ghost,

Have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God,

Have mercy on us.

St. Anne, Grandmother of our Savior,

Pray for us.

St. Anne, Mother of Mary, Virgin and Mother,

St. Anne, Ark of Noah,

St. Anne, Ark of the Covenant,

St. Anne, Root of Jesse,

St. Anne, Fruitful vine,

St. Anne, Issue of a royal race,

St. Anne, Joy of Angels,

St. Anne, Daughter of the Patriarchs,

St. Anne, Filled with grace,

St. Anne, Mirror of obedience,

St. Anne, Mirror of patience,

} Pray for us

St. Anne, Mirror of mercy,
 St. Anne, Mirror of piety,
 St. Anne, Bulwark of the Church,
 St. Anne, Liberator of the captives,
 St. Anne, Refuge of sinners,
 St. Anne, Consoler of the married,
 St. Anne, Mother of widows,
 St. Anne, Mother of virgins,
 St. Anne, Mother of the sick,
 St. Anne, Harbor of salvation,
 St. Anne, Light of the blind,
 St. Anne, Tongue of the dumb,
 St. Anne, Hearing of the deaf,
 St. Anne, Consolation of the afflicted,
 St. Anne, Help of all who have recourse to
 thee.

} Pray for us

Our Father! Hail Mary!
 God has loved St. Anne.
 And delighted in her beauty.

PRAYER

Almighty and Eternal God, who didst vouchsafe to choose St. Anne to be mother of the Mother of Thine only Son, grant, we beseech Thee, that we, who keep her in remembrance, may through her prayers attain the everlasting life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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