

¡Adorada sea la Santa Faz de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo!

**IGLESIA CRISTIANA PALMARIANA
DE LOS CARMELITAS DE LA SANTA FAZ**

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One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian Church



TWENTY-FIRST APOSTOLIC LETTER

**A Call to Generosity.
Joyfulness and sadness**

We, Peter III, Sovereign Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Saint Peter, Servant of the servants of God, Patriarch of Palmar de Troya, *de Glória Ecclesiæ*, Herald of the Lord God of Hosts, Good Shepherd of souls, Aflame with the Zeal of Elias and Defender of the Rights of God and Church.

We suffer terribly at seeing the sufferings of the Church, the Order and their members. It is a deep grief for Us to see the present state of the Church, having to pray with face-mask, the faithful deprived of receiving Holy Communion, our Missionaries unable to travel to attend all their faithful.



In these events we must see the Will of God, who has so permitted, and we should say as did Saint Job amid his misfortunes: "The Lord gave me all, and the Lord has taken it away. What has been done is to His pleasing: blessed be the Name of the Lord." God knows well what He does, for He is infinitely wise and has a thousand reasons for allowing things to happen, and always draws good out of evil. In His infinite mercy, He allows all this for the good of our souls. We also feel the sufferings of the many Palmarians who, besides finding themselves deprived of receiving the Holy Sacraments, have had to live confined to their homes, overwhelmed by worries and illnesses. Let us see God's providential hand in everything, and ever live completely abandoned to His Divine Will,

remembering that everything that happens, good or evil, is allowed by God; and let us say with Saint Job: "If we receive good things from God's hand, why should we not receive bad things as well?" In this way our sufferings will help to make us grow in love and thus unite us closer to the Lord and to Mary Most Holy. Take this very much into account, since we shall soon have yet more to suffer, as Our Lord announced: "All this shall be but the beginning of grief."

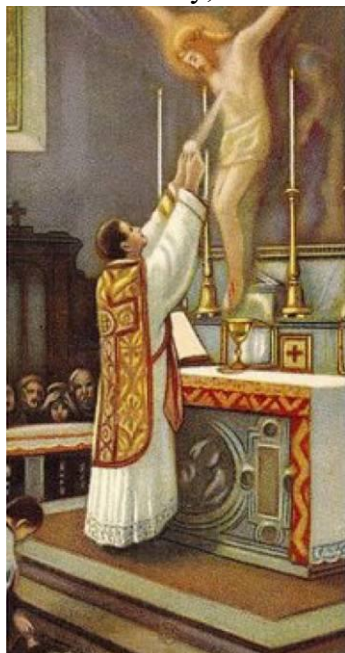
To know God's Will, the most important thing is to love God dearly and seek to please Him; to want to do God's Will for love of Him with a deep strong desire.

When someone in the family dies, when the father or mother dies, when the husband or wife or child dies, at that moment the life of someone who survives often changes: he receives an inheritance or perhaps loses the one he had, or loses the support he had before, and it often happens that he has to take the place of the departed; like for example, when one of the parents dies, perhaps it falls to the son to care for the house and take charge of the business, or the elder daughter finds herself needed as a mother to the younger children. Would you not brand them as selfish if they refused to take on the heavy burden and leave their little siblings forsaken? That loss is a call to the generosity of those children, for charity requires them to shoulder the cross selflessly so as not to leave the younger children in misery.

So likewise, when spiritual fathers, who are the Priests, die, their children, the members of the Church who have the necessary qualities should see the hand of God in this, for God is showing us His Will, telling us that a task needs to be done here, and that we should respond, moved by charity, just as when Providence requires us to care for a sick person or do some other act of charity. Who is going to perform that task so very necessary? If

there is generosity, if someone really wants to do God's Will, he becomes aware of his duty. It is like soldiers fighting on the battlefield, who must be replaced swiftly.

The present shortage of Priests and Religious stems precisely from lack of charity and generosity. The Lord said so, speaking of our times in His Eschatological Sermon: "And wickedness shall spread to the point that charity will disappear in many, owing to the great apostasies. But whoever perseveres to the end shall indeed be saved." Charity, love for God, has disappeared in many, and in others has dwindled so far that it is very hard to



find generous souls ready to take up the cross and follow after Christ out of love for Him. After the Saviour had asked Peter three times whether he loved Him, sure then of his love, He commended as proof of that love nothing other than that Peter take care of souls.

We all have a vocation in life, for we are all called to do God's Will, which is different for each. Ask God for the grace to know His Will and fulfil it perfectly for His greater glory. To love God, don't think that words alone are enough, there have to be deeds as well. Actions speak louder than words. Whoever does the Will of God will always enjoy true happiness, and will never have to repent for responding to the divine Call, the religious vocation, the best of the sacred gifts that we can wish for, as it turns our whole life into a continuous act of perfect love for God, a divine love which sanctifies, purifies and unites us to our beloved Creator, and wins eternal salvation for other souls.

If we put limits to our love and generosity towards God, or if we do just easy and pleasurable things, or just act when we see the fruits of our efforts, or if we look to our own comfort, then we shall never come to do great things or grow much in divine love, but will arrive at the end of our brief stay on earth with empty hands. Let us learn from the generosity of Saint Thérèse, who could say: "From the

age of three, I have denied God nothing."

It is not as difficult to know God's Will as some imagine. It is easy to know God's Will: principally, from the Commandments of God's and the Church's Law, from our obligations, and from events ordained by Divine Providence. And when we resolve or intend to do something we know to be God's Will, then it is up to us to do all we can to bring it to a happy conclusion, always trusting in the help of our Heavenly Mother.

God's Will: How is it shown to us? Saint Alphonsus Mary said that God's Will is almost always not only quite clear, but very clear, and we know it in three ways: First by way of our obligations, whether those proper to every Christian, whether proper to our state in life. These include the fulfilment of the Commandments, precepts, vows, rules, acts of justice and charity, obedience to superiors and to parents, and also to confessors, above all in matters of scruples, doubts and danger.

Second, everything rightly intended is God's Will, that is, once decided after having thought it over well, commended it to God in prayer and the Confessor's prudent counsel heard; such are, for example, resolutions and proposals to do more to please God and His Most Holy Mother.



Finally, everything unforeseen by us that, without fault on our part, prevents us from fulfilling the obligations we have assumed and maintaining the order established. Such are illnesses, trials, acts of charity to neighbour, upsets of any kind, difficulties which arise, and so forth.

So then, there can be few exceptions in the manifestation of God's Will, for being always so clear and evident, whether in things foreseen and ordained, whether in things unforeseen and unordained by which God forestalls us precisely so that we do not do what we usually do or have proposed to do, but what He presents to us unexpectedly and unavoidably.

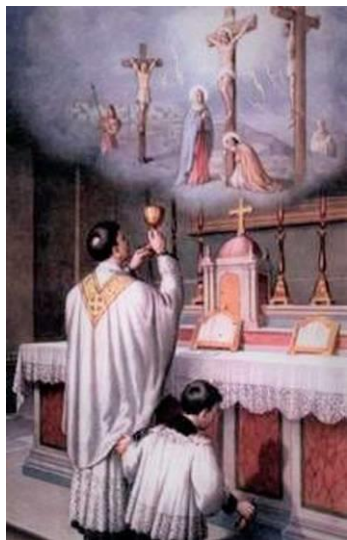
No need for fear: when God calls, He will give the graces. When God commends some task to us, He takes charge of helping us to fulfil it, but with us always asking for His help. The important thing is to look and make sure of God's

Will for us; but we must take care not to be led by our own likes and dislikes and do only what is pleasing to us. We have the example of Christ on telling the Eternal Father: "Not as I will, but as You will... not My will but Yours be done." That is what the Lord teaches us. Let us say with Saint Teresa: "Give me death, give me life, give me health or sickness... I say yes to it all. What is it You command of me?" Remember that life is very short, but eternity has no end. Do not misspend your time on vain things that pass, make good use of it to love God in imitation of Mary Most Holy, fulfilling the Divine Will.

What greater glory can a man ambition to win than to co-operate in this great work of the salvation of souls? Whoever loves the Lord with all his heart is not satisfied with loving Him himself alone, he would besides inflame the whole world in the holy fire of charity, so that we all might exalt His Name together. Hence Saint Augustine, addressing all God's lovers, tells them: "If you love God, inflame everyone in His holy love." This is precisely what we ask when we say: "O beloved Jesus! If I had the love of all hearts, it would all be for Thee. Send Lord souls, above all souls of apostles and martyrs, in order to inflame in Thy love the multitude of wretched sinners."

To work to save souls: not just for themselves, but above all to please God, so that the Lord be eternally loved by those souls and He be able to share His infinite happiness with them. Besides, whoever works with true zeal in the salvation of souls can have well-founded hopes of saving his own.

When choosing a state in life, God alone is to be obeyed, by embracing that state of life to which He calls us. Our eternal salvation depends on fidelity in following the divine call. Our Redeemer did not say: "Ask men to



go out and gather in the harvest", but: "Pray then to the Lord of the harvest to send labourers out to His harvest." It is the Lord who chooses workers to cultivate His vineyard: "I have chosen you, and have appointed you to go out into the whole world and yield fruit." Let us trust that the Lord will never abandon His Church to the point of leaving it unprovided with worthy Priests, according to the needs of souls.

The world is being left almost without Priests. To remedy this dearth, the root of it must be sought, and we find it in Saint Thérèse: "And when I saw Saint Paul encouraging us to strive for the greatest gifts, this phrase brought me comfort: "I am going to show you a yet more sublime path, that of the virtue of Charity". And the Apostle goes on to explain that the best charisms are nothing without love and that charity is the unrivalled path which leads to God with complete security... I understood that the Church had a heart, and that this heart was ablaze with love. I understood that only love could cause the members of the Church to act; that if love ever became extinguished, apostles would no longer announce the Gospel and martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. I understood that love enshrines in itself all vocations, that love was everything, that love embraced all times and places. In a word, love is eternal! Then, on the verge of a delirium of joy, I exclaimed: Jesus, my love, at last I have found my vocation. My vocation is love!" That is the root of the problem: since love is almost extinguished, apostles are lacking to announce the Gospel. The Lord already said so in the Gospel: "Wickedness shall spread to the point that charity will disappear in many... When the Son of Man comes, however, do you think He will find faith on earth?" – a living faith, vivified by true Charity. Hence the answer to the problem is that all we members of the Church dedicate ourselves fully to growing in charity, in true love of God. Imitate Mary Most Holy and make those continuous acts of love which give such consolation to Jesus' Sacred Heart; tell Him that you love Him and show Him so by your deeds and your patience; thus you will all grow in charity, and the fruits will soon be seen.

By deeds we show our love for God, but for the love to be great the deeds do not always need to be great. You already know Saint Thérèse' 'little way', composed of countless little acts of love for God. Love is shown by patience in bearing everyday crosses and contradictions, and also in the affects and desires only seen by the Lord. We therefore insist that you often tell Him, "Jesus, I love You", so as thus to practise and grow in charity.

We have already spoken to you on several occasions about religious and priestly vocations; but as we see that, by means of the latest events, Divine Providence is making a Call to the generosity of young Palmarians, placing before your eyes the need for Priests and Religious, We are therefore bound to urge you again to respond generously to the colossal Holy Crusade of the Last Times, and explain something of the grandeur and importance of the Christian Priesthood to you.



Consider the loftiest purposes for which the Priesthood was instituted. Not solely to celebrate Mass and pray; the divine plan is to establish public persons on earth to take charge of all that concerns the honour of His Divine Majesty and the salvation of souls. Jesus Christ established Priests to be co-workers of His, to secure the honour of His Eternal Father and the salvation of souls. Hence, on ascending into Heaven He declared that

He was leaving them in His place, for them to continue the Work of Redemption that He Himself had begun and will bring to an end. He made them delegates of His love. And Jesus Christ Himself said to His disciples: "As the Father sent Me, so likewise I send you." The task He left to them was that which He had come to earth to perform. This means that Priests are in the world to make God known, with His divine perfections, His justice, His mercy, His commandments, and to make Him respected, obeyed and loved as He should be. They are destined to seek out the lost sheep, and lay down their lives for this if need be. Such is the purpose for which Jesus Christ came to the world, and for which He instituted Priests.

Priests have to be teachers to instruct the Peoples in God's Law. They have to live innocent lives unstained by sin. The Apostle Saint Paul demands that those who aspire to the Priesthood are to be of irreproachable conduct, as he wrote to his disciple Titus, so that for divine things they should not attempt to be at the head of the rest without being conformed and like to God in everything in their way of acting. By Ordination the mission to carry out the loftiest functions at the Altar is received, for which even greater sanctity and perfection of life are required than for the religious state.

We can thus understand the chief duties of the Priest, remembering that Jesus did not come into the world other than to set aflame the fire of divine love: "I came to put fire on earth. And what do I wish, but that it blaze up? For I have come to set the earth ablaze with the Fire of Charity, to destroy the false peace the world gives." This is just what the Priest has to do all through his life and with all his strength: not heap up money or gain honours or worldly goods, but see that God be loved by all. We are called by Jesus Christ, not to seek our own interests, but to work for God's glory. True love does not seek its own profit, but strives hard to realize all that the Beloved wills. The Lord has separated Priests from among the peoples so that they may be His, which means that they should spend themselves in His praises, His service and His love; and be collaborators and dispensers of His Sacraments. The spirit of the Church consists precisely in ardent zeal to promote the glory of God and the salvation of neighbour. Saint Ambrose says that, "Priests have to be the guides and shepherds of the flock of Jesus Christ, for the Minister at the Altar is no longer his own, but God's." The Lord separates Priests from the rest of men to unite them completely to Himself. "If anyone wishes to serve Me, let him follow Me." Follow Me, that is, flee from the world, help souls, make God loved, and combat sin. The Priest who is a true follower of Jesus Christ takes injuries done to God as done to himself. Lay people, involved in worldly business, cannot render God due veneration and thanksgiving, so that it was necessary to choose certain men from among many with the duty of paying the Lord the honour due to Him. Just as the office of the Angels is to be continually praising God in Heaven, so that of Priests is to be continually praising Him here on earth.



In royal courts there were ministers in charge of the observance of laws, of undoing scandals, of putting down seditions and of defending royal honour. The Lord instituted Priests for all these purposes, they are the officials of His court, as ministers of God. Ministers are always ready to obtain the respect owed to their sovereign, always speak admiringly of him, and if they hear anything against the monarch they zealously reprove it; they strive to anticipate his tastes and even expose their lives to please him. Thus should Priests act towards God, conscious that they are His Ministers, and that all dealings for God's glory pass through their hands and are dealt with by them. By their means the sins of the world are taken away, for which Jesus Christ willed to die. What would be said of a subject who refused to watch over the interests of his king and who turned away whenever asked for his help? Priests are God's ambassadors. They are God's coadjutants or collaborators for winning the salvation of souls. Jesus Christ infused into them the Holy Ghost so that they might save souls, forgiving them their sins, when He said: "Receive the Holy Ghost: those whose sins you forgive, are forgiven them; and those whose sins you retain, retain them." Hence the Priest should not be involved in earthly matters, but in divine matters, to the profit of mankind. Thus Priests should not look other than to God and to winning souls for Him, an all-divine office. Priests should have an ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, since they are destined to conquer souls, not riches. Saint Gregory I exclaimed: "Let us leave earthly business to apply ourselves to the things of God alone, for we do the contrary: leave the things of God to apply ourselves to earthly business."

The Priesthood is an honour and as well a burden which implies a great responsibility and a great rendering of accounts. The Priest is obliged to greater perfection of sanctity than the other faithful, since his state is more sublime than that of all the rest, for God counsels perfection to lay people, while he imposes it on clerics.

Saint Ambrose said that the Priest, to offer up the Sacrifice worthily, has first to sacrifice himself, offering himself up wholly to God. The Priest has not only to be remote from all vice, but has to strive continually to reach perfection. The Priest has to be dead to the world and to all the passions so as to live a completely divine life. Today's Priesthood is the same which Jesus Christ received from His Father; so that Saint John Chrysostom exclaimed: "If the Priest represents Jesus Christ, he has to be sufficiently pure as to deserve to be among the Angels." The whole world knows that Saint Francis wanted to stay a deacon without becoming a Priest, for having seen in a revelation that the soul of the Priest has to be as pure as the water he was shown in a crystalline vessel.

Let us see the holiness a Priest should possess as mediator between God and man. The Priest should be holy in his role as dispenser of the Sacraments, for it is crucial that he be free of all blameworthiness as administrator of God's House. "The Priest", says Saint John Chrysostom "is placed between God and human nature, drawing Heaven's benefits down upon us and raising up our prayers heavenwards, reconciling us with the Lord and freeing us from His avenging hands." In the Sacraments, God communicates His graces to the faithful by means of Priests. By Baptism He makes them His children and saves them: "Whoever is not born anew cannot see the Kingdom of God, nor have any part in it." By them He cures the sick and even raises up the dead to the life of Grace, that is, sinners, by means of the Sacrament of Confession. By them He feeds souls and conserves their life of Grace by means of the Sacrament of the Eucharist: "Unless you shall eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you." By them He gives strength to the dying to overcome Hell's temptations by means of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. In a word, says Saint John Chrysostom, "without Priests we cannot be saved," and calls Priests "battlements of the Church"; Saint Prosper calls them "interpreters of God's Will"; Saint Ambrose, "army of sanctity"; Saint Gregory the Nazianzene, "foundations of the world and columns of the Faith."



The Priest has to be holy as well in order to win graces for the rest. Saint Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, wrote: "The Mediators between God and the people have to shine out in God's eyes for their good conscience and in men's eyes for their good name." "Otherwise", says Saint Gregory, "it would be rash to present oneself as an ambassador before a sovereign and ask pardon for criminals, being at the same time guilty of like offences." Whoever wants to intercede for the rest needs to be pleasing to the sovereign, for if he is hateful to him, he will only succeed in arousing the sovereign's anger yet further. Hence Saint Augustine affirms that "the Priest, who has to pray for the rest, needs to have such merit before God as to obtain what they cannot hope for owing to their demerits." This is what Pope Saint Hormisdas declared when he said that, "he who has to pray for the people has to be holier than the people." Saint Bernard complained of the fewness of priests holy enough to be called worthy mediators; and Saint Augustine, speaking of bad clergy, gets to say that "the barking of dogs is more pleasing to God than the prayers of such clergy." In 1215, Lateran Council IV wisely declared

that "it is preferable that there be a reduced number of Priests rather than many bad ones." "To try to provide for the needs of the peoples with bad ministers," says Saint Leo I, "is to work not for their salvation but for their perdition." Father Marchese recounts in his Diary of the Dominicans that a certain Nun, Servant of God of his Order, on praying to the Lord to have compassion on the people through the merits of the Priests, heard the reply that they, by their sins, irritated rather than placated Him. This is what we have seen in the roman church, led into apostasy by priests who, instead of making reparation to God and atoning to Him, have brought down terrible chastisements of Divine Wrath upon the world. God is now sifting mankind with chastisements so that people turn to His Mercy and cease to live with their backs to the Creator.

If anyone aspires to the Priesthood with the upright intention of working for God's glory, serving God alone and spending himself in the salvation of souls, he may well judge that he is called by God. On the contrary, if he seeks the Priesthood moved by ambition, self-interest or personal honour, he is showing that he is not called by God, but by the devil. Priests must be holy so as not to dishonour God, whose ministers they are and whom they are charged to honour. For this very reason, and so that Rome's collapse may not happen again, the Priesthood is now conferred only on those who live in humble obedience, poverty and chastity, dedicated to prayer in the religious life.

This is where the religious faithful to his vocation learns to be obedient without answering back, poor without worldly ambitions, chaste without stain, patient without complaint, humble without pretence, cheerful without dissipation, fearful without mistrust, diligent without anxiety, prudent without affectation. He learns to

have a vigilant heart that does not turn aside from God to think vain thoughts; a generous heart that never retains unworthy affections; an upright heart that is not perverted by wrongful intentions; a heart strong in trial and free of earthly attachments. Here he grows in light for knowing God, in diligence for seeking Him, in talent for finding Him; here grow his perseverance in pleasing Him and faithfulness in thanking Him for His benefits. In prayer he finds the courage to face up to the hardships of life in expiation for sin, and so obtain the grace to see God, possess Him and love Him for all eternity in Heaven. To be a religious is to offer your all up to God; it is to promise to love Jesus alone, so that you may no longer be yours, but all, all God's.

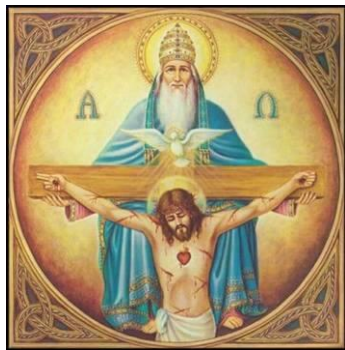
Saint Augustine said: "Nothing happier here below nor anything more agreeable to men than the office of Priest, but nothing more laborious, no commitment greater before God." Great happiness and honour is the Priesthood for man, to be able to bring the Incarnate Word down from Heaven into his own hands, and free souls from sin and from Hell, to be a vicar of Jesus Christ, light of the world and mediator between God and men, to be greater and more noble than all the sovereigns of earth, have greater power than the Angels; in a word to be a 'god on earth', nothing more fortunate. But on the other hand, nothing more laborious, no commitment greater: for if Jesus Christ comes down into his hands to be his Food, the Priest has to be purer than water, as Saint Francis was given to understand. If he is mediator before God for men, it is essential for him not to appear before God as guilty of any sin. If he is a vicar of the Redeemer and Reparator, he has to be like Him in the life of self-denial. If he is light of the world he has to be a complete light with all the virtues. In summary, if he is a Priest, he has to be holy. Otherwise, if he does not respond to the gifts he receives from God, the accounts he will have to render to God will be so much the longer. The Priest discharges a heavenly office and is Angel of the



Lord, so that, like the angel, he will be chosen for glory or reprobated to Hell. Hence the Priest has to be free of even the slightest faults. Though the requirements are great, God does not command the impossible; but, on commanding, he warns us to do all we can and to ask for whatever we cannot, so that He help us to be able. From all this it follows that the Priest must work to sanctify himself. It is not enough to offer Holy Mass and no more. He has to have a life of prayer, mortification, recollection. Someone will say that it is enough for him to be saved. No, not enough. Do you not remember the servant who hid the talent? So that the Priest be holy, he has to live detached from everything; from worldly conversations, from vain honours, from immoderate affection for his relatives. Seeing him busy with God's work, when they ask him: why did you do this to us?, he should reply as the Child Jesus did when His Mother found Him in the Temple: "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Heavenly Father's business?" Thus should the Priest reply to his relatives: Are you the ones who made me a Priest? Did you not know that the Priest has to work solely for God? I want to consecrate myself to Him alone.

The Lord instituted Priests to save souls and to free them from vices, to instruct the ignorant and convert sinners. To be aware of how deeply God desires the salvation of souls, it is enough to consider all He did in the work of human redemption. Jesus Christ made quite plain this desire of His when He said: "By baptism of blood it behoves Me to be baptized, and what anguish I feel until it be accomplished!" He felt held back in His longing anxiety to see the Work of Redemption carried out, in order to save all men.

From this it is inferred that there is nothing dearer to God than the salvation of souls, for nothing is so pleasing to God as to work to make others better. One day the Lord told a certain Priest who laboured hard for the conversion of sinners: "Work for the conversion of sinners, for nothing is more agreeable to Me." It is so agreeable to God that it might be said that He has no greater zeal than to see all men saved. Thus Saint Lawrence Justinian said, speaking to the Priest: "If you are concerned for God's honour, you cannot seek it in a better way than by working for the salvation of souls." And Saint Teresa said: "When we read in the Lives of the Saints that they converted souls, it gives me far greater devotion and touches me more and moves me more to envy than all the martyrdoms they suffer; as this is the inclination the Lord has given me, and it seems to me that He appreciates a single soul won by our industry and prayer, through His mercy, more than all the services we can do Him."



Saint Bernard says that in God's eyes one soul is worth as much as the entire world; thus Saint John Chrysostom wrote that "whoever converts a single soul pleases God more than if he gave away all his goods in alms." God values the salvation of one little stray sheep as highly as the salvation of the whole flock. Hence the

Apostle Saint Paul said: ...He “who loved me and gave Himself up for me”, meaning by this that Jesus Christ would have died for one single soul, just as He died for all. God has died for you! He did this so that we might not live for the world, but for that Lord who wanted to die for us. He did so in order that the love He showed for us might gain all the affections of our hearts; and thus, on considering Christ’s death, we might hold it little to lay down our life and give all for love of our most loving Jesus. Make good use of the rest of the days God grants you in order to love Him. Remember how much Christ loved you, and tell Him: “My God, You have died for me!” Do so frequently, and thus you will feel sweetly moved to love God, who loves you so. Till now you have not loved your most loving Redeemer as you should, because you have not thought about the love He bears for you. When the devil or the world offer you their poisonous fruits, remember the suffering your beloved Saviour underwent for your love, and hence love Him and offend Him not. Will it be possible for someone to consider our beloved Redeemer in the Bethlehem crib, on the Cross of Calvary and now in the Sacrament of the Altar, and not be inflamed with love for Him?

The Priest has to administer the Sacraments and offer up to God the Father the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the sins of mankind, in order that the graces of salvation be poured out over all; and this office is proper to the Priests of the Law of Grace, to whom the power has been given of offering up the supreme sacrifice of the Body and Blood of the Son of God Himself, of the Eternal Word Made Man, a sovereign and perfect sacrifice, unlike the ancient ones, which enfolded no more merit than that of shadows and figures of our sacrifice, which has the power of obtaining the remission of the temporal pains owed for our sins, an increase of Grace and the most abundant helps in favour of those for whom it is offered.

The Priest who is not interpenetrated by the greatness of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass will never offer it up as he should. Jesus Christ on earth performed no greater work than this. The Mass is the holiest action, the one most agreeable to God that can be performed, both for the Divine Victims offered up, namely Jesus Christ, Victim of infinite dignity, and His Most Holy Mother the Immaculate Virgin Mary, as well as for the Principal Offerer, Jesus Christ Himself, who offers Himself up by the hands of the Priest. When you see the Priest offering up the Sacrifice, do not think it is the Priest, but imagine the hand of Jesus Christ invisibly stretched out.

All the honour that the Angels with their homage and men with their virtues, penances, martyrdoms and holiness in general have been able to pay to God have been unable to give as much glory to God as that offered



up to Him by a single Mass; because all the honours given by creatures are finite, while the honour given to God in the Sacrifice of the Altar is infinite honour, coming from a Divine Person. The Mass, then, is the holiest action and the one most pleasing to God; it is the action most capable of placating God’s Wrath against sinners, that which most wounds the forces of Hell, the one which wins the most abundant graces for men on earth and the one which produces the greatest relief for the souls of Purgatory, the one which gives infinite value to the sacrifices of the members of the Church; and, finally, is the action most closely bound up with the salvation of the world, the perpetuation of Calvary. Holy Mass prevents the earth from being annihilated.

At each Mass, the Lord makes a gift to the human race in no way inferior to that He made in the Incarnation. This is in accord with the renowned sentence of Saint Augustine, who exclaimed, “Oh, revered dignity of Priests, in whose hands the Son of God takes flesh, as He took flesh in the womb of the Most Holy Virgin!” Besides, as the sacrifice of the Altar is nothing other than the application and renovation of the great sacrifice of the Cross, one Mass has all the efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Cross for the good and salvation of men. The celebration of Holy Mass has the same value as the Death of Christ. As often as this Sacrifice is offered up on the Altar, the work of our redemption is renewed. Effectively, it is the very same Redeemer who offers Himself up for us on the Cross and also sacrifices Himself on the Altar by way of the Priest.

In a word, in the Church the most beautiful and excellent of all is the Mass. In the Mass Jesus Christ gives Himself up to us by means of the Sacrament of the Altar, which is the reason for and consummation of all the Sacraments. Rightly then, the Mass is called ‘the compendium of all Divine Love and of all the benefits dispensed to men.’ Hence the devil has always striven to suppress the Mass in the world by means of heretics, turning them into precursors of antichrist, and for a time they succeeded in suppressing the Sacrifice of the Altar, as chastisement for the sins of men, as Daniel prophesied: “And power was given it against the perpetual Sacrifice, because of the sins of the people.”

The devil and his pawns now have more power than ever in the world owing to so many sins. Much prayer to persevere! We, Vicar of Christ and your Universal Father, ask you to intensify your prayers and sacrifices for Us as well, so that We can persevere in carrying out the difficult task which is Ours.

Speaking of Spiritual Communion, Saint Gregory XVII said: “Christ and Mary do not refuse those who are prepared to receive Them worthily, They do not deny them entry. They enter, yes, not by way of the Sacrament of Communion, when truly impossible; They do so by direct increase in the Drop of Mary’s Blood.” To be ‘prepared to receive Them worthily’, to be able to commune, there is always the obligation under mortal sin, of



being visibly present at the complete turn of Masses in which Holy Communion is administered. This precept obliges for every Communion, and only those for whom it is impossible because of illness or prevented by true difficulties are dispensed. The reason is because the best preparation for Communion is to unite our sufferings, aspirations and prayers to the Passion of Christ and Mary at Holy Mass, so as then to unite ourselves to Them by love at Holy Communion. If Spiritual Communion is made with a great desire to receive Jesus and Mary, the same graces as Sacramental Communion are received, and they can even be greater still, since often Communion is received for Communion’s sake, routinely. Now that the devil is doing more against the Church to prevent the Lord entering the hearts of the faithful by way of Holy Communion, it is up to us to do more to give the Lord the pleasure of coming and being able to find the rest and comfort He claims. This is achieved if we make our Spiritual Communion with fervent acts of love, with the firm desire of receiving Them and having Them in our hearts, and with complete surrender to God’s Will; in this way Jesus and Mary will come joyfully and be even more at ease than before, sharing with us their afflictions.

Saint Nicholas de Flüe’s sole food for twenty years was Holy Communion, though he lived at a time when Communion was infrequent. He himself explained that when he attended Mass, at the moment when the Priest received, he felt he received strength which by itself allowed him to stay without eating or drinking. This is an example of the efficacy of Spiritual Communion well made during Holy Mass, and confirms once more the words of Pope Saint Gregory XVII: “The One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian Church, Christ’s Immaculate Spouse, is supremely fruitful, by virtue of the Celebrant’s Communion, at each of our Masses.”

We are in the Last Times, an epoch of trials for the Church and the world. At the beginning of Christianity as well, and for a long time, there were great difficulties, because of which the Christians of those times had to take part in worship in hiding, and in the catacombs, where the bodies of the glorious martyrs were buried.

All of the first 32 Popes, up to the Pontificate of Saint Sylvester I the Great in the year 313, died martyrs. It has been calculated that in the Church’s twenty centuries of history, there have been more than seventy millions of Martyrs who shed their blood for Christ. The history of the first centuries of the Church reveal an untold multitude of Martyrs. Not only Christian authors affirm this, but besides, Tacitus, Libanius, Pliny the Younger and other pagan historians. From Emperor Nero in the year 64 up till Saint Constantine I in the year 312, ten general persecutions are counted, besides local persecutions. According to documents of the greatest authenticity, the number of martyrs during the first three centuries of the Church is calculated at some eleven to twelve millions. The last persecution, ordered by Diocletian, was so violent that this emperor believed he had erased the name of Christian from the face of the earth, as is proven by the fact that he ordered a medal to be struck with this inscription: *‘Nómine christianórum deléto’*: in the obliterated name of Christians.

The life of the Christian is to bear the Cross. Christ gave us the example, being God, by dying on the Cross to save us. Without the Cross, no salvation is possible!

Beloved children: Learn to love your everyday cross. Let it be your companion, your shadow, your Guardian Angel. The second station of the Way of the Cross reminds us of how Christ took up the Cross: He kissed it and embraced it. It is something so impressive, showing the love He had to save all souls who so desire.

Now is the time for prayer and penance, to make reparation to God for so many offences He receives and to obtain the eternal salvation of innumerable souls who depend on us. The Church is suffering in many of her members. Everything that happens is wanted or permitted by God, who knows what is good for us and when to send us the cross. Let us accept it with joy, abandoned to the Divine Will, trusting in the loving care of our Heavenly Father even amid the greatest trials. Let us place our trust in the Most Holy Virgin Mary, our Mother, who loves us Palmarians as predilect children and who knows how to resolve all problems. This confidence will open our eyes to see God’s hand in events, and will give us the strength and joy to persevere amid adversity.

Remember those words of Christ: “When all these things, then, begin to happen, look up, and hold your heads high, because the day when the earth shall be purified and renewed is at hand.” He told them not to lose heart at their sufferings and difficulties when He purifies us in the fire of tribulation, but that we be filled with holy joy on seeing that the glorious triumph of the Lord over the forces of evil will soon arrive.

Likewise in the Messages of Palmar, Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Most Holy Mother encourage us to rejoice at the approaching events: “Soon, very soon, the world will rapt up in contemplation of the era of the great heavenly wonders. Be glad, dear children, as the time called Mary's day is close... The Great Lady appears, clothed with the sun, Her head crowned by twelve stars and the crescent under Her feet. Behold the hope for remedying the evils of these times: the Universal Apparition of the Great Lady; for soon the Great Lady is to crush the head of the serpent. Then there will be a great division, huge and manifest. The children of the Great Lady and the children of Satan, the Light and the darkness. A war without quarter and an open struggle between the dragon and the Great Lady. And all My enemies will be placed as a footstool at My feet. But beforehand the triumph of the Great Lady shall be seen. And let no one be anxious or worried, even in the midst of persecution. For the day of the great martyrs of the Last Times will come; they shall be the children of the Great Lady, and She will give them a spirit which will be the confusion of their enemies. Be of good cheer! Be of good cheer, for the times that are coming! The Kingdom of My Peace is soon to arrive. Christ's triumph is close: the Era of the Holy Ghost. However, to reach that Kingdom alive, there must be a purification by which the Father will winnow and refine the earth. Blessed be those who take part in these martyrdoms as martyrs. Blessed be they, for they shall see Me for all eternity. If they truly understood the meaning of this Kingdom of Peace, they would always be saying: Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Lord Jesus!... That day of My Glorious Coming will arrive. It will be the most glorious event ever to occur on earth. For some I will have a Father's Countenance; for others a Judge's Countenance. For some it will be infinite joy to contemplate My Countenance full of Mercy and Majesty; and for others it will be horrible and terrible to see My Countenance full of Wrath: the Wrath of the Lord demanding of them the martyrs.”



The heavenly messages also exhort us to rejoice at the great spiritual benefits we already enjoy at the present: “Today, more than ever, Mary exercises Her Spiritual Motherhood over men; and your hearts should fill with joy on calling Her 'Mother'. Since, for you, She begets Grace, namely Jesus Christ, present here among you... Rejoice yourselves and give thanks to Heaven, because you have the happiness of adoring and venerating the Holy Face on this Most Sacred Mount of Christ the King... Now you begin to enter fully into the Passion. Yet do not be anxious. Let good cheer reign among you. For this cross which has fallen upon your shoulders means: joy. The joy of knowing that you are with the truth. Though in hiding, you give glory to the Most High... The Cross must be borne with cheerfulness, with love, with peace, with benevolence... You, the Bishops of El Palmar de Troya, are

those specially chosen, with a mysterious seal which sets you apart from all the bishops of the world. You have the seal of prayer, of penance, of recollection and of holy joy in you. You shall have much to suffer. One cross after another will fall upon you. But you must all be united... I want you to take up the Cross with love, kiss it and bless it. The one awaiting you will be heavier. But I know how to teach the martyrs, and at the moment of martyrdom I fill them with dolour and fortitude. And they die with joy, because they know that they are giving their lives to save many others.”

Let us imitate Saint Paul in accepting all that happens to us: “I have learnt to be happy with the little I have. I know how to live in poverty and I know how to live in plenty. I have experienced everything and am now ready for anything: both to enjoy plenty and to suffer hunger, to live in abundance and to suffer need; as I can do all things in Christ, who comforts me” (Philippians). Our Lord in the Gospel also exhorts us not to be anxious over material things: “See how the lilies of the field grow, which neither labour nor spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his royal magnificence was attired like one of them. So if God thus clothes the herbage in the fields, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown onto the fire, how much more you, men of little faith? Do not worry then, saying, ‘what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear?’ Because that is what pagans do, who worry about those things; and your Father well knows you have need of them all. Seek first, then, the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all those things shall be given to you in addition. Do not be troubled, therefore, about tomorrow, because tomorrow has its own cares; and sufficient for the day is its labour.”

It is well to avoid sadness, which is the bane of devotion and fount of a thousand defects. If you let yourself be drawn down by sadness, you will do no good and almost all your prayers will be fruitless. Think that all your upsets and worries spring from lack of resignation at the crosses which God sends you. Uniting to God's Will makes all trials sweet and pleasant. You complain because you are poor, disregarded and persecuted, and because you are ill and desolate; well then, be conformed to God's Will, and all those pains will cease to be for you. Very likely these exterior crosses do not mortify you as much as the interior ones, that is, scruples of conscience. However, is it not certain that by the grace of God you detest the sins you have committed; that you are resolved to die rather than deliberately commit any sin, though it be venial; that you frequent the Sacraments and would belong entirely to God? All these things are signs that you enjoy His Grace. Cease then to grieve saying: Who knows how I stand before God? What will my death be like? Have I really confessed all my sins? Has my Confessor perhaps deceived me? The devil tells me that I am damned. This is the tune usually played by many pious persons. So then, throw yourself into the arms of divine mercy and be at peace saying: Lord, I will do as Your Minister tells me, and thus I hope that by Your Blood I will be saved and never lose Your Grace.

As for the present, if the venial sins you commit every day grieve you, it is important not to become attached to them, nor commit them with full deliberation; so detest them at the moment and be at peace. If you are deeply grieved at the fear of committing grievous faults because of the many bad thoughts which continually harass you, know that someone with a delicate conscience, if not sure of having fallen into mortal sin, can be



certain of being in God's Grace, for it is impossible that a will confirmed in upright intentions can turn against God without being clearly aware of it. Therefore, when the Confessor tells you to take no account of those fears and to commune without confessing them, obey blindly and give no ear to the devil who will try to disturb you with these scruples to turn you aside from the way of perfection. When you feel uneasy, tell the Lord, 'my Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit. If you want me to have this cross till I die, I will bear with it. Do not permit me to offend You; make me love You, and I will refuse not to suffer all that be to your pleasing.' Saint Francis de Sales says that God, with the tenderest love, loves those souls who throw themselves into his fatherly arms in this way, and let themselves be guided in all by His divine providence; and hence God will turn everything to his good, disposing that these chosen souls follow Him very closely, without any other support than His Divine Will, which so wishes. The Saint says all this.

With all fervour seek to rejoice only at whatever unites you to God and to grieve at whatever separates you from Him. Seek to please God alone and fear only what displeases Him. May all the goods of earth be vile and despicable to you, and only God's gifts be agreeable to you for love of Him; and that you love Him above all things. Acknowledge as tasteless all joy not coming from God, so that you wish for nothing outside of God, and that all your affects and all your thoughts be directed to God. Ever implore the Most Holy Virgin Mary to request for you from the Lord, together with their forgiveness, a great sorrow for your sins, perseverance in virtue, a pure love of God and perfect conformity with His Most Holy Will. In this you will find true happiness.

"Cast sadness far from you, as it has killed many, and is good for nothing", says Ecclesiasticus, to teach us that there is no profit in it at all. To cure and remedy this ill and sickness of the spirit of sadness, no less care and diligence is needed than we are given for other spiritual illnesses and temptations in this life, because of the multiple and great injuries and harm that follow. Beware of sadness, don't let it enter your heart; because if you do, and it begins to master you, it will then take away your taste for prayer, and make the time for prayer seem long to you, and prevent you from saying your prayers integrally, and will even sometimes keep you wholly from prayer, and cause you to leave aside spiritual reading. And in all spiritual exercises it will fill you with such tedium and dreariness as to be unbearable. Many are the dangers that follow from sadness. The soul is numbed, not the body, because by sadness and spiritual worry the soul feels such tedium and dreariness at every spiritual exercise, and at all works of virtue, that it becomes as though dormant, useless and inept for all good. And sometimes the irritation is so great regarding spiritual things, that these cause him annoyance and he is detained from his good exercises.

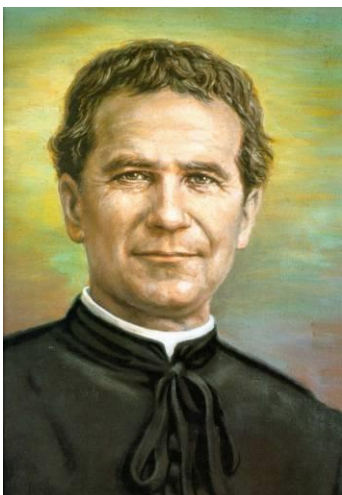
Sadness can cause great harm, so that Ecclesiasticus says: "Do not allow sadness to take hold of your soul, nor let melancholy afflict you; for the life of the righteous man should be accompanied by wholesome joy of heart, since good cheer is a treasure not absent from holiness; and man's wholesome joy makes his life easier to bear. You, who desire to please God, cheer up and gladden your heart."

Sadness has another feature as well, that it makes a man unpleasant and harsh towards his brethren. Sadness moves to anger and irritation. And this we experience when we are sad. We are then easily annoyed and upset for any reason. And further still, it makes a man impatient in his dealings; and sometimes so disturbed that he seems to have lost his senses and to be out of his mind; or makes him suspicious and ill-willed, because where there is bitterness and sadness there is no discernment. And so we often see that when sadness and melancholy reign in a person, he has such out-of-the-way reasonings, such unfounded suspicions and fears, that the level-headed laugh and speak about them as craziness. Others, very serious men of great learning and talent, have been seen so caught up in this passion that it was pitiful to see them some times weep like children, and at others breathe such sighs that seemed rather like bellows. And thus when in their senses they feel that this madness (for so it can well be called) is coming upon them, they shut themselves up in their rooms to cry and sigh there alone so as not to lose authority and the good opinion of those who might see them in that state.



If you want to know entirely the effects and harm caused by sadness of heart, the Holy Ghost briefly declares them to us by the wise Solomon: “As moth to clothing and canker to wood, so melancholy harms man’s heart.” Moth-eaten clothes are worthless and of no use, and cankered wood serves to no purpose in a building, it can bear no weight, as it breaks up; thus the man plagued with melancholy, sad and wretched, is of no use for anything good. And the evil does not end there, rather the worst is to come, that sadness of heart is the cause and root of many temptations and many falls, as sadness has led many to fall into sin. Thus some call sadness ‘nest of thieves and cave of demons’, and with good reason. In the shadows and the gloom, in that mist and darkness of confusion you have when sad, the devil hides and sleeps; that is his nest and den, and there he does as he wills; that is the disposition he awaits to attack with whatever temptation he pleases. Just as snakes and wild beasts await the darkness of night to emerge from their lairs, so does the devil, the ancient serpent, await the night and darkness of sadness, and then attacks with all kinds of temptations.

Saint Francis of Assisi the Great said that the devil revels when a man’s heart is sad; as he can then easily cause him to sink into melancholy and despair or turn him to worldly pleasures. Note this teaching carefully, as it is of great importance. Whenever someone is sad and melancholic, the devil sometimes makes him fall into great mistrust and despair, as he did with Cain and with Judas. With some, thinking that this will not work out well, he comes up with worldly delights, and with others fleshly and sensual delights, under the pretext that in this way the person will free himself from his pain and sorrow. And hence it happens that when someone is sad, sometimes temptations come against his vocation; for the devil represents to him that out in the world he would be happy and contented; for sadness and melancholy have drawn some from the religious life. Again, the devil often provokes carnal and indecent thoughts which please sensuality, and seeks to have the person dwell on them, pretending that he will thus leave his sadness behind and relieve his heart. This is something greatly to be feared in those who go about sad and melancholic, since these temptations are quite usual in them. As every man naturally desires some pleasure and satisfaction when not finding it in God or in spiritual things, the devil, well aware of our inclinations, then represents and places before him sensual and impure things, and offers him a taste and delight in them, by which the sadness and melancholy he feels appear to be alleviated. Understand that, if you have no satisfaction or pleasure in God and spiritual things, you may easily go to look for them in vile and sensual things, for a man cannot live without some satisfaction and amusement.



The evils and harms that follow from sadness are so many that we affirm that all evils come from sadness. Death comes with it, including eternal death which is hell. We must needs keep away from sadness, as the harm and dangers which follow from it are so great, and not merely for your consolation or pleasure; if this were all there was to it, it would matter little to be sad or cheerful. And so the devil too desires and promotes it so much, as he knows that it is the cause and root of many evils and sins.

“Always rejoice in the Lord. Again I say to you, rejoice”, says the Apostle Saint Paul to the Philippians. And in many other places we are exhorted to serve God with joy, to be glad and rejoice. And this is how the Archangel greeted Tobias: “The peace and joy of the Lord be with you.” Blessed Saint Francis of Assisi used to say: “It is for the devil and his members to be sad, but for us always to rejoice in

the Lord. In the abodes of the just the sound of joy and health should always be heard. The Lord has brought us to His house and chosen us among thousands, how can we go about sad?" To realize its great importance, it is enough to see how often Sacred Scripture commends and repeats this, and on the other hand to see the great harm that follows on sadness as we said. But for greater force, and so that seeing how profitable it is that we make greater efforts, let us give some reasons which make it right for us always to go about in God's service with this joy of heart. And let the first be that the Lord so wills. Saint Paul says: "God loves the cheerful giver." Just as in the world we see that any nobleman wants his servants to serve him with joy, and when he sees that they go about troubled and serve him frowning sadly, their service is not pleasing to him, rather it annoys him; thus God our Lord likes us to serve Him willingly and joyfully, not with frowns and sadness. What God values much from the people is that they offer their donations with great joy, willingly and gladly; he does not value the action as such, as much as the will with which they do it. Even here we are used to saying: the goodwill with which he does it is worth most of all. And we value that highly, though the service is small. And on the contrary, however great it may be, if not done willingly and cheerfully, we do not value it or give thanks, rather we are displeased. They say quite rightly that it is like someone who serves a good meal, but with a bitter sauce that gives it all a bad taste.



The second reason is that it redounds to God's greater glory and honour to serve him with joy, since in this way it shows that He is served very willingly, and that all seems little for the desires he has. Those who serve God with sadness seem to give to understand that they do much and are tired out with their work, being great and burdensome, and that they can scarcely bear it, and that displeases and causes annoyance. And thus one of the reasons why Saint Francis did not want to see sad faces among his friars was because it gives to understand that there is grief in the will and sloth in the body for doing good. But those others, according as they go about joyfully and in a lively way, seem to say that all they do is nothing compared to what they desire and would wish to do, as Saint Bernard said: "Lord, all I do for You seems hardly an hour's work and, if more, with love I do not notice it," according to Christ's words: "My yoke is sweet and My burden light." This gives the Lord great pleasure, and says so in the Gospel: "When you fast, appear cheerful." This means to say, be festive and go about happy, so that it seems that you neither fast nor do anything: "Do not allow the penance to make you look sad

as do the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces to let men see they are fasting and so be praised by them." Do not be sad like the hypocrites who want everyone to know that they are fasting and see that they are doing something. On passing it should be said that there are some who, in order to act with modesty and recollection, think that they should go about crestfallen and miserable. And they are deceived, for the modesty of the religious should not be sad but holy. The religious should always show cheerful modesty and modest cheerfulness. And the two together are a great decorum and adornment of religious.

Thirdly, not only does it redound to God's great honour, but also to our neighbour's benefit and edification, and increase of virtue; for those who serve God in this way do much to persuade men by their example that there is nothing burdensome and difficult about the path of virtue as bad people imagine, seeing them go about with such liveliness and joy. By this, men who are naturally desirous of living joyously and happily are greatly encouraged to be virtuous. For this reason particularly it is very proper for us to go about our ministry joyously, dealing as we do with neighbours, and that gaining souls for God be our aim and purpose; for in this way they are won over and take a great liking, not only to virtue, but to perfection and to the religious life. We learn from some that they have left the world and entered religious life on seeing the joy and happiness with which religious live; for what men desire is to spend their lives happily, and if they were aware of the life which the good religious leads, the world would become deserted, and all would choose the religious life; but this is a hidden manna which God concealed and kept for those whom He wanted to choose. If the Lord revealed this hidden treasure to you and not to your brother, who thus stayed outside, and brought you here, you owe Him infinite thanks.



The fourth reason why it is good for us to be cheerful, is because an action is commonly of greater merit and value when done with this joy and promptness; because it helps us to act better and more perfectly. Including Aristotle said: "The joy and pleasure with which an action is done is cause for doing it with perfection,

and sadness for doing it badly.” Thus we see by experience that there is a great difference between one who does something with pleasure and one who does it reluctantly. For the latter seems to care only to be able to say that he did it; but the former takes great pains to do what he does well, and tries to do it as best he can. To this is added that joy and well-being of the soul gives strength and spirit for the work. It is certain that joy dilates and broadens the heart, and makes us press on very vigorously along the path of sanctity. The work is then no burden. And on the contrary, sadness narrows, tightens and shrinks the heart; not only does it take away the will to work, but also the strength, and makes hard something that was previously easy. With sad and sorrowful spirits, there is no will to praise God. And by experience we see each day that when we are sad, not only is our spiritual strength reduced but also our bodily strength, and it seems that each arm and foot weigh too much. Hence the Saints counsel us not to be sad amid temptation, as that strips the heart of vigour and makes us cowardly and fainthearted.

Another reason can be inferred from the previous ones, by which it is greatly to be desired that the servant of God, and specially the religious, live with joy. And it is that when someone is seen living with joy in the things of virtue and religion, it gives great satisfaction and the hope that he will persevere and go ahead with what he has begun; but when we see him go about sadly, it makes us suspect and fearful that he may not persevere. Like when you see someone shouldering a heavy load of firewood, and doing so groaning, heaving and sighing, and stopping here and there; a log falls, and further on another, you then say: all that is too much, I think he'll leave it halfway. But when you see him shoulder the load lightly, and go along singing and cheerful, you then say: he could carry even more. Well, in the same way, someone who is sad and sorrowful in matters of virtue and religion, and who seems to be groaning and exhausted with his burden, leads us to suspect that he will not last long; since to be always rowing and struggling against the current is the life of a galley slave and very crushing. But when someone acts joyfully at humble tasks and in the other exercises of the religious life, both corporal and spiritual, and it all seems easy and light, he gives great hope of going on ahead and persevering.



So highly do the Saints value us always living with this spirit and joy, that even in falls they say that we should not weaken or be disheartened, nor be sad and melancholic, sin being one of the things for which we can rightly be sad, as we shall later say; withal, Saint Paul says that this sadness should be tempered and moderated by the hope of God's pardon and mercy, lest it be the cause of discouragement and mistrust. And so Saint Francis, who deeply detested this sadness in his friars, reprehended one of his companions who went about sad, saying: "Whoever serves God should not go about sad, if not for having committed some sin: if you have sinned, repent and confess, and ask God for forgiveness and mercy, and implore Him with Prophet Saint David to restore your previous joy: 'Return to me the happiness of Your salvation and comfort me with the spirit of Your Grace'," so that the Lord might restore that joy and promptitude he felt in His service before he sinned, and sustain and confirm him in it with the

magnificent and powerful spirit of His Grace. Saint John de Ávila very rightly reproaches some who follow the way of the Lord burdened with useless sadness, with frozen hearts, without pleasure in the things of God, harsh towards themselves and their neighbours, faint and disheartened; and many of them, he says, commit no mortal sins, but say that for not having served God as they should and wished, and for the venial sins they commit, they are that way. This is great deceit, for the harm which follows from this exaggerated pain and sadness is far greater than that which ensues from the faults themselves; and what they could diminish if they had prudence and diligence, they cause to grow, and from one evil fall into another. And this is what the devil is after with this sadness, to strip them of vigour and diligence to act, so that they fail to do anything well.

What we should learn from our faults and falls ought to be, first, that we be more confused and humbled, knowing that we are frailer than we thought. Second, that we ask for greater graces from the Lord, for we need them. Third, that we live from then on with greater caution and reserve, drawing lessons from one occasion to practise on others, foreseeing occasions and avoiding them. In this way we shall do more than with detrimental discouragement and sadness. Saint John de Ávila says quite rightly: "If for the ordinary faults we commit we had to go about with low spirits, sad and downcast, who among men would have rest or peace?, for we all sin." Try to serve God and do your tasks, and if you were not to finish them, and fall into faults, do not be startled at that nor disheartened, for so are we all: you are a man and not an Angel; frail and not sanctified. And God well knows our weakness and misery and does not want us to be faint on that account, but to rise up there and then and pray for greater strength from the Lord; just as the child falls, and then rises up and runs about as before. Saint Ambrose says: "The falls of children do not make their father indignant, rather they touch him. God is

like this with us, for He knows our infirmity and misery very well, and loves us as weak and sickly children; so these falls and frailties of ours move Him rather to compassion than to indignation.” Saint Thérèse expresses the same, and besides is happy with her weaknesses since she thus has greater opportunity for showing her love for Jesus: “Oh, what soul does not desire to possess virtue? That is normally the way! But how few are those who accept falling, being weak, those who rejoice at seeing themselves down and that others catch them down!... Why should you be fearful of being unable to carry that cross without losing heart? Even Jesus fell three times on the way up to Calvary, and you, poor little child, are you not going to be like your Spouse, do you not want to fall a hundred times, if necessary, to show Him your love, and rise up with more strength than before the fall?” One of the great consolations which we who are frail in the service of God have, is to understand that God is so rich in love and mercy that He bears with us and loves us, though we do not respond to Him so integrally as we should. His mercy surpasses our sins; just as wax melts away before fire, so do all our faults and sins fade away before His infinite mercy. This should encourage us greatly always to go about with great happiness and joy, to understand that God loves us and wishes us well, and that for all these ordinary faults we have, in no point do we lose God’s grace and love.

That is the fount and the basis of true joy and happiness, in loving God and possessing Divine Grace in the soul. Remember how Saint Thérèse interrupted a Sister who was speaking about the happiness of Heaven with these sublime words: “It is not that which attracts me.” “What is it then?” the other asked. “Oh! It is love! To love and be loved, and to return to earth to make Love loved!”

Once again We insist on the need to make continuous acts of love for God, so that you thus give Him the love He claims from His children. In the Holy Trisagion we say: “Most loving God, Three in One, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in Whom I believe, in Whom I hope, Whom I love with all my heart, body and soul, senses and powers: because Thou art my Father, my Lord and my God, infinitely good and worthy to be loved above all things.” Let us say this prayer from the heart, and let us love God sincerely with the three powers of our soul, for as you know from the Catechism that “The understanding is for knowing God and His works. The memory is for remembering God’s Law and the spiritual and temporal benefits we receive from Him. The will is for loving God and for doing His divine Will in all things. True human liberty is to use understanding, memory and will in accord with the divine plan. On the contrary, libertinage is man’s abuse of the liberty given to him by God. The libertine loses true liberty by becoming a slave to his passions.”



The Catechism also teaches that in Heaven “Essential glory or beatific vision is to see the Divine Essence, namely to contemplate God face to face with the understanding and to love Him most perfectly with the will.” There is no greater happiness and joy than to love God and be in His presence. We can enjoy these goods spiritually already in this life if we possess Divine Grace in our souls and make continuous acts of love for God; and in Heaven that same happiness will be complete.

On the other hand, in Hell, the essential pain of loss, namely to be deprived forever of the vision of God, is the greatest suffering. As the chief fault of the impenitent, in which the malice of sin lies, is to separate from God, the greatest pain there is in Hell is the lack of the vision of God and the loss of it forever. The Treatise on the Holy Mass says: “The pain of loss for the damned is the anguished and desperate desire to see God in order to be happy, and at the same time the obstinate refusal to see Him out of hatred towards Him and so as not to humble themselves and ask forgiveness for their sins. For the Souls in Purgatory, however, the pain of loss is the most vehement desire to see God and inability to do so owing to the temporal pains not yet expiated; yet those souls have no desire to abandon that state before their complete purification.” To be separated from God, the desire which burns in them to possess God whom they do not yet possess, is the pain of loss, and is incomparably the greatest torment of Purgatory; for God is the Infinite Good, and the privation of an infinite and necessary good is the cause of a pain as great as God Himself.

But let us see the roots and causes which give rise to sadness so as to apply the necessary remedies. Saint Bonaventure says that there are many roots which sadness can arise. Sometimes it is born of natural ill-health with melancholic temperament, and then the remedy is for the doctor to prescribe rather than the theologian; but it should be said that a melancholic character is born and increases with having melancholic thoughts. And so we should take no less care with sad and melancholic thoughts, that they neither enter nor draw us after them, just as we do with thoughts against chastity or against the Faith, owing to the great harm that can follow, as has been said.

At other times he says that, without any particular cause which might provoke it, of a sudden we can find ourselves so sad and melancholic that nothing pleases, not even the friends and conversations that previously entertained us, rather everything annoys and displeases us, and we have no wish for dealings or conversations with anyone; and if we do, it is not with our usual cordiality and affability, but in a nervous and unpleasant way. From which it can be deduced that our impatience, and harsh and inconsiderate words, do not always spring from the occasions our brethren give us, but from within; the cause is within us: and the root from which it all comes is not having mortified our passions. And thus the remedy for being at peace is not to flee from dealings and conversations with men, nor does God so will, but in having patience, and mortifying our passions very thoroughly, for if we do not mortify them, then wherever we go, wherever we flee to, we take with us the cause of our temptations and anxieties.

Well known is the example told of an irate monk who because of his unmortified anger and rage was a trial to himself and the rest. He decided to depart from the monastery of the holy abbot Eutimius in which he lived, thinking that living alone, free of dealings with others, his anger would cease, as he would no longer have occasions for becoming angry. He did so, and shutting himself up in a cell, took with him a pitcher of water, which by art of the devil all spilled out; he took it and filled it up again, and a second time it spilled out onto the floor; he went back to fill it to the brim a third time, and for the third time it all spilled out; then, more furious than ever, he seized the pitcher, and hurled it to the floor shattering it. This done, he realized and came to see that it was not the company of the monks and dealings with them that were the cause of his impatience and anger, but his own lack of mortification; and he finally returned to his monastery. Hence the cause of your unease and impatience is in yourselves and not in your brethren; mortify your passions, and in this way you will enjoy peace even with the wild beasts, and how much more with your brethren.

At other times, says Saint Bonaventure, sadness may well come from some work that arises, or not having obtained something coveted. And Saint Gregory and Saint Augustine and other Saints also give this cause, and say that the sadness of the world comes from fondness for worldly things; for obviously, it makes us sad to be deprived of something cherished; but whoever is detached and free of affection for everything worldly, and places all his desire and happiness in God, will be free of worldly sadness. Saint John de Ávila well says:



“There is no doubt that grief comes from desiring; and so the more desiring, the more grief; the less desiring, the less grief; and no desiring, rest.” Hence our desires are our executioners; they are the torturers who torment and strangle us.

Analyzing this more particularly, and applying it to ourselves, it is to be noted that the cause of sadness in a religious is often in not being indifferent to all that obedience can demand of him; this is what can often make him sad and melancholic, and make him go about troubled and nervous, thinking: if they take away this thing that does me good? if they send me to do something that repels me? For by desiring to have something he lacks or to keep something he has, he becomes troubled and nervous as a result; but the religious who is indifferent to whatever obedience orders, and whose whole happiness is in doing God’s Will, shall always be content and cheerful, and no one will be able to take his joy away.

The superior could well remove him from that task or that community, but cannot take away the joy he has, because it is not in being here or there, nor in doing this or that task, but in doing God’s Will; and thus he always takes his contentment with him wherever he goes, and in whatever occupation they give him. Well, if you want to go about always happy and content, place your happiness in doing the Will of God in all things; and do not put it in this or that, or in doing your own will, for that is no way to be happy, but to have a thousand worries and troubles.

Examining this further, what can very commonly be the cause and root of our melancholy and sadness is not a melancholic character, but a proud character reigning deep in our hearts, from lack of humility; and while this disposition reigns in your heart, be assured that you will never be free from sadness and melancholy, as occasions will never be lacking, and thus you will always be living in grief and affliction. And we can reduce this to what we have just said, to be indifferent to whatever obedience wishes to command; for often it is not the work or the difficulty of the task which strikes us. What greater work and greater difficulties are to be found in the offices and high posts for which we yearn and wish for, but pride and desire for honour? It is pride which makes what is hard seem easy, and what is easier and lighter seem hard, and makes us sad and melancholic. And even the mere thought and fear that we be commanded to do what we do not want to is sufficient for that.

The remedy for this sadness is clearly seen to be in humility and being happy with the last place; such a one will be free of all this sadness and unease, and will enjoy much peace and rest. “Learn from Me, who am meek

and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.” If we imitate Christ in humility, we will not feel labour or difficulty in the exercise of the virtues, but much facility and ease. For what gives rise to difficulties is self-love, self-will and judging others, the desire for honour and esteem, pleasure and ease, and all these impediments are reduced and overcome by humility, which makes a man think little of himself, deny his own will and judgement, and despise honours and esteem and all temporal goods and satisfactions; and all this once removed there is no feeling of toil or difficulty in the practice of virtue, but great peace and rest.

An excellent remedy for every species of sadness, whatever way or for whatever reason it comes, is to turn to prayer, think of God and of the hope of eternal life promised to us. By doing this all the clouds clear and scurry away, and the spirit of sadness flees; as when David played his harp and sang, and the evil spirit fled and left Saul. And thus the Apostle Saint James the Less in his letter gives this remedy: “Is anyone sad among you? Pray that he be happy.” If you are sad, turn to prayer. When you feel sad and disconsolate, the remedy is to bring God to mind, and doing this you will be consoled. Thinking of the Lord and His Commandments and of His promises is a joyous chant for the faithful soul; it is what recreates and consoles him in this banishment and pilgrimage in all his labours and afflictions. If conversing with a friend is enough to hearten and cheer us, what will it be to converse with God? And thus the servant of God and the good religious, as means for banishing sadness and melancholy, should not use chatting, amusements and diversions, nor vain or profane readings, still less singing them, but turn to God, to recollection in prayer: this is to be his consolation and rest.

Several Saints have considered the passage from Divine Scripture where, after the Flood, forty days later, Noah opened the Ark’s window, and sent out a raven to see if the earth had by then dried up, to be able to disembark, and it did not return; he then sent a dove which, finding nowhere to alight, returned to the Ark. These Saints ask: Well, the raven did not return, so it is plain that it found somewhere to alight: why does Scripture say that the dove found nowhere to alight? Their reply is that the raven alighted on the mud pools and on the dead bodies; but the simple dove, white and beautiful, does not feed on cadavers nor alights on mud



pools; and so returned to the Ark, not finding where to set its feet, nor encountering anywhere to rest. Well, the true servant of God and good religious likewise does not find contentment or recreation in such dead things, in those vain worldly diversions; and so returns like the dove to the ark of his heart, and all his rest and consolation in work and in sadness is to turn to prayer, remember God, spend a while before the Most Blessed Sacrament and find consolation with Christ, and there tell Him of his labours and say to Him: How can I, Lord, be sad in Your house and company?

God gives joy of heart, so that it has not to be sought for outside, in outward things, but here within in the secret cell of the heart, where we should pray to God.

Severus Sulpicius tells of blessed Saint Martin bishop, that his relief from work and weariness was prayer. As blacksmiths, for a little relief in their work, give blows on the anvil, so the Saint, when it seemed he was resting, prayed. Of another servant of God it is told that in his cell amid grievous sadness and incredible affliction, by which God at times willed to try him, heard a voice from Heaven in the interior of his soul, telling him: What are you doing there idling and wasting away? Arise and start to consider My Passion. He then rose up, and started carefully to meditate on the mysteries of Christ’s Passion, and afterwards his sadness vanished, and he was consoled and encouraged; and continuing this consideration, he never ever felt this temptation all his life long. Let us grieve then at the sufferings of the Lord and at the offences He received, and not at our little crosses. If for love of Jesus and Mary we accept the cross with joy, it becomes sweeter and we do not feel its weight so much; and it is true that our crosses weigh very little in comparison with our Divine Saviour’s Cross.

One of the principal causes and roots of sadness and melancholy is commonly not doing as we should in God’s service, in not acting as we should in accord with our state and profession. By experience we see, and we each experience in ourselves, that when we go about with fervour and make the most of things, and with good conscience, we feel so joyful and so happy that we burst with pleasure; and on the contrary, when we do not do as we should, we go about sad, disconsolate and embittered. It is proper and natural to evil and to sin to cause sadness and pain in the soul. God proclaimed this consequence of sin to Cain who, when envious of his brother Abel, felt within an anger and rage that made him go about very sad and crestfallen, for he found it “deeply galling to him that his brother Abel was loved by God.” God angrily told Cain: “What is your motive for ill-treating your brother and why is your face downcast?” This means that the interior bitterness and sadness of his soul was patent in his countenance, going about so troubled and dejected. And as Cain did not reply, God Himself replied, that his condition was precisely that of sin, saying: “Is it not certain that if you do good you

will be rewarded? And that if you do evil the habit of sin will always be with you?" If you act well, you will be recompensed and enjoy happiness and contentment and live with joy. But if you do evil, your sin will then be knocking at the door to enter and torment you; and then as well it will show outwardly in the expression on your face; for just as virtue, being in accord with reason, naturally gives rise to great joy of heart, so vice and sin naturally cause great sadness; since a man is fighting against himself and against the natural dictates of reason, and then the worm of conscience gnaws away inside, troubling and worrying him from within.

The present day worldly, who have turned their backs on God, live plunged into sadness and misery; they seek happiness, but know not where to find it, and turn to pleasures and diversions which only serve to separate them further from God and sink into a void of sadness or despair.

Saint Bernard says: "There is no greater or more grievous pain than a bad conscience, for though others may not see your faults or know of them, it is enough that you know them; you are the witness ever accusing and tormenting, from whom you cannot hide or flee for all you do." And so said the philosopher Seneca, that the greatest pain that a fault can inflict is having committed it, owing to the great anguish with which the person's conscience torments whoever does evil. Plutarch compares this pain and torment caused by the bad conscience to the heat and cold caused by fever. He says that just as the sick suffer much more pain from the cold and heat due to illness than the healthy from the heat or cold due to the weather, so melancholic sadness due to our own fault, from our conscience weighing upon us, causes far more pain and torment than that which comes from chance calamities, without any guilt on our part. And this particularly happens to one who begins to enjoy God and for a time goes well, with fervour and diligence, and then begins to fall back and act indifferently; since



a man falling into poverty after having been rich lives a harder and sadder life than those who never knew what riches were. When someone remembers that he once enjoyed devotion and diligence in God's service and that the Lord granted him favours, and then finds himself so different from before, he cannot but feel great sorrow and great pain of heart.

Well if you want to banish sadness from you, and live ever joyful and content, the remedy is to live well, and do as you should according to your state. Do you want never to be sad?, says Saint Bernard: live well. Reflect and remove the faults which cause that sadness; and that way it will cease and joy will come. A virtuous life is always accompanied by joy and happiness, as the bad life is by pain and torment; just as there is no greater pain and torment than remorse and the gnawing of a bad conscience, so there is no greater contentment and joy in this life than the testimony of a clean conscience, since there is no joy on earth to compare with it. It is like a perpetual banquet; just as at a reception one enjoys the variety of dishes

and the presence of the guests, so the servant of God who does as he should rejoices at the testimony of a good conscience and at the odour of the divine presence, of which he has great proofs and presentiments in his soul. The Apostle Saint Paul recognizes that the good conscience is a paradise, and a glory and blessedness on earth: "My glory is in the testimony that my own conscience gives me in having acted in this world, and chiefly with you, with simplicity of heart and sincerity before God." Saint Chrysostom says that the good conscience, caused by a virtuous life, removes and dissolves all darkness and bitterness of heart as the sun when it rises disperses all mist; so that the whole weight of sadness, falling onto a good conscience, goes out like a spark falling into a deep lake of water. Saint Augustine adds that just as honey is not only sweet in itself, but turns insipid things sweet when put with them, so the good conscience is not only joy and sweetness in itself, but is joy amid work, which it makes sweet and savoury, in accord with the words of the Prophet Saint David: "The judgments of the Lord (which are His holy Commandments and the fulfilment of His Law) are true and just in themselves, are more desirable than gold and precious stones and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Hence Your servant keeps them, and is thereby spiritually recompensed." It is not only sweet to serve God, but turns sweet all the work, pains and bothers of this life.

We read in the history of the Church that the persecutors of the Faith did a very new thing, with no remembrance of others ever having done it in the past; and it was that they placed all those who, being called or submitted to torture, had first denied the Faith, together in prison with the holy Martyrs, so that their punishment be without consolation, not now accused of being Christians, but of being evildoers and murderers of men. And note the outward difference, in the gestures and eyes of the first and the second, for the Saints went to the tribunal and to torture rejoicing, and in their countenance reflected the divinity; their chains adorning them like pearl necklaces, and leaving the filth of the prison with the aroma of Christ and His Angels, and themselves, as if they had not been in prison but in a garden. The others left sad, heads bowed, awful in

their submission, and horrifying more than all ugliness. Their own conscience exhausted and tormented them more harshly than the shackles and chains and stench of the prison; but for the others their good conscience and hope of rest and of glory relieved their pains and refreshed them. And the good commonly experience this; for a good conscience is such a joy that often, when a good person feels sad and troubled and, turning to every side finds nothing to console him, then, turning within, and seeing his peace of conscience and its testimony, he feels consoled and enlivened, as he realizes quite well that everything else, happen what may, neither makes nor unmakes him, but that alone.

From this something of great consolation follows, and it is that if the good conscience and keeping right with God is cause of being joyful, then this spiritual joy will also be a very great sign and indication that one has a good conscience and is keeping right with God, and is in His grace and friendship; for by the effect the cause is known. Spiritual joy is a great sign that God dwells in a soul, and is in His Grace and love. “Light is born to the righteous, and joy to the upright of heart.” But darkness, obscurity and sadness are for the wicked. And thus one of the principal reasons for which Saint Francis of Assisi wanted to see this spiritual joy in his Friars was this; and because it was a sign that God dwelt in them, and that they were in His Grace and friendship. This spiritual joy, born and coming from cleanliness of heart and purity of life, as from a fount, is fruit of the Holy Ghost, and thus a sign that He dwells there. Saint Francis rejoiced so greatly on seeing his Friars with this joy that he said: “If ever the devil tempts me with spiritual sadness or depression, I look at my Friars and companions and consider their joy, and then with the sight of their joy I am freed from the temptation as if I were seeing Angels.” To see the joy of the servants of God who are in His Grace and friendship is like seeing Angels on earth.



But someone will say: Must we always be joyful? May we never be sad? Is no sadness of any good? To this Saint Basil replies, that some sadness is good and profitable. Because one of the eight beatitudes given by Christ our Redeemer in the Gospel is: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Saint Basil and Pope Saint Leo I say that there are two ways of mourning: one is worldly, which is when someone is saddened by something in the world, like adverse and trying events; and God’s servants should not have this. It is read of Saint Apollonius in the lives of the Fathers that he preached to his disciples that it is not

good that the servants of God who have their heart in Him, and hope in the Kingdom of Heaven, be sad. Let the gentiles and the jews and other nonbelievers be sad, and sinners as well mourn without cease; but the just, who with lively faith hope to enjoy those eternal goods, let them rejoice and be glad. For if those who love the decrepit things of this earth rejoice and are glad at their success, how much more reason do we have to rejoice and be glad at God and the eternal glory we hope for? And thus Apostle Saint Paul does not want us to mourn excessively even at the death of our friends and relatives. He does not say that we be not saddened at all; since to show some sentiment at this is something natural and not bad, but good, and a sign of love. Christ our Redeemer showed it, and wept at the death of His friend Lazarus, and the people around said: “See how He loved Lazarus.” But what Saint Paul says is “it is not proper for the true Christian to be saddened in the manner of pagans, who do not live with the hope of Eternal Life or of the glorious resurrection of the bodies of the righteous”, – that we be not saddened like the faithless who do not believe in the other life, but let our sadness be moderate, consoling ourselves that we shall soon find ourselves all together with God in Heaven; the one who has just died goes on ahead, and we shall go after him later. In this fashion we should not pay much attention to the present things of this life, though we cannot cease to feel them as men, but take them in passing. “Those who suffer trials”, says Apostle Saint Paul, “let them live in conformity to the will of God as if they did not have them; those who live rejoicing in their happiness, as if they did not rejoice.”

There is another sadness which is spiritual and godly, which is good and profitable, and right for God’s servants. And Saint Basil says that it springs up in four ways or from four roots. The first, from the sins we have committed against God, because to mourn for one’s sins, and be saddened and pained for having offended God, is for sure a good sadness and pleasing to God. Saint John Chrysostom gives a reason worthy of his ingenuity: “There is no loss in this world to be restored by pain, regret and sadness, but that of sin alone; thus in all other matters, pain and sadness is badly employed, if not in this; because not only are all other losses not remedied by mourning and sadness, rather they increase and grow; but the loss caused by sin is remedied by sadness and pain, and we should mourn it.”

The second root: this sadness is engendered and born from the sins of others, on seeing God offended and unloved, and His Law broken. This too is a very good sadness; for it is born of love and zeal for the honour and glory of God, and the good of souls. And thus we see those holy prophets and great friends of God, wasting away, consumed by that sadness and pain, seeing the sins committed against His Majesty, unable to remedy them. So great was the affliction felt by one of them, that his pain of soul consumed his body, and his blood boiled to see the injuries and offences done to God. The Prophet Jeremias is full of similar lamenting and mourning. This sadness is very good for us, and very proper to us, as one of the purposes of our Order is to see the name of God sanctified and glorified by all and sundry; and so our greatest pain is to see that this is not done, rather quite the contrary. Besides, we find that the majority of men do nothing to serve God; only offend Him continually. We Palmarians are alone in consoling Jesus' Heart for so many offences. Now it is more than ever necessary to console and atone to God, for never in history has there been so much sin, so that God will have to chastise the world as in the times of the Flood. We have the great responsibility to make reparation to



the Lord, console Him and do prayer and penance to placate His Wrath and save souls. Let us not fail to fulfil this sacred obligation. When God sends us the cross, it is for our sanctification; let us bear it with joy and patience for love of God, and for the salvation of so many who do nothing to save themselves.

The third root: this sadness can be born from the desire for perfection, which is to have so great a longing to make progress in perfection and in the love of God that we are ever sighing and crying out because we are not better and more perfect and more ardent in divine love, in accord with Christ's words in the Gospel: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall have their fill." That is, blessed are those who go about with this hunger and thirst for virtue and perfection, for God will fulfil their desires; He will satisfy their longing to grow in divine love if they spend themselves making many acts of love for God.

The fourth root: a holy sadness can be born in God's servants as well from the contemplation of Glory and the desire for those heavenly goods, but who find themselves in exile, and this prolonged, like the children of Israel weeping in their Babylonian exile, remembering the Promised Land. To mourn in the exile of this life, with a "to Thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to Thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears", is a prayer that resounds in God's ears as very good and sweet music.

There are signs for discerning which is the good, the godly sadness, and which is the bad, the diabolical one. The first is obedient, affable, humble, meek, gentle and patient. For sure, born of love of God, it contains in itself all the fruits of the Holy Ghost, which are charity, spiritual joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, forbearance, faithfulness, meekness, modesty, continence and chastity. Bad, diabolical, sadness, however, is harsh, impatient, full of resentment and fruitless bitterness, moving us to mistrust and despair; it holds us back and turns us aside from all good. Furthermore, this bad sadness does not bring any consolation or joy; but the good, godly sadness is after a fashion joyful, and brings with it consolation, and a comforting, and great courage for everything good, as is seen by reviewing all these four ways of sadness We have said. Just to go about mourning for our sins, though on the one hand it afflicts and pains us, on the other greatly consoles. By experience we see how happy and satisfied we become when we have wept deeply for our sins; and one of the things by which we see the great difference and advantage there is in the spiritual life of God's servants compared to the life of the worldly is this, that we feel greater joy and gladness in our soul when we have just wept for our sins than that felt by the worldly in all the festivities and pleasures in the world; Saint Augustine ponders this very well, saying: "Is this, the first of the true works of those beginning to serve God, if their mourning, if their sadness gives the just so much contentment, what will be the joy and contentment they feel when the Lord consoles them in prayer, and gives them that spiritual jubilation He usually communicates to His elect? What will it be like when He wholly dries and wipes away the tears from their eyes?" For someone always going about like a Jeremias, mourning for the sins of others, well shows the savour, taste and satisfaction they cause in the soul: for it is a sign of good children to be very zealous for the honour of their Father. To go about always yearning and sighing for perfection and desiring to be in that heavenly fatherland now, what can be gentler and sweeter? What sweeter than to be always sighing for that glory and blessedness for which we hope, and have our heart always where true joy is, namely Heaven?

From this it will be seen as well that the joy we ask for in God's servants is not vain joy, of laughs and frivolities, nor of jokes and politeness, going about chatting with everyone we meet; because that would not be the joy of God's servant, rather diversion, dissipation and dissoluteness. What we ask for is an outward joy that

stems from within. Just as sadness of spirit reflects in the body, in such a way that it even comes to dry up and waste away the body; so inward joy of heart reflects in the body as well, and makes itself seen in the countenance; and so we read in many Saints that a joy and serenity appeared in their countenance giving testimony to their interior joy and peace of soul. This is the joy that we children of Mary Most Holy need.

Amid our tribulations, let us be grateful to God. The Christian life has to be a life of gratitude to Our Lord and God, in accord with the counsel of Pope Saint Peter II the Great: “The children of the Church should ever seek the best way of honouring and glorifying their Heavenly Father. Very few times do we show our gratitude for all the many things we receive. God gives us more than we can possibly imagine, His gifts cannot humanly be valued. He, all the while He heaps graces upon us, allows adverse things to happen, quite opposed to what



we were seeking. And then we feel as though God has abandoned us, when it is quite the contrary. The greater our struggle and our suffering, the closer we are to Him, for that is when we really live crucified to the things of this world. A grateful child shows God his gratitude in the face of the trials which He permits for the greater good of his soul. Let us never complain of God nor be ungrateful to our Creator. God, as Provident Father, wants to make use of our littleness, of our grain of sand, of our insignificant drop of water, to raise up the grand edifice of our own sanctification and to co-operate in the salvation of others. To obtain these goals, He places within our reach the cross, instrument upon which Christ was crucified for us, without which we cannot occupy the high mansions of glory which His Heavenly Father has reserved for those who truly love Him, this solely being possible by fulfilling His will and being grateful for His benefits. Our gratitude towards God, however, should necessarily extend to His Most Holy Mother, for without Her most powerful intercession we would receive nothing from Him. And all the innumerable and priceless graces which have been poured out, and are still being poured out in this Sacred Place, we receive from Our Lord Jesus Christ by way of the Purest Hands of our Heavenly Mother, Suppliant Omnipotence.”

Given in El Palmar de Troya, Apostolic See, on the 4th of April, Feast of Merciful Jesus, in the Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ MMXXI, and fifth of Our Pontificate.



With Our Apostolic Blessing
 Petrus III, P.P.
 Póntifex Máximus

Petrus III P.P.